



The University of Edinburgh

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Digital Preservation

The Special Collections department in the University Library has initiated a **Digital Preservation project** to produce a comprehensive strategy for the permanent preservation of the University's core electronic publications.

The growth of digital information in UK Higher Education far outweighs the precautions taken to ensure continued access to the data in years to come, with rapidly changing technological infrastructures. The Project's research officer, Najla Semple, will investigate some key areas of digital preservation, including preservation methods, metadata, standards, and legal and evidential issues. The project will focus initially on core electronic publications such as the University Calendar and Prospectus, striving to take a holistic approach to their digital life cycles, and involving all departments and stakeholders.

It is vital that any organisation or department that produces electronic information has a strategic preservation plan to ensure the physical reliability, continued usability, and intellectual integrity of electronic files.

It is widely accepted that technological obsolescence of hardware and software represents a far greater threat to the preservation of digital archives than do the physical mechanics of media storage. Currently, there are two radically different strategies for protecting the digital object from this obsolescence: migrating digital data to a new system, and emulation—preserving the original software environment on which the data were originally produced. Both are risky procedures and have to be addressed, as they put the authenticity and integrity of the object at risk.

The inclusion of metadata—summary information, or 'data about data'—is critical in describing, among other things, the content and administrative information of any digital resource, and the project will aim to create an appropriate schema for digital publications to enable easy retrieval and management.

Very few UK Higher Education institutions have begun to tackle the problem of digital preservation. It is important for Edinburgh to play a role within the framework of emerging national strategies, and to address this new digital dilemma.

If you have any questions or comments on this project I would like to hear from you (email najla.semple@ed.ac.uk, tel 511422).

Najla Semple (EUL)

UKBORDERS and the Census

As part of their plans for making April 2001's Population Census available for analysis by the research and education community, the ESRC Research Resources Board and the JISC Committee for Electronic Information have recommended renewal of funding of UKBORDERS for five years to support Census-related geographic data.

Information about UKBORDERS, an online retrieval system containing a very wide range of digitised boundaries suitable for thematic mapping, is at <http://edina.ac.uk/ukborders/>

Staff and students are welcome to contact the Data Library for support and to register for this and other census datasets: see <http://datalib.ed.ac.uk/EUDL/UKBORDERS.html>

Peter Burnhill (EUCS)

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Cataloguing the World Wide Web at the University of Edinburgh

The Science & Engineering Library, Learning & Information Centre Project—SELLIC—has been working on the description of Web resources to aid resource discovery. By cataloguing Web sites in the same way as we have traditionally catalogued printed books and journals, we create records for these resources which then exist side by side with records for printed resources in the library catalogue.

The aim is to help users by highlighting quality sites of relevance to the academic community, and providing access to them by ensuring that they are described using quality 'metadata' (author, title, subject and other relevant fields), with standardised subject heading information. Searchers should then be able to retrieve useful and relevant search results made up of a variety of different media.

In order to create these metadata records for the University Library catalogue, SELLIC has become involved in the Cooperative Online Resource Catalogue (CORC) project, run by the Online Computer Library Center based in the US. CORC follows a cooperative cataloguing model familiar to libraries, and provides the Library with a repository of quality metadata records for Web sites. In addition, CORC helps with the creation of new records by harvesting metadata from the HTML source of Web sites, and uses this metadata to start the record creation process for the cataloguer automatically. CORC also provides a link-checking facility to help maintain the URLs in imported records.

So far SELLIC has concentrated on records for resources such as Science & Engineering departmental Web sites, electronic abstracting and indexing databases and electronic journals. We now invite academic staff to

recommend Web sites for addition to the Library catalogue in the same way as they recommend printed material for Library shelves. The University's Web Editor has constructed a 'button tool' which can be dragged on to the personal toolbar of your browser. When you are viewing a site of interest, you can then request that it be included in the Library catalogue with a single click of the button: this will automatically send the information to the Metadata Editor who will then catalogue the requested resources.

A Web form and details of how to add the button tool to your personal toolbar are available on the SELLIC (<http://www.sellic.ed.ac.uk/>), Library Online (<http://www.lib.ed.ac.uk/>) and Science & Engineering Web pages (<http://www.scieng.ed.ac.uk/>).

For further information, contact the SELLIC Metadata Editor, Zena Mulligan (email zena.mulligan@ed.ac.uk).

Zena Mulligan (SELLIC)

Behind the Headlines

A link has been made from the SCRAN Links Directory to "Behind the Headlines", a new service from the Resource Discovery Network (RDN).

The service, which is free at the point of use, offers background information on the latest news stories via pre-set searches of high-quality Internet resources. All of the RDN's 30,000 resources are selected, catalogued and described by subject and information professionals in over 60 UK education institutions and related organisations.

"Behind the Headlines" can be found in the SCRAN Links Directory, either by searching on (for example) "headlines" or by browsing under "Newspapers".

Bruce Royan (SCRAN)

New electronic resources

Edinburgh University Library has introduced the following electronic resources, all of which can be accessed from the database list on Library Online (<http://www.lib.ed.ac.uk/lib/resources/databases/findlita.shtml>).

Global Market Information Database

GMID provides business intelligence on countries, markets and companies. It covers 200 countries, 52 in detail, and includes detailed market size data, country marketing parameters, marketing forecast data, consumer lifestyles, brand and company information, business information sources, marketing profiles and full text market analysis.

GMID is available on Edinburgh University computers only.

PCI Full Text

This is an online periodical archive for the humanities and social sciences which makes the full image of periodical articles, from 1770 to 1995, available in digital form. PCI Full Text currently contains the full image for 100 journal runs, providing access to two million article pages.

PCI Full Text is available on Edinburgh University computers only.

Digital Dissertations

This replaces Dissertation Abstracts on CD-ROM, and indexes doctoral dissertations and masters theses from 1861 to date, originally covering North America only but now representing more than 500 universities throughout the world. Abstracts are included from 1980 onwards. This Web-based version additionally provides 24-page previews of many dissertations.

Note that the University does not subscribe to the full text content of this database: users will have to pay to retrieve complete electronic copies of dissertations, or apply through the Inter-Library Loan system in the usual way.

Simon Bains (EUL)

Athens: important announcement

The Athens access management system provides usernames and passwords for access to a number of well-used bibliographic and full-text electronic resources (e.g. BIDS, BIOMED, Emerald, FirstSearch, JSTOR, Web of Science).

In order to ensure that we comply with the licence regulations of our data providers it is necessary to introduce a change to Athens account management. **In future all Athens accounts will be set to expire every 12 months.**

This will ensure that accounts of users no longer at the University are removed systematically on a regular basis.

Students will be required to register for a new account unless there is a very good reason to renew an existing one. Staff will need to renew their accounts using a form on Library Online (see <http://www.lib.ed.ac.uk/lib/resources/databases/athens.shtml>) or by sending a request to the Athens Administrator (athenshelp@ed.ac.uk).

From 2nd July 2001 it will be possible to register for a username and password that will be valid until October 2002. Staff will also be able to renew existing accounts from this date.

On 31st October:

- all student accounts created before 2nd July will cease to function
- all non-renewed staff accounts will cease to function.

Registration is a simple process, and should only take a few minutes to complete. However, it is necessary to be on a University machine to register. Full information is available at <http://www.lib.ed.ac.uk/lib/resources/databases/athens.shtml> (select 'Create a username and password').

Off-campus users, and anyone else requiring assistance, should contact athenshelp@ed.ac.uk.

Simon Bains (EUL)

MIS breaking new ground

On 11th June 2001, the University's Personnel and Payroll system became the first major corporate application to move to full Web-based delivery with its upgrade to Oracle HRMS 11i.

In addition, we became the first user of the Oracle Human Resources Management System (HRMS) Application in the UK to upgrade from a previous version. As an early adopter, there were some difficult times over the last year, but happily all the effort by the Project Team, the user departments and MIS has now paid off.

The new application is functionally similar to the previous version, with additional options such as "Self Service Human Resources (HR)" that enhance its usability. Where it differs is in its underlying technologies and delivery. All components now reside on a database or application server, with the client-side presenting only the user interface component: no application software is run from the client. The application server components comprise an Oracle-modified version of Apache, along with Oracle's own Forms and Reports server applications.

The previous version was client-server based, so restricted access to MIS desktop users. With the 11i version of the application and its Web-enabled delivery, anyone with a suitable client machine (Windows 95, 98, 2000, NT 4.0 or Mac OS 9.0.4, running Internet Explorer 5+ or Netscape Navigator 4.74+) could have access within the Edinburgh University domain.

At present access is only down to faculty Group level as before, however Planning Unit and Departmental access could now be achieved. A project will be initiated shortly that will look at how best to exploit the Self Service HR component of the HRMS Application throughout the University.

David Smyth (MIS)

MIS training schedule 2001-2

Management Information Services now delivers and supports desktop services based on Windows 2000 Professional, MS Office Pro 2000, Front Page 2000, Internet Explorer 5.5 and Business Objects InfoView for database reporting.

Training courses are normally held in the MIS Training Room in Old College.

The current timetable is at <http://www.mis.ed.ac.uk/services/training/>

Pat Jackson (MIS)

Virus hoaxes

As if computer viruses weren't bad enough, further disruption can be caused by people sending hoax email messages warning about a virus where none exists. Recently, one such message scared people into deleting a legitimate part of their computer system... There are *hundreds* of different hoax viruses, so you are almost certain to hear about one from time to time.

General advice about any emailed virus warning is that you should ignore it unless it comes from a reputable source—such as EUCS, your Departmental Computing Officer, or a company which makes anti-virus products. Companies such as Microsoft and IBM *do not* issue virus alerts, so any message claiming to come from them must be a hoax.

There is more information about hoaxes, including how to install VirusScan, at <http://mft.ucs.ed.ac.uk/pcvirus/pcvirus.htm>

Garry Scobie (EUCS)

New worm virus on Macs

Mac users don't see many viruses, but should not be complacent—as shown by the appearance of a new AppleScript worm offering "Simpsons Episodes". This uses Outlook Express or Entourage to send a copy of itself to everyone in the user's address book, and is a useful reminder to keep your copy of Virex up-to-date (see URL in previous article).

Nick Stroud (EUCS)

Summer vacation services

The Library is operating its vacation opening hours from now until 7th October. The Main Library is therefore only open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, and to 9pm on Wednesdays, except for the week 6th to 10th August, when it is completely closed for the annual maintenance of its air conditioning system. During this closure week there will be no access to Computing Services Reception, the three Support teams based in the Library, the Learning and Resource Centre or the Data Library offices; the Support teams will however offer a limited service via email and telephone.

Every computing lab is likely to be closed for at least two days some time during the vacation, in the annual upgrade programme. The Macs on level 4 of the Main Library are to be replaced altogether, so this Mac lab will be closed from 25th June for several weeks.

David Muxworthy (EUCS)

Wireless networking study

The ability to connect to networks via wireless technologies has been available for some years. The introduction of the 802.11b standard, and the potential to run at access speeds of up to 11Mbps, has stimulated user interest to the extent that there are already some installations within the University. Unlike conventional networks, wireless networks are not constrained by walls, and therefore introduce several new, different issues which need exploration.

As part of the C&IT Committee's initiative to improve consultation across the University, a Wireless Networking working party has been created to identify, discuss and make recommendations on deployment issues on behalf of the University. To assist in receiving and disseminating information, a new Web site (confined to the ed.ac.uk domain) contains all the current information on the remit of

the group, its membership, all papers and reports; it is at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/nsd/wwp/>

All interested parties within the University are welcome to provide information for the group (email wwp@lists.ed.ac.uk).

George Howat (EUCS)

Changes to videoconferencing

The videoconferencing studio in the Faculty of Education, Cramond Campus, has closed, with the imminent closure of Cramond Campus itself. The studio at Holyrood remains, offering an ISDN service.

The studios in Appleton Tower and the James Clerk Maxwell Building will continue with their existing service. However, from 30th June 2002 the videoconferencing equipment (Cellstack) which connects these venues to the network will have reached the end of its intended life. It is almost certain that the core network on which the Scottish MANs Videoconferencing Network (SMVCN) is based will move to different technology, so the current SMVCN service will close on 30th June 2002.

Bookings for the current SMVCN service will be taken as normal up to and including 30th June 2002; those after that date will only be taken on the basis that they cannot be guaranteed.

The SMVCN Futures Group, with representatives throughout Scotland, is studying the replacement scenarios, and will make its recommendations in September 2001. We will distribute further information on the replacement service as it becomes available.

Details on videoconferencing at the University of Edinburgh are at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/nsd/vidconfuo.html>

If you have any queries, please email jvcs@ed.ac.uk.

John S. Martin (EUCS)

Late News: KETF award

The University has been awarded £437,652 from the SHEFC Knowledge Economy Task Force fund, to support teaching, learning, student support and business processes. Further details will appear in a future issue of *BITS*.

Sara Welham (Secretary's Office)

SCRAN wins Silver Muse award

The Scottish Cultural Resources Access Network has won the 2001 Silver Muse Award of the American Association of Museums, "in recognition of the Highest Standards of Excellence in the use of Media and Technology for a Collections Database or Research Resource".

While the scope of the Muse Awards is international, SCRAN is the only Silver Muse winner in any category from outside North America.

Muse Awards: <http://www.mediaandtechnology.org/muse/>

SCRAN: <http://www.scran.ac.uk/>

Bruce Royan (SCRAN)



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Contributions to *BITS* are welcomed from all readers.

Copy deadline for August BITS:

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