

# Information Services Edinburgh Bits



## Information Services takes first step to mobilise the campus



Students are extremely keen to be able to use mobile phones more to support their studies. This was a clear message at this year's eLearning@ed conference, as well as through other channels.

Information Services is keen to deliver the best tools to help the University enhance the student experience. To this end it recently initiated a project to deliver a **Mobile Campus** for the University. The pilot service will initially focus on student needs, and will then be grown in a modular manner, in the light of feedback and liaison, to provide a balanced service which meets wider requirements.

As a first step we distributed a 'Mobile Services 2010' survey to students in March, asking about their handsets, what they use them for, and which potential University services they would most like to see available. We were very pleased with the volume of responses received – 1,989 – implying a high level of interest among students for mobile services..

In summary the survey found that:

- 49% of students surveyed have smartphones.
- Apple accounted for 35% of smart handsets, Nokia 25% and Blackberry 17%.
- 68% of students have monthly contracts.
- 39% have a contract that gives unlimited access to Internet.
- 25% claim to have no Internet access from their handsets.
- 50% of students access email and Facebook through their mobiles several times a day.

The most popular mobile functionality wished by students was access to course information and timetables. The full findings from the survey, including graphs and student feedback, are at [http://www.projects.ed.ac.uk/areas/itservices/integrated/ITS045/Other\\_documents/MobileSurvey2010.shtml](http://www.projects.ed.ac.uk/areas/itservices/integrated/ITS045/Other_documents/MobileSurvey2010.shtml)

Liza Zamboglou (IS)

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A muon passes through Alan Walker (see p5)

## Would you like to host a Virtual Graduation?

The University's first Virtual Graduation, last Autumn, was a tremendous success. It ran in parallel with the conventional graduation in McEwan Hall, and enabled participation by graduands who were unable to come to Edinburgh. It also allowed the involvement of friends and family for whom there was no space in the Hall. This innovative event was reported in BITs in January, and is covered in detail at <https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/VueWiki/Virtual+Graduation>

Information Services invites Schools and programmes to consider hosting a Summer Graduation and/or a Winter Graduation in 2010. This would involve streaming the graduation ceremony in McEwan Hall live on to a screen in Second Life, where a virtual graduation ceremony runs in parallel. Fiona Littleton is the University's Virtual Worlds Development Officer, and will be happy to work with you to host a virtual graduation and to support you and your students throughout.

Virtual graduation is particularly suitable for distance programmes at the University, so that off-campus students can attend a graduation ceremony in Second Life, and for on-campus programmes where McEwan Hall tickets are in short supply, so that family and friends can still see what's going on.

If you'd like to find out more, please email [fiona.littleton@ed.ac.uk](mailto:fiona.littleton@ed.ac.uk).

Fiona Littleton (IS)



## AddressingHistory

EDINA in partnership with the National Library of Scotland (NLS) has been awarded a JISC Rapid Innovations grant to develop an online, 'crowd-sourcing' tool to enable a broad spectrum of users – both in academia and beyond (such as local history groups and genealogists) – to plot a location on a map of any address, street name, advert or listing from digitised historical Scottish Post Office Directories on to a contemporaneous historical map. The geo-coding web tool will greatly enhance both mapping and directory data, and permit original research using the rich contextual perspective the tool will draw out from these combined resources.

Both digitised resources are being provided, without licence restriction and as part of an ongoing digitisation exercise, by the NLS who will also share extensive digital mapping and geo-coding expertise.

During the six-month project AddressingHistory will focus on engaging the community through a tool which will access three eras of Edinburgh mapping and Post Office Directories (1784-5; 1865; 1905-6). The technologies demonstrated will be scalable to the full collection of digitised materials which include 400 Post Office Directories and associated maps covering the whole of Scotland.

We would like to hear from researchers and anyone else who is interested in Edinburgh's history who might like to test the tool when it is developed.

For further information visit [http://edina.ac.uk/projects/addressinghistory\\_summary.html](http://edina.ac.uk/projects/addressinghistory_summary.html)

Stuart Macdonald (IS)

## Edinburgh Compute and Data Facility: major upgrade

The contract has been awarded for the successor to the ECDF High Performance Computing cluster (Eddie). The new system will be supplied by OCF, in partnership with IBM. It will be based on IBM's iDataplex technology, using the latest Intel microprocessors.

New nodes will be introduced, and will provide approximately a fourfold increase in computing power, yet draw significantly less electricity than the nodes they are replacing. The high-performance storage system will receive a significant upgrade to improve performance for all types of data access. We will have a leading-edge architecture based on multiple tiers of storage, from Solid State Disk (SSD), through enterprise-grade high-performance disks, to highly cost-efficient commodity storage, significantly improving the efficiency of each tier in terms of performance, capacity and cost.

Phase 1 of the new system will provide the core infrastructure and a significant computational resource, and is expected to be ready for service in July. Phase 2, scheduled for July 2011, will provide even more computational capacity. The pace of technological development is such that at this point we don't know for certain what the computational power of the second phase will be.

Despite the increase in computational power, the operational costs of the cluster will stay much the same as they are now. It follows therefore that the cost per core-second will reduce from August.

Jean Ritchie (IS)

## Robertson Library moving to the JCM Building



The Robertson Library is moving from the KB Centre to the James Clerk Maxwell Building in June, and will be closed for two weeks as it does so. This is part of the preparation for the creation of a new Library and Learning Resource Centre at The King's Buildings.

The Robertson Library will close on Friday 4th June at 5pm and is expected to re-open on Monday 21st June at 9am. While it is closed, library services will be provided from the Darwin Library. Access to the book and journal collections will not be possible, though users may apply for free inter-library loans for Robertson Library material during the period of the move; please contact the Darwin Library for more information. Items already on loan from the Robertson Library will have extended return dates, but can be returned to the Darwin Library during this period.

The Library is moving to recently-refurbished accommodation at the eastern end of levels 1 and 2 of the JCM Building. The book and journal collections will be on the lower floor, and study space including group study rooms on the upper floor. Access will be via the entrance on level 1 on the north side of the building. The current range of library services will be offered in the new location, and opening hours will continue as at present: Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

### The KB LLRC

The reason for this temporary move to the JCMB is that the University is seeking to create a new KB Library and Learning Resource Centre – the KB LLRC. The existing library building will be demolished later in the year, the current move being timed to minimise disruption to users and to allow the necessary preparatory work to be undertaken by Estates & Buildings later in the Summer.

The KB LLRC will provide a range of different types of study spaces on four floors, including catered study space on the ground floor, and it will accommodate the book collections from the JCM, Robertson and Darwin libraries. It is hoped that it will open in Summer 2012 – capital cashflow permitting. Further information on this project will be published later.

There are no changes to the facilities available in the KB Centre (café, shop, computing labs), although access routes will change at some stages of the work.

Information Services staff will be working hard to minimise disruption to users during this period. If you need further advice or help, please contact:

**Darwin Library Helpdesk:** Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm

Email: [Darwin.Library@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Darwin.Library@ed.ac.uk)  
Tel: 505784

### IS Helpline

Email: [IS.Helpline@ed.ac.uk](mailto:IS.Helpline@ed.ac.uk)  
Tel: 515151

## Historic database of Edinburgh students: update

Since writing about this database in BITS last August, we have managed to secure funding from the Friends of Edinburgh University Library for a scoping project to look at our student records and at how best to create a scaleable and sustainable online database to meet the needs of the many types of researcher who would use it.

As well as the types of information usually wanted by genealogical and biographical researchers, the records contain educational, socio-economic, ethnic and religious data, and details of academic relationships (who studied under whom), which is ripe for all types of comparative analysis.

One useful test of our existing database yielded an interesting result. The First Matriculation records seem consistently to use the phrase “public school” to designate a student educated at one of the schools set up following the Education Act of 1870. From the data we have found that nearly 16% of all students matriculating in the 1890s came via this route. If we took this as a percentage of UK students, this would of course be higher. Unfortunately the data in their current form do not allow easy filtering out of non-UK students.

We aim to work towards a resource with digitised records underpinned by a robust dataset to allow multiple types of search options. This might be through one interface, though it may make sense to separate queries for analytical data from those regarding individual students. We recognise that the resource will have multiple audiences/users, and will look to their needs as well as our own.

The scoping project will look to identify methodologies, technologies and potential funding streams to move the project into its next phase.

**Grant Butters** (IS)

**Richard Battersby** (IS)

## JISC: making the best of the future

Tim O'Shea, chair of JISC, launched its 2010 conference in London with good, bad and ugly news – respectively the launch of a new strategy with exciting objectives for national services; funding cuts; and the outlook for the funding of public services following the general election. He pointed out that JISC, described as a “collaborative innovation engine”, saves researchers and scholars around £43m a year through collective purchasing of content, and a great deal more in time saved by sharing resources and services. The JISC Strategy for 2010–2012 is at <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/publications/strategy/2009/strategy2010.aspx>

There were two particularly thought-provoking keynote presentations at the conference, summarised below and online at <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/events/2010/04/jisc10/keynotes.aspx>



**Martin Bean**, Vice Chancellor of the Open University, identified some critical trends and challenges facing Higher Education. His ‘Megatrends’ are Globalisation (“Distance education is on fire”), Massification (the world cannot make enough physical buildings to keep up with the demand for more education and lifelong learning), and Privatisation (the UK needs to catch up with Australia, New Zealand and the US). The many Challenges include the need to educate people for new types of work, and particularly to find innovative and creative ways to enable STEM – science, technology, engineering and maths – to thrive, and this will be key for a competitive workforce. There will be increasing problems about the reliability of information: alarm bells should have started ringing when ‘google’ became a verb and teachers started allowing their pupils to rely on wikipedia. The artificial barriers we perpetuate between secondary, further, higher and lifelong education “could kill us”, and we must build a more flexible, credit-based community. We need to make radical changes to enhance student experience: 78% of US students believe higher education is vital to their life, but only 28% are satisfied with it. We shouldn't be loading students with information, but teaching them skills of profound and lasting value, and new devices like Apple's iPad are “megaphones of informal learning” which will be increasingly significant in attracting people into formal education. Among the many messages were: it is time for HE to morph and evolve, as the entertainment industry has; we need to exploit technology to be as rich and engaging as possible; and the UK is too small for HEIs to duplicate efforts, datacentres or programs for common purposes – we need to work together more.



**Bill St. Arnaud**, president of a Canadian environment consulting firm, closed the meeting with an urgent message about climate change, and the important role that JISC has in helping HE and society in general to deal with it. He showed a string of statistics to demonstrate that the planet is warming at an alarming rate, and could be 6°C hotter by the end of the century. Climate change is not reversible as smog and acid rain are: Carbon will stay in the atmosphere for thousands of years. Alarmingly, change will probably not be gradual, but could see tipping points leading rapidly to more severe weather. Governments and universities have to take action now to slow down the rate of harm, and some around the world are doing so. IT is responsible for a huge amount of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions via power consumed from coal-burning plants, currently 2% of world emissions but growing at 6% a year; this is not sustainable, and cannot continue. The quickest way to make a significant difference is to move datacentres to renewable power sources, as Google and Microsoft are doing. Datacentres and High Performance Computers are responsible for 30–50% of emissions in some institutions, and a lot of power is wasted in running unnecessary servers. The issue is not how much energy we consume, but how it's generated. The key point is to have a zero carbon strategy, with wind and solar power the best options. HEIs will have to move datacentres off the electricity grid and to where the renewable power is. Universities need to be proactive (it is good to know that Edinburgh is already exploring options for this).

**Nick Stroud** (IS)

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photographer: Johnny Greig ([www.johnnygreig.com](http://www.johnnygreig.com))

## JISC news about e-assessment

Two interesting reports on emerging technologies have recently been highlighted by Becta, a government agency promoting the use of technology in learning. The first provides a detailed overview of e-Assessment, and concludes that it “has not come of age as quickly as expected”. The report gives a wide-ranging overview of developments and trends in this area and highlights the transformational potential of the technology.

In contrast to the slow uptake of e-Assessment, the use of mobile phones has increased dramatically. A Becta report into mobile ownership highlights the fact that over half the population in the developing world now have one.

The two reports are available at <http://scottish-rscs.org.uk/newsfeed/?p=8170>

‘e-Asy Assessment: Creating Assessment for Better Learning’ is a workshop in Leicester on 17th May to help people engage with innovative ways of assessing learners – to make assessment e-asy. The event is organised by the Higher Education Academy and JISC for lecturers in all HE disciplines. The afternoon workshops will cover designing multiple choice questionnaires, Curriculum design, Assessment for reflection, and Creative assessment to eliminate plagiarism. For further details see <http://scottish-rscs.org.uk/newsfeed/?p=8173>

If you can't spare the time to visit Leicester you might like to have a look at the ‘ten rules for writing multiple choice questions’, available through <http://scottish-rscs.org.uk/newsfeed/?p=8177>

These are just a few of the items in the latest fortnightly bulletin from the Scottish JISC Regional Support Centres. You can see further news and subscribe to RSC NewsFeed in various formats at <http://scottish-rscs.org.uk/newsfeed/>

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

## OGSA-DAI goes open source

OGSA-DAI is EPCC's unique 'middleware' product for distributed data management, which allows data resources such as file systems and relational or XML databases to be accessed, federated and integrated across the network. Over the past few years an international community of users and developers has formed around it. This includes users in fields as diverse as medical research, environmental science, geo-sciences, the arts and humanities, and transport.

In line with OMII-UK's vision to promote software sustainability, OGSA-DAI is now an open source project hosted on SourceForge, with EPCC taking the role of project leader. This guarantees to our users that OGSA-DAI's lifetime does not depend on any single institution or funding stream. It also provides a way for users to develop and release their OGSA-DAI components, and a focal point for OGSA-DAI's continued evolution and usage.

In April EPCC released OGSA-DAI 4.0 via SourceForge, marking the end of the current OMII-UK phase of OGSA-DAI funding. However OGSA-DAI lives on, and EPCC is continuing to drive its development, both in our role as the leader of the open source project, and in our involvement with a number of projects that use and extend it.

You can find out more about OGSA-DAI by emailing [info@ogsadai.org.uk](mailto:info@ogsadai.org.uk) or visiting <http://www.ogsadai.org.uk/>

**Tracy Peet** (EPCC)

## Major Physics Exhibition



Physicist Alan Walker took over the Main Library forum for a major physics exhibition to coincide with the switch-on of the Large Hadron Collider at CERN on 30th March. Here he explains one of the demonstrations to visiting students while images from CERN are shown on the holopro screens in the background.

**Nick Stroud** (IS)

## JISC awards enhance University resource discovery

JISC has funded two six-month projects to help discover library resources:

The IS Digital Library Section's project is EnCLaVE – Enriched Catalogues for Learners and Virtual Environments – and will identify and develop enrichment and social networking functionality in the Voyager catalogue interface. The project will: develop and test innovative searching options; embed Voyager catalogue searches into WebCT; and evaluate these developments against user needs. We also hope to build a platform-independent 'widget' that can be deployed by other Voyager system users. The target is to improve the current service while we plan for the arrival of a next-generation library management system with a single 'finding' interface in two or three years' time. The project will be managed by Simon Bains, alongside Morag Watson (DLS) and Stephen Vickers (IS Learning Services). The National Library of Scotland is a project partner, and will be represented by Gill Hamilton (Systems Librarian). There are details of the grant at [http://www.jisc.ac.uk/fundingopportunities/funding\\_calls/2009/12/1209lms.aspx](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/fundingopportunities/funding_calls/2009/12/1209lms.aspx)

The AquaBrowser User Experience project – AquaBrowserUX – is undertaking a case study of the University's resource discovery service 'Aquadbrowser'. A holistic evaluation centred on both the fundamental and the practical use of AquaBrowser will be undertaken. This involves user research with a survey and ethnographic interviews of users with different background and information-seeking behaviour. A field study will be conducted to elicit user perspectives, and recommendations will be made for the service, gauging its usefulness in terms of function and fitness for purpose. Usability testing will subsequently be carried out to examine the user interface of the resource discovery service. The work will be carried out by a team both off-site and on-site in the Library. It is a collaboration between the National e-Science Centre (NeSC) and Information Services, managed under a similar usability initiative (Usability and Contemporary User Experience in Digital Libraries – UX2.0). There are further details at <http://ux2.nesc.ed.ac.uk/>

**Simon Bains** (IS), **Boon Low** (NeSC)

## Director of Digital Curation Centre **retires**

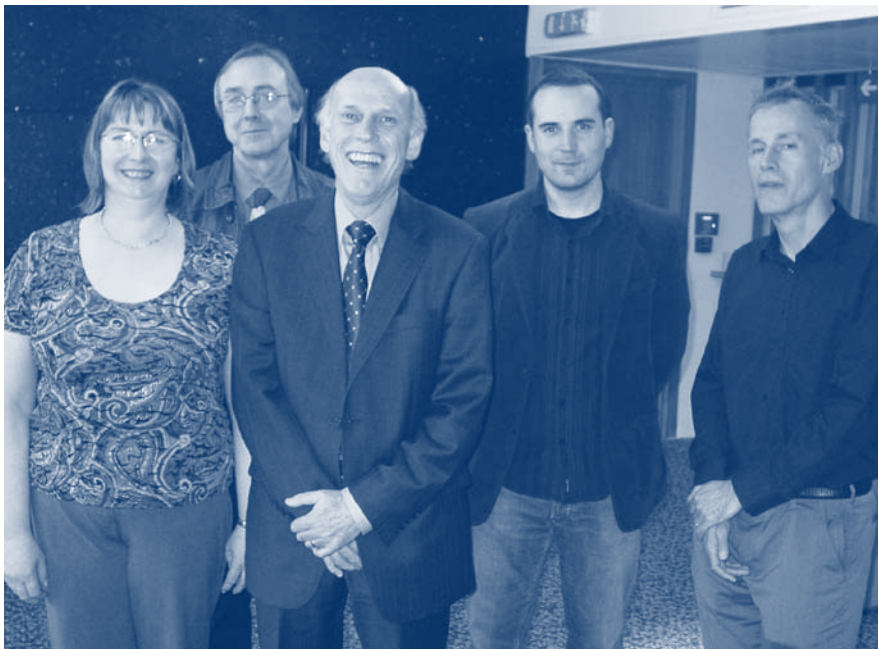
After a little more than five years at the Digital Curation Centre, based here in the University of Edinburgh, my last day before retirement came on 16th April. Jeff Haywood hosted a small reception in the Library, at which various friends old and new came to wish me well. I really enjoyed this, chatting with friends, and even the usual kind words from Jeff. The surprise turned out to be an embarrassing video of the ambush at the JISC Conference earlier in the week, where my expected cosy chat with a few JISC colleagues had turned into a presentation by Malcolm Read in front of about 300 people, with a big video camera under my nose and a boom microphone!

I will always remember my time at this University with great fondness: there are some great people here, and the services seem to work really well. No one could complain at the view from my office on the 7th floor of Appleton Tower; it is truly wonderful in all sorts of weather. My thanks to the very many people who have supported and helped me and the DCC since its establishment.

The Digital Curation Centre is probably not well enough known across the University. It was established six years ago by JISC and the e-Science Core Programme to support improvements in research data management, curation and preservation across the UK; as reported in last month's BITS it is now entering its Third Phase.

I leave the DCC in good hands, as Kevin Ashley (formerly of the ULCC National Digital Archive of Datasets) takes over. For myself, I hope to do a little more work for the University, helping to formulate a data management policy, so you may still see me around from time to time.

**Chris Rusbridge** (retired)



Chris Rusbridge with the Edinburgh DCC team: Florence Kennedy, Graham Pryor, Martin Donnelly and Angus Whyte

## **BCS meeting:** Computer Conservation

Older readers of BITS may remember the Elliott 401 and the Harwell Dekatron computers. These and other projects of the Computer Conservation Society will be the subject of a talk by Christopher Burton at 6:30pm on Wednesday 12th May in the Informatics Forum. Full details are at <http://www.edinburgh.bcs.org/events/2009-10/100512.htm>

**David Muxworthy** (BCS)

## **Finding high-quality information** without Google

Oxford University Press has launched a new service which uses subject specialists to put together bibliographies in a range of academic areas which lead to information that scholars would value and appreciate – in contrast to Google's method of finding every mention of a topic no matter what its value and relevance. This is a subscription service with a small initial range of subject areas mostly in the arts and humanities, but with several more areas to be added in the coming year.

You can find out about Oxford Bibliographies Online at <http://aboutobo.com/>

**Liz Stevenson** (IS)

## **IS Usenet service** to close

JANET is discontinuing its newfeed service at the end of July, because so few sites still subscribe to it. IS has surveyed the University's use of its Usenet service and has concluded that it is too slight to make paying for an alternative newfeed cost-effective. The decision has therefore been made to close the University's Usenet service at the end of July.

Users still wishing to access Usenet newsgroups are advised to make use of Google groups or some other external Usenet service after that time.

**Scott Larnach** (IS)

## Jenny Holzer *Blue Purple Tilt*

The University's Talbot Rice Gallery, in Old College, is currently presenting the first solo show in Scotland of the American artist Jenny Holzer. The exhibition runs until 15th May.

One of the most celebrated artists of her generation, Holzer's work is both visually stunning and intellectually challenging. The exhibition shows her characteristically provocative text-based work, including paintings, posters and a signature LED display. The 2007 work *Blue Purple Tilt* transforms the historic Georgian Gallery, while a distinctive selection of paintings based on declassified US Army documents and text poster works are displayed on the two floors of the White Gallery. A documentary film on her work is showing in the Gallery's Education space on the upper floor.

There are further details at <http://www.trg.ed.ac.uk/current.htm>

The David Talbot Rice Memorial Lecture 2010 takes place at 7:30pm on Tuesday 4th May, when Nicky Wilson will talk about Jupiter Artland, a sculpture park in the estate of Bonnington House, outside Edinburgh. The lecture will provide an update on this remarkable work-in-progress, making reference to artists such as Antony Gormley and Anish Kapoor. This is a free event, though booking is essential (email [info.talbotrice@ed.ac.uk](mailto:info.talbotrice@ed.ac.uk), tel 502210). A loop system is available on request.

Shawn Coulman (IS)



## Data Management tool launched

The Digital Curation Centre (DCC) has launched a new web-based data management planning tool to help researchers apply for and manage funding. **DMP Online** draws on the DCC's analysis of funding agencies' data-related requirements to enable researchers to create, maintain and export customisable Data Management Plans (DMPs), both at the grant application stage and during a project's lifetime.

The tool aims to provide a comprehensive list of data-related issues that researchers will want to consider before and during their projects, in the form of a series of clauses. The user interface enables the requirements of different funders to be mapped straightforwardly to the equivalent DCC clauses, and for onscreen guidance and links to be provided to assist in the completion of DMPs. Funder requirements are certain to change over time, so the system enables administrators to edit the mappings between individual funders and the corresponding DCC clauses. This flexibility allows for one-to-one mappings (where one funder's requirement maps directly to one DCC wording), one-to-many mappings (where a funder's requirement maps to multiple DCC questions), and one-to-none, for cases where there are no equivalent mappings to the DCC terms (these generally occur when the funder asks for non-data-related elements to be included, such as the AHRC's Technical Appendix).

Where an application is being made to a funder which makes explicit data-related demands at the funding stage (currently AHRC, BBSRC, ESRC, MRC, and Wellcome), the user is presented with the DCC clauses which correspond most closely. The idea is that by answering the DCC clauses, the user automatically meets the funder's requirements. When applying to a funding council that does not make explicit data-related demands at the application stage, the user is presented with a superset of all of the clauses which the mapped funders require, to be supplemented or pared back as desired. Once the DMP is complete, plans can be exported as PDF files or as HTML.

The DCC is currently providing dedicated support for JISC's 'Managing Research Data' programme. Many of the projects funded under this programme intend to support researchers with Data Management Plan requirements. The next public demonstration of DMP Online will be at the *JISC Managing Research Data Programme Workshop* at Manchester Conference Centre on 17–18 May.

You can try out the alpha version of the tool at <http://dmponline.hatii.arts.gla.ac.uk/>

Please let us know what you think by emailing [DMPOnline@dcc.ac.uk](mailto:DMPOnline@dcc.ac.uk).

Martin Donnelly (IS)

## Open Knowledge Scotland

EDINA and the Data Library are working with the Open Knowledge Foundation and iDEALab to organise an Open Knowledge Scotland event at InSpace, the Informatics Forum, on 13th May, from 2:30pm to 7pm.

The event will bring together interested parties from across the open knowledge spectrum, based in Scottish educational institutions, Scottish research organisations, Scottish local and national government, and members of the public, for the purposes of teaching, learning and discussion.

During the event we will consider questions such as: What data can be made available? Are there privacy or ethical concerns? How can we connect it together? How can we use it to collaborate and share our work? How can Scotland benefit from open data? Are there public implications for entrepreneurial or big business participation?

Event details and further information are at <http://okscotland.eventbrite.com/>

Stuart Macdonald (IS)

## EDINA takes Digimap to school

EDINA has been delivering Ordnance Survey maps and data to Higher and Further Education for the past ten years, and is now launching a similar service to schools in the UK. **Digimap for Schools** – the result of a collaboration of EDINA, Ordnance Survey and JISC Collections – is an online mapping service designed for use by teachers and pupils.

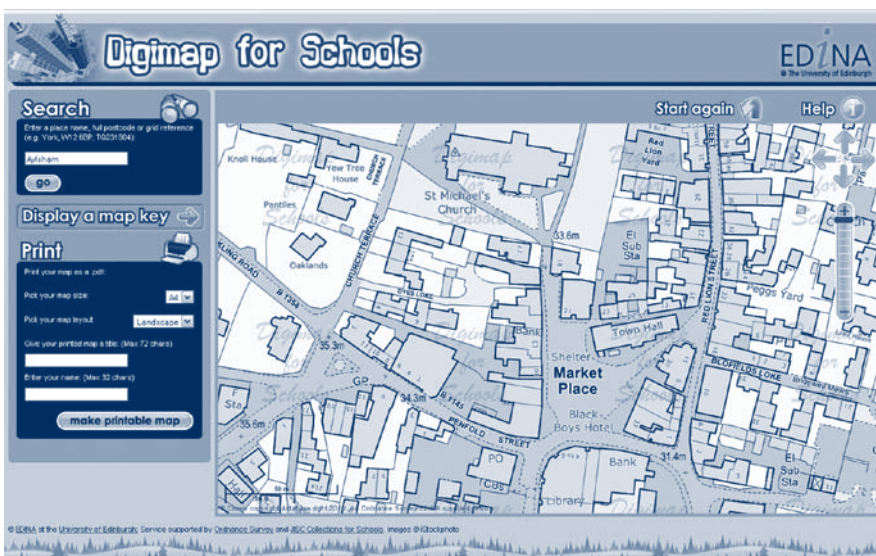
For the first time all schools can have access to a seamless digital map of Great Britain at a wide range of scales. Digimap for Schools provides easy access to a range of current Ordnance Survey maps, including the most detailed mapping available for Great Britain – OS MasterMap – and digital versions of Ordnance Survey's renowned paper maps, the Landranger and Explorer series. Also included are street-level maps and road-atlas style maps. The annual subscription for a primary school is just £60.

Most importantly, most of the maps available through Digimap for Schools are not available under OS OpenData, the package of map data recently released by Ordnance Survey for free use and re-use. Digimap for Schools will run as a beta service until 1st September. Further information is available from the links below.

Digimap for Schools: <http://digimapforschools.edina.ac.uk/>

EDINA Digimap: <http://edina.ac.uk/digimap>

Emma Sutton (IS)



Emma Sutton (IS)

## Digimap and OS OpenData

The Government published details on 31st March of a package of Ordnance Survey datasets which are now available for free use and re-use under OS OpenData.

EDINA Digimap continues to provide ease and continuity of access to a whole range of geo-spatial datasets and will be adding all the OpenData products to the current range in the near future. Of particular note is that OS MasterMap, the large-scale vector data, is only available through Digimap.

Further details of the datasets available are given on the EDINA website at <http://edina.ac.uk/cgi-bin/news.cgi?filename=2010-03-06-osopendata.txt>

EDINA welcomes the release of OS OpenData and the opportunities this provides for the development of existing services (such as Unlock and Go-Geo!) and new ones for the benefit of teaching and research.

## EDINA newsletter

The March 2010 edition of *Newsline*, EDINA's quarterly newsletter, is available at <http://edina.ac.uk/news/newsline.html>

Newsline is aimed at support staff, interested users and others with an interest in EDINA. It carries information on EDINA services and developments and this issue is full of such varied and relevant information as:

- Ease and continuing access to journals
- Open Access Repository Junction project website
- JorumOpen offers Creative Commons resources
- More films in Film & Sound Online
- Digimap: Roam rolls out
- Land Life Leisure service changes
- EDINA Digimap tenth anniversary event

Paul Milne (IS)

## EDINA to provide Identity for JISC Executive

EDINA has been given responsibility for hosting an Identity Provider (IdP) for the JISC within the UK Access Management Federation for Education and Research. The IdP runs on resilient VM hardware hosted within Edinburgh University's computing infrastructure. It is now operational, and provides identity management facilities to JISC Executive, JISC Collections and JISC Regional Support Centre staff. Support and data maintenance are provided by the EDINA Helpdesk.

Ed Dee (IS)

## Help for nomads

At its latest seminar, the University's IT Futures group considered the needs of academics who increasingly work away from their University base. The seminar brought together academics and IT professionals in a discussion of needs and solutions.

Prof Michael Northcott of Divinity talked about arranging his own mobile technology support, and using Internet-based software in addition to some of the services provided by IS in his typical working pattern – which includes meetings in America, the UK and across Edinburgh, on top of his regular teaching load. He contemplated the growing mobility of students, which highlights the necessity for academics to have mobility, and he remarked that the nomadic lifestyle of working with people in other institutions is very stimulating to creativity, and should be made as easy as possible to achieve.

Paul Anderson, School of Informatics, next looked at some of the technical and social challenges to the nomadic lifestyle. He praised the advances in wireless computing and EDUROAM but stressed the fact that remote access and adequate protection of sensitive data are still problems. His suggestions included the existence of explicit policies for service providers (e.g. on IP restrictions, cross-browser support, privacy), educating and advising users and service providers about data protection, and developing frameworks for peer support. He drew particular attention to the difficulties of the work/life balance, with many people using their own laptop or home computer for a mixture of work and personal applications. Many academics are prepared to pay for their own IT facilities (laptops, broadband, phone data, software, home machines/networks), clearly believing that this is worthwhile in terms of productivity. Their computing facilities are thus no longer financed, or 'controlled', by the University – an issue that the University should recognise and support.

Dave Berry, Head of Development Services in IS-Applications, presented the IS commitment in providing easy-to-use, secure and integrated services that aim to support academics, nomadic or otherwise. He considered the increasing number of necessary services and the issues which are raised concerning accommodation of multi-platform support, 24/7 availability, clarification of policy on what data need to be protected, and the integration of cloud services in the university world.

Prof. Peter Clarke described his own 'nomadic' way of working, which involves regular visits to CERN. Valuing the resulting benefits, he pointed out the importance of having good non-complex support for the nomadic academic lifestyle at Edinburgh, particularly in relation to tools for remote meetings and document sharing.

A common wish shared by all the academic speakers was for the University to provide a globally-accessible file system with reasonable space, and some form of automatic synchronisation for backup.

In the closing panel discussion, it was generally agreed that there are many good services in the University; however, more flexible IT services are required to support modern academic work in both teaching and research. It was suggested that services should be framed to support tasks that academics do. The University seemed still to be operating a centralised model for provisioning personal computing, which needs to evolve to suit the more mobile requirements of the new century.

Warnings were expressed of the dangers of using services "in the cloud", from the point of view of data protection, continuity of service, and access.

**Mariza Dima** (IT Futures Group)

## Undelivered Message 0-93

Messages have started dropping into inboxes around the University, looking as if they come from Twitter Support (always remember that email 'from' addresses are easily forged), and with a link to the bona fide Twitter support site, saying that the recipient has some unread messages. These 'unread messages' can be retrieved from a Web address that looks to be a plausible Twitter one – but of course it isn't. In some browsers, if you hover your mouse over the "Twitter" link a pop-up box will show you the actual URL which underlies the innocuous text, and where the danger lurks. Delete such messages!

**Nick Stroud** (IS)

## Student publications

Several student societies in the University produce high-quality magazines and journals which deserve a wide audience. From now on a selection of these will be available in the Main Library. At present they are on a shelf on the first floor of the main staircase. In the Summer they will probably join the current journals section which will be moving into the room behind this first-floor landing.

Available now is the 6th edition of the Science club's journal, *eu:sci*.

**Nick Stroud** (IS)





## Informatics Forum wins Civic Trust award

The University's newest academic building is viewed as an exemplar for large modern buildings in the city, seen as a good neighbour which respects its surroundings while exuding confidence. The Civic Trust's assessment mentions the building's dignified atmosphere and its engagement at street level, with accessible exhibition space and external terraces being well thought out. Excellent use of colour and furniture selection, and exemplary sustainability credentials, mean that the building contributes greatly to the richness and diversity of an evolving city area.

See <http://www.civictrustawards.org.uk/winners/2010/CTA006485/>

**Nick Stroud** (IS)

## IS Skills for IT skills

The IS Skills Development team runs courses and short sessions for staff and students to help them use IT effectively in their work and studies.

The dates of taught courses and taster sessions in May are listed below. Please see our web pages for further details and booking, at <http://www.ed.ac.uk/is/skills>

**Jenni Reeves** (IS)

Date	Course	Location
May 4	Excel Intermediate: Manipulating and Managing Data (Part 2)	ML
5	Word Intermediate: Document Layout and Customisation (Part 2)	ML
6	Access Database Management: Intermediate (Part 1)	ML
7	Making the Most of your Wiki	ML
11	Managing Bibliographies with EndNote	ML
11	WebCT Basic Skills: Vista Fundamentals	ML
12	Excel Basic Skills: Creating Spreadsheets and Charts (Part 1)	ML
13	Access Database Management: Intermediate (Part 2)	ML
13	Wikis: What can I do as an Administrator?	ML
19	Excel Basic Skills: Creating Spreadsheets and Charts (Part 2)	ML
20	Producing a Thesis using Word 2003	ML
25	PowerPoint Intermediate: Adding Tables, Graphs and Diagrams	ML
26	Writing for the Web	DHT
27	Creating Web Pages with HTML	ML
27	Formatting Web Pages with Cascading Style Sheets	ML

### Venues:

ML – Main Library Training Suite  
DHT – David Hume Tower

## Latest additions to **University Website**

The College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine has been particularly busy recently, launching these new sites:

- School of Molecular and Clinical Medicine: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/molecular-clinical-medicine>
- Division of Pathway Medicine: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/pathway-medicine>
- Centre for Integrative Physiology: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/integrative-physiology>
- Institute of Immunology and Infection Research: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/biology/immunology>

The International Office has added a section on Exchanges to the recruitment strand of the site, at <http://www.ed.ac.uk/student-exchanges>

### Progress behind the scenes

The Project has surveyed 200 Website contributors who have attended the usability-testing course over the past two years. The feedback was tremendous, and the course has enabled many authors to align their sites more closely with their users' needs and thinking. It next runs on 15th and 30th June. The survey results are at <http://www.ed.ac.uk/website-project/usability-training>

Behind the scenes the Website is maintained in a Content Management System called Polopoly, and steady progress is being made in adjusting this tool so that it better meets the needs of the University's web publishing community. Comments on the latest improvements are collected at <https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/x/10wPBG>

**Dawn Ellis** (University Website Project)

## Not IT, not IS

Some news is so important that it bypasses the usual BITs filters...

The SBS and USS pension funds are facing significant challenges which are likely to affect all staff. A consultation over the University's Staff Benefits Scheme has just been launched, and changes to USS are likely to be announced shortly; details are on the Finance Department's website at <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/finance/>

The Edinburgh Cycle Challenge aims to get as many people as possible to ride a bike for just ten minutes or more between Monday 10th and Sunday 30th May. Participation is free, and there are prizes to be won. For more information and to register see <http://www.ed.ac.uk/news/staff-bulletin/cycle-challenge-090410/>

Congratulations to the Students' Association, overall winner of the National Union of Students Sound Impact Awards – an accreditation scheme that encourages student-led action on ethics and the environment – as reported at <http://www.ed.ac.uk/news/staff-bulletin/eusa-award-190410>

The Christian Aid Booksale is into its 37th year, and over those years has raised £1.8m. Last year celebrated Dugald Stewart and the University's new building named in his honour; this year's sale will be marking the 150th anniversary of the birth of J.M. Barrie, one of our most famous alumni, and will be featuring a selection of Barrie items including some donated by Geraldine McCaughrean. There are full details at [http://www.standrewsandstgeorges.org.uk/christian\\_aid\\_book\\_sale.php](http://www.standrewsandstgeorges.org.uk/christian_aid_book_sale.php)

**Nick Stroud** (IS)

## IS staff talent recognised

**John Smith**, of the IS Infrastructure Division, has become a Certified Data Centre Specialist (CDCS) accredited by the International Consortium for Organisational Resilience (ICOR), building on the Professional accreditation that he gained from ICOR in 2008.

John used his training in helping to bring the new data centre in Appleton Tower into service, and in helping to plan the refurbishment of the KB data centre. He would be happy to help any groups in the University who could benefit from his advice (please email [John.Smith@ed.ac.uk](mailto:John.Smith@ed.ac.uk)). Further information about ICOR and the certifications it offers can be found at <http://www.theicor.org/>

In the UK, ICOR courses and examinations are administered by EPI Service Ltd; see <http://www.epi-uk.com/>

**Robin Taylor**, of the IS Digital Library group, has joined the elite group – numbering only a couple of dozen people worldwide – of 'DSpace committers'.

DSpace is a novel open-source digital repository system which captures, stores, indexes, preserves and redistributes an organisation's research material in digital formats. Research institutions worldwide use it for a variety of digital archiving needs, from institutional repositories to learning object repositories and electronic records management. DSpace committers are the group of developers with significant experience in DSpace who have to approve any change to the DSpace codebase. The University Library uses DSpace for the Edinburgh Research Archive and in other ways for the Scottish Digital Library consortium.

**Nick Stroud** (IS)

## Robin Milner 1934 – 2010

Robin Milner was a great man, an inspiring colleague, and a dear friend. He died suddenly of a heart attack, just three days after the funeral of his much-loved wife, Lucy.

Robin worked in Edinburgh from 1973, and was promoted to a Personal Chair in 1984.

He made seminal contributions to three major areas of research. He developed Edinburgh LCF as a tool for performing rigorous proofs about programs. He designed and implemented ML, a Meta-Language for programming which stands as a beacon to show that programming can indeed be beautiful; ML was way ahead of its time, and has influenced many languages including Java, Scala (as used by Twitter), and Microsoft's recent F#. His Calculus of Communicating Systems demonstrated that we can effectively analyse the behaviours of complex distributed systems. Robin's work on concurrency inspired the design of tools now used to ensure the correctness of control software for critical embedded applications such as nuclear plant controllers, and flight systems for aeroplanes such as the Airbus.

In 1994 Robin helped to establish the Informatics Planning Unit at Edinburgh. This new enterprise brought together previously warring tribes around a unifying vision of a new science of information. He moved to Cambridge in 1995, and returned (part time) to the University of Edinburgh in 2009, to an established Chair in Computer Science.

Robin Milner was a most gifted teacher, a kind mentor and gentle critic, and quite extraordinarily congenial.

Many fuller appreciations of Robin and his work can be found on the web, including obituaries in:

- the Independent: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/robin-milner-pioneering-computer-scientist-1943933.html>
- the Guardian: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2010/apr/01/robin-milner-obituary>
- the Times: <http://times.cluster.newsint.co.uk/tol/comment/obituaries/article7081867.ece>

**Michael Fourman** (Informatics)



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