



### EPCC wins another supercomputer

A revolutionary new design of supercomputer is to be installed at the University of Edinburgh to help researchers throughout Britain tackle some of the most challenging puzzles in science.

Edinburgh Parallel Computing Centre, in partnership with IBM, has secured the first IBM Blue Gene supercomputer to run in Europe, to help chemists, biologists, physicists and environmental modellers tackle complex problems that cannot be solved on existing computers.

The new computer gives British research and industry affordable access to outstanding computing capacity, and helps to keep the University at the forefront of computational science.

You can read the full story at <http://www.ed.ac.uk/news/supercomputer.html>

There is more news about high-performance computing in EPCC's latest newsletter. You can join the mailing list or see electronic versions at <http://www.epcc.ed.ac.uk/overview/publications/newsletters/subscribe/>

*Tracy Peet (EPCC)*

### LT Supplement 14

This issue of *BITs* is accompanied by the first *Learning Technology* issue of 2005, in which MALTS has gathered together news from across the University on a wide range of activities. Some have been supported by the E-Learning Project Fund, some by external sources such as the JISC, and some are centrally supported. We hope you will find information and ideas here to excite and inspire!

*Wilma Alexander (MALTS)*

### E-Learning@Edinburgh 2005

**Early notice!** The Principal's third E-Learning@Edinburgh Conference will be held in Adam House on Thursday 24th March 2005. The all-day event will include a mixture of presentations and hands-on demonstrations.

Further details on the programme and how to register will appear on the e-learning website (<http://www.e-learning.ed.ac.uk>) early in the New Year. We will be contacting project leaders to arrange demonstrations for the day, but if you have any ideas or suggestions you'd like us to consider, then please contact Nora Mogeey (email [nora.mogeey@ed.ac.uk](mailto:nora.mogeey@ed.ac.uk)) or Jo Hamill (email [jo.hamill@ed.ac.uk](mailto:jo.hamill@ed.ac.uk)).

*Nora Mogeey (MALTS)*

### Happy Birthday LRC!

The Learning and Resource Centre in the Main Library celebrates its fifth anniversary in January.

Throughout all that time it has been steadily developing its mission to provide specialist IT resources in a relatively quiet and spacious environment.

The LRC aims to facilitate access to IT-based knowledge, and foster the learning of user skills. A wide range of resources are provided on a self-service basis with support staff available at core times, and support also provided through the LRC website and by email.

For more information see <http://www.lrc.ed.ac.uk/>

*Allyson Hayes (LRC)*



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## Wireless access from other universities

The August issue of *BITs* contained an article on a pilot project to allow Edinburgh staff and students to use the wireless networks when visiting certain other UK universities. This project has now entered the trial stage and almost forty institutions are taking part. Full details and a list of participating institutions are available at <http://www.ja.net/development/aa/lin/>

If you intend to visit another UK institution and would like to have wireless access back to Edinburgh, check the website to see if that institution is participating in the trial. If it is, there will be a link to further details of their wireless networks and allowed services.

If you have not already done so, you will need to register to use the Edinburgh VPN/Wireless service by visiting <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/access/wselfreg.html>. This is because the visited institution will pass your username and password (securely) to the Edinburgh VPN/Wireless authentication server for verification. Note that you may now use your EASE credentials to register with the VPN/Wireless service.

If you are expecting a visitor from a UK university who would like to use our wireless network, they will need to belong to one of the participating institutions, and they will need to check our visitor guidelines page which is at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/lin/linvisitor.html>

They should take particular note of the security recommendation to install the Edinburgh University Root Certificate before they arrive (see box above).

*Bill Byers (EUCS)*

## Security certificates

Do you get worrying messages about unrecognised security certificates when browsing University websites? If so, you need to install a tiny electronic 'key' which can recognise the University's 'Root certificate' and make these messages go away. Instructions are provided at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/fmd/unix/docs/certificates/>

*Graeme Wood (EUCS)*

## Telephone directory needs attention


In early December the University's online telephone directory contained 7,174 entries for individuals, plus a similar number of entries for functions (enquiries, reception, meeting room, *etc*), fax machines and frequently-called numbers outwith the University. There were 3,635 distinct surnames, of which 2,507 were unique. The most commonly duplicated ones were Smith (70), Brown (60) and Anderson (45).

We believe that some hundreds of these entries could be removed because the people concerned are no longer with the University. For example a recent Internet search showed that one unit's entries included people who have been at institutions in Athens, Sofia, Gothenburg and Birmingham for several years.

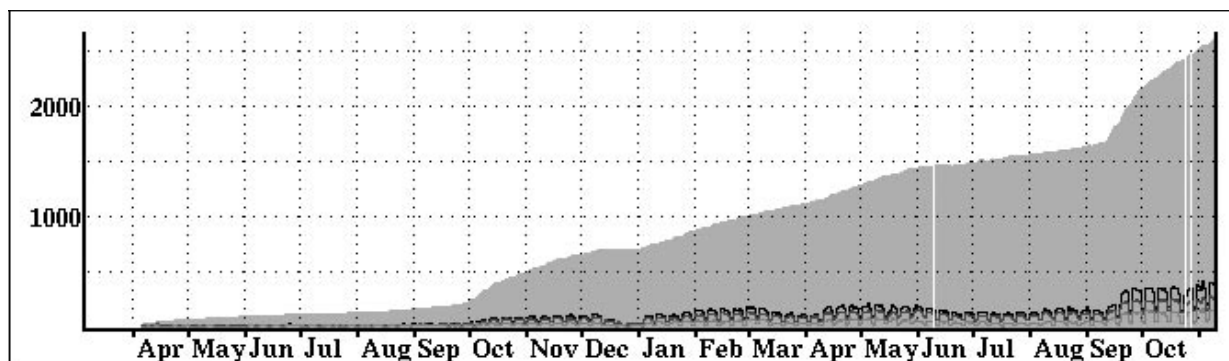
You can check the directory via the 'Search' button on the University website's home page. Please let us know whenever your own entry needs to be updated, or if you see an entry for a colleague who has left the University, using the form at <http://www.phones.ed.ac.uk/teldir.html>

*Murray Clayton (EUCS)*

## Wireless access on the map

The rollout of wireless access to cover the University's 'public' areas continues as funds permit. The areas covered are now shown on an interactive map: for a detailed description of any location, click on the wireless symbols  at [http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/nsd/access/wlocation\\_map.html](http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/nsd/access/wlocation_map.html)

Registrations and usage of wireless continue to grow. The graph below shows the number of registrations; usage in each area can be found at <http://skiddaw.ucs.ed.ac.uk/cgi-bin/switchcgi?TOPN?sitelist>



*Registrations for VPN or Wireless since April 2003; daily usage at bottom of chart.*

*Scott Currie (EUCS)*

## New Software Coordinator

At the beginning of January, Charlotte Moon relinquishes the role she has held for over 12 years as EUCS Software Coordinator in order to concentrate on rolling out the Polopoly Web Content Management System (see next page, and <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/projects/wcms/>).

Frances Provan will take over as the new Software Coordinator, and thus becomes the contact for all the special software agreements through CHEST and other software deals, including the Microsoft Select and Campus Schemes.

Any enquiries about software which were previously made to Charlotte should now be directed to Frances at [eucs.software.services@ed.ac.uk](mailto:eucs.software.services@ed.ac.uk). The range of software currently available to the University through special deals is shown at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/tsd/software/>

*Frances Provan, Charlotte Moon (EUCS)*



### Footnote

Although I have sadly left the very fine HSS College Support Team, I am keeping on my support role for statistical computing. Email for that can be sent to [statistical.systems@ed.ac.uk](mailto:statistical.systems@ed.ac.uk), and the website is at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/usd/stats/>

*Frances Provan (EUCS)*

## UCISA Award for Excellence 2005

UCISA – the UK's Universities and Colleges Information Systems Association – is pleased to invite bids for its **Award for Excellence 2005**, sponsored by SunGard SCT for the fourth successive year. There will be one Award, with a monetary value of £5,000.

The objective of the Award is to recognise and publicise high levels of excellence and best practice which currently exist and are demonstrable in the area of systems integration and administration in member organisations. You don't have to be using SunGard SCT systems to qualify for this award.

The closing date for submissions is 31st January 2005; the winner will be announced at the UCISA Management Conference in Glasgow in March 2005.

Full details on how to apply can be found on the UCISA website, at <http://www.ucisa.ac.uk/activities/awards/2005/excellence/>

If you have any queries please contact [execsec@ucisa.ac.uk](mailto:execsec@ucisa.ac.uk).

The Award for Excellence may be in an area listed below, or indeed a significant integration of a number of these headings:

- Innovation
- Systems integration
- Leadership
- Self-service implementation
- Business management improvements
- Returns on investment
- Managed learning environments
- Integration of wireless technologies into campus networking
- Collaboration

*Martin Price (UCISA)*

## EUCS contributes to national developments

Brian Gilmore, Director of Computing Services, has been appointed as chair of the Network Development Group of the JISC Committee for Networking – JCN – and is representing the JCN on the SuperJANET5 procurement panel.

SuperJANET is the national academic network, for which a new implementation is currently being procured.

*(Editor)*

## Theory and Practice of Computer Graphics 2005

**University of Kent, Canterbury**  
**15 – 17 June 2005**

The 23rd Conference organised by the UK chapter of the Eurographics Association will be the third Theory and Practice of Computer Graphics 2005 Conference (TP.CG.05), and takes place at the University of Kent from 15th to 17th June 2005. The deadline for papers is 14th February 2005. All accepted papers will be published by Eurographics (pending) and held on the Digital Library, and will be available at the conference.

The aim of this conference is to focus on theoretical and practical aspects of Computer Graphics and to bring together top practitioners, users and researchers, which will hopefully inspire further collaboration between participants – and particularly between academia and industry.

The Programme Committee is seeking refereed papers and work-in-progress reports in all aspects of computer graphics and its applications.

Full details, including a list of appropriate topics, may be found at <http://www.eguk.org.uk/TPCG05/>

*Paul Hatton (Birmingham)*

## More about the University's Web Content Management System

An article in the September issue of *BITs* introduced the Web Content Management System, which EUCS is setting up as a service for the University. We purchased the system from Polopoly, are making good progress with the implementation and configuration, and expect to start migrating one or two small websites to it in January.

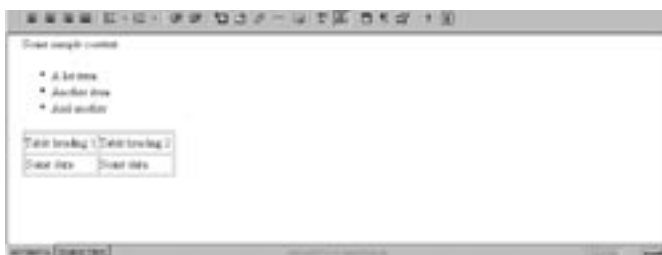
Here we highlight some of the features and advantages of the system.

### Easy content creation

The Polopoly system has a browser-based interface for creating and editing web pages. You select a template to use for your web page, open it, and type information into the appropriate fields – for example, page title, main heading, first paragraph:



The sample Polopoly template shown here is fine for sites which require a standard set of page content elements. This makes it very easy to enter and amend information, but if you are used to using Dreamweaver or FrontPage you might find it restrictive. To get around this, we are integrating a third-party editing tool which will appear as part of the template, and allow more flexible creation and formatting of page elements such as lists and tables.



Note that you won't need to use Dreamweaver, FrontPage or a similar tool – the Content Management System will make it much easier to create and update web content.

### Standard page design

The content elements created using Polopoly 'input templates' are stored in the content management system. When a web browser accesses a web page, the content elements for that page are retrieved, and assembled using the appropriate 'output template'. This output template defines the page layout, automatically creating navigation links, and includes style sheets to give the page the standard University appearance:



### Accessible pages and up-to-date content

The Content Management System will make it much easier to create web pages which comply with accessibility guidelines. The output templates can be designed to be accessible, or to provide a text-only alternative without having to create a separate set of pages.

The Polopoly system also provides features for scheduling the publication of web pages, so that they become visible on a particular date, and optionally become invisible at a later date. The workflow system allows you to send content for review or approval by someone else.

### Automatic navigation links

Polopoly can automatically create menus of links, and 'breadcrumb' navigation links. Alternatively, you can structure pages by topic, regardless of where they are in the website, and create a list of links to all pages on a given topic.

### Finding out more

You can find a list of Frequently Asked Questions on the project website (accessible from ed.ac.uk only) at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/projects/wcms/>

To register an interest in using the service when it is available, please email [C.Moon@ed.ac.uk](mailto:C.Moon@ed.ac.uk).

Charlotte Moon (EUCS)

## New Director for Digital Curation Centre

Chris Rusbridge has been appointed Director-designate of the Digital Curation Centre (DCC), and will start full time as Director of the DCC at the University on 19th February.

Chris is presently Director of Information Services at the University of Glasgow, one of the four partners to the consortium that supports the DCC.

The Digital Curation Centre has the demanding task to help ensure that the digital content required for research, learning and teaching continues to be available and usable, despite the ever-changing nature of information technology. It has been entrusted with a budget of over £1m per year by the funding bodies for universities and research institutes across the UK.

Information about the DCC – which was launched formally on 5th November – is on the DCC website at <http://www.dcc.ac.uk/>

Chris Rusbridge has been at the University of Glasgow since 2000, with responsibility for the Library and Archives together with the Computing Service, Management Information Systems and Media Services. In the previous five years he was programme director of the JISC Electronic Libraries Programme (eLib), a £20M national digital library research and development programme, which included a significant element of digital preservation. Before that, Chris was IT director at the University of Dundee, in charge of academic computing services at the University of South Australia, and a manager of major development projects for ICL and for the South Australian Hospitals Department.

*Peter Burnhill  
(DCC Director Phase One)*

## Estates and Buildings award

The University of Edinburgh along with Mass Systems have won the e-Business award for EBIS, the Estates and Buildings Information System, at the prestigious Premises and Facilities Management (PFM) UK Awards on 17th November in London.

In 2000 the partnership between Mass Systems and the University won the PFM Award in the Public Sector category. This year there was unprecedented interest in the e-Business category, and the judges shortlisted four entrants instead of the usual three to reflect the level of activity across e-Business solutions in the Facilities Management sector. We had to give a presentation and live demonstration of our web-based room-booking, fault reporting, drawing information and financial reporting in London in June.

The judges were impressed with the web software and with how the system was rolled out to users to generate business benefits as well as attracting interest from other universities.

While the award is presented in association with the PFM Partnership, entries are assessed by independent judges who are looking not just for the use of innovative software but also its application in facilities management or related areas. The Award covers the whole range of 'e' initiatives, including websites, company intranets and customer extranets, e-procurement, desktop services, online PR and marketing campaigns, project websites, online benchmarking and other information services.

Credit is due to everyone who made a significant contribution to the project, including E&B Staff, MIS Staff and Mass Systems.

*John Leishman (Estates & Buildings)*

## The Library: a Star is Born

Edinburgh University Library has featured in two television programmes recently – although in one it did not appear!

The BBC's *Who do you think you are?* series followed various celebrities as they traced their family history. One episode featured Moira Stuart visiting EUL to collect information about her grandfather from the Caribbean. Edgar Gordon graduated in medicine in 1918, and the Library could provide immediate access to his University records.

In *Shoebox Zoo*, the story is somewhat stranger. Some time ago I received an email asking me if I knew that the National Archives of Scotland had a sign up saying "Edinburgh University Library – Closed". My correspondent had at first just seen the sign saying "closed," and was angry at a wasted journey, but it turned out that the NAS was not closed – merely masquerading as Edinburgh University Library for the purposes of the children's television programme *Shoebox Zoo*. I took advice about this because we had not been asked about the use of our name – but it is apparently not illegal to use a name such as 'Edinburgh University Library' without permission! (In the programme, Marnie's father works for the Library. Marnie has a magic shoebox containing animals voiced by famous Scottish actors, and is trying to find the "Book of Forbidden Knowledge" in a magical tunnel of books somewhere in the Library. The programme is on children's TV on Tuesdays, repeated on Sunday lunchtimes.)

I'd be delighted if anyone could let me know where to find the magical tunnel and *Book of Forbidden Knowledge* in EUL!

*Sheila Cannell (EUL)*

## Take more breaks!

The series of informal seminars organised by MALTS for all staff interested in eLearning in the University continues through the second Semester.

Topics for e-breaks over this period include: using rich media resources; project management; e-portfolios; online library resources; and case studies of WebCT use across the institution.

There is no need to pre-book: just come along to the Wolfson Technology Suite in the Main Library at lunchtime. There is further information on the website (<http://www.elearn.malts.ed.ac.uk/issues/news/ebreaks.phtml>) or contact [elearnhelp@ed.ac.uk](mailto:elearnhelp@ed.ac.uk).

*Wilma Alexander (MALTS)*

## BCS meeting: Hacking

The January meeting of the Edinburgh Branch of the British Computer Society is about *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.

“Hacking and the law” is on 12th January. The speaker, John MacKenzie, is a partner with international law firm Masons, and is one of a select band of Solicitor Advocates who specialise in contentious IT matters in Scotland.

The talk is open to anyone interested, and will be held at the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, 36 York Place. Fuller details, including a synopsis, are at <http://www.edinburgh.bcs.org/meets.htm>

*David Muxworthy (BCS)*

## Events at the National eScience Centre

- 5–7 January:  
Tenth International Conference on Database Theory.  
Further information: <http://www.nesc.ac.uk/esi/events/307/>
- 8–9 January:  
Workshop on Database Issues in Biological Databases (DBiBD).  
Further information: <http://www.nesc.ac.uk/esi/events/459/>
- 10 January:  
Public Lecture by Jennifer Schopf.  
Further information: <http://www.nesc.ac.uk/esi/events/536/>
- 27–28 January:  
Globus Toolkit GridFTP Days.  
Further information: <http://www.nesc.ac.uk/esi/events/516/>
- 9 February:  
Higgs-Maxwell Particle Physics Workshop.  
Further information: <http://www.nesc.ac.uk/esi/events/476/>
- 15–17 March  
5th annual Dependability IRC workshop.  
Further information: <http://www.nesc.ac.uk/esi/events/467/>

*Lee Callaghan (NeSC)*



## Trees for computers

The Future Forests website lets you calculate how many trees you would need to plant to soak up the Carbon Dioxide you produce at home and in travelling (see <http://www.futureforests.com/>). The ‘Carbon Calculator’ is based on figures supplied by the Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Management – ECCM – set up in 1998 by University scientists.

When we get to work, many of us use computers, laser printers and photocopiers which consume a significant amount of energy, and which are therefore indirectly producing Carbon Dioxide and warming up the planet. EUCS is aware of around 15,000 devices connected to the University network.

We asked the ECCM how many trees the University should plant to compensate for our computers. They calculate that 14,000 computers switched on all day will cause the emission of some 900 tonnes of Carbon Dioxide, which would be offset if we planted 3.26 hectares – about eight acres, or one-and-a-half George Squares – of natural woodland such as oak. This assumes the universal use of flat screens however, which is certainly not the case in the University; older monitors use up to five times more energy.

You can find out more about ECCM at <http://www.eccm.uk.com/>

*Nick Stroud (EUCS)*

## And the answer is –

24/9-24-4-1-59-25-7-11-2-10-39-14-3-44-26-8-40-6-21-15-16-19-22

This is the optimal 24 mark Golomb Ruler, demonstrated after an exhaustive four-year search of all possible rulers organised by distributed.net and harnessing the power of personal computers around the world.

If you would like to contribute some computer time to one of the many distributed projects of this kind, and don't mind keeping your computer switched on (and have planted lots of trees recently!), you can find details of several possible candidates at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/ucsinfo/distrib.html>

*Nick Stroud (EUCS)*

## Nigerian scam: the world fights back

A 38 year old Australian has been jailed for at least four years for his part in the global Internet fraud known as the Nigerian Scam, in which people are invited to help smuggle vast sums of money out of turbulent countries. The scam has cost its victims at least £3 million, and is unlikely to be stopped by the capture of just one of its many perpetrators.

*(Editor)*

## Password change for IEE and IEEE full-text access

On 1st December the username and password required for access to the full text of IEE and IEEE publications changed.

The IEE/IEEE Library – IEL – is accessed through IEEExplore at <http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/>

This provides the full text of all subscribed IEEE and IEE publications from 1988 on, including all journals, magazines, conference proceedings and standards (see the November issue of *BITs* for further details).

On-campus access does not require a username and password, since access is IP-authenticated. Off-campus access requires an IEL username and password, which are given on the secure accounts page, available within the University network only at <http://www.lib.ed.ac.uk/secure/accounts.html#ieee>

You can use these details to access the full-text off-campus.

If you have any queries, please contact Sarah Kelly (email [Sarah.Kelly@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Sarah.Kelly@ed.ac.uk)).

*Sarah Kelly (EUL)*



## Submarine Models

The Crannogs of Scotland have been studied for over 25 years, and the use of modern computing techniques is now helping to bring together this archaeological knowledge to give better insights into ancient ways of life.

Oakbank Crannog at Loch Tay is a submerged site dating back to around 500 BC, and has produced much valuable information for underwater archaeology research.

Rosa Mendoza Roble's final MSc project in Architecture in 2004 involved the detailed modelling and rendering of an ancient crannog from remains on the bed of Loch Tay. The digital reconstruction may assist visitors to the Crannog Centre to understand the construction and decay of a typical crannog.

There are more pictures, and some animated sequences of the crannog's construction and decay, on the project website at <http://ddm.caad.ed.ac.uk/digitalIST/>

*Richard Coyne (Architecture)*



## Main Library booming

The Main Library has observed a substantial increase in use over the semester. The move of the Erskine Medical Library accounts for much of the increase, although there has been some transfer out to Little France with circulation of stock there increasing by 78%.

The Main Library has certainly *felt* much busier, and comparative figures show that there was an 18% increase in use in week 8 over last year.

Extended opening in the Main Library for pre-exam study has again proved very popular, with over 1,000 students studying on the evening of Sunday 5th December. Students are very resourceful in finding space for study, on their own and in groups. Group study is on the increase, and as well as using the designated Group Study Rooms, students are finding other suitable spaces in the Library and in the basement café. Library staff hope to create better zones for the different types of study likely to be required in coming years.

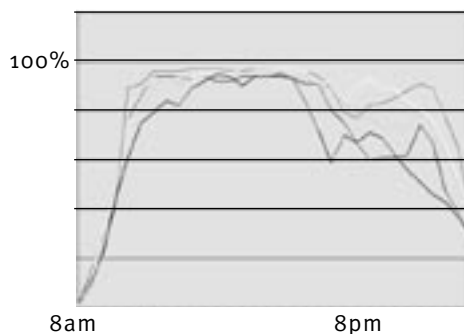
Many more students are bringing their own laptop computers to use in the Library, both individually and in groups, and are making use of the wireless areas in the basement café and on the first and second floors of the Main Library. The Library's **Student Laptop Loan Service** is set to resume on 10th January with laptops available for a three-day loan. There will be more news about this and other services on *Library Online* at <http://www.lib.ed.ac.uk/>

*Library Online* attracts over two million visitors a year, while the Catalogue appears to enjoy even greater popularity: in one recent week some 300,000 searches were made. The Library's other websites attract around 20,000 visits a month – almost quarter of a million a year.

*Pam Clouston (EUL)*

## Computing labs in demand

EUCS has begun capturing usage data from the open-access computing labs. Here is a sample of the kind of information that can be obtained, showing the percentage utilisation of the Windows computers on Level 2 of the Main Library during the week of 29th November – when the Library was open late to provide study space.



*Chris Adie (EUCS)*

## MALTS also busy

There are now 1,067 courses activated in WISARD, catering for a total of 18,498 student users. Several courses have over 500 students: the biggest has 569 users enabled. There are 1,619 individuals with designer status.

One course, with 286 students, makes use of a WebCT “publisher’s e-Pack” – online material developed by content partners and designed for use with WebCT. There are over 1,500 e-Packs in more than 50 subject areas, to make it easier for instructors to start teaching online without having to create a course from scratch. There is information about e-Packs at [http://www.webct.com/content/viewpage?name=content\\_epack\\_help](http://www.webct.com/content/viewpage?name=content_epack_help)

Traditional services remain in high demand, with 360 bookings for laptops this semester, and over 400 for data projectors.

*Nora Moge (MALTS)*

## Stuart McKenzie

Stuart McKenzie died on 5th December after spending six weeks in hospital, some of it in intensive care.

Stuart joined the Library in October 1997 as a Library Assistant. He switched to Systems Support six months later, and worked there until he transferred to Computing Services this Summer. Many colleagues in the Library will have come across Stuart in his Systems role and appreciated his support in setting up new hardware or getting started on new software applications.

Our thoughts and deepest sympathies are with Stuart’s wife, Laura, and his family.

*Pete Smith (EUCS)*

## EDINBURGH BITS

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Contributions to *BITS* are welcomed.

Copy deadline for February *BITS*:

**Tuesday 18th January**