



# EASE: the reduced sign-on service

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EUCS is happy to announce the Edinburgh Authentication Service—EASE.

Instead of logging in to each individual IT service you use, you can now sign on just once and you will then have access to your network services without having to give your username and password again during the login session. This is enabled using a new service called EASE. An EASE login session typically lasts for up to eight hours.

The EASE service results from the work of the C&IT Committee’s Authentication and Directories Working Party. It enables service providers to use a centralised authentication system to authenticate users to both interactive and web-based services. Any service using EASE will use the same username and password.

EUCS and others are working to move University services to EASE. Services already using it include:

- staffmail and SMS mail services, both through the web interface and through IMAP;
- Athens web-based resources;
- the new release of the ISG call management system
- Coldfusion services (webdb and webdbdev) so that people can build their own applications to authenticate using EASE.

EUCS is working with the Library and the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine to provide access to Library services and the EEMeC and EEVeC virtual learning environments. MIS is moving its portals to EASE: the student portal will switch over in time for the new session, and the MyEd portal will use EASE when it is launched in the Autumn. MIS will be converting a number of the University’s business applications to use EASE over the next 12 months.

To register to use EASE please visit <https://www.ease.ed.ac.uk/register/> Here you are asked to register with your staffmail, SMS or Exchange mail username and password as an initial authentication check (if you do not use any of these services, there is an option to request that an initial single-use registration password is sent to you in a letter). You will then be issued with your Universal Username or UUN (if you don’t already know it) and be able to set your EASE password. You will be asked to set up some shared secrets that can be used to identify you if you later forget your password and need to reset it (this service was announced in the January issue of *BITS*).

For general information about EASE, documentation and software downloads, and to login with EASE, please visit <https://www.ease.ed.ac.uk/>  
*Graeme Wood, Keith Farvis (EUCS)*

**Phrase of the month:**  
**Reduced sign-on**  
 Many people need to use several IT services in the course of the day, and it is tedious to have to log on to each one with its own username and password. Now you can log on just once – using EASE – and have instant access to other local services without further challenge.

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**What are Location Independent Networking and VPN Roaming?**  
 They will be of great help to computer users who need access to their email and other data when travelling. See page 3.

## The University's e-learning strategy

Chapter 4 of the Knowledge Management Strategy (of which the third draft is available at <http://www.isg.ed.ac.uk/>) ends with some milestones that will be used to measure progress in implementing the strategy in the area of e-learning. The first of these milestones acknowledges the need for an **e-learning strategy**. Consultations on the major elements for such a strategy took place at the Open Forum meeting in March 2003, and on the draft strategy at the e-learning conference in May 2004. The final version of the strategy is now available online at <http://www.isg.ed.ac.uk/>

Comments are welcomed on the strategy itself (please send email to [jeff.haywood@ed.ac.uk](mailto:jeff.haywood@ed.ac.uk)), as are suggestions for the 'key ingredients' we ought to take into account in developing milestones M2–M6. These milestones are the most difficult to achieve, and need to be completed within a short timescale in a period when additional funding is hard to find.

*Jeff Haywood (MALTS)*

## Groundbreaking course for e-learning

A new online course offers a broad, yet critical, introduction to the technologies of learning using the Internet.

*An Introduction to Digital Environments for Learning* is a postgraduate-level course aimed at teachers, developers and other staff working in higher and further education.

The 12 week (20 credit) course is being run for the first time starting in September 2004. It is being run as a pilot, which means that it will be offered free of charge to a limited number of participants who are willing to help evaluate it.

Course tutors are Dr Siân Bayne of the Media and Learning Technology Service and Dr Hamish Macleod of the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Assessment. There is significant interest among academics and support staff in how best to use new technologies for learning, and this course will give people real insight into the nature of e-learning.

This pilot course is the first step in the development of a full Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning Online, to be delivered from September 2005.

For further information, including how to enrol free of charge, contact Dr Siân Bayne (email [Sian.Bayne@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Sian.Bayne@ed.ac.uk)) or visit the course website at <http://www.ecpd.ed.ac.uk/idel/>

*Jake Broadhurst (MALTS)*

## New eDiary service: what should it be like?

An article in last month's *BITs* announced an eDiary review group to look at providing a common staff and student diary service. The group is initially focusing on a requirements specification. If you have strong feelings about what such a service should look like, please visit the 'wiki' website at <https://adelie.ucs.ed.ac.uk/dstwiki/index.php/eDiaryReview> or email [C.J.Adie@ed.ac.uk](mailto:C.J.Adie@ed.ac.uk).

*Chris Adie (EUCS)*

## COAST in the GMRC

Professor Clive Greated's EPSRC-funded 'COAST' project—Awareness and implications of coastal marine and beach pollution promoted through art exhibitions and interactive workshops—has been recognised with an *outstanding* (the highest) rating by the EPSRC's Public Awareness of Science review panel. We are rather proud of this, since much of the work of the project was carried out on resources in the Graphics & Multimedia Resource Centre (GMRC). If good presentation and display would help your work to attract the recognition it deserves, we'd be pleased to help you too.

If you're preparing material for Freshers' Week, please help us to make new students aware that our facilities are available to them. If you teach any course where scanning, colour printing, and other multimedia technologies can be useful, make sure they know where to come for help!

*John Wexler (EUCS)*

## SpamAssassin improvements

The University mail relays now check links in incoming mail messages against lists of spammers' domains provided by the SURBL project (<http://www.surbl.org/>). Instead of targeting the source of spams, this targets the websites that spammers would like people to visit. The majority of spam messages contain such links, and this is proving to be an effective enhancement to our SpamAssassin filtering.

Details of our mail filtering are provided at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/fmd/unix/docs/mail/junk/antispamvir.html>

*Scott Larnach (EUCS)*

## Removal of Technet from ucs-services

A copy of the Microsoft Technet CD has in previous years been made available from a NetWare file server. It is now proposed to discontinue this service, partly due to the fact that it was always a month behind current information, and mainly because the most up-to-date information is easily accessible directly from the Microsoft website or via your favourite search engine. This will take effect from the end of August.

*Garry Scobie (EUCS)*

## Would you like wireless access from other universities?

Do you have a portable computer with a wireless connection, and do you wish you could use this when visiting other academic institutions to access your email, the Web or whatever?

EUCS is collaborating with others to develop services which may help you to do just that. These are *Location Independent Networking* (LIN) and *VPN Roaming* (VPN stands for 'Virtual Private Network').

The idea is that visiting staff or students from collaborating institutions can use each other's wireless networks (and in some cases wired networks) to obtain Internet services without requiring any special visitor registration process. The aims are to avoid delays and management overheads at the visited site and to promote collaboration and mobility.

Access to wireless or visitor network services usually requires authentication (with username/password for example). The new feature of LIN and VPN Roaming is that your authentication is checked at your home site, so nothing temporary or new need be created for your visit. For example, to use a LIN-enabled Manchester network, you would authenticate yourself with the same username (with '@ed.ac.uk' appended) and password that you use with the Edinburgh VPN/wireless service. Manchester passes these securely through JANET to be checked by Edinburgh's authentication server(s). If accepted you then have access to the services defined by the visited site policy, the proposal being that LIN will specify a minimum useful set. Such services have been piloted in Europe and the technical issues are relatively clear.

LIN is in proof-of-concept phase until September (the work being undertaken by a group of universities as described at [http://www.ja.net/development/network\\_access/lin.html](http://www.ja.net/development/network_access/lin.html)), to identify problem areas in implementation and issues for operation, security, logging *etc.* A trial stage will then bring in more institutions, and 'real users' will be able to take advantage of the services. The institutions currently involved are Bristol, Edinburgh, Lancaster, Manchester, Southampton, Strathclyde and Surfnet in the Netherlands. It is planned to include UK and mainland European academic centres, and the US is currently evaluating the European work.

VPN Roaming is similar to LIN in avoiding pre-registration at a remote site, taking advantage of an agreement between the Russell Group Universities (of which there are about 20, see <http://www.rugit.ac.uk/>). When you are visiting one of these you can use its wireless networks to access Edinburgh's home VPN service directly—just like VPN access to the University from the general Internet, but using the wireless network of the visited institution. More information on the Edinburgh VPN service is available from <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/nsd/access/>

A very important aspect of these projects is the information about the sites available for LIN and VPN Roaming, and visitor requirements. This information will be collected as part of the projects, and up-to-date project status and known resources will be maintained at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/lin/>

If you would like more information, please email [netdev@ed.ac.uk](mailto:netdev@ed.ac.uk).

George Howat (EUCS)

## New Computing Regulations

A new and highly-readable set of Computing Regulations—the 16th edition—came into effect on 1st August. See 'Regulations' in the A–Z index in the EUCS website.

Brian Gilmore (EUCS)

## eProcurement update

### New post for eProcurement

We are about to recruit a Procurement Business Process Manager to assist the University to derive the benefits of the eProcurement strategy over the next 18 months or so. Working closely with Procurement Office, FIS and MIS, this person will be vital in assisting School staff to deliver cost-effective procurement business processes, through various current and imminent projects.

### Procurement Process system

The new person will assist in establishing a standard document management and project workflow process for procurement to meet Freedom of Information requirements. We will keep *BITs* readers informed of developments.

### SciQuest on to V3

Some hiccups occurred in the go-live, perhaps due to 4th July weekend! A QA review and further training are expected to resolve any outstanding issues. We will roll out to other Schools and more suppliers after these are settled.

### HEeP planning

We have begun the detailed planning for the HEeP eProcurement module of eFinancials project starting next semester.

### ePrint

Solution review has taken place and detailed planning can now begin.

### Updated eProcurement strategy

This is online at <http://www.procure.ed.ac.uk/home/news.htm>

Karen Bowman (Procurement)



## Could your email have its day in court?

As followers of the Hutton Inquiry will know, electronic records such as email have become central to legal cases. As more business is transacted via electronic media, it is increasingly important that we all examine our practices and ask ourselves: *might my electronic records be important evidence of complying with law, and, if so, how can I ensure that they qualify as legally admissible if I need to invoke them in a court?*

If you are dealing with important records that may be needed in court, you can maximise their evidential weight by making specific changes to your IT systems. This can be expensive, and each section should carry out a risk analysis before installing such a system. The University's Records Management Section includes such risk analysis in our online guidance on legal admissibility of electronic records.

If you decide it is necessary, you can maximise evidential weight by managing your electronic records through an IT system which can 'freeze' versions of the file at a specific moment in time, and record an audit trail of information about the genesis of the document and subsequent changes. Such processes are detailed in the British Standards Institution's *DISC PD 0008:1999 Code of Practice*, the highest standard for maintaining electronic records.

Each business unit is responsible for ensuring that suitable practices are established. Detailed guidance on the legal admissibility of electronic records, along with a range of guidance on other subjects of interest to IT users, will be available after 5th August at <http://www.recordsmanagement.ed.ac.uk/>

*Sara Wasson (Records Management)*

## ScienceDirect – more content!

The University's site licence for ScienceDirect has been renewed, extending access to the service until the end of December 2005. The new licence increases coverage from 1,200 to over 1,800 Elsevier journal titles, including almost 400 titles previously published by Academic Press. Access is to full text content from 1995 onwards, unless backfiles have been purchased. Details of the additional titles will be added to the Library catalogue.

*Liz G. Stevenson (EUL)*

## Support team leader retires



Gillian Kirkwood is taking early retirement from Computing Services, relinquishing her post as team leader of the Humanities and Social Sciences Support Team. Gill has led her team skilfully for over 11 years, coping cheerfully with its expansion first with the Moray House merger and then with the creation of the new College. Her knowledge, organisation, sensitivity and tact will be greatly missed.

We wish Gill a long and happy retirement!

*Jeff Phillips (EUCS)*



## Arise, Sir David!

David Wallace was awarded a knighthood in the Queen's 2004 Birthday Honours List, for services to UK Science, Technology and Engineering. This adds to the CBE he received in 1996 for services to parallel computing, in helping to found Edinburgh Parallel Computing Centre. Congratulations!

*Nick Stroud (EUCS)*

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Contributions to *BITS* are welcomed.

Copy deadline for September *BITS*:

**Wednesday 18th August**