University of Cambridge Computing Service Newsletter

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In this edition

See below for advice on the sending of bulk email, on guidelines for scanner use, and on the importance of backing up your work.

For information on how to use the University-wide email addressbook, see Mail, News and Information Services.

Many software applications are available free to members of the University; see below.

Students leaving the University this summer please see the article on cancellation of student accounts.

The Computing Service is launching a pilot Streaming Media Service; see Mail, News and Information Services

We are now able to offer extra technical support to small institutions within the University; see below.

The University telephone system is to be replaced; see below.

We are now able to offer TLS and SSL server security certificates free of charge for some purposes; see Mail, News and Information Services.

Lost: one thesis, nearly complete

The Hardware Support section of the Computing Service sees a regular flow of users with dead or partially-dead laptops. A number of these users report that the laptop contains their only copy of work in progress: thesis, paper or book. Some also report that the laptop has been showing signs of trouble for weeks or months, and it still has not occurred to them to make a backup copy of their work.

Could this be you?

With the advent of USB storage devices, backup is easier than it has ever been, and takes only a few mouse-clicks. Documents or data you are actively working on need to be copied to backup devices at least twice a day, depending how much time you can afford to lose having to reconstruct your changes from scratch. Backup devices need to be stored separately (i.e. not in a laptop case - laptops can be stolen). See leaflet G81: *CDs and other removable storage media* for advice on the different removable media you can use.

It is also possible to back up onto another computer system; many people use their PWF filespace as primary or secondary backup storage.

Use of CS teaching rooms and User Area

Following recent complaints about the behaviour of some users in Computing Service Teaching Rooms, the Service would like to remind all users of the following.

Antisocial behaviour including noise which disturbs other users is not acceptable in Computing Service public areas such as the Titan Teaching Rooms. Eating and drinking is prohibited in CS Rooms, particularly because of the risk of damage to equipment arising and the likely mess created.

Users are reminded that CS Rooms are covered by CCTV Security monitoring.

Small Institution Support Service

A new service has been launched to provide support for small institutions within the University which do not have access to their own Computer Officer, yet still have significant and sometimes complex requirements for IT services and support. Marcus Young has been appointed Small Institution Support Specialist within the

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Institution Strategy Team and started in the post on 1 March 2007.

The Small Institution Support Service offers the following services:

• Consultancy - this may include a review of current use of IT and recommendations for upgrades or new systems/services; expert advice on projects identified by the institution; implementation or managing the implementation of projects.

• Technical Support - for more complex problems which cannot be resolved via the UCS Help Desk and which may require a site visit or remote access to systems to resolve.

• Emergency Support - for institutions whose own IT support staff are unavailable owing to leave, illness or an interregnum.

Central funding means that this service is available free to small Council and non-School Institutions; for other institutions an hourly or daily charge will be made. For further information contact `small-inst-support@ ucs.cam.ac.uk`

New University telephone system

The current University Telephone Network (UTN) infrastructure dates from 1984 and the maintenance is due to expire in April 2009. At that time it will be imperative to have a replacement system operational.

Originally the University Telecommunications Office and latterly the University Computing Service (UCS) have been charged with procuring a replacement. The new system will be based on a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) solution, which uses the data network to carry voice calls digitally.

The replacement is a large and complex undertaking. Pilot schemes have been running for some time in the Computing Service and the Engineering Department. The system will be rolled out institution by institution over a two-year period starting early in 2008.

A significant goal of this project is to ensure minimal disruption to affected institutions and end users. It is expected that each new instrument will be installed and tested before the existing number is transferred from the old system.

For the end user with no special requirements, the change of technology will not make a great difference; phone numbers will generally be unchanged and the new handsets will operate in much the same way as the old, just plugging into a different wall socket. However, there may be a much wider range of add on services available including special feature phones, or alternatively 'softphones' running on a PC or laptop.

The new voicemail system promises several improvements such as email-delivered voicemails, web access to voicemail, and a variety of customizable controls. Future enhancements may include alternative forms of communication medium (e.g. video), and links to other institutions, organizations, or to public internet phone services to allow free or low-cost calls.

Further details, and links to an FAQ and discussion area on CamTools, can be found at `http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/voip/`. For any other information, please contact Jake Hornsby, `jdh51@cam.ac.uk`

Coordinated bulk purchase of Windows/ Linux hardware

As reported earlier, the University Computing Service (UCS), the IT Purchasing Group and the Central Purchasing Office (CPO) are again working this year on a tender for the supply of desktop PCs to the University. The evaluation of tendered machines took place in April, and the tender should be awarded at the end of May with the tender agreement itself starting in the first 2 weeks of June.

Details of the current bulk purchase deal are at `http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/cam-only/offices/purchasing/groups/it/deals/hardware/current.html` and details

of the new deal will also be published on those pages.

The current deal will remain in place for a few weeks to overlap with any new deal, or if the same suppliers are selected again will continue without interruption.

Power failures

On 24 January a complete external power failure to both the New Museums and Downing sites from 8.20 am to 5.15 pm resulted in public facilities on those sites being unavailable. All UCS courses on the New Museums Site had to be cancelled. Computing Service major systems (network, Hermes, webserver, and so on) were protected by the UPS system, backed up by a diesel generator. There was some disruption to service on Hermes caused by a few of its servers being plugged into the mains instead of the UPS, which was soon corrected. Some sites served from the Downing site CUDN router suffered some disruption later in the day when its local UPS battery was exhausted.

A second power failure to both sites occurred on 2 March, from midday to early evening; again, major services were maintained but local facilities on both sites were disrupted.

The Computing Service regrets the inconvenience caused to users.

Copyright and scanners

The University policy on copying and scanning has recently been updated to bring the rules for scanners into line with those for photocopiers. The new policy will be published shortly.

The new policy allows UCS scanners in public rooms to be used by University staff and students under the following conditions:

* for material for which the user is the copyright owner.
* for copyright material for which the copyright owner has granted express written permission to copy, or copying is permitted under statute.
* for material for which it is reasonable to assume that copyright has expired, e.g. generally, for published literary works, copyright expires 70 years after the end of the calendar year of the author's death..
* by designated people as defined by the University's Copyright Compliance Notice: Photocopying and Scanning, scanning material within the terms of that agreement.

If you use the scanner outside these conditions you are breaking UK copyright law.

Videoconferencing News

The UCS videoconferencing suite now includes the following equipment:

* Studio-based Tandberg 6000 hardware codec with screens, projector, document camera, video recorder.

* Portable Tandberg MXP hardware codec for use in Babbage Lecture Theatre or for hiring out to Departments or Colleges.

* Apple Mac with iChat, Skype and MSN Messenger for use in the studio.

* Windows PC with Skype, MSN Messenger and Netmeeting for use in the studio.

For more details of the videoconferencing service see `http://www-tus.csx.cam.ac.uk/videoconf/`

General News

Are you paying too much for software?

It sometimes happens that members of the University pay the commercial rate for software when they need not do so, because the University has negotiated site licences which would cover what they require. This article lists some of the applications which are free to institutions or individuals in the University, and describes some other sources of free or very low-priced software. Note that if you need a particular application which would cost money to obtain for your own machine, you may well be able to use it free of charge on the PWF (see `http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/pwf/software.html`). In the case of Linux applications, you can do this remotely, from your own machine in your Department or College.

Software which is generally free

There is a lot of good free software available on the Internet. The UK Mirror site, which used to be the recommended place to look, is being discontinued at the end of July, but the following are good sites for browsing for free software:

- `http://www-uxsup.csx.cam.ac.uk/nfs-server/` for Unix related software (requests for additional software will be considered)
- `http://www.freesoftware4all.co.uk/` for all platforms
- `http://www.tucows.com/` for all platforms
- `http://www.freemacware.com/` for Macintosh software
- `http://www.mirrorservice.org/` which was formerly the JISC mirror service until 2004, and is now hosted by the University of Kent.

Some particular applications which may be of general interest in the University are:

- **PuTTY** (free Windows Telnet/ssh client for logging into remote systems); obtainable from `http://www.chiark.greenend.org.uk/~sgtatham/putty/download.html`
- **Firefox** (web browser for Windows, Mac and Linux, with many useful add-ons), from `http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/`
- **Thunderbird** (email and News client for Windows, Mac and Linux) from `http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/thunderbird/`
- **Acrobat Reader** (for reading PDF files); comes bundled with many systems but can be downloaded from `http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html`
- **OpenOffice** (office suite for Windows, Mac and Linux), from `http://www.openoffice.org/`
- **Neo-office** (office suite for Macs), from `http://neooffice.org/`
- **Stuffit Expander** (for expanding/decoding compressed files, for Windows and Mac) from `http://www.stuffit.com/`; see also the list of site-licensed software, below.
- **Cygwin** (a Linux-like environment for Windows, giving access to a wide range of applications), from `http://www-uxsup.csx.cam.ac.uk/pub/windows/cygwin/`
- **WinSCP** (file transfer client for Windows) from `http://winscp.net/eng/`
- **7.zip** (file compression utility for Windows) from `http://www.7-zip.org/`
- **TeX and LaTeX** (mathematical typesetting, all platforms but see next section for Macs) from `http://www.tex.ac.uk/`

Site-licensed software, free to the end user

Site licences vary in detail, and in whether they are free only to individuals for personal use, or only to institutions, or both. Note that if an item of software is site licensed to an Institution or the University, you must obtain a copy of the software from the person or group holding the site licence. You cannot simply download a copy by searching the internet and assuming that you are licensed to use it.

Generally, however, the following are free to members of the University (you will usually need to collect a licence key, as described on the pages listed below, and if you need a CD there will usually be a small charge):

- **Anti-virus software** for Windows and Macintosh; see `http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/virus/`
- **Stuffit8** (compression software) for Windows: see `http://www-tus.csx.cam.ac.uk/pc_support/stuffit.html`
- **Mulberry** (Mail User Agent) for Windows and Macintosh; see `http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/docs/faq/e22.html`
- **Fetch** (file transfer client, SFTP and FTP, for Macintosh); see `http://www-tus.csx.cam.ac.uk/mac_support/`
- **Fruit Menu** (to customise the Apple menu under OS X); see `http://www-tus.csx.cam.ac.uk/mac_support/`
- **URL Manager Pro** for Macintosh; see `http://www-tus.csx.cam.ac.uk/mac_support/`
- **Oracle** (database software, not for home use); see `http://www-uxsup.csx.cam.ac.uk/software/oracle/`
- **CorelDraw** and other Corel products; see the Computing Service Sales catalogue, via `http://www-sales.csx.cam.ac.uk/`
- **NaG** libraries: see the Computing Service Sales catalogue, via `http://www-sales.csx.cam.ac.uk/`

- **OzTeX** (TeX for Mac; the University has a shareware licence), from `http://tug.ctan.org/tex-archive/nonfree/systems/mac/oztex/`
- **Genstat** (statistical software); see the Computing Service Sales catalogue, via `http://www-sales.csx.cam.ac.uk/`
- **VMWare player** (for Windows and Linux; allows multiple virtual machines, with heterogeneous operating systems to run side-by-side on the same physical machine); the licence is not relevant to free-standing machines but permits VMware to be installed on a managed machine without the explicit agreement of the end user. Available from `http://www-uxsup.csx.cam.ac.uk/software/vmware/`

Nearly-free software

The sites listed above for free software are also good sources for shareware (which you can typically use free for a short period but are then asked to contribute towards costs).

Are you paying too little for software?

The attention of all users is drawn to the University's Software Policy at `http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/sales/softwarepol.html`

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Cancellation of student accounts

This notice is addressed to all students expected to complete their studies this summer, and describes the timetable for cancelling student accounts. Students believed to be continuing to a further course are excluded; however, the data we collect is inevitably incomplete, particularly concerning certain one-year courses. See below for what to do if you are on the cancellation list and should not be.

Students cannot keep their University computing accounts after the cancellation date below; the University's email forwarding service for alumni, set up jointly by the Development Office and Management Information Services Division, may be of interest. See `http://cantab.net/` for details.

Students affected

Cancellation date 16 July 2007:

- third and fourth year undergraduates, unless they are known to be following longer courses (e.g. clinical medicine and veterinary medicine, MML, MEng, MSci and some Oriental Studies students), or known to hold a conditional or unconditional offer of a postgraduate place in Cambridge.
- affiliated students completing their second year (entered the University in 2005)
- LLM and Part III Mathematics students
- final year clinical veterinary medicine students
- single term and single year students who have completed their Cambridge course

Cancellation date 20 August 2007:

- students following one-year postgraduate courses scheduled to be completed by 31 July. This includes a number of MPhil courses and all Diploma courses.
- fourth year MET students
- PGCE students

MPhil and one year students following later-finishing courses will be cancelled at a later date in the Michaelmas term.

On or shortly after the dates shown, all computing accounts belonging to students in the categories mentioned above will be cancelled on the PWF, Hermes, CUS, CUDN Dial-up service (Magpie), VPDN, Raven and Pelican. The students concerned will be notified by email to their `@cam` addresses during May 2007. Those who have applied to continue to a further degree will receive a message confirming that we are aware of their application and that accounts will not be cancelled, as long as the application is live at the cancellation date.

Before you leave

If you are not intending to return to Cambridge next year, please clear your filespace(s) before the dates given above, first ensuring that you have copies of any files you want to keep. Also, if you have subscribed to any mailing lists, please remember to cancel the subscription before you leave.

If you will have another email address after you leave the University (for instance the cantab.net forwarding service for alumni), you are advised to set up your new account and notify your regular correspondents of your change of address soon. You may forward mail from your Cambridge account to your new account, but this will only work until the Cambridge account is cancelled. It is regretted that mail cannot be forwarded after accounts are closed. See `http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/docs/backup.html` for how to make copies of your data to take away.

University Society computing resources

Please remember to arrange to transfer ownership of any society resources to the person who will be looking after them in the next academic year. See `http://www.cam.ac.uk/societies/socinfo/` for instructions.

Information for alumni

The following has been received from the University Development Office:

To make sure that you receive CAM, the

University's alumni magazine, when you leave Cambridge please visit `http://www.foundation.cam.ac.uk/` and register your details. You will also find information on the Alumni Travel Programme, the Alumni Weekend and other benefits available to alumni on the web site.

If you are staying in Cambridge

If you are going to be away during the summer vacation, please unsubscribe or suspend mail from mailing lists; see Information Sheet IS12: *Hermes Email: Forwarding (redirection) and vacation messages* (or IS31 if you are a CUS mail user). You may also like to consult IS13: *Reading and sending email when away from Cambridge*, and see `http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/away/` which describes actions you should consider taking before you leave Cambridge for the summer.

If you expect to return to the University in October but are not on our list of continuing students (and therefore receive a message warning you about cancellation), then when you receive the message about cancellation, please fill in the web form at the appropriate page:

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If you have not yet finished your degree: `http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/request/contstud.html`

If you are returning to the University for further study: `http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/request/newpg.html`

If you are joining the University or a College as a member of staff: `http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/request/stud2staff.html`

Seventy years ago

From the University Reporter of 23 February 1937:

> The following Graces passed the Regent House:
>
> ... 2. That the recommendation contained in the Report of the General Board, dated 2 December 1936, on the establishment of a Computing Laboratory be approved.

Help Desk News

The following table shows the number of calls completed by the Help Desk, together with other parts of the Computing Service, in December 2006 to February 2007. The second shows the number of calls received that could not be answered as they concerned systems not supported by the Help Desk; those calls were referred to local support staff.

Month	Calls	Not supported
December	406	0
January 07	594	5
February	540	2

The Help Desk Frequently Asked Questions can be found at `http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/docs/faqslist.html`

The latest FAQs added to the list or updated are

Y1 Which computer should I buy for Dragon NaturallySpeaking?
Y2 How long does it take to train Dragon NaturallySpeaking to understand my voice?
Y3 Do I need to re-train Dragon NaturallySpeaking v8 if I have upgraded my hardware or software?
Y4 How can I export or copy user's voice files from Dragon NaturallySpeaking v8?
Y5 How can I improve my recognition accuracy with Dragon NaturallySpeaking v8?
E51 Why am I receiving spam that is not addressed to me?
E7 What is junk mail and what can I do about it?
U2 Should I use PCGuard on my VirginMedia broadband connection?

Mail, News and Information Services

University-wide addressbook service

One of the features of the University Lookup service, launched last year, is that you can use it within your mail program, or with Hermes Webmail, in just the same way as your personal addressbook. This service (LDAP), gives you easy access to the email address of anybody in the University and Colleges, staff or student, unless they have chosen to suppress this information.

For example, to use this feature in Hermes Webmail:

- Select Addressbook and type in the surname of the person you are looking for
- Select Search Directory
- You will be given a list of entries matching the name
- Either select Compose opposite an entry if you want to start composing a message to that address
- Or select Add to add that person permanently to your personal addressbook.

Alternatively, you can select Addressbook and search the directory after you have started to compose your message; you will be given the option of adding the person you have found to the To: or Cc: or Bcc: list for the draft message.

To use this feature within a mail program such as Outlook, Thunderbird, Apple Mail etc., you need to make a simple configuration change to your program so that it knows where to find the directory. Directions for doing this can be found at `http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/email/ldapsettings.html`

Note that this service for mail client programs is only available from within Cambridge (within the cam domain), whereas Hermes Webmail can access the directory wherever you are working from.

Bulk email - think before you send

The University, the Computing Service, and individual Departments or Colleges, frequently receive requests for unsolicited email to be sent (often inappropriately) to all members or all students and staff. Individuals also sometimes send unsolicited email to large numbers of University addresses.

Although it is very useful to have some large mailing lists, for instance of students and staff within a College or Department, sending bulk email of this sort can easily be counterproductive. Recipients may simply start to ignore everything that comes from a particular source, or may put a block on mail from the sender or even on all mail from the sending institution.

A particularly counterproductive form of mass mail is messages with bulky attachments. These could often equally well be sent as plain text, if they need to be sent at all, or a brief message sent referring recipients to a website for the material.

The IT Syndicate has promulgated some guidelines on bulk email, which include more useful advice. See `http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/itsyndicate/otherguidelines/bulkemail.html`

There is an email preference service (similar to the Telephone Preference Service and Mail Preference Service) run by the Direct Marketing Association at `http://www.dmaconsumers.org/emps.html` Use of this may help to cut down the bulk mail you receive from legitimate UK businesses. It will not generally protect against inappropriate bulk mailing within the University, nor against the majority of spam which is foreign or criminal in origin.

Mail, News and Information Services

Secure access to Hermes - the end of the story

In the last Newsletter, we reported: "there are still a few non-Hermes users sending email via `smtp.hermes.cam.ac.uk` which we hope to clear up in the next few weeks". We set a deadline of the end of the Lent Term for this process, and this has now passed. All access to all parts of Hermes is now securely authenticated.

Thanks again to everyone for your help with this long and hard effort - we made the decision to embark on this process over two years ago, and it is finally over!

Size limits on Hermes

Until recently there was a size limit of 250 Mb on each mailbox in a Hermes account, as well as an overall quota for the whole account. The per-mailbox limit was abolished at the beginning of April since it tended to cause problems for people with a larger-than-standard quota. The per-mailbox limit was a hangover from the original Hermes system where it was needed to avoid performance problems.

The other Hermes limits continue to apply: an overall quota for all mailboxes for a given user, initially set at 250 Mb, and a limit of 25 Mb on the size of individual messages (incoming or outgoing).

You can apply for an increase in your Hermes mailstore quota at `http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/request/quota.html`; the limit on the size of individual messages, however, cannot be changed for individual users.

Server security certificates

For the past four years the Computing Service has supplied globally recognised TLS and SSL server certificates for computers in the University under an arrangement with Thawte, a well-known global certification authority. There is a cost associated with these certificates which the Computing Service recharges on a cost recovery basis.

We are now able to also supply certificates from GlobalSign via an arrangement with TERENA and the JANET Server Certificate Service (`http://www.ja.net/services/scs.html`). The significant advantage of these certificates is that the cost of providing them is absorbed by JANET and the Computing Service and as a result they are currently issued at no charge. However they may not be used to protect the exchange of financial data, for example credit card transactions, and for this purpose the at-cost Thawte certificates remain the most cost-effective option and will remain available.

To support the new certificates, the process by which the Computing Service accepts requests for all server certificates has been revised. This is now an on-line process using Raven authentication - the only exception being that paper purchase orders are still required to authorise payment for Thawte certificates.

These certificates are most often needed for web servers that wish to implement the secure form of HTTP (normally called HTTPS), but they can also be used to secure other protocols such as SMTP, IMAP, POP, NNTP, LDAP, etc. Certificates issued under both schemes are acceptable to, and are compatible with, the vast majority of browsers and other client programs.

Further details of the two schemes, including instructions on the new application process, are available at `http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/tlscerts/` Enquiries should be addressed to `tlscerts@ucs.cam.ac.uk`

Mail, News and Information Services

Changes to web search

The University's central web search engine (`web-search.cam.ac.uk`) was upgraded to the latest version (5.7.0) of the Ultraseek search software in January.

The visible changes resulting from the upgrade were minor. However, that software upgrade also permitted the change, planned earlier, to the use of Google-like "all terms" matching. That change was made in late February. A search for "turkey buzzard" will now bring up only pages containing both words (not necessarily consecutive, unless the phrase is enclosed in quotes), rather than as before giving all pages containing either word.

It is hoped that this change will generally improve the searching process; it is possible to overrule it for any particular search.

See `http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/web-search/recent-changes.html` for more detailed information about the change to "all terms" matching.

UK Mirror Service to close

A Mirror Service funded by the JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) has existed in the UK since 1999, providing an essential component of an integrated national system for the delivery of networked content, including open source software. By providing free local access to copies of these mostly high-demand resources which exist on other, remote sites, the service has delivered enormous savings to the UK education community in terms of time and money saved, greater efficiency and reliability and better performance.

However, with the massive increase in network bandwidth provision and as the education community has taken up, through the example of the national service itself, its own mirroring activities, the need for a funded national service has steadily

diminished. JISC has therefore decided to cease funding for its Mirror Service which means that the service will close on the 31st July 2007.

For more information see `http://www.mirror.ac.uk/`

The old mirroring service, funded by JISC until 2004 and now hosted at the University of Kent, is still being maintained and can be found at `http://www.mirrorservice.org`. It contains most of the same material as the current JISC service.

The Computing Service also provides a mirror, mainly for Unix software, at `http://www-uxsup.csx.cam.ac.uk/nfs-server/`.

Streaming media service

The Computing Service has been developing a Streaming Media Service, which will shortly enter its pilot phase.

The service offers institutions the ability to upload potentially large audio/video files, which will then be compressed into several different formats and then made available for anyone in the world to stream or download them to their computer to view/listen to the content provided. It is intended to offer a wide range of possible formats to improve the chances of the target audience being able to view the content provided. These will include Windows Media, Quicktime and Real formats.

In addition it is intended that much of the provided content will be copied into DSpace `http://www.dspace.cam.ac.uk/` for long term archiving.

The pilot phase is expected to last approximately a year before it becomes a fully supported service. In the meantime you are encouraged to experiment with the current system and come up with suggestions for how it could be improved.

For more information please visit `http://sms.csx.cam.ac.uk/` or email us at `sms-support@ucs.cam.ac.uk`

PWF software for next academic year

The period for requests for new application software for the PWF for next academic year closed at the end of the Lent Term (see previous Newsletter). The list of software which the Computing Service plans to make available for the start of the Michaelmas Term will be announced on the Computing Service web page `http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/pwf/upgrades.html` by the division of the Easter Term.

The programme of installation of the new software will need to start immediately after the end of Full Easter Term, in order that it can be completed on time. Those teaching during the Long Vacation should note that the installation of new versions of PWF software during that period may have implications for them.

The full set of applications for 2007-08 is intended to be available from Monday 3 September; this time-scale will enable those whose teaching depends on these applications to check that they work correctly, update course notes and allow for any necessary remedial action to be taken before the start of the Michaelmas Term.

The PWF Windows PCs will continue to run Windows XP; the move to Windows Vista will not be before summer 2008.

File transfer to and from the PWF

For some years the recommended method of file transfer to and from the PWF has been via secure file transfer (SFTP). The Computing Service now plans to withdraw the "plain" insecure FTP service at `home.pwf.cam.ac.uk` (for personal filespaces) and `shared.pwf.cam.ac.uk` (for University Society filespaces). As a consequence, connections via a web browser using the FTP protocol (`ftp://home.pwf.cam.ac.uk`) will also cease to work. The

service will be withdrawn from the end of July unless good reasons are put forward for retaining it. Users who anticipate problems should contact `pwf-manager@ucs.cam.ac.uk`.

To use secure transfer to and from your personal filespace, connect using an SFTP client to `sftp.pwf.cam.ac.uk`. To access society and group filespaces by this mechanism, connect first to your home filespace and then navigate to `/ux/groups`. See `http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/filetransfer/` for more information about using SFTP. See also `http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/pwf/fsaccess.html` for other methods of accessing your PWF filespace from a non-PWF system.

The use of an FTP client on the PWF itself, to make outgoing connections, is unaffected.

PWF Condor

In Newsletter 228 we reported that the PWF Condor service (a system for running jobs on idle workstations) was being successfully used by University researchers. Since that time the number of researchers successfully using the service has significantly increased, as has the number of workstations being used by the PWF Condor service.

In just over one year from 7 April 2006 to 16 April 2007, the PWF Condor service provided about 72.2 years of compute time on PWF workstations, and ran about 248,000 jobs. At present there are about 400 PWF PCs that may run PWF Condor jobs, and the number will shortly increase by about 30 as another Departmental Managed Cluster joins the scheme.

During the above period the PWF Condor service was used by a total of 14 researchers from the Departments of Chemistry, Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics, Physics, Plant Sciences, Veterinary Medicine and Physiology, Development and Neuroscience, as well as the Computer Laboratory. One of these researchers, Sebastian Fallert of the Amorphous Materials Group in the Department of Chemistry, explains why

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the PWF Condor service is so useful to his research group:

> Our research is concerned with the simulation of stochastic spreading processes on lattices and complex networks. Usually no exact closed form solution can be found making extensive Monte Carlo simulation an essential technique in their study. PWF Condor is a powerful tool for us as it allows running hundreds of suitably packaged jobs for parameter sweeps every night which would otherwise take several days to complete.

> Without a doubt, our research could not proceed at the pace it does without PWF Condor.

Other University researchers who wish to make use of this service should contact Bruce Beckles (`condor-support@ucs.cam.ac.uk`), as should any other Departments or Colleges who would like to run Condor on their Managed Cluster. Current and prospective users of the PWF Condor service may be interested in the new CS course "Condor Distributed Task Scheduler: Submitting Jobs" on 2 July, which introduces the PWF Condor service and explains how to tailor computationally intensive jobs so that they are suitable for this service. Details and booking for this course are available at `http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/courses/` in the usual way (note that bookings for this course cannot be taken until June).

CUS closure

Users are reminded that, as announced in previous Newsletters, the Central Unix Service will close down on 1 October 2008. The intention is that the majority of the functions of the CUS should be consolidated into other services, including an enhanced PWF Linux service.

The closedown schedule will be as follows:

- 1 October 2007: no more new CUS accounts will be created
- 1 October 2008: CUS will be closed down. Email addressed to `CRSid@cus.cam.ac.uk` will be redirected to `CRSid@cam.ac.uk`, and web requests to `http://www.cus.cam.ac.uk/~CRSid/` will be redirected to `http://people.pwf.cam.ac.uk/CRSid/`
- 1 October 2010: mail and web forwarding will cease.

It is expected that very few people will need to open new CUS accounts from now on, but there may be special cases such as someone joining a research group with a heavy existing commitment to CUS. Anyone wishing to open a new CUS account should contact `ids@ucs.cam.ac.uk` stating their case.

Advice on migrating from CUS has been published at `http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/unix/cusmigration.html` and includes sections on

- Mail
- Files and filenames
- File permissions
- Personal web pages
- Unix systems and utilities
- Applications

Closure of Pelican

The Pelican archive service became read-only on 2nd January 2007. All routes by which data may be uploaded to Pelican have been blocked.

Pelican will close altogether at the beginning of 2008. Please be sure to retrieve any files you need before the end of 2007.

If you have finished with your Pelican filespace and are happy for it to be cancelled, please send a message to `ids@ucs.cam.ac.uk` asking for cancellation.

For further information, see `http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/instadmin/pelicanend.html`

Sales News

Performance Figures

Percentage of orders completed, in working days:

	< 5	5-10	10-15	15-20	>20
January	98.2%	0.9%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%
February	99.1%	0.6%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%

Products now available

Adobe Captivate 2 / Windows
Adobe Contribute 4 / Windows & MacOS X
Apple OS Maintenance Programme (for a limited time only - conditions apply)
ESRI ArcGIS 9.2 / Windows & UNIX
FileMaker Pro Advanced 8.5 / Windows & MacOS X
Hummingbird eXceed 2007 / Windows
Microsoft Office Enterprise 2007 / Windows

Microsoft Office Professional Plus 2007 / Windows
Microsoft Office Standard 2007 / Windows
Microsoft Project 2007 / Windows
Microsoft Visio Pro 2007 / Windows
Microsoft Windows Vista - Business Edition (Upgrade only)
Microsoft Windows Vista - Enterprise Edition (Upgrade only)

Products available shortly

Adobe Creative Suite CS3 Products / Windows & MacOS X
Adobe Encore 2 / Windows
Adobe Photoshop Elements 5.0 / Windows
ERDAS (Leica Geosystems) Imagine 9.1 / Windows & UNIX

Progress Reports

The Progress Reports made by the Computing Service to the IT Syndicate in January and February 2007 included the following items not covered elsewhere in this or earlier Newsletters:

Unix Systems

The migration of the email lists to the new mailman system continues apace with over 2,000 lists migrated. As this number rises the remainder are increasingly composed of moribund mailing lists which are likely to be allowed to die.

The spam problem continues to grow and an increasingly aggressive stance is being adopted by the Service on its mail systems receiving email from outside Cambridge. The latest changes in timeouts, designed to prevent mail being sent by hacked domestic computers (typically running Windows insecurely), have required changes in the Exim mail system so that they can still be logged. The principal author of Exim is a member of the Service staff and so was able to add this functionality very quickly.

A DSpace developer has been recruited and has started work. The mirrored capacity of DSpace has grown to 20TB.

The first phase of our Shibboleth project is complete. A test Identity Provider has been built and configured. The University is now part of the UK Access Management Federation and is one of the first UK Universities to join. The initial publicity and demonstrations are under way. Work is now starting on phase 2, the evaluation and planning of the production service.

New mailstore machines have been purchased using Project Capital 4 funds to replace the existing hardware which is now 4 years old. Once commissioned this new hardware should allow for increased disk quotas on Hermes.

The Scientific Computing series of courses has continued and been further extended. One instance of a course has been given in the Chemistry department for an audience of Chemistry PhD students and Post-Docs in a very successful trial. Changes and additions to the set of courses are currently being planned for next academic year.

The University's primary name servers have been moved to more powerful hardware.

There has also been considerable behind-the-scenes development of the next generations of the lookup service and managed web service.

Progress Reports

Network and Small Systems

Lapwing rollout continues: over 40 wireless access points are now providing service in eleven hotspot areas. Technology for making a large collection of access points more manageable is being investigated.

Plans for a CUDN upgrade program are progressing, with particular emphasis on diverse routing to client sites and other requirements for supporting voice-over-IP.

On 2 February, the CUDN's connection to JANET was moved onto new (SuperJANET-5) infrastructure.

Discussions are underway with potential suppliers of replacement equipment for the PWF filestore and with consultants who may assist with procurement and installation.

The use of IP based protocols, instead of Novell's IPX, for communication with the PWF core servers has been enabled for all PWF clusters. This will come into full use for all PWF Windows stations with the April image rollout.

The PWF eCredit facility, offering online payment for PWF common balance print credit by debit and credit cards, continues to be successful. By early January, it had been used by 644 users for 984 transactions totalling more than £6,300 since its release in August.

The phased transfer from legacy Netware print queues to secure NDPS print objects, which started in June 2006, was completed over the Christmas vacation.

Preparations for testing the next release of Novell's Open Enterprise Server based on Linux instead of NetWare are in progress.

Technical User Support

Hardware Support continued to be busy with a large number of repairs, especially during the run-up to the Christmas holidays. Most of the work involved equipment belonging to departments and colleges, as opposed to student owned machines. Laptops, both PC and Apple, belonging to staff and students are increasing in numbers and present an ever-rising workload for the group

Michaelmas has always been the busiest term on the course front but this year there was an all-time record number of attendances: 1752, 40% up on Michaelmas 2005. The fortnight of Thinking Skills Assessment sittings using central Computing Service facilities in December went smoothly.

In early February the decision was made centrally to use the HEFCE Data Collection System (DCS) directly for the RAE submission, rather than input data via the DCS being developed in the Computing Service. This was primarily because the HEFCE system was delivered in a timely manner and was considered to meet the University's needs. Data will be exported from HEFCE to the University's system because HEFCE itself offers no backup/restore facility to individual sites. The University's own system can then act as a longer-term repository for the data after the University is locked out of HEFCE's system following RAE submission. The development of the University's system is ahead of schedule and should be available in advance of the planned release date of 20 March.

User Services

There were 18 instances of copyright infringements in December and a small number of security related incidents.

January saw the highest number of security incidents for some time: 81 security incidents and 31 copyright infringements. The security incidents were mostly the result of worms spreading within the domain. Prompt action by IT staff in the relevant institutions soon had the problem machines off the network and under control. One outbreak was on a Sunday and so a number of machines were disconnected by the UCS in order to limit the damage done by the worm.

The number of copyright infringements is a concern. It is believed that the rise is due to improved detection methods by the agencies acting for copyright holders rather than any change in practices amongst users. The CERT team acts promptly to ensure disconnection of the offending machine and normally reports back to the complainant within the day. The UCS continues to support the IT Syndicate policy of disconnection if no response is received from the institution.

Documentation and Courses

Leaflets

The following leaflets have been updated since the last Newsletter:

G25   Managed Mail Domains
G26   Managed web server
G56   Making a Virtual Private Dial-up Network (VPDN) Connection to the CUDN with Windows Vista
G63   How to use the University Web proxy and cache
IS24   Information for New Users - Using Windows XP on the PWF
IS26   Information For New Users - Printing from Windows XP on the PWF PCs
IS45   The Lapwing wireless service
M495   Using the Macintoshes on the PWF
M596   Using Windows XP on the PWF
M605   Using Linux on the PWF

Courses

Computing Service courses are free to current members of staff and students of the University. All details are available at `http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/courses/` There is also an additional software training programme for departmental support staff, administered by the Staff Development Office - see `http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/personnel/staffdev/computing/` for details.

The most convenient way to register for Computing Service courses is to complete the booking form on the Web at `http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/courses/` Apart from being more efficient to process, an advantage to using this method of booking is that it is possible to check the availability of places. If it is not possible to book via the Web, please email `course-admin@ucs.cam.ac.uk`, ring (3)34662 or come to Computing Service Reception.

If necessary, please cancel your booking, preferably via the Web or else by email or phone, giving as much notice as possible. This is important as it enables the place to be allocated to someone else, and avoids waste of resources.

Additions to the Training Programme

We are pleased to offer the following new/ updated courses in the Scientific Computing series in the Easter and Long Vacation Terms 2007:

Condor Distributed Task Scheduler: Submitting Jobs (2 July)
Unix Systems: Shell Scripting for Scientists (revised/renamed) (12-14 June)
Unix Systems: Shell Scripting Recipes (26 June)
Unix Systems: Shell Scripting Workshop (2 May)
Writing Better Programs: Program Design (5 June))
Programming: How to Help Programs Debug Themselves (21 June)
Writing Better Programs: Test-First Programs and Unit Tests (9 July)
Programming: Converting Old to Modern Fortran (31 May - 1 June)
Programming: Decoding and Converting Variant and Old Fortran (7 June)

Details of these and all other Computing Service courses are on the website `http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/courses/` Please register online (note that course bookings for July courses cannot be taken until June).

Additions to the Library of Self-Instruction Courseware

There have been additions to the library of self-teach courseware, including DVDs on the Apple multimedia products Garageband, iDVD, iMovie and Logic.

Contact points

Director of the Computing Service	`Director@ucs.cam.ac.uk (334703)`
Course Bookings	`Course-Admin@ucs.cam.ac.uk (334662)`
Disc conversion and recovery	`Sales@ucs.cam.ac.uk (334695)`
DNS Registrations	`Hostmaster@ucs.cam.ac.uk`
Data Protection Act (DPA) registration	`Help-Desk@ucs.cam.ac.uk(334681)`
Documentation	`Documentation@ucs.cam.ac.uk`
Electronic Mail Administration	`Mail-Support@ucs.cam.ac.uk`
Electronic Mail Information	
(addressing problems)	`Postmaster@ucs.cam.ac.uk`
Hardware Support	`Hardware-Support@ucs.cam.ac.uk (334610)`
Help Desk	`Help-Desk@ucs.cam.ac.uk(334681)`
Information Service (World Wide Web)	`Webmaster@ucs.cam.ac.uk`
Institution Liaison	`Institution-Liaison@ucs.cam.ac.uk (336060)`
IP Registration	`IP-Register@ucs.cam.ac.uk`
Macintosh Support	`Mac-Support@ucs.cam.ac.uk`
Managed Web server	`webserver-admin@ucs.cam.ac.uk`
Macintosh Support	`Mac-Support@ucs.cam.ac.uk`
MIMAS national dataset service	`Joe.Gluza@ucs.cam.ac.uk (334701)`
Network Support	`Network-Support@ucs.cam.ac.uk`
Network faults	`331899`
Newsletter editor	`Newsletter-editor@ucs.cam.ac.uk`
Newsletter notification of new issues	`Newsletter-circ@ucs.cam.ac.uk`
Operations Staff	`Operator@ucs.cam.ac.uk`
Photographic and Illustration Service	`pandis@ucs.cam.ac.uk (334390)`
Reception	`Reception@ucs.cam.ac.uk (334600)`
Sales	`Sales@ucs.cam.ac.uk (334695)`
Secretarial Staff	`Secretary@ucs.cam.ac.uk`
Security reports	`cert@cam.ac.uk`
Sidgwick Computing Facility	`335029`
Speech-assisted computing	`voice-support@ucs.cam.ac.uk`
TCP/IP network address allocation	`IP-Register@ucs.cam.ac.uk`
Unix Support	`Unix-Support@ucs.cam.ac.uk (334728)`
Usenet News Administration	`Newsmaster@ucs.cam.ac.uk`
User Administration	`User-Admin@ucs.cam.ac.uk (334680)`
User Library	`User-Librarian@ucs.cam.ac.uk`
Web Support	`web-support@ucs.cam.ac.uk`
Windows Support	`NT-Support@ucs.cam.ac.uk`
WWW server administration	`Webmaster@ucs.cam.ac.uk`
Suggestions and announcements	`Usenet Newsgroups ucam.comp-serv.announce,` `ucam.comp-serv.suggest,` `ucam.cus.suggest,` `ucam.pwf.suggest`

This newsletter, and back issues, are available on the World Wide Web (including a PDF copy for printing) at URL `http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/newsletter/`. If you wish to be notified by email when a new Newsletter is published, send email to `newsletter-circ@ucs.cam.ac.uk`, giving your name and the email address to which you want notification to be sent.