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ICTF News

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MICHAELMAS 2009

Welcome

Welcome to the Michaelmas ICTF Newsletter. By the time of reading the Nexus migration should be all but completed and the students should have largely left us. All in all it's been a very busy term but looking back we should all congratulate ourselves that the new intake has successfully been inducted, we have survived a major email change and that the IT systems we support are all doing what they should be doing.

This is a good time of year to stop and remind ourselves about all the work we have done over the year. Often those we support fail to see just how much work has gone on behind the scenes to ensure that their computer needs are met safely and efficiently. It is usually only when things are going wrong that we are visible, as all too often the ICT support is the silent hub of the institution. It is the case that the best IT support is the one where all the work is quietly hidden and the systems "just" work.

Now we all know that systems don't "just" work, that web pages don't take minutes to produce, that IT application change does take planning and time to get right and that the network doesn't keep itself secure. So, I think, it is our duty as IT officers to make sure that the efforts we put in are recognised and that just occasionally we remind people that what they take for granted has taken hours of work at the IT office computer. Advertise what you do and celebrate your successes in the workplace for all to see.

I wish you all a lovely Christmas break and suggest you give yourself a pat on the back for another year of successful IT at Oxford.

Sarah Lawson
IT Manager
Harris Manchester College



IT Suppliers' Exhibition 2009

10th December saw another successful IT Suppliers' Exhibition organized for us once again by Exhibition Management Limited. There was an excellent range of



many stands and many visitors

suppliers present again and the freebies appear to have been largely unaffected by the recession! This year the event included two seminars: One about Secure, Scalable and managed 802.11n wireless and one about Window 7. These attracted a fair number of people and I think increased the overall attendance at the event quite well. Lunch was provided again and was extremely well-received by all those present. One attendee commented: "Really impressed with how the food was managed at the suppliers exhibition today. It was ordered and calm and managed, with

food coming out from the servery area in a staged process, so that everyone got the chance to fill a plate with food, and people did not try to go back for more, until everybody had a first crack. Half empty trays of sandwiches were consolidated as things went on, so that sandwiches stayed fresh and nicely presented.



much better lunch!

What a huge improvement on previous years! Well done to whoever sorted it out."

I am grateful to everyone who attended and grateful to EML for organizing the event so smoothly once again.

Tony Brett
Head of IT Support Staff Services

A year of projects

We come to the end of what has been a very busy year for IT around the University, with a number of projects coming to fruition.

The Collegiate University is now starting to see the impact of projects that have finally been realised from the list of desirable projects in the ICT Strategy. The most obvious of these of course is the implementation of the Exchange groupware solution, which arrived in the second half of the year. By all accounts, the transition for most users has been a very smooth process and this will hopefully continue as the final batches of users are transferred from Herald and other systems. It will be interesting to see how the use of calendaring and the new Sharepoint service develops over the coming year and if those dusty (and full) diaries get put back on the shelves, in favour of an electronic solution. Another high-profile project has been the wider implementation of wireless networking across the University. This has been of great benefit to students in particular and has certainly changed the use of space in my own unit.

There have also been a number of smaller projects that have come out of PICT (the University's main ICT committee) this year and these of course are just as important. This gives me an opportunity to highlight the fact that small bids to the ICT Capital Envelope can be decided by PICT itself. This is of course a great opportunity for ITSS, particularly if you have projects within your own unit that require some financial support and that could perhaps be piloted or indeed scaled-up to benefit the wider University. The ICTF steering group would be delighted to help with this and I would like to think that we could make a strong case to PICT on your behalf. Please get in touch.

The ICT Information Security Best Practice exercise (self-assessment questionnaire) was completed by many units over the summer. There will be an update from the Information Security SIG at the ICTF meeting regarding this and how it is likely to develop as we go into 2010.

Representing the views of departmental and college ICT staff on a variety of committees and project boards can at times be a challenge. To help me with this though, I really need to hear your views and thoughts on projects and services and the IT changes within your own unit. If you have any comments, suggestions or just require some advice, do please get in touch. Remember, the ICTF is **your** voice and needs **your** involvement.

Jeremy J Worth
Chairman, ICT Forum
ICT Manager, School of Archaeology

"small bids to the ICT Capital Envelope can be decided by PICT itself. This is of course a great opportunity for ITSS"

Oxbridge College IT Officers: Duxford 2009

As this was the first Oxbridge College IT Conference I've attended, I had little idea as to what to expect. Reports of previous conferences centered largely around the freebies, and that the F1 simulator at the 2008 conference was not to be missed.

Consequently I attended, unhindered by expectations, and felt this year's conference at the Imperial War Museum, Duxford was a success for a host of reasons.

The sponsor stands from Sharp, 3Com, Pars, Salto, and Khipu were useful without being intrusive (and yes, the freebies were of the high quality we have come to expect from this event).

The keynote presentation by Microsoft entitled "How Technology Will Affect the University of the Future" was certainly interesting, if not a little daunting. It was then back down to earth for the seminars and round table discussions, dealing with more current issues. The topics on offer ranged from everyday IT practicalities that affect us all, such as backup

strategies, to those that may be less universally applicable but were certainly pertinent, such as virtualisation, wireless networking, green IT, and remote access.



(l to r) Steve Kersley, Matt Jennings, Sarah Lawson & Karen James

The social highlight of this year's conference was the dinner, held under the wings of Concorde. Not only was the dinner excellent, it was a great opportunity to get to know not just our counterparts in Cambridge, but also our counterparts in other Oxford colleges. I can't speak for everyone who attended, but for me, having the time and opportunity to find out what projects other people are embarking on, or have just completed, was one of the most interesting and beneficial aspects of the day.

Steve Kersley from Keble College Oxford won a 32" TV from the Sharp stand and was delighted with it until he had to try to get it home on the bus!

I think it's fair to say that all those who attended found the event both enjoyable and useful, and I shall certainly be attending next year.

Karen James
Computing Manager
Worcester College

Profile: Natasha Heaton

I've been working for the School of Anthropology and also the School of Interdisciplinary Area Studies for 6 years now, something I can't quite believe myself!

I came here after having 13 months of maternity leave with my first daughter. Before that, I started in IT in 1995, always working with Microsoft products. The same as many of us in IT, I fell into it, originally starting out as a translator of French, German and Spanish – I know, that sounds far more glamorous doesn't it? Would I have been working in a basement office knee deep in cables if I'd stayed in that career? Doubt it.

and then the last few months are spent wondering whether you can ever do your job again.

Part of this is definitely because you suffer from the common "mashed potato" brain post baby/pregnancy. Another part of it is because your life is so full of washing, dirty nappies and sloppy goo food that you can't ever imagine donning a smart outfit, talking to adults and drinking a hot cup of coffee, let alone actually having to work.

That first day back is both terrifying and exciting. I couldn't wait to see everybody, but knew I'd have trouble with all the changes that would have inevitably happened as technology marches on. Both times it took 5 months for me to feel in control of my position again. I've had my colleague to thank for helping me regain management of the team and projects as users inevitably deferred to him as I'd been absent.

I have been extremely lucky with returning to the office both times. I've had problems with childcare, a common complaint amongst parents, and my employers have allowed me to work flexible hours in order to accommodate picking up from different locations and the nursery not having a place. Without this flexibility, I would not have been able to return to work as we live so far away,

so it's been vital.

Natasha is the IT Manager at the School of Anthropology and the School of Interdisciplinary Area Studies where she manages 3 staff and plans, provides, manages and supports IT for both those units



Natasha and her girls

In the 6 years that I've been here I've managed to produce a further 2 daughters, and have therefore had 2 years of maternity leave.

A strange thing maternity leave: You're desperate for it by the time it comes around, you spend the first couple of months worrying about what's going on at work, then a lot of months not thinking about it at all as reality of being a mum of more than one kicks in,

ICT Forum Conference 2010 is going to take place at the Kassam Stadium on Wednesday 14th July 2010. Get it in your diary now!

Next year's ICTF conference promises to be the biggest and best yet. We have taken the decision to move to a much larger venue so we can accommodate more people and deliver a superior event. There will be transport from Oxford City Centre and emergency transport available all day for those who need to keep servers and networks and so on up and running. Plans are still embryonic but we hope to take over the next door bowlplex in the evening for some serious bowling for ITSS!



Oxford University ICT Forum Steering Committee

ICTF Chair:

Jeremy Worth (Archaeology)

ICTF Secretary:

Sarah Lawson (Harris Manchester)

Elected Members:

Jonathan Ashton (OUCS)

Gerard Robinson (IMSU)

Janet McKnight (OUCS)

Natasha Heaton (Anthropology)

James Dore (New College)

Jon Lockley (OeRC)

Co-opted members:

Katherine Ferguson (SERS)

(2 more may be co-opted by the committee)

**... representing all Oxford University's IT Staff
in top-level ICT decision-making and planning**



ICTF provides a framework that promotes and facilitates excellence incorporating the full involvement of ICT Staff in both the strategic development and day-to-day running of ICT in the Collegiate University. The ICTF Steering Committee (ICTF-SC) oversees the operation of the ICTF. The Steering Committee is led by the ICTF Secretary and meets at least once per term, usually just prior to the ICTF termly meeting.

Got an article or idea for an article?

Email it to its3@oucs.ox.ac.uk

<http://www.ictf.ox.ac.uk>

Oxford Women's Network (OWN)

The Oxford Women's Network exists to enhance the quality of life for the community of women within the collegiate University. OWN is designed to connect female faculty members, staff and students and to serve as a clearing-house for services and information (conferences, training courses etc.) and a forum for networking and discussion of issues affecting women in the University.

Benefits of networking include personal and career development, greater visibility, increased social and work contacts and sharing of information. The University benefits through greater communication with and a better understanding of the needs of female staff. Established ways of networking include attending meetings, dining in or going for drinks after work. Many women, as well as men, are able to join in these informal networks, but, usually because of responsibilities at home, others cannot.



Weekly emails containing a round-up of news and events are circulated by the Gender Equality Project Officer. OWN has recently held a re-launch event, hosted by Dame Fiona Caldicott, the then Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Personnel and Equality), and looks forward to many future events, suggested, organised and led by its members. Dame Fiona was recently succeeded by Dr Sally Mapstone as Pro Vice Chancellor for Personnel and Equality.



The OWN WebLearn site provides a means of online networking, so please do feel free to post events, upload resources (articles, posters etc), and post queries, links and tips in the forums. The livelier the site becomes, the more effective a resource for you and other Oxford women it will be!

Please see the OWN website at: <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/gender/own.shtml> for further information on the WebLearn site and many other sources of information, networking and support.



Oxford & Cambridge ICT Collaboration

We are hoping to get much greater interaction and collaboration between Oxford and Cambridge University ICT Officers. If anyone would be interested in helping to make this happen then please email sarah.lawson@hmc.ox.ac.uk Note we are also intending to invite Cambridge IT Officers to the Oxford ICT Forum Conference which will be held at the Kassam Stadium on Wednesday 14th July 2010.

