



THE UNIVERSITY *of York*
Computing Service

Keynotes

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The year ahead

Mike Jinks outlines Computing Service plans for the academic year 2004/05

Also in this Issue:

Improving the anti-virus service

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SNS update

From the Editor

The Computing Service has seen another busy summer, with the usual rounds of software upgrades (pages 2 and 3), and classroom refurbishment (page 1), supplemented by extensive work on the network. The Student Network Service has now been extended to cover all on-campus college accommodation (page 3), while development of the Network Access Service (page 3) has provided further dedicated sockets for laptop users, with work on wireless hotspots well advanced.



Of course, it's not all about what we've done - readers will want to know what we're planning to do next too. Turn to page 2 to read Mike Jinks' report on the year ahead.



Finally, the move to Office XP has seen many Computing Service training courses rewritten to take account of the new software. This term's course schedule is provided in the centre of this issue - please contact the Computing Service Information Desk to register for any of the courses.

Joanne Casey

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Keynotes on the web

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

New staff Mike Jinks

We're pleased to welcome Iain Ford who joined us at the beginning of September as a Technician. Iain previously worked with Omnicrom who develop software for video surveys of the National Rail Network. He has worked both on analysing video data and as a Technical Assistant in their IT departments where he was involved with PC management and support. We wish him well in his new role.



Iain Ford

Classrooms Brian Souter

Plans to upgrade and maintain our PC rooms over the summer have gone reasonably well with a number of major improvements: provision of air conditioning in D/114; provision of a high performance PC facility in D/016; replacement of PCs in G/022 with Pentium 4 processors; rebuilds of all classroom PCs to provide Office XP. Regrettably, funding did not allow for the planned replacement of PCs in L/050 and R/113.

There was slightly more disruption in Derwent College than anticipated during refurbishment, and D/114 was closed for two weeks more than scheduled. Similarly, we are running about two weeks behind schedule with the provision of the new facility in D/016. The opening date will be announced on YorkExtra; staff planning courses may contact Rob Fletcher (rpfl) to discuss availability.

Login to the PCs in D/016 will be restricted to postgraduates and staff only, with undergraduates requiring written permission from their supervisors. Access to the room will be controlled by TESA lock outside normal hours; non-residents of Derwent College will need to contact the porters.

Details of all our PC classrooms, including D/016 and G/022, are available at www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/class/.

Software support for taught course students David Surtees

From the start of this term we have offered support to undergraduates and taught graduates in the use of these components of the Microsoft Office suite:

- MS Word 2002
- MS Access 2002
- MS Excel 2002
- MS Outlook 2002
- MS Powerpoint 2002
- MS Internet Explorer 6

Support is available via the Information Desk, supplementing self-help material available online. For useful links and details of the support policy, please visit: www.york.ac.uk/go/usersupport/

Revised rented filestore charges Robert Demaine

To reflect the changing economics of storage the cost of renting additional shareable filestore has been reduced from £100 per Gbyte to £60 per Gbyte. Users should note that this rented storage, offered in units of 1 Gbyte, is distinct from individual home directories or mail store, and is primarily intended for those requiring a shareable on-line data repository. Rented filestore lives on a high-performance, high availability Network Appliance filer, and is backed up to tape on a cycle of one full backup per week and daily incrementals, with a retention period of three months.

Windows 95 Mike Jinks

The supported Windows 95 service was withdrawn on 1 October. This system provided the University's standard desktop system for several years, but with the release of Windows 2000 then Windows XP, Microsoft withdrew support of the system, including the provision of security updates, in 2002. The University's standard supported desktop system is now Windows 2000 which has been available since 2001.

Any PCs that operated under the supported Windows 95 service which you wish to continue to use will need to be converted to Windows 2000, if the hardware is capable of supporting this operating system, or will need to be rebuilt as stand-alone, unsupported Windows 95 systems.

New offices Mike Jinks

The Service has gained some long-awaited accommodation in Vanbrugh C block to help relieve over-crowding in the main building. Some members of the Support Services Group are already located there and others will move in the future. As access to the area is controlled by TESA locks, visitors will need appointments to visit staff members.

Printing Brian Souter

As previously announced in the June issue of Keynotes, we planned to make a number of changes to our printing services over the summer.

To summarise:

- All the classroom printers have been replaced with new HP 9000DN printers.
- Additional printers have been installed in PC rooms A/EW/004 and R/002.
- The cost of A4 black and white printing has been reduced to 6p per page.
- A3 and duplex printing will be made available from classroom printers in due course.
- The central colour printing service has been transferred to a new high quality printer for a trial period; usage will be reviewed at the end of the Autumn Term.
- The central A4 black and white printing service was discontinued on 30 September.
- Label and transparency printing services have been phased out.
- The pigeonhole service in the entrance lobby to the Computing Service has been withdrawn.

The year ahead

Mike Jinks

The year ahead promises to be a very challenging one for the Computing Service. Major developments such as procurement of a centrally-supported VLE are already in train, with a decision to be taken on the final choice in the next month and implementation during the remainder of the academic year. The new SPAM Management system is operating well, and the Student Network Service is now available to all on-campus study-bedrooms. The final year of the YIMS Programme is starting with implementation of the remaining systems (Hospitality and Works Management), and projects have been formulated to exploit the functionality in the SITS and AGRESSO systems. In addition, new University developments with major IT implications eg the National Science Learning Centre and the Neuroimaging Centre are in the start-up phase, not to mention planning for Heslington East.

All the above need to be underpinned by robust strategy and policy development to meet the emerging requirements of the University as technology develops and regulation increases. A new Information Strategy has a range of activities relating to the Service, ranging from reviews of IT governance, through future strategy development on 'service delivery' approaches, to e-research infrastructure. The 'service delivery' issues were aired in several presentations last year, but now the strategy needs to be developed, choices made, and implementation projects mounted. This will be a major effort against a backdrop of uncertainty both in what will comprise the technological mainstream and what will give the greatest benefits to the University. Similarly, e-research is a new area of development, pioneered, as is so often the case, by the physical sciences which need new techniques to handle new problems, but with obvious potential for most other areas of academic development. The University needs to have an e-research infrastructure that facilitates e-research in general and, in particular, which gives the University advantages of agility in bidding for and undertaking research projects.

Although the major projects detailed above are critical for the University's development in the medium to long term, the process of continuous upgrades, enhancements, and replacements needs to continue. This has been constrained this year by a larger reduction in budget than was expected, leaving the Service committed to major new developments eg VLE and SPAM Management on an effective reduction in budget compared to previous years. This has affected some standard incremental developments that had been scheduled for the year. In particular, only one of the PC room upgrades (G/022) has been possible, with those in the Library and Langwith (L/050) deferred, though it may be possible to proceed with these during the course of the year. We have been unable to make the strides we had hoped for in terms of having a functioning, secondary computer room for business continuity and risk management purposes, though the room itself has been made available and we will be able to deploy some equipment in that location. Similarly, a project to provide online payment has been deferred, as has the Tower/Ebor replacement and purchase of some system management tools. Nonetheless, we are proceeding with printing/scanning enhancements, upgrade to the tape Library, networking enhancements, upgrades to the mail and web servers, the enhanced student support via the Information Desk, taking over the management of the York contribution to the White Rose Grid, and the pilot on strategic departmental liaison.

The major projects are much more than IT projects, as they will be setting the direction for the University in the medium to long-term. The creation of a Strategic Information Projects Steering Group under Planning Committee to oversee strategic developments involving information should help to ensure that all interested parties are involved in the initiatives as they develop. This body will also take over the role previously undertaken by the YIMS Steering Group in relation to business process support, and will oversee the VLE implementation. The IT dimensions of many University projects are increasingly critical and need to be managed holistically within the project framework as a partnership, building on the successful model pioneered by YIMS. We look forward to a challenging, but hopefully rewarding, year.

Upgrading to Office XP

Joanne Casey

Until recently, the centrally managed software offered users a hybrid combination of Microsoft Outlook 2002 (also known as Outlook XP), along with components of Microsoft Office 2000 (eg Word 2000, Excel 2000). In order to provide a more uniform, up-to-date environment, the Computing Service is now providing the whole Microsoft Office XP suite.

Office XP has already been installed on classroom PCs as the standard software, and all Computing Service training courses are written for XP, but it has been decided that, at this stage, Departments should be able to choose when they upgrade to Office XP. Departments should contact the Computing Service, through their Departmental Computing Officer, to discuss an appropriate time for them to upgrade. Office XP will then be made available to all supported connection Office PCs within the Department.

We would hope that most, if not all, Departments will complete the upgrade to Office XP by the end of this calendar year.

SNS update

Robert Demaine

After another successful expansion over the summer the Student Network Service now covers all on-campus college accommodation - over 3,500 study bedrooms.

The SNS will be going live on Monday 11 October. The cost of subscription for 2004-05 will be £60 for the entire academic year, which equates to around £2 per week for a service offering up to forty times the bandwidth of a typical domestic broadband connection. This year, for the first time, payments for the service will be taken in Finance Services in Market Square. (Opening hours Monday - Friday 9.00am - 12.30pm and 1.30pm - 4.15pm)

The service provides students with high speed access to a range of IT services. These include:

- Web - campus web pages and, through the web cache, external web sites can be viewed.
- Email - users can access their university email as well as any POP3/IMAP accounts they may have elsewhere. Webmail systems may also be accessed using the web cache.
- File store - Direct access to users' central file store (M:/H: Drive)
- Printing - users can print to the classroom print queue from their own machine and then simply release the print job from the print terminal beside any classroom printer.
- Ftp - The web cache also provides access to external ftp sites.
- Usenet News - The University of York news server carries thousands of external newsgroups and is home to several York specific discussion groups.
- SSH/telnet - SSH and telnet access is allowed to machines on campus, and gateway machines will allow indirect access to off-campus SSH/telnet servers.

More information on the service and requirements can be found at: www.sns.york.ac.uk. Additionally, a Usenet newsgroup will be available to enable users to discuss SNS or any problems they may encounter. Please see the SNS web page for details of how to access the newsgroup.

Network Access Service

Robert Demaine

Over the past eighteen months, the Computing Service has been running a pilot service called NAS - the Network Access Service. Dedicated sockets have been installed in open access areas (generally PC classrooms) where students could take their own laptop computers and connect to the network. The service has been extremely successful, and as a result it is being reworked and expanded. Between now and Easter 2005 the Computing Service will be rolling out a series of approximately 12 wireless hotspots as well as more wired sockets to use with the new NAS service. Hotspots will be mainly located in public open areas such as college bars, Langwith Library, and the Roger Kirk building and will be available to both staff and student users. We are also investigating the possibility of inter-institution roaming which would allow our staff and students to gain Internet access at other Universities as well as their students being able to use our wireless facilities.

The web page for the current NAS service is available at: www.nas.york.ac.uk, and this will be updated in due course with information on the progress of the new NAS service and the wireless roll out.

Improving the anti-virus service

John Hutchinson

Following the "Banker-R" infections in April, the current procedures for Sophos anti-virus software have been extended by:

- Automatic hourly checks with Sophos and, if necessary, updates of all PCs if new virus identity files have been released
- More frequent checks during the day that Sophos is active on all supported PCs. Where Sophos services cannot be remotely restarted without a reboot, a reboot will be enforced on classroom PCs (with two minutes notice to save work), and requested by email for office PCs
- Checks at 07.00 that Sophos is active on classroom PCs after their daily reboot.

We are considering whether the distracting effect on PCs currently in use for teaching of more frequent Sophos software updates is acceptable given the additional security provided. It is likely that updates will take place two to four times on a weekday, briefly taking over the currently active Window. If you have specific concerns about this occurring in a teaching context, please contact us.

Plans for the future have to take account of the economic reality that the University's Sophos license has been prepaid to December 2006, and the difficulty of obtaining independent information on which software publisher provides the earliest detection for new viruses. Nevertheless, we have one alternative product in mind for trial.

Sophos are due to release a new management console soon, which will include the new facility to garner from the network reports of detected viruses, allowing appropriate action to be taken. This will be particularly useful in the case of viruses which Sophos is unable to remove fully, which was the case with Banker-R and some subsequent viruses.

New electronic resources from the Library

Sue Cumberpatch

The Library has recently purchased several new electronic resources as part of our ongoing endeavour to deliver as much information to your desktop as possible. Many of these resources require the use of an ATHENS login and password; you can obtain these via the Computing Service Electronic Infodesk at: www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/edesk/. Others require the setting up of access via the campus Web cache for access from anything other than a supported network connection on campus - see: www.york.ac.uk/services/library/info.yrk/proxy.htm for instructions.

Databases

We now subscribe to over 100 bibliographic and other databases, many of which have full text articles. The full list of databases, plus connection and help information, is at: www.york.ac.uk/services/library/datanet/database.htm.

E-books and electronic journals

A new venture for the Library is the provision of access to several **electronic book collections**. There are links to our e-books services from the electronic journal and e-books page: www.york.ac.uk/services/library/ejournal/. Other e-book collections are being acquired, and will be publicised as we receive them.

Our **electronic journal titles** now total 4,100, and we have acquired more back issues of many titles in all subjects. All ejournal titles are included in both the library catalogue and our A-to-Z service at: atoz.ebsco.com/home.asp?ld=uyork.

Resources added in recent months

Arts and Humanities databases

- British and Irish Archaeological Bibliography (BIAB)
- British Universities Newsreel Database (BUND)
- FIAF International Film Archive
- Gerritsen Collection (Women's History)
- Grove Music Online
- Hartlib Papers (17th century England)
- ITER (Middle Ages and Renaissance)
- Past Masters (philosophy)
- Patrologia Latina
- Poetria Nova

Social Sciences databases

- ABI Inform (management and finance)
- China Data Online
- Criminal Justice Abstracts

Health and Medicine databases

- TRIP Database Plus (evidence-based)

Science databases

- Lecture Notes in Computer Science Index

General reference and newspapers databases

- Digital Chart of the World (DCW)
- FT.com

- Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
- SYBWorld (world countries information)

E-books

- The Taylor and Francis collection of 180 titles covering education, history, health, sociology, and literature
- University of California Press: eScholarship editions
- Oxford Reference Online: Premium Collection of general and subject reference books
- xreferplus - a collection of online reference works

E-journals

- Nature journal back to 1987
- 500 titles have been added to the ScienceDirect collection of journals published by Elsevier
- Blackwell Publishing's STM collection has added 20 more titles
- The Royal Society of Chemistry journals archive now covers 1841 to 1996
- JSTOR Arts and Sciences III and Music collections
- IEEE Xplore has journals from the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers back to 1998
- The PsycARTICLES service gives us access to journals from the American Psychological Association back to 1985

Linking them all together

A major project over the coming academic year will link databases and other electronic resources together. This means that, for example, if a database contains references to articles for which we have the electronic journal, there will be a link from the database article to the ejournal full text. We are introducing this feature gradually, and more publicity will be distributed as it develops.

Contacting the Computing Service

Computing Service	Telephone:	(01904)433800
University of York	Direct dial:	(01904) 43 followed by ext no.
Heslington	Fax:	(01904)433740
YORK YO10 5DD	Email:	<i>username@york.ac.uk</i>

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 during opening hours.

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 Information Systems:	Kay Mills-Hicks	2101	<i>knh8</i>
Head of Support Services:	David Surtees	3803	<i>dps4</i>
Operations Manager:	Brian Souter	3814	<i>bs1</i>
Information Officer:	Joanne Casey	3805	<i>jmc8</i>

Kashif Amin	3817	<i>ka14</i>	John Hutchinson	3898	<i>jh57</i>
Gavin Atkinson	3738	<i>ga9</i>	Jenny Jackson	4455	<i>jj5</i>
Amanda Bacon	3802	<i>agb12</i>	Chris Kilgour	4454	<i>crhk1</i>
Linda Bailey	3800	<i>lcb6</i>	Fergus McGlynn	3822	<i>fam6</i>
Sue Bolton	2102	<i>sjb28</i>	John Marsden	3832	<i>jpm1</i>
David Broom	3229	<i>dlb10</i>	John Mason	3813	<i>jrm13</i>
Mike Brudenell	3811	<i>pmb1</i>	Darren Miller	3815	<i>dm26</i>
John Byrne	3812	<i>jcb1</i>	Darren Munday	3821	<i>dam6</i>
David Chambers	3742	<i>dac6</i>	Colin Noble	1747	<i>cdn1</i>
Michael Clark	3745	<i>mpc3</i>	Nicola Normandale	4695	<i>ncn1</i>
Arthur Clune	3129	<i>ajc22</i>	Phil O'Connell	3825	<i>paoc1</i>
Steve Downes	3741	<i>sd21</i>	Suran Perera	4689	<i>sjp25</i>
Ken Finch	4452	<i>kf1</i>	Aimee Phillips	3897	<i>amp11</i>
Rob Fletcher	3816	<i>rpfl</i>	Tamsyn Quormby	4346	<i>tq1</i>
Iain Ford	3894	<i>igf500</i>	Chris Reece	3807	<i>car7</i>
Kevin Gardner	3739	<i>pkg4</i>	Sam Scott	3817	<i>svs2</i>
Chris Gowland	3823	<i>cg1</i>	Daniel Shelton	4349	<i>ds23</i>
Dan Granville	3839	<i>dsg2</i>	Philip Smailes	3833	<i>pjrs1</i>
Sarah Hall	3827	<i>seh11</i>	Andrew Smith	3809	<i>abs4</i>
Peter Halls	3806	<i>pjh1</i>	Ben Thompson	3230	<i>bt4</i>
John Hawes	4347	<i>jeh11</i>	Pete Turnbull	3804	<i>pnt1</i>
Susanne Hodges	3839	<i>sh32</i>	Sam Vines	3749	<i>sccv1</i>
Matt Holmes	3820	<i>mjh25</i>	Jonathan Wheeler	3818	<i>jdw5</i>
Geoff Houlton	2100	<i>gph2</i>	Timothy Willson	2123	<i>ftmw1</i>