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Welcome to the new, refreshed BITS!!

I am really pleased that we have found a way to keep BITS going, and can continue to offer our readers a way to follow the developments, large and small, in services and facilities offered by IS.

We are all only too well aware of the challenges presented by the changing economic climate for higher education. This, plus the uncertainties presented by changes in our funding regimes, increased competition for students and research income, and a flood of new technologies, means that we in Information Services must become more agile, more responsive to our users’ needs, whilst ensuring that our costs for basic services are minimised to release money and effort for innovation.

This isn’t an easy task to address, but I am confident that, as long as we maintain our partnership with our academic and support service colleagues across the University of Edinburgh, we shall continue to thrive and to deliver excellent service to our communities.

Professor Jeff Haywood
Vice Principal for Knowledge Management and CIO
Library excellence
SCURL award
words: Helen Murphie

I was chair of SCURL when SHEDL started, and am very pleased that we were able to introduce a shared service which maximised existing resources, giving more journals to researchers and students in Edinburgh and throughout Scotland.

Digital Curation Centre receives £1.5m vote of confidence
words: Kevin Ashley and Florance Kennedy

The DCC is pleased to receive £1.57m of funding from HEFCE for the development of shared cloud services in UK Higher Education.

HEFCE will be investing a total of £12.5m in the cloud. The funding recognises the DCC’s national and international role in data curation and the importance of the growth in the use of shared cloud services. This was identified as a key institutional concern for the next few years in a recent review of JISC’s activities.

Kevin Ashley, DCC Director said, “The DCC has been funded by JISC since 2004 to spread the message about maintaining, preserving and adding value to digital research data throughout its lifecycle. We now have a suite of tools to enable researchers and all those associated with research data to plan and carry out data management over the lifecycle of the data. The new funding will allow us to give those tools the support and promotion they deserve, to enable institutions to plan more effectively for future data management needs, and to make savings as a result.”

As well as deploying their own tools in the cloud infrastructure, the DCC will be developing advice and support - including the successful DCC roadshows - for institutions considering the use of the cloud for any and all aspects of research data management. The DCC will also be working closely with JANET(UK) who have received a similar level of funding.

www.dcc.ac.uk
Cristina Masters, Virtual Open Week Project Leader, tells us about the University’s first ever Virtual Open Week.

Our pilot Postgraduate Virtual Open Week ran from 21 - 25 February. All 22 schools and several student support services participated. The purpose of the Postgraduate Virtual Open Week was to give prospective postgraduate students the opportunity to speak with staff, students, and student services at the University, real-time, from anywhere in the world. It was also a pilot to test how we might offer some appropriate and focussed information to the growing number of online distance education students who are likely to never need to come to Edinburgh. As such, they might want to learn different things about the University from the more traditional face-to-face students.

This project used software called Wimba which allowed staff and postgraduate students, acting as hosts, to connect with participants using webcams, headsets, and a text-based chat room. The session hosts were able to load slides and give presentations on topics of interest, as well as to take questions from participants.
Hundreds of international visitors

There were nearly 400 visits to our Virtual Open Week sessions. We had participants from 61 countries, including Japan, Peru, Germany, and Ghana. Interest was especially high from the United Kingdom, but the United States, China, and India had large numbers as well.

Some of the sessions that attracted particularly high numbers included the MSc in Sustainable Energy Systems (hosted by Dr Sasa Djokic); the MSc in Marketing and Business Analysis (hosted by Dr Daniel Black), and the School of History (hosted by Dr Paul Quigley).

There was a great turnout by Student Support Services and their sessions were very popular. EUSA gave sessions on two topics – on the Students’ Association and on Postgraduate Life at Edinburgh University. The EUSA Advice Place also offered sessions. Accommodation Services, the International Office, Careers Services, and Scholarships and Student Funding Services were all present during the week and their sessions were well attended.

One participant from the United Arab Emirates said, “This system is the best. I live overseas and it was hard for me to visit the University. I really appreciate all the efforts. When I heard about Virtual Open Week I was very much relieved and I think other overseas students will also be. I was worried about timings but they were flexible and manageable.”

All expectations exceeded

This is a pilot project which began with modest aims and targets, but we exceeded our expectations in terms of interest and participation. We had invaluable and enthusiastic help from staff all around the University, without which we could not have delivered the pilot within such a short time-frame. We certainly now have many ideas on how we could improve the PG Virtual Open Week and are supplementing them with evidence from feedback from staff and student participants. We are delighted this pilot project seems to have been such a great success.

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This system is the best. I live overseas and it was hard for me to visit the University.
IT focus

**UniDesk service launch**

Opening new opportunities

words: Mark Wetton, Bryan MacGregor, Kevin Brogan

The UniDesk shared service, an integrated service management software package to encourage and facilitate continuous service improvement methods and measures, is now live for all three university founder partners – the University of Edinburgh, University of St Andrews and University of Abertay, Dundee.

Despite the inevitable pressure that comes with large change, the transition to the new service has been successful with around 600 operators who log in daily. Primary service concerns and progress have been visible from launch via a supportive wiki page. This remains available at: https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/x/cAXuBg

UniDesk paves the way for the IS ITIL training and planning to now bear fruit. This will require ongoing commitment and effort and we thank everyone involved for their support to date.

To help our continual improvement agenda, we anticipate some new tools becoming available including:

- A new Problem Management process, enabling a more proactive approach towards implementation of work-arounds and solutions.
- The UniDesk Self Service Module to allow all users to monitor the status and performance of services and to log and track their own requests.
- A Change Management module planned for development during 2011/12: http://tinyurl.com/6dxm2k5

Following positive discussions with TOPdesk – the vendor of the software which supports UniDesk – we will be jointly marketing UniDesk to the wider HE sector.

**JISC Collections and EDINA**

to run UK federation

words: Andrew Bevan

From 1 August 2011 JISC Collections and EDINA will manage the UK Access Management Federation for Education and Research.

The two organisations will work in partnership to deliver the operation and support of the service:

- JISC Collections will act as federation operator; managing member enrolment, training and promotion.
- EDINA will continue to provide the federation’s technical and operational support.

Until 31 July, JANET(UK) will continue in the role of managing operator, with support from EDINA in its role as technical operator.

We will be working to deliver a smooth handover, so federation members do not need to worry about a break in their service.

Further information: http://edina.ac.uk/news/newsline16-1/01-federation.html
Projects focus

Upgrade for VLE

WebCT is now in its 5th year as the centrally-supported Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) service. Over this period the number of courses using it has increased by around 250% and the peak load in the first week of each session has increased by 150% matched by increases to the service capacity.

In 2007 WebCT was acquired by Blackboard which then merged into “Learn 9”. With the release of Learn 9.1 last year (which incorporates most of the functionality familiar to WebCT users), Information Services is embarking on a project to upgrade to Learn 9.1 for all course deliveries from 2012/2013 onwards.

Learn 9.1 will bring a fresh, new and exciting solution to our on-line learning services. Support and training will be provided to migrate existing WebCT courses and to enable staff to make productive use of the new platform in supporting teaching and learning.

Further updates will be provided.
To try out Learn 9.1 go to: https://www.coursesites.com/

Windows 7 launch

Work is well underway to prepare for the launch of the Windows 7 supported desktop service. There are around 10,000 supported desktop PCs across the University so the roll out is a considerable undertaking. Thorough testing by stakeholders across the University should be completed by end April 2011. A pilot of the service in selected areas will then begin with the intention of full roll out this summer.

The new desktop has a host of new features including:
- More support for mobile computing.
- Delivery of a service for laptop users, similar to that provided for desktop users.
- The latest version of MS Office, Office 2010.

The IS-Skills team are preparing training materials and support options, including self-help materials, drop-in demonstration sessions and in-depth training.

Further information:
www.ed.ac.uk/is/windows7

Timetabling project

The Shared Academic Timetabling project aims to improve timetabling processes across the University through modifications in our approach to timetabling combined with the introduction of dedicated software. The project is being steered by a Board made up of representatives from Schools, Colleges and Support Groups.

Get involved

A User Group is being set up to address practical implementation issues. Schools, Colleges and Support Groups are encouraged to nominate members for this group to help shape the final implementation. If you would like to be involved in the User Group, please contact the project team at sharedtimetable@lists.ed.ac.uk

Further information:
https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/x/FBn2Bg

New University swipe card

IS is preparing to introduce a multi-application smart card, containing a microchip, to replace the existing University identity card. The new card will securely hold essential data and provide a cashless payment facility throughout a range of Accommodation Services catering outlets across the campuses.

The Easter Bush Campus will be the first to benefit from the card following the opening of the new Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies building in early April. A phased roll out of the card will then begin to all staff and students over the course of 2011. There will be no charge made for the first time issue of the new card.

Card Services information: www.ed.ac.uk/is/card
Early on in my professional career, as a librarian in a business school, I provided support in the use of what was then cutting-edge digital information. CD-ROMs were as popular as print collections, and several public workstations were connected to modems to access online information.

More innovative than the technology was the fact that users had direct access to these services, without a librarian intermediary. The Web at that time (1995) was still very much in its infancy. Users needed to understand arcane command language, wrestle with unintuitive interfaces, and call on a lot of support. But this heralded the beginnings of the user-facing digital library we deliver today.

As we seek to improve our services, responding to user demand and to (sometimes) justified criticism, it is easy to forget how far we have come. Our users are accustomed to Amazon (founded 1995) and Google (not even a research project until 1996), and the speed and simplicity of the Web. They expect searches to return results instantly, and to see relevant items first. Most users continue to shun advanced searches, as Google does such a good job of surfacing relevant results. It is also assumed that most results will lead directly to content, such as full text articles.

Leaping forward
In this environment, libraries have struggled to catch up. Traditional abstracting and indexing services caused frustration, as there was no simple route to full text, because journals were either not online, or held in entirely separate repositories from the index databases. It was confusing that there were so many databases, and the need to search them all separately was tedious. Improvements came in the form of ‘link resolvers’, associating records in one database with full-text articles in another, and ‘federated search’, allowing users to search multiple databases simultaneously. This felt like an amazing leap forward,
but it became clear that federated search was slow and prone to error, and still some distance from the Google experience we sought to emulate. Recently, new systems have emerged which claim to address these issues, and several university libraries have been migrating to them.

In 2010, the University of Edinburgh Library Committee approved work to replace the technology driving our Searcher service with a new system. IS led a collaborative procurement involving six Scottish partner organisations, through the auspices of the Scottish Digital Library Consortium (SDLC). In exactly 12 months we procured, implemented and launched a new version of Searcher, powered by the EBSCO Discovery Service (EDS). The new service went live at the end of January, and we are very interested in feedback. EDS attempts to deliver both a Google-like experience, by holding content and metadata in a single index (known as ‘aggregated search’), but also by providing federated access where necessary. This approach makes it quite comprehensive, but potentially a little complicated to use.

**Initial user testing**

Mindful of this, we also procured a competitor product, Summon, which ignores content that cannot be aggregated, on the assumption (supported by user testing evidence) that speed and simplicity outweigh comprehensiveness. We see pros and cons in each product, and will subject both to scrutiny. In order to avoid confusion, only EDS will be run as a managed service, but we will conduct user testing on both products, and we are interested to hear from anyone who would like to be involved.

Please contact: [angela.laurins@ed.ac.uk](mailto:angela.laurins@ed.ac.uk)

**Early evidence of success**

Early indicators suggest that the new service has been well received though there are some usability and technical issues to address, and content is still being added. We believe that the launch of EDS has moved us on substantially in the quality of our discovery service. We are sure we shall see the consequent return on investment in our digital collections.

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**New services:**

**Library Annexe**

words: Laura Macpherson

The Library Annexe, located at the South Gyle Industrial Estate, now operates services five days per week, Monday to Friday, with a team of four staff from University Collections. The team is headed up by Nicola Moncur.

These new services include twice daily deliveries of General Collections material to the Main Library and Site Libraries, via a courier service. A new document delivery service has also been launched, providing digital scans of book chapters and journal articles to the user through their desktop, usually within four hours.

For users wishing to browse or consult collections within the Library Annexe building, appointments can be made to visit quite freely, with advance notice.

Clearer information about how to use the Annexe has been posted on a new website and is provided in a leaflet available across the Library Sites.

The new services have been launched to tie in with the move of some more high-profile collections from the Main Library to the Annexe. These moves allow the Main Library Redevelopment Project to continue through its final phases – works on the fourth and lower ground floors.

For more information: [www.ed.ac.uk/is/library-annexe](http://www.ed.ac.uk/is/library-annexe)

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**Come and browse**

the new library display area on the first floor landing

[www.ed.ac.uk/is/library](http://www.ed.ac.uk/is/library)

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**About Searcher:**

[www.ed.ac.uk/is/searcher](http://www.ed.ac.uk/is/searcher)

Scottish Digital Library Consortium: [www.sdlc.ed.ac.uk](http://www.sdlc.ed.ac.uk)
Cushions for clarinets

In 2006, the Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments (EUCHMI) received the Shackleton Bequest of instruments, many of which were clarinets.

Added to the already significant collection of clarinets acquired through the bequest of the Rendall Collection, EUCHMI is now home to approximately 1000 clarinets, making it the world’s most extensive and significant clarinet collection.

A new storeroom was constructed to house the increased collection. However, it soon became apparent that the temporary foam supports placed between the instruments were unsuitable. 1000 individual cushions were designed and funded by the MGS Small Grants Scheme and the Shackleton Fund. The new cushions support the entire length of the clarinets.

Repacking is planned to coincide with an environmental monitoring programme in the storeroom. This is particularly important as no such programme has been in place since the storeroom’s construction.

www.music.ed.ac.uk/euchmi/

Distance learning at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies

IS colleagues have been working with Jo-Anne Murray and Sharon Boyd of the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies e-learning Unit on enhancements to the School’s distance education technologies and support.

Some exciting initiatives:

• The Easter Bush Farm in Second Life. Fiona Littleton built the virtual Farm to host real-time tutorials for distance-learning students from around the world.

• The ‘IS Tack Room’. Marshall Dozier provided an IS space where students can access information resources, view online tutorials and find contact information for support.

• Wimba e-learning trials. Fiona Brown used this to provide real-time information skills question and answer sessions for Equine Science students beginning their MSc dissertation year.

“Third year student:

I like the online discussions as they generate more thought on a particular subject or answer questions that you may have.
Successful refurbishment
at JCMB Data Centre

Two major milestones have been reached in an ongoing phased £1m refurbishment of the Information Services Data Centre at Kings Buildings. Staff across IS worked to minimise disruption to users across two February weekends this year.

The project has delivered increased resilience through the installation of a backup generator and the replacement of ageing air-conditioning systems.

IS staff and contractors overcame many challenges to meet the milestones, not least the adverse weather before Christmas which impacted on staff availability, equipment delivery and installation. The theft of the main supply cable due to the high price of scrap copper also impacted on the programme.

26 IT racks in the main Data Centre space were disconnected and physically moved into the refurbished space and just under 1000 fibre and many additional copper network connections were rerouted and terminated during the weekend. Happily, the vast majority of services were fully operational by Monday morning of each weekend.

Malware and Security

The use of anti-malware software to protect against viruses and spyware is well established within the University of Edinburgh. However, new threats to the computing infrastructure are continuing to emerge. As new protective technologies are adopted the criminal fraternity continue to respond, leading us to constantly review our own response to them. Security is further complicated by the increasing use of mobile devices, blurring the distinction between personal and business data.

Come and listen to Garry Scobie of IS who will provide an overview of challenges and mitigations.

The talk for IS staff is in the DHT conference room, 13:00-14:00 on 11 May 2011. Book through MyEd.

Construction of the new King’s Buildings Library has started. The new library is due to open for the start of the 2012/13 session.

Staff from Information Services, the College of Science & Engineering and Estates & Buildings are working closely together on this exciting project and regular updates will be provided.

For general enquiries: KBLibrary.Project@ed.ac.uk
News of the sad death of Charlotte Moon at the age of 46 came as a shock to many of her former colleagues. Charlotte had joined Edinburgh University Computing Service on 23 April 1990 as its first, and perhaps only, software librarian, having both first class honours in Botany from Edinburgh and a newly acquired Masters in Information Studies from Sheffield University.

During her 19 years of dedicated service to the University, Charlotte’s roles varied, but to each she applied intelligence and endeavour. An early achievement was the creation of an online facility for managing site software licences, searchable by software function and by computing environment. Subsequently she worked on the development of the widely used ColdFusion service, and applications such as the recently retired Call Management System. She also built the application, web interface, graphs and maps used to display the data for “The Survey of Scottish Witchcraft”. Later, as Technical Project Manager on the University Website Project, Charlotte laid the groundwork for the system now widely adopted across the University. Her skills as a Business Analyst were critical in her next role as Programme Manager. Successful projects under her watch included the procurement of an institutional ePortfolio. Charlotte left UoE on voluntary severance on 31 July 2009 in order to set up her own consultancy business, working with local charities such as the John Muir Trust.

In all her roles, at work and elsewhere, Charlotte was quiet but highly insightful, a fabulous colleague, at the same time persuasive, fun and dogged. She will be missed, and remembered, by friends and colleagues across the University.

Here are just some of our colleagues who have signed up for the Race for Life (5 or 10k) and the Moonwalk (13 or 26 miles) in Edinburgh this summer.

Moonwalk – 11 June 2011: Dawn Ellis, Alex Forrest, Ally Hayes, Claire Knowles, Angela Laurins, Laura Macpherson.


To sponsor for the Moonwalk: http://tinyurl.com/6f8lcpr
To sponsor for the Race for Life: http://tinyurl.com/6cchuy4
Sharing news and stories across Information Services and the University

When did you start at the University and what did you do?
Way back in 1995. My first job was the “Additional Cost of Teaching (ACT) Officer” based in Medicine. I was involved in creating the Service Level Agreements and the Clinical Attachment Monitoring System, which together were supposed to tell us what we were meant to get from the NHS and check the quality of what was being delivered.

How has your role changed over the years?
I didn’t use to worry quite so much! My role is very much determined by the Vice Principal and in the time I’ve been here we’ve had three, very different, individuals in that role. Planning has always been the cornerstone of my role and, over the last three years in particular, the focus has been on strategic rather than operational planning. I also spend a lot more of my time on finance matters than I ever used to.

How has IS/the University changed since you joined?
We’ve been restructured into Colleges and Support Groups and then IS further restructured into Divisions. I think it’s fair to say both the University and IS are very different today from when I first joined.

How does IS listen/respond to “the voice” of its community - staff/students/research?
We run a number of surveys on our services covering both staff and students, for example the IS Survey and LibQual. We consult widely using recognised groups and committees such as EUSA and college computing and library committees. As part of the planning round, we run consultation meetings involving the Colleges, other Support Groups, EUSA and IAD. One example of how we’ve responded to the community would be the decision to increase library opening hours.

What is the biggest lesson learned in your career?
There are always new challenges, and I’d be bored if there weren’t!

What do you think the University will be like in 30 years time?
I think it will be a lot like it is today. The move into distance education is exciting and I think there will be a lot more postgraduates studying remotely; we may even have hybrid programmes, but I think there will still be the face-to-face interactions here on campus. And the library will still have books.

What inspires you within your job?
The University is an incredible place. To work with such talent and committed individuals is inspiring in itself, and if you ever need more inspiration, just go along to the McEwan Hall on graduation day. If the sight of all those graduating students and their proud friends and family doesn’t inspire you, then nothing will.

When not at work, what are you passionate/interested in?
I’m passionate about life in general, it’s for living and there’s so much to be interested in. There’s also bread making; you have to be passionate about bread making otherwise all you’re making is a loaf.
Main Library forthcoming exhibitions
Centre for Research Collections
www.ed.ac.uk/is/crc
words: Jacky MacBeath

The Polish School of Medicine
70th Anniversary Exhibition
Main Library Exhibition Room
4 May to 25 June 2011
Tuesday to Saturday 10.00am – 5.00pm

The history and celebration of the Polish School of Medicine has given rise to an extensive archive. View highlights from this collection and learn about the achievements of this unique wartime academic initiative, past and present.

Polish School of Medicine
www.ed.ac.uk/medicine-vet-medicine/polish-school

Carmichael Watson
CRC Exhibition Wall, Sixth Floor
1 June to 5 August 2011

Find out about Alexander Carmichael, influential collector and pioneering folklorist. View highlights from this important collection and learn more about the Carmichael Watson Project helping to deliver centuries-old Gaelic traditions to a worldwide audience.

Carmichael Watson Project
www.carmichaelwatson.lib.ed.ac.uk/

Unsung Heroes exhibition
Lothian Health Services Archive (LHSA) is working in partnership with the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, eca (Edinburgh College of Art) and Innovative Craft to deliver an exciting new permanent installation in the Royal Infirmary, combining items from LHSA’s historic badge collection with creative responses from eca postgraduate jewellery and silversmithing students. In advance of the Infirmary installation, the work will be exhibited temporarily in a number of locations across the city including the Edinburgh University Main Library (EUML) Display Wall in Autumn 2011.

More information:
www.lhsa.lib.ed.ac.uk/projects/unsung_heroes.htm

Academic Collaborations, Postgraduate Curators
Talbot Rice Gallery
27 May - 25 June 2011

In 2011, Contemporary Art Theory MA students from eca (Edinburgh College of Art) and History of Theory and Display, and Modern Art MSc students from the University of Edinburgh will provide stimulating exhibitions in contemporary art and historic collections.
Social Media

Our regular look at what is happening in the social media space

Lothian Health Services Archive embraces Social Media

Rosie Baille from the Centre for Research Collections tells us how LHSA have taken steps in the last six months to enter the world of social networking, using web 2.0 functionality, in an effort to promote the Archive service and to engage with online customers:

“In an effort to keep up to date with user expectations in the online world, we have recently dipped our toes into the waters of social networking and Web 2.0. We soon discovered that most functions are very easy to set up and use, LHSA now has a presence on Facebook and Flickr and we have our very own Blog which is updated weekly. These social media functions provide fantastic opportunities to showcase our collections, promote our services, and interact with our users.”

The Archive holds the historic records of NHS Lothian and other collections relating to the history of health and medicine.

Find out more about the Archive and its services: www.lhsa.lib.ed.ac.uk

Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/pages/Lothian-Health-Services-Archive/108181069245667

Blog: http://lhsa.blogspot.com

Flickr: www.flickr.com/photos/49439570@N08/

Get tweeted by the IS Helpline

Want to know what’s happening with IS services? You can follow the IS helpline (isalerts) on Twitter at: http://twitter.com/isalerts

Are they talking about IS?
Did you know that there is an online forum for support and ideas about IS services? It is powered by GetSatisfaction.com, the customer satisfaction people, and you can login with EASE! Find out more:

www.ed.ac.uk/is/user-engagement
To catch up with the Latest News from IS visit:

www.ed.ac.uk/is

There, you will find information on:
Library Museums and Galleries
Computing
Learning Technology
Research Support
Help and Consultancy

Did you know that IS can also help you with:
Applications Development, Lecture Capture, Graphic Design, Research Data Management, Mobile Mail and Diary, Audio Visual Technology and Web Publishing?

Comment on IS services:

http://feedback.is.ed.ac.uk

BITS on the Web:

www.ed.ac.uk/is/bits