



**Disruption today for more reliability tomorrow**

All critical services managed by EUCS will in future only be provided from The King’s Buildings and Appleton Tower computer rooms. This decision was taken in the wake of recent power disruptions in the George Square Library, and a review of server locations in support of one of the objectives of Chapter 6 of the Knowledge Management Strategy – to deliver reliable services. There will therefore be a short period of disruption on 20th December as some servers are moved from their present locations.

The two main EUCS computer rooms have an excellent environment (though not yet *totally* fail-safe), multiple network connections to the rest of the University (that is, they are not on the end of a single fibre cable) and there is extensive operator cover at The King’s Buildings, including on Saturdays. This means that the risk to services is reduced, and our ability to restore disrupted services out of core hours is much greater.

To achieve this more resilient arrangement, EUCS will move a total of nine servers out of the Main Library during the Christmas break. Some of these moves will not have a direct effect on users since the services are duplicated elsewhere, but the following services will not be available on Monday 20th December from approximately 8am until 8pm.

- The Perception and WebBoard services (MALTS)
- The Call Management System (EUCS)
- The Windows IIS-based web services (EUCS): that is, all web sites served by [IISweb1.ucs.ed.ac.uk](http://IISweb1.ucs.ed.ac.uk)
- The Cold Fusion-based web services (EUCS): that is, all Cold Fusion applications served by [webdb.ucs.ed.ac.uk](http://webdb.ucs.ed.ac.uk)
- The SQL-Server service (EUCS): that is, all databases hosted on [ucs-sequel.ucs.ed.ac.uk](http://ucs-sequel.ucs.ed.ac.uk)
- The second HSS file server, known as HSSK2

A more detailed schedule of restoration and further information will be posted on the EUCS Service Alert system.

*Scott Currie (EUCS)*

**Christmas and New Year holiday**

The University closes for the Winter break at 5pm on Thursday 23rd December, and reopens at 9am on Wednesday 5th January 2005. Semester Two starts on Monday 10th January 2005.

All EUCS-operated computing labs (including the 24 hour access ones) and all Library sites will be closed for the entire Winter break. Accommodation Services will be opening the Pollock Halls computing lab from 10am to 5pm every day *except* Christmas day and New Year’s Day.

All Library, EUCS and telephone services will be closed unless they can run unattended (such as the central EUCS Unix, mail, Web and network services, and electronic resources).

The Library will be closed on Saturdays 18th December and 8th January. Journals and most reference material can be borrowed for the closed period, from 9am on 23rd December until midday on 5th January. (As most of this material is in high demand, fines will apply for late returns.)

*Helen Hayes (ISG)*

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SEASONS Greetings



## Planning to avoid disaster

As part of its ongoing commitment to a high availability network, EUCS is required to carry out work to ensure that there is a minimum of disruption to high priority services in the event of an unanticipated interruption or disaster.

Continuity planning refers to maintaining a minimum level of operations in order to fulfill critical operations in the midst of a disaster. Such continuity planning is essential to protect against a variety of threats to our network systems, such as:

- a hardware failure on a critical network system;
- a computer virus, worm, or other malicious code that infects critical network systems and renders them unusable;
- an environmental catastrophe;
- a building that is physically damaged or destroyed.

In addition to the obvious financial cost of such incidents, there are also consequences such as recovery time and subsequent legal ramifications. Effective continuity planning can help us:

- sustain mission-critical operations;
- minimise the number of critical decisions taken during a crisis situation;
- minimise legal liabilities and insurance premiums;
- reduce the probability of reoccurrence;
- ensure that the time taken to recover is kept to a minimum.

With this in mind, EUCS is planning a full test of our continuity planning procedures on Monday 3rd January 2005 (which is a University holiday). This will involve downtime of core EdLAN network systems in the King's Buildings campus between 8am and 12 noon, with the consequent loss of all associated network services for the duration of the test.

### Affected services:

- All network connectivity to each building on the King's Buildings campus.
- All University-wide services based in the King's Buildings area, such as Staffmail, eDiary, VPN service, Wireless service, Dial-up service, and most MIS central services.
- All network connectivity to and from JANET-sponsored connections.
- Network connectivity to and from Little France and Bush areas.

Note that access to the JANET network from all other areas of EdLAN should not be affected.

*Alan Boyd (EUCS)*

## Micro-switches for extra connections

From time to time people need extra or temporary network connections. EUCS Network Services can now assist with such needs by providing extra Ethernet ports through deployment of a 'micro-switch.'

Micro-switches are not suitable for permanent new connections to the network; they are provided only for use within one room and for the following situations:

- a temporary connection is required for a defined and reasonable time.
- a new connection is required urgently until a permanent wiring installation is provided.
- a connection is needed to a printer or other device which will only have very occasional use.
- internal connectivity is needed between computers within the room.

There is more detailed information at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/nsd/nsd-tn11.html>

To request a micro-switch please email [network-commission@lists.ed.ac.uk](mailto:network-commission@lists.ed.ac.uk); for further information please email [j.leitch@ed.ac.uk](mailto:j.leitch@ed.ac.uk).

*Jim Leitch (EUCS)*

## Staff web portal launched

MyEd was released to all staff as planned on 29th October, and the team thanks all those who contributed. Feedback to date suggests that the system is already proving useful, whilst the challenge remains to continue to develop staff content to increase usage further.

Visitor integration with MyEd is expected early in the New Year, and work has begun to move the Edinburgh Student Portal on to the MyEd platform, to be ready in time for the 2005/06 session.

The portal team is particularly keen to hear from anyone who would like to manage an announcement 'stream' to advertise services on the MyEd home page, or who would like to develop an RSS feed to provide service news to MyEd. Please contact [misusers@ed.ac.uk](mailto:misusers@ed.ac.uk).

*Mark Wetton (MIS)*

## Mathcad: interested?

Mathcad is available through the Chest site licence scheme; details can be found at

<http://www.eduserg.org.uk/chest/software/mathcad/>

At the moment academic licences cost £299 each (+VAT+£10 shipping) from <http://www.adeptstore.co.uk/>

If there is enough interest, we could buy the site licence (e.g. £5,500+VAT for an annual licence) so that individual licences would be cheaper. If you would be interested in this, please contact me by email to [EUCS.Software.Service@ed.ac.uk](mailto:EUCS.Software.Service@ed.ac.uk).

*Frances Provan (EUCS)*

## Firewall security in Supported Desktop

Early in 2005, the Supported Windows XP Desktop will be upgraded with Service Pack 2 (SP2). SP2 makes a number of enhancements to the Windows operating system, mostly to increase security. One of the key enhancements is the *Windows Firewall*.

In simplest terms, a firewall is a piece of software or hardware that secures network access to a computer. In order to get the most out of a firewall, it has to be configured to keep out unwanted access without affecting the system and applications. EUCS Desktop Services and others involved in the Supported Windows XP Desktop are working together to achieve a robust, safe firewall configuration which doesn't compromise functionality.

SP2 and the Windows Firewall will be essential components which further increase the reliability and quality of the Supported Windows XP Desktop.

*Mark Sammons (EUCS)*

## See the Bigger Picture with the Supported Desktop

Users of the Supported Windows XP Desktop can improve visibility by rapidly changing zoom level. Many modern applications including Microsoft Office and Internet Explorer will change the zoom level if you hold down the [Ctrl] key and scroll the mouse wheel. Note that this does not change the underlying fonts: documents remain unaltered.

Additional accessibility options can be accessed by pressing the [Windows] and [u] keys.

A *BITs* supplement featuring accessibility tips for Linux, Mac and Windows will be published early in the New Year.

*James Jarvis (EUCS)*

## Implementation of eProcurement

The University's commitment to work towards using online transactions for the bulk of its goods and services was reinforced this month by the decision to upgrade the University's core financial package, CedAr's eFinancials, in mid-January. Version 3.2.1 will be implemented, following extensive functionality testing conducted by FIS, working in conjunction with MIS.

This will provide a suitable platform on which to run the eProcurement module, thereby placing the University one step closer to its goal of processing 80% of its purchase orders electronically by 2005/6.

The eProcurement module, which creates direct links to hosted marketplace service providers – and thence to suppliers of catalogued goods such as stationery items and computer consumables – is targeted for staged roll-out in early Spring, following user testing and training.



*Karen Bowman looks on as the Principal displays the Award; photo courtesy of Douglas Robertson Photography.*

## Public Procurement Excellence Award

On 4th November, the Principal hosted a celebration to acknowledge the *GO Government Opportunities* magazine Public Procurement Excellence Award 2004 to Karen Bowman, Director of Procurement, and her team. The Science and Engineering Procurement Project was also short-listed for an award.

A gathering of staff involved with procurement in support services, Colleges, Schools, the academic community and other institutions celebrated the award at the Talbot Rice Gallery. The Principal was pleased to see excellence as the goal in support services as well as in research and teaching, and acknowledged the contribution made by the Procurement Office – incorporating Printing Services – in securing value for money on the £130m the University spends each year on goods and services.

Nigel Paul, Director of Corporate Services, mentioned the staff who have completed or are progressing in professional qualifications in procurement in the last five years. He noted the increase in legislation and external pressures, in coping with which the team contributes over £3m of value to the University while supporting the sustainability agenda and streamlining procedures for academic colleagues and potential suppliers.

*Graham Cook (Procurement)*

## New support team leader



Abdul Majothi has been appointed as team leader of the EUCS support team for the Humanities and Social Science College, following the retirement of Gillian Kirkwood.

The team will continue to operate in the Main Library (tel 513000, email [HSS.support@ed.ac.uk](mailto:HSS.support@ed.ac.uk)) and at Moray House (tel 516689, email [Education.support@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Education.support@ed.ac.uk)).

The team's website is at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/hss/>  
*Jeff Phillips (EUCS)*

## BCS meetings: Hacking

The next two talks at the Edinburgh Branch of the British Computer Society are on *hacking* – not in the 'purist' sense of "making a computer do something interesting," but in the antisocial sense of people trying to break in to your computer – and how you can try and prevent it.

"Ethical Hacking" is on 8th December, and "Hacking and the law" on 12th January.

Both talks are open to anyone interested, and are to be held at the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, 36 York Place. Fuller details, including synopses, are at <http://www.edinburgh.bcs.org/meets.htm>

*David Muxworthy (BCS)*

## Launch of Digital Curation Centre

Digital preservation and e-Science experts from around the UK and beyond gathered at the National e-Science Centre in Edinburgh on 5th November to celebrate the launch of the national Digital Curation Centre (DCC) – a new centre of expertise in data curation and digital preservation funded by JISC and the e-Science Core Programme.

The DCC, which began work in March, is a partnership of four institutions – Edinburgh, Glasgow, UKOLN (the UK Office for Library and Information Networking at Bath), and CCLRC – the Council for the Central Laboratory of the Research Councils. Each partner brings particular expertise and experience to the collaboration, as described on the DCC website at <http://www.dcc.ac.uk/>

The Centre was launched by Lord Stewart Sutherland of Houndwood, former Principal of the University and current President of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. The high-profile event also featured speeches from Principals O'Shea and Russell of Edinburgh and Glasgow Universities, and Professor Tony Hey, Director of the UK e-Science Core Programme.

The DCC already operates an outreach and services programme (email [helpdesk@dcc.ac.uk](mailto:helpdesk@dcc.ac.uk)) and a research and development programme.

The Centre is keen to engage with its user communities in UK Higher and Further Education, research councils and data centres, and with industry and individuals in the UK and abroad. The Associates Network has been set up to begin that process and allow peer-to-peer communication for those responsible for digital curation within their organisations. We invite all who are interested to participate in the discussion forum hosted on the DCC website, at <http://www.dcc.ac.uk/network.html>

*Robin Rice (EDINA)*

## New IT Committee

EUCS and MIS provide computing and communications services to their respective constituencies within the University, and work together where services overlap.

The committees which oversee the work of the two departments – C&ITC and MIC – have been combined into the single *Information Technology Committee*, to provide better coordination between EUCS and MIS, and between ISG and CSG. The new committee meets for the first time on 9th December.

My thanks to all who have served on and with the old committees.

You can find out about the remit, membership and meetings of the IT Committee through its web pages, which are linked from the University's Committee page at <http://www.aaps.ed.ac.uk/Committees/>

*Helen Hayes (ISG)*

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Contributions to *BITS* are welcomed.

Copy deadline for January *BITS*:

**Thursday 9th December**