

Personal commitments force University's first Chief Information Officer to return to Australia

Looking back over the last three years I see many of the objectives set late in 2003 either achieved or well progressed thanks to the staff in Information Services, MIS and elsewhere in the University.

The University's first Knowledge Management Strategic Plan identified a range of priorities, including increasing electronic library resources, closer relations with MIS and with Colleges, 24x7 support, improved IT security, an agreed information services architecture, combined help and support, and greater standardisation. The resultant progress includes:



- A strategy for agreeing whether services should be provided centrally or locally. A policy framework has been agreed and unnecessary duplication minimised through such projects as the managed desktop (now on 9,000 PCs), EUCLID (a University-wide student management system), and the University website redevelopment project.
- Increasing integration of information professionals in IS, MIS and Corporate Services, working effectively together towards agreed goals.
- A greater capacity to provide a wide variety of electronic library resources to meet learning and research needs. The Library now buys around 70% of material in electronic form. Special Collections are also being exposed through digitisation and active promotion.
- The Main Library is being redeveloped to become a world-class facility for a world-class University, incorporating new learning and study spaces for a new generation of communication-savvy students.
- Plans for upgrading teaching and learning spaces using new technologies, and programmes to promote good practice in their use.

Other areas seeing good progress have been an E-Learning Strategy, greater support for e-learning and distance learning, improved support for research computing, support for Web 2.0 and social software, Help Desk, eDiary, single sign-on, wireless network capacity, information repositories, Library service hours, and 24x7 IT support. We have managed to enhance productivity in many key areas.

One of the most important changes over the last three years has been the development of partnerships with Schools, Colleges and other support groups to achieve greater harmonisation of systems for reducing costs, enhancing collaboration, and taking advantage of the many and varied skills that University of Edinburgh staff possess.

I thank colleagues for the support, constructive advice and extraordinary knowledge that made my time at the University stimulating and enjoyable.

Helen Hayes

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Jeff Haywood acting CIO

IS will press ahead with our agreed agenda to enhance the range and quality of services to the University.

A few of the major areas are:

- Service continuity through the Main Library redevelopment.
- Working with Science & Engineering on the planned LRC.
- Offering a wider range of services at all Libraries.
- Maintaining and enhancing the physical and digital Collections.
- Developing stronger and more coordinated support for research, especially research computing guided by a new Research Computing Advisory Group.
- Enhancing support for centrally-provided applications by building on the skills of MIS colleagues in the new Applications Division.
- Strengthening the IT infrastructure, to ensure robust services and support when our users are working and studying.
- Expanding support for e-learning and e-portfolios.

The IS Directors and I are confident that we can continue the excellent progress that Helen Hayes set in train, and we look forward to further productive consultations with all our users over the coming months.

Jeff Haywood (IS)

MIS becomes new Applications Division in IS

One of the major recommendations of last year's Kenway Review of IT services was that MIS and IS should be combined in the same overall management structure. Work to achieve this has been progressing, and the new Information Services Applications Division formally came into being on 1st March.

The new division comprises:

- the core of MIS, minus the customer service team;
- the WAMS team, responsible for WebCT production service, web publishing and database services;
- the IDMS service.

Much work remains to be done to finalise the internal structure of the new division and its service offerings. The intention is to complete this work by the end of July. In spite of all these internal changes, MIS, WAMS and IDMS services should all continue without interruption.

The MIS Customer Support team is transferring to the IS IT User Services Division, where it will continue to provide desktop service support to Support Group staff and manage the University Card Service.

Simon Marsden (IS)

The IT Professionals' Forum

Information Services set up a working group in December to implement the Kenway Review proposal that a "forum" be established for all computing staff in the University. The name **IT Professionals' Forum** has been chosen, to reflect the intention that the new organisation will be useful to everyone in the University who supports the IT environment, and not just those who are formally called 'Computing Officers'. The Forum's next step is to elect a convenor, and the first meeting has been organised under its banner.

Convenor required

The convenor will develop specific proposals to establish the Forum and make it as useful as possible to as many of its members as possible. Nominations for the position have been sought, and an online election will run in March.

First technical meeting

Kerberos is a network authentication protocol designed to provide strong authentication across a distributed system. It is included as part of most modern Unix systems, lies at the heart of Microsoft's Active Directory, and is the underlying technology in the University's EASE system.

A tutorial on Kerberos takes place in Appleton Tower on the afternoon of 7th March, to provide a general introduction and technical background.

A range of meetings

The Kerberos tutorial is of vital interest to some members of the Forum, and of no interest at all to others. The intention is to provide something for everyone, so future meetings will appeal to different sub-sets of the Forum. If you would like to see a meeting on a specific topic, please suggest it to any member of the Forum committee.

The Forum mailing list

The IT Professionals' Forum maintains a mailing list through which it circulates items of news and interest. If you would like to join this list, please send the message **subscribe ITForum** to majordomo@lists.ed.ac.uk.

The Forum website

For details of all the above: <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/ucsinfo/cttees/itforum/>

Nick Stroud (IS)

Computing Labs: 2007 upgrade

Initial plans have been made for the annual upgrade of the University's open-access computing labs, to be implemented over the Summer vacation. We welcome comment on these proposals, with the aim of finalising core features by April and the complete strategy by May.

It is likely that some PC seats in the Main Library will be lost in the coming session due to the redevelopment project (see page 4), but over 200 PCs in the Hugh Robson Basement should offset any temporary loss in the Main Library. There is a possibility that the open-access lab in High School Yards will move in the coming year; otherwise, there are no plans for any overall lab changes.

The primary aim of this year's replacement programme is to replace all 312 four-year-old PCs with the current *SelectPC* configuration – the 'all-in-one' case design from Dell. About 60 of the cascaded PCs will replace Library Catalogue PCs (OPACs) in the Main Library. Surplus four-year-old PCs could again be sold to Schools.

The Library Laptop Loan service has been in operation for three years. There are now 37 laptops available for loans of up to three days, at the Main Library, Darwin Library and Divinity Library. We plan to buy 30 new laptops to replace old ones, to accommodate increasing demand from library sites, and to provide a new service at the Easter Bush Veterinary Centre Library.

The entire Apple Macintosh stock was replaced in 2005 with Mac Minis, so no replacements are needed this year.

Software issues

Development, testing, documentation and training for Microsoft Windows Vista will not be complete in time for this Summer, so we propose to continue with Windows XP Professional on PCs for session 2007–2008. We will continue to use MacOS 10.4.x on the Macintosh systems.

IS provides core software applications that are maintained centrally, and updates them as required. We believe there is no need to update the current versions of the majority of 'core' applications, but will respond to reasonable requests made **before 1st April 2007**.

For 'School' applications, the Desktop Services Team must be provided with software media and configuration instructions by **1st May 2007**.

These deadlines are necessary to allow essential preparation work to be done in a timely manner.

There is a possibility that we will be able to provide OpenOffice V2.1 in all open-access labs.

Full details of the proposals are available at http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/fmd/central_labs.html

Please send feedback to desktop.team@ed.ac.uk.

Graham Newton, Jim Sheach, Mike Baillie (IS)

New staff discussion forum project

A project is currently under way to deliver a Staff Discussion Forum, sponsored by Human Resources. A new service will be available from the end of June.

The project aims to promote the development of communities of mutual interest via discussion within the University. Already several other units have recognised this as a useful way to:

- Share ideas, views and opinions diversely within a framework of managed topics;
- Highlight best practice and experience;
- Advise and inform decisions by engaging with colleagues;
- Retain a searchable, transparent discussion history;
- Encourage inclusion and participation.

Details for the project are at <http://www.projects.ed.ac.uk/areas/infservices/myedChannels/DIRo66/>

Please contact me if you might be interested in this new service (email stephen.smith@ed.ac.uk, tel 509299).

Stephen Smith (IS)

MyEd upgrade: coming soon

Work is now well under way with the project to upgrade the MyEd web-portal, and the project team has been concentrating on what the new version will contain.

A lot of channels have been added since MyEd was launched in 2004, and with the new version come better tools for targeting this content more specifically at user communities. We aim to simplify user layouts, and have been conducting several rounds of 'card-sorting' exercises with members of various MyEd communities, to give us a sense of what content is most important, who it's important to, and how it should be grouped. We are currently finishing off the analysis of this information, and will soon know what the default set of tabs and channels for various types of users will contain.

The new management tools and new default layout will come with a cost however; we will not be able to transfer your existing MyEd tabs and channels to the new version. We will be able to provide a 'blueprint' that you can use to re-create your layout if you need to, and we will be out and about giving advice and training to make sure that all users are well supported through the upgrade.

More information about the project – including analysis of the card-sorting exercise – is at <http://www.projects.ed.ac.uk/areas/infservices/portals/DIRo58/>

The planned release date for the new MyEd is late April, slightly before the launch of the new University Website. If you have any comments on MyEd, or its upgrade, please use the feedback link at the bottom of any MyEd page.

Anne-Marie Scott (IS)

Main Library Redevelopment Project

The University's Strategic Project Group, chaired by Angus Currie, met last month, and was pleased with the progress being made towards transforming the University's Main Library building into a fitting space for learning and research in the 21st century.

Following external consultancy, we have decided to carry out the redevelopment floor by floor in the sequence: 5 & 6, ground, 1, 2, 3, 4. This plan has significant benefits for users, in ensuring better access to study space and less disruption for the collections, while at the same time ensuring that more functions reach their final destination sooner, minimising double moves.

Construction on floors 5 & 6 will commence at the end of April, and the early stages of the work will be quiet. A partnership charter will be developed once the contractor is appointed, and Main Library users and staff will be kept well informed through the MLRP website and the plasma screen at the Library entrance.

Various projects to vacate the 6th and 5th floors are complete – these floors are now eerily empty. EDINA staff have moved to Causewayside House. Data Library services continue on the second floor of the Main Library, and Special Collections has moved to the area vacated by EDINA, with telephone and email unchanged; see <http://www.is.ed.ac.uk/MLRP/news/speccoll.html>

The Library Research Annexe (LRA) opened on schedule in December, and has since had several reader visits and delivered numerous items back to the Main and site libraries. Opening hours and service levels are shown at <http://www.lib.ed.ac.uk/resources/collections/specdivision/LRA.html>

In preparing to set up the LRA, Library staff made best efforts to identify lower-usage collections to move. There is a process for requesting the restoration of items from the LRA to the Main Library, but it must be noted that for everything retrieved, space will have to be made by putting something else out to the LRA in its place.

The work to design the Ground Floor is progressing steadily. The architects are now developing detailed plans from the original specification for the functions on this floor – reception/security, helpdesk, course book collection, study space, group study space, exhibition area(s) and café. A second set of student focus groups has been held to discuss the new Ground Floor; these were organised by EUSA, and were extremely useful.

From this month there will be a total of 1,750 user spaces in the Main Library, increasing to around 2,000 study spaces by the end of the project. Once floors 5 & 6 have been returned to use, this number will never



fall below 1,800. As the project develops, there will be a greater variety of types of study zones than at present, and this will include quiet spaces, spaces where conversation is encouraged, group learning spaces, and spaces with fixed computers. Wireless access will be available throughout the building. The location of the collections in the redeveloped Main Library is now under active discussion; a paper on this topic has recently been added to the project website.

Disability issues are being dealt with by an ongoing audit process. The architects manage the audit, with input from Estates and Buildings and the Information Services Disability Advisory Group.

We are developing a communications strategy, which will include a dedicated MLRP group and the use of the plasma screen at the Library entrance.

The project website is <http://www.is.ed.ac.uk/MLRP/>
Sheila Cannell (IS)

Midnight opening in the Main Library

The Main Library is now open until midnight on Sundays, and will be until mid June. The arrangements after normal closing at 7pm will be the same as during extra exam opening; that is, the building will be under the control of a security company, study space and PCs will be open and available up to floor 2, and self services such as self-issue machines and photocopiers will be available. The Reserve Collection will close at the normal time.

Extra exam opening until midnight every night will start as usual in April.

Students have recently been pushing strongly for this extension, and the University wants to widen and increase access to all staff and students, so IS is keen to extend hours wherever it can.

Pam Clouston (IS)

Website Development Project update

The Project's user research is continuing to inform development of the new website. We have been running the website survey for three months now and are still looking for more web managers to link to it. We've also recently started a series of emotional response tests which are collecting feedback to inform the development of the website's look and feel.

Emotional response testing

We have been using emotional response testing to provide data for the development of a graphic design for the new website. Research has shown that users make up their minds about a website in the blink of an eye (see <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/4616700.stm>), so it's important that the development of a new look-and-feel is as informed as possible.

We have set up online tests for a range of audiences, including University staff. If you can spare 15 minutes, please share your views on a range of website screenshots by visiting <http://www.ed.ac.uk/survey/ert/staff/>

We need to recruit external users of the website, so if you know of anyone who might be happy to help, please contact Neil Allison (tel 509513, email website.project@ed.ac.uk). We have created several tests specifically for defined external user groups, so please don't direct them to the University staff version quoted above.

Website survey

The survey has been running for almost four months, and is currently averaging over 200 responses per month. Reports summarising responses from a number of groups including staff and current students are published monthly at <http://www.ed.ac.uk/websiteproject/documentation/reports.html>

The number of links to the survey is growing, but at the moment we don't have any from Colleges or Schools. For us to get a true measure of user opinion, *we need more links to the survey*.

Please contact Bryan Martin (email web-comment@ed.ac.uk) if you intend to link from your website, as it's important for the Project Team to maintain a record of who is linking to the survey. As the Project develops, the location of this form may change and we want to ensure that everyone can keep their links up to date.

More information

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

If you'd like to discuss the development of the new website, or contribute your views, please contact Dawn Ellis (tel 506379, email website.project@ed.ac.uk).

Neil Allison (CAM)

IT training: new dates ready for booking

New dates for IT courses offered by Information Services have been published, and places are available for booking. From March to August we will run over 150 full- or half-day courses in 50 different technical areas. All courses are free to most staff and postgraduates at Edinburgh University.

The latest addition to our catalogue is a half-day Thunderbird course, covering sending and receiving email, handling attachments, managing email, creating mail archives, extensions and themes.

Dates for March and April are shown below; later dates and course synopses are available on our website. Please book online at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/usd/cts/courses/>

Date	Course	Venue*
March Mon 5	Introduction to SPSS	GS
Tue 13	Scanning Tutorial	KB
Tue 13	Using EDINA Digimap	GS
Tue 13	Intro to Visualising Data in ArcGIS 9	GS
Wed 14	Minitab	GS
Thu 15	Word Intermediate	GS
Tue 20	Reference Manager	KB
Tue 20	Excel Introduction	GS
Wed 21	Producing a Thesis	GS
Wed 21	FileMaker	GS
Mon 26	PowerPoint	GS
Tue 27	HTML and Web Authoring	GS
Wed 28	Access Introduction	GS
Thu 29	PhotoShop	GS
Thu 29	EndNote	GS
April Mon 2	Dreamweaver	GS
Thu 4	Intermediate SPSS	GS
Tue 10	Excel Advanced	GS
Wed 11	Database Design	GS
Wed 11	Editing Web Pages with Contribute	GS
Wed 18	SQL	GS
Wed 18	Word Introduction	GS
Thu 19	Unix 1: Introduction	KB
Thu 19	Access Application Development 1	GS
Thu 19	Introduction to InDesign	GS
Mon 23	Reference Manager	GS
Mon 23	HTML and Web Authoring	GS
Tue 24	Introduction to Computing	GS
Tue 24	Introduction to Mac OS X Part 1	GS
Wed 25	Unix 2	KB
Wed 25	Excel Introduction	GS
Wed 25	Thunderbird	GS
Thu 26	Video Editing	GS
Mon 30	Access Introduction (1)	GS

* Venues: GS, George Square area; KB, King's Buildings

Jenni Reeves (IS)

Software news: SPSS and Minitab

IS Software Services has received the latest Windows versions – 15 – of SPSS and Minitab; please contact software.services@ed.ac.uk to order a copy. The new versions will be available for supported desktop PCs later in the year.

We propose to leave both SPSS and Minitab at version 14 in the open-access labs for academic year 2007–2008. If you would like to discuss, object to or agree with this proposal, please email statistical.systems@ed.ac.uk.

Frances Provan (IS)

New datasets

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

- British Household Panel Survey, Waves 1–14, 1991–2005
- British Household Panel Survey, Waves 1–13, 1991–2004, Time-Use, Leisure and Social Membership Teaching Dataset
- Human Capital and Social Position in Britain: Creating a Measure of Wage-earning Potential from BHPS Data
- Millennium Cohort Study: Second Survey, 2003–2005
- Scottish Graduate Migration and Retention: A Case Study of the University of Edinburgh Cohort, 2000
- Scottish Medieval Prices, 1263–1542
- Scottish Minorities Survey, 2003–2004
- Wages and Prices in Scotland, c1580–1780
- World Values Survey, 1981–2000 (2006 version)

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

Stuart Macdonald (IS)

Digital Preservation Award 2007

Are you completing an exceptional digital preservation project? If so, why not apply for the Digital Preservation Award, worth £5,000?

This is the 11th anniversary of the Conservation Awards, sponsored by Sir Paul McCartney, and the third year to include the prestigious Digital Preservation Award, which recognises the many new initiatives being carried out by museums, libraries, galleries and archives in the challenging field of digital preservation.

To be eligible for the Award, a project must demonstrate leadership and advancement in digital preservation which will benefit the UK. It must focus on preserving digital materials (whether “born digital” or digitised copies), rather than on the use of digitisation as a preservation reformatting tool. Only projects that have been completed by 31st March 2007 will be considered.

Further information about the Conservation Awards is available at <http://www.conservationawards.org.uk/>

Carol Jackson (Digital Preservation Coalition)

Call for e-Science papers

The Sixth UK e-Science All Hands Meeting – AHM 2007 – will be held on 10–13 September 2007 at the East Midlands Conference Centre in Nottingham.

The meeting will provide a forum in which e-Science projects from all disciplines can be discussed, and where the results from projects can be demonstrated. The conference will feature presentations by groups throughout the UK who are active in e-Science projects, along with poster sessions, mini-workshop sessions, demonstrations, tutorials, and birds-of-a-feather sessions. The schedule will include a number of invited Keynote speakers involved in leading Grid and e-Science activities.

The deadline for submissions is 16th April 2007. Details of the format for the papers, and how to submit, are available at <http://www.allhands.org.uk/>

The next International Summer School in Grid Computing will take place on 8–20 July 2007, in the Gripsholmsviken Hotell & Konferens in Mariefred, Sweden. Students from all over the world are invited to apply for this well-established School, now in its fifth year. Further details of the School, an article on doing ‘smart science’ with e-Science and much else are available in the NeSC Newsletter at <http://www.nesc.ac.uk/news/newsletter/January07.pdf>

Alison McCall (NeSC)

Working with deaf students? British Sign Language dictionaries online

The C&IT dictionary contains approximately 1,500 signs covering concepts related to technology, such as data representation, hardware, Internet, managing data, programming, security, software and systems design. The dictionary is at <http://www.qiaresources4ict.net/>



The signs were collected by Judith Mole of Direct Line Services from a large group of deaf computer and British Sign Language (BSL) specialists. The dictionary was designed primarily to support deaf students, interpreters and communication support workers, and is also of use to BSL tutors, lecturers and families. The website is freely available and each individual clip can be downloaded to enhance teaching and learning materials.

For more information, email judithm@directlearn.co.uk.

For BSL sites covering different curricular areas see:

- <http://www.engineeringsigns.ac.uk/>
- <http://www.sciencesigns.ac.uk/>
- <http://www.artsigns.ac.uk/>

Hugh Dailly (JISC Regional Support Centres)

eLearning news

Bids invited for e-learning Project Fund 2007–2008

Since the first call in 2003, 52 projects have received awards ranging from £11k to £196k: interest in e-learning is both highly innovative and widespread across the Colleges and Support Groups.

After taking account of costs already committed for multi-year projects, the finance available for 2007–2008 is around £300,000. This time only one-year projects will be funded. We will favour smaller bids to maximise the number of projects.

As in previous years, it is anticipated that project bids will fall into two broad categories: enhancement of an existing course; or creation of new courses.

The criteria for the bidding process and application forms are available from <http://www.elearn.malts.ed.ac.uk/pelf/>

The closing date for this round will be noon on 10th May 2007.

Jeff Haywood (IS)

IS eLearning Team move

The IS eLearning Team has moved to the Main Library Building in George Square: turn right after the turnstiles. If you would like to meet us or see more of our work, please drop in, or email elearnhelp@ed.ac.uk.

WebCT Vista

The IS eLearning Team offers a range of support activities and resource materials for staff using WebCT Vista. If you would like assistance with the creation, management or monitoring of your WebCT Vista courses, please refer first to the WebCT Vista support webpages, which offer staff:

- a range of factsheets, modules and animated tutorials about WebCT Vista and its tools;
- details of forthcoming WebCT Vista training courses;

- news updates on the WebCT Vista service;
- answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) about WebCT Vista and its use.

Online support for WebCT Vista is at <http://www.elearn.malts.ed.ac.uk/webct/>

Just a game? Report on computer gaming

Last October's call for information from anyone using computer games in teaching and learning has resulted in the report *Learning in Immersive Worlds: a review of game-based learning*, which has just been published at http://www.jisc.ac.uk/eli_outcomes.html

Podcasting Workshops

The Learning Lab runs one-day Podcasting Workshops for educators, at beginners' and advanced levels. The Learning Lab is at the University of Wolverhampton's Telford Campus, in Shropshire, and its work is described at <http://www.learninglab.org.uk/>

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Symposium: Learning Communities

A one-day symposium on 3rd April at Glasgow University will look at the role Learning Communities can play in supporting and enhancing scholarship across the Higher Education sector. There is further information at

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/learn/>
How do students engage with learning?

The 4th LDHEN Symposium and the inaugural meeting of the Association for Learning Development in H.E. (ALDinHE) will be held at Bournemouth University on 12th April 2007. For details, email enquiries.ldhensymposium@bournemouth.ac.uk, or see <http://www.lincoln.ac.uk/ldhen/>

eLearning at the Cusp

A one-day international conference at Staffordshire University on 30th May 2007 looks at 'Technology Supported Learning in Higher Education: emergent futures; paradigms for practice'. Keynote speakers include Sian Bayne of Edinburgh. There are details at <http://www.staffs.ac.uk/elearnconf/>
6th International Conference on Web-based Learning (ICWL 2007)
This annual international conference on web-based learning, organised by the Hong Kong Web Society (HKWS), will be held in Edinburgh on 15–17 August 2007. The first ICWL was held in Hong Kong in 2002.

Full details are available from the conference website, at <http://www.hkws.org/events/icwl2007/>

Wilma Alexander (IS)

Robot marking on horizon

The UK's second largest exam board is testing a computerised system which marks essays without a human examiner. Developers preparing the system for a dummy trial by Edexcel on GCSE-style scripts next year believe it is accurate and economical, but authors, academics and teachers have attacked the idea, fearing it will be unable to appreciate sophisticated essays. The Pearson Knowledge Technologies system rates essays for content, syntax, style and spelling, without human help. It is already used in several parts of the US, where it has attracted a lot of controversy. Critics say it deals poorly with metaphors and reads for vocabulary rather than meaning. The sentence "the cat ate the pin cushion," for example, could score the same as "the pin cushion ate the cat". See

<http://www.tes.co.uk/2316305>

Caroline Porteous (JISC Centres)



Stargazing videoseminars



Which Wiki?

A recording of 'Which Wiki?', the IT Stargazing Group's February videoseminar, is now available at <http://www.itfutures.ed.ac.uk/>

Leading the discussion were Chris Adie, Stephen Vickers, Wilma Alexander, Susan Graham, Mark Wetton, Ed Dee, Charlotte Waelde, Morag Watson, and Hamish Macleod. Topics covered included: different ways of providing a Wiki; the need for guidelines in this area; and the acute need for a Wiki service within the University. It was reported that a Wiki service will be provided by IS in the near future.

Semantic markup and structured information

The next videoseminar, at 3:30pm on 14th March, is 'Semantic markup and structured information'. Speakers include Dave Robertson (Informatics) and Ken Currie (CAPDM Ltd, and ex-eLearning Consultant to HSS).

Is it feasible to express complex research models using XML, rather than coding in Fortran or other languages? The advantages of using XML include ease of extending models, freedom from complex programs, and possibilities of sharing and discussing models with other research groups – but will this scale across different disciplines?

Jean Ritchie (IS)

The Usenix LISA Conference

The Usenix LISA conference (<http://www.usenix.org/events/lisa07/>) is the foremost worldwide gathering for everyone interested in the technical and administrative issues of running a large computing facility. This year, I will be chairing the conference, which will be in Dallas in November.

LISA is not a purely academic conference, and many people involved in IT support in the University should find the programme interesting. Many computing staff within the University have relevant expertise which would be welcome in the form of a paper, a poster, or some less formal presentation.

If you are interested in contributing, or attending, or would just like to know more about possibilities, please get in touch (email dcpaul@inf.ed.ac.uk).

I would be happy to lend my support to any applications for funding.

Paul Anderson (Informatics)

MIS lunchtime seminar

What do the RAE Data Repository, WISARD, Jobs website, WebFIRST and MyEd Event Booking have in common? They are all bespoke web-based applications designed and built by MIS.

Come to the next MIS Lunchtime Seminar to get to know more about the team and how we do this work. Find out about our methodology, way of working and the tools we use. You will hear about the challenges we regularly face and will get a glimpse of what the future holds with a preview of how the introduction of service-oriented architecture (SOA) will impact on and improve software development over the next few years.

The Seminar is on 14th March in Old College, repeated on the 16th at The King's Buildings, and starts with an informal buffet lunch at 12:30pm. It is open to anyone who is interested in the work of MIS. With MIS merging into IS as a result of the Kenway review, this event may be of particular interest to staff across the University who have not previously worked with MIS.

Further details, including locations and how to book through MyEd, are available from <http://www.mis.ed.ac.uk/services/seminars/MIS-LTS-Mar2007-agenda.shtml>

Liam McDowell (IS)

BCS: computer security

The British Computer Society local branch is holding an open meeting on *computer security* at 6:30pm on 14th March, at the Royal Scots Club, 29/30 Abercromby Place, EH3 6QE. It will be addressed by Ed Gibson, security advisor to Microsoft UK, and Russell George of Insight Computing.

Further details are at <http://www.edinburgh.bcs.org/events/070314.htm>

David Muxworthy (BCS)

Something completely different: Fairtrade

There will be an open day on 8th March in Appleton Tower Concourse, from 10am to 4pm, to celebrate the third anniversary of our becoming Scotland's first Fairtrade University.

Everyone is welcome, to visit and chat with Fairtrade producers, suppliers and campaigners. Further details are at <http://www.pps.ed.ac.uk/news/newsitem.cfm?MyID=208>

(Editor)

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BITS on the Web:

<http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/bits/>

BITS RSS feed:

<http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/bits/bits.rss>

Some acronyms explained:

<http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/ucsinfo/acronyms.html>

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 April *BITS*:

Friday 16th March