



THE UNIVERSITY *of York*
Com puting Servie

key notes

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Towards 2001

Computing Service
Development Plans

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WebCT

New MIS Features

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From the Editor

Computer viruses have once again been big news in the national press. On page 1, John Illingworth writes about our reaction to early reports of the Love Bug.



Mike Jinks writes about the Computing Service's development plans for the forthcoming academic year. These include enhanced student computing facilities and improvements to the network infrastructure. The full details are on page 4.



MIS staff have been working on a number of new utilities to support administrative systems. These include a web interface to the Accommodation Office's database of private rented accommodation, a student records enquiry screen, and a salary 'ready reckoner'. More information on pages 10 to 12.



Joanne Casey

John Illingworth informs you of recent and forthcoming news events

The Love Bug

Did we get it?

If the web pages are to be believed, most sites had more virus alert messages than viruses during the early stages of the "love bug" computer virus scare, but there is no doubt that this one was real enough and there were some reported cases within the University.

What did we do about it?

The problem was addressed on a number of fronts. As soon as our Antivirus Protection suppliers, Sophos, sent a virus alert message with the URL of the code required to spot the virus, we downloaded a copy onto the Windows 95 N: drive, copied the alert to Departmental Computing Officers and put up urgent notices on the Message of the Day facility. To stop the virus accessing its home base, we also used the University Firewall to prevent access to the web server it tried to reach.

Why wasn't it worse?

For a start, the virus was aimed at the Microsoft Outlook mailer, and the default mailer on University systems is Netscape Messenger, so that let the majority of people off the hook straight away. Another positive factor is that the virus and its variants are of file-type ".vbs", visual basic script, which is not on the default list of file types. See **View | Options | File Types** in Windows Explorer for a list of file types and their associated programs.

The most vulnerable are those who have installed Microsoft Office on their PCs and use Outlook as their mailer. Being part of the world-wide majority does sometimes have its drawbacks!

What should you do?

If you should receive a file attachment that you are unsure about, save before running it to enable the anti-virus software to scan it.

Reference Manager

The Reference Manager application has been installed on the Windows 95 system for some time now, but a period of high staff turnover has prevented us from providing any training so far. However, we are now back to strength in the relevant area and intend to provide introductory courses next term, with the possibility of self-teach web-based instruction prior to that.

Software Changes Over the Summer Vacation

We intend to install Corel Office 2000 on supported Windows 95 systems, which means new versions of WordPerfect, Quattro Pro and Paradox. Maple 6 will also be installed, as will C++ Builder 5, Delphi 5 and Jbuilder 3.5 for Java programming. As far as possible, overlap periods will be arranged. We will keep you informed of major changes and publish change summaries on the web as the information becomes available.

Staff & Graduate Training for Academic Year 2000/2001

During this academic year we have been running a "web strand" of courses designed to help web authors of a range of skill levels. We started in October with sessions on creating web pages without knowing html, and thought we had finished in the spring term with a series on databases and the web, featuring Cold Fusion, a system that sits alongside a web server and provides extra functionality, including both read and write access to databases. However, the Cold Fusion course was so popular that we are repeating it this term.

Next term we intend to start the process again, with the basic introductions for new staff and graduates, some specialist courses and the web strand. A new course - an introduction to Reference Manager - will also be running.

Staff News

Mike Jinks

David Atkin, our Head of Technical Services, will be leaving us after 14 years to pursue his career in the commercial sector. David has been responsible for our systems since the days of the DEC System 10 and has overseen the progression for centralised computing power to a modern distributed system based on Unix and PCs supported by sophisticated high speed networking. David's vision and grasp of technology have enabled us to develop an integrated infrastructure rather than a set of separate services as is common elsewhere; he will be a difficult act to follow. We wish him every success in his new role.

Sue Dekker, a member of our secretarial staff, is leaving us after over 11 years to become College Secretary in Langwith College. Sue has acted as Secretary to the Deputy Director, as well as undertaking many and varied duties within the Service. We will miss her cheerful personality and wish her every success with her new responsibilities.

David Chambers, known to many of you via the Information Desk, has recently become a father for the second time. Bethany Mae was born on 8 May, weighing in at 7lb 1.5oz. We wish David and his family well.

Nick Walker has joined us as a Computing Assistant, replacing Mark Cook. Nick has a background as a musician, studying Jazz and Contemporary Music at Leeds College of Music. Although he still has an active interest in music, performing in local bands, he has worked more recently for York Gas in IT support.



Lisa Burkinshaw and Nick Walker

Lisa Burkinshaw joined us early in May as the Database Advisor, replacing Vivienne Hemingway who left in December. After gaining a degree in Biochemistry, Lisa has undertaken several roles in the West Midlands Cancer Intelligence Unit, where she became involved with databases.

Daniel Shelton has recently joined us as a Software Technician and will be involved in the installation, configuration and support of the software bundle on supported PC connections. Daniel gained an HND in Computing and comes to us from Whitby Community College, where he worked as an IT Technician.

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

PC Classroom and Study Centre Upgrades

Brian Souter

As usual at this time of year, we are considering our various PC Classrooms and Study Centres to budget for replacing some of the older equipment and to provide additional devices wherever possible. This Summer, we intend to replace the last of the old 486 PCs, currently in L/051 and on the first floor of the Morrell Library, and to remove the last of the general access terminals on campus, in G/022.

The exciting news however is that, following the initiative to centralise college library facilities in Langwith College, additional space is being created next to G/022. Funding has been made available to refurbish the entire ground floor area of Goodricke College Library to provide a 60-seater PC Study Centre. The new room will be fitted with the latest PCs, several equipped with zip drives, a second printer for Goodricke College and possibly one or two scanners.

We are aware that space constraints and the need to make our equipment secure has not always provided the most comfortable or ergonomic arrangement for our classroom PCs. We intend to look carefully at the new installation in Goodricke College to see if we can improve on its layout and would welcome suggestions at this stage - please email infodesk@york.ac.uk.

Enquiry Tracking System

Brian Souter

We have recently introduced a new Enquiry Tracking System (ETS) to replace the product we purchased when the Information Desk was first launched some years ago. The new system has been produced in-house using Cold Fusion and provides a web interface which can be used across all platforms within the Department. Essentially, the new system provides the same functionality as the previous one, albeit with a much improved interface. However, having written the system ourselves, we are now in a strong position to make some long awaited improvements.

By the end of May, we should have started routing all infodesk email directly into ETS. Apart from the advantages of logging and accounting for all enquiries made in this way, it allows us to deal with them much more efficiently. The system will also allow us to log any additional correspondence by email so we can build a complete enquiry history.

Soon to follow upon these improvements, we are to provide an electronic form on our Electronic Information Desk web site for direct input of enquiries into ETS by users, Departmental Computer Officers and Database Administrators. This will be our preferred method rather than free-format email, because it will allow us to request the correct information depending on the type of enquiry.

Finally, for the moment, we are soon to allow users to access ETS on-line to check the progress of their enquiries. We have just started developing the software but we envisage users having full access to their enquiries to read any log entries or to check the enquiry history. More details will be given on our Electronic Information Desk web site at: <http://www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/edesk/welcome.htm> when this new feature is available - hopefully by the end of June.

Undergraduate Account Expiry

Brian Souter

If you are an undergraduate leaver at the end of the Summer Term this year, then your computer account will be set to expire on Saturday 15 July, the day after Degree Day. A countdown to this expiry date will be displayed when you login. If you have a requirement to use your account beyond this date, or you are returning in the Autumn, you can apply for an extension. You will need to collect a form from our Information Desk and have it signed by your academic supervisor or Head of Department.

If you are the owner of any other computer accounts then these will expire at the same time as your normal username. You should consider what to do with any society accounts BEFORE you leave as we may not be able to transfer ownership without your permission.

All expired accounts are removed from our registration database automatically after one month, and all files are saved for one year. There is nothing for you to do in this respect, although you may wish to make your own copies of any important files or delete any unwanted ones.

As with your other files, email folders will be saved for one year after expiry, but it would be useful if you tidied up your area and deleted any unwanted messages. At the very least, you should unsubscribe from any mailing lists. Once your computer account expires, all email will be rejected unless you have set a forwarding address. Check out the email Management section on our Electronic Information Desk at: <http://www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/edesk/>.

And finally, you will need to give some thought to closing your print charge account. If your account is in credit then we will be happy to make a refund, if it is debit then you must pay the difference before leaving. Call in at our Information Desk once you are certain you will no longer need to do any printing.

Development Plans for 2000/2001

Mike Jinks writes of major areas of development for the coming year

The Service's draft development plan was discussed at the recent meeting of Computing Committee and the revised version will be considered by Information Committee in mid-June.

The major areas of development for the coming year focus on:

- implementation of the University's Information Strategy
- YIMS
- development of web-based access to internal information
- pilot Windows 2000 service
- improving the performance of the infrastructure, particularly the campus network
- enhancing student computing facilities by provision of a new facility in G/022 and upgrading others.

Much of the work associated with the University's Information Strategy relates to policy issues. In particular the Information Committee's priority for the year is the development of the University's Information Access and Security Policy which will draw together existing regulations and guidance, together with new areas relating to the new Data Protection Act and the forthcoming Freedom of Information and Human Rights legislation. This is a complex area and obviously covers more than electronic information, but the increasing volume of regulation relating electronic information requires the University to have policies and guidance in place to ensure that we comply with the legislation, whilst not unduly inhibiting the smooth operation of the University. The Computing Service will also be involved in drafting the University's IT Strategy.

Following on from Y2K compliance, the University is more aware of its dependence on a range of factors including IT. A major project investigating the vulnerability of the University's operations to absence or failure of critical components is being set up. This will consider buildings, services, emergency procedures etc as well as the IT infrastructure, and will lead on to business continuity plans. Although there needs to be central co-ordination of these activities, many critical components relate to departments.

A major enhancement to the campus network is due to take place over the summer

The YIMS project is now well underway, with the tendering process for the new Personnel and Payroll system being undertaken during the year. YIMS activities are publicised separately at: <http://www.york.ac.uk/univ/org/yims/local.yzk/> but there is major involvement of the Computing Service in many of its activities, particularly by the MIS Group.

A working Group of the Web Steering Group is reviewing the organisation and content of Yorkweb. Technology now facilitates more customised access to web-based information and it is planned to develop a more customised intranet during the year. In addition, web-based access to the Service's enquiry tracking system (EIS) will be provided so that individuals can submit queries directly into the system and can ascertain their current status at any time.

A major enhancement to the campus network is scheduled to take place over the summer. There is increasing demand for 100Mbit/s connections to the desktop and the capacity of SuperJanet will increase significantly with the introduction of Gigabit/s trunk links in SuperJanet 4. Modest enhancements will be made elsewhere to the infrastructure with an increase in default filestore allocations and an increase in the capacity of the central filestore.

Student computing facilities will be enhanced by a new facility in G/022 with the creation of a large 24-hour study centre on the removal of the current book stack. In addition, the ageing PCs in L/051 will be replaced.

There are also a range of issues arising from the user satisfaction surveys which will be addressed during the year. Several of these relate to levels of service and performance indicators. Now that Computing Committee has agreed a set of service definitions, we will need to collect performance data in the major areas. We also intend to continue to develop some of our internal administrative systems and make appropriate ones available to DCOs and to improve the operation of the charging system.

Other projects include a pilot distance learning course employing WebCT, undertaken with Economics, development of an LDAP directory service which will be used for both internal administration and provision of more customised information to constituencies of individuals, and possible video-conferencing developments undertaken in association with the White Rose consortium.

GIS News - Digital Data Update

Peter Halls

We have received a pre-release of the Digital Elevation Model, DEM, for the British Isles that has been generated as a part of the JISC funded LANDMAP project to ortho-rectify the LANDSAT and SPOT satellite imagery for the British Isles. This data set is approximately equivalent in horizontal resolution to the Ordnance Survey 1:10000 *Bdf* product, but with a better vertical resolution, especially for relatively flat areas. The pre-release is not the final product and some variation in accuracy is to be expected, but it does offer a new opportunity for York researchers to incorporate elevation related factors into their work. As this is a pre-release, users who think they may be able to benefit from using this data should contact Peter Halls at P.Halls@york.ac.uk in the first instance.

We have also received the 2000 update of the Bartholomew digital map data. This data is now online. In order to manage the requirement to retain certain datasets from superseded releases - for example British Postcode Sector Boundaries- to enable comparison of survey results from year to year, the directory structure has been changed slightly; details are below. All such data may be used directly with a GIS, such as Arc/Info (provided on our UNIX service) or ArcView (available at the PC Desktop and on our UNIX service). Detailed descriptions of the dataset concerned can be found on the GIS web pages at: <http://www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/sw/gis/bartholomew.htm>.

The bartholomew data for

Great Britain is now located in `bartholomew/gb<year>` - eg `bartholomew/gb1999`; `bartholomew/gb2000`. These data are digitised at a scale of 1:200000, are registered to satellite imagery and comprise the data used to create the Bartholomew Road Map of Great Britain series of published mapping. Data is included for County and Unitary Authority boundaries (`admin_gb`) and Postcode Sector boundaries, the "YO10 5" level of YO10 SDD, (`pcsect`) in addition to roads, rivers, lakes, towns, etc. There is also a gazetteer, which is built as a 'point' dataset. We also have street level data for Greater London, at a scale of 1:5000. Greater London is defined as being "within the M25". This data replaces the 1996 release, which has been removed.

For Europe a substantially improved dataset is now available. This has been digitised at a scale of 1:1000000 and the digitising 'tiles' have now been seamlessly incorporated into a single data set. Data is similar to that for Great Britain, but excludes local administrative authority boundaries and postcode equivalents. The World Gazetteer (see below) should be used in conjunction with the European data set. The European is located in `bartholomew/eur2000`.

The new World data, that from which the Times Atlas of the World is produced, is located in `Bartholomew/wrld2000`. This data has been digitised at a scale of 1:5000000 (a very great improvement over the superseded data) and includes a similar range of themes to

those in the GB and Europe dataset, but with a greater degree of generalisation and selection. For the first time, there is a Gazetteer included, which should also be used in conjunction with the Europe data.

In addition to the vector data for GIS use described above, Bartholomew have also now provided raster versions of the Great Britain and Europe data. These are images of the Bartholomew published maps, generated from the data provided and are suitable for use where a background map is required but where there is no need to use additional or selective information in the map. At the time of writing, no decision has been reached as how best to provide this data; users who think they might benefit from its use should contact the Computing Service for advice.

Withdrawal of Obsolete Data

The Bartholomew Data Agreement has been renewed and a reliable update facility is included in the agreement; there will be a data set upgrade each year. Other than administrative and related boundary data, where it may be necessary to be able to refer to older data, all other data from the release *prior to that being superseded* will be removed from the system each summer. This means that in Summer 2000 data from the 1998 release would be removed. At the end of June it is proposed to remove the data in the top level Bartholomew directory relating to the 1996, 1997 and 1998 data supplies.

Web Disclaimers and Liabilities

Joanne Casey

The Web Disclaimers and Liabilities Working Group was set up in February 1999 to consider the issue of information provided on pages carrying the University domain name and the management of web servers. The group reported to Information Committee in February of this year.

The report notes the burgeoning use of web pages to publish information both within and beyond the University, examines the possible legal liability of the University for this information, and considers the use of disclaimer statements. It also looks at the security issues inherent in server management. The responsibilities of all groups and individuals involved in providing information on YorkWeb are detailed, and a number of recommendations made covering aspects of web management. Of particular interest are sections 4.1, 4.2, 5.3 and 5.4

Section 4.1 looks at the issue of responsibility for web pages and the necessity of showing 'due care' in the regulation and provision of web material. Those who have formal responsibility for web information are identified. Heads of academic and administrative departments have formal responsibility for information held in departmental web pages or on departmental web servers. Directors (or equivalents) of research centres, units, commercial subsidiaries, etc are responsible for information held in the organisation's web pages or on its own web servers. Chairs (or equivalent) of student organisations and societies are responsible for information held in the organisation's web pages or on its web servers. Such responsibilities apply even where the everyday responsibility for maintaining the site is delegated to a Webmaster or equivalent. Individual members of staff and students are responsible for information held in their personally owned user web areas or on personally owned servers.

Section 4.2 recommends that a York Local Acceptable Use Policy be formulated, again to ensure that the University is demonstrating 'due care' in the provision of information on its web pages. Information Committee accepted the draft proposed by the Working Group.

Section 5.3 deals with the issue of external access to servers. At present, there are no criteria for allowing access to servers through the firewall, and it is recommended that Information Committee should establish general criteria to be met if such access is to be permitted. Draft criteria were proposed by the Working Group. These were accepted in principle and the Computing Service asked to set in place the appropriate administrative arrangements.

Section 5.4 is concerned with the inclusion of disclaimers on YorkWeb pages. Currently, there is a link to a disclaimer from the University home page, and from the personally owned user web areas home page. It is proposed that appropriately worded disclaimers be linked to the home pages of all York servers visible to the outside world. Suitable disclaimers are given for servers hosting official information only, for those hosting personally owned user web areas only, and for those servers which host both.

The full report is available online at: <http://www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/offdocs>.



Useful Travel URLs

British Tourist Authority:
<http://www.bta.org.uk/frameset.htm>

RAC route planner:
<http://www.rac.co.uk/services/routeplanner/>

Ordnance Survey, including downloadable maps:
<http://www.ordsvy.gov.uk/home/index.html>

Rail timetables and ticket ordering:
<http://www.thetrainline.com>

Travel advice from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office:
<http://www.fco.gov.uk/travel/>

Travelmag - a monthly magazine for independent travellers:
<http://www.travelmag.co.uk/>

National Express:
<http://www.nationalexpress.co.uk/>

Lifestyles UK's list of UK travel pages - hundreds of links:
<http://www.lifestyle.co.uk/adb.htm>

The UK Public Transportation site provides an index of travel by rail, air, coach, bus, ferry, metro and tram within the UK and to the UK and mainland Europe: <http://www.pti.org.uk/>

Access-Able travel resources - information for disabled and elderly travellers:
<http://www.access-able.com>

The World Wise Directory - travel advice indexed by country: necessary vaccines, emergency numbers, prohibited items, visa information, public holidays:
<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/worldwise/>

Information from MAFF on the Pet Travel Scheme:
<http://www.maff.gov.uk/animalh/quarantine/>

WebCT - an update

Debra Fayter

An article appeared in January's Keynotes describing a product called WebCT. Winter seems a long time ago now so we would like to remind you of the University's WebCT project and bring you up to date with new developments.

The WebCT project was set up in response to increased interest in distance learning and associated technologies across the University community. The project group (a collaboration between the Computing Service and the Department of Economics and Related Studies) has been investigating WebCT, which aims to provide a virtual (or managed) learning environment.

Designed by the University of British Columbia, the product is in use at many universities in several countries and is regarded as one of the front runners in the new field of virtual learning. It allows for provision of Web-based teaching materials and for extensive communication amongst students and between lecturers and students, whatever their physical distance. It includes bulletin boards, whiteboard presentations, chat rooms, self assessment and testing tools, email, calendar facilities and so on.

The WebCT project group was asked to consider whether the Computing Service could provide WebCT as a centrally supported service and, if so, to define the resource implications. After evaluation, the project group believes that it will help to meet the needs of both distance learners and campus-based students. However the brief nature of this evaluation and lack of experience in a live environment make it impractical to specify the implication of running a full service: this requires a more detailed pilot phase supporting a live course.

Accordingly, the group has been authorised to set up a pilot service for October 2000 to support the WebCT component of the Certificate and Diploma programmes in Health Economics for Health Care Professionals. The pilot will also give additional departments the opportunity to investigate the WebCT system. A recent letter to Departmental Computing Officers invited individuals, groups and departments to participate in the project and, at the time of writing, several expressions of interest have been received. By the time you read this we hope to have selected evaluation partners.

The pilot project will address issues such as management of the software, resourcing in terms of staff and hardware, training implications for both staff and students and interfacing of administrative data with WebCT. It will also provide an opportunity to ascertain whether the software should be installed on the network more permanently.

By April 2001, following feedback from all those taking part, we should be able to recommend one of the following: the provision of a fully supported WebCT service; an unsupported service; the withdrawal/replacement of the software. In the meantime information about the project is available from Debra Fayter (x3839, email daf3) and more about WebCT may be found at: <http://www.webct.com>.

MAC Users - In the nicest possible way... please leave!

F T M Willson

Every weekend, late on Saturday afternoon, a series of processes are run on the Alpha Platform that convert the data files of the MAC Administrative Computing System. These processes - analogous to the defrag that PC users undertake on their disk structures to help to tidy up the files - mean that during the following week performance is enhanced for all MAC users.

However for these processes to work it is necessary for there to be **no users logged into MAC**. Even if not actively using the system, just logging in opens several files to read - enough to cause the converts to fail. One odd weekend missed is not significant but when the converts fail several weekends in a row, then performance is noticeably affected.

This therefore is a plea to all users of the MAC applications to be vigilant in checking that they have logged out properly on Friday evenings. For those of you who work over the weekend, please can you **make sure that you have logged out of MAC by 4.00pm on Saturday afternoon and do not log in again until after midnight**.

If you have access to other applications on the Alpha platform that are not MAC (for example Vehicle Registration) you can clearly carry on using these but if you have logged into MAC at all whilst you have had your window to Alpha open then please log out of the Alpha altogether and then log back in again - you may still have files open "to read" even though you are not actually logged into the MAC software itself.

In short, please:

1. Log out of the Alphas carefully on Friday night (and every night!)
2. On Saturdays if you have logged into MAC, logout from the Alphas totally before 4.00pm and don't log back in until Sunday.

Hints and Tips

Susanne Hodges



This issue's Hints and Tips concerns the spreadsheet programme, Quattro Pro. If you are not familiar with Quattro Pro an initial trawl around the very useful quick reference guide at: <http://www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/docs/guides.yrk/qpqr.htm> is advised.

Quattro Pro Tips

Q: How do I alter the printed layout of my spreadsheet?

A: Choose **File | Page Setup**. Various options allow you to decide if your spreadsheet should go onto one page or more, be scaled down, centred vertically on the page, printed portrait (vertical) or landscape (horizontal). Margins can be changed, headers and footers and cell gridlines (the default is not to print them) may be added here.

Q: Can I enter sequences of data automatically?

A: Yes, you can if you wish to enter a series of data, for example the months of the year or numbers 1 to 10. Enter the first item of the series in the first cell. Highlight this cell and also the cells which will contain the next items in the series and click the **QuickFill** button on the toolbar. You may also create new lists of data by selecting the **QuickFill** button and in the QuickFill dialogue box, select **Create** and follow the instructions as appropriate.

Q: How do I create a chart?

A: Highlight the cells containing the data that you wish to transform into a chart. Choose **Insert | Chart**. A Chart Expert dialogue box appears, providing a step by step guide. Follow the steps indicated to create your chart. At Step Five ensure that the destination is **Chart Window** then click **Finish**. Your chart will now be displayed in a separate window from the spreadsheet. Using the Chart Menu, you may make further amendments to your chart. Using the **Window** menu, you can move between the spreadsheet and chart. All the charts included in your spreadsheet will be available in the **Objects** page of your spreadsheet notebook. You can move to and from the Objects page by choosing the 'last page' button in the **Page Tab Skip** controls at the bottom left of your screen.

Q: How do I put a Quattro Pro chart into my report?

A: Highlight your chart in Quattro Pro. Select **Edit | Copy**. Minimise the Quattro Pro program. Start up WordPerfect and open your report. Select **Edit | Paste Special | Paste Link**. The chart and the report are now linked together so that any changes you make to your chart will be reflected in your report.

Q: How do I display numbers as currency?

A: You need to specify the format of the numbers to Quattro Pro. Highlight the numbers in your spreadsheet, click the right mouse button to display a pop up menu, choose **Cell Properties**. The **Numeric Format** tab is already selected, so simply click on **Currency**. A window containing a list of countries will appear, so select the country of your currency, as appropriate. The default setting is two decimal places which is usually fine, so select **O K**.

Further information on Quattro Pro may also be found at: <http://www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/help/spread/> and Computing Service Quattro Pro course materials are online at: <http://www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/docs/guides.yrk/quattro/index.htm>.



More WordPerfect Tips

Using a new character in your WordPerfect dot leaders

Do you get tired of those boring dots in your dot leader? Did you know that you can use any other character, such as an underscore or an asterisk, and you can even control the spacing between the dot leader characters?

To customize your dot leader, select **Format | Line | Tab Set**. When the **Tab Set** dialog box appears, replace the full stop in the **Dot Leader Character** text box with a new character. The default spacing between dot leader characters is 1, but you can decrease that number to 0 or increase it up to 255. Then, when you want to use the dot leader in a document, select **Format | Line | Flush Right With Dot Leader**. When you do, WordPerfect inserts the dot leader to the right margin using the character and spacing you selected.

Open Day

Sue Hodges

This year the Computing Service provided an information stand in Central Hall. Fliers in the form of floppy disks, containing an attractive program designed by Rob Fletcher that detailed our network facilities, were handed out. We attracted much interest, with over 500 visitors. The most commonly asked questions were 'how do I access the network from my study bedroom?' and 'is the Internet free?' For those interested, consult: <http://www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/obcs/guides.yk/student99.pdf>. Many students were also relieved to find that at York email addresses are user-friendly, unlike many other universities that have complex numeric addresses.

PC Procurement

Doug Moncur

As you may be aware the Computing Service, on behalf of the University, recently invited manufacturers, assemblers and distributors of PCs to tender for the supply of PCs to the University and we have had 22 responses. The companies tendering are:

Company	Supplying
Akhter	Akhter
Chisholms	Chisholms
Compaq	Compaq
Computacenter	Gateway
CRS Computers	Compaq
Dan	Dan
Dell	Dell
DTP	Hewlett Packard
Elonex	Elonex
Evesham Micros	Evesham
Global Communications Group	Gateway
G N D	G N D
Hi-Grade Computers plc	Hi-Grade
ICM	Fujitsu *1
Megabyte	Fujitsu *1
Pars Technology Ltd	Pars
Phoenix Computers	Fujitsu *2
RM plc	R M
Tiny	Tiny
Unisys	Hewlett Packard
Viglen	Viglen
X M A	Compaq

(*1) The situation with Fujitsu is complicated, in that machines can either be sourced directly from Fujitsu themselves (*2) or as part built machines with the final assembly being carried out by another company (*1). The model ranges supplied directly by Fujitsu differ in several crucial aspects from those whose final assembly is carried out by another company.

The tenders are currently being scrutinised and assessed as to how well the proposals mesh with the University's Information Strategy.

It is hoped to have a short list in place by early June 2000 and be able to indicate who is likely to be selected later in the summer.

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Accommodation Office - Private Sector Suite

FTM Willson

Following on from the ColdFusion Application written for the Stationery Store and highlighted in the last issue of Keynotes, I have now completed a different application for the Accommodation Office.

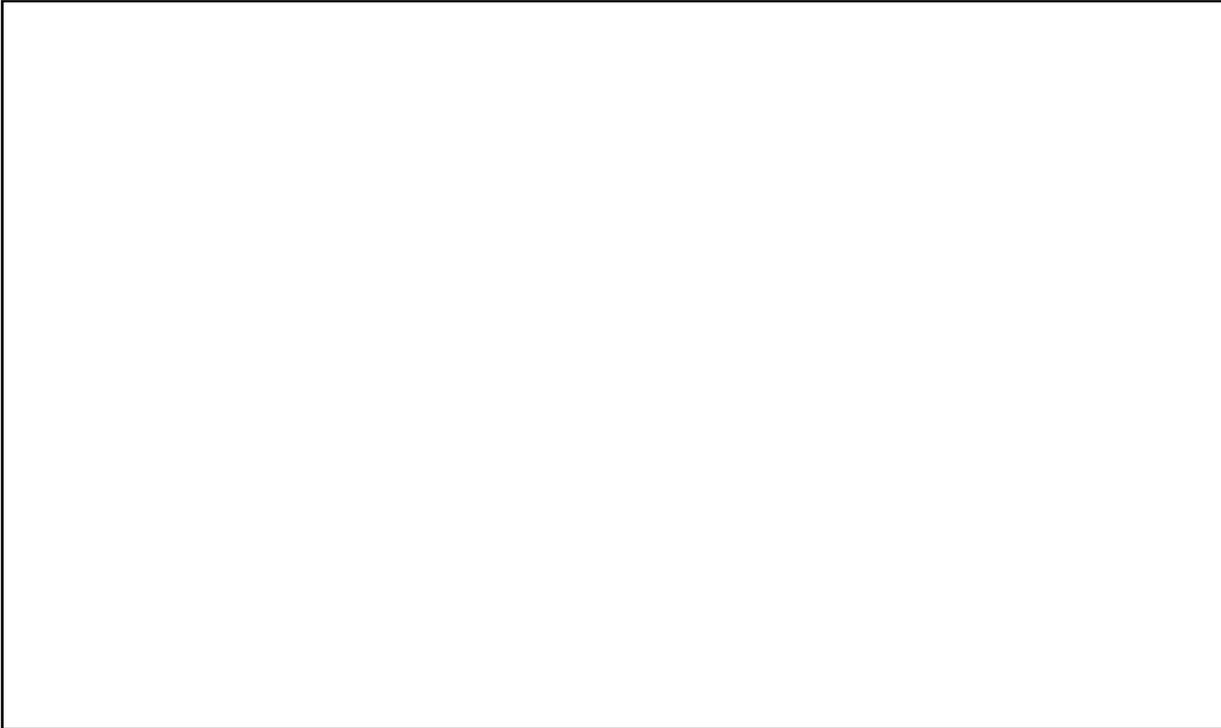
As some of you will be aware the Accommodation Office produces a list of properties, rooms etc that are available in the Private Sector for rent. At the moment this is either a printed list that has to be collected from the Student Services Building or a full list on the web at: <http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/accom/prsector.htm>. However, the web list is simply a large text file and it is all or nothing when it comes to printing it off. Even so it is heavily visited - 1275 hits in March. The new web pages that have been designed are currently being piloted within the Accommodation Office and, all being well, should go live later in the summer.

The new suite of programs consists of an administrative set - to allow the maintenance of owner and property lists and the production of reports, marking off let properties etc - and a user search engine type interface. This allows the user to set a series of constraints before querying the database and to get a list of properties that match the criteria they have selected, as shown below.

When you want to move in	This defaults to tomorrow
Property Type	Flat, House, Room, Bedsit, Temporary, Family, Family with children, PRS Whole House, Room in a PRS House (or all of them)
For how many people	Up to 12
How many bedrooms required	Up to 12
Rent (per week)	Between £0 and £999
Street Name	If you want a particular street you can enter it
Postcode	If you want a particular postcode area (first part of postcode only)
Distance to campus	Any distance, 1 mile or less, 1 -2 miles, 2 - 3 miles, 3 - 4 miles, 4 - 10 miles, over 10 miles
Property Furnishings	Unfurnished, Partially furnished, Furnished (or No Preference)
Person Type	Anyone, Undergraduate, Postgraduate, Staff, Mature Student - some owners constrain the category of person they wish to let to
Resident "Landlord"	Yes, No, No Preference
Smoking	No Preference, Allowed (including Non Smokers preferred), Strictly Not Allowed or Non Smokers Preferred (including Strictly Not Allowed)
Reference number	If you have selected a property before and wish to refresh your memory, you can enter the University Reference number

When run, a list of appropriate properties is displayed on screen. The user can either print this list off or drill further into the individual records to get a full list of all of the features, constraints etc of a particular property.

Rents are quoted by owners in several ways - per week, per month, per four weeks, per property etc and this suite calculates an approximate weekly rent equivalent to allow selection and comparison. Details of deposits required, items included in the rent (for example Water/Sewerage charges), owner contact numbers etc are itemised and, if you wish to see the location of the property, there is a built-in link to: <http://uk8.multimap.com/map/places.cgi>.



Behind the user interface several conditions have to be met for property details to be displayed and there are several useful features for the Accommodation Office staff. Previously data, once entered into the system, was live straight away - now property details can be entered in advance and released automatically from a predetermined date. Properties can be withdrawn once let but re-advertised very easily if the letting falls through, or can be re-activated the following year. Gas appliances have to be certified as serviced annually and, if this has expired, the property is automatically withdrawn. In addition owner details can be held on the database but only those elements of them that the owner specifies released to the user. (For example owner telephone numbers are released but often owners' personal addresses are withheld).

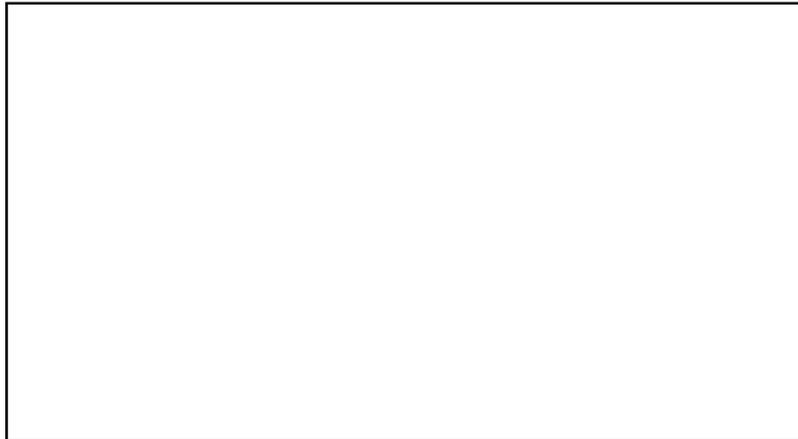
If the pilot is successful - and all indications are that it will be - this suite will be released later on in the summer.

Postscript to Electronic Requisitioning - as mentioned in the last edition this was being piloted but it has now been accepted and DoFM launched it in mid May. As I write this there are 44 registered Stationery Store electronic requisitioners and the number is growing.

Student Enquiry Screen

Jenny Jackson

The Student Records Review Team (SRRT) has been looking at ways to improve current processes. Out of these investigations came the idea to make student records information more easily accessible to all members of departments. An enquiry screen which would allow the main elements of the student record to be viewed via the web, provides a medium which is readily available to most people and requires no formal training in its use. I have been involved in designing an enquiry screen which contains the most frequently used search criteria:



When a query has been submitted a simple list of students matching the specified criteria is displayed. Individual students' details and module choices are displayed by selecting a record from the list. Future developments will include a screen designed specifically to display graduate research student records and an email facility. The first draft of the screen is available at: http://www.york.ac.uk/univ/mis/cfm/stud.yku/stud_search.cfm. If you have any comments on the acceptability or otherwise of the facility and on how it may be improved please email jj5@york.ac.uk.

Online Services for Finance

Sue Bolton

I have recently completed work on a salary 'ready reckoner' interactive web page to help with costing research grant applications.



This facility enables staff to enter the details of a proposed appointment, eg grade, length of appointment, full-time or part-time, increment date etc. After pressing the GO button the application reports back how much it would cost. Costs are broken down by salary, employer's Superannuation and National Insurance contributions for each year, with a grand total at the end. There is also the facility to enter an exchange rate whereby costs would also be reported in a foreign currency equivalent.

This facility is available at: http://www.york.ac.uk/univ/mis/cfm/salcost.yku/sal_entryform.cfm.

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

Information Desk

Telephone: ext 3838
Email: info@desk

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:

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

Sue Bolton	2102	<i>sjb28</i>	Paul Hodgson	4347	<i>ph25</i>
Mike Brudenell	3811	<i>pmb1</i>	Geoff Houlton	2100	<i>gph2</i>
Lisa Burkinshaw	3818	<i>ljb4</i>	Jenny Jackson	4455	<i>jjb</i>
John Byrne	3812	<i>jbl</i>	John Marsden	3832	<i>jpm1</i>
Michael Clark	3745	<i>mpc3</i>	John Mason	3813	<i>jml3</i>
David Chambers	3742	<i>dac6</i>	Darren Munday	3821	<i>dam6</i>
Paul Conacher	4346	<i>pac1</i>	Nicola Normandale	4695	<i>ncn1</i>
Robert Demaine	3808	<i>rdl</i>	Colin Rea	3817	<i>cr9</i>
Steve Downes	3741	<i>sd21</i>	Chris Reece	3807	<i>car7</i>
Debra Fayter	3839	<i>daf3</i>	John Robinson	3833	<i>jr1</i>
Ken Finch	4452	<i>kfl</i>	Sam Scott	3817	<i>svs2</i>
Rob Fletcher	3816	<i>rf1</i>	Daniel Shelton	4349	<i>ds23</i>
Kevin Gardner	3739	<i>pkg4</i>	Andrew Smith	3809	<i>abs4</i>
Chris Gowland	3823	<i>cgl</i>	Nick Walker	3897	<i>njwt8</i>
Peter Halls	3806	<i>pjh1</i>	Timothy Willson	2123	<i>ftmw1</i>
Sue Hodges	3839	<i>sh32</i>	Michael Woodhead	3825	<i>mw28</i>