



May 2007

This printed version of IS News contains only a few full news items with a number of brief introductory passages to others that may be found in their entirety in the on-line version. A particular article may be viewed either by clicking on the URL or by typing the URL in the address box of your web browser, or you can see the complete issue at: <http://www.inf.aber.ac.uk/news/isnews.asp>. Past issues and other recent news items and articles that are not contained in this printed version may also be seen there.

An Aberystwyth Art Find

Back in the 1980's the Library Association deposited a large collection of library planning materials with the then CLW Library. Over the years this collection has proved of great value in supporting teaching and research work both within Aberystwyth and the wider community, leading indirectly to the development of valuable electronic resources such as the new Designing Libraries website (www.designinglibraries.org.uk) which was featured in the recent *CyMAL* magazine (no 3 Winter 2006 pp14-17). Although the bulk of the original planning collection consists of architect's drawings, plans, photographs and the like, we were recently delighted to come across an old art work amongst the more technical materials. On inspection this has proved

to be an original design commissioned from Lawrence Alma-Tadema by the newly founded Library Association back in 1898.

The Royal Charter of Incorporation for the Association required the creation of a seal and it was felt that this seal "should in a sense be the expression or symbolic representation of the Geist of the Association". John MacAlister wrote on behalf of the Association in July 1898 to invite Alma-Tadema to provide a design and his suggested draft finally appeared in December along with a letter apologising for the delay. Alma-Tadema was noted for his depiction of Greek and Roman classical scenes and was a leading member of the Royal Academy. In the 1890's his standing in the art world was at its peak and he received a knighthood in 1899. Alma-Tadema noted that he had found it difficult to symbolise the aim of the Association but *The Library* magazine for 1899 felt "the design is in every way worthy of Mr. Alma-Tadema's reputation, and is

perfectly appropriate to its purpose. The treatment is symbolic – the Library Association being represented as a female figure (is this meant as an encouragement to lady librarians?) engaged in distributing substantial looking volumes to a group of students. Neither the indicator nor the open access party can claim the design as in their favour, for while the shelves beside the lady are open the readers are not helping themselves, nor are there any signs of an indicator. ... The Association should feel highly honoured by this gift from one of the greatest of living artists".

Unfortunately the work has suffered rather from the ravages of time, although fortunately the core of the design remains intact. Over the coming months we are planning to conserve the drawing and hope that in due course it will be possible to display it alongside other items in the School of Art Gallery and Museum at UW Aberystwyth.

Bill Hines, Assistant Director, Library and Advisory Services
(whh@aber.ac.uk)



What Information Services Can Do For You

The **Briefing Paper on Information Services** has been produced in consultation with Admissions & Recruitment for Departments and student guides for use on Visiting Days and Open Days. Copies will also be available from the Information Desk in Hugh Owen Library. Also please note the following:

Workstation rooms to be included in Campus Tours

- Our largest workstation room is B23 in Llandinam Building which contains 100 pcs, but if you do not wish to visit Llandinam the following are suggested:
- Hugh Owen Library - EL6 - this is the main computer room in the Library on Level E (middle floor). This is popular with students because they can use library materials, there are 2 printers in the room and the Computing Help Desk is adjacent - computing staff will help students at their desktop in this room.
- C66 in the Hugh Owen Building - a good example of a smaller, nicely laid out room.

Student led visits/tours of the Hugh Owen Library

The Information Desk in the Hugh Owen Library will act as a back-up for student led visits/tours. If anyone in the group has a question about Information Services which the students are unable to answer, they can ask at the Information Desk on the way out.

<http://www.inf.aber.ac.uk/central/is-portfolio.asp>

Lillian Stevenson, Team Leader, Subject Support and E-Library Team

(lis@aber.ac.uk)

Disaster Day

In early January Information Services interrupted computing services for a day to carry out a second successful trial of its Disaster Recovery Plan. This confirmed that the basics of the Plan are sound and identified areas to which further resources could usefully be devoted. Fuller details are available at: <http://www.inf.aber.ac.uk/news/computing/disasterreport07.asp>

Jeremy Perkins, Assistant Director Central IT Services

(jwp@aber.ac.uk)

E-learning Benchmarking

Back in January, the Higher Education Academy invited interested universities to become involved in the second phase of their E-learning Benchmarking programme. Aberystwyth submitted an expression of interest and we have been successfully admitted to the programme.

The benchmarking exercise will take place between May and December 2007 and we will be supported in our work by consultants provided by the Academy. We will also be working with other universities across the UK, including University of Wales Bangor, following an internationally-recognised benchmarking standard – the E-learning Maturity Model or eMM.

The exercise will require us to take a comprehensive look at the role of e-learning in the university's planning and strategic processes, and will give us a thorough overview of the position of e-learning within the institution. To help us with this work, Mary Jacob, our E-learning Advisor, will be working full-time between April and December 2007.

There is more information about the benchmarking exercise on the Higher Education Academy's web site at

<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/benchmarking.htm> and <http://elearning.heacademy.ac.uk/weblogs/benchmarking/>

Kate Wright, E-learning Development Officer

(kaw@aber.ac.uk)

AStRA Developments

The following developments in and around the AStRA system may be of interest to users of this system:

- Timetable data now integrated into AStRA and used to generate personal lecture timetables for students to access on the web.
- A system has been developed to support the allocation of students into Module Seminar Groups. We are hoping to arrange a session to demonstrate this before the start of next session.
- Students can now specify on-line their requirements for attending the degree ceremony.
- A new form will soon be available for authorised users to check basic HR details for staff in a department.
- Web-based address/postcode lookup system is being implemented in various areas of AStRA and the web.

For further information on any of these areas or any other aspects of AStRA please contact

Laurence Dupont, Assistant Director, Management Information Services

(lrd@aber.ac.uk)

Blackboard in Welsh

For some time staff and students have been asking whether it would be possible to access Blackboard through the medium of Welsh. As from next academic year this will now be possible, thanks to an upgrade of our Blackboard system and a comprehensive translation from University of Wales Bangor.

The forthcoming upgrade to the full Blackboard Learning System allows us to offer a Welsh language interface to Blackboard. This will enable staff and students to set a default language of Welsh for their work in Blackboard, and will also allow users to choose a language for individual modules.

All system elements will be available in Welsh. Students will be able to browse their modules in Welsh and see a Welsh interface to discussion boards, assignment submission and quizzes. Staff will see a Welsh language Control Panel and will be able to undertake all aspects of setting up a module in Welsh.

The translation work has been undertaken by staff at the University of Wales Bangor, and we would like to express our thanks to Bangor for all their hard work.

In parallel with this, we will be updating our helpsheets to reflect the new Welsh language menus etc, but as you may appreciate this will take us some time to implement. We appreciate your patience as we undertake this work.

If you have any queries about using Blackboard, or want to know more about the Welsh interface, please email bb-team@aber.ac.uk

Kate Wright, E-learning Development Officer

(kaw@aber.ac.uk)

Speeding Things Up

A faster link to the School of Art, the Buarth workstation room, and to Brynderw Hall of Residence, is now being installed. Fuller details at:

<http://www.inf.aber.ac.uk/news/computing/artslink.asp>

Graduation DVD

This year Desktop Services will be producing DVDs of the graduation ceremonies which will be selling @ £15 each.

Whilst filming we will also stream the ceremonies, enabling people who are unable to make graduation to view it at home via a computer. We will also relay the ceremonies into the cinema in the Arts Centre, a service which proved to be very popular with our visitors last year.

Nigel Thomas, Team Leader Technical Support

(Int@aber.ac.uk)

Consulting Rare Books

The Hugh Owen Library has a number of Special Collections that are not on open access and a new procedure for consulting rare books by visually impaired readers is now in place. Users should contact the Library either by filling in an online request or by visiting the Loans Enquiry Desk 24 hours in advance so that the material can be located and its condition assessed for use. The reader will then be sent an email to make arrangements to use the item. Rare books may only be consulted during normal working hours, i.e. 9.15am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday.

A full list of the Library's Special Collections may be seen at this link: <http://www.inf.aber.ac.uk/academicliaison/collections/location.asp>

Judy Lile, Teamleader, Lending Services

(jvl@aber.ac.uk)

The Tuesday 'At Risk' Period

I'm sure that you have all seen the Tuesday 'At Risk' messages on your computers and may be a little annoyed at these interruptions, but there are very good safety and security reasons for them.

For more information see: <http://www.inf.aber.ac.uk/news/computing/atrisk.asp>

Inter-library loans

We are in the process of implementing a new module of our Voyager library system for handling of Inter-library loan (ILL) requests. This will allow you to see your outstanding ILL requests as well as ILL items that are on loan to you through the 'View your user information' section of the Voyager library catalogue.

For more information on placing ILL requests see: <http://www.inf.aber.ac.uk/lending/interlibraryloans.asp>.

Christiane Erika Kloos, Library Systems Officer

(cek@aber.ac.uk)

Slide Scanning Service

DTS now offers a slide scanning service. With the growth of digital images and presentation methods we decided to invest in a batch slide scanner enabling us to offer this service.

Further details can be found at <http://www.inf.aber.ac.uk/mediaservices/slide-neg.asp>

Nigel Thomas, Team Leader Technical Support
(nt@aber.ac.uk)

Microsoft Windows Vista and Office 2007

You will have without doubt noticed in the media that Microsoft has released a new version of their Windows Operating System which is called Microsoft Vista, and also a considerably revised version of their Microsoft Office Suite called Office 2007. These new systems are now installed as standard on most newly purchased IT equipment and are available to UWA staff as an upgrade free of charge under the terms of our Microsoft Campus Agreement. It is highly likely that these items of software will be installed on the vast majority of systems which the new intake of undergraduates will bring to UWA in Academic Year 2007/2008.

We believe that these developments will require us to update our public workstation system by installing Vista and Office 2007 in order to remain compatible with up-to-date systems. These new items of software are desirable since they have a very considerably enhanced graphical user interface and are considerably more secure than their predecessors, minimising risks of the propagation of viruses and spyware.

Information Services have been deliberating on the timing of the upgrade of our public workstations and have concluded that in order to allow tutors as much time as possible to incorporate revisions into their courses, we should not update the software on our public workstation systems until the summer of 2008.



However, our public workstations are now very old, are extremely slow to boot-up, and do not support measures to conserve electricity; we regularly receive complaints about them in meetings with departments. As such we intend to replace all of our public workstations during the summer of 2007 with new systems which will perform well running the current Windows XP-based system and which will also be able to run Vista when we upgrade the software during the following summer.

Delays that will occur in Information Services rolling out the new software on the extensive network of Public Workstations do not need to hold UWA staff members up and DVDs of Microsoft Windows Vista and Office 2007 are now available from Data Prep for use on your departmental PCs. The DVDs are priced at £3 each to cover the cost of production. The software is available free to University staff and departments under the Microsoft Campus license agreement. This agreement allows the following to be installed on University-owned and staff PCs: Windows Vista Enterprise Upgrade and Microsoft Office Enterprise 2007.

Currently, Vista may only be installed on PCs on-campus as it requires activation from a central service. We are investigating ways of allowing staff to use Vista from home under the agreement and will be announcing this shortly.

For help and guidance on Windows Vista see <http://www.inf.aber.ac.uk/advisory/faq/6/>

For help and guidance on Office 2007 see <http://www.inf.aber.ac.uk/advisory/faq/7/>

Tim Davies, Desktop Systems Manager
(tid@aber.ac.uk)

Other articles on the online version

Land, Life and Leisure celebrates its 30 anniversary: <http://www.inf.aber.ac.uk/news/may07/lll.asp>

Results of the 'Suggestions Harvest' that was held earlier this session: <http://www.inf.aber.ac.uk/news/may07/harvest.asp>

Editorial Team

Elgan Davies (epd), Laurence Dupont (lrd), Mary Green (mcg), Jacqui Kenton (jck), Christine Hughes (cmh), Simon Marshall (som), Dermot Ryan (drr), Jackie Woollam (jaw), Kate Wright (kaw).

Information Services, The University of Wales, Aberystwyth, Penglais, Aberystwyth, SY23 3DZ.

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