key*notes*

Learn something new!

Staff and Graduate Course schedule for the Spring term

Also in this Issue:

More on the Millennium

MIS News

ILIAD 1999/2000

key*notes*

Volume 26, Number 2

contents

From the Editor

As regards the Millennium Date Change, this really is your last chance! Doug Moncur gives details of how to go about changing the date and time in your machine's BIOS on page 4.

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For details of holiday closure, and crucial information on network access see Peter Roberts' item 'Christmas and the Millennium' on page 1.

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On page 3 you can find Mark Cook's Web News, fast becoming a regular Keynotes feature, with information about recent changes to our web pages, aimed at making them both more comprehensive and more user friendly.

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It has transpired from our survey that some of our users never get to see a copy of Keynotes, and may be missing out on useful information. If you know any member of staff or graduate who wishes to be added to the mailing list, this can be arranged with the Computing Service's Secretaries. Alternatively, save paper by passing your copy on to colleagues or pointing them to Keynotes online at *http://www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/offdocs/keynotes/.*

Joanne Casey

millennium countdown

3 weeks to go!

Are you prepared? See *http://www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/offdocs/y2k.htm* for further information.

Christmas and the Millennium
Peter Roberts

The Computing Service building, including the Information Desk and entrance lobby, will be closed over the Christmas and Millennium holiday period, from 12.30pm on Friday 24 December until Tuesday 4 January. Computing Service equipment in colleges and at King's Manor will be available over some of the holiday period but opening times should be checked with porters. During the Millennium bank holiday weekend access to many parts of the University is likely to be severely restricted. During the holiday period Computing Service staff will attend to the printers and check the network on a few occasions. However faults and problems will not be attended to until the service resumes on 4 January.

Following a decision of Information Committee the University will disconnect from the Internet from 24 December until 4 January. During that period it will not be possible to transfer data into or out of the University nor to send or receive e-mail from external sites. Users expecting to send or receive data or e-mail during that period should notify the potential senders or recipients of our closure and make appropriate alternative arrangements.

Users of the administrative MAC system will note that access to it will be withdrawn between 30 December and 4 January to allow checks to be made that the Millennium roll-over has occurred without problems. Once this has been confirmed on 4 January access to MAC will be restored.

Staff News
Mike Jinks

Two new members of staff joined us on 18 October. Chris Reece joins us from Pindar Systems plc in York where he worked as a software developer. Chris is a York Computer Science graduate and has also worked as a Computer Officer in the Computer Science department. Chris is taking over the post vacated by Chris Joy and will be involved in support of the central systems.

Michael Clark joins us on a fixed term contract to develop some internal administrative systems for the Computing Service. These will have web-based interfaces and some will be available to the Departmental Computing Officers to facilitate the handling of some of the day to day tasks which currently can only be done centrally. After a first degree in Medicinal and Pharmaceutical Chemistry, Michael gained an MSc in Computer Studies and worked in a variety of roles before joining Tenhill Computer Systems Ltd in Leeds as a Software Developer, involved in the development and maintenance of financial software.

We welcome our new colleagues and trust they will have a stimulating and enjoyable time with us.

Michael Clark and Chris Reece

Dr Vivienne Hemingway is leaving us in early January to take up a post as the ICT Implementation Change Manager with the recently created University for Industry. Vivienne has been with us for six years as Database Advisor, during which time she has been involved in the creation of the central Data Warehouse, as well as a wide variety of projects in departments.

We wish Vivienne well in her new post and trust that her technical experience here will stand her in good stead in her new role.

ILIAD 1999/2000
Susanne Hodges

ILIAD for University offers a specially designed course to introduce first year students to information literacy at York. Although information technology training has recently greatly increased in schools, demand from incoming students this year was more than ever, with six hundred taking the taught course and one hundred and fifty taking the self study route. For the first time we are also running three evening classes each week for Health Studies students, all encouraged by their Department to take this course.

The programme consists of five two hour sessions, introducing students to computing at York, to researching and evaluating information sources, to word processing for academic purposes and visual aids. This year we also offered a pre-course optional session to give complete beginners an introduction to Windows 95.

A University validated certificate is awarded to those who successfully complete the assessment, with points also accrued towards the York Award.

ILIAD for University runs in Autumn Term from Monday of week 3 to Friday of week 7.

The next issue of Keynotes will contain news of our advanced courses, known as ILIAD for the Workplace.

For more information about both ILIAD programmes, visit our website at *http://www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/training/.*

Staff and Research Graduate User Satisfaction Survey
Joanne Casey

We have had a very high rate of returns to the User Satisfaction Survey sent out to staff and research graduates, and would like to thank all those who responded. The data is being analysed for us by Priority Search and a report will be published in due course. I'd like to take this opportunity to answer some points raised by respondents, and to explain a little more about the rationale behind the survey.

As a service we are moving away from paper-based documentation wherever possible. We decided however to distribute the survey in hard copy rather than by email to ensure we reached a full spectrum of our customers - a web or email based survey would have ruled out a number of users, and it is important that we take this opportunity to elicit their views.

The paired statements were based on comments from focus groups and from people approached randomly by phone, by email and in person. They are not intended to represent opposites, but a broad selection of the wishes conveyed to us. The aim is to discover what a user's priorities are by making them compare possible changes. Simply asking people to rate each statement individually may produce a list of 'very important' items, without showing which are *most* important. If we are to prioritise future spending in line with user needs and wishes, this information is essential.

We decided not to ask for comments, as this is a huge survey and written comments require hand coding, a laborious task on potentially thousands of returned surveys. We are of course interested in user comments and invite these year-round via our web site - at the bottom of each page the navigation bar includes a link to a comments page at *http://www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/misc/comments.htm* - or direct to the Information Desk.

Course news
John Illingworth

The complete Spring Term course schedule appears in another part of this issue. The new items this year are the continuation of the Web strand that began this term and three sessions on GIS (Geographic Information Systems), an area of interest that touches more disciplines each year. The Web strand gets to grips with the business of linking web pages with databases and we will be including simple database design and manipulation, as well as the high-level page designer Cold Fusion.

We have a remit to provided training in all the basic components of the central system each term, particularly with a view to bringing new staff up to speed, so if you are new to the University, make sure that you sign up for courses relevant to your work.

Web News
Mark Cook

Since my last update in the Summer edition of Keynotes, further additions have been made to the Computing Service web area.

In the Hints and Tips section of Help, Rob Fletcher has continued to develop the Graphics area. All of the on-line information about Enhance, GIMP, SGI Workstation Utilities, Uniras, Xforms, XV and Xpaint is now accessible from here. Completely new sections on Animation, AVS/Express, Ghostscript, Ghostview, Dynagraph, Geomview and FLTK have also been added. Further material will be posted here in future, making this an invaluable resource for anybody using graphics applications. See:
http://www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/help/graph

There have also been new Hints and Tips added to help users with common problems in Netscape Messenger, Real Player and Maple.

A basic level guide to Netscape Messenger has also been put on line which covers how to carry out most of the tasks a user will need when using the main Windows e-mail package. This can be found at:
http://www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/docs/guides.yrk/messenger/messenger.htm

It is planned to add further sections on the more advanced features available.

The final part of the purchasing area has now been updated with the section on buying printers. Doug Moncur gives useful guidance on choosing the most suitable type of printer for your needs, recommends the best makes and models (this is particularly important when selecting a printer to be networked) and the approximate cost of each. Details can be found at:
http://www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/purchase/purchase.yrk/prtprice.htm

A topic which cannot be ignored at present is the Y2K issue. More information has been added to the section dealing with this subject and an index provided to make the material you require easier to find. It provides detailed information about the issue and answers to most of the questions users will ask regarding their machines, compliance issues and what action needs to be taken in the run up to the millennium. See:
http://www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/offdocs/y2k.htm

The Computing Service welcomes any feedback regarding the information contained on its web pages. This can be given by clicking on 'Comment' on the taskbar at the foot of most pages and completing the form which appears. Alternatively, use one of the 'mail-to' links on the pages or send an e-mail to: *information-officer@york.ac.uk*.

Use of email signatures
Joanne Casey

Using a signature file obviates the need to type information you may always wish to add to your mail - name, department, contact details. It is important to stick to the 'netiquette' guidelines. A signature file should begin with two dashes followed by a space (- -). This enables mail programmes to recognise it as a signature. Good practice is to keep your signature file to a maximum of four lines - longer files increase download times; this is particularly important when the recipient may be picking up their mail at home.

You can set up a signature file to append to all your email messages as follows:

Use any text editor (ie Word Perfect, Notepad) to type the text you want to appear in your signature. Type the text you want to appear at the end of your outgoing e-mail messages (for example, your name, e-mail address, etc.). Note that if you are preparing a file to be used with Netscape Messenger, you may omit the (--) as Netscape will append this automatically. Save the file in text format ie sig.txt.

In Netscape Messenger, from the **Edit** menu select **P r e f e r e n c e s | M a i l & Groups | Identity.** Click on the **choose** button beside the signature file box to select the file you have created. In Pine, select **S**etup | **S**ignature File and ctrl R to read in the file.

Your signature will now be automatically appended to all outgoing messages.

up-to-date

Making your machine appreciate the 21st Century
Doug Moncur

Most recent PCs will cope with the rollover from 31/12/1999 to 01/01/2000 without difficulty, but quite a few older machines may wake up on New Year's morning under the delusion that it's 01/01/1900. You will only need to carry out such a fix if your machine has failed the rollover tests as described in *http://www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/offdocs/y2k/pctest.htm.* As a cross check on the test you should also check the compliance information posted at *http://www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/offdocs/y2kcomp.htm.*

It's important to appreciate that the following instructions are not carved in stone. Due to the range of different machines on campus and different BIOS (Basic Input Output System) versions it is impossible to give a set of definitive instructions. However many machines use a BIOS from Phoenix or have a BIOS with a similar user interface to that of a Phoenix BIOS. These instructions are based around Phoenix BIOS implementations dating from around 1995.

If your machine uses a different BIOS or a BIOS of a different vintage you might well need to check the documentation accompanying the machine to see how to change the date in the BIOS. If you feel that you need help doing this you should contact whoever in your department looks after PCs for advice and assistance.

Getting into the BIOS

Reboot the machine. Watch the start up messages carefully. If you see a message such as: "Press DEL to enter setup ...", press the delete key (bottom left in the block of 6 immediately above the arrow keys). A message "Entering Setup ..." will appear.

With some versions of the Phoenix BIOS the **F2** key is used and you may see a message about pressing **F2** to enter setup. If you do not see any message about accessing setup, reboot the PC again and try pressing **F2** during the memory self test. Should that not work, reboot the PC again and try pressing the **Delete** key during the memory self test.

If neither of these options work, consult the motherboard manual that came with your computer as to how to access the BIOS, for example on Compaq machines one has to press **F2** when a flashing cursor appears on the top right of the screen during the power-up sequence.

If you have successfully accessed the BIOS you should see a screen listing configuration options. If instead you are prompted for a password, enter the password for the BIOS. If you have never set a BIOS password you will not be asked for one. Being asked for one means that either the previous owner of the machine or your departmental computer officer has set a security password in the past. Please contact them to find out what the password is.

Setting the date

Setting the date is usually located under system setup in Phoenix BIOSes. Other BIOSes locate the date option in Main, and a few even call the menu item '*Date & Time*'. Once you have located the correct screen move the cursor to highlight the year portion of the date. Be careful not to accidentally change any other values.

If the year is not set to 2000 it will need to be changed - if there is a problem the date will probably display as either 1900 or 1980.

Again how you change the date is dependent on the BIOS version and vendor but in most cases there will be an aide-memoire at the bottom of the display telling you which key to use to change the date. Common choices are either the + key or the **PgUp** key. Press the key repeatedly until the year changes to 2000.

You then need to save the changes. Commonly **F10** is used as the '*save&exit*' key. If asked to confirm your changes select '**Yes**'.

Once you're done…

Once you've successfully saved and exited your computer should reboot. Once it's rebooted you should check the date by clicking on the Date&Time icon in control panel. The date displayed should be firmly in 2000.

Remember that this only sets the hardware clock. If you have not done so you will need to apply any required Y2K patches to the operating system and applications before you can use your computer. Details of any required patches will be available via your Departmental Computer Officer.

Sophos
John Illingworth

The Sophos Anti Virus Software has now been in the University for nearly two months and we are through the first monthly upgrade. It seems to be working as there have been several reports of viruses detected and removed. The upgrade procedure for those with supported Windows 95 PCs is very simple and involves executing the Sophos setup command again. If you used **Start** | **Run** to execute it the first time you will probably find the command still stored in the pull-down list on the **Run** command. In any case it is: **N:\Misc\Antivirus\Sophos_install\Setup.exe**. Sophos will detect that you already have a copy mounted and will only install the upgraded virus signatures and any new features introduced since last time. You will have no questions to answer. However, you will have to restart your PC and its hard disk will automatically be checked against the latest set of virus signatures. Those with unsupported PCs or NT workstations may download from YorkWeb.

We have had a few queries, although I am pleased to say not many, about what to do if Sophos Anti Virus (sometimes known as SAV) actually finds a virus. What happens is determined by the settings in the **Options** | **Configuration** | **Action** section of the Sophos Sweep program which is accessible from the start menu (**Start** | **Sophos Anti Virus** | **Sophos Anti-virus sweep**).

Most of the viruses we have seen so far have been Microsoft Word macro viruses. One safe way to look at the contents of an infected .doc file is to read it in WordPerfect. You might lose something in the translation, but the architecture of WordPerfect means it is not susceptible to this kind of infection and can open infected files with impunity.

Full details on all installation and upgrade procedures may be found at *http://www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/sw/sophos/sophos_antivirus.htm*.

Maple available to staff and students
John Robinson

For some years the University has held a site licence for the computer algebra system Maple. This applies to computers owned by the University. We have recently taken out an extension to this licence to allow students and staff, whilst at the University, to use the full Maple package on their own computers.

The student needs to sign a licence (one of the terms is the removal of the software on leaving the University) and then receives a CD and the Installation Guide.

Neither Waterloo Maple, nor the Computing Service will be able to provide support, but there are active newsgroups and discussion lists for Maple and the Computing Service will investigate any problems that can be reproduced on the Windows 95 network PCs. The licence will cover maintenance to the product.

There will be a charge of £25 for the software (to cover the additional licence cost, and duplication of CDs); this is an exceptionally favourable price, as a single-user licence is normally £895).

Please contact the Computing Service Information desk to purchase Maple V under this agreement.

MAC Millennium Testing
Jenny Jackson

Millennium testing of the MAC system, described in the October issue of Keynotes, is now drawing to a close, with any identified problems corrected.

Just as a precautionary measure, the Alpha Computers will be **unavailable** from Thursday 30th December until checks have been performed on Tuesday 4th January. If anyone requires access to the system over this period for a specific reason, please liaise with MIS.

Do you access the MAC system?
Kevin Gardner

Following the recent hacking incident, we would like to remind users who have not changed their Alpha password since July 1999, to do so as soon as possible.

To change your Alpha password, log onto Alpha as normal.

From the first screen:-

Choose option **99 To change password**

You should then be asked for your **old password**, enter it and press return.

Now you will need to think of a **new password**, enter it and press return.

Finally, for verification, **re-enter your new password** and press return.

There are several things that may cause the creation of a new password to go wrong.

The length of the password may be too short or too long, if so you would see:

If you entered your old password incorrectly, you would see:

If you tried to re-use an old password, you would see:

Or if there is a mis-match between the new password and its verification, you would see:

If you tried to re-use your existing password, you would see:

In all of the above cases, your password will NOT have changed, the University of York User Menu will be displayed again and you will need to go back into option 99 to change your password.

A New NT Server
Kevin Gardner

The MIS group recently took delivery of a NT server to allow specialised administrative software to be accessed and used across the network. The server is called Qbix and, initially, we intend to install Powerplay on it. Powerplay is one of two business intelligence packages from Cognos that the Computing Service supports, the other one being Impromptu which is currently used to access DWH data as an alternative to Paradox.

Powerplay software allows users to manipulate Powercubes in a user-friendly windows environment, where summary data can be viewed in a traditional tabular form, or graphically as pie charts, scatter graphs or bar graphs. So far, Powercubes have been developed for student records, research and Personnel.

The production of Powercubes will be effected in a similar manner to the DWH, whereby data is extracted from MAC on a regular basis and transferred to the Powerplay server. Powercubes are then created and placed on a shared network area. The access to Cubes will be restricted to registered users. Users will need to register with the Computing Service in a similar way to registering for access to MAC or the DWH. Further details can be obtained from MIS.

Student Loan Company and Tuition Fees
FTM Willson

Following the 1998/99 changes to the funding of tuition fees by HM Government, the University had to develop a suite of programs to allow the processing of multi-sponsored tuition fee accounts. (This was the subject of an article in January 1999 Keynotes). With the transfer of responsibility for the "public" contribution from Local Education Authorities (LEAs) to the Student Loan Company (SLC) in 1999/2000, we have had to enhance this software.

The LEAs provided paper lists of students' debts for which they were responsible and the University matched them to the data provided by students. However, with the advent of the SLC the system has, supposedly, moved into the 20th Century. This means that the SLC now provides a CD with a file listing the students at York for whom a public contribution has been assessed and the value of that contribution. Unfortunately, due to the fact that the SLC did not insist that all students provided their universal student number (provided to all UCAS students upon application to university), the data has no recognisable key with which to link to the University student record. To add to the complexity the SLC have invented another key (the Student Support Number) which the University has to quote to them! This means that we have had to provide alternative methods for linking the file and have alighted on the combination of surname, first initial, date of birth and course code. There are very few students for whom this combination is not unique and these have had to be manually ascertained by reference to the assessing authority code (the first part of the SSN). In addition the current student record system requires fixed length files for processing and the SLC provides "tilde" delimited variable length records so we have had to pre-process the CD file to allow linkage.

So far we have received only one CD from the SLC which, perhaps inevitably, was several weeks late. At the time of writing the arrival of the next version is anticipated - and also late. The first CD contained data for over 2500 students and all but twelve were successfully matched by either the UCAS Number or the "Surname/First Initial/Date of Birth/Course Code" combination. Those that did not match included spelling errors with names, wrong dates of birth and, in a couple of cases, students who withdrew just before term began or who didn't turn up at all.

The third CD is scheduled to be produced in late November and this is the "definitive" version for billing. The data in this file will have to be verified and a return made to the SLC, confirming students are "actively participating in their courses" and "expected to return in January 2000". Once this is completed around two million pounds worth of public contributions to tuition fee income will be collectable by the institution.

Although we have managed to match student records, it is perhaps worth asking any student reading this article to help us by quoting their UCAS number on LEA assessment applications.

Viewing Details of a Print or Batch Queue in MAC
Jenny Jackson

The majority of batch entries are sent to the queue ba$maclive, though there are some exceptions to this rule. The queue ba$maclive is closed between 8.30am and 5.30pm, in order to improve system performance during the day. There are a number of queues that have been set up to run during office hours; these are for use by specific processes.

If you have submitted a job to batch and wish to view the status of your entry on the queue you can enter **SJ** in the Action Box This will display all entries on the queue ba$maclive.

To view an entry on any other batch or printer queue you will firstly need to enter **99** in the Action Box and then**york** in the call screen area. Choose the option**Common Facilities**, followed by**View Queues**. You will now be prompted for a queue name; if you enter * all queues will be displayed, if you know the name of the printer or batch enter the full name. If you wish to view all batch queues enter ba$* this will select all queues that begin ba$. The * may be used in this way as a wildcard, for example if you know that your printer begins pr$ then enter pr$* at the queue prompt and all queues starting with pr$ will be displayed. To exit from this option enter 0.

Computing Service Address

Computing Service
University of York
Heslington
YORK YO10 5DD

Telephone: Switchboard (01904) 430000
Direct dialling (01904) 43 followed by ext no.
Fax: (01904) 433740
Email: *username*@york.ac.uk

Also, try the World Wide Web: http://www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/

Information Desk

Telephone: ext 3838
Email: *infodesk*

The Information Desk is 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 conversion, sales, course bookings, registration and documentation. Printed output can be collected from the lobby entrance which is open from 8am to midnight.

Computing Service Staff:

Role	Name	Ext	Username
Director:	Mike Jinks	3801	*kmj1*
Deputy Director:	Peter Roberts	3802	*pdr1*
Departmental Secretary:	Lorraine Moor	3801	*lsm1*
Head of Technical Services:	Dave Atkin	3804	*dla1*
Head of User Services:	John Illingworth	3803	*jji1*
Head of Personal Systems:	Doug Moncur	3815	*dgm1*
Head of MIS:	Kay Robinson	2101	*kr7*
Operations Manager:	Brian Souter	3814	*bs1*
Information Officer:	Joanne Casey	3805	*jmc8*

Name	Ext	Username	Name	Ext	Username
Sue Bolton	2102	*sjb28*	Vivienne Hemingway	3818	*vwh1*
Mike Brudenell	3811	*pmb1*	Sue Hodges	3839	*sh32*
John Byrne	3812	*jcb1*	Paul Hodgson	4347	*ph25*
David Chambers	4347	*dac6*	Geoff Houlton	2100	*gph2*
Michael Clark	3744	*mpc3*	Jenny Jackson	4455	*jj5*
Paul Conacher	4346	*pac1*	Bob Marriott	4454	*bdm2*
Mark Cook	3897	*rmc12*	John Marsden	3832	*jpm1*
Sue Dekker	3800	*spd2*	John Mason	3813	*jrm13*
Robert Demaine	3808	*rld1*	Darren Munday	3821	*dam6*
Steve Downes	3741	*sd21*	Helen Parker	3800	*hp7*
Debra Fayter	3839	*daf3*	Colin Rea	3817	*cr9*
Ken Finch	4452	*kf1*	Chris Reece	3807	*car7*
Rob Fletcher	3816	*rpf1*	John Robinson	3833	*jsr1*
Kevin Gardner	3739	*pkg4*	Sam Scott	3817	*svs2*
Chris Gowland	3823	*cg1*	Andrew Smith	3809	*abs4*
Peter Halls	3806	*pjh1*	Timothy Willson	2123	*ftmw1*
			Michael Woodhead	3825	*mw28*