



University of Cambridge Computing Service Newsletter

Number 234
October 2007

Contents

General News

In this edition	1
Retirements from the Computing Service	1
Information strategy in the University	3
New Web and RSS feed UCS News Service	3
Coordinated bulk purchase of desktop Windows/Linux hardware	3
Vista licensing	4
Mathematica	4
Burning CD/DVDs on Vista machines	5
CHRIS and the Computing Service database, Jackdaw	5
Improvements to pre-arrival registration	5
Cancellation of student accounts	6
Magpie account renewal	6

Advice for new users

New users	7
Security	7
Keeping your system up to date and protected	7
Backup of data stored on computers	9

Help Desk News

Mail, News and Information Services

Upgrading your web browser	11
Mailing lists - old system to be withdrawn at Christmas	11
Raven developments: Shibboleth	12

Central Services News

CUS closure	12
PWF filestore	13
Passwords on the PWF	13
New pilot CIFS service on the PWF	13
Closure of Pelican	14

Network News

Lapwing ticketing system	14
Increase in the Cambridge Network Traffic Charge 2007/2008	14

Sales News

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

Tuesday 16 October	Information Technology Syndicate meeting
Thursday 8 November	Computing Service IT exhibition, 9.30 to 13.00
Tuesday 4 December	Information Technology Syndicate meeting
Friday 21 December	Service closes at 17.00: Reception, Sales, Help Desk and Sales closed; all services running unattended.
Monday 1 January 2008	Pelican closes down
Tuesday 2 January 2008	Service reopens
1 October 2008	CUS closes down

University of Cambridge Computing Service Newsletter
ISSN 0305 5086

Editor: Katy Edgcombe (e-mail newsletter-editor@ucs.cam.ac.uk)
Circulation: e-mail newsletter-circ@ucs.cam.ac.uk)

This edition went to press on 8 October 2007

In this edition

New users please see the Advice for new users below, especially the sections on security and backups.

The Computing Service is launching a new News service; see General News.

Users of old web browsers are strongly recommended to update them; see Mail, News and Information Services.

The old mailing list system will be withdrawn at Christmas; all lists should be moved over to Mailman. See Mail, News and Information Services.

You can now use your Raven password to access various electronic databases and journals; see Mail, News and Information Services.

You have only three months to recover any data you need from Pelican; see Central Services News.

The PWF filing system is moving onto new hardware with greatly increased capacity and reliability; see Central Services News.

You can now mount your PWF filesystem directly on your desktop using a pilot CIFS service from any machine within the Cambridge network; see Central Services News.

Retirements from the Computing Service

Sadly, the Computing Service loses three of its most senior members of staff at the end of September, when David Prince, Philip Cross and Philip Hazel all retire from the University. All three of them have been key players in the history of the provision of computing facilities at Cambridge, and between them they represent over one hundred years of service in the Computing Service. It is difficult to see how their collective knowledge, skills and experience will ever be adequately

replaced and certainly their successors will have shining examples to aspire to. We wish each of them many long and happy years in retirement, and thank them for their contributions to the Service and the University over the many years of their respective careers.

David Prince

Dave joined the University in 1963 as a



computer engineer in the Mathematical Laboratory, working on the experimental Titan computer system being developed by Professor Maurice Wilkes and his colleagues. Dave, a mathematics graduate from

Manchester University, had been working as a research assistant at Jodrell Bank prior to coming to Cambridge, and quickly became an indispensable member of the Titan maintenance team. With the closure of Titan in 1973, the maintenance team then turned its hand to maintaining the new IBM mainframe, and the peripheral PDPs associated with it, as part of the newly formed Computing Service within the Computer Laboratory, as it was then known.

The talents of the maintenance engineers were widely recognised, and by the end of the seventies a small business had developed for the team in maintaining many of the growing number of computers in other departments across the University. This greatly expanded with the advent of personal computing in the eighties. By now Dave was deputy leader of the team under Ken Cox, and when the latter retired in 1993 Dave took over the leadership of the engineering team, or Hardware Support as it was then known, and assumed the title of Chief Engineer: only the fifth holder of the position in the Laboratory's history.

Dave is a highly respected member of the Service, a keen sportsman, and a gifted

General News

engineer, as many thousands of staff and students throughout the University will attest after having had their ailing computers restored by him and their life's work rescued in the process. His skill and comradeship will be greatly missed.

Philip Cross

Phil began working in the University in 1967 when he joined the Mathematical Laboratory as a Technical Officer working on early Computer Aided Design systems, having previously been a research student under Neil Wiseman working in the same area.



He stayed in the Computer Laboratory until 1975 when he left to work for Laser-Scan Ltd, on the Science Park, which had numerous associations with the University, but returned four years later to rejoin the Computer Laboratory as a Computer Officer working in the Computing Service. Phil was now part of the communications team under Chris Cheney, and was initially responsible for making a major contribution to the design and implementation of software for the locally developed Transport Service Box, an early microprocessor based piece of networking equipment, which was subsequently to be developed commercially as the JNT-PAD.

With the early adoption and evolution of communications standards, firstly X.25 and then the IP protocols and Ethernet, Phil became responsible as Network Systems Manager for ensuring the technical integrity and efficient running of the systems making up the Cambridge University Data Network (CUDN), managing a small team of communications specialists who helped make sure our electronic communications within the University and with the world outside ran smoothly and transparently.

It is an unfortunate fact of life in the communications world that the only time one becomes aware of the presence of the network at all is when it is not working properly, and it is a credit to Phil and his team that this has been mercifully a relatively rare occurrence. His quiet conscientious dedication and meticulous attention to detail have been instrumental in creating the first class communications system we all benefit from today, and it is with some trepidation that we say farewell to Phil on his retirement.

Philip Hazel

Phil Hazel started as a mathematics postgraduate student at Cambridge in the late sixties, and after submitting his thesis in 1969, but before taking up a lectureship in Cape Town, took a temporary job working as a programmer in the Mathematical



Laboratory. He clearly liked the experience, because within a year he was back working full-time as a Computer Officer in the Laboratory and was one of the first programmers working on the new IBM service provided to the University by the newly formed Computing Service within the Laboratory.

Phil is a prodigious programmer and software architect and has been the author of many of the critical applications that generations of University students and staff have relied upon in building their academic careers. Many of the early mainframe service utilities were implemented by him, e.g. EXAMINE, XPDS, HELP, SEND. There then came the major applications like ZED, a general purpose command driven editor, and GCAL, a text layout system, which together must have been responsible for typesetting thousands of theses and papers over the years. Over time these were developed and refined into more

modern versions on newer platforms: E (and subsequently NE), and SGCAL.

Then in 1995 the Service was in need of a decent email transfer agent to cope with its mushrooming email traffic, and, not finding anything fit for purpose in the opensource domain, Phil designed and implemented Exim. Exim has now become one of the world's three leading mail transfer agents, used by major commercial and public institutions worldwide. The success of Exim, and the associated books written about it, has meant that he has now become an internationally revered figure in the computing world, and software developed by Phil to support Exim now forms components of major opensource products like apache, php and python. He is regularly invited to international workshops to speak and advise on issues concerning network email.

Phil's contribution to the Computing Service and the University over the years is difficult to overestimate, and his legacy is outstanding. The Service is losing one of its most illustrious and productive members of staff.

Information strategy in the University

This article is reprinted from the previous Newsletter.

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 was published in the University Reporter in June 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

As announced in the last Newsletter, the Computing Service has been developing a Web/RSS feed news service for UCS announcements.

This service is now available; the web interface is at <http://ucsnews.csx.cam.ac.uk/> and the RSS feeds are incorporated into the new UCS home page at <http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/>

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. In due course, we expect that all UCS announcements will be made via the News Service, which draws all these together on web pages and in RSS feeds, both structured so that users can read all the current news or can select services or topics of interest to them. As well as the main RSS feeds on the Computing Service home page, the separate RSS feeds will be incorporated into other suitable web pages as they are revised.

(See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RSS_\(file_format\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RSS_(file_format)) for more information about RSS).

Institutions may wish to incorporate certain RSS feeds into their own web pages, the 'Service interruptions' feed being the most likely candidate for this.

Coordinated bulk purchase of desktop Windows/Linux hardware

As reported earlier, the University Computing Service (UCS), the IT Purchasing Group and the Central Purchasing Office (CPO) set up a tender this summer for the supply of desktop PCs to the University. The contract was awarded to Dell Computers. Full details, with information about how to order under the

General News

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 was 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

Vista licensing

This article is of interest to technical staff who need to deploy Windows Vista in a managed environment, where images are rolled out via ghost or other imaging or mass deployment technology.

Normal volume license versions of Vista use Volume Activation 2.0; any system under this licensing scheme must be activated within 30 days of installation with a product key or it will only work in reduced functionality mode.

An alternative to this scheme is provided by the Key Management Service (KMS), which allows systems to automatically activate in the background without requiring a product key to be entered. This method is designed for use in managed environments as above. The Computing Service (PC-Support) runs a KMS for IT support staff to use; for full information see http://www-tus.csx.cam.ac.uk/pc_support/Vista/volumeactivation/volumeactivationindex.html

Mathematica

A group of institutions in Cambridge University have negotiated an unlimited site licence deal (work and home use) with Wolfram for Mathematica, for 3 years starting on 09/07/2007.

If you want to use Mathematica then there are various options:

- Mathematica is (or will very shortly be) available on the PWF in Colleges and the UCS

- if you are a member of one of the Institutions that is part of the unlimited licence deal (listed below) then please contact your Computer Officers.

- if your institution is not in the deal and would like to join then this is possible at each annual renewal. For more information please contact Mike Rose at Chemistry (mr349@cam.ac.uk).

The participating institutions are:

Department of Chemistry
Cambridge Institute for Medical Research
Welcome Trust/Cancer Research UK Gurdon
Institute

Department of Physics
Division A, Engineering Department
Faculty of Economics

Department of Earth Sciences

Faculty of Mathematics

Institute of Astronomy

Chemical Engineering

University Public Workstation Facility (PWF) in

Colleges and the University Computing Service
(NOT in Departments)

Environmental Modelling Unit, Department of
Geography
Newton Institute

More information is at <http://www-co.ch.cam.ac.uk/software/mathematica/>

The Department of Chemistry took the lead on negotiating this deal, in consultation with UCS Software Sales, as the price of a complete University site licence was prohibitive.

It seems likely that there is even more demand for a site licence for Matlab and probably the same level for Labview. There is some of Matlab and Labview in the Department of Chemistry, not enough to justify CO time to negotiate a deal, but they would be very happy to contribute to a deal. If you are considering organising such a deal then Mike Rose (mr349@cam.ac.uk) is very happy to share his experiences (and mistakes) regarding the Mathematica deal.

Burning CD/DVDs on Vista machines

It appears that care is needed in choosing formatting options for burning CD/DVDs on Vista machines; some of the defaults produce unreliable results.

Most Vista machines arrive with hardware capable of burning CDs/ripping DVDs. Some arrive with appropriate software like Nero (version 7.x with updates), Sonic etc., but problems sometimes arise with the Windows native CD/DVD software.

When you insert a blank CD-R or CD-RW Windows seizes the CD and gives you a choice of three options: "Burn an audio CD using WMP", "Burn files to disc", or "Create a CD using iTunes". If you respond by accepting "Burn files to disc", then on the next screen, you should choose "Show the formatting options". Otherwise you will get the default Windows Vista CD-burning option, which we have found to be unreliable, even with other Vista machines in some cases.

If you do show the formatting options you then get more sensible guidance: we recommend that you choose Mastered (=ISO).

CHRIS and the Computing Service database, Jackdaw

Information about current and expected University staff is now supplied to Jackdaw by the new University HR system, CHRIS. The change of datafeed from the old system, SECQUS, to CHRIS took place in mid-August. The feed from CHRIS contains more information than the old SECQUS feed; in particular, it contains those who are not University staff, but who are on the payroll. It also contains people who are on the Roll of the Regent House, as did the SECQUS feed.

As soon as information about a new person is received from CHRIS, a CRSid and Raven account are created in Jackdaw and an entry will appear in the University directory, Lookup. The password for the Raven account is held for later collection by the user.

We also track staff who have left University employment and include them in our monthly cancellations (mini-purges) of accounts.

Improvements to pre-arrival registration

Some improvements have been made to the pre-arrival registration scheme, which allows institutional staff to register incoming staff and visitors with the UCS so that CRSids are created and the passwords to computing accounts are ready for collection when the user arrives in Cambridge.

Some improvements are concerned with the 'behind the scenes' matching of data, giving User Administration staff a better chance of matching data correctly. Improvements that will be obvious to data suppliers include:

- start dates are now available. This allows data suppliers to register incoming staff as soon as they are known about, but accounts will only be created a week before the user arrives. This solves the problem of use of the password-collection form timing out after 6 months.
- it is now possible to register a user without providing a date of birth at the time. Please note, however that the user will not be able to collect their passwords until a second registration has been submitted which supplies the DoB.
- data suppliers can now choose which accounts are allocated to any pre-arrival registered user (but note that Raven accounts are always allocated). This change deals with the problem of short-term visitors who do not require email or PWF accounts.

General News

- user administration staff are now able to correct data in a pre-arrival registration record, on request from the data supplier. We hope that we will be able to allow data suppliers to make corrections themselves in the future, but regret that we are not able to do so in this release.

Full details of the pre-arrival registration scheme are at <http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/instadmin/prearriv.html>

We encourage institutions to use pre-arrival registration for their incoming staff and visitors whenever possible, rather than using paper forms. The advantages are:

- start and stop dates can be supplied and can be updated by staff of the institution
- the CRSid is quickly returned to the institution
- accounts are usually ready for collection by the user on the next day; there is no waiting for password letters to be delivered by the UMS
- there is less transcribing of information and so fewer errors are likely.

Cancellation of student accounts

The UCS accounts of many students who completed their courses in the summer were cancelled either in mid July or mid August, depending on the finishing date of their course. The remaining students on later-finishing courses will be included in the monthly purges of ex-staff and ex-students during the Michaelmas term.

Magpie account renewal

Users are reminded that payment for Magpie accounts for 2007-08 was 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 were in the letter and email sent to all users earlier. 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.

Advice for new users

New users

If you are a new user of Computing Service systems, you will have received (with your registration letter or the letter describing how to register yourself) some brief information about the Service. It is important to read the more extended guidance available on the Web at <http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/new-students/> (for students) and <http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/newusers/newstaff.html> (for staff).

Your attention is drawn to the IT Training programme. This includes introductory sessions on Windows, Macintoshes and Unix, as well as many other topics and levels. All courses are free to students and staff of the University. There are also self-teach materials for loan and, in a few cases, sale.

All users should be aware of the University Software Policy published at <http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/sales/softwarepol.html>

In the introductory web pages mentioned above you will also find important information about:

- The Computing Service Help Desk and other sources of help
- The Computing Service Web pages at <http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/> and the documentation (including Frequently Asked Questions) at <http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/docs/>
- Keeping in touch: newsgroups, announcements, and the Computing Service Newsletter
- How to keep your computer secure (see also the next article)
- Charges for use of the network, and how to keep them down (Colleges and Departments are charged in proportion to their network usage)
- The Data Protection Acts and other legislation: implications for Computing Service users
- Advice from the IT Syndicate (primarily for research students and their supervisors) on the analysis of data by computer
- Rules and guidelines for acceptable use of University computing systems.

Security

Each year a number of computers in Cambridge are hacked or succumb to infection from a virus or other malware. Regrettably, investigations still repeatedly show that the vast majority of hacked or infected computers are not up to date with anti-virus software or with patches for the operating system and for applications such as word processors, web browsers and email programs. Occasionally they have been patched but the patches have not taken effect because the user has not rebooted the machine since the patch was downloaded (this primarily applies to Windows systems).

The software of all computers and other devices (e.g. printers) that are connected to the University Data Network must be kept fully up to date and must have strong passwords on all accounts (see <http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/security/passwords/>). This will help protect both the user of the system and all other users of the network. Advice can be sought from Departmental or College Computer Officers and the Computing Service Help Desk. General information is also available at <http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/security/>, and more specific advice on the web pages detailed below.

Keeping your system up to date and protected

Anti-virus software

The University has a licence that allows all current staff and students to use the McAfee anti-virus software (for Windows, Linux and Macintosh systems) at no charge. See the FAQ *How can I obtain anti-virus software?* at <http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/docs/faq/a4.html>

Advice for new users

Windows updates

Users are very strongly encouraged to automate the updating of their Windows software wherever this is possible. You can do this via the automatic update facility (Microsoft Update) within Windows Vista, Windows XP or Windows 2000, or by means of a Windows Software Update Server (WSUS). The Computing Service runs a WSUS server and some Colleges and Departments also run their own. You should ask your local IT support staff whether they run a server that you can use and, if so, how you should set up your system to use it.

The updates available via Microsoft Update or via a WSUS server are essentially the same, and cover Microsoft Office, SQL and Exchange as well as the operating system itself. Microsoft Update requires the use of Internet Explorer.

If you intend to use the Computing Service WSUS server, see http://www-tus.csx.cam.ac.uk/pc_support/wsus/wsusindex.html. There is also a page at http://www-tus.csx.cam.ac.uk/pc_support/wsus/wsusclientconfig.html that tells you how to configure a WSUS client so you can use the service. There are various options for setting up the client; we recommend that you set it to download and install new patches automatically once every 24 hours (say at a fixed time each evening). This of course requires the computer to be running at the appropriate time. Although it is possible to set it up so that you are asked, each time a new update becomes available, whether it should be downloaded and installed, it is generally better for updates to be accepted automatically. If you do choose to be asked each time, please do not delay accepting the update; you may be putting not only your own system but many others at risk. For patches to take effect, you will usually need to reboot the computer, and it is a sensible habit to do this for all patches.

Our recommended practices for stand-alone users are at http://www-tus.csx.cam.ac.uk/pc_support/WinXP/collegehome.html and should be used if there are no local

IT guidelines to follow or in conjunction with any such guidelines.

See also the note below about the security CD distributed to Computer Officers for checking machines before they are connected to a network.

Macintoshes

Macs running MacOS X can also be set to auto-update. Further advice on keeping different Mac OS versions up to date is available at http://www-tus.csx.cam.ac.uk/mac_support/mac_security.html

Unix

Many current Unix distributions allow you to update your system automatically. You will need to see your distribution's documentation for how to configure these. Locally, Unix Support's server provides updates and patches for several versions of Unix including the SuSE, Debian and Fedora Linux distributions and Solaris. Contact unix-support@ucs.cam.ac.uk for more information.

VirusScan CD

Past experience indicates that, when students and staff arrive in October with computers to be connected or reconnected to the CUDN, there will be some systems that have either succumbed to one or more of the various current hazards or are susceptible to them. It is important that all systems are checked for problems before they are connected to the CUDN, and brought up to date with patches; they should then be set up to download security and virus updates as described above.

The Computing Service has produced CDs for Windows and Macs to help. The Mac CD contains current anti-virus software. There are two versions of the CD for Windows, one for Vista and XP and a second for "Legacy" versions (Windows 2000 and the 9x stream). The CD for Vista and XP contains anti-virus

Advice for new users

software and operating-system-critical patches, as well as other utilities (including anti-spyware software). It is vital that patches on the CD are applied before connecting to the CUDN. Once connected, users should immediately use Microsoft Update as soon as they can so that other components such as Internet Explorer and Office can be updated. These CDs have been distributed to College Computer Officers, where requested. All users are urged to remove any existing anti-virus software and install the McAfee anti-virus software included on the CD and to scan their system. The CD also provides an easy way to set passwords on accounts, which is also vital.

Windows users can also download an ISO image of the CD from <http://www-tus.csx.cam.ac.uk/virus/PCdownload.html#isoimages> using any machine with a CUDN-based network connection (including VPN). A CD burner can then make a CD from it.

Backup of data stored on computers

Users who store data, programs etc. on any sort of computer system are urged to give thought to the provision of backup copies. It still happens that people lose an entire thesis or book because, for instance, they have relied on a single copy on a hard disk which ceases to work, or is on a laptop which is stolen. You should always aim to keep a second copy of work in progress (not on the same disk), not out of date by more than a few hours' worth of work. In case of disaster, a reasonably up-to-date paper copy is better than nothing; it may be possible, though laborious, to reconstruct the document by scanning.

Backup is the end-user's responsibility; many communal systems have some central provision for backup, but you need to judge whether this is adequate for your needs. If you are storing material on your own equipment then backup is entirely your responsibility.

You may have valuable data, email or programs on a system of your own on your desk, or it may be stored on a system belonging to the Computing Service or a College or Departmental network.

Computing Service systems

On the PWF, backup copies of the file servers holding users' personal filespace are taken at regular intervals, for use in case of major hardware failures. However, it is difficult in general to arrange to retrieve an individual user's files (sometimes PWF files can be recovered using the salvage technique described at <http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/docs/faq/q2.html>, but this will not work in all cases). Normally you should make adequate backup copies on USB devices, CDs, DVDs etc. (there are writable CD drives on most PWF machines, ZIP drives on a few and USB connections on all). See Computing Service leaflet *G81: CDs and other removable storage media*. If your main copy of important data is kept on removable media (USB, CD, etc.), it is advisable to keep two current copies as well as routine backup copies.

Do not store data on the local PWF hard disks (e.g. on drive C: on a PWF Windows PC) or on the desktop on the PWF, as such data cannot be guaranteed to remain available from session to session, even on the same computer. Data that you wish to keep should be stored in your PWF personal filespace (drive U: on Windows), and backed up as described above.

The Hermes message store has disaster recovery backups similar to the PWF servers - that is, they are for system recovery only. Hermes also keeps copies of deleted email for limited periods of time (currently 7 days but will be increased to 28 days in the near future) so that in most cases we can restore a user's accidentally deleted email

We recommend that users keep their own offline backups of their email, especially if they want to archive large volumes of it.

Advice for new users

Other networked systems

If you keep files on a fileserver in your College or Department, you should ask your local computer support staff what backup arrangements are made; they will normally have provision for recovery from major disk failures, for instance, but they may not easily be able to retrieve individual files.

If you have your own equipment

This section applies to any equipment for which you are responsible, but is particularly vital for owners of laptops. Every year there are instances of stolen laptops which contain the only copy of someone's thesis, essential papers or laboriously collected data.

You should always keep an up-to-date copy or copies of any important data on USB devices, CDs, DVDs or ZIP disks, stored separately (i.e. not being carried about in a laptop case). See leaflet G81: CDs and other removable storage media. "Important", in this context, means anything that you would find difficult or

tedious to reconstruct - e.g. taking more than an hour or two at most. The Pelican service is no longer available for archiving and will close down finally at the beginning of 2008.

You may also want to consider whether the time invested in the software setup and configuration of your computer is such that the whole system ought to be backed up to a mass storage medium such as CD, DVD, tape, secondary hard drive etc. The cost of rebuilding your system after a major crash (or setting up a new system after yours has been stolen) may be very considerable for you or your local Computer Officer or both. The Computing Service can provide advice on backup devices and strategy where local facilities or advice do not exist.

Users with valuable files (or valuable backups) stored on disks of unusual format or non-standard devices may like to consult the Computing Service data transcription service (contact Reception) to discuss making copies on more standard media.

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 June to August 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.

June 2007	461	1
July 2007	587	3
August 2007	496	8

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

- E52: Mailman lists: How can I have only a few authorised senders for my list?
- E53: Mailman lists: How can I do spam filtering on my list?
- E54: Mailman lists: How can I add (or remove) a single address?
- N14: Why can't I login to CamSIS, CHRIS, or another service that requires a Raven password?
- N15: Why can't I access some electronic journals and databases?
- N16: What information might Raven disclose about me?

Mail, News and Information Services

Upgrading your web browser

In times gone by, when 'browser wars' were taking place, web sites often came with a recommendation for a specific browser, the use of which ostensibly guaranteed a perfect user experience. Thankfully those days are gone, and now websites are more often created with web standards in mind; the likelihood is that they will look very similar, if not identical, with a range of browsers.

The major change that has taken place over the last year or so has been the appearance of Internet Explorer 7 for Windows. It was launched before Vista and so can be used with either Windows XP or Vista, and it takes giant strides towards being standards-compliant at a level similar to Firefox. IE7 will show up flaws that IE6 is happy to ignore, so it can be revealing when looking at websites that have not been checked for cross-browser compatibility, but for most websites it will give a smoother and more predictable usage, in addition to giving better security by managing security issues separately from the Windows operating system.

It is increasingly the case that older browsers are defective in respect of handling newer technologies and ways of coding web pages, and also in terms of security - the browsers have always been 'broken' but this is now more noticeable and is becoming increasingly the case. To get a better view of pages and more effective web application functionality, try using a newer browser alongside the older ones (e.g. IE5 for the Macintosh, version 1 of Safari, IE5 and IE6 for Windows, Firefox versions 1.5 and earlier and Opera version 8 and earlier), and see what a difference it makes.

Mailing lists - old system to be withdrawn at Christmas

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 Christmas 2007.

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

Raven developments: Shibboleth

Raven authentication has been in use for three years as a way for Cambridge users to gain access to restricted facilities and web resources within Cambridge. It has now been extended to provide authentication for a range of other services, mainly outside the University.

Raven can now supply information about people to web sites (normally for the purpose of authentication) by using the internationally-accepted Shibboleth protocol. This is in addition to the locally-developed Ucam-WebAuth protocol which Raven has used since its introduction.

As a result of this change Raven account holders can access an increasing number of Shibboleth-supporting services, most of which are currently outside the University, using their Raven CRSid and password rather than having to apply for and remember separate IDs and passwords for each service.

Most significantly, electronic journals and databases protected by the Athens authentication system can now be accessed using Shibboleth, and so using Raven CRSids and passwords, rather than requiring a special 'Athens' ID and password as in the past. Existing Athens IDs and passwords will continue to work for the time being, but from this October no new Athens passwords will be issued and new users will gain access

via the Shibboleth route. See <http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/electronicresources/athenschanges.html> for further information on this change. For advice, please contact lib-raven@lists.cam.ac.uk

Other services already supporting Shibboleth access include JISCMAIL (<http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/> - see <https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/help/policy/shibmode.htm> for more details), the JANET Videoconferencing Booking Service (<http://www.jvcs.ja.net/> - see <http://www.jvcs.ja.net/vcng/help/shibboleth.shtml> for details), and an increasing number of other journals and databases.

It is important to understand that a working Raven account does not guarantee access to every Shibboleth-supporting service - some services require the University to subscribe to them before access will be granted; others are only available to particular classes of user (for example staff or students), or to people who appear on particular lists. If your Raven account generally works but you have are having a problem accessing a particular service then you should contact that service's administrators for advice.

Please see the article at https://wiki.csx.cam.ac.uk/raven/A_brief_introduction_to_Shibboleth for more information on Shibboleth itself. Anyone interested in using Shibboleth, either as a way of accessing additional 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

Central Services News

CUS closure

Users are reminded that the Central Unix Service will close down on 1 October 2008. The Service has already ceased to issue new CUS accounts. The remaining schedule will be as follows:

- 1 October 2008: CUS will be closed down
- 1 October 2010: mail and web forwarding will cease.

Mail users with `.forward` files should note that these will not be effective once CUS has closed down; the mail forwarding to `@cam` addresses after 1 October 2008 will be all-or-nothing, and any filtering will have to be

done at the destination. Users will be able to request to have their forwarding turned off.

Advice on migrating from CUS has been published at <http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/unix/cusmigration.html>

Any CUS user who no longer needs their CUS account (and does not require any mail forwarding) should contact ids@ucs.cam.ac.uk asking for the account to be cancelled.

The anonymous FTP service on CUS (providing access to <ftp://ftp.cus.cam.ac.uk/pub>) will be closed down 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.

PWF filestore

In early August the PWF filestore suffered two major hardware problems. As a result some users' home directories were unavailable for a significant period of time and had to be reconstructed from tape backups made a day before the failure. The Computing Service apologises for the inconvenience caused.

The plans for new hardware to replace the whole of the PWF filestore, which were already underway, have been brought forward as a result of this episode. A new storage system with greatly increased capacity and reliability has been purchased, and will be implemented shortly after the beginning of the Michaelmas Term.

Once the new system has settled down, it is expected that there will be an increase in filespace quotas both for individuals and for group filespace.

Passwords on the PWF

It was reported in the last Newsletter that, for technical reasons, some changes are being planned to the way passwords are handled on the PWF. The first stage happened as planned on 20 August, and had little effect on users.

No other changes to existing services are expected before the Christmas vacation; however, users of the new CIFS service described below will need to reset their PWF passwords and thereafter treat them as being case-sensitive.

New pilot CIFS service on the PWF

A new pilot CIFS service is now available on the PWF. CIFS is the Common Internet File System (CIFS) and is also known as SMB/Samba. It provides Windows, Linux and Macintosh systems with native file access to network resources, in this case to PWF personal and group filespace.

The CIFS service enables you to use your PWF personal filespace (or group filespace) directly from a non-PWF machine. When you have successfully set up your CIFS connection, your PWF filespace will appear as just another network device, and can be used in exactly the same way as any local filing system (like your CD drive or local hard disk).

CIFS provides a convenient alternative to the other methods available for remote access to your PWF filespace (NetStorage (<http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/pwf/fsaccess.html#netstorage>) or FTP access), but is currently limited to machines within the Cambridge University Data Network (VPDN access has not been fully tested and is not currently supported). Macintosh users also have the option of using AFP (see <http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/pwf/macAFP.html>), which is the native Apple way of providing a similar facility.

CIFS is particularly useful for Windows Vista since WebDAV access via NetStorage is currently not possible from Vista. Note that CIFS cannot be used from a machine with a Novell client installed (i.e. a PWF machine or a non-PWF machine with Windows Client Service for Netware, or the Novell Client installed).

Central Services News

See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cifs> for a detailed explanation of CIFS.

To use the pilot CIFS service, you need first to reset your PWF password (to ensure that your password is recorded in the place where CIFS expects to find it), and note that CIFS, unlike the rest of the PWF service, treats passwords as case-sensitive. You can then map your PWF file space to a drive letter (Windows), or mount it on your desktop (Mac and Linux). Detailed instructions for how to do this can be found at <http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/pwf/cifs.html>. If you wish, you can arrange to make this connection every time you start up your machine. CIFS can also be used to connect to shared (group) file spaces.

Network News

Lapwing ticketing system

This article is reprinted from the previous Newsletter.

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

Closure of Pelican

The Pelican archive service became read-only on 2 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 file space 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>

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.

Increase in the Cambridge Network Traffic Charge 2007/2008

The Computing Service wishes to draw the attention of institutions to the significant increase in the charge for JANET network traffic from 1 August 2007 as outlined below.

For some years, with the approval of the IT Syndicate, the Computing Service has levied a quarterly charge, based on each

institution's JANET network traffic, to meet the network charge imposed on the University by HEFCE policy (see <http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/netdiv/usagecharge.html>). The web page <http://www.ja.net/services/connections/connecting/network-charging/> explains the basis for the JANET network charge and links to a spreadsheet giving a table of charges, which are based on the total incomes of the Universities and other HE organisations that are connected to JANET.

The charge to the University for 1 Aug 2007 to 31 Jul 2008 is £261056.93 (including VAT) - an increase of £51579.15 (some 25%) compared with that for the previous year. The reason for this increase is the inclusion of Cambridge University Press in the University's accounts.

A similar increase occurred in 2005 when Cambridge Assessment was included in the University's accounts. The first bills to include this new increase will be issued in November 2007 at the end of the quarter.

Institutions may wish to note that they can estimate their quarterly charge at any point in the current quarter. The overall quarterly charge to the University in 2007-8 is £65264.23. Multiply this by the institution's fraction of the total traffic, as given at <http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/netdiv/usage/janet/sum/acct/latest/quarter.html>

VAT will generally be applicable to non-University institutions.

Sales News

Performance Figures

Percentage of orders completed, in working days:

	< 5	5-10	10-15	15-20	>20
July	97.5%	1.5%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%
August	97.7%	1.3%	0.5%	0.5%	0.0%

Computing Service IT Exhibition 2007

This exhibition will take place on Thursday 8 November 2007 from 9.30 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Large and Small Exam Halls, New Museums Site, Pembroke Street, Cambridge. There will be exhibitions and demonstrations from commercial suppliers of software, hardware and peripherals, as well as information and displays from the Computing Service including Computing Service Sales, Hardware Support, and the Photography and Illustration Service.

The event is open to all current members of staff and students of the University, and features promotional giveaways and a free Prize Draw, as well as free tea and coffee. For

more information contact Computing Service Sales on (3)34695 or sales@ucs.cam.ac.uk.

New Products

Available now:

Adobe Creative Suite Design Standard CS3/
Windows & MacOS X
Adobe Creative Suite Production Premium CS3/
Windows & MacOS X
Adobe Web Premium CS3/Windows & MacOS X
EndNote X1/Windows
ERDAS (Leica Geosystems) Imagine 9.1/Windows
& UNIX
FileMaker Pro 9/Windows & MacOS X
GenStat 10th Edition/Windows
Microsoft Expression Media/Windows
Minitab 15/Windows

Available shortly:

EndNote X1/MacOS X
FileMaker Pro Advanced 9/Windows & MacOS X
FileMaker Server 9/Windows & MacOS X
FileMaker Server Advanced 9/Windows & MacOS X
Hummingbird eXceed 2008/Windows (with
Connectivity Secure Shell 2008)
MathCad 14/Windows
Solidworks Academic Edition 2007-2008/Windows

Documentation and Courses

Leaflets

The following leaflets have been updated since the last Newsletter:

- G 93 The CUDN Dial-up Service (Magpie)
- H 19 Videoconferencing Service
- IS 17 Managing a PWF Group Filespace
- IS 19 Anti-Virus software for the Macintosh
- IS 21 Remote Access to the Internet
- IS 22 Producing PDFs on the PWF

Many of the Computing Service web pages at <http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/docs/> have also been updated over the summer.

New and Updated Courses for Michaelmas Term

We are pleased to offer the following new courses in 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
- Condor Distributed Task Scheduler: Submitting Jobs

Note that the "Introduction to Scientific Computing" will be held on Monday 8th 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)

Notices have been 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

Director of the Computing Service	Director@ucs.cam.ac.uk (334703)
Course Bookings	Course-Admin@ucs.cam.ac.uk (334662)
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
Small institution support	small-inst-support@ucs.cam.ac.uk
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.