

Keynotes

Volume 33 Number 3 June 2007

Classroom upgrades

- ◆ Windows XP
- ◆ Upgraded PC features
- ◆ Extended power saving

Also in this Issue:

Disruption to IT services

Account administration

Business Objects XI

SNS extension

From the Editor

Over the summer, the PCs in all Computing Service classrooms and study areas will be upgraded to the Windows XP operating system. At the same time, a number of classrooms will have new PCs installed as part of the rolling upgrade programme. Turn to page 2 for details of all these upgrades.



The Student Network Service continues to be a popular service, with high take-up. In response to user demand, we have in recent years investigated the feasibility of providing the service in off-campus accommodation. On page 3, Ben Thompson writes about the extension of SNS to Constantine House.



Members of the Web Services Group have been working on the introduction of new identity management software. We are now seeing the first results of this work, with the introduction of new account administration procedures and a self-service password reset facility. John Byrne and John Isles provide more information on page 3.

Joanne Casey

Contents

News in Brief

Major disruption to IT services	1
Staff news	1
Withdrawal of Uniras graphics software	1

News

Windows XP classroom upgrades	2
Classroom PC upgrades	2
CD/DVD drives on classroom PCs	2
Power saving in classrooms	2
Account administration for new students	3
Extension of SNS to Constantine House	3
Self-service password reset facility	3
Migration to Business Objects XI	4
Using the Timetabling and Room Bookings applications off-campus	4

Keynotes on the web

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

Major disruption to IT services during safety testing

Joanne Casey

This summer the University's Estates Services has a statutory requirement to carry out a comprehensive safety test of all electrical supplies within the Computing Service building. A similar statutory requirement commits the Computing Service to the testing of all active equipment within the machine room.

Following discussion with contacts in a number of departments, it has been decided that the safety testing will take place over two weekends during the summer vacation:

08.00 Saturday 30 June to 08.00 Monday 2 July
08.00 Saturday 14 July to 08.00 Monday 16 July

During the first of these weekends, there will be major disruption to all central IT services, and users should expect most services to be unavailable for much or all of the advertised period. These include email, web, central filestore, supported desktops, VLE, external connectivity to the Internet over YHMAN, SNS, remote access via the VPN, all YIMS systems, the Library catalogue, and York HYMS systems. There will be no access to YorkWeb; however the possibility of redirecting attempted connections to an explanatory holding page elsewhere is being investigated. Users may find that some facilities operate intermittently during the course of this work; however such services should be regarded as being 'at risk' and not be relied upon. The campus network excluding Computing Service will continue to function, as will services such as internal DNS and DHCP.

Email sent to University email addresses over the weekend will be queued on external servers, and delivered when all systems are running again; no incoming email will be lost.

During the second weekend (14-16 July) we anticipate interruption of service to all YIMS systems, the Library catalogue, and York HYMS systems. In the event of overrun from the first weekend it is possible that there may be temporary disruption to some other central services. We would hope to keep this to a minimum.

In the course of the two testing weekends we do not require you to alert us to facilities not working, changes in the status of facilities etc. However, if you become aware of facilities which are not working correctly after the restoration of usual service at 08.00 on either Monday 2 or Monday 16 July, please contact the Information Desk.

This information has been circulated widely, but we would appreciate your assistance in ensuring that your colleagues and students are aware of this disruption. If you have any further queries about the timing or likely impact of this work, please contact Arthur Clune ([ajc22](#)) by Friday 22 June.

Staff news

Joanne Casey

Welcome to Pritpal Rehal who has joined us as Senior Microsoft IT Systems Administrator/Programmer from the University of Leeds, where he worked as IT Systems Administrator in the School of Computing. We welcome also Tricia McNamara, who has joined our administrative team, covering Linda Bailey's maternity leave. We hope they will both enjoy working with us.



Pritpal Rehal



Tricia McNamara

Dan Shelton, who had worked in our Applications Deployment team since 2000, has now left the University. We wish him every success in his career.

Finally, we are pleased to congratulate Heather Payne, now Walker, on her recent wedding to James and to wish them both all the best for the future.

Withdrawal of Uniras graphics software

Rob Fletcher

Having monitored the use of the various programs in this suite of software, and requested usage information from the DCOs, we have decided to not renew our licence for the following products as of 31 March 2008.

- UNIGRAPH
- UNIMAP
- UNIEDIT
- PICTURE MANAGER
- GSharp
- AGL/FGL libraries

If this is likely to cause you problems, then please contact Rob Fletcher ([rpfl](#)) for help and suggestions for alternative software.

Keynotes

Windows XP classroom upgrade

Adrian Young

Following a successful pilot of upgrading the PCs in L/050 the project has given the go ahead to continue with the main rollout phase to all of the remaining Computing Service Classroom PCs in the summer break.

The aim of the pilot was to provide us with very important feedback from the people who use the PCs on a regular basis. The project received some very positive feedback from both the online and paper based surveys and we managed to identify on a small scale some potential issues that we were able to be quickly investigate and rectify.

The purpose of the XP Classroom upgrade is to provide a platform that is more stable and secure. Having XP means we can provide more up to date software applications and also offer a more familiar look and feel to the desktop that people would recognise from home use.

The XP upgrade does not incur additional capital costs to the University as it is already covered under our Campus Agreement.

The decision not to go to Windows Vista was taken because we felt that as an Operating System it wasn't mature enough to provide us with the benefits we would get from upgrading to XP.

Classroom PC upgrades

Brian Souter

The ongoing programme to replace ageing PCs in Computing Service classrooms/study areas will this year focus on rooms in Vanbrugh, Wentworth, Kings Manor and the JB Morrell Library; a total of 99 PCs will be replaced in rooms V/058, W/202, K/120 and R/002.

The new PCs will have Intel Dual Core 1.8GHz processors, 1GB memory, LCD TFT display screens (flat screens), CD-RW/DVD-W drives (for more detail, see the article below) and accessible USB and audio ports. A detailed schedule of the room upgrades, including cleaning and PC rebuilds is available on the web at www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/class/upgrades.html.

Power saving in classrooms

Joanne Casey

As you may be aware, we already have power saving measures in place on PCs in Computing Service classrooms and study areas. One of the measures switches unused PCs off at 22.00, and automatically restarts them at 07.30. Anyone wishing to use a PC during the night can switch it back on using the power button.

We now plan to implement extended power saving measures during vacation periods when classrooms/study areas are not heavily used. Unused PCs will be switched off at 22.00, but will not be restarted automatically the next day. Instead, users will switch them on as needed using the power button. These new measures were trialled successfully over the Easter vacation.

CD/DVD drives replacing zip and floppy drives on classroom PCs

Aimee Phillips

As detailed above, a number of Computing Service classrooms/study areas will have new PCs installed this summer. These PCs will have a changed specification, in response to evolving user needs.

Provision of CD writers has been standard in new classroom PCs for some time. For the first time, new machines will now have combined CD/DVD drives installed. As well as being able to read CDs and DVDs, users will be able to write and rewrite to CDs, and to write to DVDs.

USB ports located on the front of the machine for easy access are a standard feature of classroom PCs; USB storage devices are popular with users as they offer a quick and easy way of transferring files.

The new machines will not have zip drives or floppy drives, as these are now regarded as being less reliable and less popular. This will complete the phasing out of zip drives, but in order to ensure that users can access material they have stored on zip disks there will be a machine with a zip drive available at the Computing Service Information Desk. Users needing to access material on floppy disks will be able to find floppy drives in all of the other Computing Service classrooms/study areas, ie those which are *not* being upgraded this summer. Posters in classrooms will keep students informed of these changes.

Account administration for new students

John Byrne

Following the introduction of new identity management software, various new procedures have been implemented affecting the administration of Computing Service accounts. The following changes will affect new students:

Random initial passwords

All new students are now issued computer accounts with random initial passwords. This replaces initial passwords based on library codes.

Account registration

New students are now required to complete an online account registration process before gaining access to key facilities such as email, Windows, printing etc. Accounts are registered on the web at <https://idm.york.ac.uk/>. After logging in with the new username and initial password the user is taken through the following steps:

- Additional identity checks
- Agreeing to regulations for using computing facilities
- Setting answers to security questions
- Changing password

Users who set answers to security questions will have access to the online self-service password-reset facility detailed in the article below. They will also be able to confirm their identity when contacting the Computing Service Information Desk by telephone.

All new students receive their username, initial password, and instructions on registering their account as part of the University admissions process.

It is expected that students will register their accounts before arriving at the University. Anyone wishing to do so on campus should contact the Computing Service for further instructions.

Please note that these changes may affect your local documentation. Please contact the Computing Service if you have any questions.

Extension of SNS to Constantine House

Ben Thompson

The Student Network Service (SNS) provides an ethernet link in study bedrooms, allowing access to various network services. It is already available in all on-campus college accommodation, and at Fairfax House and has now been extended to Constantine House in Bootham which provides accommodation for 27 graduates. It is made up of two buildings, built in the 19th century, which have Grade II listed buildings status.

Over a two week period in April, we carried out a network cabling install in Constantine House. Each study bedroom has been fitted with a double Category 5e network outlet which is cabled back to a wall mount wiring cabinet in the basement of the respective house. The two wiring cabinets are linked together with an optic fibre cable which runs partly outside the building and is fixed along the suspended breezeway. As with any such project in an antique building, the cable installation was made more challenging due to the lack of modern risers, ceiling voids and the misalignment of walls from one floor to another. In addition to this; many of the room ceilings were edged with decorative mouldings which we were instructed not to cut or drill in any way. In order to distribute the network cabling throughout the building we made use of existing risers wherever possible and in some areas we have installed surface mounted mini trunking.

The installation was carried out by Plexus who specialise in structured cabling installations and undertake similar projects at Hull and Lincoln universities.

The network in Constantine House will be connected up to the SNS in order to provide internet access working in the same way as in the on-campus student accommodation. We have also made provision to install at least one wireless access point to cover the ground floor and common room of the main house.

Self-service password reset facility

John Isles

A new self-service password-reset facility has been added to the Electronic Info Desk to enable you to reset your password if you should forget it. The facility allows you to set answers to a selection of security questions. If you should forget your password, you can reset it by correctly answering the security questions. The questions may also be used by the Computing Service Information Desk to verify your identity over the telephone. The answers you provide are kept confidential and will not be used for any other purpose.

Before you can use this facility you must answer your security questions by going to the Electronic Info Desk at www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/edesk/ and selecting the "Password management" link.

Keynotes

Migration to Business Objects XI

Sue Bolton

Business Objects is an extremely versatile software package that allows great flexibility in query construction, analysis and report presentation. The system was implemented during 2003 as the University's strategic reporting tool, as part of the YIMS programme. The life support cycle of our original version (v 6.1) was coming to an end and a major upgrade to version XI became a necessity.

Migration to Business Objects XI Release 2 is now complete and the product was officially launched on the 2 May to a group of key users.

Business Objects XI or BOXI for short has many advantages for the administrator and the end-user. It is a more secure, robust and resilient system.

New features for InfoView users include easier navigation, easier scheduling and the creation and maintenance of document threads on any document within the Business Objects environment.

Report writers using Web Intelligence will see lots of new functionality including custom sorts, ability to combine queries with 'union', 'intersect' and 'minus' commands, Free-hand edit of SQL, Merging queries from different universes and an enhanced Formula language with numerous new functions and operators.

Guides on how to use InfoView XI and Web Intelligence are available from the online Support Centre at www.york.ac.uk/univ/mis/cfm/supportcentre/support_main.cfm and the 'General Reports and Guides' public folder once logged into InfoView XI.

Business Objects is being used for reporting from T&A (Time and Attendance), SITS Admissions and Main Student Records, Resourcelink Payroll and Personnel, PAMS Accommodation and the DWH (Data Warehouse).

To request access to use Business Objects contact the supervisors of individual applications: Del Gee (dj3) for Main Student Record, Alan Carlile (ac584) for Admissions and Schools Liaison, Nadia Bagwell (nlb504) for Graduate Schools Office, Mark Barber (mb51) for Time & Attendance, Phil Prosser for Accommodation and Jan Waite(jw57) for Payroll and Personnel.

Accounts on the old system were disabled at the end of May.

Using the Timetabling and Room Bookings applications off-campus

Nicola Normandale

For some time now, departmental, module and staff timetables have been available on the web at www.york.ac.uk/univ/mis/cfm/sws/index.cfm. A new room bookings system is also available on the web at www.york.ac.uk/univ/mis/fm/.

These pages link directly into the University's core database systems. They are therefore protected by an additional security layer to prevent their use directly from an off-campus connection.

However, University members **can** still access these systems from off-campus by using the VPN. VPN stands for Virtual Private Network and it allows any member of the University to "tunnel" through this additional security layer from off-campus and thereby have remote access to the Campus network. It is a one-off procedure to register for the service, then you will be set up to use it from your home computer whenever required.

See www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/net/vpn/ for further information.

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 09.00 to 17.15 Monday to Friday (*may be closed for training Wednesdays 14.00-15.00*), for problem solving, advice and information, fault reporting, network connections, file restoration, course bookings and user registration.

Computing Service Staff

Director:	Mike Jinks	3801	<i>kmj1</i>
Departmental Administrator:	Lorraine Moor	3801	<i>lsm1</i>
Head of Infrastructure:	Robert Demaine	3808	<i>rld1</i>
Head of Information Systems:	Kay Mills-Hicks	2101	<i>kmh8</i>
Head of Support Services:	David Surtees	3803	<i>dps4</i>
Information Officer:	Joanne Casey	3805	<i>jmc8</i>

Kashif Amin	3817	<i>ka14</i>	Anthony Leonard	4350	<i>apbl500</i>
Gavin Atkinson	3738	<i>ga9</i>	Michelle McCarthy	2627	<i>mm533</i>
Amanda Bacon	3802	<i>agb12</i>	Fergus McGlynn	3822	<i>fam6</i>
Sue Bolton	2102	<i>sjb28</i>	Tricia McNamara	3800	<i>pm535</i>
David Broom	3229	<i>dlb10</i>	John Marsden	3832	<i>jpm1</i>
Mike Brudenell	3811	<i>pmb1</i>	John Mason	3813	<i>jrm13</i>
John Byrne	3812	<i>jcb1</i>	Darren Miller	3815	<i>dm26</i>
Arthur Clune	3129	<i>ajc22</i>	Eleanor Morrison	3742	<i>emm502</i>
Stevie de Saille	3818	<i>smds500</i>	Darren Munday	3821	<i>dam6</i>
Steve Downes	3741	<i>sd21</i>	Nicola Normandale	4695	<i>ncn1</i>
Al Edgar	4348	<i>aee500</i>	Aimee Phillips	3897	<i>amp11</i>
Ken Finch	4452	<i>kf1</i>	Tamsyn Quormby	4346	<i>tq1</i>
Rob Fletcher	3816	<i>rpf1</i>	Pritpal Rehal	3597	<i>psr500</i>
Iain Ford	3894	<i>igf500</i>	Sam Scott	3817	<i>svs2</i>
Kevin Gardner	3739	<i>pkg4</i>	Philip Smailes	3833	<i>pjrs1</i>
Chris Gowland	3823	<i>cg1</i>	Andrew Smith	3809	<i>abs4</i>
Dan Granville	3819	<i>dsg2</i>	Brian Souter	3814	<i>bs1</i>
Kelvin Hai	4689	<i>kh525</i>	Max Spicer	3745	<i>mjs510</i>
Sarah Hall	3827	<i>seh11</i>	Richard Stoddart	3825	<i>rjs502</i>
Peter Halls	3806	<i>pjh1</i>	Carl Stovell	4699	<i>cjs505</i>
John Hawes	4347	<i>jeh11</i>	Ben Thompson	3230	<i>bt4</i>
Susanne Hodges	3839	<i>sh32</i>	Pete Turnbull	3804	<i>pt1</i>
Geoff Houlton	2100	<i>gph2</i>	Sam Vines	3749	<i>sccv1</i>
John Hutchinson	3898	<i>jh57</i>	Heather Walker	3800	<i>hp501</i>
John Isles	4454	<i>jdi500</i>	Adrian Young	3820	<i>ary500</i>

Keynotes

Computing Service, University of York, Heslington, York, YO10 5DD

Tel: (01904) 433838 Email: infodesk@york.ac.uk

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