



University of Cambridge Computing Service Newsletter

Number 233
July 2007

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Sales News

Progress Reports

Documentation and Courses

University of Cambridge
Computing Service
New Museums Site
Pembroke Street
Cambridge
CB2 3QH

tel: 01223 334600
fax: 01223 334679

Price £1 where sold

Diary

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Thursday 2 August | Help Desk closed from 12.30 (Reception open) |
| Monday 20 August | Cancellation of accounts for some postgraduate courses |
| Monday 1 October | No more new CUS accounts |
| 1 January 2008 | Pelican closes down |
| 1 October 2008 | CUS closes down |

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In this edition

See below for links to the Report and Discussion on *the supervision of the University's information strategy and information communication and technology services and systems*.

Users of CUS are reminded that they should be planning now for the migration of their work before CUS closes down at the end of September 2008; see Central Services News.

Visitors to the University can now use Lapwing; see below.

Those responsible for purchasing new computing hardware may be interested in the University's coordinated bulk purchase of Windows/Linux hardware, and also in advice on Vista licensing issues for machines to be imaged in bulk.

The Streaming Media Service pilot is now under way; see Mail, News and Information Services.

The Small Institution Support service can now provide some limited support for institutions with lone Computer Officers when these are ill or on holiday; see below.

See Network News for reports on network outages in June.

VPDN users will be notified in September of a change to the shared key needed to use the service; see below.

Information strategy in the University

Anyone involved in the provision of computing or information services within the University might be interested in proposals to revise how policy and strategy are managed.

A Joint Report of the Council and the General Board on the supervision of the University's information strategy and information communication and technology services and systems has been published in the *University Reporter* at <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/current/weekly/6079/19.html>

A Discussion was held on 10th July and is reported at <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/current/weekly/6081/37.html>

New Web and RSS feed UCS News Service

For some time now, the Computing Service has been developing a Web/RSS feed news service for UCS announcements.

Up to now, news items have been published in a number of different places, such as `ucam.comp-serv.announce` and other newsgroups, and News files on particular services. The plan is to draw all these together on web pages, structured so that users can read all the current news or can select services or topics of interest to them. In addition, the service will provide a number of RSS feeds which can be viewed as single feeds or as a merged feed, so news can be read or supplied both selectively and generally.

We are developing a mechanism for the RSS feeds to be incorporated into any appropriate web page, and hope that this will be available later this year. For example, the RSS feed which describes scheduled Service downtime might be incorporated into the UCS home page and, if Departments or Colleges so choose, into computing-related pages on institutional servers.

Further information about this will be published in the next Newsletter.

General News

Small Institution Support Service

In the last Newsletter, it was reported that 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.

The Computing Service is now able to offer limited IT support to institutions during the absence of their Computer Officer (CO) due to holidays, sickness etc. This support is primarily aimed at institutions with a lone CO. The service is intended to provide for critical issues which arise during the CO's absence that prevent the institution from functioning effectively; it is not intended to provide full cover for the absent CO, so user support, PC or Mac support or routine system administration tasks are all excluded. However, users of the institution will, in this situation, have access to the UCS helpdesk to seek assistance with support issues which they would normally direct to their CO.

The service is chargeable and needs to be arranged in advance.

For more details, please email small-inst-support@ucs.cam.ac.uk

Techlink seminars

As members of the Techlink scheme will know, the Computing Service runs a programme of seminars, mostly on Wednesday afternoons in Full Term. Areas covered include developments in CS systems (e.g. the Streaming Media Service), operating systems in general (e.g. Windows Vista) and security. External companies and organisations also give presentations on occasion.

The Michaelmas term schedule is being planned, and any suggestions for topics will be very welcome. Anyone from outside the

Service who would like to present a seminar will be especially welcomed; we have had several successful seminars where non-CS IT supporters have volunteered to share their particular expertise and experience.

Please contact techlink-admin@ucs.cam.ac.uk with any comments or suggestions.

More about the Techlink scheme can be found at <http://www-tus.csx.cam.ac.uk/techlink/>

Skills database

One of the barriers to Computer Officers in various departments working together is that members of the IT community may not know what the particular strengths of other local Computer Officers are. The Computing Service has produced a skills registry to try to go some way towards rectifying this - the hope is that a number of COs will choose to register a portfolio of their skills and that this will be a tool that College and Departmental IT staff can use when looking for local pockets of expertise.

Further information has been circulated to Techlinks; to add information to the database or to make use of it you have to be a member of the Techlink scheme (see <http://www-tus.csx.cam.ac.uk/techlink/>).

VPDN service shared key

For routine security maintenance, the shared key that is used by all users of the UCS VPDN service will be changed in September.

When the key is changed, all users of the VPDN service will need to change the shared key in their client software before they can use the service again. All users of the VPDN service will be emailed with a link to a Raven-authenticated web page which will provide the new key and instructions on how to change the key in the client.

Lapwing ticketing system

It is now possible for visitors to the University (including conference guests) to be given temporary access to Lapwing so that they can use their wireless laptops while they are in Cambridge.

This is done by means of Lapwing "tickets" of limited duration, which can be issued by Lapwing-enabled institutions and are used as an alternative to Raven for authentication at the beginning of a Lapwing session. This facility is part of the normal Lapwing service to institutions.

Tickets may be issued by members of the group of "Lapwing wireless network administrators" for the institution concerned; this is a group within the Lookup directory whose membership is determined by the institution. There is provision for bulk issuing of tickets for an event such as a conference. The period of validity is fixed at issue; it is also possible to set a duration of validity from first use. To issue tickets, authorised users should go to <http://www.lapwing.cam.ac.uk/> and select their institution from the list. (The page can then be bookmarked for future use.)

Tickets are intended to be short-term; academic visitors staying in Cambridge for more than a month should normally obtain a Raven password rather than using the ticketing system.

Tickets are normally only usable within the issuing institution, but may be extended to other institutions by negotiation between the institutions.

Constraints on the Lapwing session (no insecure telnet or ftp, for example) are exactly the same for a ticket user as for a Raven user.

For further details see <http://www.lapwing.cam.ac.uk/>

Vista licensing issues

This item is of interest to PWF Managed Cluster site managers and also to anyone else running a bulk imaging scheme for Windows machines.

Clarification has been received from Microsoft on the Vista licensing situation for this type of setup. It is apparently essential to have the appropriate licence in advance so that remote imaging is permitted; this cannot be done by means of an original licence for a different version of Vista and then an upgrade licence.

For the PWF (and this will probably apply to other such systems), we are therefore recommending that you buy your new PCs with a OEM Vista Business Licence in order to be able to rollout Windows Vista on the PWF when the time comes.

For any new hardware purchase you need to make sure that the motherboard is Vista Volume License compatible if you want to ghost and use KMS (Key Management Service). A BIOS marker is required for systems to be activated using KMS; a University wide KMS service will be available soon.

More information on KMS and other licensing issues will be made available at http://www-tus.csx.cam.ac.uk/pc_support/Vista/vistavollicense.html

General News

Apple repairs

The Computing Service is now an official Apple Limited Service Provider. This means that Hardware Support can do warranty repairs on Apple desktops and portables, if the machine is owned either by the University of Cambridge and its associated institutions or by a current member of staff or student.

Please note that this does not include what Apple refer to as an "onsite service"; machines for repair have to be brought in to the Computing Service.

To make use of this service, see the contact details at http://www-tus.csx.cam.ac.uk/hw_support/

Coordinated bulk purchase of Windows/Linux hardware

The University Computing Service (UCS), the IT Purchasing Group and the Central Purchasing Office (CPO) have been working, as in previous years, on a tender for the supply of desktop PCs to the University. Printers and laptops were not included this year, because of low take-up in previous years.

The contract has been awarded to Dell Computers. Full details, with information about how to order under the scheme, can be found at <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/cam-only/offices/purchasing/groups/it/deals/hardware/current.html>

Details of the purchasing process that has been followed, the rationale behind the decisions that have been made, and a copy of the tender documents for these contracts, can be found at http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/cam-only/offices/purchasing/groups/it/deals/hardware/2007it_bulk_purchase.pdf

WEEE regulations

The following has been received from the University Central Offices:

Users are reminded that the WEEE (Waste Electrical & Electronic Equipment) Regulations came fully into effect on 1 July 2007. The definition of WEEE includes almost any item of Electrical and Electronic Equipment (EEE) with a voltage of up to 1,000 volts AC or 1,500 volts DC, in particular IT and telecommunications equipment.

After 1 July 2007, the University, as a Business User, will be legally required to ensure that any WEEE is collected separately from other general waste and passed to a suitable recycling contractor for it to be treated and disposed of in an environmentally sound way. There are different arrangements depending on when the EEE was bought and if it is being replaced by an equivalent item (e.g. a CRT computer monitor being replaced by a flat screen monitor):

- Any EEE that was bought after 13 August 2005 should be able to be returned free of charge through the producer's compliance scheme. The supplier of the original equipment should be able to provide information on their take-back scheme.
- Any EEE that was bought before 13 August 2005 which is being replaced by a new equivalent item should also be able to be returned free of charge through the producer's compliance scheme.
- The University will be responsible for the disposal of any EEE that was bought before 13 August 2005 and is not being replaced by a new equivalent item.

There is also an option to negotiate responsibilities for the disposal of existing or future WEEE with the supplier of new EEE. However, although this option is likely to have significant implications for the University and our suppliers, it is still unclear how the arrangement might actually work in practice.

Further information can be found on the DTI and Environment Agency websites at <http://www.dti.gov.uk/innovation/sustainability/weee/page30269.html> and http://www.netregs.gov.uk/netreg/s/275207/1631119/1631350/?lang=_e

We are still not exactly sure what facilities are going to be provided to deal with WEEE in the longer term - there is still very little information concerning the likely availability of disposal and take-back facilities.

We will be continuing with the collection of computer and other office equipment (as we do now), but at the moment, individual Departments will need to make their own arrangements either by way of take back schemes when buying replacement equipment or through a recycling contractor.

CHRIS and the Computing Service database

The Computing Service database, which holds record of Computing Service users and accounts, receives datafeeds from two authoritative sources: CamSIS, the student records system, and the Personnel Division's database of University employees. These datafeeds enable the UCS to monitor the comings and goings of staff and students so that CRSids and computing accounts can be set up and terminated at the appropriate time. In late June, the Personnel Division feed moved from the old HR system to CHRIS, the new HR system.

Initially, there will be no change to the provision of accounts: CRSids and Raven accounts will be created for incoming staff and students at the appropriate time and incoming students will also be provided with PWF and Hermes accounts and will be able to collect the passwords to all accounts when they arrive in Cambridge, via a web form at <https://jackdaw.cam.ac.uk/signup/>

Incoming staff and academic visitors may be registered in advance of their arrival by their institution so that the passwords for accounts

are available for collection when they arrive in Cambridge, via the same web form. Details of this procedure are at <http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/instadmin/prearriv.html>

In due course, we intend to register all incoming University staff with a set of accounts so that they will be able to collect their passwords as soon as they arrive in the University. We are working with staff of the CHRIS project to provide the mechanisms for this.

Cancellation of student accounts

The full timetable for cancellation of student accounts was published in the last Newsletter, which also gave details of what to do if you are staying in Cambridge and need to retain your account. The remaining cancellation dates are:

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 date shown, all computing accounts belonging to affected students will be cancelled on the PWF, Hermes, CUS, CUDN Dial-up service (Magpie), VPDN, Raven and Pelican.

General News

Magpie account renewal

The charging year for the CUDN dial-up service, Magpie, runs from 1 October to 30 September. Renewal letters (and email to @cam addresses) will be sent in early September to all registered users of Magpie.

The subscription rate for this year is £27+VAT. VAT will not be charged on the following:

- departmental orders for Magpie subscriptions for staff and students
- college orders for Magpie subscriptions for registered students
- individual Magpie subscriptions for registered students.

In the two latter cases students claiming VAT exemption will be required to supply a form

stating that they are registered students of the University. The required declaration form is available from Reception and at <http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/forms/studec.pdf>

Payment is due by 1 October 2007. Accounts that have not been paid for by 15 October 2007 will be cancelled. Full details of how to renew a Magpie account will be in the letter and email. Please send any queries to user-admin-magpie@ucs.cam.ac.uk

Members of the University and other authorized users of the CUDN are reminded that they must not allow other people to use the network facilities accorded to them, even other members of their household including partners, spouses and children. The sharing of user identifiers, whether for logon to Magpie or to other Computing Service systems, is not permitted under any circumstances.

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 March to May 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.

| | | |
|-------|-----|---|
| March | 525 | 3 |
| April | 492 | 4 |
| May | 494 | 0 |

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

- 11 How do I join a group in Camtools?
- D8 How do I uninstall the CISCO client under Mac OS X?

Mail, News and Information Services

Managed Web Server

Work is proceeding on the upgrade for the Managed Web Server. The new server will be based on Apache 2. While this is a significant change it is expected that most web sites will continue to work without modification. At a later date we hope to be able to offer a choice of https or virtual hosting (the latter allows a site to offer different sets of pages depending on the name used to access the site, e.g. `www.dept.cam.ac.uk` and `www-resgroup.dept.cam.ac.uk`). Newer versions of PHP and MySQL will also be available. To simplify the migration process sites using PHP and MySQL will initially migrate to the latest releases of PHP 4 and MySQL 4. The more challenging upgrade to PHP 5 and MySQL 5 will be offered later.

UK Mirror Service to close

This article is reprinted from the previous Newsletter, with a minor date change:

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 to users on the 25th 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.mirror-service.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/>

Mailing lists

About 3000 University mailing lists are now on the Mailman system, which has been in operation since Spring 2006. List managers are encouraged to move any remaining lists from the old system, which is now obsolete and will be removed at some future date.

To transfer a list to the new system, see <https://lists.cam.ac.uk/mailman/migrate> which requires Raven authentication. To migrate large numbers of lists (for example all lists associated with a given institution), contact postmaster@lists.cam.ac.uk. Once a list has been migrated updates to the old list through the menu system are blocked. Basic properties of a list such as list visibility, moderator lists, and message footers, will be carried across unchanged. Once your list has been transferred, take a moment to look through the configuration as it appears in Mailman.

List moderators will need to read the information at <http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/docs/leaflets/g90/mailman/moderators.html>, as moderation is slightly different on the new system. Users can also subscribe and unsubscribe themselves from lists (subject, if the list managers so choose, to moderation).

Mail, News and Information Services

Streaming media service

It was announced in the previous Newsletter that the Computing Service has been developing a Streaming Media Service.

The pilot service is now available for testing; if you would like access then go to <http://sms.csx.cam.ac.uk/collection/new/> and follow the instructions. This will result in an email being sent asking us to let you have access. You will need to give a reason for your request.

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

Raven developments: Shibboleth

Work has continued throughout the year on extending Raven to act additionally as a Shibboleth Identity Provider for members of the University - see the January edition of the Newsletter or the article at https://wiki.csx.cam.ac.uk/raven/A_brief_introduction_to_Shibboleth for more information on Shibboleth.

We expect to replace the current pilot arrangements with a production-quality service in time for the start of the coming academic year.

Anyone interested in Shibboleth, either as a way of accessing resources outside the University or as a way of granting access to resources within the University to people outside, should contact raven-support@ucs.cam.ac.uk

Oxford Reference Online

The following has been received from the University Library:

The University Library is pleased to announce that it has taken out a subscription to the Oxford Reference Online Premium collection. The subscription also includes specialist literature and Western civilisation collections. Oxford Reference Online brings together many of OUP's most popular reference titles, including subject and concise/pocket language dictionaries, into a single, cross-searchable, collection, making it a unique tool for reference enquiries. Subjects covered range from Art and Architecture through Classics, Economics and Business, Mythology and Folklore, to Zoology. A list of titles arranged by subject can be viewed at <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/SUBJECTSBOOKS.html>

Access is available without passwords within the university at www.oxfordreference.com. Access off-campus via Athens passwording will be established shortly.

Central Services News

Vista and the PWF

As announced previously, there are no plans to move the PWF onto Windows Vista before summer 2008 at the earliest. However, users running Vista on their own machines may wish to access their PWF filespace or PWF printers remotely. A page describing the

current state of PWF interactions with Vista is being maintained at <http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/pwf/vista.html>

PWF Managed Cluster site managers please also see the article on Vista licensing under General News

PWF software for next academic year

The list of planned updates to PWF application software for 2007-08 has been published at <http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/pwf/upgrades.html>

The programme of installation of the new software started 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.

Passwords on the PWF

Some technical changes are being planned for this summer to the way PWF passwords are handled. At this stage these changes will have no effect on users, with the exception of a very few PWF Macintosh users.

Anyone who has set a password which is longer than eight characters currently cannot log in on a PWF Macintosh. After a change to be made on 20 August, users who, after that date, set a password longer than 8 characters will be able to log in on a PWF Mac.

Note that it is in the nature of the mechanisms involved that login on PWF Macs for such users will be case-sensitive. Users with passwords of eight characters or fewer are unaffected.

The password changing utilities on all PWF platforms (Windows, Macs, Linux), are also being replaced; there will be minor cosmetic changes.

The changes being made will enable modern Novell password handling (the so called Novell Universal Password) to be made use of subsequently, and will at a later stage enable PWF Macs to use longer passwords properly and in a secured way, as is already the case on the other PWF platforms.

At some point it is likely that all PWF password checking will become case-sensitive. Most users of other Computing Service systems such as Hermes will already be accustomed to typing passwords in the exact form they were given, or that they themselves most recently set. New users and those advising them should be encouraged from now on to note the case of a password and use it exactly.

Up to now, PWF passwords have been issued in a uniform case; however, it is likely that we shall soon start to issue mixed-case initial passwords, as an aid to security for the future.

File transfer to and from the PWF

As announced in the previous Newsletter, the "plain" insecure FTP service at `home.pwf.cam.ac.uk` (for personal filespace) and `shared.pwf.cam.ac.uk` (for University Society filespace) is to be withdrawn from the end of July.

To use secure transfer to or from your personal filespace, connect using an SFTP client to `sftp.pwf.cam.ac.uk`. To access society and group filespace 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.

Central Services News

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>

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.

Anyone wishing to open a new CUS account between now and October 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

CUS hardware

In June 2007, Sun announced that they would not support the hardware used to run the Central Unix Service (CUS) after December 2007. We will therefore be running the CUS without hardware support from Sun between January 2008 and its decommissioning at the end of September 2008.

There are three identical systems providing the CUS at the moment and we have two more spare from previous use elsewhere in the Service. All five systems have proved to be very reliable in their own rights. We believe we will be able to proceed by relying on cannibalism to provide any defective components during the vulnerable period. User data is stored on a distinct storage unit, not provided by Sun, and whose maintenance has been secured for the lifetime of the CUS. User data is not at increased risk from this situation.

Of course, there is an increased risk that the service will be compromised by five identical components failing in all five systems. However, we believe that this risk is acceptably low. Any users who are worried should expedite their migration from the CUS. See the above URL for help with migration.

Withdrawal of anonymous FTP service on CUS

Some material of interest to users of the Computing Service has historically been kept on CUS for access by anonymous FTP.

Alternative homes are being found for material that may still be of value, and it is planned to close down the anonymous FTP service (providing access to <ftp://ftp.cus.cam.ac.uk/pub>) at the end of December 2007. Non-anonymous ftp to CUS will not be affected, and anything remaining in the `/pub` directory tree will still be accessible to users logged on to CUS

Network outages

From mid-morning on June 14th there was considerable network disruption, caused by routing problems on JANET. The main routing problem was fixed at about 0715 on Thursday 15th. A further disruption, caused by an unrelated JANET problem, occurred on Tuesday June 26th for an hour from midday. The Computing Service regrets the inconvenience to users.

None of the failures were within the University Data Network.

The detailed report on the first incident is below; the cause of the second is still under investigation by JANET Operations.

The Cambridge-Chelmsford link failed at 11:13 on the 14th June. It was re-spliced at 21:12 but the Telco believes that a power surge caused by the re-splicing damaged the hardware and the

link failed again at 22:57. Several attempts were made to refit new hardware and the link was finally re-established at 13:45 on the 15th June. JANET are waiting for a full report from the Telco with recommendations on how the above scenario can be avoided in future.

Eastnet is designed so that in the event that the main trunk fails, traffic will re-route in a ring around the network. Traffic did re-route but a number of sites suffered severe disruption. Engineers did work throughout the disruption to find the cause of the problem. It was identified as an incorrect command in the configuration of one of the Eastnet node routers. This error affected packets returning from outside JANET that used one half of the ring but not traffic on the other half. This was corrected at 07:00 on the 15th June. All other nodes in the ring have been checked to ensure that their configurations are correct.

Sales News

Performance Figures

Percentage of orders completed, in working days:

| | < 5 | 5-10 | 10-15 | 15-20 | >20 |
|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|------|
| March | 98.0% | 0.7% | 0.3% | 0.7% | 0.3% |
| April | 96.6% | 2.4% | 0.5% | 0.0% | 0.5% |
| May | 99.3% | 0.0% | 0.7% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| June | 99.2% | 0.8% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |

Products now available

Adobe Creative Suite Design Premium CS3/
Windows & MacOS X
Adobe Web Standard CS3/Windows & MacOS X
Adobe individual CS3 component products for
Windows and MacOS X

Apple OS Maintenance Programme (for a limited
time only - conditions apply)
EndNote X1/Windows
Novell Open Enterprise Server (OES) on NetWare
kernel and SuSE Linux Enterprise Server (SLES)

Products available shortly

Adobe Creative Suite Design Standard CS3/
Windows & MacOS X
Adobe Web Premium CS3/Windows & MacOS X
ERDAS (Leica Geosystems) Imagine 9.1/Windows
& UNIX
Minitab 15/Windows

Progress Reports

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

Network and PWF

The demand for the UCS service which enables exams in a PWF room for students with special needs has been increasing steadily with numbers expected to rise further this year. The service has been well received by students and academic staff over the last 2 years.

A PWF Macintosh Software Update Server has been deployed for testing.

The change from use of IPX to IP-based networking for the PWF Windows user service was completed with the April Windows rollout.

Preparation for the procurement of the servers and storage system to replace the current PWF central filestore is continuing. The consultants contracted to assist are reviewing our statement of technical requirements. The technical requirements in turn will be used to seek vendors to provide a solution.

The Colleges and the University have unanimously decided to support the new Voice over IP telephone system. This breakthrough will ensure a consistent, centrally managed, and professional service to the users. A Request for Proposal will be delivered to the 11 vendors currently on the framework agreement in June. Approximately 30 days later proposals from these vendors will be due and vendor selection will be announced within 3 weeks of the due date.

The replacement voicemail system is currently in testing within the UCS. The system has been successfully integrated into the existing phone system and allows for email delivered voicemails or notifications. Further work will include closer integration with the University lookup system and the development of a web front end which will allow Institutions, and potentially individual users, to view call history.

Unix Systems

A Shibboleth-Athens gateway has been created by Eduserv. This permits users with Shibboleth accounts to access online resources protected with Athens passwords. This is currently being

tested by the UL to see if they can avoid having to pay a year of Athens fees.

The central email systems now run a permanent process for checking messages for viruses, rather than running a separate process for each email. While a technical detail, it does dramatically improve the speed with which each message is scanned from around 40 seconds to around 10 seconds.

The University's core DNS servers have been migrated to new hardware and a significantly different configuration; these now provide superior protection against spoofing of host names by hostile sites. This involved no changes of configuration by "end user" systems but has involved configuration changes to every secondary DNS server in the University. The Service would like to record its appreciation of the work done by the administrators of these systems.

PWF Condor continues to provide distributed computing facilities to users (in four schools to date: Physical Sciences, Technology, Biological Sciences, Clinical School) having yielded 73,422 CPU hours for 48,044 jobs since the March IT Syndicate report.

Technical User Support

The PC Support team has updated the Virusscan and Security CD for general release; this now detects Windows Vista (all versions) and contains Virusscan 8.5i.

User Services

In March a remote attacker found 36 insecure Windows 2000 machines and planted malware on them, allowing them to scan internally looking for other vulnerabilities. Regular scans for the fingerprint enabled machines to be identified and removed from the network, so limiting the damage. Institutional IT members of staff were quick to respond and share information about their findings.

The number of wide-scale malicious probes from outside the domain continues at around 200 per day.

The Web Review report has been received and follow-up meetings have been scheduled.

Documentation and Courses

Leaflets

The following leaflets have been updated since the last Newsletter:

IS36 Scanning on the PWF
M495 Using OS X on the PWF Macs

In the course of the summer there will as usual be a general review and updating of Computing Service leaflets and web pages.

New and Updated Courses for Michaelmas Term

We are pleased to offer the following new courses in the Scientific Computing series in the Michaelmas Term.

- * MATLAB: Further Use
- * Programming: Python for Programmers
- * Programming: Further Python
- * Programming: Operating System Access in Python
- * Programming: Regular Expressions in Python

Note that the "Introduction to Scientific Computing" will be held early in the term (the provisional date is Monday 8 October).

In addition there will be one new Web Authoring course:

- * Web Authoring: Web2.0 (Collaborative Technologies) - Overview (Level 3)

and the "Further Use of Cascading Style Sheets" has been split into three separate courses:

- * Web Authoring: Cascading Style Sheets Next Steps (Level 4)
- * Web Authoring: Positioning with Cascading Style Sheets (Level 4)
- * Web Authoring: Media-Dependent CSS and Mobile Devices (Level 4)

Bookings can only be taken when the schedule is published on the web (<http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/courses/>) in mid- to late September. Notices will be circulated to departments, colleges and libraries as usual.

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.

Contact points

| | |
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| TCP/IP network address allocation | IP-Register@ucs.cam.ac.uk |
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| 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 |

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