



# keynotes

The Computing Service Newsletter

vol.36: 3 - June 2010

# New email address scheme

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- . Address based on forename & surname
- . Registering preferred names

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## From the Editor

In recent months, members of the Computing Service have been working hard on a project to bring into fruition a new email address scheme, and have consulted widely. The scheme has now been finalised, and the new style addresses will be allocated to staff starting in October. For more details, please see John Byrne's article on page 6.

On pages 4 and 5, Arthur Clune addresses two aspects of IT security, advising on six rules to follow to protect your identity, passwords and files, and then detailing the work being undertaken within the University to ensure our institutional information security, in line with ISO27001.

Many of you will already be aware that the Computing Service is to be renamed over the summer, becoming IT Services. At the same time, we will relaunch our website as it is migrated to the Web CMS. Details of these two changes are on pages 9 and 5.

JOANNE CASEY

The refresh of the IT Support Office was completed in April. The office had been neglected over the years and recent roof leaks had damaged the carpet and roof tiles and created an unwelcoming environment for our staff and visitors.

We decided to brighten up the area by choosing a vibrant colour scheme of purple and green. These bright colours match the branding of our publications and posters in our PC Classrooms and study areas. We've fitted new carpets, notice boards and ceiling tiles, painted the walls, refitted the surface on the front desk and bought new furniture. We've since received positive feedback from both staff and students.

Please come and visit us to see the changes we've made.

## VMWare Academic Programme

PRITPAL REHAL

The Computing Service has negotiated access to the VMWare Academic Programme on behalf of the University.

This will allow University staff and students access to a variety of VMWare fully featured products for free: these products are licensed for one year.

Products include:

- VMWare ESX
- VMWare Workstation (all platforms)
- VMWare Fusion (for Mac)
- Online training materials

Please note that the terms of the agreement only allow these products to be used for personal use and research. You may not use them for departmental infrastructure purposes or for commercial activity.

More information about the VMWare Academic Programme can be found in our software pages: [www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/sw/](http://www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/sw/).

To register for this service, please email [itsupport@york.ac.uk](mailto:itsupport@york.ac.uk).

In March Linda Bailey commenced her maternity leave and we have since heard that she had a baby boy, Samuel Oliver, on 1 May. Our very best wishes go to Linda and her family. Fiona Lamb has joined us to cover Linda's leave; Fiona is a Chemistry graduate from York and she also works part-time in the Accommodation Office. We hope she enjoys her time with us.

At the beginning of April one of our longest serving members of the department, Rob Fletcher, retired. Rob joined the University in 1968 as a Biology undergraduate and went on to undertake a D.Phil. In 1975 he became a Research Fellow in the Department of Psychology, and in 1981 he took up the post of Applications Programmer in the Computing Service, working on numerical and statistical packages. Subsequently Rob expanded his area of responsibility into graphics and database management systems and earned national recognition for his work, particularly in the field of computer graphics and multimedia. We wish him a long and happy retirement enjoying his many interests.

## PC Classrooms and Study Areas: Summer Upgrades

JO REID

The Computing Service will start the upgrade of PC classrooms and study areas in June and carry on through the summer vacation. The Estates department will also be refreshing the décor in some of our rooms. The programme of works is starting earlier than usual this year because of work commitments in September on the Heslington East Project.

The full timetable of work can be found on our classroom pages ([www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/class/](http://www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/class/)) - follow the link to **Summer Upgrades**.

Whilst we realise that the work scheduled in June may cause some inconvenience, we have consulted with administration, college authorities and student bodies to try to keep disruption to a minimum.

Please note: the cleaning, inspection and rebuilding of PCs in GNU/009 (2 PCs) is spread over three days but is unlikely to take more than a couple of hours;

To compensate for closing rooms G/N/022, W/N/202 and D/N/016, we have reserved the bookable PC classrooms in each of the relevant colleges (G/N/169, W/N/036 and D/N/114) to coincide with the closures. One or two short bookings were already in place during the day in W/N/036 and D/N/114, but no further bookings will be taken.

Each room will close for most of the first and second day from 09:00 but will be available from about 16:00. We have work to do remotely on the third day but the PCs should be available.

Please contact [itsupport@york.ac.uk](mailto:itsupport@york.ac.uk) if you have any concerns.

## Keynotes Subscription Service

JOANNE CASEY

We have launched a service which allows you to control your own Keynotes subscription online, including the option to receive an email alerting you to the publication of the online version, rather than receiving a paper copy. To use this facility, please visit [www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/offdocs/keynotes/](http://www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/offdocs/keynotes/) and follow the link to Keynotes Subscription Service. You'll need to use your York username and password to log in.

## Staying Safe Online: Six Things You Need To Do

ARTHUR CLUNE

Information Security is a complex issue and one where getting things wrong can have real impact (e.g. losing your internet banking password). So here's 6 things to do online that will help reduce the risk of having your passwords, files or identity stolen. It was going to be "Five Things to do" but I added a bonus extra...

### 1) Never give or send any of your passwords to anyone. Ever.

We've all seen the emails: "Your account has been locked, please send your username and password to have it re-enabled", "Your internet banking details have changed, please send us your password" etc. No real service should ever have to ask you for your password. If they are legitimate, they can do what they need to do without your password.

### 2) If it looks too good to be true, it is.

This one is simple - be suspicious!

If you post an article for sale on Gumtree for £50 and someone offers to send you £100 with some complex story, it's a scam. If someone offers you "inside" information on a hot new share, it's a scam (or illegal!). If someone asks you for their help in getting \$10m from a bank account, it's a scam.

Scams like this aren't just online: lots of people lost money in the "Women helping Women" Ponzi scheme ([news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/1464997.stm](https://www.bbc.com/news/business-1464997))

### 3) Manage your passwords wisely.

The best advice used to be to never write down your passwords. With the growth in the number of sites we have to remember passwords for, this isn't practical any more. However, don't just write them down on a post it note! Use a program that encrypts all your passwords with a master password to keep them safe.

On Windows, use Password Safe ([passwordsafe.sourceforge.net/](https://passwordsafe.sourceforge.net/)) and on a Mac, use the Keychain (but make sure you have a password set on your account!).

Another option is to use Firefox to remember the passwords and Mozilla Weave (<https://mozillalabs.com/weave/>) to synchronise them across all your computers. If you want to go this route, it's VERY important to know that Firefox stores your passwords unencrypted by default. You MUST set a master password in Firefox ([kb.mozillazine.org/Master\\_password](https://kb.mozillazine.org/Master_password)), to ensure the passwords are all stored encrypted or you are at risk of losing all your passwords in one go!

### 4) Always keep all your programs up to date.

Most viruses and malware are spread by flaws for which patches are available, so by keeping all your software up to date you reduce your risk of infection greatly.

For Windows, visit [update.microsoft.com](https://update.microsoft.com) to install any patches missing and set up automatic updates.

On a Mac, you'll be prompted when there are updates available, or use "Software Update" on the Apple menu to check.

That covers the basic software. For third party software, you'll have to check each one, though usually they'll come with their own tool to get updates. Just make sure you download the updates when prompted.

Linux users have it easy here - a quick 'apt-get update' or 'yum update' and the whole system is patched. The corollary to this is that you must not use operating systems that are no longer supported. This means you should only be using Windows XP or later (from June) or OS X version 10.5 or later.

### 5) Use a good anti-virus program.

For Windows, running a good anti-virus program is essential. For work PCs, the University licenses Sophos ([www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/sw/sophos/](http://www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/sw/sophos/)).

For other machines we recommend Microsoft Security Essentials ([www.microsoft.com/security\\_essentials](http://www.microsoft.com/security_essentials)) and Microsoft Defender ([www.microsoft.com/windows/products/winfamily/defender/default.msp](http://www.microsoft.com/windows/products/winfamily/defender/default.msp)).

Microsoft also produce a good malware removal tool: [www.microsoft.com/security/malwareremove/default.aspx](http://www.microsoft.com/security/malwareremove/default.aspx).

### 6) Consider encrypting your laptop.

If you have any sensitive data on your laptop (and you probably do: financial data - work or personal, student information, draft or actual exam papers etc) you should encrypt the disk so that the data cannot be accessed if the laptop is lost or stolen.

If you are working on research involving any sensitive data, the data provider will now require you to encrypt the disk and will require you to use certified software.

Computing Service has recently launched a disk encryption service based on PGP ([www.pgp.com](http://www.pgp.com)). This is charged at cost and covers Macs and PCs. Some licenses are available under "pump-priming" funding for existing research contracts or other sensitive work. Contact the IT Support Office for more details.

If you do not need the certified software, there are other free alternatives.

For Windows, for most purposes, the free Truecrypt ([www.truecrypt.org/](http://www.truecrypt.org/)) works very well.

For Macs, you can encrypt your home directory using FileVault (under "Security" in System Preferences). There's no free solution that lets you encrypt the whole disk on a Mac, but encrypting your home directory and ensuring all sensitive files are stored in there gets you a reasonable level of security.

For Linux, use LUKS. Recent Linux distributions allow you to set this at install time.

The Computing Service, with input from Departments, is reviewing and re-writing all our IT Security polices. This might seem a somewhat abstract thing to want to do, but it's driven by some very practical reasons.

Research depending on access to Government or NHS data (e.g. Psychology, Social Science and Health Science work) must now sign up to very stringent controls on how that data is used and protected. It's as a result of various bits of government losing data: they now wish to ensure that it won't happen again, and that we won't lose their data. To ensure this, we have to sign up to a large number of conditions (for example, that any laptops used for the research have their hard drives encrypted in case of loss) and ensure that we have the necessary polices and procedures in place to avoid data loss.

Even for our own data (eg student records), the Office of the Information Commissioner now has powers to levy fines of up to £500,000 on an organisation that suffers a data loss and can't show that it has followed best practice, so this isn't just an issue for researchers working with sensitive data.

Our current polices and procedures are a mixture of good practice that's not formalised with written policies that cover a more limited scope than is now required so when writing the polices we aim to stick to an international standard for Information Security called ISO27001.

Our aim is to re-write our polices so that we are in line with ISO27001, but not to apply for certification (being certified as being in compliance which ISO27001 is a complex process which would be both very expensive and very disruptive, and is currently a higher standard of compliance than we require). By sticking to the standard we are assured that we have covered the areas we need to, and by sticking to a well known standard, it becomes much easier to re-assure funders, collaborators or commercial organisations that are able to protect their data.

This is a major piece of work which we aim to have it finished by October 2010 and is being led by Kay Mills-Hicks, the Head of IT Services. The first polices are already written in draft form, with more to come. The scope of ISO27001 is very wide: it covers such areas as home/remote working, equipment disposal, use of cloud computing as well as polices around how servers are managed, how IT investigations are carried out and Human Resources issues. An initial draft of several of the polices has now been written, with more being produced. After consultation, these will go to the Information Strategy Group (ISG) to be approved. For more information about this, please contact either Kay Mills-Hicks or Arthur Clune.

## Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) Service ADRIAN YOUNG

We are planning to pilot a VDI service later this year. Initially we will be providing a small number of virtual desktops to a few departments we have identified as suitable candidates for this new technology.

For the uninitiated, a virtual desktop works exactly the same as a normal desktop but the difference is that rather than the operating system and applications being installed on the PC on your desk, it is all run from a server in our data centres.

Having a VDI service gives us more flexibility in how we provide a managed desktop to you and helps us improve the support and management of the desktop. We can provide a managed desktop on existing PCs either through software running on there so you can run additional desktops within your normal desktop or via a web browser, potentially from any internet enabled device.

Later stages of the project will look at thin client technologies, which give us benefits in energy reduction and longer lasting more reliable devices.

We will be giving regular updates about the service over the summer but if you would like to know more about it, then please contact me ([ary500@york.ac.uk](mailto:ary500@york.ac.uk)).

## NorMAN: Providing 24/7 User Support

SARAH KENNEDY

We're currently evaluating the NorMAN Out of Hours Helpline service hosted by Northumbria University which provides an out of hours phone, email and SMS service enabling us to offer 24/7 support all year round. The service handles calls relating to IT, Library and VLE queries. They currently provide support for over 20 universities nationwide so are knowledgeable in HE IT support.

We understand the needs of our users change every year; we have staff and students working outside our 09:00 - 17:00 opening hours and in different time zones. The NorMAN service means we are able to cater for these users and provide extended support at a fraction of price it would cost the University to provide this service in-house. The service will also act as an early indicator to any major incidents out of office hours and will be able to contact the relevant Computing Service staff immediately for quicker resolution.

The way the service works means all calls will be directed through to NorMAN when the IT Support Office closes at 17:00. The member of staff will know you are calling from York and will have access to our account management and knowledge base to enable them to answer queries with local information. All queries calls are logged and reported back to the IT Support Office before opening time meaning any unresolved issues can be picked up by our staff at 09:00.

For more details, please visit [www.outofhourshelp.ac.uk/](http://www.outofhourshelp.ac.uk/) or contact Sarah Kennedy ([srk500@york.ac.uk](mailto:srk500@york.ac.uk)).

## New Website JOANNE CASEY

At the end of July, we will migrate the Computing Service website to the Web CMS, a process which has involved close consideration of the usability of our site, and a re-organisation of the information it contains. The move will coincide with the renaming of the service (see page 9) and will result in new URLs. Our new home page will be [www.york.ac.uk/it-services](http://www.york.ac.uk/it-services) - redirects will be put in place for all key URLs, including any mentioned in this edition of Keynotes.

## New email address scheme for staff and students

JOHN BYRNE

Since the central mail service was first set up, staff and students have been issued personal email addresses based on their initials with added digits for uniqueness. This has ensured consistency across the organisation but it is generally acknowledged as being somewhat opaque to the wider community.

The University wishes to improve the mail system by introducing a new email address scheme which more closely matches the names of its staff and students and which is more closely aligned to schemes adopted in other organisations. After consideration at the May Information Strategy Group meeting, the following scheme will be implemented.

Starting in October 2010, all staff will be allocated an email address based on the form **name@york.ac.uk**. The scheme will later be available as an opt-in process for students and associates. Student addresses will be of the form **name@student.york.ac.uk**, and details of the scheme will be sent to students in due course. Addresses may be reissued in exceptional cases such as changes resulting from marriage or deed poll.

Please note that the changes detailed below apply only to email addresses. You will continue to use your username (eg abc123) when logging in.

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### Your new email address

Your new email address will be based on your forename and surname. You can choose to register a preferred forename if you wish. Your new address may include your initials and, if necessary, a number at the end to make the address unique.

For example, John William Smith would be allocated the first available address from the following ordered list:

- . john.smith@york.ac.uk
- . john.w.smith@york.ac.uk
- . j.smith@york.ac.uk
- . j.w.smith@york.ac.uk
- . john.smith2@york.ac.uk
- . john.smith3@york.ac.uk etc

If John William Smith has registered a preferred forename of "Bill", the system will instead allocate the first available format from the following list:

- . bill.smith@york.ac.uk
- . b.smith@york.ac.uk
- . j.w.smith@york.ac.uk
- . bill.smith2@york.ac.uk
- . bill.smith3@york.ac.uk etc

Currently around 97% of staff have a unique forename/surname combination. For those who share the same forename/surname combination, the system will allocate email addresses in an order based on your contract start date in the HR system.

### How to register your preferred forename

If you wish to register a preferred forename, you must do so by 30th September 2010 to ensure that your new email address is correct. If you are a member of staff you can set your preferred forename by logging in to the MyView service (<https://myview.york.ac.uk/>), following the 'View and maintain your personal details' link, then the 'Personal Details' link, and changing the 'Name known by' field in your personal profile.

If you are a student you should contact Registry Services ([www.york.ac.uk/admin/ss/sas.htm](http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/ss/sas.htm)) to ask for the change.

### Moving from your old address to your new address

Your old and new email addresses may be used interchangeably for a period of three months following introduction of the scheme. Thereafter messages sent via the York mail servers will have old addresses automatically converted to the new addresses in the From, To, CC etc fields. This three month period will give you time to update your email address on any external services that only accept email from an address you have registered, eg discussion lists.

If you wish, you will be able to convert to using your new address before the three month deadline by setting an option in My IT Account on the web or by manually changing your settings in your mail client, eg Outlook or Thunderbird. Instructions will be made available in due course.

Please note that you will continue to receive any email that is sent to your old email address indefinitely.

### Reusing email addresses

In order to maintain the overall benefit of addresses which are relatively easy to recall, and to minimise the need to generate addresses containing digits, it may be necessary for the University to reissue real-name based addresses once the current owners have left the organization. Suitable safeguards will be established before such a process is invoked. For example all email addresses will be held for 24 months before becoming available for reuse.

As addresses may be reissued, to avoid privacy problems we strongly recommend that you only use the new address for University work.

In particular, registering for non-work related internet based services using the new address may cause privacy issues as if the name is reused, the new owner of the address may be able to access the service.

If you have any queries about the scheme, please contact the IT Support Office ([itsupport@york.ac.uk](mailto:itsupport@york.ac.uk)).

# Digimap and Ordnance Survey OpenData

PETER HALLS

Some of you may be aware of a set of announcements by Government over the past few months surrounding Ordnance Survey (OS), culminating in the introduction of the new OS OpenData service at the beginning of April. This article explains a little of the background, what has happened recently and what is still to happen regarding OS data - and how this may relate to the Digimap service.

Publicly, the process began with the then Prime Minister Gordon Brown's announcement in November 2009 that a number of Ordnance Survey products were to be made freely available from 1 April 2010. This was followed by a public consultation, led by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), into future policy for Ordnance Survey. The consultation led to the definition of the precise product mix for OS OpenData and a report defining additional work that must be completed before a formal decision regarding OS can be made by ministers. Within the scope of the consultation and the currently ongoing work is the relationship between Government, OS, other suppliers of geospatial ('mapping') data and the requirements of industry, the public and government for geospatial information.

At the heart of the consultation was the question of the precise role of Ordnance Survey, which seems to have been somewhat fluid, at least since it became a Government Trading Fund. There is UK and European legislation that defines a number of 'Public Tasks' of government: this includes the provision of baseline mapping of the state. Currently, and perhaps surprisingly, this particular Public Task is undefined in Britain and the Consultation identified this as a major problem. Another problem identified as having a significant impact is that of the administration of OS Intellectual Property Rights (IPR): at present, OS can claim ownership of all data that includes any spatial reference derived from OS material, regardless of the scale of the contribution made by the OS content to the whole dataset. Also identified are complications for UK adherence to the EU INSPIRE Directive, which is concerned primarily but not exclusively with environmental information, that result from the existing OS regime.

The products listed by Government for delivery through OS OpenData are:

- OS VectorMap District
- OS StreetView
- OS Locator
- OS LandForm Panorama
- Code-Point Open
- Boundary-Line
- Meridian
- Strategi
- 1:50000 Gazetteer
- 1:250000 Colour Raster
- MiniScale (a 1:1000000 raster product).

Many of these are essentially images of printed maps, good for display as a backdrop or picture but unsuitable for extracting any of the included detail for use in analysis or modeling. OS have also published a web API, similar to Google Maps, to permit users to display their own data through the OS web service, rather than to obtain the OS data themselves.

Digimap is a JISC data service, based at Edina in Edinburgh, to deliver data licensed by the JISC Agreements for OS, Historical OS, Marine and Geological information. These are subscription agreements, where institutions license access for their staff and students to these data; the OS Agreement is currently heavily subsidised to

institutions by JISC. The use of the Digimap service is mandated by the various agreements, mainly for access control and licensing purposes. Digimap provides a heavily used download service, enabling users to incorporate OS, etc, data into their GIS operations, as well as facilities to create maps. Clearly, there is potential for these changes to have a significant impact on the Digimap service. A review by Edina of Digimap usage has shown that the products now available through OS OpenData contribute a very small proportion of overall Digimap usage; the vast majority of Digimap usage being for large scale, detailed data that are not included in OS OpenData. At least for the next year, the Digimap service will continue in its present form.

The future is less clear.

The Government's response to the OS Consultation has included setting up internal working groups to report back on solutions to various of the problems identified by the Consultation, one of which is how OS OpenData is to be funded! Other groups are to define the OS's role in Public Sector Mapping; define the terms of reference of OS, in particular with regard to any Public Task delivered by OS; resolve the data sharing issues created by the OS's attitude to IPR; and define a licensing and charging regime for OS products. Various completion dates have been specified, but the published intention is to enable a new regime to take effect from 1 April 2011. One impact of this uncertainty is that the current Digimap Agreement has been extended by OS until it is clear against what regime a new agreement must be negotiated.

This article was written before the results of the General Election were available. It is currently unknown where this all fits in the priorities of the new administration or even whether the new government might seek to abandon some or all of the changes described.

## Changes to the VPN Service BEN THOMPSON & ELEANOR COULTISH

Our VPN (Virtual Private Network) service provides access to web pages and computing resources normally only available on-campus to users from home. This can be useful to those wishing to access firewall restricted resources such as filestores and certain departmental websites, or network-access-location protected resources such as library journals.

Whilst a VPN service has been available for a number of years, over this time we have been made aware of various problems and shortcomings with the original system and thanks to the availability of better technology we have been able to install a new service which offers numerous benefits. The new service which is about to be officially launched uses the standard SSL (Secure Socket Layer) protocol instead of the old system which uses PPTP (Point to Point Tunnelling Protocol) and primarily, it is this change in protocol which makes the new system much more suitable.

One of the main problems with PPTP is that it does not work with all broadband routers and firewalls, and over the years this has caused problems and frustration to many people who could not get it to work. The key reason that SSL is better is that it is exactly the same protocol as used for secure websites, and this is pretty much guaranteed to work with any firewall, or internet connection. This means that it should work perfectly on any broadband router regardless of make and model, or even in an internet cafe, perhaps at the other side of the world where you have no way of knowing what router hardware or firewall restrictions are in place.

The system we have selected is made by 'Juniper Networks', and it has been configured to provide failover to a standby unit. The two units are installed in different data centres and therefore, for the first time the VPN service will be resilient to hardware or software failures.

The new system provides two ways to access resources: via a VPN client called Network Connect, or via a web based interface which is able to proxy web pages or

display files in a web browser. We expect that the first method of using Network Connect will be the most familiar to users of the original VPN service. Once the VPN client is installed, it can simply be launched from your Programs menu (Applications folder on Mac OS), and should provide a more reliable and stable equivalent to the old service. For Linux users the client comes in both graphical and command line versions. We have prepared a getting started guide on the web which is available here: [www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/net/vpn/](http://www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/net/vpn/)

The web interface allows links to services such as filestores or web pages to be presented on a configurable home page. This is the method to use when accessing online journals or IP restricted web resources which are outside of the University network. It can also be useful if you are using someone else's computer and you cannot or do not want to install Network Connect and just need "quick" access to a particular remote file. In most cases however, the Network Connect method is preferred.

## Internet Access in Off-Campus Accommodation ELEANOR COULTISH

The University currently leases three houses in York (one on Walmgate and two on Fulford Road). The house on Walmgate is occupied by approximately 20 postgraduate students and the two on Fulford Road by around 30 2nd/3rd year undergraduate students or mature first year undergraduates.

Up until recently, each of the houses had a BT broadband connection with one Aruba Remote Access Point located near to the common living space. This enabled students to connect to the University wireless network as if they were on campus as the Remote Access Points broadcast our SSIDs UoY Setup and eduroam. Unfortunately though, unless the student's study bedroom was near to the access point, they wouldn't be able to access the internet from within their bedroom. Also, due to the limitations of the BT broadband package when students were using software such as on-line gaming, the upload bandwidth of the connection was being saturated resulting in poor performance of the internet service for everyone.

To alleviate these problems there has been an on-going project to firstly provide wireless coverage to each room in the accommodation, and then to look at other service providers in order to increase the upload bandwidth on the broadband connection.

As the University does not own these houses, we've had to go through a process, collaborating with Estates, to get the owners' permission to install additional UTP cabling. This has enabled us to install more Remote Access Points to increase the wireless coverage within each house. This has now been completed at Walmgate and one of the Fulford Road residences. We are still awaiting permission from the other landlord but hope to get the work done soon.

The next stage of the project was to find an ISP who could offer better broadband upload speeds than what we were getting with BT (8 Mbit/s download and 0.5Mbit/s upload). After exploring the different options with BT and other service providers we have chosen BE ([www.bethere.co.uk](http://www.bethere.co.uk)) who offer Annex M broadband giving us upload speeds of up to 2.5Mbit/s (downloads of up to 24Mbit/s). Using these speeds in conjunction with the Aruba controller we can limit the download/upload bandwidth each student is allocated so that we shouldn't get a situation where the bandwidth is being saturated by one person, making it fairer for everyone. We've got this installed and tested at the Walmgate house and so far we've not had any complaints about the Internet. We're now going ahead with the order for the Fulford Road residence where we have full wireless coverage and hopefully, in due course we'll go ahead with remaining Fulford Road house.

## New Online Landlord Property Management System

NICOLA NORMANDEALE

For several years now, the university has allowed private sector landlords to register advertising details of their properties. These details were then available for students either via a web search or a printed report.

A great breakthrough when first introduced, the system was becoming increasingly out dated. Landlords had to send their details in via a paper form, which then had to be entered into the online database by Accommodation Office staff, and there was no provision for photos to be included. Landlords were also unhappy at being unable to see exactly how their final adverts looked, as the web search was (and still is) limited to University members.

Last November, we launched the Online Landlord Property Management System, written in-house, allowing landlords to enter and update their own details, and upload photos. They can also view how their adverts will look to students. Great care has been taken with security – landlords have to register to use the system, and all photos and changes to free text are checked by the Accommodation Office before they appear in the student property search. Landlords still have to send in copies of the safety certificates for their properties and only Accommodation Office staff can enter details of these.

The new system has been very well received by landlords, pleased to be able to see their details, change them and stop their adverts at any time, without having to ring or email the Accommodation Office. Some mentioned they had let their properties much more quickly than usual this year. The Accommodation Office estimate it has reduced their workload by at least two person months. Students now see adverts similar in quality to those on agency websites.

Further enhancements are planned this year in response to feedback from landlords and students, to ensure accurate, comprehensive and easily accessible information on properties for let continues to be available to University of York students.

## “Computing Service” is becoming “IT Services”

GEOFF HOULTON

It occurred to me recently that this is the last edition of Keynotes that the Computing Service will ever produce. Not because the publication is ending, but due to our name changing to “IT Services” this summer.

The new name was proposed in the document IT Services Strategy, 2009-2013, in order to reflect the current reality of service provision. “IT Services” is believed to be the simplest expression of the boundaries of the current service and more meaningful to users and staff. Some practical benefits are also anticipated, for example a reduction in the number of delivery couriers and visitors confusing our department with Computer Science!

The change also represents part of the formation of the new Directorate of Information, under the leadership of Stephen Town, Director of Information and Kay Mills-Hicks, Deputy Director of Information and Head of IT Services. Within this Directorate, we are forging closer links with our sister department, the University Library & Archives.

We are planning to introduce the new name in July, so that our building, website, publications etc can be ‘re-branded’ prior to the arrival of new students in the autumn. A project group has been formed, to co-ordinate the necessary changes, including: signage, web pages, publications, voicemail messages etc.

We will, of course, contact every department via email and YorkExtra when the change is introduced. In the meantime, if you have any questions about this, please contact Geoff Houlton ([gph2@york.ac.uk](mailto:gph2@york.ac.uk)).

## Wireless Strategy

JOHN GRANNAN

At its meeting of 12 May, the University’s Information Strategy Group agreed a vision, strategy and policy for future provision of the Wireless Infrastructure within the University.

It was agreed that having a pervasive, reliable and appropriate infrastructure was a key strategic element in supporting mobile working across campus.

Heslington East Phase 2 has already been designed with a wireless infrastructure in mind and so coverage there should be good (with the new Goodricke College being retro-fitted in common areas).

However, improving coverage on the Heslington West Campus presents significant challenges both in terms of the major capital expenditure required and installation issues related to asbestos. Hence it is planned that:

- The Library service will be improved alongside the current building works;
- We will work alongside the new ‘Student First’ initiative to enhance coverage in areas to be redeveloped;
- Surveys of areas with currently poor coverage will take place and a capital plan developed to address them;
- Ensure that information on wireless coverage is readily available.

As plans for each area become firmer, we’ll advertise them here.

## Withdrawal of Windows 2000

JOANNE CASEY

As previously advised we are now fast approaching the end of Windows 2000. Microsoft will withdraw support on 13 July 2010. Once this happens, Windows 2000 machines will no longer receive security updates; as such they will have to be removed from the network (possibly without notice) if we believe there are any threats to their security.

If you, or any of your colleagues, are still running a Windows 2000 PC now is the time to act, either by rebuilding the machine with Windows XP or by replacing it. Advice can be found at: [www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/pc/WinXP/OfficeWinXP.htm](http://www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/pc/WinXP/OfficeWinXP.htm).

Summative or high stakes e-assessment relates to the end-to-end use of electronic assessment processes, where ICT is used for the presentation of the assessment activity and the recording of responses. In its broadest sense this refers to the use of computer-assisted and computer-based assessments to evaluate student achievement, resulting in a grade or a certification.

In recent years there has been a growing demand from departments for support in delivering high stakes assessment activities using technology. The VLE Service Group were approached by four departments last year, wishing to use the University's centrally supported virtual learning environment (VLE) - Yorkshire – for the delivery of high stakes summative assessment activities. The Group is also aware of departments which are already using the VLE for this purpose, and we may anticipate a further demand for this type of activity in the future, as online delivery becomes an established part of teaching and learning activities across the university.

This attention to the use of technology to facilitate assessment testing is in keeping with sector trends across HE, where e-assessment has become a mainstream activity. The JISC report on Effective Practice with e-Assessment (2007) highlights institutions such as Loughborough, which have been undertaking over 80,000 e-assessment activities per year across a range of disciplines including foreign languages, chemistry, mathematics and engineering. The University of Dundee is also highly active in this regard, delivering up to 3000 formative assessment sessions a day, and around 80 summative exams each year through the use of Questionmark Perception software (Walker, 2009). The University of Dundee estimated that in 2007, over 150 academic staff were using formative and summative e-assessments, mostly in multiple-choice format, with some also incorporating sound and video files. E-Assessment has been applied most extensively in education, law, medicine, life sciences, nursing and languages, but is evident throughout all 15 schools in the university.

At York, departmental requirements appear to range from the delivery of multiple choice examinations for large cohorts of students, to 'open book' examinations which permit students to access a restricted set of web resources. At present though, there is no centrally supported service to help departments manage assessments of this nature, which affect student progression. Whilst the VLE has been set up to support formative assessment activities, it has not been designed to support 'live' assessments, which are grade bearing.

As a result, University Teaching Committee (UTC) in March 2010 supported a proposal to establish a working group to look holistically at e-assessment requirements, including requirements for a centrally supported e-assessment service, which address user needs, relevant IT systems & integration issues, support provision and physical space issues. The Group is comprised of representatives from the Standing Committee on Assessment, E-Learning Development Team & Academic Support Office, Computing Service, and also representatives from academic departments. The Group will also draw on contributions from Estates, Examination Office and student representatives.

The Group has been tasked with developing a report which will go to the Strategic Information Projects Implementation Group and UTC at the end of September, with recommendations on a range of options which the University might wish to consider in support of the electronic delivery of summative assessment activities. The project will address the following workstreams:

- Investigation into departmental summative assessment requirements
- Benchmarking of supported e-assessment services against comparator institutions
- Survey of market leader assessment solutions (IT systems) & technical support to run these systems & integration issues (e.g. linking system(s) with SITS/VLE).

- Review of physical space requirements for e-assessment
- Review of support structures to manage the delivery of e-assessment

The focus of the work will be on the electronic delivery of high stakes assessment activities, rather than formative assessment, although there may be transferable lessons learned which may influence current formative assessment practices.

In terms of the technology that will be investigated, the Group will be looking at a range of commercial tools on the market which support assessment activities. Typically they function independently of an institution's VLE, running on different hardware with a secure server. The leading assessment engine in use across the sector is Questionmark Perception (QMP), which runs on Microsoft technologies and can be integrated with SITS, supporting automated student enrolments to a test site. Summative assessments can be delivered via a dedicated server running QMP through a secure browser. Alternatively Questionmark to Go (QM2Go) software may be used to facilitate local download of an assessment to a workstation for completion offline, with results saved locally on to the PC and automatically returned to the server following detection of an internet connection.

The Group will also be looking at solutions such as Appsense which restrict the range of software applications assigned to a user. Thus the facilities that students have access to during the examination can be controlled via the desktop.

Dave Surtees will be leading investigations into the physical space requirements for e-assessment. John Byrne and Dave will also be leading on the review of assessment solutions and technical support to run e-assessment systems.

If you would like to contribute to the working group or would like to know about its activities, please do get in touch with a member of the working group.

## Computing Service Staff

Director of Information.	<b>Stephen Town</b>	3864	jst504
Head of IT Services.	<b>Kay Mills-Hicks</b>	3801	knh8
Departmental Administrator.	<b>Lorraine Moor</b>	3801	lsm1
Head of Infrastructure.	<b>John Grannan</b>	3798	jkg503
Head of Information Systems.	<b>Kay Mills-Hicks</b>	3801	knh8
Head of Support Services.	<b>David Surtees</b>	3803	dps4
IT Infrastructure Consultant.	<b>Robert Demaine</b>	3808	rld1
Information Officer.	<b>Joanne Casey</b>	3805	jmc8

<b>Kashif Amin</b>	3817	ka14	<b>Anthony Leonard</b>	4350	apbl500
<b>Gavin Atkinson</b>	3738	ga9	<b>Michelle McCarthy</b>	2627	mm533
<b>Amanda Bacon</b>	3802	agb12	<b>Robert McCarthy</b>	3594	rm575
<b>Sue Bolton</b>	2102	sjb28	<b>Fergus McGlynn</b>	3822	fam6
<b>Tom Borgia</b>	4348	tb549	<b>Tricia McNamara</b>	3842	pm535
<b>David Broom</b>	3229	dlb10	<b>John Marsden</b>	3832	jpm1
<b>Mike Brudenell</b>	3811	pmb1	<b>John Mason</b>	3813	jrm13
<b>John Byrne</b>	3812	jcb1	<b>Darren Miller</b>	3815	dm26
<b>John Campbell</b>	4347	jac523	<b>Darren Munday</b>	8469	dam6
<b>Arthur Clune</b>	3129	ajc22	<b>Nicola Normandale</b>	4695	ncn1
<b>John Cooper</b>	3595	jmc508	<b>Aimee Phillips</b>	3897	amp11
<b>Eleanor Coultish</b>	8467	emm502	<b>Tamsyn Quormby</b>	4346	tq1
<b>Steve Downes</b>	3741	sd21	<b>Pritpal Rehal</b>	3597	psr500
<b>Mike Dunn</b>	3819	md24	<b>Jo Reid</b>	4346	jr562
<b>Paul Elliott</b>	3807	pre500	<b>Sam Scott</b>	3744	svs2
<b>Ken Finch</b>	4452	kf1	<b>Philip Smailes</b>	3833	pjrs1
<b>Iain Ford</b>	3894	igf500	<b>Jenny Smailes</b>	4455	jj5
<b>Kevin Gardner</b>	3739	pkg4	<b>Andrew Smith</b>	3809	abs4
<b>Chris Gowland</b>	3823	cg1	<b>Tom Smith</b>	3847	tas509
<b>Kelvin Hai</b>	4689	kh525	<b>Brian Souter</b>	3814	bs1
<b>Sarah Hall</b>	3827	seh11	<b>Max Spicer</b>	3745	mjs510
<b>Peter Halls</b>	3806	pjh1	<b>Richard Stoddart</b>	4349	rjs502
<b>John Hawes</b>	3818	jeh11	<b>Carl Stovell</b>	4699	cjs505
<b>Susanne Hodges</b>	3839	sh32	<b>Ben Thompson</b>	8401	bt4
<b>Geoff Houlton</b>	2100	gph2	<b>Pete Turnbull</b>	3804	pnt1
<b>John Hutchinson</b>	3898	jh57	<b>Heather Walker</b>	3743	hp501
<b>John Isles</b>	4454	jdi500	<b>Michael Walters</b>	2627	mjw513
<b>Michael Jones</b>	3749	masj500	<b>Dave Wells</b>	4341	djw516
<b>Sarah Kennedy</b>	3825	srk500	<b>Stefan Wielgosz</b>	3826	sw796
<b>Fiona Lamb</b>	3800	fsl501	<b>Adrian Young</b>	3820	ary500

## IT Support Office

The IT Support Office is your first point of contact with the Computing Service

t. 01904 43 3838  
e. [itsupport@york.ac.uk](mailto:itsupport@york.ac.uk)

Open from 09.00 to 17.00 Monday to Friday for problem solving, advice and information, fault reporting, network connections, file restoration, course bookings and user registration.

## Contacting the Computing Service

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

t. 01904 43 3800  
dd. 01904 43 followed by ext nos beginning 2, 3 or 4.  
01904 32 followed by ext nos beginning 8.  
f. 01904 43 3740  
e. [username@york.ac.uk](mailto:username@york.ac.uk)  
w. [www.york.ac.uk/computingservice/](http://www.york.ac.uk/computingservice/)

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University of York,  
Heslington,  
York, YO10 5DD

t. 01904 43 3838  
e. [itsupport@york.ac.uk](mailto:itsupport@york.ac.uk)

[www.york.ac.uk/computingservice/](http://www.york.ac.uk/computingservice/)