



May 2008

This printed version of IS News contains only a few of the full articles and some brief introductory passages to others that may be found in their entirety in the on-line version. Past issues and other recent news items and articles that are not contained in this printed version may also be seen there.

Summer 2008 Vista Upgrade

Information Services is installing Microsoft's latest operating system, Windows Vista, on all of its computers in public workstation rooms and centrally-time tabled teaching rooms over the summer 2008. This is the second part of a two-year programme to update our desktop IT facilities across campus. Last summer we replaced all of our 550 public PCs with brand new machines and this year we are completing this project by updating these new PCs to Vista. Many software packages that are part of the desktop are being updated at the same time.

For the past year our public workstations have been "dual running", with the old Microsoft Office 2003 coexisting with the newer and very much improved Office 2007. However, "dual running" cannot be a permanent solution, not least because of the technical support and resource issues involved. It is therefore proposed

that we will no longer make Office 2003 and FrontPage available on public workstations with effect from the end of summer 2008.

However, if the discontinuation of this software on public workstations will have a serious impact upon your work or your teaching, I urge you to contact me as a matter of urgency so that we can reconsider the way forward.

The Vista upgrade will enable us to provide our staff and students with the latest software for teaching and learning, and equip our students with the IT skills required by business when they graduate. These developments will keep Aberystwyth University at the forefront of desktop IT provision.

Development of the public service Vista desktop has been on-going since mid 2007 and we are making examples of the desktop available



during April 2008 in the Media Centre in the Hugh Owen Library. The purpose of this will be to gather feedback on the desktop, allow staff to gain familiarity with it, and provide plenty of time for teaching materials to be updated where appropriate.

For more information on these developments, contact Tim Davies, Desktop Systems Manager on tim.davies@aber.ac.uk or extension 2924. Please refer to www.inf.aber.ac.uk/micros/vista.

The IGER Merger

As a result of the merger of IGER with the University, Information Services has assumed responsibility for providing library and IT services to the Plas Gogerddan site. We extend a warm welcome to the ex-IGER library staff under the direction of Steve Smith (tns@aber.ac.uk) and the IT staff under the direction of Andrew Chick (anc@aber.ac.uk). Although a considerable amount of interaction has already occurred in the run-up to merger, the initial post-merger period will consist of a gradual familiarisation and assimilation process with staff having opportunities to get to know their work colleagues and become familiar with how things are currently done in other parts of the department. Whilst it will very much be business as usual during this early phase we will, at the same time, be anxious to develop and extend IT and library services by building on the strengths and synergies that merger presents. Provision has already been made for upgrading IT equipment on the Plas Gogerddan site and plans are already well advanced for the excavation of a nearly 6 kilometres long duct between Penglais and Plas Gogerddan to provide staff based there with the resilient, high speed/bandwidth network infrastructure that will be needed as IBERS develops its research activities. On the Library side plans are similarly in place for the rationalisation and re-cataloguing of stock and for the introduction of new self-issue and related equipment.



These are early days, of course. In the longer term, as plans for the new Institute take shape and as new buildings and facilities come on stream, so library and IT services will need to respond accordingly so as to ensure that Information Services plays its full part in helping IBERS to achieve its aims and realise its vision. But that's for the future and maybe another issue of this Newsletter.

Mike Hopkins, Director of Information Services (mhh@aber.ac.uk)

E-learning Benchmarking

As a result of the work conducted by the AU Benchmarking Team since January 2006, a successful bid was recently made to HEFCW for additional Learning & Teaching monies to develop e-learning projects and dissemination of good practice.

For more information on the background to this bid and the scope of the project, see: <http://www.inf.aber.ac.uk/news/may08/bench.asp>

DVDs and Videos in the Hugh Owen Library

DVDs and videos in the Short Loan Collection in the Hugh Owen Library can now be borrowed for an extended period of 15 hours. This is in response to suggestions from users that the loan period for these items be extended from 10 hours so as to make it possible to watch boxed sets in one loan period – for those who enjoy marathon viewing sessions! As these items are heavily used the fine will remain 50p per hour overdue, so do make sure you keep the receipt from the self issue machine which notes the date and time when the item is due back, and then remember to bring it back in time. Please also note that there are DVD players within the Hugh Owen Library which you are welcome to use.

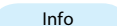
If you have any questions, please contact Elizabeth Kensler (eak@aber.ac.uk) or Nia Ellis (nrj@aber.ac.uk), Customer Services Managers, Library Services Division. Email csmstaff@aber.ac.uk, phone 01970 621848.

Hugh Owen Library Changes

During the Easter Vacation there were some limited refurbishment activities within Hugh Owen Library which have resulted in some service delivery changes. A new public access point has been provided for Media and Printing Services with a new service counter opposite to the issue desk on D floor of the library. At the same time the existing enquiry desks on this floor have been reorganised. A new reception/welcome desk facility is located close to the entrance, providing direction and referral services. The loans enquiry point has been moved further along the issue counter to enable us to provide a more streamlined service to users. The quick reference collection and information desk has been moved to Level F where the majority of loan stock is housed, since it is felt that this may help us to provide a fuller service to users with specific reference and study requests in a section of the building where staff support has been limited in recent years. We will be monitoring the impact of these changes over the coming months and hope they will result in an improved level of service to users.

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

ScienceDirect – Elsevier – Freedom Collection

Aberystwyth staff and students will be pleased to hear that we now subscribe to the Freedom Collection of ScienceDirect, published by Elsevier. This prestigious collection gives you full text access to over 1900 scholarly journals, covering the years 2004 to 2008. For more information use the info  button on ElecInfo/JoEy.

To search and/or browse through ScienceDirect, access via ElecInfo: <http://www.inf.aber.ac.uk/electinfo/eiaz.asp#sdelsevier>

To access individual ScienceDirect titles search via JoEy: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/is/ejournals/>

Lillian Stevenson, Academic Services Manager (lis@sber.ac.uk)



The National Six Book Challenge

Thomas Parry Library has launched the national Six Book Challenge with the aim of encouraging reading and improving literacy skills. Staff and students are invited to sign up for the challenge and read six books. Upon completion a certificate is awarded and they will also have the chance to win an all expenses paid trip to London – courtesy of the Costa Book Awards.



**The
Vital
Link**

The Reading Agency, the independent charity working to get more reading to more people, has set up the national Six Book Challenge in association with the Costa Book Awards. The Six Book Challenge is targeted at adults who want to improve their literacy skills, and forms part of the Vital Link programme for libraries and literacy run by The Reading Agency.

read
the reading agency

Anita Saycell, Subject Support and E-Library Team (aiv@aber.ac.uk)

Prize Draw Winner

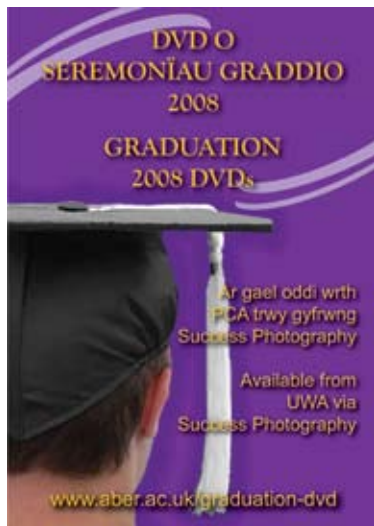
Kyle Bachan's name was the first to be pulled out of the hat in our Book Review prize draw, and he will soon be the recipient of the £30 book token prize! The prize draw follows on from our successful World Book Day lunchtime talk with author Lyn Ebenezer, and celebrates the start of the National Year of Reading 2008. The winning review and a selection of the other entries will be posted on the Prize Draw web page at <http://www.inf.aber.ac.uk/bookreview/>.

Hannah Payne, Graduate Trainee, Library Services Division

Tweek Update

Tweek, which was originally created by the Department of Computer Science here at AU but subsequently developed commercially by Khaydor, has not been supported by the company since December 2006. As a result we have been looking at alternatives for the Attendance and Assessment features and are pleased to report that progress has been made on both these fronts.

For more on this development, see: <http://www.inf.aber.ac.uk/news/may08/tweek.asp>



Graduation 2008 DVD

Information Services is pleased to announce that once again we will be recording the Graduation Ceremonies of 2008 and making them available for purchase at £15 each, the same price as in 2007.

The DVD is not just a record of the ceremonies themselves, but also of views of Aberystwyth and the surrounding area, campus views and candid post graduation celebrations. Things that we are sure will bring back memories in years to come. You could even show the kids!

A sample of last year's DVD can be seen on-line at:

<http://streaming.aber.ac.uk/Unrestricted/Departments/infoserv/graduation/sample.wmv>

Please note that this is streaming quality and not the quality of the actual DVD.

Further details of how to order can be found at:

<http://www.aber.ac.uk/academicoffice/graduation/index.shtml>

and choose the menu item on the left of the page.

Or you can contact Nigel Thomas, Technical Support Team Leader (nlt@aber.ac.uk)

Welsh Data Network

Devolution has given the opportunity for broadband networking between public bodies in Wales to be co-ordinated in a way that, as yet, has not proved possible elsewhere in the United Kingdom. The size of the country has been of benefit in this, some of the terrain less so - who put Plynlimon in the way here and Tregaron Bog there?

A network spanning Wales - the Lifelong Learning Network (LLNW) - was introduced in 2003 linking the universities, Further Education colleges, and Local Authorities. From this summer a new higher-speed network is being introduced to which the Welsh NHS is being added; this has been given the over-arching title of the Public Sector Broadband Aggregation or PSBA.

Such developments have been good news for Aberystwyth University, as without them the speed and reliability of connection to the JANET network and the Internet could well have remained at the 2003 level of a single connection down the coast by microwave link - people may recall the increasing bottlenecks on traffic and not infrequent lengthy losses of service. With the LLNW we have seen regular improvements to bandwidth speed and independent connections to the Internet going north via Wrexham and south via Cardiff.

The new network takes this a stage further in terms both of upgraded speed and resilient links across the country. Apart from these direct benefits to users, Aberystwyth has gained a good deal of prestige from being involved at first with the LLNW and now the PSBA. As possibly the major Internet user in the area and the institution with the greatest amount of technical expertise, we have been playing a key role in supporting connections not only within the University but in much of Mid-Wales as well. This has resulted in core switching equipment and the main high-speed links out of the area being concentrated at the University, enhancing both our service and reputation.

These are interesting times both internationally and within Wales as faster and faster broadband connections are demanded, and it is good to have Aberystwyth so closely involved.

Jeremy Perkins, Assistant Director, Central IT Services (jwp@aber.ac.uk)

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