



# BITS

MAGAZINE

Spring 2012 Issue 3

Sharing news and stories across Information Services and the University



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**SUBMISSION DETAILS**

If you would like to submit an article, or tell us about some news, please email: [BITS@ed.ac.uk](mailto:BITS@ed.ac.uk)

The deadline for submissions for the next edition of **BITS** is **18 May 2012**.

To keep up to date with IS news:  
[www.ed.ac.uk/is/news](http://www.ed.ac.uk/is/news)

**Editorial**

Welcome to the Spring edition of **BITS** magazine.

In this issue you will find news from colleagues across Information Services and much more. Our cover feature describes how the University is capturing research activity in the run up to the next national research assessment exercise (REF2014) with the introduction of PURE and the Edinburgh Research Explorer. See page three to find out more.

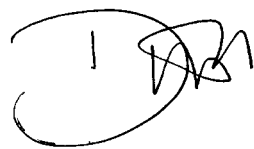
We've also got the latest on the Distance Education Initiative. See page nine to learn about the DEI's ambitious growth plans and the support available for the development of Online Distance Learning courses.

Our regular slot on the University's social media activity highlights recent Digital Workshops in HSS and reports on our recent IT futures conference. We are also pleased to announce that the University's Social Media Guidelines are now available for all staff and researchers. See the link on page ten to get hold of yours.

From spontaneous world-class violin playing on the stage of the University's McEwan Hall to virtual graduations on the same stage in Second Life, I am sure you'll agree that the University is leading the way in terms of inspiration and innovation. And these pages give some insight into the amazing work and strides being made by colleagues across IS in collaboration with academic and support colleagues across the University.

We are always interested in your feedback. Please do take a moment to complete our feedback questionnaire, link on the back cover of this issue. With your input we can continue to improve on every issue of **BITS** and deliver a magazine which works for us all.

All good wishes,



**Dawn Ellis**  
Director, University Website Programme

**News highlights**

**Graduation stars** shine brightly round the world

Florance Kennedy



Graduation day is a memorable occasion for every student. For the last decade, Information Services has been operating a live webcasting service for the University community. With a live stream distance is not an obstacle, and families and friends from around the world can share in the graduands' success without leaving their own homes.

Florance Kennedy, Administrator for the DCC in Information Services, and an Edinburgh graduate herself (BA 1976), told us how the graduations were particularly special for her this year.

Florance proudly watched her daughter Rhona receive her MSc in Psychology in McEwan Hall in November, whilst at the same time her father Lee (MBCb 1980 and MD 1987) on the other side of the world stayed up into the early hours to watch the graduation live via the webcasting stream.

Both were delighted to be able to share in Rhona's success and were also pleasantly surprised to be treated to an impromptu rendition of the Sarabande from Bach's Partita No.2 in D Minor by Nicola Benedetti after she received an Honorary Doctorate of Music on the same stage.

Lee Kennedy told us "Unfortunately I could not be there in person as I now live in Melbourne, Australia. I was extremely grateful to be able to watch the webcast live. I had a front row seat, heard great speeches, and a violin recital into the bargain. Thanks to the webcast, the memories of Rhona's graduation are no less vivid than those of my own. Well done IT at Edinburgh University".

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

**The 7th International Conference** on Open Repositories (OR2012) comes to Edinburgh University

EDINA, Information Services and the Digital Curation Centre are delighted to announce that the University of Edinburgh will be hosting the 7th International Conference on Open Repositories (OR2012) from 9 –13 July 2012. The theme, "Open Services for Open Content: Local In for Global Out", reflects the current move towards open content, 'augmented content', distributed systems and data delivery infrastructures.

[www.or2012.ed.ac.uk](http://www.or2012.ed.ac.uk)

**Edinburgh to host UK-wide Higher Education Web Management Conference**

The University Website Programme is pleased to announce that the University will be hosting the Institutional Web Management Workshop 2012 (IWMW 2012) from 18 – 20 June 2012. The conference is the annual gathering for all HE web professionals. The theme for this year is "Embedding Innovation", which will explore ways in which innovative technologies and ways of working can be embedded in order to respond to the challenges provided by rapid technological developments, changing user expectation and reduced levels of funding.

[iwmw.ukoln.ac.uk/iwmw2012](http://iwmw.ukoln.ac.uk/iwmw2012)

Cover feature

James Toon

# PURE Edinburgh research



Image supplied by Paul Dodds

## PURE, early days

A 2013 deadline might feel like a long way off so early in 2012, but two years is no time at all in the run up to the next national research assessment exercise - the Research Excellence Framework (REF2014).

The PURE project is part of the University's investment in preparing for this significant undertaking. It brings together and reconciles the required information from across corporate systems, in collaboration with College and School administration and the University's research and academic staff.

## Project Background

The University is one of the latest UK Universities to procure and implement a dedicated Current Research Information Management System (CRIS).

The PURE system was acquired early in 2011 from Danish suppliers, Atira, and over the past year the project team has worked to synchronise and migrate data from corporate and legacy systems into PURE, as well as preparing for, and actioning, the roll out of the system across the University.

The PURE Project Team is made up of members from Governance and Strategic Planning (the business owners and project client), Library and Collections, and IS Applications Division.

## Scope

The scope of the PURE project is to deliver a functional and usable research management information system, designed for researchers, administrators, and managers across the University.

Project benefits include;

- providing researchers with access to their research activity data for use in their CVs, web profiles, etc.
- enabling public access to research activity data through a web-based portal
- improving the University's communication of its research activity, and hence widening its impact
- strengthening the University's research management processes by enabling the incorporation of research activity data
- enabling the collation of data with research collaboration partners (e.g. pooling), facilitating management and preparations for external research assessment
- enabling administrative oversight of research activity data to ensure its accuracy and therefore the accuracy of statutory returns



The research activity information captured in PURE will be made publicly available from the end of March, via the Edinburgh Research Explorer.

The over-riding priority for the PURE Implementation Project is ensuring that we accurately capture the data required to make our REF2014 submission in 2013.

## Milestones reached

An enormous amount has been achieved to date. The system was implemented in two stages, with the initial 'live' service coming on-line at the end of August 2011, extracting staff details from the HR record and replacing the existing publications repository service. Stage 2, completed in February 2012, now also extracts funding and project information from eFinancials, and links with the Visitor Registration System to enable visitors to be captured in PURE.

A dedicated programme of user engagement has been a primary area of focus throughout the project implementation phase. In this, the team has liaised extensively across the University in preparation for rolling out the service to academic and support staff.

## The Edinburgh Research Explorer

The research activity information captured in PURE will be made publicly available from the end of March, via the Edinburgh Research Explorer. All content types (staff, outputs, activities and awards, and projects) will be visible and searchable from this single site.

## Further aspirations

Future phases of work are looking toward further integration with other corporate systems (e.g. EUCLID), and in the use of PURE as a content provider of research information to local web pages.

[www.ed.ac.uk/pure-project](http://www.ed.ac.uk/pure-project)



IT focus

## User satisfaction survey

Neil Bruce

The IS Helpline recently launched a survey to collect feedback on the use of support services provided by Information Services.

The "satisfaction survey" is being sent to 10% of the people who have raised a query with the IS Helpline. The information we've received so far paints a very positive picture of the quality of service IS provides, with over 80% of respondents reporting the highest level of satisfaction with our services.

The information collected will help us continually improve the quality of our service.

[www.ed.ac.uk/is/satisfaction-survey](http://www.ed.ac.uk/is/satisfaction-survey)



## Final report on digital monograph study

Theo Andrew

The Digital Monograph Technical Landscape study was a six month thinktank set up by JISC in the first half of 2011 to explore the potential value that the use of the ePUB specification could bring to the Higher Education sector if further adopted in UK Universities.

The study looked at the issues surrounding the adoption of e-book reader technology within the academic environment to assist with scholarly literature publication, in particular monographs.

<http://jiscpub.blogs.edina.ac.uk/final-report/>



## Network services team activities update

Jim Leitch

### Greater resilience and space for growth

After many years we have taken the opportunity to move all core Network Equipment at Kings Buildings into a more suitable environment. The refurbished area has more up-to-date air conditioning and power supplies, including Uninterruptible Supply and Generator backup. This will make the communications equipment more reliable and also provides ample room for future expansion. Malcolm Bell led this from the Network Team, liaising with Contractors, Telecom Suppliers, Estates and Buildings, Schools etc to manage the change and keep the level of disruption down to a minimum.

The bulk of the work has been completed. We have 'before' and 'after' photographs showing the original Communications Room and then the new communications rows in the machine hall showing clean lines with all services and cabling concealed.

We have also relocated the Operations staff into a more suitable work environment.

### Better wireless control

New hardware to control the 1500 Wireless Access Points was installed over the autumn. This will enable expansion of the management of the wireless network for the foreseeable future. The new hardware is also capable of IPv6 support when this is released by the manufacturer.

During the migration process, all wireless service disruption was scheduled between 03:00am and 04:00am to limit the impact on the user community.

As part of the University/Edinburgh College of Art Merger, the ECA Wireless Access Points were also migrated to the University Wireless Service.

### Retiring old network routing equipment

The majority of the Core Network Routing equipment is approaching end of life and this being replaced. The new equipment has higher performance, and, in key areas, has increased resilience.

The contract for the EaStMAN Infrastructure has been reprocured with a few new circuits still to be delivered by the various suppliers.

### Better resilience at the Bush estate

The University is adding significantly to its estate at Easter Bush. This has highlighted the potential risk to network service at that site and the Advanced Computing Facility (ACF) at the Bush Estate, as both are provided for by a single fibre set each leased from the telecoms provider THUS. We are in the final stages of negotiation to now provide a second link to Easter Bush on a completely diverse route. The existing link is connected to Kings Buildings and so it is proposed that the second link should be connected to Appleton Tower, for enhanced resilience.

## Timetabling project

James Thin

The Shared Academic Timetabling Project will deliver a new Timetabling application and integrated Web Room Booking system.

The new system will go live on 26 March 2012.

User acceptance testing and user training is well underway with sessions running until the end of March.

Key benefits of the Timetabling project:

- Student focused, coherent institutional timetabling which enhances the student experience
- Improved information and tools to support the effective use of University resources
- Improvements to the management of curricula and academic timetables
- More effective provision and use of learning and teaching space
- Greater flexibility in managing staff teaching time
- More effective use of administrative staff resources
- Supporting family-friendly policies
- Improved curriculum planning

The 2nd edition of the T@Ed newsletter is now available on this wiki, with latest project news and contacts.

[www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/x/zLQtC](http://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/x/zLQtC)

## How fresh is our website?

Martin Morrey

A key priority for IS is to make sure we keep our web pages up-to-date. To help visualise our progress, we extract the publication dates from all of our web pages and process them into an interactive "treemap" diagram. Each box in the diagram represents a section of the IS website, where the size of the box depends on the number of pages in the section, and the colour depends on the average number of days since those pages were last published. The viewer can drill down into the part of the website they are interested in simply by clicking on the relevant box.

You can do this for yourself: <http://goo.gl/KXHwg>

See how it works: <http://bit.ly/z8Efez>

## AMS business process review

Elize Rowan

Kaizen is a fusion of Japanese and US management theory relating to continuous improvement of services, and ensuring that these are customer-focused.

Using Kaizen, the Acquisitions & Metadata Services Team recently undertook an exercise to examine and refine a number of business processes and workflows relating to the way in which we acquire, catalogue and deliver a wide range of library materials.

The team is currently implementing a number of changes which will significantly improve the speed with which new books are made available to library users. Longer-term changes will improve alerts to academic staff, and the way in which supplier payments are handled.



## Get your new university card

Barry Croucher

The rollout of the University Smartcard continues at pace. Card events have been held across campus in the past few weeks at which red and white cardholders have been able to exchange their old card for new blue cards. Over 31,000 (73% of card holders) Smartcards are now in use.

If you haven't got your new card yet, please see the further information on 'Smartcards' on the Card website.

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



## Libraries

### Re-opening of Floor 4 in the Main Library

The Floor 4 of the Main Library opened in February, providing an additional 550 study spaces, including 150 extra computers. The Main Library has been very busy since the start of the session, and we expect to make it easier for students to find seats. Collections on the floor include the Older Lending Collection, Journals and some specialised collections. The Lower Ground Floor is now closed for redevelopment.

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

### Help finding study spaces in the Main Library

Student helpers are again at work in the Main Library directing students to available study space within the building and in the George Square area. You can spot them in their bright purple tee-shirts with the logo: "Here to help". They are there for you, so please ask them for help.

### Longer Main Library building opening on 13 Sundays in Semester 2

Information Services is pleased to inform you that the Main Library building will be open from 9am (rather than 12 noon) on 13 Sundays in Semester 2, from Sunday 26 February until Sunday 20 May 2012 inclusive. Helpdesk staffed services open at 12 noon as usual.

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

### Library Annexe Open Days

The Library Annexe team hosted Open Days in 2011. We were delighted to welcome over 70 people. Visitors were shown round both annexes, seeing where the Dewey and periodical collections decanted from the Main Library are now housed. The Annexe also now holds collections from Edinburgh College of Art and Vet Libraries. The team were on hand to demonstrate how we use Callslip (book requests via the catalogue) and ILLiad (Interlibrary Loan Service) to collect and scan material for our users.

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

### World Book Day

On World Book Day on 1 March we held a fines donation day in our libraries. Users paying fines were asked if they would like the money to be donated to Book Aid International. We are delighted to report that £458 was raised which will go towards providing books and library services for people who currently have little access to either. Many thanks to all who contributed.

## 5000th ERA record published

Theo Andrew

The Edinburgh Research Archive (ERA) is a digital repository of research produced at The University of Edinburgh. The service run by the Library presents a selection of the University's best research and makes it available to the public on an open access basis. This includes digital theses and dissertations, book chapters, working papers, etc.

The 5000th full text item has just been deposited, which makes it one of the largest full-text institutional repositories in the UK.

[www.era.lib.ed.ac.uk/](http://www.era.lib.ed.ac.uk/)

## Why choose

## Edinburgh DataShare?



Robin Rice

Edinburgh DataShare is an institutional data repository set up by the Data Library to allow University researchers to deposit, share, and license their data resources for online discovery and use by others, either openly or in a controlled way if requested.

We asked Stuart MacCallum, a Research Associate in the School of GeoSciences, how Edinburgh DataShare has helped him share his research more widely.

**Q: What kind of data have you been collecting within the Edinburgh Earth Observatory?**

Through the ARC-Lake project, funded by the European Space Agency, we have produced a data set of Lake Surface Water Temperature (LSWT) and Lake Ice Cover (LIC), derived from satellite observations. This data set covers around 250 of Earth's largest lakes over the last 20 years.

**Q: What is the purpose of the ARC-Lake research project which is the latest data 'collection' deposited in Edinburgh DataShare?**

LSWT and LIC observations have potential environmental and meteorological applications for inland water management and numerical weather prediction. The ARC-Lake project aims to develop and make such observations publically available (which we achieved using Edinburgh DataShare), and to demonstrate their usefulness to climate science.

**Q: You also provide 'data visualizations' on your website. What kind of open technologies have you used for these?**

We have used Google Earth and Google Fusion Tables to offer users a quick look at the data available and to make it accessible to the non-scientific community.

<http://datashare.is.ed.ac.uk/>

## LHSA volunteering programme: oral history project nears completion

Laura Gould

Volunteers at Lothian Health Services Archive (LHSA) are about to complete an oral history transcription project, providing access for the first time to engaging testimonies from staff at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital whose careers span from the 1920s to 1990s. Descriptions of the interviews and related research material have also been catalogued. This project forms part of LHSA's active volunteer programme, running since 2009. What started as a fairly informal arrangement has developed into an efficient and mutually beneficial procedure, providing invaluable experience for those hoping to enter the archive and conservation professions, and enabling the Archive to undertake additional cataloguing and re-housing work. Eleven volunteers have participated so far, working on projects involving architectural plans, hospital registers and photographs. For regular updates on our volunteer programme, please visit <http://lhsa.blogspot.com> or to take part, complete an application form on our website:

[www.lhsa.lib.ed.ac.uk/services/index.html](http://www.lhsa.lib.ed.ac.uk/services/index.html)



## Recruitment at the University is changing

Rhian Davies and Susan McLaren

Human Resources in partnership with IS are modernising recruitment at the University with the introduction of new software which will support the whole recruitment lifecycle. The new solution will greatly enhance the applicant experience, helping the University to attract quality people, and will significantly improve the recruitment process for recruiting managers and those involved in recruitment administration.

Over the last eighteen months the project team have worked with a User Group representing the Colleges and Support Groups to agree requirements and procure a suitable solution. Core International have been awarded the contract, Core work with many other educational institutions including the University of Oxford.

The implementation phase is now underway and the new software will be released at the end of May 2012. For more details on this exciting project please see the project wiki:

[www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/x/AKFoC](http://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/x/AKFoC)



## New DCC Website

Magdalena Getler

In April discover the new and improved homepage for the Digital Curation Centre (DCC) at [www.dcc.ac.uk](http://www.dcc.ac.uk). We hope that the new homepage (and soon the whole DCC website) will be more functional, easier to use, visually appealing and engaging.



## Visualisation tool showcased at Green Energy Workshop

Stuart Macdonald

A networking event, held at the Edinburgh Centre on Climate Change, saw individuals from across the sustainability, green energy, architecture and thermal imaging areas (including representatives from the academic, public and private sectors) meet, share research and practice. The STEEV team from EDINA demonstrated the innovative spatial-temporal visualisation tool they have developed. The tool has been created to enable analysis of historical data and future models of energy efficiency data.

<http://bit.ly/zTZPV>



## University breaks new ground with virtual graduations

Fiona Littleton

The University of Edinburgh broke new ground during its graduations in November 2011, as students located at a distance from the University attended graduation ceremonies in the virtual world Second Life.

Students on the MSc in E-learning in the School of Education and the MSc in Equine Science in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine received their graduation 'scrolls' as avatars in the virtual world, wearing specially designed University of Edinburgh robes.

One student, Jeremy Knox, receiving his Masters degree from the School of Education, attended the real-life ceremony in the McEwan Hall and the virtual ceremony at the same time, using an app on his iPhone. This is the first time a student at the University has graduated from two locations simultaneously. Jeremy Knox said, "It was a fascinating experience, challenging and risky, but it is just this kind of innovative thinking that the MSc in E-Learning encourages."

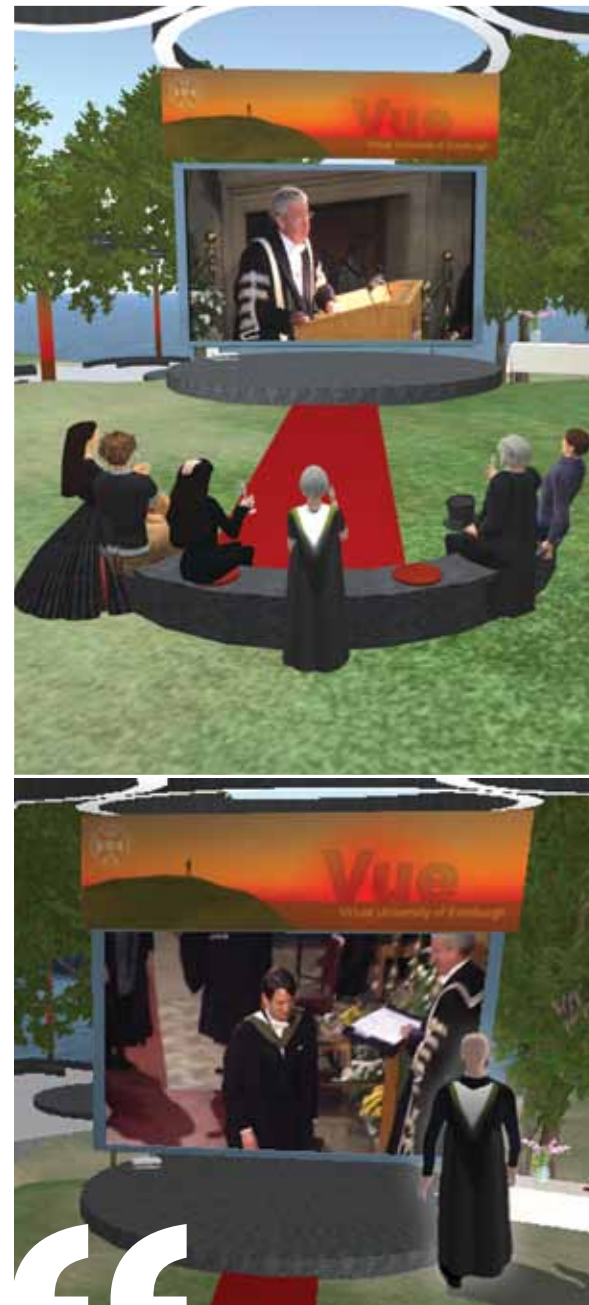
Dr Sian Bayne, co-director of the MSc in E-learning programme said, "We're proud that our students continue to push at the boundaries of what's possible in terms of educational practice. We are keen to think creatively about where the boundaries between the real and virtual lie, and our virtual graduation is the perfect opportunity to do this."

Jayne Roberts, Georgia, United States, who is among the first students to graduate from the University's Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies' MSc in Equine Science Programme, said: "I was disappointed not to make it back home to the UK for the graduation ceremony, but Second Life made it possible for me to be there. The support team was patient and encouraging and everything went great." She added that "not many people can attest to graduating with a cup of tea and their PJs on – it was 6am here."

Dr Jo-Anne Murray, director of the MSc in Equine Science programme said, "We are extremely proud of our first set of graduates from our Equine Science programme and so delighted that these students can undertake all aspects of their studies online, including graduating." Dr Murray was especially pleased when the vice-chancellor, Prof Tim O'Shea, mentioned Jayne by name in his graduation speech and asked for a special round of applause for this graduating student in Second Life!

The virtual graduation service is a result of collaboration within Information Services between The Multimedia Team and Learning Technology Services. This collaboration offers the live stream from the McEwan Hall to a screen within Second Life and supports the staff and students during the Second Life ceremony.

If you are interested in hosting a virtual graduation for your programme or school then please contact Fiona Littleton (fiona.littleton@ed.ac.uk) who will be happy to support you.



**We're proud that our students continue to push at the boundaries of what's possible in terms of educational practice.**

## Distance Education growth plans

Sarah Gormley, Amy Woodgate

In November 2010, The University of Edinburgh launched the Distance Education Initiative (DEI). The DEI aims to substantially increase Online Distance Learning (ODL) at the University to match on-campus student recruitment by 2020.

Distance education is not new to the University – Edinburgh has been offering hugely popular online-only courses for over 10 years. However, the student demographic is changing and there is now more demand than ever for truly flexible learning.

### Greater flexibility – all around the world

Fully online courses allow students the flexibility to learn anywhere around the world via a virtual learning environment (VLE). The qualification obtained is of equal value to on-campus delivered programmes, whilst allowing students the flexibility to learn part-time and around personal commitments, e.g. full-time work or dependents.

As a University, we currently deliver 23 online-only postgraduate level courses to 1,000 online students. The DEI has funded development of a further 9 new courses, each set to launch by 2012/13. We now have online offerings from all three Colleges.

### More than just funding!

But there is a lot more to the DEI than funding courses! Staff Development, Student Experience, Technology, and Marketing – we are reviewing all areas of the University within an online context to ensure we are delivering a world-leading, Edinburgh experience, online.

In response to the need for the ODL community to be able to communicate, provide support and learn from one another, the

DEI launched The ODL Hub: [www.odl-community.is.ed.ac.uk](http://www.odl-community.is.ed.ac.uk)

Through a peer support model, The Hub enables staff members to openly discuss topics surrounding online distance learning, share good practice, explore collaborative initiatives and develop a future vision for online learning at Edinburgh in a staff-only area. The Hub is available to all University staff members.

To supplement The Hub, we have launched a new mailing list to widen the reach of online distance learning communication to the wider University, beyond those directly associated with the DEI: [onlinelearning@ed.ac.uk](mailto:onlinelearning@ed.ac.uk)

If you are interested in joining the mailing list, wish to find out more about how DEI could potentially support you to develop a new online course, or have any questions about the DEI, please contact Sarah Gormley or Amy Woodgate.



**DEI funding deadline for development of new ODL courses**  
**27th April 2012**

## Prominent Edinburgh neurosurgeon's case notes to be catalogued

Ruth Honeybone

Lothian Health Services Archive (LHSA, University Collections) has secured a significant grant from the Wellcome Trust's Research Resources in Medical History (RRMH) programme to undertake a two-year project to catalogue Norman Dott's private practice and hospital-based case notes.

Professor Norman Dott (1897-1973) had a successful career in surgical neurology, holding posts in key Edinburgh hospitals and founding the Royal Infirmary's Surgical Neurology Unit in 1937. He became the University of Edinburgh's first Professor of Surgical Neurology a decade later.

Approximately 27,000 case notes held by LHSA have already been conserved and re-housed as part of two previous RRMH projects, and have strong links with other Dott collections, for example his personal papers held by Edinburgh University Archives (Coll-32). On a wider scale, this material is hugely important in demonstrating Edinburgh's rich medical heritage, and the cataloguing work will enable improved access for research in line with legislation on patient confidentiality.

[www.lhsa.lib.ed.ac.uk](http://www.lhsa.lib.ed.ac.uk)



## Social media

Nicola Osborne, Social Media Officer, looks at what is happening in the social media space

Twitter  
Social Media  
Facebook  
YouTube  
Blogging

The University Social Media Guidelines are now available at:  
[www.ed.ac.uk/website-programme/editorial-guidelines](http://www.ed.ac.uk/website-programme/editorial-guidelines)

### The Centre for Theology and Public Issues

Dr Jamie Pitts

The Centre for Theology and Public Issues (CTPI), a research centre in the School of Divinity, brings academic theologians into conversation with the public, policy makers, practitioners and other academics to address pressing matters of public concern.



CTPI is leading two major projects at present:

- Peacebuilding through Media Arts (PMA), investigating representation of religious violence in media arts and use of media arts in peacebuilding
- Religion and Ethics in the Making of War and Peace (Relwar), led by Dr George Wilkes and involving academics, militaries, and humanitarian and peacebuilding organisations.

At the start of the PMA project in May 2011, CTPI launched a Wordpress blog called Public Faith.

Content initially focused on exhibition promotion (as PMA began with an art exhibition), but has since gone on to offer artist profiles, interviews, announcements about lectures, feature articles and reviews.

The Public Faith blog has been modestly successful in publicising CTPI's activities. Currently it has over 20 Wordpress followers, over 100 Twitter followers, and 50 Facebook friends. By far the most popular posts involve original content or interviews.

More interactive features are planned in the future including a poetry contest to coincide with a reading by Michael O'Siadhail in May and an interview series with our associate directors (who are all well-known theologians) that is likely to generate significant discussion.

<http://centrefortheologyandpublicissues.wordpress.com>

### Digital HSS workshops

The College of Humanities and Social Science has been running a series of hands-on workshops for academic and support staff, which aim to help people learn how to use social and digital media environments for teaching and research.

Last semester we focused on "Social media for teaching and research". This semester workshops on the theme of 'Online learning live!' are looking at various synchronous (and nearly synchronous) environments for teaching – Skype chat, virtual worlds and Twitter.

For more information please contact Sian Bayne, Associate Dean (digital scholarship), CHSS.

### IT Futures Conference 2011: Social Media in Academia – a Tweet too far?

Julia Collins

The annual IT Futures Conference took place in December at the Informatics Forum. It focused on social media with speakers from the Schools of Education, Divinity, Informatics and Edinburgh College of Art offering their diverse experiences of using social media in all areas of academic practice.

Julia Collins, Maths Engagement Officer who uses social media for personal projects such as the "What's on My Blackboard?" blog, shares her thoughts: "It was refreshing to go to an event about social media in academia and hear that it is becoming a serious tool in teaching and research. It was very interesting hearing Jen Ross describe her experience of encouraging students to be more open about their learning experiences via blogging. We would definitely learn a lot from hearing how students go about problem-solving in maths!

Another intriguing idea was from Richard Coyne, who grades his students on the quality of how they comment on his blog posts. With these ideas I definitely have ammunition to encourage colleagues to take social media more seriously as a learning tool!"

Presentations can be found on the IT Futures website:

<http://bit.ly/sp9LRw>

### Exhibitions

## Musicians, satyrs and dancing girls - what could it be but Gandhāran sculpture!

Jill Forrest

### 1st and 2nd Century Indian sculpture in University Collections

The Kushans were an Indo-European people who came to Gandhāra, Bactria, now northwestern Afghanistan, in the 1st Century BC.

Kushan Gandhāra was a multi-ethnic blend of cultures and religions. Gandāra's location and dynamic history brought together Greek, Persian, Indian and many other influences.

Gandhāran art developed and flourished under Kushan rule. The earliest Kushan art mostly reflects Greek and Roman mythology, before Buddhist figures became dominant. The first depictions of the Buddha in human form were made by artists of Kushan Gandhāra. The University of Edinburgh was gifted several fragments of Gandhāran sculpture in 1872 by Colonel H. C. Johnstone, Deputy Superintendent of Survey, Bengal Staff Corps, North Western Frontier. Three fascinating pieces, carved from grey schist, can be seen within Masterpieces II exhibition of University Collections treasures to be held in the Main Library, George Square from 31 March – 30 July 2012.



### Your Paintings

Jill Forrest

### University of Edinburgh oil paintings go on-line

The University of Edinburgh has been in collaboration with The Public Catalogue Foundation since 2009 in order to photograph all publicly owned oil and acrylic paintings in the UK. The University's collection finally went on-line in December 2011 and can be seen on the BBC's "Your Paintings" website.

This mammoth task was entirely funded by the Public Catalogue Foundation and has made our paintings available to researchers worldwide.

[www.thepcf.org.uk/](http://www.thepcf.org.uk/)

[www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/)



### Talbot Rice Gallery

10 March – 5 May 2012

#### Alison Turnbull exhibition

Alison Turnbull's contemporary abstract paintings, from star charts and architectural plans, distil colour, rhythm and pattern to create images of startling clarity. They stress the inherent aesthetic qualities of information, while demonstrating how the process of painting can record analytical and intuitive relationships.

#### James Cumming exhibition

Including rarely seen works this exhibition celebrates the achievements of James Cumming (1922-1991) RSA, RSW. In addition to paintings from every decade of his career, sketchbooks and preparatory materials reflect the level of research and design that enriched his work.



## Arts & Crafts Fair

Talented crafters from across the University exhibited their wares at the first University Charity Christmas Arts & Crafts Fair held in December in Teviot Row House.

The fair, organised by Anezka Leskovcova in Information Services, had a fantastic range of handmade goods on offer from cards to confectionary to calendars all wrapped up in a festive atmosphere.

The crafters were delighted to have raised £170 for charity which was divided between the British Heart Foundation, Teenage Cancer Trust and PDSA and would like to say a big thank you to everyone who supported the event.

The group hope to hold further events in the future, so if you've got a hidden talent and would like to get involved please contact

[Anezka.Leskovcova@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Anezka.Leskovcova@ed.ac.uk)



### **Anthea McAlpin** receives recognition of 40 years service

**Helen Murphie**

Congratulations to Anthea McAlpin of Acquisitions & Metadata Services. She received her Gold Pin from the Principal in recognition of her 40 years' service.

She returned to the Library after completing her Masters in Librarianship in 1971. Anthea remembers how she used to write up the catalogue "in her best hand writing" and compared this to today's computerised methods. She has worked in a number of libraries across the University including the Central Medical Library and the Erskine library.

Anthea feels it's been a privilege to work at the Library with great colleagues, some of whom have become lifelong friends.



### **Jeff Haywood** announces Sheila Cannell's retirement

Sheila Cannell, Director of Library Services in Information Services and one of my Deputies, has decided to retire as of July 2012.

I am sure that you will feel as I do, a sense of sadness that a very respected and valued colleague is leaving our community. I think that we all recognise the enormous contribution that Sheila has made over 27 years, to the Library in its widest sense, and to the development of the high quality research, teaching and learning environment that the University offers. She has contributed greatly to Edinburgh University, but has also shared her experience and expertise with the wider UK and international communities of library professionals, through her roles in RLUK and SCURL.

Sheila has nurtured our physical and digital libraries, our galleries and museums and helped to keep us at the forefront of shared services and innovation. She has taken a constant interest in our staff and their well-being, in equality and diversity, and in the effectiveness of our communications. She has also been a staunch promoter of Open Access.

I shall miss Sheila greatly, and I am sure that you will join me in wishing her well in the next phase of her life. We shall organise a celebration of her achievements in due course.



## 60 seconds with: Orlando Richards

Research Systems Manager,  
UNIX Section of  
IT Infrastructure Division



**It is great to talk to people about what they are doing and we do that quite regularly**

#### **How long have you been at the University?**

I started as an undergraduate in 1996 and have been here ever since! I did a BSc (Hons) in Physics with Music and went on to do a PhD in Musical Acoustics. I then started work in the computing support team in Physics, then moved into the UNIX section in 2006 to form the Edinburgh Compute and Data Facility (ECDF).

#### **What do you see as the main remit of your job?**

We provide IT services to support researchers in the University. Our focus is on the large scale computing requirements, CPU based or data-based.

It's great to talk to people about what they're doing, and we do that quite regularly, but equally our services are open to everyone to use and we have many users whose activities are a mystery to us. We try to make our services easy to use, and when a researcher uses our services to carry out their research without any help from us, it shows we've managed to achieve that.

#### **Your department was set up in 1980 and must have seen a lot of changes.**

#### **What do you think the next 32 years will bring?**

That's difficult to predict, but something we do get asked from time to time. For instance, we were recently asked by some astronomers to plan for a storage project up to 2025. I'd like to say we use educated guesswork but it's impossible to predict that far ahead in the world of computing.

I like to think Linux will still be around in 32 years, and I'm sure that people will still be using computers to do research – probably more than they do now. Researchers are great at pushing the boundaries of what you can do with computers, and I have no doubt that they will still be doing so in 32 years - no matter how much computing has changed in that time.

#### **What do you love most about your job?**

Being at the leading edge of providing research services within the University, nothing ever stands still. The technology we use, and the uses it is put to by our research community, change every day - sometimes in absolutely immense ways. That makes for very challenging and exciting work. We also work on a huge range of things, from helping a new PhD student take their first steps in research computing, through working with a principal investigator to plan their technology requirements for their projects, to procuring, building and running multi-million pound IT systems. All that combined means that no two days are ever the same.

Many of the projects we support are also great to be involved in. For instance, we've just finished installing a storage cluster for the Particle Physics group here, who are working on the Large Hadron Collider project, including the search for the Higgs boson.

#### **When not at work, what are you interested in?**

I'm a keen reader, gamer, runner and squash player - but above all these days I'm a family man. Watching my young daughter take her first steps with technology, it amazes me to think of how fast technology does change – and does make me wonder how the world of computing will change over the next 32 years.





The re-launched **BITS** magazine has now celebrated its first anniversary.

We'd love to hear from you, the readers, what you think of **BITS**.

What do you like most? ...and least?!

Are there any changes or improvements you would like to see in the future?

Let us know by completing the short online survey at the link below.

[www.survey.ed.ac.uk/bits](http://www.survey.ed.ac.uk/bits)