



The University of Edinburgh

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Video production: facilities at the Resource Centre

Video editing has become very popular in the Graphics & Multimedia Resource Centre since we installed a Media 100 system last year. Users have been bringing more and more sophisticated material to process – and have been winning prizes, and grants, with their productions.

Try it yourself

It takes only minutes to learn enough to edit simple movies. Many productions have been completed in no more than a couple of days' work. You can create:

- recordings on analogue or digital video tape,
- Quicktime movies,
- MPEG-1 files (suitable for CD-ROM, for instance),
- Real Video (suitable for use on Web sites),
- multimedia productions.

New

To keep up with the developing technologies, and to widen the range of work that we can handle, the Resource Centre is now equipped with:

- a DV (Digital Video) player/recorder;
- a multi-standard video cassette recorder to process and convert NTSC, SECAM and PAL video;
- a time-base corrector, for handling time-lapse recordings and “broken” recordings which are otherwise difficult to process.

The Resource Centre is in JCMB room 3901 at The King's Buildings, and is open to all University staff and students from 9:30am to 5:30pm during the working week (tel 505089, email graphics.support@ed.ac.uk).

John Wexler (EUCS)

New facilities in the Learning and Resource Centre

Two new services have recently been installed in the Learning and Resource Centre (LRC) in the Main Library, and are being refined for the start of the new session. The first is a Kurzweil 3000 text-in/voice-out system to help anyone who has difficulty reading conventional printed text or screen output such as Web pages. The system is straightforward to use, and the voice output can be manipulated in various ways to make it easier to listen to.

The second is a speech input system, based on IBM ViaVoice or Dragon Naturally Speaking. These need about half an hour's initial setting-up to adjust to your particular speech, but this only has to be done once as your profile can be stored for future use.

The LRC is operated by the Library and Computing Services, on the second floor of the Main Library in George Square, and is open when the Library is open. It offers self-help learning resources, with assistance available during office hours. Its Web page is at <http://www.asg.ed.ac.uk/lrc/>

As well as bringing together a collection of specialist IT facilities for people with particular requirements, for example to produce high-quality graphical output, or scan images and text, the Centre provides a selection of Open Learning material (for packages such as Photoshop and PageMaker, and programming languages such as C++ and Java), help with searching for bibliographic information on CD-ROM and the Internet, and support and advice to undergraduates through the Student Helpdesk.

David Findlay (EUCS)

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EUCS wins grants for new networking projects

Network security

George Howat, of Network Services, has won a project from JCAS, the JISC Committee for Authentication and Security, to look at Virtual Private Network (VPN) security issues. The project will examine secure access to service networks using the VPN model with encrypted tunnels and strong authentication, and the outcome for EdLAN might include protecting sensitive data against unauthorised access both from inside the network and from the Internet.

Regional Support Centre for Further Education

EUCS is part of a consortium which has won the contract for the new Regional Support Centre for Further Education, which will provide IT support for 25 colleges from the Borders to Shetland. This is another JISC initiative, in partnership with the Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC). EUCS Network Services Division will provide technical advice on specific aspects of connecting to SuperJANET via the various metropolitan area networks, and on general internal networking issues to make best use of that connectivity.

Scott Currie (EUCS)

Do you dial in to JANET?

The JANET National User Group (JNUG) is conducting a survey about how people access JANET by dialup, and to gather views on dialup and remote access. If you are interested in this, you are welcome to contribute: the questionnaire is on the JNUG Web site at <http://www.jnug.ac.uk/>

Your views will be taken into account in discussions on future services. Other JNUG pages have been updated recently, including the report on your views on advertising on JANET services.

Ian Campbell (JNUG)

Generating dynamic graphs with Cold Fusion

EUCS has for some time offered a free service to enable people to publish data from small to medium databases on the Web. This service is based on ColdFusion (CF), which uses a simple HTML-like language to specify the interface between the database and the Web.

We have recently enhanced this service with CFXGraphicsServer, to enable local CF developers to generate dynamic, server-side graphs and charts, providing instantaneous visual representations of their data to users on the Web.

Further, graphs and charts can be interactive, allowing users to drill-down through data, creating further graphs and charts to explore data of particular interest. Graphs and charts are generated in the standard Web formats (GIF, PNG and JPEG), and can be saved as graphics files for further use in static Web applications.

Details of the Cold Fusion Service, including the CFXGraphicsServer, are available at <http://webhelp.ucs.ed.ac.uk/services/cfservice/>

John Smith, Charlotte Moon (EUCS)

Office 98 patch for Macs

Microsoft has released a patch for Macintosh Office 98 to fix a bug in Word 98 (by which data could be corrupted when saving files with complex table formatting); and to add support for new file formats in PowerPoint 98 (enabling it to open files created by subsequent versions of PowerPoint for Windows and Mac). The update is a free 5.6 MB download from http://www.microsoft.com/macoffice/ProductInfo/98DL/word98_ppt98_update.htm

TidBits (Mac newsletter)

RealMedia service support for Quicktime and MP3

The EUCS Streaming Media Service enables University staff to transmit video and audio data over the Internet – for example to demonstrate the correct pronunciation of a Gaelic word, or to show archive film of rural Scottish life. This is a free service for staff who would like to use multimedia to support teaching and learning in the University, and it is fully described at <http://webhelp.ucs.ed.ac.uk/services/media/>

The streaming media service will shortly be enhanced with the addition of both QuickTime video and MPEG1 Layer 3 – popularly known as MP3 – audio to its RealNetworks RealMedia server, which already supports many other media formats. Over the coming months EUCS will be investigating the use of ‘multicast’ media streams over EdLAN, to permit the broadcasting of both live and scheduled events.

Enquiries about the service should be sent to stream-media@ed.ac.uk.

John Smith (EUCS)

Auto-replying to email

You have probably had the experience of sending someone an email message and receiving an automatically generated reply to say they are away. The following very brief details summarise how to do this:

If your email comes to **holyrood**, use the ‘vacation’ program: that is, type the command `vacation` and follow its instructions.

If you use Pegasus Mail, choose ‘Automatic Reply’ from the ‘Tools’ menu, type a message and tick the box ‘Enable automatic replies’.

If you use Eudora you need to use its ‘filter’ and ‘stationery’ features, and also keep your computer in constant touch with its mail server: if that server is **holyrood** it is better to use the vacation program on that.

If you belong to Mailbase mailing lists, send the message 'suspend mail all' to mailbase@mailbase.ac.uk.

Fuller details are given in the Note *Setting up email to tell people when you're away*.

Have a good holiday – and don't forget to restore everything when you get back!

Nick Stroud (EUCS)

Design and the Emerging E-commerce Environment

A conference in Edinburgh 14 - 15 November 2000

The term "e-commerce" is gaining currency with the burgeoning of the Internet as a medium for commercial transactions. Anyone with a credit card and a networked PC can browse on-line catalogues of books, computer games, clothing or airline schedules, place orders and bookings electronically, and receive the goods and services by post a few days later.

This extension of mail ordering shows the potential of e-commerce, and suggests its extrapolation into other areas of commerce and design practice. There are some obvious links between e-commerce and design: such systems have to be designed, as do the ubiquitous electronic devices we use to interact with them. There are also design implications for products, structures, architecture, the city and planning. What becomes of the commercial centre, the home, the school and the suburb in the light of e-commerce?

This one-and-a-half day conference is being organised by the Department of Architecture at the University and EUROPIA Productions, of Paris. The field is new, and the conference will canvas a broad range of topics. Details are at <http://www.caad.ed.ac.uk/events/e-commerce/>

Richard Coyne (Architecture)

CADE2001 Digital Creativity crosses the Border

Computers in Art and Design Education Conference, Glasgow 9 - 12 April 2001

The CADE Conference takes place every two years and has become one of the world's principal forums for digital creativity in Art and Design Education. For the first time, this UK based conference comes to Scotland.

CADE2001 invites proposals for contributions of all kinds. Potential contributors should submit a written description of their proposal, or an abstract, by 31st October 2000.

Further details are given at <http://www.gsa.ac.uk/cade/>

John McKay (Glasgow School of Art)

Trial access to newspapers

CHEST has arranged a free trial for evaluation of the NISS Clover Service, which provides online access to indexes of newspaper and magazine articles supplied by Clover Publications. To gain access:

1. go to <http://clover.niss.ac.uk/>
2. click on the index you want to search (Newspaper or Information)
3. enter the username
ch_clovertrial
4. use the password bothpd33
5. perform your search

Access is totally free for any library and any person, and continues until the end of August.

Annette Lafford (NISS)

Train your students to exploit the Internet

The Resource Discovery Network (RDN)'s Virtual Training Suite is a JISC national initiative to offer free online training in Internet information skills to UK HE and FE. It comprises a set of

'teach yourself' tutorials on the Web, each of which offers Internet skills training in a particular academic subject. The tutorials offer 'any time, any place' training, take less than an hour each to complete, and include quizzes and interactive exercises to lighten the learning experience.

The tutorials are free for members of the UK education communities. They can be used by individuals for learning, or by lecturers, librarians and IT trainers wanting to teach Internet skills to their students. The RDN Virtual Training Suite is at <http://www.vts.rdn.ac.uk/>

Emma Place (RDN)

Guides for digitising

The Digital Library Federation (DLF) and Research Libraries Group (RLG) have issued Guides to Quality in Visual Resource Imaging, available at <http://www.rlg.ac.uk/visguides/>

This new Web-based reference aims to help anyone who is using digital conversion to provide greater access to visual resources and to help preserve original materials, filling a gap in the literature for serious digital imaging projects. The guides – on project planning, scanner selection, imaging systems, digital master quality, and master storage – share the experience and knowledge of leaders in this field.

Nancy Elkington (RLG)

DRH2000: Digital Resources for the Humanities

The DRH conferences bring together scholars, librarians, archivists, curators, information scientists and computing professionals to share ideas and information about the creation, exploitation, management and preservation of digital resources in the arts and humanities. DRH2000 takes place at the University of Sheffield, 10-13 September. Details are at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/~drh2000/>

DRH2000

Replacement of BIDS ISI by MIMAS Web of Science

The well-known BIDS ISI service, which ran from February 1991, closed on 31st July. Over the last decade it has been used extensively for both research and teaching in the UK HE sector where it has been very popular due to its currency, citation search facilities, multi-disciplinary nature, and the excellent response by BIDS to users' wishes with regard to the interface.

Following lengthy negotiations and consultation, the ISI databases from BIDS have been replaced by ISI's own Web of Science (WoS) search interface. The new UK WoS service is operated by MIMAS at the University of Manchester, and is now available at <http://wos.mimas.ac.uk/>

This supports the same ATHENS usernames and passwords as the BIDS ISI service, but there are several important differences between the services (see <http://wos.mimas.ac.uk/documentation.html#bids>).

BIDS itself is not closing, and will continue to provide access to a number of other databases.

Richard Battersby, David Carroll (EUL)

eLib evaluation

An evaluation of Phases 1 and 2 of the Electronic Libraries (eLib) Programme is available in PDF format from the eLib Web site at <http://www.ukoln.ac.uk/services/elib/>

The report examines the operation of the Programme, achievements, overall impacts and value, and finally makes recommendations for future activities based on the lessons learned. A summary document is also available.

eLib grew out of the 1993 Follett report to explore the use of IT in libraries, and its projects include the 'Hybrid Library', attempts to scale digital library resources into production services, and digital preservation.

Elizabeth Graham (eLib)

Main Library closure in August

There will be no public access to the Main Library during the week 7th-11th August, while the building's air-conditioning system receives its annual maintenance. There will therefore be no access to Computing Services Reception, the three Support teams based in the Library, the Learning and Resource Centre on the second floor, or the Data Library offices. The Support teams will however be offering a limited service via email and telephone.

David Muxworthy (EUCS)

Survey on data use in coursework

The Data Library and project partners are conducting a national survey over the summer to find out how numeric datasets are used for learning and teaching in UK Higher Education.

As part of the JISC-funded project described in June's *BITs*, the survey will provide empirical evidence about the nature and extent of data use in the classroom and student projects, and obstacles encountered in university teachers' efforts to integrate data use into coursework. Results should help the project team form recommendations for both national services and local support arrangements in universities in the final project report.

A representative sample of Higher Education departments in the Social Sciences and beyond will be targeted via their department heads.

Respondents will have the option of completing the questionnaire on paper or on the Web. If you are selected as a survey respondent, please make sure you complete your questionnaire!

More information about the project is on the Web at <http://datalib.ed.ac.uk/projects/datateach.html>

Robin Rice (EUCS)

EUCS courses

The schedule of computing courses offered by EUCS from September to February is now on the Web, at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/usd/iss/courses/>

It will also appear in the Personnel Department's *Staff Development Opportunities* booklet to be distributed to all staff shortly, and in the EUCS catalogue *Courses in Computing*, which will be available in September.

Tracey Athay (EUCS)

EMWAC courses

The University of Edinburgh's EMWAC project is part of the Authorised Academic Training Partner scheme, delivering Microsoft-certified training in a variety of programmes to staff in HE/ FE institutions. Microsoft has recently awarded EMWAC the distinction of becoming an Academic Professional Development Centre, one of 12 in the UK and three in Scotland.

The full course range and current schedule can be viewed at <http://www.emwac.ed.ac.uk/>

Vanessa Ranaldi (EUCS)

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Contributions to *BITs* are welcomed from all readers.

*Copy deadline for September BITs:
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