

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*
Computing Service

Keynotes

Volume 29 Number 1 October 2002

Classroom upgrades



Also in this Issue:

Frequently asked questions

New PC suppliers

Training news

Outlook 2002

YIMS update

From the Editor

If you're new to the University, then start off by turning to the back page for answers to some of the Computing questions you may have. But try to remember to come back and read the rest of Keynotes later.



This term's training schedule is available in the centre pages of this issue, and details of new features and highlights can be found on page 3. We expect many courses to be fully booked this term, so contact the Information Desk as soon as possible to ensure your place.



Kay Mills-Hicks, writing on pages 4 and 5, gives an update on the YIMS programme, in particular the progress towards implementation of new finance and student record systems.



We're pleased to feature two guest authors this issue. Sue Cumberpatch writes about the new Library Catalogue, and Aaron Turner gives details about the White Rose Grid, a collaborative project between York, Leeds and Sheffield. Both can be found on page 8.
Joanne Casey

Cover photo: the newly refurbished Goodricke 114 PC classroom.

Contents

News in Brief

Student Network Service goes live	1
Windows 2000 service update	1

News

Staff News	2
New PC suppliers announced	3
MIS news	5
The new Library Catalogue is here!	8
White Rose Grid	8

Software

Outlook 2002	3
Software news	3
Program development environment for Windows 2000	7
GIS and remote sensing software	7

Web and Mail

Web server default home/welcome pages	6
Web news	6
Mail service changes	6

Feature articles

Classroom upgrades	1
Frequently asked questions	9
YIMS update	4-5
Training news	3

Keynotes on the web

Back copies of Keynotes can be found at:
www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/offdocs/keynotes/

Summer classroom upgrades

Doug Moncur

Summer is traditionally the time when we refresh and update the hardware in PC classrooms and this summer has been no exception.

New Pentium 1.7GHz PCs running Windows 2000 have been installed in Goodricke G/169, Derwent D/114 and Langwith L/117. We've also closed the former classroom in Alcuin A/270 and opened a new Windows 2000 based facility in A/107. At the same time we've replaced the rather tatty and tired old white melamine benches with new wood effect benches and new chairs to provide a better working environment. We've also had carpets replaced and rooms repainted where required.

And that's not all. We've upgraded the existing PCs in G/022, L/050 and R/113 to Windows 2000, as well as the PCs in the training suite, HB/40 and opened a new 13 PC staff training room in Wentworth 218.

This means that we have only two Windows 95 based classrooms left – Vanbrugh V/058 and K/120 in King's Manor. We would hope to be able to upgrade these at a later date, perhaps Christmas 2002 or Easter 2003. Unfortunately there was not enough time to factor these in with all the other work that's been going on this summer.

There is of course the question of what happens to all the old PCs. The ones from Alcuin, which were the oldest and slowest machines with the least resale value were donated to East Yorkshire's Refurbit programme which trains unemployed people in computer hardware skills and then donates them to charities and voluntary organizations. Some will be needed to keep V/058 and K/120 running, some will be used for internal development projects and to support other services around the network. The remainder will either be sold or donated to a third world educational charity such as ComputerAid (www.computeraid.org).



Goodricke 169, before and after transformation

Student Network Service goes live

Robert Demaine

The pilot scheme to provide high-speed network access to student study bedrooms goes live at the beginning of October. Trials conducted by volunteers at the end of last term proved very successful, with encouraging levels of user satisfaction. Note that the pilot service is only available in the following locations:

James D block	48 bedrooms
James E block	32 bedrooms
James F block	48 bedrooms
Halifax	496 bedrooms
(Ingram, Irwin, Lindley, Younger & Wood)	
Total:	624 bedrooms

Any future expansion of the service will depend both on the success of the pilot scheme and on the availability of funding.

The cost of using the Student Network Service is £60, payable in advance, based on a 30-week academic year. So for £2 per week students will have access, at speeds up to 200 times faster than standard dialup, to a range of services including mail, web, news, ftp and telnet/ssh. Full details are available at: www.sns.york.ac.uk.

Windows 2000 service update

Andrew Smith

During the Summer holiday we have purchased four new servers to support the Windows 2000 service. Two of the servers are to improve the resilience of the user filestore in case of hardware failure. The remaining two servers will enable us to support users desktop PCs via Systems Management Server (SMS). SMS will provide facilities to remotely deploy application software to a users PC overnight and not on PC start-up as is now the case. Other features include remote hardware failure detection and diagnosis, and management of service packs and security updates.

Staff news

Mike Jinks

Congratulations to Philip Smailes on his appointment as the MIS Technical Support Programmer. Phil originally joined us just under a year ago as software technician where he was involved with the updating of the standard PC desktop. He will be able to build on his PC software installation experience and that in his previously employment in his new role helping to maintain the YIMS systems.

Suran Perera joined us in August as a temporary Analyst Programmer to work on the implementation of the YIMS systems. Suran has a background in Electronic and Electrical Engineering, together with an MSc in Computing, and previously worked in IT for the London Marriage Guidance Council. A second temporary Analyst Programmer post is yet to be filled.

Matt Holmes graduated this year with a BEng in Electronic and Computer Systems Engineering from Loughborough University where he was the Student Hall Network Advisor and hence gained valuable experience of the issues of providing network services to student study bedrooms. He has taken on the role of temporary Technician for the pilot of the Student Network Service at York, which commences this term.

Gavin Atkinson is a York Graduate from the Electronics department who joins us as a temporary Technician to support the installation of Windows 2000 systems. He has worked for us before, and at the Audio Visual Centre so is no stranger to the University.

There have also been several changes to the staff on the Information Desk. Ed Jones joined us in July, replacing a member of staff who has been on long-term sick leave. Ed is also a York graduate, with a first degree in English Literature



New faces: (left to right) Suran Perera, Dan Granville, Gavin Atkinson, Matt Holmes, John Hawes and Deb Taylor.

followed by an MSc in Information Processing. Shortly after arrival, Ed needed to enter hospital for surgery and we wish him a speedy recovery. Deb Taylor, another York Graduate, who is completing an MA in History, is providing short-term assistance during Ed's absence. John Hawes, yet another recent York graduate, from Computer Science is providing cover for Tamsin Quormby during her leave of absence.

Finally, Dan Granville joined us as the Information Assistant following Susanne Hodge's appointment to the ILIAD Programme Manager post. Dan is also a recent York Graduate, this time from Electronics.

We hope that all the new members of staff and those who have transferred to new roles will enjoy working with us.

Outlook 2002

Mike Jinks

We have been experiencing a range of difficulties with Outlook 2002, the new version of Microsoft's standard mail client, part of Microsoft Office. We expect that these problems will have been resolved by the time you read this, but they have caused considerable inconvenience over the summer.

The previous version of Outlook, part of our Windows 2000 system, had several deficiencies, notably major problems with retaining user profiles on the classroom systems and backing up profiles on the office systems, since they were stored on the local hard disk. There was also a set of documented problems interfacing to the standard mail services. We upgraded to Outlook 2002 on staff PCs in the Computing Service in May: this identified a set of configuration issues requiring user action immediately after the upgrade. We had no further problems and released the upgrade generally in August, together with information on the configuration issues, to minimise the impact of any unanticipated problems

In the event, we experienced a considerable number of apparently random problems, some of which could be solved easily whilst others failed to respond even to complete rebuilds. In order to minimise the inconvenience we attempted to seek external help, and eventually were able to secure the services of a Microsoft consultant who was experienced in problems with Office products in a mixed environment. This consultant had experienced our specific problem elsewhere and has helped us to stabilise our systems. The root cause of the problem appears to be associated with the system load in upgrading a large number of PCs simultaneously. The consultant is working with us to define a more general approach to minimise such incidents occurring in future.

We apologise for the inconvenience this upgrade has caused, and are working to minimise the chances of such problems recurring with other standard upgrades.

New PC suppliers announced

Doug Moncur

As you may know, the University is required by law to put in place contracts for the supply of computing equipment, rather than simply buying the first PCs that come along on a given day. With the demise of Dan Technology, and the HP/Compaq merger, the University has effectively been reduced to one supplier over the summer.

As of 1 October, we will be appointing six suppliers:

- Akhter
- Centreprise
- Compusys
- Hi-Grade
- Research Machines
- Viglen

This agreement has been jointly negotiated by the North Eastern Universities' Purchasing Group and the Midland Universities Purchasing Consortium on behalf of universities in the North East and the Midlands, and is also open to use by other UK universities. The negotiating team included Doug Moncur as well as colleagues from Leicester, Nottingham Trent, Sheffield Hallam and Aston.

The agreement will run for three years with options to extend for a further year on two occasions, ie 3+1+1 or a maximum of 5 years.

Negotiations concluded late in September: the Computing Service's purchasing web pages at www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/purchase/ will be updated to reflect the new agreement.

Software news

John Illingworth

From the start of the 02/03 academic year we have, after much consultation, discontinued our Borland Education Programme licence. This includes C++ Builder, Delphi and Jbuilder. It transpires that the terms of the current licence allow installed products to be left in place after licence expiry, without updates, support from Borland or further installations. This is the last year that such an arrangement is possible: the new Borland licence insists on complete removal as soon as the licence expires. You will notice no difference in the short term, but next year we intend to install the Microsoft Visual Studio products. There may be a problem in providing a suitable Java development environment, but the existing Borland Jbuilder will remain in place until we find a solution.

See Rob Fletcher's article on page 7 for more information on program development environments.

Training news

John Illingworth

The staff and graduate training schedule, detailed in the pull-out, includes some new features.

A shorter HTML course has given us time to slip in a drop-in session for users with queries on web authoring or on Access databases. This is a new idea, in response to user requests for sessions to help them apply the theory to their day to day work.

There will also be a new short session on File Management: now that many office PCs have 40Gb disks or more, organising that amount of space requires some thought, even if a fair proportion of it is taken up with massive software items. It is only a few years since the entire central file store was smaller than a single PC hard disk on a new machine.

The web strand is focussed on the needs of those using departmental web accounts, and will be largely based on the Dreamweaver package used by them. Unfortunately we can't currently afford to provide Dreamweaver for all, but the Computing Service has primed the pump by providing a copy to all web authors who asked for it, and enough licences for a full classroom.

We maintain a significant amount of IT training material on the Computing Service website at: www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/advice/guides.htm. There are tutorial guides to Microsoft Office software and workbooks and guides to many other products.

YIMS update

Kay Mills-Hicks

The start of the new academic year means that we are getting closer to the implementation of two major new systems in the University – a new Finance system (Agresso) and a new Student Record system (SITS:Vision). Following the exhaustive selection process carried out in the first half of 2002, implementation activity is now proceeding at a hectic pace. Much remains to be done and exact dates for go-live have not yet been set, but current plans indicate the following key dates:

Finance (Agresso)	live from April 2003
Student Record (SITS)	live from August 2003

Finance system

Agresso will replace all of the components of the current MAC Finance system and the Finance data warehouse. The YIMS Finance project team has established several workstreams to focus on the detailed specification and configuration of the system. Agresso is much more complex than MAC Finance, and there is greater flexibility to configure the system to meet University needs.

Implementation of Agresso will also see the withdrawal of the Paradox “Richard Shepherd” reports that many departments presently rely on for financial information. Obviously, alternative reports will be available to departments and we are aiming to provide these via the web.

A comprehensive user training program is planned. Information will be sent directly to departments and will be available on the YIMS web site and on YIMS circulars.

Further information on any aspect of the new system can be obtained from the YIMS Finance team project leader Hamish McCardie (Finance) lm26@york.ac.uk.

Student Record system

The SITS Student Record system is the most widely used student record system in the education sector in the UK. It has been developed specifically for the UK market and has comprehensive functionality for undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Following a series of project kick-off meetings, work to implement the system is now gathering pace. Student information will be transferred from the MAC system and loaded on to SITS in time for the start of the new academic year in 2003. A comprehensive training program for users will take place during calendar year 2003 and departments will be notified directly of the timing and arrangements.

The implementation of SITS for admissions processing will take place at the start of academic year 2004. By spreading full implementation of SITS over two years, YIMS is hoping to minimise disruption to departments and ensure sufficient time is given to user training and support.

It is intended to use SITS for administration of students in the Hull York Medical School and we will also hold records for students taking e-University programmes.

Further information about the implementation of the new Student Record system can be obtained from the YIMS Student Record project team leader David Muckersie (Registrars) (dam5@york.ac.uk).

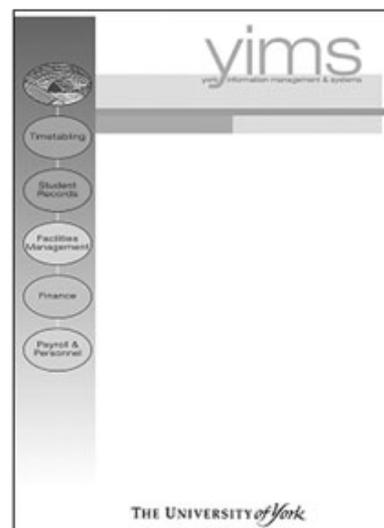
Technical issues

The YIMS Programme set out with the aim of acquiring new systems that would provide user access via web browsers wherever possible. This would minimise hardware and software requirements for desktop PCs and provide a familiar user interface. However, we found during the selection process that fully web-enabled systems are not yet available for both Finance and Student Records. This means that some users of the Finance and Student Record systems will need software to be installed on the desktop and there are minimum hardware desktop PC requirements. The users affected will be those who currently access MAC on a daily basis, carrying out extensive data entry and enquiries. Ad hoc and occasional users can expect to have access via web interfaces.

For members of staff who have a Computing Service supported desktop PC, we will deploy the new systems on the Windows 2000 service as the Windows 95 service is being phased out. Members of staff who need to use the systems but have a departmentally managed desktop PC are strongly recommended to move to a Computing Service supported desktop. For more information, please contact me via your Departmental Computing Officer.

YIMS communications

The impact of the implementation of the new Finance and Student record systems will be felt across all departments in the University. In order to keep departments and individual users fully informed during the next few months, YIMS project teams will be issuing written updates more frequently and will be using a new house style on A4 paper – shown here in miniature.



continued from previous page

YIMS web site

www.york.ac.uk/univ/org/yims/local.yrk/

YIMS update - summary

During the next academic year the following systems will be phased out and replaced by the new systems implemented under the YIMS Programme:

- MAC Finance
- MAC Student Record
- Finance data warehouse
- Student record data warehouse
- Finance (Richard Shepherd) Paradox Reports

If you or anyone in your department has developed a system using the Finance or Student data warehouse you will need to consider migration to use the facilities provided by the new YIMS systems. Please contact me to discuss data warehouse migration issues or if you have any other technical questions relating to the YIMS Programme.

MIS news

Kay Mills-Hicks

The implementation of new systems under the YIMS Programme is having a major impact on the MIS Group - not just in terms of workload. The new systems require us to be familiar with a wide range of software products and server environments such as Oracle databases, Windows 2000 servers, client-side software, web servers, web browsers, reporting tools etc etc. Whilst some of these technologies are familiar, much of the detail is new and as we go through the system implementation process MIS staff are undertaking a full learning programme - just as users will be once the system training begins.

To reflect the technical support requirements of the new YIMS systems, the structure of the MIS Group was recently modified. The roles and job descriptions of some members of the group have changed and we have appointed some new members of staff. Suran Perera joined MIS in August and is holding a post funded by YIMS. Philip Smailes has moved to MIS from the User Services Group and brings valuable expertise on desktop software. We hope the new structure will enable us to meet the challenges of the YIMS Programme and provide an ongoing service to the University once the YIMS Programme is complete in 2005.

Head of MIS	MIS strategy, policy, resource management and planning	Kay Mills-Hicks
Development Team	Projects, systems development, advisory services, technology watch	Geoff Houlton (Development Manager) Sue Bolton Jenny Jackson Suran Perera Timothy Wilson
Technical Support Team	System administration, change management, business continuity, systems integration, Oracle database administration	Kevin Gardner (Technical Support Manager) Philip Smailes
User Support	Liaison with DCOs and users, training, ad hoc support, data integration management	Nicola Normandale

Web server default home/welcome pages

Mike Brudenell

You may be aware that the Computing Service has replaced the single computer running YorkWeb and other web services with a new cluster of three machines. Along with the Web Office, we are also taking the opportunity to review various settings controlling the web service in order to tidy them up and remove leftovers from long-abandoned software. Most of these changes will have no visible effect on pages hosted on YorkWeb, but you need to be aware of changes to the names of files that can be used to set up **default pages** (also known as **welcome** or **home** pages) for an area. A default page is provided when the URL for an area is requested but no specific filename is included; that is, the URL ends with just a “/”.

1. The recommended filename to use when setting up a default page is being changed from welcome.htm to index.html. As you create new areas, or update existing ones, you should save the default page as index.html.
2. We aim to phase out two mixed-case versions of the filenames used to set up default pages: Welcome.html and Welcome.htm.
3. Two new filenames - index.cfm and index.shtml - have been added to support default pages written with HTML and ColdFusion, and Server-Parsed HTML respectively.

4. The order in which filenames for default pages are checked is being altered into a more sensible sequence.

In general these changes will affect very few information providers. Scans will be made of the YorkWeb filestore to identify any potential problems. These will look for:

- Web areas with a file called either Welcome.html or Welcome.htm, to forewarn of the need to rename these files;
- Web areas containing two or more files with names from the list of filenames for default pages: the change to the checking order may cause the wrong file to be displayed. (You should never have more than one file saved with a default page filename in any area.)

If the scan detects that your web account may be affected by the above changes you will be contacted with advice.

You can find out more information about default pages and the full, ordered, list of filenames for these, at: www.york.ac.uk/services/cservlet/help/web/ProvidingInfo/DefaultPages.html

Web news

Kriss Fearon

Home page redesign

The University's main welcome page and navigation pages are being redesigned, and should be available by the beginning of term. The design was commissioned from Ray Drainville of Argument from Design, who some readers may remember as Computing Service Information Officer in a past life.

The new design is a refresh of the existing pages, which were put up in November 1997. A complete redesign and restructuring is likely to take place in another two years after the introduction of an intranet and staff and student portals.

Photo library

The web photo library has been updated. The revised version is now available at www.york.ac.uk/images/library/. It contains a considerable number of images, including photographs of the University campus, students and the city of York.

Visual ID refresh

The web version of the University's visual identity has been reworked and plans are in progress for implementation. The Web Office will be in touch with web contacts from each office with more information.

Mail service changes

Mike Brudenell

You may recall that a scaleable cluster of new machines is replacing the single machine that used to run the central Mail Service. (Keynotes, June 2002). Because of the change, any mail client software you use to read your email from the service will need one of its settings altering slightly. This is the setting that tells your mail client the name of the computer from which to obtain your email; usually labelled **Incoming mail server**, **IMAP server** or something similar.

With the old, single, mail server this setting used to be set to imap.york.ac.uk. It now needs to be changed to indicate the particular server that stores your email. Its name includes your username followed by a full-stop as a prefix to the above, ie: **yourusername.imap.york.ac.uk**

If you use the standard mail client software on a machine administered by the Computing Service you do not need to do anything: we have already updated this setting for you. This includes:

- Outlook (Windows 2000 service)
- Netscape Messenger (Windows 95 service)
- PC-Pine (Windows 95 service)
- Pine (Computing Service UNIX systems)

However if you use another mail client, or your computer is not looked after by the Computing Service, then you will need to alter the setting yourself. Your department's DCO may be able to help with this if you get stuck. If you read your University email from home using an IMAP-aware mail client do remember to check and correct its settings too!

Program development environment for Windows 2000

Rob Fletcher

At some point in time the number of Unix systems available for program development will be reduced. The SGI O²s in D/104 are due to be replaced, thus reducing the access to Unix from 22 machines to just 2 (tower and ebor).

With the increase in available power on the desktop many more computer intensive jobs are now capable of being run on these systems. However, the tools available to the programmer on supported systems are not as comprehensive as those on the Unix systems.

The Computing Service has looked at the use of C/C++, Fortran and other programming languages in order to assess the requirements of the programmers. Put into context the figures for Fortran and C/C++ usage for this year to date (ignoring Computing Service use) are as follows:

	Compiler runs		Number of users	
	SGI	SUN	SGI	SUN
F77/F90	0	7073	0	38
C/C++	972	5800	33	30

Of course, it must be remembered that programs written by one person may be used by a number of others within

a research group. These figures are only for the central systems and do not take into account any program development done on departmental Unix systems. We do not have figures for PC usage.

At present we do not provide a Fortran compiler on the PCs, nor do we provide the numerical libraries (e.g. Nag), although we do provide the Nag C library, which is a subset of the main library. It is evident from research that the quality of the available PC Fortran compilers is very variable, but the final choice (if any) is likely to be made on the grounds of availability of required third party mathematical support libraries.

We have provided Microsoft Visual Studio C++ 6.0 on the Windows 2000 systems, along with the Borland suite of compilers (C/C++, Delphi, Jbuilder). Our intention is to phase out the Borland compilers and move to the .NET range of Microsoft compilers.

We would like to hear from any users who use and build applications with the JBuilder and Delphi tools. We would also like to hear from those who program on either Unix or the PC environment in order that we can assess your specific requirements and progress a move from the Unix environment to the PC desktop, where this is feasible and/or desirable. Please contact Rob Fletcher (3816 or R.Fletcher@york.ac.uk)

GIS and remote sensing update

Peter Halls

During the summer we have upgraded the GIS and remote sensing software offered on supported Computing Service systems.

ArcInfo has been upgraded to release 8.2 and the traditional interface is now available on Windows 2000 systems, (after installing from control panel it will appear in the Graphics & Presentations menu of the Start menu) as well as on the SGI and SUN UNIX systems. Release 8.2 fixes a problem that had prevented us from being able to offer the new Windows interface: this will now be installed on our Windows 2000 systems when time is available.

The PCI remote sensing and photogrammetric software, Geomatica, has been upgraded to release 8.2 on the UNIX platforms. At the time of writing, the Windows 2000 distribution kit had still not arrived at York; again, we will install this on Windows 2000 when it is to hand and staff time is available.

Windows 2000 users should note that the ArcInfo and PCI software, like most other graphics intensive packages, are designed for use with high-resolution graphics screens. Our default display settings are, however, deliberately set to a low resolution. Before using ArcInfo, ArcGIS or Geomatica on Windows it will be necessary to go to My Computer, Control Panel, Display, Settings and increase the Screen area setting to at least 1024 by 768 pixels, more if practical. After setting this do not forget to click Apply, OK and confirm the change. It would be a help to other users of the machine after you if you would set the resolution back to its original setting when you have finished using the GIS / remote sensing software.

Also arrived during the summer are the long awaited LANDMAP project products: A digital elevation model for the whole of the British Isles and ortho-rectified satellite imagery, including recent LANDSAT 7 imagery.

Full details of the LANDMAP products are available on www.landmap.ac.uk/ and details of how to access the data at York are available from the GIS help pages: www.york.ac.uk/services/csersv/sw/gis/datayork.htm.

The new Library Catalogue is here!

Sue Cumberpatch

The new Library Catalogue was launched on schedule on 18 July 2002. The new web-based service offers easy and fast navigation, plus new functions and searches, such as combined author and title searches. There are options for automatic alerts of new purchases and for emailing search results. **My Library Record** enables you to renew items and view your past loans. New computers have been purchased for dedicated catalogue access in the Library. But the catalogue can be accessed using any computer with web access at: libcat.york.ac.uk

Hints and Tips: Logging In

You do not need to login to search the Catalogue. But doing so gives you access to several powerful features, including **My Library Record**, where you can make requests, renew items, save searches and set up search alerts. To login, you use your library number and a password:

Students: Add 28026 or 28026000 to the beginning of the number on your University Card (eg 28026000123456) for your library number.

Staff: Your Library Number is the full 14-digit barcode, which appears on your library card.

All users: The Password is initially the same as the library number. Change this as soon as possible: go to **My Library Record**, login with your library number and existing password and click **Change Password**. The password must be numeric to use self-issue machines.

Hints and Tips: Saving your search results

Select records from the Results list by clicking in the check box to the left of each title (or **Select All** from the menu) and then on **Save Selected** (located directly above the check boxes). You can then view, save or email the selected records.

Save: Click **Email/Save**. Select the format in which you wish to save the records. Click **Go**. Follow the on screen instructions to save to a file.

Email: Click **Email/Save**. Select the format in which you wish to email the records. Enter your full email address and a subject line. Click **Go**.

Basket: You can gather together records from several searches by selecting them and using **Add to Basket** throughout your search session. The contents of the basket can then be saved or emailed in one go.

Help and Feedback

The Catalogue has online help, and there is a guide available from the Library and on LibWeb at: www.york.ac.uk/services/library/guides/newlibcat.htm. Enquiries about the Catalogue may be emailed to lib-enquiry@york.ac.uk. Feedback from users will be an important part of the development process. You can make comments and suggestions via the **Feedback** button at the bottom of each Catalogue screen

Latest news about the Catalogue and other Library development projects can be found on the Your New Look Library Web page at: www.york.ac.uk/services/library/newlook/.

White Rose Grid

Aaron Turner

An exciting new project has started at York that combines high performance computing (HPC) with the new world of transparent computing over The Grid, which will allow York to plug into the e-Science Grid.

The White Rose Grid project is a collaborative effort between the universities of Leeds, Sheffield, and York, funded by SRIF funding, central funds, and Yorkshire Forward. It is organised under the auspices of the White Rose Consortium, Sun and Esteem are also strategic partners.

The project aims to deliver HPC for each university, but also the opportunity to transparently use, via web-based portals, resources at the other participating universities. This portal technology is at the cutting edge of technology.

The project is supported by a number of computer systems at the universities. Leeds has a large Sun shared memory

system, and a 256 node Intel Beowulf distributed memory computer. Sheffield has a cluster of medium sized Sun shared memory machines, and York also has a Sun shared memory system. There are also a number of ancillary machines providing support roles, portals, web servers, and so on. The York component comprises a SunFire 880 machine with 8 UltraSparc III processors for login and interactive use, backed by 24GB of RAM, and a batch job compute server with 20 processors and 44GB of RAM. A hierarchical storage system is provided which will offer up to 4TB of storage, with a 1TB disk cache for data sets and 0.5TB for user files. A 'fair share' system is in place to ensure that each participating department can obtain a fair use of the system resources. Currently the resources are not charged for. Management structures are being created to manage the sharing of the resource.

For further details on the system, how to use it, and how to get access to it, see the web pages at: troilus.york.ac.uk or contact Aaron Turner (agt3@york.ac.uk).

Frequently asked questions

Aimee Phillips and Joanne Casey

Ever seasonal, this issue's frequently asked questions are aimed at new users. You can also find links to a range of information and facilities at: www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/newusers.htm.

How do new staff register to use Computing Service facilities?

Come to the Information Desk in the Computing Service (see www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/advice/desk/ for the opening hours) with some form of ID. You will need to have been entered on the Personnel database or the Associates Database (see www.york.ac.uk/univ/mis/cfm/assoc_rll/assoc_procedure.htm) before coming to register. Once registered, you will be able to use the Windows 95 service straightaway. The Windows 2000 service will become available to you the day after you register.

Can it be done in advance?

Yes. The Department can add new staff members to the Associate Database (each Department has a designated person with access to the Database) before they arrive. This data is updated overnight. The day after the data is added, the Department can contact the Computing Service Information Desk with details of the new staff member(s) and account details will be sent out via the internal post.

Which Management Information Systems should I use?

The MIS group in Computing Service has provided information on the different systems at: www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/admin.yrk/whichsys.htm.

How do I register for Data Warehouse and MAC?

You need to fill in separate registration forms for Data Warehouse and MAC – you can get these from the Information Desk or from the MIS web page mentioned above.

How do I get help with computing problems?

There are a number of sources of help you can access:

- Departmental Computing Officers: most Departments now have a DCO, although their remit (and available time) will vary from Department to Department. A list is available at: www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/cfm/dcos.yrk/dco_contact.cfm.
- Computing Service web pages (www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/) include a Help section with links to Hints and Tips, user guides, course workbooks, and online manuals.
- The Computing Service user guides issued, via Departments, to all new users give the basic information to get you started and give pointers to further sources of information.
- You can report problems to us via our Enquiry tracking system (www-db.york.ac.uk/cfm/csrv/ets/enqintro.cfm), giving as much detail as possible (ie the operating system, circumstances, any error messages). They will then be allocated to a member of the Computing Service with the appropriate expertise.
- Contact the Computing Service Information desk by email (infodesk@york.ac.uk), phone (3838) or in person (see above for opening hours).

What's my email address?

Your email address is your username followed by @york.ac.uk ie abc1@york.ac.uk.

What's the Electronic Infodesk?

This is a web based utility at: www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/edesk/. It provides various facilities for managing your account, including changing your password, checking print queues, checking disk quota, registering for optional facilities, amending your entry in the Online Directory etc.

How do I find out about mailing lists?

Visit lists.york.ac.uk to see local mailing lists, and to find out how to subscribe to or set up a local mailing list. Mailing lists for the wider academic community are provided by JISCmail (www.jiscmail.ac.uk). For lists elsewhere, see the directory at Publicly Accessible Mailing Lists (www.paml.net/).

Where can I get a list of available newsgroups?

Newsgroups provided by the University's Usenet News service are listed at: www.york.ac.uk/ServerSupport/UsenetNews/.

Contacting the Computing Service

Computing Service
University of York
Heslington
YORK YO10 5DD

Telephone: (01904)433800
Direct dial: (01904) 43 followed by ext no.
Fax: (01904)433740
Email: username@york.ac.uk

www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/

Information Desk

The Information Desk is your first point of contact with the Computing Service

Telephone: ext 3838

Email: infodesk

Open from 9am to 5.15pm Monday to Thursday, and 9am to 4.15pm Friday (*may be closed for training Wednesdays 2pm-3pm*), for problem solving, advice and information, fault reporting, network connections, file restoration, sales, course bookings and user registration. Printed output can be collected from the lobby entrance which is open from 8am to midnight.

Computing Service Staff

Director:	Mike Jinks	3801	<i>knj1</i>
Departmental Secretary:	Lorraine Moor	3801	<i>lsm1</i>
Head of Infrastructure:	Robert Demaine	3808	<i>rld1</i>
Head of User Services:	John Illingworth	3803	<i>jjj1</i>
Head of MIS:	Kay Mills-Hicks	2101	<i>kmh8</i>
Head of Technical Services:	Doug Moncur	3815	<i>dgm1</i>
Head of Systems:	Andrew Smith	3809	<i>abs4</i>
Operations Manager:	Brian Souter	3814	<i>bs1</i>
Head of Networking:	John Mason	3813	<i>jrm13</i>
Information Officer:	Joanne Casey	3805	<i>jmc8</i>

Gavin Atkinson	3738	<i>ga9</i>	Jenny Jackson	4455	<i>jj5</i>
Linda Bailey	3800	<i>lcb6</i>	Ed Jones	4346	<i>cej3</i>
Sue Bolton	2102	<i>sjb28</i>	Chris Kilgour	4454	<i>crhk1</i>
Mike Brudenell	3811	<i>pmb1</i>	Fergus McGlynn	3822	<i>fam6</i>
Lisa Burkinshaw	3818	<i>ljb4</i>	John Marsden	3832	<i>jpm1</i>
John Byrne	3812	<i>jcb1</i>	Darren Munday	3821	<i>dam6</i>
David Chambers	3742	<i>dac6</i>	Nicola Normandale	4695	<i>ncn1</i>
Michael Clark	3745	<i>mpc3</i>	Phil O'Connell	3825	<i>paoc1</i>
Arthur Clune	3129	<i>ajc22</i>	Suran Perera	4689	<i>sjp25</i>
Steve Downes	3741	<i>sd21</i>	Aimee Phillips	3897	<i>amp11</i>
Ken Finch	4452	<i>kf1</i>	Colin Rea	3817	<i>cr9</i>
Rob Fletcher	3816	<i>rpf1</i>	Chris Reece	3807	<i>car7</i>
Kevin Gardner	3739	<i>pkg4</i>	Peter Roberts	3802	<i>pdr1</i>
Chris Gowland	3823	<i>cgl</i>	Sam Scott	3817	<i>svs2</i>
Dan Granville	3839	<i>dsg2</i>	Daniel Shelton	4349	<i>ds23</i>
Sarah Hall	3827	<i>seh11</i>	Philip Smailes	3833	<i>pjrs1</i>
Peter Halls	3806	<i>pjh1</i>	Deb Taylor	4346	<i>dt8</i>
John Hawes	4347	<i>jeh11</i>	Simon Thompson	3894	<i>sjt8</i>
Sue Hodges	3839	<i>sh32</i>	Pete Turnbull	3804	<i>pnt1</i>
Matt Holmes	3820	<i>mjh25</i>	Sam Vines	3749	<i>sccv1</i>
Geoff Houlton	2100	<i>gph2</i>	Timothy Willson	2123	<i>ftmw1</i>

Keynotes