

IT services over the holiday period: monitoring, reporting, restoration

All IT-based services will run on an as-is basis, with limited cover over the holiday period. Most IS staff will not be working from 24th December to 4th January.

We are therefore putting a monitoring service in place, to give you the best information we can about the status of the most important services. If you try and log in to one of some key web services and it has failed, you will be redirected to a web page which will let you know when we will attempt to re-start the service.

Our highest priority over this period will be for online applications from prospective students – part of EUCLID. We are currently considering other services for which we can provide a monitoring service.

The monitoring service may be able to rectify some faults and so restore the affected services quickly. However, there are faults which will require a broader skill set than the monitoring team has, so we are arranging for a fuller team to be available on one of the days between the public holidays, to review any unresolved issues.

This service is being provided through the good will of staff in various IS Divisions and Teams, and will help us to develop a more mature permanent monitoring service and restoration capability. As you might expect, our cover on the four public holidays during the period will be very limited.

Fuller details of the monitoring service will be on the IS website at <http://www.is.ed.ac.uk/>

Jeff Haywood (VP-IS)

IS vacation services

All IS sites, including all libraries, close at 5pm (some earlier) on Tuesday 23rd December, and open again at 9am (Main Library 8:30am) on Monday 5th January.

Library opening in vacation

The Main Library will be open for two days between Christmas and New Year, on Monday 29th and Tuesday 30th December, from 10:30am to 5:30pm. Access will be by valid student/staff card only, with no new registrations possible, as these will be self-service days.

There will be access to open collections on all floors, study space, computers and printers, self-issue machines, return of borrowed items, photocopying, and self-service refreshments.

Computing support on the 4th floor will be the only staffed service. We hope users on these days will complete the short survey available at the entry point, to help our planning for future years.

Hugh Robson open-access lab

The open-access lab in the basement of the Hugh Robson Building will be open on Monday to Wednesday, 29–31 December, from 9am to 4pm. Access will be by student/staff card and PIN.

Jeff Haywood (VP-IS)

Save it!

When you leave for your holiday, please switch off your office equipment – at the socket. This is as much a fire safety issue as it is part of the University's *Switch and Save* campaign to reduce energy bills and CO₂ emissions. In previous years over a quarter of the University's PCs have been left running unnecessarily over the break.

David Somervell (Sustainability Office)

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Improving the Student Experience

IS-Applications delivered one of its fastest projects of recent times when 'Improving The Student Experience' went live last month. It took just over two weeks to create and test a MyEd channel, a wiki, and a PHP Forum based on open source PHPBB 3.0.2.

Following Edinburgh's showing in the latest National Student Satisfaction survey, senior University management requested the delivery of a software mechanism to engage the student community with a dialogue around the student experience and in particular about feedback and assessment.

The requirement was for a channel in MyEd linked to a wiki containing more detailed information, which takes students to a Discussion Forum where they can post to threads. The MyEd channel is the front door to this process which students can easily find, and the wiki helps them to understand what is going on in the Forum.

The *Student Experience* channel is on students' 'myStuff' tab; staff can add it to their layout if they wish to use it. The wiki space is at <https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/StudentExperience>
The *Student Experience* Discussion Forum is at <https://www.student-experience.ed.ac.uk/>

This work has put in place tools which Schools and Colleges can use to provide students with better and faster feedback. The full story is at <http://www.mis.ed.ac.uk/news/newsitem.cfm?MyID=275>

Liza Zamboglou (IS)

Student Experience Forum Information

This forum has been established so that all students at the University of Edinburgh may express their views about the feedback that they receive in their courses. We want to know what works well for you, and where things could be better. Sharing your experiences with other students is one way to find out where good feedback and assessment take place, We would like you to cite examples of feedback that you regard as effective, and also tell us about bad practice.

However, the forum is not intended to be a "complaints channel" and does not replace normal means of communication with your course organiser or tutors about the quality of feedback and assessment in your course. This can be done through staff-student liaison committees or directly via your Class Representatives.

Everyone posts to the forum with their user name (for students this is their student number) - there is no anonymous option. We intend in the next week or so to offer an option so that we can all change from this identifier to our preferred names.

We hope you will tell us what you think in response to the questions that we have seeded into the forum. If you have ideas for a new topic or ways in which we might improve the wiki and forum sites themselves, please let us know through the topic called "Suggestions".

[Click here to go back to the Wiki](#)

It is currently Thu Nov 13, 2008 2:40 pm Last visit was: Mon Nov 10, 2008 5:24 pm

Mark forums read

FORUM	TOPICS	POSTS	LAST POST
Feedback This forum contains various topics related to course feedback, details can be found within each topic	4	10	by jhaywood on Wed Nov 12, 2008 8:02 am
Assessment This forum contains topics related to course assessments, further details within the topics.	1	1	by jhaywood on Wed Nov 05, 2008 5:41 pm
Suggestions Please tell us about ways in which we might improve the value of the feedback and assessment process.	1	1	by jhaywood on Wed Nov 05, 2008 5:41 pm

Digital Curation Centre conference success

The last quarter of 2008 has seen some major events for the Digital Curation Centre – DCC – that is based in the University. Most recently, our fourth International Digital Curation Conference was held in Edinburgh between 2nd and 3rd December, attracting a high level of international interest. From all reports, it was judged a considerable success – which is fortunate, as the new team appointed to undertake a formal evaluation of the DCC was present! This independent evaluation, which runs from now until February 2009, will inform the JISC's deliberations over a proposed Phase 3 for the DCC (Phase 2 concludes in February 2010). A prolific range of commentary on the individual conference sessions can be enjoyed at the DCC blog at <http://digitalcuration.blogspot.com/>

A week prior to the conference, the DCC held its second Research Data Management Forum (RDMF) in Manchester. The RDMF is a unique community of practitioners, including data managers, librarians, researchers and agents of policy. The overarching theme was Roles & Responsibilities for Effective Data Management. The individual topics explored included:

- 1 Roles and responsibilities associated with data curation and good stewardship.
- 2 The core skills required for these roles.
- 3 Ways in which the various stakeholders might acquire the required skills.
- 4 Models and working practice to facilitate the exchange of skills.

The breakout groups focused on the aspirations and expectations in three distinct communities, including library and information services. Material from these groups and the outcomes they inspired has been posted at the RDMF page at <http://www.dcc.ac.uk/data-forum/>

You are encouraged to join the debate on the RDMF blog at <http://data-forum.blogspot.com/>

Graham Pryor (IS)

Procurement achievements recognised

The University has won yet more awards for its eProcurement systems and IT recycling services.

The Procurement Office team were finalists in the hotly contested Government Opportunities 'GO' Scotland Public Procurement Excellence Awards 2008, and along with the Energy and Sustainability Office were finalists in GO Scotland Sustainability awards.

George Sked, Assistant Director, was a finalist for Individual Excellence and congratulations go to Andy Kordiak, Equipment Procurement Manager in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, who was the overall winner in Scotland for the Individual Excellence Award 2008, competing against others from the whole of the Scottish public sector community.

We thank all the users of our eProcurement services: ePS (eProcurement Scotland), SciQuest, InTend, and in Library and Catering.

For more information, including a full report of the GO awards in the 'Newsflash' section, please see our website at <http://www.pps.ed.ac.uk/>

Karen Bowman (Procurement)

IS-Applications support for research projects

You may not know that the IS Applications Division can support research projects as well as the University's core IT infrastructure.

Our development team can assist you in the design of databases, Java programs and web-based user interfaces. We can create dynamic applications to manage and manipulate research collections and other data, including facilities for collaborators and researchers from other institutions to explore the information. We will design the database schemas, web interfaces and application analysis to meet your research requirements, and will take on the full process of building, testing and deploying the system.

IS-Applications also provides expertise in graphic and multimedia design, web publishing, podcasting and streaming. Our project management team can help you manage your project, either via training your staff or by providing a project manager. Our hosting service can run your software on a resilient infrastructure, using either Windows or Unix, and SQL Server, Oracle or MySQL databases.

If you would like to take advantage of these services, please contact Liam McDowell (email Liam.McDowell@ed.ac.uk) for an initial discussion. It is best if you contact us well in advance of submitting your proposal, so that we can agree a programme of work and provide an accurate estimate of the time and funding that will be required. We can also help you write the technical appendix for your proposal, providing the necessary information in plain English that you can include in your case for support.

Further information is available from the IS-Applications website at <http://www.mis.ed.ac.uk/for/staff/>

Dave Berry (IS)

MyEd milestone



MyEd recently hit an impressive milestone: one million logins in a month.

The momentous target was reached on 29th October (at 11:30pm), by Zara Morrison – currently in Year 2 studying English Literature for a Master of Arts with Honours; Zara visited Old College to receive a £50 Blackwells gift voucher to mark the occasion.

The number of monthly logins to MyEd has been rising steadily ever since we launched the portal over four years ago. Students have been particularly supportive, providing positive feedback through the International Student Barometer.

We knew October would be a busy month and that we might see slightly more traffic, but we were delighted that MyEd reached a million with two days to spare – and continued to climb steadily.

We thank all who have been involved over the years with the MyEd Portal.

Liza Zamboglou (IS)

Corporate IT planning

Planning for Corporate IT projects in 2009–2010 is now well under way.

The timetable and processes to identify, cost and prioritise projects are broadly similar to last year's. The scope has been increased to cover all aspects of University business, including areas such as 'Learning & Teaching', 'Knowledge Transfer' and 'Scholarly Information Resources' as well as administrative business areas. A provisional list of projects has been published, and feedback is now being sought. The final list of projects will be published before Christmas.

Full details are available at http://www.projects.ed.ac.uk/planning/Corporate_IT/

Liam McDowell (IS)

Main Library Redevelopment

Ground Floor Transformation

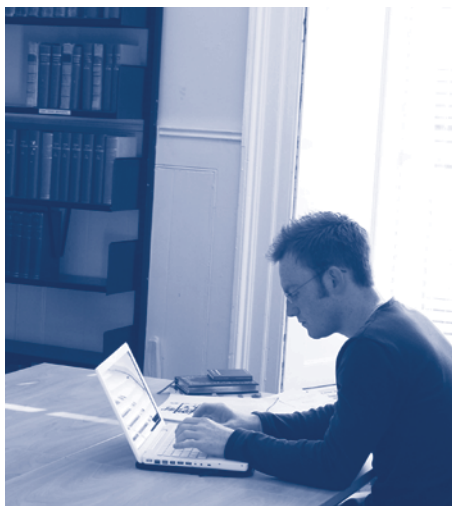
A recent visit to the site has brought home the full impact of the scale of the transformation that is taking place. There is little recognisable about the old Ground Floor, and work is progressing well: the dimensions of the new spaces are starting to take shape as the partition walls go up. (The features such as granite and wood that make the Ground Floor special are still there – but covered up to protect them while work is in progress.)

We have had our first glimpse of the new 'Study Pods', as a mock-up has been installed on site. Designed for group study, these pods will seat up to eight people and be equipped with a PC, LCD screen, whiteboard, and sockets for a laptop and headphones. There are 18 pods going into a great study space on the Ground Floor where learning and conversation will go hand in hand.



Artists impression of study pod, courtesy of architects Lewis & Hickey

Fiona Boyd (IS)



Law & Europa Library redevelopment

The Law & Europa Library received a substantial donation from the Law School Tercentenary 2007 Appeal which permitted the replacement of a motley assembly of tables and chairs with brand new furniture. The Law School provided money for two Laptop Recharging Cabinets and, with Estates and Buildings, new carpets.

We chose a variety of furniture to take account of the need for computing workstations and reading tables (our colour scheme turned out to be rather organic with a hint of Summer: 'Apple' table tops, 'Ocean' carpet, set off by 'Windjammer' and 'Martinique' upholstery).

The need to replace the carpet meant that every book and every book stack had to be moved, and the Library is very grateful to all who helped with this. A great deal has been accomplished with quite limited resources, and we now provide much more acceptable accommodation for our students. Gratifyingly, the Library has been extremely busy since this refurbishment was completed.

Frances Fullarton (IS)

News from the Data Library

DISC-UK DataShare deliverable

A new briefing paper entitled *Data Visualisation Tools: Part 2 – Spatial Data in a Web 2.0 Environment and Beyond* has been published, to discuss and compare a number of spatial data visualisation tools, mashups and initiatives. It can be downloaded in PDF form from the DISC-UK DataShare website at http://www.disc-uk.org/docs/spatial_data_mashup_v2.pdf

The paper discusses and highlights some of the many examples of spatial (or geographic) data mashups using Web 2.0 technologies and geo-browsers, and how they are or can be used in an institutional or collaborative research realm. It also touches on neo-geography and Volunteered Geographic Information (VGI), in addition to other open geo-processing tools and organisations which publish and support the use of spatial data in open ways.

For other project deliverables, including 'Briefing Paper: Part 1', visit <http://www.disc-uk.org/deliverables.html>

Remote Virtual Micro-data Laboratory (VML)

The Virtual Micro-data Laboratory (VML) was launched in 2004 to provide a secure facility for government and academic researchers to access confidential micro-data held by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The VML has primarily been used by researchers to analyse ONS business surveys such as the Annual Business Inquiry.

ONS has recently established a Remote Virtual Micro-data Laboratory in Glasgow (July 2008) with the support of the Scottish Government. To promote this facility, the Micro-data Analysis and User Support team (MAUS) will hold a workshop 'Supporting Regional Analysis with Devolved Administrations' and training session on 23rd January 2009 at the Scottish Government Offices, Glasgow.

For further information contact Thea Thomas (email maus@ons.gov.uk) or visit <http://www.ons.gov.uk/about/who-we-are/our-services/vml/>

Stuart Macdonald (IS)

Website Development Project

The Project spent the Summer laying the foundations for a rollout of Polopoly beyond the central, theme-driven University website. The first new sections and a round of School-level consultations are scheduled before the end of the year.

New sections

You probably noticed new areas of the Polopoly-driven site appearing over the Summer. The editorial partnership responsible for the initial launch continues to grow the site and remove legacy content from the old site.

Accommodation Services has been working closely with the Project and the Corporate Services Rollout Coordinator, Rose Dewar, to get its new site ready to go live. Martin Morrey, the new web editor and Rollout Coordinator for **Information Services**, is carrying out a major research and consultation exercise to prepare for the IS move to publishing with Polopoly.

Consultation with Schools

The Project has been consulting with heads of School and their web publishing representatives in preparation for the first Schools coming on board. Our aim is to identify a shared vision and some common web publishing goals to ensure a smooth and consistent take-up of the new web publishing framework. These sessions will continue into the new year.

Ongoing development

The Project is committed to continuous improvement, both for the website and for Polopoly – the publishing tool we are using. It is essential that this development is based on research and evidence, in order to meet end-user needs. Research with prospective students has highlighted areas where a few tweaks to the interface will improve the usability of the website. Changes are currently being tested and you should start to see improvements over the next few months.

Similarly, we are working with the Polopoly user group to identify how we can improve the publishing system interface and the related training and support materials. Again, changes will be trialled and implemented based on this feedback.

Management and location changes

Following the pilot launch, the Project moved from Communications and Marketing into Information Services. Jeff Haywood, Vice Principal for Knowledge Management, is now the Project Sponsor, and Richard Kenway – Head of the School of Physics – became the Chair of the Project Board in October.

Dawn Ellis (IS)

Your help with the IS website would be appreciated!

Information Services is planning the redevelopment of its web presence, and would very much like your feedback to help prioritise this work.

The primary goal of the redevelopment is to make it easier for students and staff to find the support information, contacts and solutions they need for all library, computing, eLearning, multimedia and data services.

If you would like to have your say – which should only take about five minutes of your time – please complete the IS Task Survey by going to <http://www.is.ed.ac.uk/tasksurvey>

Martin Morrey (IS)

Network charges updated...

Network charges for the current session have just been published at <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/nsd/charging/nsd-cho809.html>

Both the Network Maintenance charge and the Network Service charges have been increased this year, by 7.5%.

This is the first increase in Network Service charges since 2005, and the first increase in Network Maintenance charges for over four years. It is planned to review both charges annually from now on, to take account of salary inflation and any increased costs.

Jim Leitch (IS)

SPSS renewal

It's the time of year for the annual renewal of SPSS codes...

The Codes warning starts on 1st December, though SPSS will continue to work until the end of January 2009. Please note that any SPSS installation after 1st December will require one of the new codes.

For all current subscribers, billing should have reached you by the end of November; if it has not, please contact is.software.codes@ed.ac.uk. Pricing is the same as last year.

We hope to start distributing SPSS 17 in mid-January; more details next month and on our new wiki (EASE login required) at <https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/pages/viewrecentblogposts.action?key=SoftwareServices>

There is full information about SPSS licensing and renewal at

<http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/usd/stats/spsscodes.html>

Software Services home page:

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

Statistical Systems home page:

<http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/usd/stats/>

Frances Provan (IS)

Perspectives on PeLF: evaluation final call

The data-gathering phase for the evaluation of the Principal's eLearning Fund (which will be reporting in Spring 2009) is coming to an end. As part of the evaluation we have set out to obtain views from a wide range of sources and perspectives. Anyone who has not yet been involved in this process is very much encouraged to participate by relaying their observations to the Project Officer, sian.gowans@education.ed.ac.uk.

All observations are welcome; in particular you may wish to comment on:

- the operation and general impact of the Fund;
- the projects that have been taken forward under the aegis of PeLF (2003–2007);
- the point that has been reached in eLearning;
- the future development of eLearning in local and wider University contexts.

All contributions will be treated confidentially. The evaluation team (Charles Anderson, Kate Day, Sian Gowans and Hamish Macleod) will be very grateful for your assistance.

Sian Gowans (Education)

Need to produce video?

The University's video production unit has moved to Communications & Marketing, to provide an expanded range of services to meet audio and video needs.

Services include filming and editing short promotional films about the activities of individual Schools and Units, recording interviews with members of staff for online broadcast (and dissemination to external websites), and quality recording of high-profile lectures and events for podcasting – helping to bring websites to life.

The unit also offers media training days to help people prepare for radio and TV interviews, with playback and analysis. All the equipment we use is of broadcast quality, and we have professionally-equipped television studios at Moray House.

As a rule we have to charge for these services, but the rates are extremely competitive. The following examples give a flavour of the unit's recent work:

- this Summer's General Council visit to Washington:
<http://www.ed.ac.uk/news/2008/july/washington>
- this year's James Tait Black awards:
<http://www.ed.ac.uk/about/2.419/tait-black/ceremony>
- an interview with Professor Tom Devine:
<http://www.ed.ac.uk/news/all-news/diaspora>

For more information and contact details please see <http://www.cam.ed.ac.uk/video-production/>

Rob Tomlinson (CAM)

Technology's impact on Higher Education

A report produced by the Economist magazine's Intelligence Unit looks at the increasing impact technology is having on education. It begins:

"Technological innovation, long a hallmark of academic research, may now be changing the very way that universities teach and students learn. For academic institutions, charged with equipping graduates to compete in today's knowledge economy, the possibilities are great. Distance education, sophisticated learning-management systems and the opportunity to collaborate with research partners from around the world are just some of the transformational benefits that universities are embracing.

"But significant challenges also loom. For all of its benefits, technology remains a disruptive innovation – and an expensive one. Faculty members used to teaching in one way may be loath to invest the time to learn new methods, and may lack the budget for needed support. This paper examines the role of technology in shaping the future of higher education."

You can find the full report at

[http://www.nmc.org/pdf/Future-of-Higher-Ed-\(NMC\).pdf](http://www.nmc.org/pdf/Future-of-Higher-Ed-(NMC).pdf)

*Hugh Dailly, Caroline Porteous
(JISC Regional Support Centres)*

RCAHMS celebrates centenary

The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland received its royal warrant in 1908. Its role is to identify, survey and interpret the built environment of Scotland, care for the historical items in the National Collection, and promote public understanding and enjoyment of the collection.

The RCAHMS website explains the Commission's work, and acts as a portal to the main RCAHMS database, 'Canmore', which allows users to search the RCAHMS archive and to access more than 100,000 images online. Canmore is free to use, requiring only a simple initial registration, and educational users can then download images free-of-charge for use in their teaching, or use the map-based interface to find significant sites in a local area.

Find out more at <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/>

Alan Muirden (RCAHMS)

Mice turn 40 on the 9th

Douglas Engelbart gave the first public demonstration of the computer mouse on 9th December 1968 at the Fall Joint Computer Conference in San Francisco (along with videoconferencing, teleconferencing, email and hypertext). Happy birthday!

Nick Stroud (IS)

Part- and full-day IT courses

The IS eLearning and IS Skills Development team runs free IT courses and short sessions for University staff and postgraduates. We're based at 19 Buccleuch Place in the central area and also run courses at The King's Buildings. Please see our course dates to the right, and look at our web pages for further details and bookings: <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/usd/cts/courses/>

Date	Course title	Location*
Dec	1 Word Intermediate: Document Layout and Customisation	BP
	2 Creating and Editing Web Pages with Dreamweaver 8	BP
	2 Creating Templates and Managing Websites with Dreamweaver 8	BP
	2 PowerPoint Intermediate: Adding Images	BP
	2 PowerPoint Intermediate: Adding Tables, Graphs and Diagrams	BP
	3 Producing a Thesis using Word	BP
	3 Managing Bibliographies with EndNote	BP
	3 Introduction to Wikis	BP
	4 Mail Merge with Word	BP
	4 Excel Advanced: Manipulating and Managing Data (Part 2)	BP
	8 Editing Web Pages with Contribute	BP
	8 Introduction to Sun Grid Engine (for ECDF users)	BP
	8 Introduction to Basic Shell Scripting (for ECDF users)	BP
	9 Basic Image Manipulation Techniques using PhotoShop	BP
	9 Making the Most of Your Wiki	BP
9 Wikis: What can I do as an Administrator?	BP	
10 Formatting Web Pages with Cascading Style Sheets	BP	
10 PowerPoint: Basic Skills for Creating a Presentation	BP	
11 Excel Introduction: Creating Basic Spreadsheets and Charts	BP	
15 Writing for the Web	BP	
Jan	13 Excel Introduction: Creating Basic Spreadsheets & Charts (Part 1)	BP
	13 By the Numbers: Word Numbered Headings Made Easy (T)	DHT
	14 Introduction to Access Database Management	BP
	14 Introduction to Wikis	BP
	14 PowerPoint: Basic Skills for Creating a Presentation	BP
	15 Creating Web Pages with HTML	BP
	15 Formatting Web Pages with Cascading Style Sheets	BP
	16 Thinking About Using WebCT for the First Time? (T)	DHT
	19 A Brief Introduction to Second Life (T)	DHT
	20 Introduction to Unix	JCMB
	20 Excel Introduction: Creating Basic Spreadsheets & Charts (Part 2)	BP
	22 Basic Image Manipulation Techniques using PhotoShop	BP
	22 WebCT Vista Fundamentals	BP
	22 PowerPoint Intermediate: Adding Tables, Graphs and Diagrams	BP
	22 PowerPoint Intermediate: Adding Movie and Audio Clips	BP
23 Managing Bibliographies with EndNote	BP	
23 Wikis: What can I do as an Administrator?	BP	
23 Writing for the Web	BP	
26 Editing Web Pages with Contribute	BP	
26 SPSS 1: Getting Started with SPSS	BP	
27 PowerPoint Intermediate: Adding Images	BP	
27 PowerPoint Intermediate: Adding Animation Schemes	BP	
29 Making the Most of Your Wiki	BP	

Online IT learning resources

The IS Skills Development team offers free online courses and learning materials to staff. Resources are accessible from anywhere, and provide a convenient alternative to attending a taught course. You could even use them at home over the Christmas break if you wanted to!

A wide range of IT subjects is available, and you can learn from simulations, hands-on exercises, games and videos before taking a test to check your progress.

Subscribe via <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/usd/cts/courses/elearning.html>

Jenni Reeves (IS)

BCS: Skills Framework for the Information Age

The next talk at the Edinburgh branch of the British Computer Society, at 6.30pm on Wednesday 10th December, will be on 'Skills Framework for the Information Age,' in the Informatics Forum, Crichton Street. All are welcome. Further details are at <http://www.edinburgh.bcs.org/events/o81210.htm>

The Skills Framework for the Information Age – SFIA – provides a common reference model for the identification of Information Systems skills, as described on the SFIA Foundation's website at <http://www.sfia.org.uk/>

David Muxworthy (BCS)

(T): lunchtime 'taster' session
(bring your sandwiches!)

* Locations: **BP** – 19 Buccleuch Place
JCMB – room 2009a, The King's Buildings
DHT – Conference Room, David Hume Tower

A serious look at virtual worlds

JISC has published a report called *Serious Virtual Worlds: a scoping study*, which focuses on the use of virtual worlds for education rather than for leisure.

One of the challenges is the plethora of virtual worlds available: it can be hard to choose a suitable world or context. The report reviews different virtual worlds, and case studies provide ideas for further exploration, to help learning practitioners and policy-makers see how virtual worlds can be used in tertiary education.

The report indicates that learners are becoming more central in the use of immersive worlds, creating learning experiences for themselves and adopting a more exploratory mode of learning. In future, learners will play a different and enriched role in forming collaborative learning experiences and choosing how to support their own learning.

The report is at <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/publications/publications/seriousvirtualworldsreport.aspx>

Wilma Alexander (IS)

Another serious look at virtual worlds

JISC CETIS and Eduserv present 'Maximising the effectiveness of virtual worlds in teaching and learning', a joint event on 16th January 2009 at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow.

This free event will provide a range of perspectives on the use of virtual worlds in Higher Education, from experienced practitioners. Attendees will find out why some experts believe that virtual worlds will have a large impact on education.

Full details are at <http://wiki.cetis.ac.uk/CETIS-Eduserv-VW2009>

Rowin Young (JISC CETIS)

Pioneering work at EPCC

The latest EPCC newsletter contains news of several projects which are helping to keep Edinburgh in the forefront of European high-performance computing.

The ADMIRE project – Advanced Data Mining and Integration Research for Europe – will help to exploit the growing wealth in our digital data. The sheer volume of data has increased massively in the wake of advances in storage, pervasive computing and digital instrumentation. The knowledge hidden in digital data is potentially of great benefit to European citizens, science and business, and ADMIRE will help to extract it – starting with demonstrator projects in flood modelling and customer relations.

EUFORIA is a European-funded project to support fusion research; EPCC is helping to run simulations on HECToR in preparation for experiments on ITER. In another project, EPCC is helping to pave the way for possible European involvement with the Large Synoptic Survey Telescope, a US project to generate vast quantities of data from the Milky Way and Solar System.

The EPCC newsletter is available at <http://www.epcc.ed.ac.uk/news/>

Tracy Peet (EPCC)

News from NeSC

The November 2008 National e-Science Centre newsletter is at http://www.nesc.ac.uk/news/newsletter/2008_Nov.pdf

Here you can read about digital jewellery, a clever kitchen that keeps track of your movements, the study of the health problems that come with age ... and much more!

If there is anything you would like to see covered in future issues, please email glaw@nesc.ac.uk.

Gillian Law (NeSC)

University services open day



The major spin-off from the inaugural Open Day for the University's internal services on 20th November is a *Services Catalogue*, which will be kept up to date throughout the year. You can find this at the foot of the 'Support Services' page at <http://www.ed.ac.uk/staff-students/staff/support-services>

Nick Stroud (IS)

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

BITS RSS feed:

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

Some acronyms explained:

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

NB: if you fail to access a URL shown in *BITS*, or if you need information from it in a different format, please email BITS@ed.ac.uk.

Contributions to *BITS* are welcomed.

Copy deadline for January *BITS*:

Wednesday 17th December