



Janet Roaming Service: freedom of the airwaves

The Janet Roaming Service – JRS – went live on 2nd May. Part of the ‘eduroam’ federation, JRS enables staff and students to use wireless services while visiting participating UK and European institutions, using the username and password they use at their ‘home’ institution. The username must have the domain of the home institution appended; in the case of the University of Edinburgh, this is @ed.ac.uk .

To support the JRS, participating institutions – including Edinburgh – broadcast SSIDs of *eduroam* and/or *eduroam-web*. University users in Edinburgh should continue to use *central* and preferably *central-wpa*, since these are less restricted.

Note that all staff and students are covered by our *and* the visited institution’s Computing Regulations. Abuse of the facilities while using the JRS is strictly and explicitly forbidden; JRS will actively pursue suspected abuse.

If you intend to visit, or host visitors from, other UK or European Institutions, please familiarise yourself with how the JRS works. In particular, check exactly what is provided by visited sites.

Full documentation is at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/lin/>

Bill Byers (EUCS)

Staffmail: change your mail settings by 24 June!

The Staffmail server is being upgraded over the last weekend in June, bringing these benefits:

- better performance;
- the standard mail quota will be increased to 300Mb;
- the web interface will be upgraded and improved;
- login will be streamlined;
- ‘out-of-office’ messages and spam filtering will be simplified;
- there will be better facilities for administering shared accounts.

If you only use the Web interface to Staffmail you don’t need to do anything. If you use a desktop mail client – such as Outlook, pine or Apple Mail – you need to make the following changes to ensure your continued access to the service:

- The incoming mail server or IMAP server name must be set to **imap.staffmail.ed.ac.uk** and the SSL or encryption option set to **on**.
- If you are connected to the University network then set the outgoing mail service or SMTP server name to **smtp.staffmail.ed.ac.uk** and do *not* set the SSL or encryption option. If you are connected via an ISP then leave this setting pointing to your ISP’s SMTP server name.
- You should use your EASE password to log in to Staffmail.

If you have not registered to use EASE, you can do so at <https://www.ease.ed.ac.uk/register/>
You can make these changes now: don’t wait for the changeover! Documentation on configuring the supported mail clients is at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/email/clients/>

Graeme Wood (EUCS)

contents

Janet Roaming Service	1
Staffmail: change your settings!	1
Support for WebCT upgrade Demonstrations Workshops	2
Wiki Pilot Service for eLearning	2
Engineering & Research repositories	2
Imagine doing this ...	3
The new University Website	3
Open-access Lab changes at KB	3
Software news Mailing list News by RSS SAS for students	3
Student laptop strategy	3
Trial access to EOLSS Online UNESCO Multidisciplinary Encyclopedia of Life Support	4
Full-text from Advancement of Computing in Education	4
DIVERSE – a conference	4
Learning games	4
Avian ‘flu rouses The GRID	4

Ed/ITLib
EDUCATION & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY LIBRARY

Digital resources pouring into the Library: see back page

Support for WebCT upgrade

As announced in May's *BITS*, the University's VLE – WebCT – will be upgraded to WebCT Vista 4 over the Summer. Vista offers a powerful range of integrated tools and improved facilities for integration and data exchange with other systems. We have a detailed timetable for the move to WebCT Vista and for providing information, support and training in the new system; see <http://www.elearn.malts.ed.ac.uk/webct/upgrade/timetable.phtml>

Support materials will be available on the website by mid-June. These include basic introductions and detailed descriptions of the similarities and differences between old and new versions, and some interactive tutorials for staff and students on the tools and WebCT interface.

The MALTS e-learning team is providing demonstrations and training courses for staff, highlighting the changes, and how to use the core tools; events include:

Demonstrations

- **20th June and 4th July:**
Brenda Moon Room, Main Library, 9:30–11am
Lecture Theatre 2, Daniel Rutherford Building,
The King's Buildings, 2–3:30pm

Workshops

This workshop is suitable for course organisers, lecturers or course administrators who wish to provide learning and teaching material through WebCT, whether they have no previous experience of WebCT or are confident users.

At the end of the workshop you will have:

- had an opportunity to familiarise yourself with the WebCT Vista interface;
- spent time exploring the features and tools available to course designers, through the 'Build' tab;
- spent time exploring the features and tools available to course instructors, through the 'Teach' tab;
- explored managing files within WebCT Vista;
- located Help for topics and tools.

All workshops will take place in the IS training rooms at 19 Buccleuch Place, with the following times arranged:

- 22nd June, 9:30–12:30
- 23rd June, 9:30–12:30
- 5th July, 9:30–12:30
- 6th July, 2–5
- 22nd August, 9:30–12:30
- 23rd August, 9:30–12:30
- 30th August, 2–5

We will happily arrange training sessions with groups of staff in Schools or units. For further information email elearnhelp@ed.ac.uk or see the WebCT upgrade pages at <http://www.elearn.malts.ed.ac.uk/webct/upgrade/>

Wilma Alexander (MALTS)

Wiki Pilot Service for eLearning

A "wiki" is a type of website that allows people to add, remove, or otherwise edit the site's content, easily and very quickly, without requiring much technical skill. Wikis are appearing in many contexts, including academia, where collaborative development of an information resource is required.

The MALTS eLearning team, in conjunction with EUCS, is planning to run a pilot wiki service in the forthcoming academic year, for use by a limited number of WebCT courses. This pilot project will be based on the MediaWiki software (as used by the well-known Wikipedia online encyclopaedia) and will use EASE and WebCT to authenticate and authorise users. Each WebCT course in the pilot project will be allocated a completely separate wiki space, enabling students and/or staff to develop and discuss course-specific material.

In addition to being a useful service to an (initially) relatively small group of courses, the pilot project will help EUCS and MALTS to resolve the practical issues involved in deploying wiki software securely, and to evaluate its impact on other services.

If you have a course next year which you would like to be considered for inclusion on this wiki pilot project, please contact the MALTS eLearning Helpdesk at elearnhelp@ed.ac.uk.

The wider role of web-based collaborative tools such as wikis and blogs in the University, and how Information Services can support their use, is being considered by a working group convened by Chris Adie (EUCS), who will be happy to hear any comments or views you may have (email Chris.Adie@ed.ac.uk).

Stephen Vickers (MALTS)

Ed Dee (EUCS)

Engineering & Research repositories

A pilot service providing subject resource discovery across a variety of digital repositories of interest to the engineering learning and research communities has been released by the JISC-funded PerX Project.

Although the repositories included in the pilot are relevant to engineering, the cross-searching methods and interface used, plus the range of repository types included, should be of interest to many as a demonstrator of one method of resource discovery across multiple digital repositories.

To see the possible future go to <http://www.engineering.ac.uk/>

Caroline Porteous (JISC Regional Support Centres)

Imagine doing this ...

You want to share a presentation by your research group with colleagues in the UK and European research community, and to do this so that software demonstrations, simulations, animations and narration are clearly delivered.

Over the past year, a collaboration between EUCS and MALTS has successfully developed a pilot service for achieving just such a facility. The pilot has been trialled with several partners, including the Digital Curation Centre and the National eScience Centre who were impressed "with the quality of the broadcast feed and the service in general".

Using a custom encoder and the existing streaming media service, content is delivered as a live broadcast stream at VGA (640 x 480) or XGA (1024 x 768) resolution. At present only Windows Media format is supported: other formats may be supported in the future. Examples of content delivered by this pilot and further information including an FAQ can be found at <http://webhelp.ucs.ed.ac.uk/services/media/wcast/>

Enquiries about the use of this pilot service should be made by email to webcast@ed.ac.uk. Its availability is limited by network connectivity, equipment and staff availability. A charge is normally made towards the costs incurred in purchasing and maintaining the equipment together with the necessary staff to deliver the overall service.

Readers are reminded that in addition to this pilot, IS provides a comprehensive, managed service for delivering on-demand and live media, and can provide secure broadcast points for units considering running their own encoders. Further details are at <http://webhelp.ucs.ed.ac.uk/services/media/>

John Smith (EUCS)

The new University Website

The Project team is developing apace in the University's newly-named Communications and Marketing Department, based in Nicolson Street. Two new website developers, Miles MacCalman and Neil Allison, bring significant experience in developing websites for large organisations, using content management systems.

The new Advisory Board is helping to create a list of key external stakeholders to help with the first phase of the Project: to plan the development of the external-facing website to be launched next Spring. Key to this is the delivery of a thorough Content Audit, with effective Baseline Testing and User Trialling, all of which will be carried out in the Summer. The Project Team will follow up in the Autumn with the development and launch plans for the internal-facing pages.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of the new Website, please contact Dawn Ellis (email dawn.ellis@ed.ac.uk, tel 506379). The Project documentation is at <http://www.projects.ed.ac.uk/WDP/>

Dawn Ellis (C&M)

Open-access Lab changes at The King's Buildings

As part of the enabling works for a planned major estate development in the School of Engineering, the Stevenson open-access computing lab is closing. Most of its 84 PCs are going to other KB labs: nearly 50 to the Darwin/Swann Library (where there is very heavy demand), 30 to KB Centre level 1, and five to KB Centre level 3. From our analysis of lab usage, we calculate that this is sufficient to meet demand, with use only likely to exceed 85% of capacity for 19 hours in the coming year.

Chris Adie (EUCS)

Software news

Mailing list

EUCS Software Services now maintains a mailing list to inform the University of changes in our licensed software, and to canvas interest in new site licences and bulk deals: see <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/tsd/software/softnews.shtml>

To join the list, send a message to majordomo@lists.ed.ac.uk with this text in the body of the message:

subscribe software-news

Please send any items of news to the list owner at software-news-approval@lists.ed.ac.uk.

News by RSS

A prototype RSS news feed is available at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/tsd/software/rss.xml>

SAS for students

Under our current site licence (which ends in July 2007) we can offer a student discount licence for £120 per annum. Students may find a better offer by checking if their School holds a licence, and SAS UK offers a couple of options for students which may suit better; see http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/software/student_offers.html#sas_student

Frances Provan (EUCS)

Do you have a student laptop strategy yet?

Students increasingly expect to work in flexible ways using their own or their institution's laptops, and there are great benefits for all parties in establishing the right solutions and policies. This is the subject for a Forum at Nottingham on 27th June, at which university staff interested in mobile learning and in any aspect of student laptop use can hear what other HE institutions have done, and discuss the issues involved.

For details and registration, see <http://www.toshiba.co.uk/heforum/>
Wilma Alexander (MALTS)

Trial access to EOLSS Online

UNESCO Multidisciplinary Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems

EOLSS, a compendium of sixteen encyclopaedias, is being developed by UNESCO – the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. It will be augmented and updated on a monthly basis. The subjects covered include: Earth and Atmospheric Sciences; Biological, Physiological and Health Sciences; Mathematical and Physical Sciences; Chemical Sciences; Water Sciences and Engineering; Energy Sciences and Engineering; Environmental and Ecological Sciences and Engineering; Food and Agricultural Sciences; Human Resources Policy and Management; Natural Resources Policy; Development and Economic Sciences; Regional Sustainable Development; Social Sciences and Humanities; Institutional and Infrastructural Resources.

Full trial access to UNESCO-EOLSS Online is available until the end of February 2007, at <http://www.eolss.net/>

Access is controlled by IP address: click on 'Access for Institutions' in the left pane. On the Search page, either browse the Table of Contents or perform a keyword search. For off-campus access you will need to use the Virtual Private Network (VPN) system or the Proxy Cache Service.

If you have any queries or feedback, please contact your Liaison Librarian (see <http://www.lib.ed.ac.uk/staff/liaison.shtml>).

David Carroll (EUL)

Full-text from Advancement of Computing in Education

The Library has purchased access to the full-text of the publications of the Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE), via AACE's EdITLib Digital Library for Information Technology and Education, at <http://www.editlib.org/>

EdITLib provides access to the full-text of ten journals and four conference proceedings for issues published from the mid to late 1990s onwards. Titles include "Journal of Computers in Mathematics and Science Teaching", "International Journal on E-Learning" and "Journal of Technology and Teacher Education". Access is IP-controlled.

Rowena Stewart (EUL)

DIVERSE – a conference

DIVERSE is the leading conference on all aspects of video and videoconferencing in education, and aims to address both technology and pedagogy. It is intended for anyone interested in embedding video and videoconferencing technologies in educational practice.

The DIVERSE 2006 Conference takes place on 5–7 July at Glasgow Caledonian University. The draft programme is available at <http://elisu.gcal.ac.uk/diverse2006/pages/programme.htm>

Ross Little (Glasgow Caledonian)

Learning games

Computer-based educational games are presented as a way of motivating disengaged learners. Can digital games make an effective contribution to learning? If they can, what kinds of learners are most likely to benefit?

These are the topics for a meeting at Sheffield Hallam on 3rd July, with presentations from games developers and researchers and discussion on the effectiveness of computer games for teaching and learning. See http://www.alt.ac.uk/workshop_detail.php?e=221

Sue Fells (UCISA)

Avian 'flu rouses The GRID

During April, a collaboration of Asian and European laboratories analysed 300,000 possible drug components against the avian 'flu virus H5N1, using the EGEE Grid infrastructure. The power of 2,000 computers was harnessed for four weeks – the equivalent of 100 years' work on a single computer. Over 60,000 output files were created, with a data volume of 600 Gigabytes. Potential drug compounds are now being identified and ranked from these results.

In silico drug screening can accelerate the discovery of novel potent inhibitors by minimising the non-productive trial-and-error approach in a laboratory, speeding up – and reducing the cost of – developing new drugs. There is more information on the EGEE website, at <http://www.eu-egee.org/>

Alison McCall (NeSC)

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NB: if you fail to access a URL shown in *BITS*, please email BITS@ed.ac.uk.

Contributions to *BITS* are welcomed.

Copy deadline for July *BITS*:

Friday 16th June