

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*
Computing Service

key notes

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How to save on Transatlantic charges

Also in this Issue:

Electronic requisitioning

Survey results

Web of Science

WordPerfect Tips

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From the Editor

On pages 4 and 5 we explain ways to save on network traffic charges. As many departments have recently received their first bill for transatlantic traffic, this should be of particular interest.



The staff of MIS have been working on new utilities. On page 6 Timothy Willson explains the procedure for ordering stationery electronically, and on page 5 Geoff Houlton writes about the new web-based room booking facilities.



Sue Cumberpatch gives details of the transition to Web of Science in the Information section on page 3. This facility provides search access to three citation indexes, covering Science, Social Sciences and Arts and Humanities.



Joanne Casey

Computing Service User Satisfaction Survey - Taught Course Students

Joanne Casey

Around 3000 surveys were distributed in January 2000; 2,500 to a stratified sample of students and the rest made available at Porters' Lodges, Computing Service, PC Classrooms, JBM Library and the Students' Union. A draw with two prizes of £25 was offered as an incentive to complete; about 12% of the surveys were returned. This was a substantially lower rate than the staff survey, probably because of the temporal nature of the taught course student population. It is nevertheless an acceptable level from which to draw conclusions.

The prize draw was won by Janne Helin (Environment) and Emma Simpson (History of Art) who were each presented with £25 by Mike Jinks, Director of the Computing Service (see photo below).



Interestingly, while around 5% of the surveys returned by staff and research graduates were incorrectly or incompletely filled in to an extent where it was not possible to analyse the information within them, this was not the case with any of the surveys returned by taught course students.

The following emerged as top priorities:

- Increase the number of PCs on campus
- Give a basic introduction to York systems in Week 0
- Improve speed of fault solving
- Repair faults out of office hours and over weekends
- Provide better printer maintenance
- Provide free student IT training

We are currently working on a more detailed analysis of the data and a report will be available shortly. I'd like to thank again all those who took the time to complete and return the surveys.

May Bank Holidays

The Computing Service building, including the Information Desk and entrance lobby, will be closed for the May Bank holidays, Monday 1st May and Monday 29th May.

All computer systems, including the PCs and printers in the Colleges, will be available as for a normal weekend.

Enjoy the time off!

Computing Service Courses: Room Changes

Please note the following changes to the published course timetable:

WordPerfect for Beginners, Wednesday weeks 1 and 2, (3 and 10 May) 14.15 - 16.15 will now be held in Wentworth 218 NOT Langwith 117.

Web Strand, Thursday weeks 3 to 8 (18 May to 22 June) 14.15 - 16.15 will now be in Goodricke 169 NOT Langwith 117.

Classroom Etiquette

Joanne Casey outlines rules of behaviour in Computing Classrooms

Unattended PCs

There have recently been complaints from students about the number of PCs in classrooms left logged on and unattended.

Machines in the classrooms are often at a premium, and it can be very frustrating for queuing users to see machines logged in with work on the screen, but no user in evidence. There is no written or implied law that a user can 'book' use of a Computing Service classroom PC simply by leaving it logged on. If a machine is left unattended and logged on for any length of time, other students are well within their rights to log that user off and use the machine themselves. We would ask that you wait a few minutes before doing this - give the previous user time to return from going to the toilet, making a quick phone call or similar, but if their return is not forthcoming then log the machine off in a careful manner and use it yourself.

There is also a security issue involved here - if you leave the machine logged in, you are giving all comers access to your file store; if you also leave your email account logged in you are enabling a malicious user to do even more damage.

Use of telephones

A topic which has excited much debate in the local newsgroups, and comment to Computing Service is that of the disturbance caused in PC Classrooms by use of mobile phones and, to a lesser extent, the classroom phones.

Writing as a recognised phone lover, I am aware of how useful a

mobile can be. However I also realise that the noise both of the phones ringing and of protracted conversations can prove irritating to other users. There is also some anecdotal evidence of the signal from mobile phones causing screen interference. In view of this we would ask users to switch their phones off or to silent mode when they are in a PC classroom, and to leave the classroom if they wish to make or take phone calls.

It should be emphasised that the internal phones provided in classrooms are there to enable users to report faults, contact the Computing Service or report any emergencies. They should not be used for personal phone calls.

Zip Drives

In each of the PC classrooms there are two machines with zip drives attached. It would be helpful if users not requiring the zip drive could avoid using these when there are other machines available and be prepared to move if other machines become available.

Interrupting classes

The vexed issue of access to spare machines when a room is booked for teaching continues to be of concern to some. Such access is determined by the class tutor and will depend upon their teaching style. If the group is working through workbooks at their own pace, then allowing other students access is usually acceptable. If on the other hand, a great deal of tutor presentation is involved, then it may not be appropriate.

If you are admitted to use spare computers you should always work quietly, especially when the tutor is making a presentation.

Time to go home

For operational reasons, it would be appreciated if users were to leave units powered ON after completing sessions in the Computing Service classrooms.

Web Links

Guidance on conduct in classrooms is available at: <http://www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/class/conduct.htm> and the regulations for use of Computing Facilities can be viewed at: <http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/aso/ordreg/r11.htm>

Derwent SGI upgrades *Chris Rees*

Over the Easter break the SGIs in D104 have been upgraded to IRIX 6.5.7. Apart from the usual security and bug fixes, this release sees SGI finally catching up with the rest of the world and shipping a current version of Netscape.

Along with Netscape 4.7, the upgrade includes the latest Flash player, Acrobat Reader 4, and CosmoPlayer 2.1.2. Also worth a mention are the upgraded Fortran and C compilers and the addition of the Cosmo Code graphical development environment for rapid creation of Java applications.

The Transition to Web of Science

Sue Cumberpatch tells you about the new Web of Science host that replaces BIDS

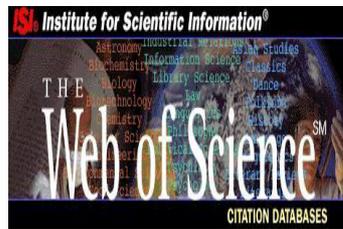
As announced in the October 1999 issue of Keynotes, the ISI Citation Indexes and ISTP databases will no longer be available via BIDS from July 2000. Instead, they will be accessed via the MIMAS Web of Science host, which is already available on the campus network at **Start | Programs | Information Resources | MIMAS** (then select **Web of Science**) or directly from your Web browser at <http://wos.mimas.ac.uk>. You will need to login with an ATHENS account.

To remind you, the Web of Science includes the three Citation Indexes: the Science Citation Index Expanded with Cited References and Author Abstracts (1981-), the Social Sciences Citation Index Expanded with Cited References and Author Abstracts (1981-) and the Arts & Humanities Citation Index with Cited References (1981-), plus the Index to Scientific and Technical Proceedings (1990-). The data for all of these is updated on a weekly basis. Additional databases may be added later and future plans include a linkage facility to subscribed electronic journals with full text.

The added value features of Web of Science include the following:

- Faster and more robust access, with support for more concurrent connections than BIDS
- Ability to search all three Citation Indexes at once
- Will export results to Windows-based bibliographic software packages
- Printing, saving, or emailing of search results is possible directly from the search interface
- Citation searching is easier and more powerful

There are, however, some features



of Web of Science which do not compare well with BIDS:

- Telnet access is not possible
- The AutoJournals facility is not available (*see other options below*)
- Combining previous sets is not possible, although this feature has been requested as a top priority by UK academics for the next release (scheduled December 2000)
- Results display ten items at a time, and can only be marked ten at a time for output
- There is a maximum of 500 viewable search results at present.

Alternatives to Auto-Journals

The lack of an AutoJournals-type alerting service is very disappointing, but there are a couple of options which compensate to some extent:

- You can save a query and re-run it on the last one, two or four weeks' updates
- The Library has re-subscribed to Uncover Reveal, which provides a similar service and is to be enhanced over the next year. Ask your Subject Librarian for help in setting up a Reveal profile, or see the Library's guide to Uncover Reveal at: <http://www.york.ac.uk/services/library/guides/uncover.htm>

You may have seen some publicity about the Web of Science demonstration sessions

being run in the Library during Week 2 of the summer term; take advantage of this opportunity to see how the Web of Science works and to ask any questions. In addition, there will be the usual documentation and user education provided by the Library in support of the service. Subject Librarians will also organise customised training for departments on request. Please contact your Subject Librarian or email ydnhelp@york.ac.uk if you wish to arrange such training.

Sue Cumberpatch is Information Systems Librarian and Departmental Computing Officer for the JB Morrell Library

ILIAD for the Workplace *Sue Hodges*

This year we are running four courses: Office Skills, Web Page Design, Database Systems and Desktop Publishing. In the Spring Term there was a high level of enrolment and, as with last year, Office Skills was the most popular course. The course assessments produced some impressive work, particularly in Desktop Publishing.

These courses will run again in the Summer Term. They are open to all students interested in developing skills in preparation for employment. The final registration date is 12 May 2000.

For full details visit: <http://www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/training/iliad/forwork.htm>

How to save on Transatlantic Charges

Joanne Casey

As you will be aware, the University now has to pay for network traffic coming to *york.ac.uk* over the transatlantic links leased by UKERNA. Trying to meet the exponential growth in usage, the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) found that it was spending an increasing proportion of its money on throwing additional bandwidth at the problem.

The University currently pays £23,000 per annum for transatlantic network traffic.

In an attempt to curb usage and to raise extra revenue, a charging regime was introduced. Universities are now charged for their usage. The University currently pays £23,000 per annum for transatlantic network traffic. A proportion of this cost is passed on to departments according to their usage.

To avoid building up transatlantic charges, it is recommended that you use mirror sites and web caches, and avoid using programs which generate excessive traffic, particularly those which give rise to a phenomenon known as "tromboning".

What is a Mirror site?

A mirror site collects electronic information and data from locations further afield and stores it on more local servers - generally UK based, but sometimes European. This makes it easier, cheaper and quicker to download. One example of this is the UK Mirror Service, which replaces the HENSA service.

The UK Mirror Service

The UK Mirror Service, <http://www.mirror.ac.uk/>, provides free access to a very large collection of software and data gathered from popular sites around the world. The collection is updated daily so that the information is always current and a true image of the sites mirrored.

The Service mirrors all forms of freely available, electronically stored material. This includes software, textual and numerical data, audio material, static and moving pictures and web pages based information.



It is hosted by the Universities of Kent and Lancaster and is funded by the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) for the benefit of the UK Higher Education community who can usually retrieve and download software and other material from the UK Mirror Service more quickly than from the originating site.

It is a free service available via the World Wide Web and FTP, which speeds up access to information. It is primarily intended for the UK Higher Education community, but can be used by anyone.

What is a web cache?

A web cache stores web pages that have previously been accessed. They work on three levels:

- The local cache held on your machine's hard drive, the contents of which can be periodically deleted
- The York web cache (see below)
- The national JANET web cache.

If you ask your web browser to point to our York web cache it will look there first for recently accessed web pages before downloading them from the Internet. The York web cache points to the JANET national web cache.

Each time you click on a link or

type in a URL, your web browser will look on your machine's local cache to see if it can find a recent copy of that information. It will then check the York cache and, failing that, the JANET national web cache. Only if it fails to find the document in any of these locations will it proceed to download the document from its source on the Internet. There is no evidence that this process leads to any significant delay and it is a big step in lowering transatlantic network traffic charges (see Keynotes passim).

Use of our local web cache can produce instant savings. All the Computing Service managed desktop systems, including all classrooms are configured to use our cache by default. However, lots of departmental systems go directly to WWW servers all around the world to retrieve pages.

(continued overleaf)

How do I use the local web cache?

Precise details of how to configure your browser will depend on version and platform, but here is the basic information you will need:

If your browser supports automatic proxy configuration (as does Netscape Navigator for example) you will need to go to **Edit | Preferences | Advanced | Proxies**. The auto proxy config should be set to: <http://www.york.ac.uk/proxy.config>. If your browser does not support automatic proxy configuration, the information you will need to supply is:

C a c h e m a c h i n e :
wwwcache.york.ac.uk; Port: 8080

You will need to specify that direct access is permitted to any york.ac.uk system. The syntax for this varies between browsers but will probably be one of the following:

york.ac.uk
.york.ac.uk
*.york.ac.uk

You can test if it is working by asking for a non-existent web server here at York such as "zzzz.york.ac.uk". If your configuration is wrong you will get an error page from our Local Web Cache, instead of directly from your browser.

What is tromboning?

Popular with students and a major cause of high traffic are the various "chat" programs, including ICQ. A side-effect of ICQ is that traffic will often make a double journey across the Atlantic, commonly known as "tromboning", which can soon cause bills to rise steeply. This issue is being considered; many universities have already blocked ICQ to keep costs down.

Online Services for Room Bookings

Geoff Holton of MIS

The MIS Group have recently completed work on two web facilities in the Room Bookings area, available via the Web page <http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/psa/roombook/>.

The "View Room Bookings" facility enables staff to check what bookings exist for a particular building and date, or range of dates. You can also use the facility to check whether a room is available on a particular date.

The "Book Technical Equipment" facility enables staff to book audio-visual equipment e.g. data projectors, for a meeting or presentation.



Working in a building site

Sue Hodges

For the past six weeks Computing Service has been undergoing a transformation in order to both rationalise the building and accommodate six additional members of staff. The ILIAD and Information Offices have been at the centre of the building works. Thus our dust covered heads have been filled each day with a chorus of loud bangings, sawings, buzzings and other unspeakable noises. We have had no heating or overhead lighting. Each day we have had to live with the fear of the workmen switching off the electricity with no notice and so losing our unsaved work. This has already happened three times and much sobbing and wailing has emanated from the lower reaches of the building.

Life however is now returning to normal. No more cheery men to greet us each morning and no more Radio 1 blaring out. All is boring silence - in fact workmen, we're missing you already!

Staff and Research Post-Graduate Survey

A report has been produced on the data gained from the Staff and Research Graduate survey. By the time this issue is published the report, including proposals for future actions, will have been presented to Computing Committee and a copy will be available from the Official Documentation section of the Computing Service web site: <http://www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/offdocs/>.

Actions highlighted within the report include:

- Running open seminars
- Creating a service status page on the web
- Continuing recent improvements in communication with Departments, via the Departmental Computing Officers and the Information Strategy Advisors
- Establishing a network group to record any glitches encountered in everyday working situations

Electronic Requisitioning from Stores

FTM Willson writes about a pilot scheme that could revolutionise your stationery ordering

As a part of the web development work being undertaken by the MIS Group within The Computing Service, I have just completed the writing of a Cold Fusion application for the electronic entry of stationery requisitions to the main Stationery Store. This is currently undergoing a pilot run with about five departments across the university and, if this is successful, will be opened up to all departmental stationery-ordering staff. The concept is, not surprisingly, quite simple. The user has to be authorised to access the suite of screens (a procedure controlled by the Stores and Stock Clerk, Martin Sperring). Once allowed access it is simply a matter of selecting the Nominal, Project or Job code to which the user wishes to charge the items and then ordering (from a pick list) up to ten items per requisition. There is a simple procedure to ensure that all required fields are populated (quantity required for example must not be zero) and the user then updates a database. The update screen then displayed shows the unique stationery requisition number allocated to the transaction and the screen can be printed, if desired, as a paper copy of the order.

Stationery Store Requisition Entry Form

User Id	ftmw1	Requisition No	<i>Allocated upon update</i>		
Contact Name	<input type="text" value="FTM WILLSON"/>	Store Id	46		
Contact Ext No	<input type="text"/>	Requisition Date	30-03-2000		
Department	<input type="text" value="COMPUTING SERVICE"/>				

Enter either a Nominal, Project or Job Code

-----Nominal Code-----	-----Project-----	Job
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Material Description (followed by Unit of Issue)	Quantity
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

At the Store end the Storekeeper checks for new requisitions on a regular basis and prints them off as a “pick list” so that Stationery staff can visit the appropriate shelves and pack up the order. There is then a simple update procedure for the Storekeeper to make to show that the order has been completed. Issuing against the appropriate charge code is undertaken in the normal manner through the Finance System.

The major advantages of this approach are three-fold. Firstly, there is a significant reduction in paper chasing and internal postage - instant electronic delivery is guaranteed using the requisition screens. Secondly, the screens display all of the appropriate finance system codes and list of all the stock within the Stationery Store - the need for “interpretation” of handwriting is no more! Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, the user now has a way of tracking his/her stationery requisition. There is a “view screen” through which an authorised user can trace either individual orders of those input by a department and discover the status of the order. It might still be “pending” (entered by the user but no further action taken by the store), “partial” (some items have been dispatched but others awaiting delivery - the user can see actual numbers) or “completed” (all items that can be dispatched have been dispatched.) This puts control of the tracking process firmly in the hands of the user and frees up the Store staff to get on with dispatching.

The opening up of the system to more users is, as stated, a matter for DoFM to decide, following the pilot - early signs are that the pilot is running successfully thus far, so it’s a matter of “watch this space”

Handy Tips

Susanne Hodges and Joanne Casey

This page is devoted solely to (hopefully) helpful tips, focusing on Wordperfect and Web addresses related to IT. As before, the columns have been formatted for easy reference - so cut round them and stick them on your notice board!

WordPerfect Tips

Q: All of my symbols display as empty boxes, what should I do?

A: The fonts that hold the symbols sometimes seem to get lost. They are actually present on the PC but for some reason WordPerfect cannot find them. For a quick fix: exit from WordPerfect. Select **Start | Settings | Control Panel** and double click on **Fonts**. Wait for a few seconds for Windows 95 to refresh the list of fonts, or press **F5**. Check the list of fonts to ensure that some names begin with WP. If so, the symbols should be available. Restart WordPerfect.

The above is a quick tip only. If it does not work you could try resetting the application, which will actually copy and re-install the fonts to the PC, by selecting **Start | Programs | Utilities & Extras | Systems & Supported Utilities**. Click on **Reset Application**. From the pull down menu in the **Please Select the Application to Reinstall** dialog box, choose **Perfect 8**, then click **OK**.

In the unlikely event that neither of these tips work, visit <http://www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/help/wp/pages.sup/wp8/nosymbol.htm> for more detailed help with this problem.

Q: How do I save a WordPerfect document as a Word Document?

A: Once you have created your document choose **File|Save As**. Enter your Filename as usual but change the File Type to your chosen format, for example **MS Word for Windows 97**. Choose **Save**. The file will then be converted and saved with the extension ***.doc**.

Q: How do I sort my WordPerfect table into alphabetical order?

A: You can sort a table on any column, either alphabetically or numerically. Here I will show you how to sort a list of names typed in as, for example, Joe Bloggs, Scarlett O'Hara. Highlight the names to be sorted. Select **Tools | Sort**. The default setting is to sort according to the **First cell in a table row**, ie the forename, so choose **New** to open the **New Sort** dialogue box. The **Type (Alpha)** and **Sort Order (Ascending)** are correct. The sort will be on **Column 1** (the name) but **Word** should be set to **2** to sort on the second item, ie the surname. Amend the figure. Type in a **Sort description** name. Click **OK**. The name of your sort will be listed in the **Sort** dialogue box and will be highlighted, so click **Sort**. This sort will be available for other tables you create.

For further hints and tips on word processing, visit Computing Service web pages at: visit <http://www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/help/wp/>

Really useful IT related Web addresses

The Terena Guide to network resource tools: an indispensable guide to network tools and services for users of all levels of expertise:
<http://www.terena.nl/libr/gnrt/index>

Download software:
<http://tucows.cableinet.net/>

Virus resources:
<http://www.sophos.com/>
<http://kumite.com/myths/home.htm>

Whatis.com provides information on all those obscure technical terms:
<http://www.whatis.com>

Plus a listing of (apparently) every file format in the world:
<http://www.whatis.com/ff.htm>

For help with UNIX:
<http://unixhelp.ed.ac.uk/>

If you're interested in Web authoring, look at *The Barebones Guide to HTML*:
<http://werbach.com/barebones/>

Philip and Alex's Guide to Web Publishing:
<http://photo.net/wtr/thebook/>

If you would like to join the British Computer Society:
<http://www.bcs.org.uk>

And finally, if all else fails, try:
<http://www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/>

The June issue will contain handy tips for spreadsheets in Quattro Pro. If you have any handy tips that you would like to share or have any questions that you would like answered in that issue, please email sh32@york.ac.uk.

Computing Service Address

Computing Service	Telephone:	Switchboard (01904) 430000
University of York		Direct dialling (01904) 43 followed by ext no.
Heslington	Fax:	(01904) 433740
YORK YO10 5DD	Email:	<i>username@york.ac.uk</i>

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:

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>jj1</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>	Susanne Hodges	3839	<i>sh32</i>
Mike Brudenell	3811	<i>pmb1</i>	Paul Hodgson	4347	<i>ph25</i>
John Byrne	3812	<i>jcb1</i>	Geoff Houlton	2100	<i>gph2</i>
David Chambers	4347	<i>dac6</i>	Jenny Jackson	4455	<i>jj5</i>
Paul Conacher	4346	<i>pac1</i>	Bob Marriott	4454	<i>bdm2</i>
Michael Clark	3745	<i>mpc3</i>	John Marsden	3832	<i>jpm1</i>
Sue Dekker	3800	<i>spd2</i>	John Mason	3813	<i>jrm13</i>
Robert Demaine	3808	<i>rld1</i>	Darren Munday	3821	<i>dam6</i>
Steve Downes	3741	<i>sd21</i>	Colin Rea	3817	<i>cr9</i>
Debra Fayter	3839	<i>daf3</i>	Chris Reece	3807	<i>car7</i>
Ken Finch	4452	<i>kf1</i>	John Robinson	3833	<i>jsr1</i>
Rob Fletcher	3816	<i>rpf1</i>	Sam Scott	3817	<i>svs2</i>
Kevin Gardner	3739	<i>pkg4</i>	Andrew Smith	3809	<i>abs4</i>
Chris Gowland	3823	<i>cg1</i>	Timothy Willson	2123	<i>ftmw1</i>
Peter Halls	3806	<i>pjh1</i>	Michael Woodhead	3825	<i>mw28</i>