OUCS Report Michaelmas Term

OUCS User Satisfaction Survey

OUCS ran a survey for users to assess their satisfaction with the services we offer. We had over 1,500 replies from across the University (staff and students) and the were very encouraging showing high satisfaction with OUCS's services. Ur also demonstrated that most users looked to their local IT support for help in the first instance so the devolved model of support seems to be working (many thanks). The results are currently being analysed more fully, and thus more to follow on this.

New Shared Data Centre - the USDC

This is now fully functional and we welcome approaches concerning co-location or use of the virtualised infrastructure - http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/sis/. We are also progressing rapidly with our Database as a Service, and have been working extensively with VMWare through their Activate programme on demonstrating running and migrating a Vapp between our private cloud and a public cloud (using Colt).

For less technical people...The services offered from the University Shared Data Centre (USDC) are called 'Shared Infrastructure Services (SIS)'. We offer your college, department, faculty or research group, a set of interlinked services which range from the basic physical hosting of your equipment through to full virtual data centre and hybrid cloud computing facilities. Further information can be found on the website: http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/sis/ or contact: sis@oucs.ox.ac.uk . We also have a video which explains more about the services and the costs on our sharepoint site: https://sharepoint.nexus.ox.ac.uk/sites/usdc/SitePages/Home.aspx

New Information Security Policy

A new policy on Information Security has been approved by the PRAC ICT Sub-committee and will soon be submitted for consideration by Council. The policy was drafted by the ICT Forum's Information Security Advisory Group in consultation with the Legal Services Office, Council Secretariat and the Information Security Best Practice Project (ISBP). We (the ISBP team) are now working with Council Secretariat to finalise the wording of the policy and to begin the process of submitting the policy to Council. We ask units to start considering the policy now and to be aware of the responsibilities Heads of Department will have. The latest draft of the policy is available at: http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/network/security/ISBP/ispolicy.xml

We are also developing an online toolkit to help support the new policy: http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/network/security/ISBP/toolkit. We aim to provide a resource for everyone with suggested technical solutions and example local policies. We welcome contributions to the toolkit - we are looking for anything from local policies, tools or solutions you have implemented to general advice on good practice within Information Security. To offer material please contact us at: infosec@oucs.ox.ac.uk .

Further information on the Information Security Best Practice Project can be found at: http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/network/security/ISBP or contact: infosec@oucs.ox.ac.uk .

Phishing attacks

Over the summer, and during term, several dozen Oxford accounts have been compromised as a result of successful email phishing attacks. Abuse of compromised accounts to send spam can significantly impact deliveries of legitimate University email. As described in OxCERT's blog post (http://blogs.oucs.ox.ac.uk/oxcert/2011/08/12/the-price-of-phish/), the cost of these incidents in terms of OUCS staff time has been considerable and is impacting other work. While OUCS will continue to put the message across, it is necessary for *all* users to be vigilant, and for IT staff across the University to assist in educating users.

Network Operations Team

With the retirement of Geoff Lescott after 38 years in OUCS, and the increasing deployment of VoIP throughout the University, Network Control has been restructured and becomes the Network Operations Team. With a planned expansion to a total of 5 persons, the team will be responsible for the deployment, maintenance and monitoring of the FroDo, OWL, VoIP and other network related hardware, the University's sizeable fibre optic infrastructure and will also take on the tier 1 support for ITSS on network issues.

Media Production Unit

As of 1st October, MPU became part of OUCS. This will allow us to bring together core services in digital filming, editing, podcasting, and videoconferencing greatly expanding our service portfolio and supporting this work. We think this is major step forward and over the term will be advertising the services we can offer.

Oxford Nexus upgrades to Exchange 2010

Early next year (some time between January and April) the Oxford Nexus service will be upgraded to use Exchange 2010. This is an enormous change for the Nexus Team running the service (as nearly all of the hardware infrastructure is being changed, as well as the upgrade to software across the board). For the end users (the consumers of the service) the change will be gradual and we hope hardly noticeable. However, in the months leading up to January 2012, we need to make a lot of preparatory changes and these may cause breaks in service during the Tuesday morning maintenance periods (7-9am): apologies in advance for these. The major benefits for the end users are: working on the latest software; the same view of Outlook Web Access for users of Internet Explorer, Firefox, and Safari (on Mac). During the period of transition (as we move Jan-April) there may be some aspects of the service that are impacted for some users. We are testing for these now and will report beforehand on anything to expect.

Training Courses and Events

This term's programme offered a combination of established courses and a selection of new and updated ones. The schedule is online at:http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/itlp/courses/atoz

WHAT'S NEW

Office 2010 This term our courses in Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook Nexus for Windows will use Office 2010. From Trinity 2012, courses using Access will also use version 2010. The full set of Office 2003 and 2007 handbooks, with exercise files and support material will remain online, so you can still download them from the archive area of the ITLP Portfolio.

If you use a different version from that used in our taught course, do still attend, as much of the material will easily transfer. For more information please visit:
http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/itlp/office.xml

ArcGIS A Geographic Information System (GIS) is designed to store, query, analyse, process, and visualise spatial data. It is typically used for making maps and performing spatial analysis. Our two new courses show you how to get started using ArcGIS.
http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/itlp/courses/detail/TMPD

EndNote on Mac Our popular Endnote courses are now also being taught on a Mac platform. http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/itlp/courses/detail/TDBIM

SketchUp If you are interested in creating virtual 3D objects, you will be interested in our new course that introduces the concepts of 3D modelling using Google Sketchup, a free program for Windows and Mac OS X.
http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/itlp/courses/detail/TIMZB

Python We now have a 3 hour introduction to this popular programming language.
http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/itlp/courses/detail/TPLT You don't have to be a seasoned programmer to benefit from this course, but it would help if you have some background in the concepts of programming, such as is given on our Programming Concepts course
http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/itlp/courses/detail/TPLL

WISER As part of the programme the Bodleian Libraries are offering another extensive range of WISER workshops which will help you to make the most of published and unpublished information in your research and learning.

ICT Co-ordination (ICCP)

The University is looking at how best we can further integrate the three central IT providers - OUCS, BSP, ICT CT - to better the experience for end users, governance,

resource allocation, and decision-making. The first stage of this will run until January 2012 under Professor Anne Trefethen of the OeRC. For more information see www.iccp.ox.ac.uk

OUCS End of Year 2010-11

OUCS produced its best ever figures for many years returning only a small deficit of c. 40k. Our FEC recovery is bolstering this by contributing over 300k from externally funded research projects, plus our sales and services had a very good year. In terms of expenditure, our payroll decreased in real terms, but we saw higher than expected spend on equipment (which is still critically under-resourced). With the proposed college contribution (which will hopefully be ratified by the Conference of Colleges this term) we are on target to meet our 10% cuts by 2013.

Stuart D Lee