

Do you need Internet training materials?

The Netskills team, based in Newcastle University, has been producing Internet training materials for use in UK Higher Education for many years. Computing Services and MALTS have bought a Netskills Gold Scheme licence for the University of Edinburgh, allowing members of the University to use all of the Netskills training materials. There are currently 50 training modules, covering the following topics:

- Introducing the Internet
- Searching and Information skills
- Communication and Collaboration
- Learning and Teaching
- Developing a Web Site
- Web Technologies (e.g. Javascript, databases, Java applets)

These training modules consist of a presentation (with speaker's notes) and a set of hands-on exercises in Microsoft Word and Powerpoint files which you can download from the Netskills site. Most of this material is designed to be used for face-to-face training, but there are also five self-paced training modules.

Further details, including how to get access, are given at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/usd/iss/ol/comms/netskills.html>

Gill Chetty (EUCS)

ResNet – getting Edinburgh students online

The student residences network, ResNet, has been in operation for a term, and has become a valued route into EdLAN, the University network, for many students, as well as being an important asset in the University's accommodation.

This residential network was delivered by the private contractor Pell Frischmann Multinet (PFML), and is available in Pollock Halls and 30 other University sites, in a total of 4,300 study bedrooms. All designated ResNet properties have a data and telephone port in each study bedroom, and there is a PFML Helpdesk at Pollock Halls.

The ResNet Telephony service provides free internal calls across all 4,300 ResNet locations. External calls paid for by prepaid or rechargeable telephone cards are charged at standard BT rates.

The ResNet data service offers Internet access (subject to security controls and restrictions), and access to student email and filespace. Over 1,800 ports have been activated already, with 1,600 users connecting to services. Accommodation Services has recruited a team of students as 'ResNet Assistants' to help people get on to the network.

EUCS has provided a substantial number of cascaded PCs and Macs for distribution by Accommodation Services. After consultation with EUSA, these are being made available to overseas students and students who are in receipt of the full student loan.

ResNet is described online at <http://www.accom.ed.ac.uk/ResNet/>

Sandy Agnew

(Accommodation Services)

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eProcurement

Karen Bowman, Director of Procurement, has recently participated in demonstrations of e-tendering solutions, including the UK government's model with the HE eProcurement 'guru' Julie Craig and selected colleagues from other institutions, as part of the HE sector's evolving eProcurement strategy. Edinburgh may be part of the pilot projects under consideration early in the new year.

E-tendering is designed for the rapid and secure transmission of sealed bids for high value equipment and services in the international market, and has evolved in the light of legislative changes on digital signatures and proposed changes on EU procurement law and timescales.

A Web-based tool to transmit and manage European Union procurement (OJEC) notices, to replace faxes, is being implemented in the Procurement Office shortly. For more information contact

Karen.Bowman@ed.ac.uk.

Karen Bowman (Procurement)

The Government's e-vision

The second UK Online annual report was published by Secretary of State for Trade & Industry Patricia Hewitt, and e-Envoy Andrew Pinder, in December. It sets out the progress that has been made in meeting the Government's objectives to be at the forefront of the knowledge economy, and provides an updated UK online strategy to further the 'e-agenda'.

The full report is available at http://www.e-envoy.gov.uk/ukonline/champions/arep_menu.htm

Nick Stroud (EUCS)

Making sense of the Internet for Social Scientists

SOSIG Roadshow

25th January 2002, 10am-1pm



Whatever your plans are for Burns Night there's still time to book a place on the SOSIG roadshow in the Wolfson Suite training room, Main Library.

The half-day event 'Making Sense of the Internet for Social Scientists' combines presentations, demonstrations and hands-on sessions to showcase key features and content of the Social Science Information Gateway—SOSIG. Participants will learn about developing search strategies, and pointers to other useful resources including the Virtual Training Suite and Regard—a searchable database of ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council) funded research awards and associated outputs.

Participants will receive a handbook with background information, hints & tips, and exercises, for future reference.

SOSIG is one of the five subject-based 'hubs' of the UK Resource Discovery Network, a freely available service which provides high-quality Internet sources for academics. SOSIG, based at the Institute for Learning and Research Technology at Bristol University, covers the social sciences, business and law: see <http://www.sosig.ac.uk/>

To book a place please contact Edinburgh University Data Library (email datalib@ed.ac.uk).

Stuart Macdonald (EUCS)

Generating online reading lists with DRLT

The 'Dynamic Reading List Tool'—DRLT—offered by SELLIC allows you to create an on-line reading list of items in the Edinburgh Library catalogue. You can search the catalogue for items you want to add to your reading list, and sort them in any order you want, add comments for each individual entry, etc. Better still, each item in the reading list links directly to the Library catalogue, so any user of your reading list can, with one click, check the details and status of each of the items in the list.

For further information on DRLT, including detailed usage instructions and a working example of a generated reading list, visit http://www.sellic.ed.ac.uk/resource/tools/drlt/drlt_instr.shtml

Angel de Vicente (SELLIC)

BCS meeting: General Register Office

January's meeting of the local branch of the British Computer Society is about staff and business developments at The General Register Office.

The General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) has twice won the BCS award for professional development for IT staff. Arlene Chalmers from GROS will explain their methods in a talk at 6.30pm on 16th January at the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, 36 York Place.

Dave Brownlee, IT Manager at GROS, will then explain how C&IT is changing the way such organisations operate. This will be of particular interest to genealogists, archivists, or anyone with an interest in the accessibility of such records.

The meeting is open to all.

David Muxworthy (EUCS)

Videoconferencing service

The present ATM-based Scottish MANs Videoconferencing Network (SMVCN) is likely to close on 30th June 2002, and plans are now being made for its successor.

The SMVCN Futures Group, convened by UKERNA, has recommended the replacement of the existing ATM service with an IP solution based on the H.323 protocol. On 6th November 2001 UKERNA hosted an event in London entitled 'JANET Video Services – the Future' which discussed this technology. This event is now available to view as a streamed presentation at http://www.ja.net/conferences/video_2001/prog.html

John S. Martin (EUCS)



Global computing success

The Great Internet Mersenne Prime Search is another project to use the spare time on countless computers to perform massive computations (see last month's BITs), and has just discovered the largest prime number yet. The number, expressed as 213,466,917-1, contains 4,053,946 digits and took 13,000 years of computer time to locate and three weeks to verify. There is a link to 'GIMPS' from the distributed computing page at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/ucsinfo/distrib.html>

Nick Stroud (EUCS)

Information Environment Development Strategy

The draft IT development strategy for 2001-2005 is now available from JISC—the Joint Information Systems Committee which oversees the development of C&IT infrastructure for UK academic institutions.

Access to high-quality online information is clearly essential to everyone in education, whether students, teachers, or researchers. The development of a coherent information environment is an important means of making users confident about the quality of the information they find, to maximise the value of the Internet.

A copy of this document is now available on the JISC Web site at <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/dner/development/IEstrategy.html>

Comments are welcome, to information.environment@kcl.ac.uk.

Catherine Grout (DNER)

Workshop on the EU Copyright Directive

London, 1st February

The EU Copyright Directive is now in the final, crucial stage of transposition into the national copyright legislation of EU member states and central and eastern candidate countries. This is the last opportunity to influence governments and to discuss progress with European colleagues. This workshop will provide an update on the current situation and an opportunity to discuss implementation with rightholder representatives. It is aimed at Librarians, information professionals, and representatives from Higher Education, archives and museums.

The workshop programme is available at <http://www.eblida.org/conferences/copyright/copyright.htm>

Teresa Hackett (EBLIDA)

Online training material for SPSS 10

Computing Services has bought a site licence for SPSS 10 training materials produced by the SPSS company itself. These are mostly PDF documents which can be copied from the Web by anyone in the Edinburgh domain ('ed.ac.uk'). There is a link to the documents on the EUCS statistics page at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/usd/stats/>

This material is primarily for use in courses, so is probably not suitable for someone who is looking to learn SPSS from scratch. It is more likely to be useful if you have been on an SPSS course (such as the range provided by EUCS), and want to remind yourself of what you have already learned or explore other aspects of the package. There are sections on the specialist SPSS modules and a variety of analyses (including data mining) not covered by our local courses.

A CD-ROM containing the complete set of the material can be obtained from the EUCS software support team (tel 503311, email EUCS.software.service@ed.ac.uk).

Frances Provan (EUCS)

Academic transparency review

The Transparency Review is an exercise run through the Finance Department to collect retrospective information on how academic staff spend their working hours. To enable collection of this data, MIS was commissioned to deliver a system to cover the initial data gathering exercise in 2000/2001.



continued overleaf...

...Transparency review, continued

Due to changing requirements, including the spread of the data collection over a number of years for different sections of the academic community, a new system has been developed for the 2001/2002 period. This will hopefully run through to 2005/2006, when all academic areas should have been covered.

The current system is a Web-based application, developed using the Oracle 8iAS technology product set, and was released at the beginning of December. Further information about the project can be found at <http://www.finance.ed.ac.uk/general/research/transparency.html>

David Smyth (MIS)

Sparkling new Resource Centre

The Graphics and Multimedia Resource Centre (GMRC) at The King's Buildings is expanding, and getting a complete overhaul. It has taken over room 2901, and the full range of GMRC services is now available there.

Room 3901 will close on 4th February and be completely refurbished, a process which will take up to three weeks. When it reopens, the GMRC will continue to operate in the two rooms, providing a significant increase in the range and capacity of its facilities in a more comfortable environment. The new arrivals will include a second video editing suite, since the first Media 100 system has been so popular, and a six-colour printer.

All GMRC hardware and software is available to staff and students, free of charge, for DIY use, supported with basic training, help and consultancy. Consumables are charged for at cost. For details see <http://www.graphics.ed.ac.uk/gmrc/>

John Wexler (EUCS)



SCRAN licensed to every school in Scotland

The Scottish Executive has decided to pay for every publicly-funded school in the country to have fully licensed access to SCRAN—the Scottish Cultural Resources Access Network. School pupils throughout Scotland will thus have access to the vast online database relating to Scotland's culture and history.

This will be part of the National Grid for Learning, funded by the Scottish Executive Education Department. SCRAN was founded by the National Museums of Scotland, the Scottish Museums Council and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland to produce a digital monument of Scotland's culture. It is at <http://www.scran.ac.uk/>

Bruce Royan (SCRAN)

EDINA moves into Further Education

EDINA—Edinburgh Data and Information Access—is a JISC-funded national datacentre which provides the UK tertiary education and research communities with networked access to a library of data resources. EDINA is based in the University's Data Library, and has recently opened an office in St Helens College in Merseyside, through which it is working to enhance services for the post-16 sector. The two EDINA staff now based there are Moira Massey (Learning and Teaching Projects Coordinator) and Debbie Kent (Learning and Teaching Projects Officer).

FE teachers and programme leaders do not have time to view a JISC service, learn its features, review suitable curricula and syllabi, and match its use against learning objectives. I am therefore working with staff at St Helens College and the NW Regional Support Centre, looking at Further Education curricula and syllabi and working out where Digimap and other EDINA services fit in to them.

For further information about the work that EDINA is doing in FE, please contact me (email Moira.Massey@ed.ac.uk).

Moira Massey (EDINA)

Christmas vacation services

The University reopens after the Christmas vacation at 9am on Thursday 3rd January 2002. All EUCS services—including open-access computing labs, central facility cover, telephone operators, Receptions, User Support and Resource Centres—will be open again from that date.

David Muxworthy (EUCS)

Edinburgh BITS

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