

## Information Services Planning 2007–2008

The University's annual planning round is well under way for 2007–2008. IS – with MIS, which will soon be fully integrated into IS – has identified a set of planning priorities, and is currently ranking these. It is anticipated that the highest priorities will include the materials budget, the recommendations from the MLE/VLE review, 24\*7 services, and interoperability.

In the second part of the process we will integrate the knowledge strategy priorities from the Colleges and Support Groups: these are an important part of our decision making. Our submission will also include priorities identified by the Kenway Review of IT-based services, including IT security and support for the Computing Officers' forum.

The penultimate draft of the plan will be available in late February.

## Kenway Review, phase 2

The Knowledge Strategy Committee considered the terms of reference for phase two of the Kenway Review at its inaugural meeting on 23rd January. This stage of the review will concentrate on IT-based services in Schools and Colleges, and will build on the data gathered in phase one. It is anticipated that the review will be completed by 31st July 2007.

The full list of milestones from the Kenway review, including phase 2, are at [http://www.is.ed.ac.uk/content/1/c4/o8/35/Milestones\\_Dec-06\\_V4Jan07.pdf](http://www.is.ed.ac.uk/content/1/c4/o8/35/Milestones_Dec-06_V4Jan07.pdf)  
*Helen Hayes (IS)*

## Dialup service changing

A major change will be made to the University's dialup service on Tuesday 6th March at 8am. This will provide fully automatic registration for the service, and provide resilience in the dialup authentication mechanism.

The change means that all dialup users will have to use their UUNs, so **if you wish to use the dialup service after 8am on 6th March you must register for it.**

You may register for the new service at any time before or after 6th March by visiting <https://vpnreg.ucs.ed.ac.uk/ease/dialupreg.cgi> (You will have to be registered with the EASE authentication service in order to access this site; existing dialup users who do not have a UUN – University User Name – should contact their IS support team. Although you can register your UUN and specify a new password at any time, please continue to use your existing username and password until 6th March.)

Further information about this change can be found at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/nsd/access/dialupfaqs.html>

*Bill Byers (IS)*

## Edinburgh Compute and Data Facility

The first phase (512 processor cores) of the compute cluster for the Edinburgh Compute and Data Facility (ECDF) described in December's *BITs* is expected to be delivered this month, with the full service going live in May.

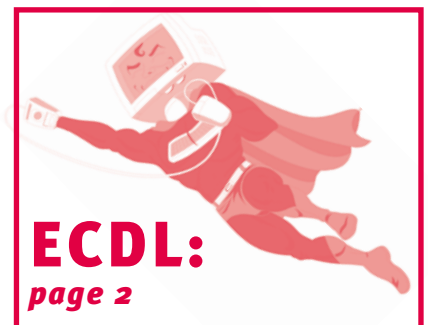
Following the Open Meeting on 17th January a series of visits to departments is being planned as a continuation of the requirements analysis. The presentations from the open meeting, other news of the ECDF, and details of these visits and the visit coordinators in departments are all available at <http://www.is.ed.ac.uk/ECDF/>

To arrange a visit please contact John Blair-Fish (email [J.Blair-Fish@ed.ac.uk](mailto:J.Blair-Fish@ed.ac.uk)).

*John Blair-Fish (IS)*

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## Getting the law on your side

A recording is now available of the latest in the IT Stargazing Group's videoseminar series. 'Getting the Law on your Side' is at

<http://www.itfutures.ed.ac.uk/>

Leading the discussion were Charlotte Waelde (Law), Rory Ewins (Education) and Liz Stevenson (Library). It was agreed that every course needs a legal strategy, covering all intended modes of delivery – including a formal degree course, e-CPD, or a franchise. It was important to establish at the outset where ownership would lie when course materials were developed by several different individuals.

Other questions raised included whether students needed to ask permission to record lectures? Creative Commons licensing was discussed. (The Library website has information about Copyright and Creative Commons at <http://www.lib.ed.ac.uk/services/copying.shtml>)

We established that software may be patented if it has a 'technical effect', and that Digital Rights Management (DRM) means use of technology by publishers or copyright owners to control the use of digital data or hardware. The concept of 'fair dealing' was an important one.

### Which Wiki?

The next videoseminar will be **Wednesday 14th February** at 3.30pm, and is entitled 'Which Wiki?' Topics will include use of free Wiki software; will Wikis work with WebCT and other VLEs? Is it time to outsource search/chat/collaboration tools? Are social tools now part of VLEs? Speakers will include Chris Adie, and Wilma Alexander from the MLE review investigation.

*Jean Ritchie (IS)*

## LRC is an accredited ECDL Test Centre

Starting this semester, Student Support will be offering training and testing for the internationally recognised IT qualification, the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL). The ECDL is widely recognised by educators and employers as a benchmark of basic IT literacy.

The ECDL programme consists of seven modules:

- Basic concepts in IT
- Using a computer and managing files
- Word processing
- Spreadsheets
- Databases
- Presentations
- Information and communication

The Student Support ECDL programme is directed at Edinburgh University undergraduates, but postgraduates and members of staff are also welcome to attend.

Training will be presented through a series of weekly seminars, accompanied by practical work using ECDL-approved online training materials. On completion of each module, students may opt to take the official ECDL test for that topic. On the successful completion of all the tests, the ECDL qualification is awarded. Please note that there will be a small charge to cover the cost of the ECDL log book and test fees, for those students who register for certification.

Seminars and practical sessions will take place in the LRC at 2:15pm every Tuesday, while online training materials give students the option to study at a distance.

To book a place on one of the ECDL eskills Seminars, students should go to the MyEd booking channel at <http://www.myed.ed.ac.uk/>

For further information about ECDL in the LRC, see <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/usd/student/ecdl.html>

*David Findlay (IS)*

## EDINA makes way for MLRP

The EDINA National Data Centre is moving to Causewayside House, on the direct route between The King's Buildings and George Square. At the time of writing – Burns Night – the plan is to be open for business on Monday 5th February, with all due acknowledgment to the 'best laid plans ...'.

The Main Library Redevelopment Project has provided a welcome opportunity for EDINA to bring its expanding complement of staff together into suitable accommodation. Robin Rice and Stuart Macdonald will continue to deliver Data Library services to this University's staff and students from the second floor of the Main Library, as at present. All telephone and fax numbers and email addresses for EDINA staff are unchanged.

Organising the move of nearly 60 staff was not easy. Christine Rees and Aileen Scott Johnson led the move for EDINA, and they thank our colleagues in Estates & Buildings and in the IS Networking and Telephone teams.

We look forward to receiving visitors and having the opportunity of hosting some meetings in our new home, at EDINA, Causewayside House, 158-162 Causewayside, Edinburgh EH9 1PR (tel 503302, fax 503308, email [edina@ed.ac.uk](mailto:edina@ed.ac.uk), web <http://www.edina.ac.uk/> and <http://datalib.ed.ac.uk/>).

*Peter Burnhill (IS)*

## New eSI themes for 2007

The e-Science Institute's Science Advisory Board has selected three Themes from the recent call for proposals:

### Theme 4: Spatial Semantics for Automating Geographic Information (GI) Processes

Up to 80% of information is spatially referenced in some way, yet that information is often unusable without expert interpretation. This theme, led by Femke Reitsma (Geosciences, Edinburgh) and Prof. Werner Kuhn (Institute of Geoinformatics, University of Münster), aims to formalise the semantics of geographical data, to improve data integration, support automated reasoning, and enable cross-disciplinary scientific computing.

### Theme 5: Distributed Programming Abstractions: What are the Challenges for Distributed High-Performance Applications?

Computing infrastructure is changing ever more rapidly, yet scientists still use the same programming methods for distributed computing that they use on isolated machines. Shantenu Jha (Centre for Computation and Technology, Louisiana State University) will lead this theme to find out how scientific programming should change to fit the new world of distributed computing.

### Theme 6: e-Science in the Arts and Humanities

The arts and humanities have substantial commonalities with e-Science, such as highly dispersed content, deep data and text mining, visualisation and simulation. This theme, led by Lorna Hughes, Sheila Anderson, Tobias Blanke and Stuart Dunn of the Arts and Humanities E-Science Support Centre, King's College London, will show how e-Infrastructure can support innovative research in the arts and humanities, expanding its use beyond the early adopters.

Further information on the themes and on opportunities for becoming involved will appear as the themes develop, at <http://www.nesc.ac.uk/esi/themes/>

If you have any proposals or questions, please contact Anna Kenway (email [anna@nesc.ac.uk](mailto:anna@nesc.ac.uk), tel 509818).

*Anna Kenway (NeSC)*

## The 20th Open Grid Forum – OGF20

This year's Open Grid Forum takes place at Manchester International Convention Centre on 7–11 May 2007. Over 800 grid enthusiasts from around the world will further grid standards and discuss best practices in e-Science. A two-day enterprise programme will focus on real-world case studies and practical grid solutions. Proposals are invited for presentations and workshops: the deadline is 9th February, and details are at [http://www.ogf.org/gf/session\\_request/commreq.php?event\\_id=7](http://www.ogf.org/gf/session_request/commreq.php?event_id=7)

*Alison McCall (NeSC)*

## Do you buy certificates for your server?

UKERNA – which runs the UK's national academic network SuperJANET – has started up a service to provide free web server certificates. This means that owners of web servers that use a certificate no longer need to pay an external provider something like £100 a year for one.

Edinburgh University has signed up for the new service: if you'd like a certificate, please contact me (email [Brian.Gilmore@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Brian.Gilmore@ed.ac.uk)). The details are at <http://www.ukerna.ac.uk/services/scs.html>

*Brian Gilmore (IS)*

## Shibboleth replacing Athens

The Athens system unifies access to electronic library resources throughout the UK. Over two million users at 600 institutions access some 300 resources using it.

However, Athens is not flexible enough for modern requirements, and has not been taken up internationally. A new system based on the 'shibboleth' protocols from Internet2 in the USA is therefore being implemented, in the US, Australia, and throughout Europe. This depends on having reliable local systems for identifying users – such as Edinburgh's EASE. Using this, you will not need to log in to an Athens server with a special username and password, but will go straight to your desired resource; Shibboleth will automatically intervene with the local authentication page – in our case EASE – if necessary.

Shibboleth works through a national federation of participating sites. The 'UK Academic Federation' has just been established, and Edinburgh will join this shortly. Training, documentation and gateways between Shibboleth and Athens will assist the changeover.

The full new service should be in place by August. In the meantime, if you are an Athens user please continue to use your AthensDA login until told otherwise.

*Brian Gilmore (IS)*

## Public Library of Science (www.plos.org)

The University is an institutional member of the Public Library of Science. PLoS, based in the US, is a "non-profit organisation of scientists and physicians committed to making the world's scientific and medical literature a freely available public resource". PLoS publishes peer-reviewed, open access scientific and medical journals that include original research and timely feature articles. All PLoS articles are immediately freely accessible online, are put in the free public archive PubMed Central, and can be redistributed and reused. The journals *PLoS Biology*, *PLoS Medicine* and *PLoS Genetics* have recently been joined by *PLoS One*. Our membership entitles University authors to a 10% discount on normal PLoS publication fees.

*Richard Battersby (IS)*

## Introduction to eTutoring

Information Services is once again offering staff the opportunity to participate in this popular course.

The six-week, wholly online course enables participants to develop the skills to provide online support in the delivery of a learning programme. Participants will experience online teaching and learning directly, in an online environment (WebCT). They will build on personal experiences of teaching and learning to develop skills in tutoring and supporting their own students in such online environments.

The course runs between 12th February and 30th March 2007. For more details, and to book a place, visit [http://www.elearn.malts.ed.ac.uk/events/online\\_courses.phtml](http://www.elearn.malts.ed.ac.uk/events/online_courses.phtml)

## Action and e-Action: eLearning @ Edinburgh 2007

This one-day conference will take place on 29th March in Appleton Tower. The aim is to explore what you can do with e-learning, moving away from presenting content to engaging in educationally rich activities. Hands-on workshops will be offered throughout the day. If you are interested in presenting or leading sessions, please submit proposals as soon as possible. For more details and booking information see <http://www.elearn.malts.ed.ac.uk/events/elearnconf07/>

## ePortfolios

The IS ePortfolio Project Officer is working with academic colleagues on a number of innovative pilot projects for the the WebCT/Blackboard ePortfolio system, to benefit student development. The largest project, involving the vanguard courses from CSE, will be developed in cooperation with Daniela Gachago, their newly appointed Learning Technology Officer.

*Robert Chmielewski (IS)*

## Website Project

The Project's online survey of website users has been collecting statistical data about how people perceive our website for almost three months. The first monthly summary reports are now available to download from the Project website, at <http://www.ed.ac.uk/websiteproject/documentation/reports.html>

The results so far show that we, as a web publishing community, have some way to go to deliver a site which consistently meets user expectations and is among the very best in the HE sector.

### More links to the survey needed

We want to collect feedback from internal and external users of all parts of the University website, so would appreciate web managers including a link to the survey from the areas they manage. Please contact Bryan Martin (email [web-comment@ed.ac.uk](mailto:web-comment@ed.ac.uk)) if you do. The survey is located at <http://www.ed.ac.uk/webpub/survey.html>

For more information and latest news on the Project, see <http://www.ed.ac.uk/websiteproject/>

*Neil Allison (CAM)*

## Jamie Shovlin launches 2007 in Talbot Rice Gallery

20 January – 10 March 2007  
Tuesday – Saturday, 10am – 5pm

*Aggregate* brings together a series of new works commissioned by four UK venues, including the University of Edinburgh. Central to the work on show at Talbot Rice is the visual study of multiple copies of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*, forming a compulsive study of fact and interpretation, questioning how we defer to a given knowledge.

Details of the exhibition and accompanying events are at <http://www.trg.ed.ac.uk/>

*Martin Minton (IS)*

## BCS meetings: Negotiation for Success

The British Computer Society's Young Professionals Group is holding its first SkillCentre outside London, at 6pm on 12th February, at the Hilton Edinburgh Grosvenor Hotel.

This SkillCentre, on *negotiation*, is presented by Malcolm Smith, the visiting lecturer on negotiation at London Business School, and starts with an 'ice-breaking' reception.

The details are at <http://www.edinburgh.bcs.org/events/070212.htm>

*Mike Hurst (BCS)*

## Transportation planning and modelling software

Pete Sykes of SIAS Ltd will give a talk on this subject at 6:30pm on 21st February at the The Royal Scots Club Hepburn Suite, 29/30 Abercromby Place, open to all interested. A synopsis is available at <http://www.edinburgh.bcs.org/events/070221.htm>

*David Muxworthy (BCS)*

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Contributions to *BITS* are welcomed.

Copy deadline for March *BITS*:

**Wednesday 14th February**