



## Microsoft Select Scheme and upgrades

If you think you will need to upgrade your Microsoft software in the next 16 months, you should consider buying Upgrade Advantage (UA) or Software Assurance (SA) *now*, as these options will not be available after the end of July.

Upgrade Advantage can be bought for any version of a package, while Software Assurance can only be bought if you already have the current version. Both products cover you for any versions brought out by Microsoft before 31st October 2003.

After 31st July, Upgrade Advantage will not be available at all, and Software Assurance will only be available with a new copy. The only way to upgrade if you don't have UA or SA will be to buy a new copy.

Please send any orders for UA or SA to EUCS Purchasing, JCMB, The King's Buildings, by 31st July at the latest. For more information and pricing, see the Microsoft Select Scheme Web pages ([http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/tsd/software/Special/msoft\\_menu.shtml](http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/tsd/software/Special/msoft_menu.shtml)), or contact [C.Moon@ed.ac.uk](mailto:C.Moon@ed.ac.uk).

*Charlotte Moon (EUCS)*

## Summer vacation

The summer vacation continues until 6th October. EUCS will maintain normal service hours throughout the vacation with the exception of the Autumn Holiday in September. Most Library sites reduce their opening times over the summer, so computing labs and resource centres in libraries will not be available in the evening or at weekends. The Main Library hours are 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday (to 9pm on Wednesdays).

*David Muxworthy (EUCS)*

## Tremors on the Internet

You may have seen in the press recently that the two suppliers of the JANET transatlantic links, Teleglobe and KPNQwest, have gone into administration. UKERNA—the United Kingdom Education & Research Networking Association which provides our academic networks—has had to establish interim alternative links to the US while seeking a new provider. You can see the history and keep up to date with progress at <http://www.ukerna.ac.uk/awareness/teleglobe.html>

This is symptomatic of the state of telecommunications companies these days. While the University network is largely self-provided, we rely on Worldcom for JANET itself (and they are 're-financing'), and on Thus for EaStMAN, which links some University locations such as New College, the Bush and the Western General. There is no suggestion that there is any threat to these services.

*Scott Currie (EUCS)*

## CD danger

We warned in *BITs* last September that cracked CDs might disintegrate in certain high-speed CD drives. Last month a *BITs* reader in Milton Keynes contacted us with the following story: "We had a disk explode earlier today, and eject a sizeable chunk across the office, ricocheting off a PC on a desk, and impacting an office dividing partition. To say we were startled is a slight understatement! It made 'one helluva bang'!!"

You can see what happened to the CD at <http://www.procure.ed.ac.uk/computer/ordering/new.htm>

**Please be vigilant and check ALL CD media before use.**

*George Reid (Procurement)*

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## eProcurement: update

The new Finance and Procurement Systems Steering Group has met for the first time, convened by Ian Mowat (the University Librarian), and has approved the draft eProcurement Strategy. This draft has also been approved by the Procurement Advisory Panel and the Management Information Committee, and will shortly be published for wide consultation and comment on the Procurement Office Web site, at <http://www.procure.ed.ac.uk/procure/guidance.htm>

The targets for the eProcurement strategy are that, by the end of Financial Year 2004/2005:

- 80% of purchase orders will be electronic
- 80% of departments will be using eProcurement
- at least 50% of invoices will be electronic

Details will be provided in the next edition of the *University Bulletin*.

*Karen Bowman (Procurement)*

## DRH 2002: Digital Resources for the Humanities

**University of Edinburgh**  
**8–11 September, 2002**

This conference is the major forum for all those involved in and affected by the digitization of our cultural heritage. It attracts scholars, teachers, publishers and broadcasters, librarians, curators and archivists, and computer and information specialists, and provides an opportunity to consider the latest ideas in the creation and use of digital resources in all aspects of work in the humanities. The programme includes academic papers, panel discussions and poster displays.

For full information and the booking form, visit <http://www.drh2002.lib.ed.ac.uk/>

*Frances Abercromby (EUL)*

## Courses in computing

EUCS organises a wide range of computing courses, primarily for staff and postgraduates, and we are keen to know if these match what people want. Please let me know ([John.Murison@ed.ac.uk](mailto:John.Murison@ed.ac.uk)) what you think of the courses we run, and what new topics you would like to see covered.

*John Murison (EUCS)*

## Desktop power

On 8th June, the University's Folding@Home protein research team passed a significant milestone: after only nine months we have achieved the equivalent of four years of processing on a standard PC. Our team's work is helping to investigate diseases such as Alzheimers, simply by running protein analysis software when their PCs aren't doing anything else. I thank all those involved, and hope that the team grows from strength to strength.

If you would like to learn more, and perhaps have your computer doing useful work while you are on holiday (note that a Mac OS X version of the 'Folding' program is now available), visit <http://www.ucls.ed.ac.uk/uclsinfo/distrib.html>

*Alistair Knock (Italian)*

## Spam spam spam ...

As announced in last month's *BITs*, EUCS has implemented measures to save members of the University a great deal of the 'spam'—junk mail—which pours around the Internet. These continue to operate most successfully. If you wonder why this annoying email is called 'spam', you might be interested in the explanation from Hormel, manufacturers of SPAM, on their Web site at [http://www.SPAM.com/ci/ci\\_in.htm](http://www.SPAM.com/ci/ci_in.htm)

*Nick Stroud (EUCS)*

## Web accessibility seminars

Over 120 University staff took time from busy schedules last month to attend seminars (one at The King's Buildings, one in George Square) to learn about some of the issues for Web sites arising from the disability and accessibility legislation which comes into effect in the University in September.

Martin Sloan described the Disability Discrimination Act and the more recent Special Educational Needs and Disability Act, and the ways in which this legislation will affect our provision of information and course materials in electronic formats. Allan Wilson of the CALL Centre demonstrated some of the assistive technology available to people with different physical impairments. Wilma Alexander from SELLIC outlined ways in which careful design for usability and accessibility could help many categories of student. Graham Rule of EUCS rounded off the seminars with a series of graphic illustrations and dire warnings of the consequences of careless Web site creation.

The special issue of the *Learning Technology Supplement* distributed with *BITs* last month contains a number of articles describing how to ensure that Web pages are accessible, and provides resources for further information and help. The questions and discussion at the seminars clearly illustrated that there is a need for this information and support. Further copies of the *Supplement*, and extra information from the seminar presentations, is available from the MALTS Web site, at <http://www.malts.ed.ac.uk/pages/websites/seminar/>

*Wilma Alexander (SELLIC)*

## New graphics & multimedia facilities

The Resource Centre at The King's Buildings (JCMB 3901) now offers ...

### New printers:

- double-sided A4 colour printing on a Tektronix Phaser 860;
- printing direct from digital camera memory cards and sticks with an HP Photosmart 1315;
- photo-quality printing 'full-bleed' (to edge of paper), and printing colour labels direct on to CDs, with an Epson Stylus Photo 950.

### Scanning:

- even better quality 35mm scanning with a Nikon Super Coolscan 4000;
- a new high-resolution Microtek flatbed scanner that handles large-format transparencies and negatives as well as reflective material.

### DV camcorder:

- replacing our trusty but bulky S-VHS camcorder.

### Digital camera:

- a new easier-to-use model.

### Film recorder:

- for making 35mm slides, our eight-year-old Lasergraphics Personal LFR is replaced by the current, much improved model.

### Software:

- new software—Bryce, Discreet Combustion;
- various packages updated—Steinberg Cubase, Adobe Premiere, Adobe After Effects, Adobe Photoshop, Procreate Painter, Macromedia Dreamweaver, Discreet 3ds max, Discreet Character Studio, Caere Omnipage, Winzip, QuickTime.

If you think you could use any of this, you can find out about the Resource Centre from <http://www.graphics.ed.ac.uk/gmrc/>

John Wexler (EUCS)

## McAfee Vscan product lifetimes

Viruses are a constant threat, which is why EUCS has negotiated a site licence to give all members of the University free access to a high-quality anti-virus utility. New viruses emerge at an alarming rate, though, and your anti-virus engine and its database must be kept constantly up-to-date.

The following details relate to the corporate version of McAfee Vscan 4.5 which is used in the University (not to the retail/home market releases).

For Microsoft Windows users an upgrade to the 4160 scan engine is recommended. The 4140 engine is now unsupported, while the 4150 engine becomes unsupported from 30th September 2002. *VirusScan version 4.5.0—used with Windows 2000, NT4, 95, 98 & ME—ceases to be supported on 31st December 2002.*

For Macintosh MacOS and OS X users an upgrade to the 4160 scan engine was required as of 1st June. **VirusScan for Windows XP, 2000, NT 4**

Version 4.5.1 SP1 with 4160 scan engine is recommended.

**VirusScan for Windows 95, 98, ME**

Version 4.5.1 SP1 with 4160 scan engine is recommended. *Support for these platforms will end on 31st December 2003.*

**Virex for MacOS 7, 8, 9**

Version 6.1 with 4160 scan engine is recommended.

**Virex for OS X**

Version 7.0 with 4160 scan engine is recommended.

**NetShield for NetWare Server**

Upgrade to 4.6 is recommended with scan engine 4160.

**NetShield for Windows NT 4 Server and Windows 2000 server**

Version 4.5 SP1 recommended.

Full information about using these utilities is provided at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/viruses/>

Garry Scobie (EUCS)

## Staffmail

More and more University staff are moving to the **staffmail** server to handle their email, and relishing the freedom of being able to access their messages from any Internet access point they care to use, at home or abroad. (This is much more secure and reliable than forwarding your mail to some external service provider.) Of particular interest as we approach the conference and holiday season, it is very easy to set up a 'vacation message' in **staffmail**.

Some people ask if it's possible to keep their mail on **hollyood** and forward it to **staffmail**. This *can* be done, but EUCS advises against it, in particular because it can lead to error messages bouncing to and fro (for example when a mailbox goes over-quota). **staffmail** is as secure and stable as **hollyood**, and offers much more space for messages and their attachments by default, so there is no need to keep backup copies of your email.

You can find out about moving your email to **staffmail** from your departmental computing officer, your EUCS support team, or at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/email/>  
Neil Cooper (EUCS)

## Student login name change

All staff are reminded that student login names will change on 23rd July, to adopt the University's Universal Naming scheme.

The details were explained in June's issue of *BITs*, the gist being that a lower-case 's' will be added in front of the matriculation number which is currently used as the login name. This may, for example, affect students' addresses held in mailing lists. Full details are provided at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/fmd/mft/schanges.html>

Christine Rees (EUCS)

## Ten years—a vast vista of time in C&IT terms

The EMAS multi-access service closed ten years ago this month, on 31st July 1992.

This milestone marked the end of a golden period of over twenty years of timesharing computing, in which EMAS was pre-eminent in Edinburgh. ‘Dumb’ terminals accessed what seemed then to be very large and powerful computers. PCs and Macs existed, but mostly stood alone as word processors.

Since then of course the personal desktop has taken over the C&IT world, although central timesharing services have continued, mainly on the UNIX platform. The embryo Computing Labs have expanded ten-fold in the intervening period and provide daily access for every University student, including the now core access to email (EMAS provided one of the very first email services, in the early 1980s), and the Web (the EMAS team did develop an online help system, though this would be totally dwarfed compared to the online help available to modern computer users). EMAS also trailblazed the early adoption of high performance scientific computing in Edinburgh, in association with the Department of Physics, and this early work paved the way for the success of EPCC over the past decade in the national HPC arena.

Perhaps the most spectacular growth over the past ten years has been in the networking field. Efficient networking was crucial to the success of EMAS, and EUCS has continued to lead in the communications arena through its major investment in the backbone network infrastructure which maintains the University in the forefront of successful exploitation of C&IT.

I absolutely decline any invitation to speculate on the shape of computing over the *next* ten years!

*Andrew McKendrick (EUCS)*

## SQL-Server database service

The SQL-Server service, **ucs-sequel**, has been upgraded. The hardware is now a dual-processor Dell 4400 with 2GB RAM and 36GB RAID disk (‘RAID’ overcomes certain hardware failures). The software is SQL-Server 2000. Together these make a very effective database platform.

While **ucs-sequel** is primarily provided to support the Cold Fusion Web-to-database service, it is available for stand-alone database applications which require ‘point-in-time’ recovery—typically for those applications where data are shared and updated in real-time. Such recovery is not generally available

with workstation database systems such as Microsoft Access.

Applications currently running on Microsoft Access which require ‘point-in-time’ recovery can generally be upsized to use SQL-server reasonably painlessly; end-users continue to use Microsoft Access on their desktop computers while the data are stored on SQL-Server as ‘attached tables’.

If you would like more information about **ucs-sequel** and the SQL-Server database service, please contact the database help desk at [dbhd@ed.ac.uk](mailto:dbhd@ed.ac.uk).

*Ed Dee (EUCS)*



*This steel disk platter from the original EMAS service held some 750kilobytes of information. The final EMAS service served up to 80 simultaneous users on a 15MIP machine with 64 megabytes of main memory—little more than that in the Personal Digital Assistant shown alongside the disk in the photograph.*

## Digital image handling: demo

The University has recently begun using Luna Imaging’s Insight software to deliver access to two digital image collections: ‘Charting the Nation’, a collection of around 5,000 early maps of Scotland; and ‘The Walter Scott Digital Archive’, an initial collection of digital images of some 500 paintings, drawings, and engravings produced during the 19th century to illustrate the works of Walter Scott.

The Library has arranged two identical demonstrations of Insight on **9th July**, at 10am and 2pm, with presentations followed by practice sessions. If you would like to attend, please email [ajohnsto@srv4.lib.ed.ac.uk](mailto:ajohnsto@srv4.lib.ed.ac.uk) to book a place, indicating if you would prefer the morning or the afternoon session.

*Richard Ovenden (EUL)*



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Contributions to *BITS* are welcomed from all readers.

*Copy deadline for July BITS:*

**Wednesday 17th July**