



### SEUSSS Project – student ICT skills across Europe

The SEUSSS Project (Surveys of European Universities Skills in Information and Communication Technology for Staff and



Students) has completed a 30 month study of the ICT skills and attitudes of students, the views of university staff who support them in developing these skills, and the expectations of employers about their graduate recruits. 13,000 students, staff and employers across Europe responded to our surveys and interviews. The University of Edinburgh was lead site, in a collaboration with the Universities of Abo, Bergen, Groningen, Pavia, Poitiers & Salamanca, all members of the Coimbra Group of Universities (<http://www.coimbra-group.be>), which itself was a partner. The project was part-funded by the European Commission.

In the context of the European Union’s policy to promote mobility of workers and students within Europe, we were interested to know the extent of comparability of ICT skills and standards which would enable students and graduates to move between countries, given the importance of ICT to work and study. Moreover, it is clear that there are many ‘drivers’ on students to develop their ICT skills, attitudes and expectations. Some are formal (e.g. training courses) and others are informal (e.g. friends and family), so within our study we wished to explore their importance. As the study was about university students we also considered the skills development environment of the university, the training and support it provided and the expectations it had of its students in their use of ICT in education. Finally, we examined the ‘fit’ between the ICT skills of current graduates and the expectations of a sample of employers drawn from a wide range of commerce, professions and public services.

It was clear that among new students (‘Freshers’) and established students at all the universities there were great similarities – and rather small differences – in the skills they had acquired, their attitudes and expectations, and in their levels of ownership of equipment. All expected to use ICT in their studies but the universities varied significantly in the extent to which they required or expected such use. This variation was not systematic and there was no evidence of a ‘north-south divide’ within Europe. Most students turned mainly to friends and family for help with ICT and to a much lower extent to formal courses or training. The gender differences of the past appear to have greatly diminished, and in skills and attitudes female and male students were little different, all viewing ICT as an important factor in their future careers. An area where we did see large differences between students was in the minority who had no computer or easy access, and who also appeared to be significantly disadvantaged in terms of skills, confidence and frequency of use for studies.

Overall, employers appeared to be satisfied with the ICT skills of their general graduate recruits, although few of them had expectations beyond the common productivity tools and Internet applications. There was also a view amongst them that graduates ought to be the ones showing them the way forward.

In the majority of universities, the lack of explicit strategies for developing ICT skills makes it harder for them and their students to assess progress against change, and to see gaps in provision before they become of concern to employers. There was little demand for accredited courses but a greater wish for skills development and integration.

The final report is available on the Web at: <http://www.intermedia.uib.no/seussis/>  
*Denise Haywood (Higher and Community Education)*

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### Support Services on the move

Two of the EUCS support teams that are based in the Main Library Building, George Square, are swapping office areas on the ground floor. The ‘old’ ADML (Arts, Divinity, Music and Library) team is moving up the corridor to join their Law and Social Science colleagues and to consolidate physically into the Humanities & Social Science Support Team. The Medicine and Veterinary Medicine Support Team is moving into the ADML space.

The disruption is likely to be in the week beginning 9th June, and during that week the Humanities & Social Science helpdesk will be located in Room B19 in the basement of the Adam Ferguson Building. The Humanities & Social Science Support Team number is Tel 513000, and our email address is [HSS-support@ed.ac.uk](mailto:HSS-support@ed.ac.uk).

We apologise for any inconvenience.

*Gillian Kirkwood (EUCS)*



## Richard Field retires



*Photo by Nick Stroud (EUCS)*

Dr Richard Field retires at the beginning of July after nine years as the University's Vice Principal in charge of Academic Services and Information Strategy. In this role he has been shepherding the development of Computing Services, the Library, MALTS, the Office of Lifelong Learning, and until last Summer's restructuring, MIS also. Thanks to his guidance the University has maintained its position as a leading centre for information and its exploitation through technology.

Dr Field came to Edinburgh from the University of London in 1990 to take charge of Computing Services, then just emerging from a period of reorganisation and re-focusing of its strategy and activities. Richard's leadership at this time was exactly the right blend of consolidation and gentle progress that the new organisation needed, as it re-invented itself to start delivering the next generation of C&IT services, reflected in the transition to desktop computing, Unix and the ever-expanding communications network.

Four years later the University restructured all its non-academic support services, and set up Support Group 1 to harmonise the work of EUCS, the Library, MIS and MALTS. Richard was appointed to take charge of the Group, and skilfully set about bringing the best out of the individual departments, and enabling them to deliver an increasing range of services as available resources steadily declined. More was certainly done for less.

A common theme running through the tributes being paid to Dr Field by his colleagues is that working for and with him has always been a great pleasure. His wise counsel and hard work are appreciated throughout the University, and his ability to calm difficult situations and bring out the best in people will be particularly missed. His successor certainly has a difficult act to follow!

We wish Richard a long and happy retirement.

*Brian Gilmore (EUCS)*

## Holyrood security

As you may know, the integrity of all **holyrood** passwords was put at risk by an account break-in on 25th April 2003. System security was quickly restored, and we do not believe any account details were taken. It is nevertheless good practice in such circumstances to reset the password for every account in the system, and this was done on 27th May 2003. The process of issuing passwords also clarified who are the current *bona fide* users of **holyrood**.

During the next annual update of registration for services, Computing Services will require schools to provide a positive indication for continuing accounts for people who are no longer current members of staff or students.

This incident again demonstrates the need to exercise vigilance in the use of all the University's IT systems, and reinforces the need for all users to choose effective passwords and take every precaution to maintain their security.

*Keith Farvis (EUCS)*

## Upgrades for staffmail and SMS mail services

Over the Summer vacation we are planning upgrades to the staffmail and SMS mail servers. Two new faster systems with increased memory will replace the existing servers, which will be redeployed elsewhere for disaster recovery and resilience purposes. At the same time we will be upgrading the disk subsystems and doubling the amount of storage available on both servers. Dates for the actual changeover to the new servers will be announced closer to the time, but will be scheduled after the end of the Summer term.

As part of this upgrade process we are also upgrading the software that runs the services. The most obvious change to users will be the move to the latest version of the IMP Web-mail client. The new version provides all the functionality of the existing client but with a number of improvements, including:

- ▶ more options allowing you to customize the client
- ▶ a new search facility for searching messages
- ▶ a much improved addressbook, allowing the creation of personal mailing lists, importing and exporting address books, and better integration with message composition
- ▶ better handling of hierarchical folder directories
- ▶ no more use of frames
- ▶ less reliance on cookies and Javascript

We are still in the process of customizing the Web-mail client and documentation for it is not yet available, but we have prepared some screenshots to show what it will look like. See <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/fmd/unix/whatsnew/mailservers.html#shots>

We hope to be able to provide both versions of IMP side-by-side for a short transition period.

*Graeme Wood (EUCS), Gordon Chung (EUCS)*

## Spam News

### New spam block list enabled

On 6th May the EUCS mail relays started blocking mail listed in the 'Spamhaus Block List' (<http://www.spamhaus.org/>), adding to the blocking which we already do using the 'MAPS RBL+' block list announced in a previous issue of *BITs*. Figures for the first five days of operation indicate the Spamhaus list to be at least as effective as the MAPS list. Together, they have been blocking an average of about 44,500 message transfer attempts daily, or about 21% of message attempts from remote sites. If we classify as spam all messages blocked by these two lists plus anything received and rated as 6 or more by SpamAssassin (see the March 2003 issue of *BITs*), then 52% of messages received from remote sites over the five-day period were spam. The real figure is probably higher.

### SpamAssassin

EUCS advises that users set their mail filters to file into a 'suspected spam' folder all messages rated by SpamAssassin as reaching their chosen threshold. The suspected spam folder can then be occasionally scanned for 'false positives' (legitimate messages incorrectly classified as spam).

We have recently received some inquiries from users about the automatic deletion of messages reaching the threshold. We understand that this is tempting: SpamAssassin's false positive rate is very low, and it may seem logical to take this next step after some time during which no legitimate mail has been misidentified. The mistake, however, is to assume that the situation is stable – this is not the case. The character of spam changes over time, as spammers adapt to try to get round deployed anti-spam software. The character of legitimate mail changes over time, too, though more slowly, and that of an individual's mail stream may change unpredictably. SpamAssassin changes too: as spammers adapt, we may add or modify SpamAssassin rules to compensate. We will also install new versions of SpamAssassin when it seems useful to do so.

While SpamAssassin is carefully crafted to minimise the false positive rate on a representative sample of email, and while we try to be careful not to introduce negative effects with our modifications, the effect of changes on any user's individual mail stream is unpredictable. Automatic deletion of messages would make it impossible to recover any messages incorrectly filed. In general, also, you cannot predict the handling of some type of message which you haven't seen before, such as from a newly subscribed-to mailing list, or a message from somebody contacting you for the first time.

EUCS therefore advises against the automatic disposal of messages using SpamAssassin ratings, but recommends their being filed in a folder which can be occasionally scanned for false positives.

*Scott Larnach (EUCS)*

## New educational film service

It is now four months since EDINA launched the first release of a groundbreaking new service to the UK HE and FE communities.



*Education Media OnLine,*

<http://www.emol.ac.uk/>, enables users at subscribing institutions to download films and videos.

Education Media OnLine is a JISC-funded set of ten collections of film and video, hosted by EDINA and cleared and digitised through the JISC's Managing Agent and Advisory Service (MAAS), who are also producing associated metadata. That work is still going on, and about 300 hours of material will become available by this Summer. The films are of high quality, are fully downloadable (either in full or as segments), and can be used freely in learning, teaching and research. Education Media OnLine offers a broad range of moving image content that will be of interest to teachers and students in many different study areas – British and European history, media studies, archaeology, performing arts, music, medical, health and life sciences, and more. A small number of medical and surgical titles are restricted to medical departments only, due to issues of content sensitivity or patient confidentiality.

In January the service included material from five collections: Educational and Television Films Ltd (ETV), Films of Scotland, Anglia Television Library, Sheffield University Learning Media Unit Collection and The Trials of Alger Hiss (1980). The service has now been augmented with material from three further collections: St George's Hospital Medical School Collection, Healthcare Productions and Logic Lane. The service will achieve its full complement this Summer with the addition of material from the Imperial War Museum and IWF Knowledge & Media GmbH collections.

The University of Edinburgh is one of over 100 institutions that have already subscribed to Education Media OnLine. To search or browse the collection and download film segments, log on using your Athens username at <http://www.emol.ac.uk/>

Note that EUCS can provide a local streaming media service for lecturers wishing to provide selected films to students through campus computers. Please see <http://webhelp.ucs.ed.ac.uk/services/media/> for details.

For assistance or further information, or to gain access to the medical-restricted titles, please contact the University's Education Media OnLine site representative (email [datalib@ed.ac.uk](mailto:datalib@ed.ac.uk)).



*Image © Getty Images*

*Rick Loup (EUCS), Robin Rice (EUCS)*

## ENCompass implementation progress report



ENCompass, created by Endeavor Information Systems, is the digital object management system purchased by the University Library in collaboration with the National Library of Scotland (see the March 2003 issue of *BITs* for more information). The full implementation of ENCompass will probably take a year or two – other institutions have taken as long as three years to launch a service – but we plan to launch a pilot service in October 2003. The basic implementation timetable is:

June – local test server available

August – live pilot service available

October – launch of pilot service

An implementation team has been recruited and consists of John MacColl (project director), Najla Semple, Hugh Croll, Marshall Dozier, Sara Higgins, Liz G. Stevenson and Morag Watson.

At present, the team is working with a few databases of local collections (e.g. NAHSTE) loaded onto an Endeavor test server, in order to gain experience of the underlying structure of the service and to establish how the descriptive information (metadata) in our databases can best be loaded into ENCompass. The team is also examining such issues as interface, rights management and the identification of resources to be accessed via ENCompass.

Do you have a collection of resources which you would like to have available via ENCompass? Are you interested in finding out more? Would you like to contribute to the work of the implementation team on the issues mentioned above? If so, please consider joining the User Forum, whose purpose is to inform the early stages of the implementation of the pilot ENCompass service so that it serves the interests of the University. The Forum will have its first meeting on **20th June 2003** at 12:30pm–2:30pm, in the Wolfson Suite of the Main Library, George Square. If you would like to come, please let me know before 12th June (email [marshall.dozier@ed.ac.uk](mailto:marshall.dozier@ed.ac.uk)).

*Marshall Dozier (Library)*

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You will see that we have included an advertisement on the opposite page. From now on, advertisements may appear in *BITs* from time to time. EUCS does not necessarily endorse the products advertised.

Potential advertisers should contact me by email, for rates and other information. See the panel on the back page for contact details.

*Editor*

## Web of Science upgrade



At the end of May 2003 two changes are scheduled to the ISI resources hosted by MIMAS, based in the University of Manchester (<http://wos.mimas.ac.uk/>).

- 1) *Web of Science* (WoS), the service comprising Science Citation Index, Social Sciences Citation Index, and Arts and Humanities Citation Index, will be upgraded to version 5, which has a new search interface.
- 2) A new point of entry will be provided to the ISI databases. This will also provide a global search interface, allowing users to cross-search the ISI resources simultaneously. This 'entryway' and search interface is called *Web of Knowledge* (WoK). For a short tutorial on WoK, see <http://www.isinet.com/tutorials/woktutor/>

The WoK, along with the upgraded WoS, will run in tandem with the current service during a period of transition. A preview service is currently available: see <http://wok.mimas.ac.uk/> When the service is fully implemented the main benefit to us will be the ability to search Web of Science and ISI Proceedings simultaneously, with duplicate records removed.

WoS changes for version 5 include:

- ▶ *Advanced Search*: this option offers more flexibility in field searching (e.g. author, source, topic) and combining results.
- ▶ *Set searching*: this is the much anticipated facility to build search histories (series of individual searches, or sets) and combine sets, easing the refinement of complex searches. Users will be able to combine a cited reference search with a subject search, as a way of improving the relevance of results.
- ▶ *Saving search histories*: this is an expansion of the current facility to save single search sets. We will be able to save whole search histories for later use, but the search will still have to be saved to your own computer or floppy disk.

For a short tutorial on the new search interface, see <http://www.isinet.com/tutorials/webofscience5/>

For a full (90-page) guide, see

<http://www.isinet.com/presentrep/tspdf/wos5-ws-0302.pdf>

Unfortunately, the new Web of Science service will not include the 1945–1979 data for Science Citation Index. The Combined Higher Education Software Team (CHEST), which negotiates educational discount prices for the UK Higher Education community, requires a further 13 UK Higher Education institutions to express an interest in subscribing to these backfiles before they can begin to negotiate a price for us.

*Marshall Dozier (Library)*

### eProcurement Update

Three pilot systems are now up and running:

#### SciQuest SelectSite

The eProcurement 'marketplace', SciQuest SelectSite, has now closed the electronic loop, with purchase order data being uploaded overnight to eFinancials. 28 suppliers and three schools are testing this managed marketplace solution for laboratory supplies, which makes the information flow less vulnerable to delays and transcription errors. We hope, subject to funding, to roll out the system further for testing during the next six months.

#### eTender

An electronic tender system is now operational. George Sked, Assistant Director of Procurement, is presenting findings of our pilot to a national eProcurement group. We hope to develop this service further, saving time, paperwork and archive storage space for academic and support colleagues and their suppliers.

#### Office Supplies

Three stores are now buying online. Once the 'electronic internal orders' facility becomes available there will be much less paperwork in buying computer and office consumables. We will next consider online paper buying.

Please contact me (email [Karen.Bowman@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Karen.Bowman@ed.ac.uk)) for more information on these pilot systems.

*Karen Bowman (Procurement)*

### Public Lecture by Jim Gray of Microsoft Research

Database guru Jim Gray, regarded as one of the world's leading experts on large databases, will give a talk on "The World-Wide Telescope as a Prototype for the New Computational Science", on **4th July** at 3pm in Lecture Theatre 102, Swann Building, The King's Buildings.

To register to attend the lecture, please go to:  
<http://umbriel.dcs.gla.ac.uk/Nesc/general/esi/events/268/index.html>

*Gill Maddy  
(National e-Science Centre)*



### EndNote and Reference Manager site licence

In cooperation with a number of schools, EUCS has purchased a site licence for the bibliographic tools EndNote and Reference Manager. Schools that are participating in the site licence by paying annual contributions will already have received copies of the software. To check whether your school is in the list, see <http://webdb.ucs.ed.ac.uk/software/refman.cfm>

If your school is not in the list, then you can continue to buy single copies of EndNote and Reference Manager (new licences or upgrades) at a small discount on the standard academic price. See the Web page above for pricing. To find out how your school can participate in the site licence, please contact me (email [C.Moon@ed.ac.uk](mailto:C.Moon@ed.ac.uk), Tel 503347).

Personal copies are available for staff and students, and must be ordered direct from the supplier using the form available at Computing Services Reception in the Main Library, George Square (Tel 503344, email [EUCS.Reception@ed.ac.uk](mailto:EUCS.Reception@ed.ac.uk)).

*Charlotte Moon (EUCS)*

#### — ADVERTISEMENT —

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## Enterprise Portal: delivering the Web services you want

MIS is developing an Enterprise Portal for the University. This will enable individual members of staff to customize her or his own Portal home page over the Web, giving ready access to a variety of screen styles and a catalogue of available information and applications.

This is achieved by a 'pick-n-mix' selection of information channels, each of which comes from a particular Web service or application presented in a standard, modularised way. Many of the University's key resources are already available in a compatible format, for example from Finance, Registry, HR and Procurement. Integration can be achieved by adhering strictly to the latest Web standards, including XML and XSLT, with resulting services being presented as personalised portal channels through the open-source 'U-Portal' software.

The Enterprise Portal complements the Edinburgh Student Portal (ESP), which provides ready access to information

which students need, and which has been increasing in popularity over the last year since it was introduced. The aim of the new Portal is to simplify and speed up access to the information we all need to do our work, so it should enable the whole University to operate more efficiently. In the longer term the Enterprise Portal will provide a vehicle for joined up development between all University IT service providers. Through ultimate convergence with ESP it will offer a single point of user-centric access for staff, student, alumni and others to those internal and external services that they personally find valuable.

Mark Wetton (MIS)



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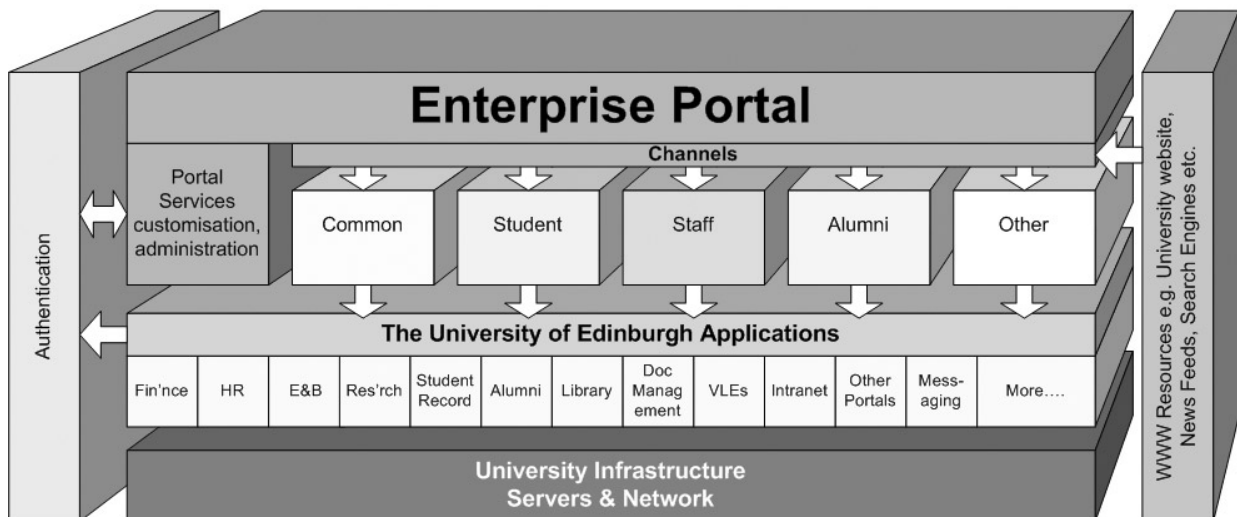


Diagram by Simon Marsden (MIS)