



The University of Edinburgh

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Main Library refurbishment

Extensive works are being carried out in the Main Library over the summer vacation, which may result in some inconvenience for Library and Computing Services users.

The main changes are:

- new entrance and inner doors to improve access for the disabled, and to reduce cold drafts in winter
- entry control by University Smart Card, for more efficient entry for staff and students, and to improve overall security
- a new, modernised Main Service Desk at the back of the concourse
- upgraded and modernised lighting
- a new Self-help Centre on the Second Floor, operated jointly by the Library and Computing Services, to incorporate Information Services, the Central Area Resource Centre, and Open Learning
- the Map Collection and atlases currently on the Second Floor will be relocated to an open-access area on the Fifth Floor
- several fire safety improvements in the basement

The Library will be open as usual, closing only for the annual air-conditioning maintenance week (9th-13th August), although it may be necessary to use alternative entrances from time to time. Circulation Services will operate from the first floor Reading Room for the whole vacation; access to Computing Services reception and the Current Serials Room will be maintained.

More details will be published as they become known.

David Easton (EUL)

Year 2000: Microsoft Product Analyser

Microsoft has released a Year 2000 Product Analyser, a Windows utility that checks Microsoft products for Year 2000 compliance. It performs the following tasks:

- identifies installed software products on specified drives by scanning for executable files
- checks the products it finds against a compliance database
- generates a report

The report is in the form of a Web page which gives complete compliance information and links to patches and updates where available.

The Year 2000 Product Analyser is available for free download from <http://www.eu.microsoft.com/technet/year2k/pca/pca.htm>

Nick Richman (CITS)

New high-performance computer

Edinburgh Parallel Computing Centre (EPCC) is to get a new high-performance Sun computer system to replace the Cray T3D. The initial installation will be significantly upgraded within the next year using Sun's future-generation system. The contract includes opportunities to develop a leading-edge technology partnership between EPCC and Sun Microsystems.

The new service was planned in consultation with a range of departments, and procured via an EU Open Procurement exercise, under a Joint Research Equipment Initiative contract organised by EPCC and the University's Procurement Office.

Karen Bowman (Procurement)

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The Data Protection Act 1998

A new Data Protection Act has now been in force for some seven months, and while it is generally viewed as offering better protection for the individual, it demands more of organisations which store and process data – including the University. Some details remain to be clarified, but if you use information about people you need to be aware of the changes which are taking place.

The Data Protection Act 1998 came into effect on 24th October 1998, and is wider in scope than the 1984 Act which it replaces. Rights of access to information have been enhanced and the new Act will, in due course, cover paper records, very probably including personal files and student records.

Transitional arrangements in the Act defer a number of the new requirements until 2001 or 2007. Secondary legislation is due to be put in place shortly to clarify the detailed application of the new legislation, though it remains possible that some of the implications of the new Act will not be wholly clear until tested in the courts.

A Working Group convened by Vice-Principal Dr Richard Field will be providing guidance to departments on ensuring compliance with the new legislation, probably over a period of time as the implications of the new Act become clearer. Meanwhile, the University's registration with the Data Protection Registrar under the existing legislation is being renewed and there should be no immediate need to change existing practices. However, any new processing of personal data which commenced after 24th October 1998 is likely to be covered by the new legislation: in this context 'new processing' can be taken to mean wholly new ways of using or analysing computerised personal data not covered by the University's current registration under

the existing Data Protection legislation, or wholly new individualised paper records/files. It does not include adding records to existing systems.

Any department which might have initiated new processing, or any colleague who has any concerns about the new legislation, should contact the Data Protection Officer, Jack McAulay (email Jack.McAulay@ed.ac.uk, tel 504930). Information about the Data Protection Working Group is available from Chris Jowett, Secretary's Office (tel 502366, email Chris.Jowett@ed.ac.uk).

Chris Jowett (Secretary's Office)

The University's Online Dynamic Diary

The Dynamic Diary Online is a new project from Communications and Public Affairs (CPA) to extend the existing noticeboard and other forward planning aides on EDINFO. The Dynamic Diary is intended to be an up-to-date record of all public events, conferences, concerts and major committee meetings happening in the University. You can use it when you are planning your own event, to avoid clashing with other events, and to notify others of provisional dates for your own event. You can also use the Dynamic Diary to search for the events, by type or title, of interest to you.

The Dynamic Diary is produced in concert with the *Bulletin*, also published by CPA: events submitted for the *Bulletin* will automatically appear in the Dynamic Diary, and vice versa, since both are readily produced from the same FileMaker database.

As the Dynamic Diary becomes known around the University we hope that even more complete information on confirmed and provisional dates will be included, making it an indispensable planning tool. See for yourself, at <http://www.cpa.ed.ac.uk/diary/>

David Donachie (CPA)

Electronic Journals in the Library

The University Library receives an increasing number of recommendations from users to buy electronic journals – e-journals – and already makes almost 500 titles available. Dealing with the phenomenal growth of this new medium of publishing presents the Library with problems, however, such as finding the money to buy the e-journals and the staff time for all the additional administrative work.

Most Faculty Libraries have a fully committed journal budget, so acquisition of electronic journals means cuts elsewhere. On average, electronic journals add 15% to the cost of the printed version, and subscribers must usually take the printed version to have access to the electronic one.

To date the area of highest growth and demand is in Science, Medicine and Veterinary Medicine. Demand is difficult to assess: many users still prefer a printed version, but provided an e-journal is readily accessible it may have value-added features which make it compelling. One possibility is for the Library to replace duplicate print copies with an electronic subscription, holding a master printed copy at the most suitable site.

Edinburgh University Library is still a long way from becoming a fully virtual service and will continue to develop a hybrid library service combining print and electronic collections. To find out more, including guidelines for recommending electronic journals, see <http://www.lib.ed.ac.uk/lib/resources/collections/serials/ejintro.shtml>

In view of the rapidly changing developments in electronic publishing, the Library will revisit these issues regularly.

Irene McGowan, Liz G. Stevenson (EUL)

Engineering Index on EDINA

The Engineering Index database of publications, Compendex, is now available through the EDINA service, at <http://edina.ed.ac.uk/>

Access to the service requires an ATHENS username and password: information on how to register for these is available in the 'resources' section of the Library's Web pages at <http://www.lib.ed.ac.uk/>

Compendex user guides are available from the Robertson Engineering Library at The King's Buildings. The Compendex database will continue to be available through the BIDS service (at <http://www.bids.ac.uk/>) until 30th June.

Jenny Flemington (EUL)

Catering outlets get wired

Accommodation Services is procuring an integrated electronic point-of-sale and stock management/back office system for management information and menu planning for all its catering outlets on all the University's campuses.

The chosen supplier is Counter Solutions, who have a track record in other institutions and offered the best value proposal on whole-life costing. Detailed planning of the phased introduction of the EPOS system is under way and the final contract being agreed. Look out for new point-of-sale equipment beginning to be used later in the summer.

Ian Macaulay (Accommodation Services)

EUCS course changes

The Access 97 Introductory course shown in the *Courses in Computing* catalogue for 27th July has been brought forward to 19th July. The Reference Manager course scheduled for 1st September will now take place on 10th September.

Tracey Rawlinson (EUCS)

EdVEC update

EdVEC is in the final stages of commissioning its new facility at the Bush Estate: the Motion Capture lab is ready, and looking for business; the Gait Lab is not far behind; the 3D scanner lab and media lab await some further electrical work.

The motion capture lab records human or animal movement in 3D by combining the images from eight video cameras which trace the movement of reflective markers attached to the subject. This produces a 'wire skeleton' animation of the captured movement which can be edited and analysed using the software packages in the lab, and combined with a suitable rendered model to reveal the original motion.

Teaching and research applications include the study of joint movement in animals or humans, or the movement of parts within mechanisms. Reflective markers can be as large as tennis balls or as small as 3mm in diameter, and can be observed at up to 240 fps and 1/1000 second exposure, so small fast processes or aspects of behaviour can be tracked. A joint movement normally obscured by hair or tissue could be rendered in diagrammatic form; physical processes, such as the chaotic behaviour of linked pendulum systems or hanging chains, could be tracked and illustrated; even swarming or clustering behaviour could be recorded, if an experimental procedure can be devised. Ergonomics of equipment in the workplace can be observed, as can, with some ingenuity, the movements of a growing shoot.

We are only at the beginning of understanding and exploiting the scope of these new tools; the important message is that we are here and ready to discuss possibilities with anyone who is interested.

Further details are on the EdVEC Web site at <http://www.edvec.ed.ac.uk/>

John Butler (EdVEC)

Scottish Census plans underway

The General Register Office for Scotland – GRO(S) – is looking for feedback from researchers on what they want from the 2001 Census, and is hosting a series of roadshows to gather users together and find out what kind of products from the Census will be in demand. GRO(S) came to the University of Edinburgh on 13th May for its first roadshow. Those who did not attend can still give their feedback, the deadline for responses in this round being 11th June: there is plenty of reading material and a questionnaire on the Web at <http://www.open.gov.uk/gros/consult.htm>

The Scottish Parliament will decide what questions will be asked in the Census. Controversy surrounds the 'income' and 'religion' questions so they may not be included: the usefulness of such data must be balanced against public acceptance, with the credibility of the Census at stake. Plans include all kinds of improvements to the methods used in 1991, and there is much emphasis on electronic distribution methods (CD-ROM and the Internet).

The construction of the 'output areas' – the smallest geographic units for which counts are provided – is yet to be decided: if they are small (about 50 people), less detailed tables will be produced to protect confidentiality, compared with units of 100-125 people; and their boundaries could be based on homogeneous communities, physical dividers like roads and rivers, equal sizes, or continuity with 1991 areas.

If any of these questions matter to your research, be sure to fill in a questionnaire, or contact the Data Library (datalib@ed.ac.uk) with your concerns and we will pass them on to the GRO(S).

Robin Rice (EUCS)

Software News

Adobe software prices reduced

Adobe recently released new software prices for their Education Purchase Plan. There are substantial reductions in licence, manual and media prices for popular Adobe products such as FrameMaker. Other Adobe products (including Adobe Type Manager and Image Styler) have also been added to the education deal, and there are new versions of Acrobat, Premiere and Pagemill.

EUCS has full pricing information on its Web site (<http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/tsd/software/Special/adobe.shtml>), and details of the products themselves can be found on Adobe's Web site (<http://www.adobe.com/>).

Reduced price for Dreamweaver

Macromedia has just announced a reduction in the price of an academic licence for Dreamweaver version 2, their Web authoring package, from £49 to £29. The CD costs £35 plus VAT, and manuals are £49. Please send internal order forms to EUCS Purchasing, JCMB, The King's Buildings. (Note, though, that Dreamweaver is not supported by EUCS: we simply pass on this offer to individuals who wish to use it.)

SPSS 9.0 for Windows

EUCS now has the new version of SPSS for Windows 95/98/NT. This provides new and enhanced features across all the capabilities of the package, such as formatting output, organising views, graphing, and statistical procedures. A comprehensive list is available on the SPSS Web site at <http://www.spss.com/software/spss/spss90/details.htm>

Users currently paying the annual fee for SPSS under the University's site licence will receive a letter informing them how to get the upgrade. All enquires should be directed to EUCS Software Services (tel 503311, email EUCS.Software.Service@ed.ac.uk).

Charlotte Moon (EUCS)

Course Organisers' Forum: Support for Learning Technology

The Centre for Teaching, Learning and Assessment presents *The Fourth Annual Forum for Course Organisers: Support for the Use of Learning Technology within the University*, on Tuesday 8th June, from 2 to 4.30pm (registration and light lunch from 1pm), in the John McIntyre Centre, Pollock Halls of Residence.

The programme looks at ways of supporting course organisers in their use of learning technology, such as computer-based learning, assessment, video and audio. There will be presentations and demonstrations by Jeff Haywood (Director of MALTS), John MacColl (Director of SELLIC) and David Dewhurst (Director of Learning Technology, Faculty Group of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine).

An important component will be for the providers of such support to ascertain the current needs of course organisers so as to provide a better service for them.

The Forum is open to all staff interested in matters of teaching and course organisation within the University. There is more information on the Web at <http://www.tla.ed.ac.uk/> (under 'Seminars, Courses & Workshops'). For more details and registration, email Miesbeth.Knottenbelt@ed.ac.uk, by 2nd June if possible.

Miesbeth Knottenbelt (TLA)

IT training

Full details of the University's extensive range of IT courses are on the Web:

- EUCS courses at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/usd/iss/courses/>
- MIS Training Modules at <http://www.mis.ed.ac.uk/services/training/timetbla.htm>
- EPCC courses at <http://www.epcc.ed.ac.uk/epcc-tec/courses/timetable.html>

Editor

Web Corner

Although it has been widely advertised, you may have missed The National Maritime Museum's newly launched maritime information gateway, Port.

This is an catalogue of high-quality maritime resources, selected and described by subject specialists. Services and materials developed by the Museum's own Centre for Maritime Research are available, including research guides on subjects such as shipping company and passenger lists, the Navy, and World War Two papers held by the Museum. There are directories of HE courses, museum collections and booksellers, and pointers to online exhibitions and UK and international conferences, symposia and meetings.

This is a first class, highly-focused subject gateway. If your field of work involves anything at all to do with the maritime, take a look through the porthole at

<http://www.port.nmm.ac.uk/>

Clare Powne (EUL)

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Editor:
Frances Allen
Computing Services
Main Library, George Square
Edinburgh EH8 9LJ
Email: BITS@ed.ac.uk
Telephone: 0131 650 3345

Distribution queries:
Individuals receive *BITS* through their departmental office; departmental secretaries please notify changes in requirements to:

David Muxworthy
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Telephone: 0131 650 3305

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Contributions to *BITS* are welcomed from all readers.

Copy deadline for July *BITS*:
Wednesday 16th June