New dial-up service imminent

The new dial-up service into EdLAN will be phased into service from August. (The advantages of the new system were highlighted in the March issue of BITs.)

Existing users

If you use the existing dial-up service, and have not already registered for the new one, you must do so now using the on-line form at http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/nsd/dialreg.htm. You will be asked to enter your current username and password to authenticate yourself, and will also be asked for your email address so that we can inform you when the new service begins. This will be added to a new mailing list, edlandial@ed.ac.uk: this is a majordomo list, so you can remove yourself if you are no longer interested in receiving dialup service information (see the instructions at http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/fmd/unix/docs/mail/lists/majordomo-list-user.html). We will email you with your new password and instructions for changing your settings when the new service is available. (You need to use your old password if you want to access the existing dial-up system up until its closure at the end of September.)

New users

If you wish to become a dial-up user for the first time, you must fill in the standard Computing Services registration form. If you provide us with an email address, it will be added to the edlandial@ed.ac.uk list mentioned above. Otherwise you are advised to join that list when convenient so that you can be kept up to date with the dial-up service.

Timetable and more information

The start date for the new service is expected to be 1st August 2000 for general use; the existing system will run in parallel with the new service until the end of September 2000.

The new dialup number will be provided along with your new username and password.

Problems with this service should be reported to your EUCS Support Team or to the communications fault number (tel 504933).

Jim Leitch (EUCS)

DNA sequence analysis

As announced in the February issue of BITs, and in letters sent to individual users, the local DNA sequence service based on GCG – operated by Computing Services for over 15 years – is to close at the end of July.

Edinburgh researchers who haven’t already done so should now move their work to the National Service which would normally cost £100 per user per annum. There is further information at http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/Futures/

Andrew McKendrick, Helen Chisholm (EUCS)

Harmonising staff usernames

The latest discussions about the implementation of a consistent naming scheme for all University staff computing accounts, and about the new email system for the University, are reported in the ‘Future Developments’ section of EUCSinfo, at http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/Futures/

Keith Farvis (EUCS)
Library wins project funding

The Library is part of a project funded by the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) under the national programme ‘Developing the Distributed National Electronic Resource (DNER) for Learning and Teaching.’

Project ANGEL – "Authenticated Networked Guided Environment for Learning" – will develop a Web-based personalised portal through which students in Higher Education will seek, discover, access and use learning and information resources; and through which teaching staff will be able to direct structured collections of learning resources towards students, and then monitor and manage the learning experiences of individual students.

Edinburgh will develop the authentication component of the system, and will also trial the ANGEL software, which is designed to operate in conjunction with virtual learning environment products like WebCT. We will ensure that the software is compatible with the SCWEMS personalised student information system being developed in MALTS (see the January issue of BITs).

John MacColl (SELLIC)

Estates & Buildings successes

Members of the EBIS project team attended the 5th International ARCHIBUS/FM Users Conference in Boston in May, and received an award for "Best FM Integration". Liam McDowell from MIS and Lesley Weaver from E&B were nominated as Advisory Council Members of a new ARCHIBUS Special Interest Group for Education. (See http://www.archibus.com/2000Awards.htm)

The EBIS room-booking service

Alongside the online system for monitoring building faults mentioned in last month’s BITs, EBIS provides a comprehensive room-booking service on the Web. For details see http://www.ebis.estates.ed.ac.uk/bookings.htm.

Lesley Weaver (Estates & Buildings)

Learning Technology survey

JCALT – the JISC committee on awareness liaison and training – has commissioned a national audit of UK HE staff involved with learning technologies. Anyone with an interest in learning technology is invited to contribute to the Edinburgh response. A questionnaire plus notes are available as a PDF file at http://www.malts.ed.ac.uk/audit/section4.pdf

The questionnaire takes about 15 minutes to fill in; please return completed forms by 7th July for collation into a single institutional response.

Nora Mogey (MALTS)

Buying computer accessories

Datamart has pulled out of the Computer Accessories and Add-ons contract: please place any future business with any of the remaining four accessories suppliers: Alipa Computing, MicroWarehouse, Simply Computers and Westwood West. Full details are on the Computer Hardware pages at http://www.procare.ed.ac.uk/computer/ordering/add_ons.htm

George Reid (Procurement Office)

Access 2000 and Access 97 on the same computer

Access 2000 is the first version of Microsoft Access that lets you convert a database back to a previous version (i.e. from Access 2000 to Access 97). This works well in most cases, but there may be good reasons to have both Access 97 and Access 2000 available on the same computer. The scenario where Office 97 is already installed is the simplest and most common. Here, the crucial steps are to select the Custom Installation (not an upgrade), to install the new version into a different folder, and to select the option to keep earlier versions of Office. For further information, consult Technet article Q241141 (http://support.microsoft.com/support/kb/articles/Q241/1/41.asp) or contact the Database Help desk (email dbhd@ed.ac.uk).

Ed Dee (EUCS)

Web Corner

xrefer is a brand new reference search engine for quick and easy access to authoritative factual information. The sources are reference tools such as encyclopaedias, dictionaries, thesauri, books of quotations, and subject-specific resources from established, reputable publishers like Bloomsbury, Macmillan, OUP and Penguin.

xrefer can be searched directly from the electronic reference collection on Library Online, and is available at http://www.xrefer.com/.

Clare Powne (EUL)

Maintenance closures

The Graphics & Multimedia Resource Centre at The King’s Buildings will be closed for a week, probably in July, for the installation of air conditioning.

The six-monthly air conditioning maintenance in the EUCS machine room at JCMB will mean that all services (except networking) will be unavailable for much of the weekend 29-30 July.

For further news see the EUCSinfo alerts at http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/alerts/

Edinburgh Bits

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Contributions to BITs are welcomed from all readers.

Copy deadline for August BITs:
Monday 17th July