

## Information Services Group evolving

Information Services (IS) consists of library, IT and e-learning professionals with particular areas of expertise; all its staff are committed to providing maximum support for the University's goals and strategies for excellence in research, education and knowledge management.

We believe that now is the right time for Information Services to make a step-change in its continual evolution to make the best of the opportunities provided by technological changes.

We will strengthen our core activities and provide greater value through better integration and coordination in areas such as services to staff and students, distance learning support, research support and information literacy awareness and training. We will ensure that our services are well described and clear to all users, and make them seamless and legible to University members and visitors.

The four main aims of the realignment are:

- to improve communication and partnership with our academic colleagues;
- to focus our services on our customers, integrating related services and providing deeper expertise where needed;
- to increase support for University-wide priorities and reduce duplication;
- to develop important new areas and move on from outdated areas.

This realignment will enable IS to improve its support for the services and collections that are essential to University members. We aim to understand your needs better through planning discussions, developing our services with greater involvement from Colleges and Schools. We will appoint three executive-level academic liaison directors to work with Colleges, to develop better, more integrated plans which are solutions-focused and future-facing.

There will be further news as the evolution proceeds. I will be happy to receive comments at any time.

*Helen Hayes (Information Services)*

## Saving It

Last month's *BITs* highlighted the University's urgent need to use less electricity. There has been a good response, and we are already saving money.

One of the recommendations was to switch off computers when not in use. However, if your computer is off, your anti-virus software cannot be updated automatically, and your system will not receive essential software "patches" which fix newly-discovered security vulnerabilities. When you switch your computer on again, it will get these software updates, but taking up to 18 hours to do so, during which time it is still vulnerable.

Information Services is developing ways of managing security updates in a more environmentally-friendly way, and is forming a working group to produce a University policy on controlling energy consumption by personal computers and related equipment. The group will include representatives from all the Colleges, MIS and Estates & Buildings, and will aim to present this policy for approval by the IT Committee in September. If you have comments for the group, please contact the convener (email [g.newton@ed.ac.uk](mailto:g.newton@ed.ac.uk)).

At the same time, the Energy and Sustainability Office is working on new procedures with the University's cleaners and servitors, and all staff in Estates & Buildings, to minimise energy wastage.

*Chris Adie (EUCS)*

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**Mail services to be upgraded next month: see page 2**



## Staffmail and SMS mail service upgrades

A major upgrade to the message stores on the staffmail and SMS mail services is currently being planned. This is part of an ongoing upgrade process that started last year when the front-end web service and address book were split off to other servers.

This next stage will replace the back-end message stores, moving your mail messages on to the Storage Area Network (SAN) and improving reliability, responsiveness and overall performance. The technical details of the plan are available on the University Projects website at <http://www.projects.ed.ac.uk/areas/infoservices/corporateinf/Mail/>

The intention is to implement these upgrades over a weekend in late June (probably 24–25 June) for Staffmail and in mid-August (19–20 August) for SMS, though these dates may change as the timescales are very tight.

There will be changes to the web interface specifically relating to how server-side filtering of mail into folders works and how you authorise others to access your mail account. Details of these changes will be made available on the staffmail/SMS online guide information at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/email/imp/>

Whether or not you use the webmail client, new facilities include: better support for notifying mail quota usage, streamlined webmail login, expiry times for messages, duplicate mail message suppression for mailing lists.

**As a result of this upgrade you may need to make changes to the preferences in your mail client.** Specifically, we will be mandating that SSL security is required to authenticate to the mail server for IMAP. For many people, no change will be required to their settings, but it would be wise to check them anyway. We will also be phasing out the use of a separate password for the mail servers and they will accept instead the EASE username and password – but only over SSL. Support staff will be contacting you shortly about this. The Science Support team has produced documentation detailing the changes and the implications for supported mail clients, available through <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/email/>

*Graeme Wood (EUCS)*

## “Must Do” Milestones 2006

Schools, Colleges and Support Groups were asked to rank this session’s Knowledge Management ‘must do’ milestones at the end of 2005, and the various rankings have now been combined into a single ‘top 20’ list. Last year’s top requests, such as the EUCLID and University Website projects, have not been included since they are now well under way.

As in previous years, the initial list of 200 possibilities was reduced to around 50 for the consultation, and the lead taken from College rankings, with input too from EUSA and the Support Groups. The final list is as follows:

- 1 Maintain purchasing budget for print and electronic journals and books.
- 2 Establish mechanisms for managing information resources for next RAE.
- 3 Provide stable and resilient e-learning tools across all Schools and Colleges.
- 4 Complete stage 2 of the reduced sign-on implementation.
- 5 Agree plans to reclassify library stock from Dewey to Library of Congress.
- 6 Enable students to manage their University financial accounts in one place.
- 7 Undertake University-wide review of IT provision.
- 8 Finalise vision for Main Library Redevelopment.
- 9 Enable academic staff to submit and manage research proposals online.
- 10 Embed the acquisition of transferable skills into the curriculum.
- 11 Provide an online real-time service to enable visitors to get an account and password.
- 12 Agree a policy on supporting distance and e-learning education.
- 13 Connect all appropriate central systems to the SAN (Storage Area Network).
- 14 Undertake a strategic review of the managed learning environment.
- 15 Investigate and develop remote support and maintenance tools, to resolve more IT problems without a site visit.
- 16 Reduce the number of University email systems by 10% of the 2005 figure.
- 17 Provide tools to enable the use of e-portfolio and personal development plans, and encourage and support CPD.
- 18 Review and update recruitment processes and website.
- 19 Link administrative systems to the major e-learning tools in use in the University.
- 20 Agree a model for sustainability of University-wide central research computing under Full Economic Costing.

This list has been presented to the Central Management Group, and will be taken into account in future planning rounds.

*Helen Hayes (Information Services)*

## Divinity's eLearning team wins

Edinburgh's Ecclesiastical Historians have won a national award for history teaching in Higher Education. The award was made to Drs Jane Dawson and Kirsteen Murray, as representing the E-Learning Team in the School of Divinity, and Dr Murray was presented with the certificate at the conference for Teaching History held at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford.

The Higher Education Academy's Subject Area for History, Classics and Archaeology organises this annual national competition, which is run in conjunction with the six major professional bodies in history (Royal Historical Society, Institute of Historical Research, Historical Association, History UK [HE], Social History Society, and Economic History Society).

The award follows the University's recognition last Summer of the Divinity team's work, when Dr Dawson received the Chancellor's Award for Teaching.

During the past six years the Divinity team has developed a new style of E-teaching and E-learning for classroom-based courses. Its blended learning uses a series of innovative strategies to integrate traditional teaching methods with the tools available on a course website mounted on a Virtual Learning Environment (WebCT).

Although initially focused on teaching ecclesiastical history, these methods can be readily adapted to suit a wide variety of subjects and disciplines.



*Dr Jessie Paterson, Dr Kirsty Murray, Dr Jane Dawson and Dr Sara Parvis, School of Divinity*

*Jessie Paterson (Divinity)*

## Get your versions under control

Do you ever find yourself struggling to identify the latest version of a document? Or searched in vain for last year's procedures only to discover that they were overwritten by this year's? If so, you need to get your versions under control!

Version control helps you to manage multiple revisions to the same document and helps you to tell one version from another. The Records Management Section has recently published guidance on this topic, at <http://www.recordsmanagement.ed.ac.uk/InfoStaff/RMstaff/VersionControl/VersionControl.htm>

The guidance sets out the version control techniques that are available to you and how to use them. The guidance is primarily intended for Microsoft users, but it also sets out general principles that are relevant to all members of staff. Techniques range in complexity from the use of version control numbers to the use of a version control table.

Version control is one element of good records management practice which:

1. helps you to do your job better: it supports ease and efficiency of working because you can find the information you need, when you need it;
2. protects you and the University: it provides evidence of people's rights and entitlements, and shows what the University did and why it did it;
3. saves you time by ensuring you can find the information you need easily;
4. reduces costs, particularly space costs, by ensuring you don't keep any more records than you have to, and that you know when you can delete or destroy them;
5. gives you records you can rely on, both by helping you to find the appropriate version, and by giving records a high value as evidence if they are needed in a court of law.

For further information please contact the Records Management Section at [recordsmanagement@ed.ac.uk](mailto:recordsmanagement@ed.ac.uk).

*Anne Thompson (Records Management)*

## EUCLID Project update

The EUCLID Project is now in Phase 2, and the team has started the software procurement process to look for the right student management and information system for the University of Edinburgh.

Change management is another crucial aspect of the project's remit, and the team is working with colleagues to prepare for the start of Phase 3 in 2006–2007 – which is when change to business processes will begin.

A key part of these preparations is to recruit individuals to join the EUCLID team. Functional Specialists will be appointed, who will have pivotal roles in designing change to business processes. They will work with Business Analysts to evaluate the new software, design new processes, and carry out in-depth consultation with colleagues. Once new processes have been agreed, the Functional Specialists will also be involved in the implementation. The Functional Specialist roles will shortly be advertised internally, so that staff with an enthusiasm for involvement in change can consider applying for a secondment.

Updates on progress will be available throughout 2006. You can register to receive the newsletter – now called *The EUCLID Angle* – and read the latest edition, at <http://www.projects.ed.ac.uk/euclid/>

*EUCLID Project Team*

## A new ICEAGE has begun

This ICEAGE is the International Collaboration to Extend and Advance Grid Education. It was launched at a meeting in March at the National e-Science Centre (NeSC) in Edinburgh, where the project office will be based.

ICEAGE will stimulate and support advances in GRID education throughout Europe, and provide insights into the future of education as the world's e-infrastructure becomes ever more pervasive. The project will act as a forum to gather the wisdom of GRID pioneers throughout the world, and pass it on to the academic and industrial researchers and business people who will be able to benefit from it. In encouraging European universities to adopt courses in many disciplines, ICEAGE will ensure that citizens are well prepared to use e-infrastructure in their private and professional lives.

The ICEAGE website is at <http://www.iceage-eu.org/>

*Alison McCall (NeSC)*



## Visit the e-learning Gallery

The e-learning Gallery is a showcase website for innovative e-learning work at the University of Edinburgh. It has information on the projects funded by the Principal's e-learning fund, and any University staff who have developed e-learning resources are strongly encouraged to get involved. The gallery went live on 1st May 2006. To visit the gallery go to

<http://www.elearn.malts.ed.ac.uk/egallery/>

If you would like to contribute an entry to the gallery please contact Sarah McConnell (email [sarah.mcconnell@ed.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.mcconnell@ed.ac.uk), tel 511442).

*Sarah McConnell (EDINA)*

## MyEd: "What's in it for me?"

This MIS lunchtime seminar will look at the strategic and underlying themes that drive MyEd, before going through the basics in terms of how to use the core functionality, highlighting options open to service providers to enhance their service profile. There will also be an insight into developments planned for 2006–2007. The seminar is on 5th May in Old College, repeated on 10th May at The King's Buildings. Bookings can be made through the Training and Development Channel in MyEd. For more information, including venue details and how to book, please go to <http://www.mis.ed.ac.uk/services/seminars/#upcoming>

*Liam McDowell (MIS)*

## You wouldn't give away your identity, would you?

To bolster interest in a conference on computer fraud, a company called Infosecurity Europe recently surveyed 300 commuters in London – and most of them revealed all the personal information needed to steal their identity, in exchange for a chance of Easter chocolate.

During the survey, all participants gave their home address, 80% revealed their mother's maiden name, 82% their date of birth, and 90% their home telephone number. Frightening as this is, it was an improvement over the previous year's result, when 92% were apparently willing to throw open their bank account to a complete stranger with a clip-board.

A *Times* article last month suggested that the credit card details of as many as 400 Britons are traded on the Internet every day.

*(Editor)*

## WebCT Upgrade

The University has decided to upgrade its current version of WebCT (Campus Edition 4.1) to the latest enterprise version, Vista 4. The MALTS eLearning team (in cooperation with EUCS) will be responsible for managing this upgrade process which involves acquiring new hardware as well as the new software. Our plan is to have the new version available for students to use for Semester 1, 2006–2007, which means staff access being made available in June. This represents a very tight timescale and the forbearance of all WebCT users will be appreciated as we try to manage this process as smoothly as possible.

WebCT Vista is a complete rewrite of the Campus Edition 4 product and this gave the company a welcome opportunity to improve consistency between the tools on offer. Some common tasks have been made more efficient, for example, the ability to upload and make available multiple files in a single action, a proper student view for staff, and the provision of shortcut menus.

A number of enhancements and new tools have been introduced:

- announcements;
- group manager (allows students to be allocated to groups and learning activities can then be based on group);
- learning modules (an extension of the current content modules enabling more types of activities to be combined);
- discussion postings are both editable and gradeable;
- sharing of files between courses;
- greater granularity in the selective release facility.

Many of these were included in the demonstrations offered to staff in December 2005. Dates for staff training sessions are still being finalised but we would welcome your views on their timing by responding to the poll at the bottom of our upgrade information web page (see below for URL).

Please note that the current WebCT service will continue to be available for access to old courses.

You can find more about the new version and keep in touch with progress on its implementation from the upgrade section of our website at <http://www.elearn.malts.ed.ac.uk/webct/upgrade/>

If you have any specific questions then please contact the Helpdesk at [elearnhelp@ed.ac.uk](mailto:elearnhelp@ed.ac.uk).

*Wilma Alexander (MALTS)*

## Software News

### NAG implementations

Having undertaken a review of our licences, four new implementations have been ordered. Existing licence holders have already been informed of these changes. A list of the implementations now available under our licence can be found at

<http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/software/nag.html>

### Mathematica

Good news! We have now achieved the next level of discount, so a standalone version for Windows, Macintosh or Linux costs £140 p.a., inclusive of VAT, from EUCS Software Services. Please contact us for details of bulk discounts and floating licences, by email to [eucs.software.services@ed.ac.uk](mailto:eucs.software.services@ed.ac.uk).

Students can buy Mathematica even more cheaply, by quoting code PD1267 for a 15% Edinburgh discount direct from the Wolfram website at <http://www.wolfram.com/>

*Frances Provan (EUCS)*

## Firefox: essential upgrade

Mozilla has released new versions of its open-source web browser, Firefox, and mail client, Thunderbird, to fix a significant number of security problems.

The versions distributed with the Supported Desktop have been upgraded automatically, but if you have installed your own versions, or if you don't use the Supported Desktop, you should upgrade immediately. There are new versions for Windows, Mac and Linux, all available from <http://www.mozilla.com/>

*Mark Sammons (EUCS)*

## Inspec update

Richard Simms from the Institution of Engineering and Technology (formerly the IEE) will be giving a talk on the Inspec database at 11am on 8th June in the seminar room in the Robertson Engineering & Science Library at The King's Buildings. The talk will cover recent developments and will last approximately one hour.

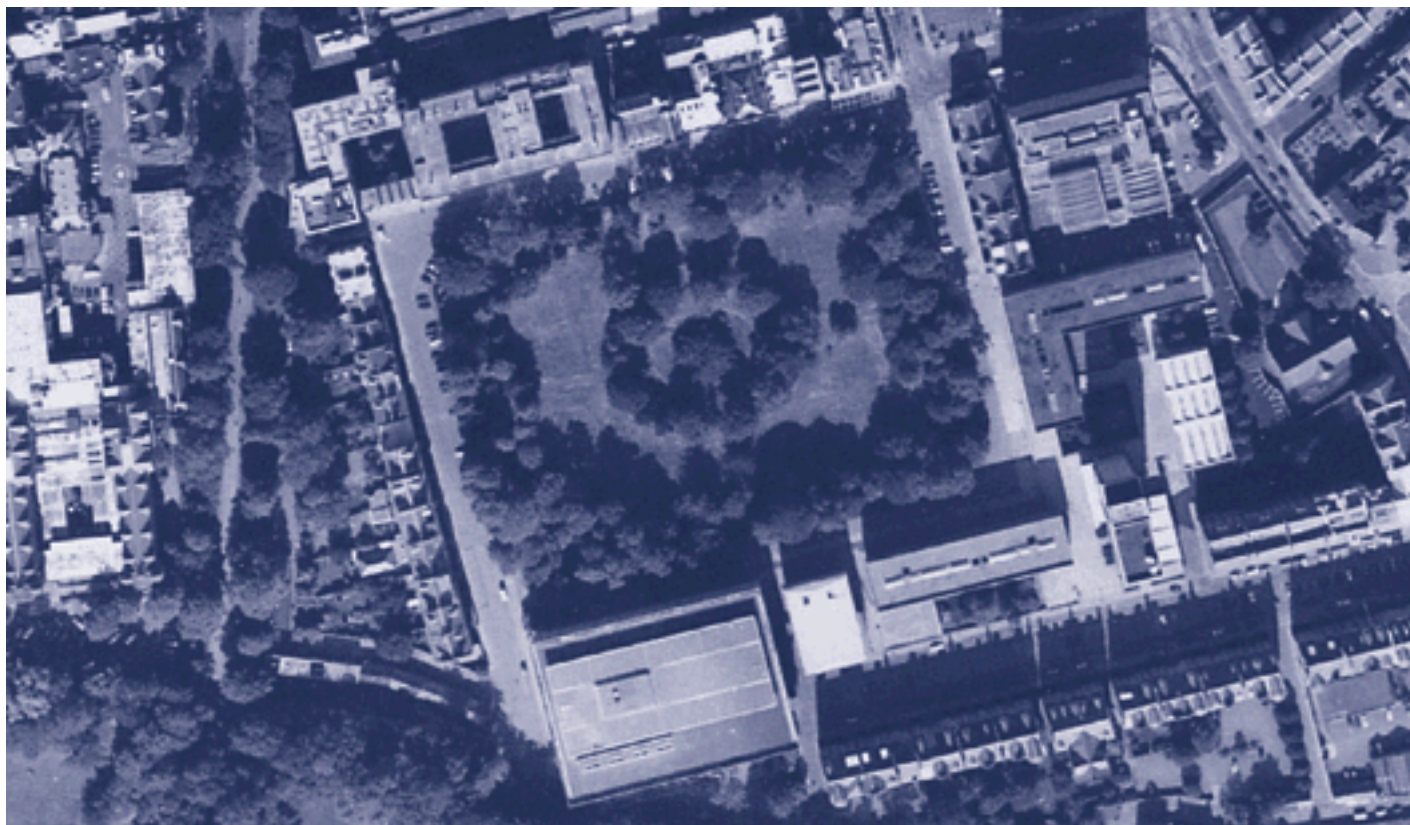
The Inspec database, produced by the IET, is the most comprehensive literature database in



the fields of physics, electrical engineering, electronics, and computer science. This year Inspec has added its 8 millionth record and has added a further one million full-text links (DOIs) in a new XML backfile.

Access to the service is available to members of the University at <http://www.engineeringvillage2.org/>

*Jenny Lauder (EUL)*



## Data Library news

Edinburgh University Data Library has purchased high-quality ortho-rectified aerial photographs of Edinburgh from Cities Revealed. Each colour photograph shows an extensive range of man-made and natural features at a spatial resolution of 12.5cm, which allows the easy identification of buildings and road markings.

### New datasets

These datasets, from the UK Data Archive, are now available to University staff and students:

- Divided We Stand: bridging differential understanding of environmental risk: GIS-P Maps, 2004
- British Household Panel Survey, Waves 1–13, 1991–2004
- Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics, January 2006

In addition the Data Library has obtained updates to standard UK surveys covering the following topics: Health; Crime; Social Attitudes.

For further information contact the Data Library (email [datalib@ed.ac.uk](mailto:datalib@ed.ac.uk), tel 511431 or 503304).

*Stuart Macdonald (EDINA)*



*Cities Revealed  
aerial  
photography  
copyright The  
GeoInformation  
Group*

## BCS meeting and DSDM course

There will be an open lecture on “Peer to Peer Video Broadcasting via Broadband” at 6:30pm on 17th May, by Andrew Parker of Cachelogic. The talk will cover the environment for using P2P to deliver video over the Internet, including its evolution from Napster up to the latest developments in P2P streaming of live content and the implications for the underlying network. The venue is RPSGB, 36 York Place, Edinburgh EH1 3HU. There is an abstract at <http://www.edinburgh.bcs.org/events/>

A course on DSDM which runs on three Tuesday evenings from 16th May, at Napier University, is one of a series of Professional Current Awareness Courses

aimed at providing greater access to developing subjects for computing professionals. The Dynamic Systems Development Method (DSDM) is an internationally-recognised framework for delivering Agile development projects, focused on delivering quality solutions to tight business-driven deadlines. DSDM recognises that development is a team effort and incremental, and must combine the customers’ knowledge of the business requirements with the technical skills of IT professionals. There are full details at

<http://www.edinburgh.bcs.org/courses/dsdm.htm>

*David Muxworthy (EUCS)*

## Plagiarism

The Plagiarism Advisory Service will be holding the 2nd International Plagiarism Conference on 19–21 June, at The Sage Gateshead.

Themes to be covered include:

- Managing change in institutional plagiarism practice and policy.
- Embedding plagiarism detection software into practice and policy.
- Addressing plagiarism in academic practice.
- Plagiarism and institutional risk management.
- Ethics in teaching, learning and assessment.

Further information is provided at <http://www.jiscpas.ac.uk/conference2006/>

A recent survey for the *Times Higher Education Supplement* at 119 UK HE institutions found that one in six university students admitted copying from friends, and one in ten to looking for essays online.

*Wilma Alexander (MALTS)*

## Human-centred technology workshop

A postgraduate workshop on human-centred technology – looking ahead, designing for collaborative as well as individualized environments – will be held at the University of Sussex Department of Informatics on 11–12 September. Topics to be covered include:

- How computerized technology can enhance or affect collaboration and communication.
- How user-centred design can help in the design of systems that adapt to individual profiles.
- How a user-centred approach can enrich users' experiences with digital technology.

Details are provided at

<http://www.informatics.sussex.ac.uk/events/hctw2006/>

*Johanna Hunt (Sussex)*

## The Learning Index

### New e-learning resource puts images into context

Thousands of high-quality visual arts images take centre stage in the **Learning Index**, a new richly illustrated e-learning resource from AHDS Visual Arts.

Using a range of visual arts topics – including fashion and textile design, product design, the crafts, print-making and social sculpture – the **Learning Index** provides self-contained learning and teaching packages, copyright-cleared and free for use in Education. Features include image galleries, glossaries, bibliographies, other image views and related images.

The content for these unique materials has been written by specially commissioned subject specialist authors and lecturers, often based on their own teaching experiences. Their work adds depth and dimension to the AHDS Visual Arts image catalogue by interpreting the collections from an expert's point of view.

Often, one of the primary barriers to the use of digital collections is the lack of time to engage with new resources. The **Learning Index** offers ready made packages of information that demonstrate the relevance of AHDS Visual Arts image collections to teaching needs, therefore saving valuable time and effort.

**Learning Index** materials are easy to use, employing a traditional walk-through approach to learning and a uniform design. This uniformity allows the resources to be re-usable and more adaptable to a variety of learning environments – an essential element in today's resource intensive market.

The **Learning Index** is at <http://www.visualarts.ahds.ac.uk/learning/>

*Wilma Alexander (MALTS)*

## The Learner Driver

A major conference for managers and practitioners in Further and Higher Education will be held at Heriot Watt University on 31st May.

The Learner Driver is a conference which reflects the fast pace of change which is taking place across the educational landscape. The conference will examine the potential positive transformational effect that new technology and methodologies can have on the learner experience, and how learners themselves are central to the change.

The keynote presentations are:

- “Looking to the US: A transatlantic perspective on the transformation of learning” by Dr Carol Twigg, Executive Director of the New York based National Council for Academic Transformation, director of the Pew Learning & Technology Program Initiative.
- “Looking to the future: transforming learning in Scotland” by Dr Bill Harvey, Deputy Director of Learning & Teaching, Scottish Funding Council.
- “Putting into Practice a Learner Centred Vision” by John Stone, Chief Executive, Learning & Skills Network, ex Principal of Ealing, Hammersmith & West London College.

There will be a range of workshops and discussions to challenge and broaden perceptions of educational transformation.

If you'd like to put your name down for the Learner Driver, please sign up via the conference website at <http://www.thelearnerdriver.org.uk/>

*Wilma Alexander (MALTS)*

## Blogging, blogging, everywhere...

Blogging – the creation of online diaries or ‘weblogs’ and related discussion areas – continues to grow at a phenomenal rate:

- The ‘blogosphere’ is doubling in size every six months.
- It is now over 60 times bigger than it was three years ago.
- On average, a new weblog is created every second of every day.
- 19.4 million bloggers (55%) are still posting three months after they create their blogs.

You can catch a flavour of all this at <http://www.technorati.com/>

### Even JISC is doing it

JISC, the Joint Information Systems Committee which funds UK Higher Education’s computers and networks, has set up a Digitisation Programme, under which six pioneering projects are unlocking a wealth of unique hard-to-access material from the 18th century to the present, creating permanent digital resources for the benefit of UK Higher and Further Education. And it has a blog.

The Digitisation Programme is at [http://www.jisc.ac.uk/digitisation\\_home.html](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/digitisation_home.html)

The blog is at <http://jiscdigitisation.typepad.com/>  
And a conference...

The UK’s first educational blogging conference provides a chance to talk about the phenomenon and its implications for education. The conference, in London on 2nd June, will bring together practitioners and research-based experts to explore the educational use of weblogs and weblogging software.

Details are – of course – on a blog, at <http://www.incsb.org/edublog/>

*Caroline Porteous  
(JISC Regional Support Centres)*

## Cleaning supervisor retires



Helen MacPherson retired at the end of April after working for the University for over 30 years – for much of that time as the Cleaning Supervisor in the Main Library. We all wish her the long and happy retirement that she has certainly earned!

*David Easton (EUL)*

## Evelyn Moffat



Evelyn died at the beginning of April, just two years after retiring as receptionist in the EUCS training centre. Few people realised that she had to cope with much adversity in her work and personal life, such was her dignity and gentle courage. We extend our deepest sympathies to her family.

*Nick Stroud (EUCS)*

## The May Holidays

This year’s May Holidays are on Monday 22nd and Tuesday 23rd. The Main and Veterinary (Suimmerhall) Libraries will be open as usual on these days, and other sites closed. The Royal and Western medical libraries will be open as usual, but other NHS libraries will be closed on the 1st and 22nd. Study space in the Main Library will be available until midnight every day this month.

*Pam Clouston (EUL)*

## Silver Surfers’ Week

The Silver Surfers’ Day of previous years is now a week: 22–26 May 2006. Age Concern is one of the many organisations tackling the digital exclusion of older people in the UK. Silver Surfer Week runs alongside Adult Learners’ Week, and there is more information at <http://www.silversurfer.org.uk/>

*(Editor)*

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Contributions to *BITS* are welcomed.

Copy deadline for June *BITS*:

**Tuesday 16th May**