



Managed Desktops from EUCS: good news

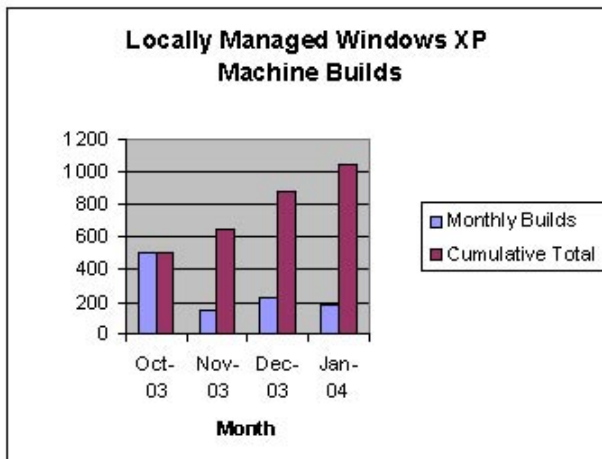
Managed Desktops stall MyDoom's Day

The recent MyDoom email virus had a major worldwide impact, but had negligible effect on the University computers which use the EUCS Managed Desktop. In this service, system and anti-virus updates are installed automatically as soon as they are available; the tiny number of PCs which were affected by MyDoom had been infected before the anti-virus updates were issued. *The Managed Desktop greatly reduces the likelihood of a workstation being infected by a computer virus or worm.*

Managed Desktops solving PC problems

Managed Desktops in most Schools are being phased in gradually rather than being deployed *en masse*, to avoid unnecessary disruption. However, when things break or a new PC arrives, the local Computing Officer may take the opportunity to install a Managed Desktop.

The percentage of Managed Desktop machines in Schools and Colleges continues to increase steadily (see figure). The EUCS Desktop Services Team manages the Windows XP installations in student labs, for training suites, in resource centres and in lecture theatres, but these now only account for two-thirds of all machines.



Managed Desktop Myth

For many, a managed desktop conjures up ideas of a PC locked down like a computer in the open-access labs. This need not be the case. A managed desktop will be what School policy dictates it should be. For example many users need to install software and printers, and the managed desktop can be configured to permit this. It is not for the technology to dictate what users can do – that is the role of local policy.

James Jarvis (EUCS)

Instant Messaging

EUCS has set up a working party to investigate the use of Instant Messaging in the University. The group's remit and membership, and some pointers to the technology itself, can be seen at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/projects/im/>

The group would like to hear from anyone with a view on messaging. In Phase 1 we are focusing on its current and potential uses (including conferencing, application sharing, file transfer etc), and its risks. All input and experience will be valuable: please send comments, before the end of March, to the group's mailing list, im-slwp@lists.ed.ac.uk. Thank you.

George Howat (EUCS)

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KMSP 2

The second draft of the Knowledge Management Strategic Plan is now on the ISG website. This includes a priority listing of milestones, for which comments on omissions and suggestions for changes will be sought from Schools. The third draft which emerges from this consultation at the end of March will reflect the planned programme of work for ISG and influence the priorities for this.

See <http://www.isg.ed.ac.uk/>
Helen Hayes (ISG)



Graphics and Multimedia Resource Centre

Would you use a large-format scanner?

The Centre proposes to set up a 36" (900mm) wide scanner for maps, posters, drawings and so forth. Please email us (graphics_support@ed.ac.uk) if you might use such a scanner, even if only once or twice a year, since we need solid evidence of interest to justify the purchase.

The GMRC

As well as providing walk-in DIY access to a variety of technologies, the Centre in the JCMB at The King's Buildings offers items of equipment on loan:

- 60 Gbyte PocketDrive – portable external hard disk drive, FireWire or USB, usable with laptops or desktop systems, Windows or Mac.
- MiniDV camcorder and tripod, digital cameras, DVD/ hard disk video recorder, and Minidisk recorder with microphones.
- Wacom graphics tablet, for tracing and accurate measurement or for freehand artwork.
- Eye-One Pro colour calibration system to make a colour profile for a monitor, scanner or printer.
- Lasergraphics Personal LFR 35mm film recorder.

There is no charge, but we do need a letter of guarantee to cover loss or damage.

Our video facilities handle many interesting and curious projects. As well as an investigation of sign language for the deaf (illustrated), we have hosted studies of larvae swimming in turbulent streams, the physics of flute playing, homelessness in Scotland, and the intonation of whispering.



For those who don't want to do any editing, we offer simple direct conversion from videotape to DVD.

For information and booking telephone 504965 or see <http://graphics.ed.ac.uk/gmrc/>

John Wexler (EUCS)

Stata

Stata provides an environment for manipulating and analysing data using statistical and graphical methods, and is popular in medical, economic and social research; it is available for Windows, Mac OS X and Unix.

We may be able to get a discount if there is enough interest for a bulk purchase. Details are available at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/usd/stats/stata.html>

Contact eucs.stats@ed.ac.uk if you are interested, so we can gauge numbers.

Frances Provan (EUCS)

MyEd Portal Town Hall meeting – invitation to all staff

Nigel Paul, Director of Corporate Services, invites all staff to a MyEd portal introduction and consultation meeting.

MyEd is the University's initiative to deliver a common portal for all members of the University, offering a secure web-based gateway that recognises you and provides an interface to your own personalised set of services. The MyEd suite is already in use by alumni and will be available for staff from August 2004. Further information can be found at <http://www.eportal.mis.ed.ac.uk/>

There will be two 'town hall' meetings about MyEd this month, lasting no more than an hour, and open to all. The aim is to inform as many staff as possible of the concepts and potential of the development, whilst also inviting ideas for future content. An RSVP is requested so that room capacity can be managed: please contact Ann.McCulloch@ed.ac.uk.

The meetings, both from 12:30 to 1:30, led by Nigel Paul and with time for questions and answers, are:

- **10 March**, Room S1, Psychology, 7 George Square.
- **11 March**, Swann Lecture Theatre, Swann Building, KB.

Mark Wetton (MIS)

The EdLAN Database – changes in EdLAN registration and DNS update procedures

The EUCS Network Team maintains details about the devices attached to the University network in order to generate the vital tables and databases which enable the EdLAN network to function, and to identify systems and the people responsible for them. These data are provided by responsible people such as user support groups and departmental Computing Officers, and amongst other things they aid fault-finding and planning for network developments.

We have recently replaced the text and email-based registration system with an SQL-based system that has a web interface, allowing database users to edit their own information directly. There are other benefits besides ease of access: Domain Name Service (DNS) information is now updated nightly instead of weekly, Active Directory (AD) and Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol (DHCP) registration of devices are included, and the Pre-Installation Environment (PIE) component of the Managed Desktop Project is also catered for.

The EUCS Network Team will be contacting Support Groups and Computing Officers who are not yet using the new registration system. If you would like to find out more, direct queries to edlan-db@ed.ac.uk.

Alan Boyd (EUCS)

HPC-Europa —

European Consortium for Scientific Research using High Performance Computing

Edinburgh Parallel Computing Centre (EPCC) is a partner in HPC-Europa, a new EC-funded consortium of eleven leading HPC (High Performance Computing) centres in ten European countries.

HPC-Europa runs a visitor programme (Transnational Access) which allows European researchers to make short research visits to one of the participating HPC centres.

Transnational Access follows on from the very successful TRACS visitor programme, which brought over 500 visiting researchers to Edinburgh over a ten-year period.

The visitor programme offers:

- Access to some of the most powerful computing facilities in Europe, including HPCX;
- Opportunities for scientific collaboration with research groups in a similar field;
- Travel expenses, subsistence payments and accommodation in shared University flats.

This offers researchers in Edinburgh two ways to build collaborative links with research groups in Europe:

- Researchers in Edinburgh may apply for EC-funded visits to research institutes in and around Bologna, Barcelona, Stuttgart, Amsterdam or Paris;
- Research groups in Edinburgh may host European researchers from outside the UK.

The next deadline for applications for the visitor programme is **15th May**. Further information is at <http://www.hpc-europa.org/>

Questions can be addressed to Catherine Inglis (c.inglis@epcc.ed.ac.uk) or to staff@hpc-europa.org.

Catherine Inglis (EPCC)

eProcurement update

The SciQuest upgrade project has begun, and should be complete in a few weeks – incorporating some changes requested by Schools. If you would like to be considered for the roll-out this year, please contact Margaret.Lochhead@ed.ac.uk.

A demonstration of the CedAR eProcurement HEP interface has taken place, and the tool looks easy to use. The module is planned to go live along with the eFinancials upgrade. If you would like to know more about CedAR, please contact fisusers@ed.ac.uk or procurement.office@ed.ac.uk.

We aim to have the majority of Schools and Support Units using the key stationery and computer consumables supplier eProcurement tools this year. If you want to know more, please contact Jeff.Borthwick@ed.ac.uk.

Karen Bowman (Procurement)

eFinancials upgrade

The upgrade to eFinancials version 3.2 has started, and is planned to go live on 19th May 2004. This will build on current functionality to provide useful features such as GUI charts of accounts, previewing of Purchase Orders and Sales Invoices, and improved POP05 screens. For further information please contact Elizabeth.Welch@ed.ac.uk.

eRemittances

All payments of expenses can now be made via BACS, and remittance advices can be sent electronically to members of staff (over 3,000 have been sent this way since October 2003). If you are *not* already using this facility, forms are available at http://www.finance.ed.ac.uk/fis_system/bacs1.html

If you have any specific queries please email FISusers@ed.ac.uk.

Elizabeth Welch (Finance Office)

Hardware news

Apple Care

Apple has launched AppleCare Technician Training, a training programme that covers all the knowledge needed to become an Apple-certified technician and to prepare for the Apple Service Certification exams. The self-paced programme costs £141+VAT for HE customers.

Half-price memory for Macs

Apple is offering 50% discount on memory pricing, though not for personal purchases. It must be requested from the account manager in the HE sales team when a quote is requested or an order placed.

Toshiba abandons the floppy disk

Toshiba has announced that it will no longer manufacture notebook computers with a floppy disk drive.

George Reid (Procurement)

Data Library news

A one-day workshop 'Social Science Data Archives: creating, depositing and using data', presented by the Economic and Social Data Service (ESDS) and hosted by Edinburgh University Data Library, will be held on 2nd April 2004 in the Wolfson Suite, Edinburgh University Main Library, George Square, Edinburgh.

For full information, visit <http://www.esds.ac.uk/news/edinburgh.asp>

ESDS has recently included World Development Indicators and IMF International Finance Statistics in the suite of online datasets available for academic use through its International Data Service. Further information can be obtained from <http://www.esds.ac.uk/international/>

Assistance with registering and using these datasets can be obtained from the Data Library.

Stuart Macdonald (Data Library)

A century of dedicated service

Three members of Computing Services staff who have retired in the past 12 months have together notched up a hundred years of invaluable service to the University. All were present at a reception at the end of February to receive a decanter or salver from the University to mark their commitment.



Peter Lithgow came to the University from the Royal Engineers and industry, and since 1974 has been working directly with users to give them the best possible service. At first he worked back- and night-shifts handling punched cards and line printer output – making delivery runs around Edinburgh and Glasgow. More recently he managed the special-purpose

network printers, and helped to run the University's open-access computing labs. Peter was always tenacious in sorting out users' problems, and only the computerised GPAS prepayment system has been more successful than him in collecting revenue to pay for printing consumables.

We wish all three of these excellent colleagues a long, happy and healthy retirement, and thank them warmly for all they have done for all of us.

Brian Gilmore (EUCS)



Andrew McKendrick retired last July, by which time he had been Assistant Director of Computing Services for many years. His main role was to assist and oversee the development of the University's open-access computers, from the launch of the EMAS service, through the VAX/VMS and transition to Unix services, and most recently covering the major switch to desktop computing.

David Muxworthy – with the longest service at 35 years and seven months – retired last March, at which point he ran the EUCS Administration section. For most of his time with the University he was a programmer, and he is still active in the local branch of the British Computer Society and the ISO committee which deals with Fortran.



Safari Bookshelf:

39 popular computing books available online

Safari bookshelf is an electronic reference library for IT professionals. It allows you to search the electronic versions of a broad range of the best technical books from leading publishers, and download chapters.

The University has subscribed to 39 full text titles from a number of publishers including O'Reilly, Addison-Wesley, Que, Sams and Prentice-Hall.

Safari is available on campus, without username and password, at <http://proquest.safaribooksonline.com/?uicode=Edinburgh>

Off campus, access is via the Proxy Cache, using your universal username and password (see <http://webhelp.ucs.ed.ac.uk/docs/proxycache.html>).

Select **Bookshelf** on the homepage to browse the list of available books or use the search box; click on the **My Books** button to limit your search to the 39 subscribed titles. Please note that our current subscription is limited to six concurrent users.

For further information contact David Carroll (D.Carroll@ed.ac.uk).

David Carroll (EUL)

New pastures

Simon Bains, Electronic Information Services Librarian, has left the University to take up the new position of E-Services Development Manager at the National Library of Scotland. Interim replacements are:

- **Bibliographic databases:** Liz G. Stevenson (l.stevenson@ed.ac.uk)
- **Athens:** Caroline Stirling (caroline.stirling@ed.ac.uk)
- **Anything else:** John MacColl (john.maccoll@ed.ac.uk)

Simon Bains (EUL)

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Copy deadline for April *BITS*:

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