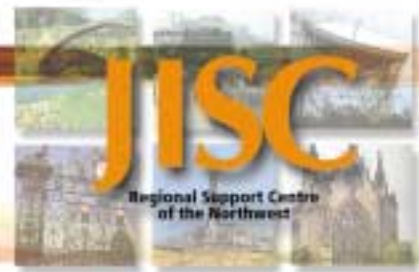


# RSC Northwest News

JISC Regional Support Centre of the Northwest



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Delegates at Crafting the Content II

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## Update on The Regional Support Centre of the Northwest

A warm welcome to the second edition of the RSC NW newsletter. Since the last issue there have been a number of changes to the RSC makeup, including some staff changes. Joining the RSC we have Mandy Topping (Part Time Administrator), Benita Wiseman (RSC Curriculum Advisor) and Kevin Brennan (RSC Curriculum Consultant). We are sorry to say goodbye to Jim Mann the RSC Technical Manager who has relocated to New Zealand with his wife. Further details of the changes can be found on page 2.

The recent appointments have been made to meet a need identified by colleges both in this region and nationally. RSC's are beginning to work with ILT champions and curriculum deliverers, not only to identify potential ILT resources, but also to offer examples and advice as to how these materials can be used to complement the learning experience. With this in mind, Benita is developing a series of subject specific workshops where delegates can see first hand how online resources can be applied. Our first workshop in Business and Economics ran on the 7th December and due to high demand another was run on the 8th February this year. We have plans to run a future workshop in Leisure, Recreation and Sport, details of which are available on our website. If you or any of your colleagues would like to develop a workshop with the RSC on a particular subject, please contact Benita here at the RSC. A limited amount of funding is available to assist with workshop development.

The RSC has a continual programme of workshops, events and staff development opportunities. Recent events that have been highly successful through your support include Crafting the Content, Know UK, Know Europe and Literature Online Workshop, "NLN - Innovative Initiatives in Action" seminar at St Helens, and more recently, the technical workshop on wireless networking. Future events are listed on the back page and the RSC Website has all the latest information.

In this issue we highlight SCRAN, a JISC subscription service currently available to HE and FE and, as new legislation and policy changes come into effect, we take a look at TechDis the JISC's Technology for Disabilities Service. We also focus on a trial operating amongst FE colleges in the NW region looking at a service currently only available to HE - the Digimap service.

Please make use of YOUR RSC and feel free to contact us with any suggestions you have for future editions of this newsletter.

Jonathan Day—RSC Manager  
jday@blackpool.ac.uk

**Innovative Initiatives in Action, St Helens College, November 2001.**

From left:  
Marianne Green and Pat Bacon (St Helens College), Jonathan Day (RSC NW), Chris Kelland (Becta), Sue Rigby (LSC) and Andy Dyson (Walsall College of Arts and Technology)



Crafting the Content II: Process and Product - Sal Cooke showing delegates the Ferl site

## New Staff Roles @ RSC Northwest

### Kevin Brennan—Regional Support Centre Curriculum Consultant ([kbre@blackpool.ac.uk](mailto:kbre@blackpool.ac.uk))

Kevin joined the Regional Support Centre as a Curriculum Consultant in October 2001. He graduated from Lancaster University with a degree in Food Manufacturing Management. He is due to complete an MSc in Food Safety from the University of Central Lancashire this spring.

Based at Blackpool and The Fylde College in the School of Catering and Food Production, he teaches Food Microbiology, Food Safety, Information Technology and Key Skills. He also works as the school ILT Champion and implements staff training sessions on subjects such as interactive whiteboards and development of teaching and learning materials for the college intranet.

Kevin comes from a strong industry background of food manufacturing and catering management, starting his catering career in the National Health Service he has worked as a consultant for large food manufacturers implementing food safety systems.



### Benita Wiseman—Regional Support Centre Curriculum Advisor ([bw@blackpool.ac.uk](mailto:bw@blackpool.ac.uk))

Benita joined us at the end of last year having previously worked for the NOF funded ICT Training for Teachers Initiative.

Benita has a broad background in business and has an MSc in Business Administration (Information Technology). Her Further Education experience was gained as a Business Computing Lecturer at Blackpool and The Fylde College.

Her role as RSC Curriculum Advisor will focus on supporting ILT practitioners within the curriculum.



### Mandy Topping—Regional Support Centre Administrator ([mto@blackpool.ac.uk](mailto:mto@blackpool.ac.uk))

Mandy has joined the Regional Support Centre as part time administrator on a job share with Yvonne Ferrell.

She comes from an administrative background and after graduating in marketing from the University of Huddersfield, worked for British Waterways promoting the restoration of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal.



**Jim Mann, the Technology Manager, left the RSC at the end of December to emigrate to New Zealand. We wish him all the best for the future.**

## Steering Committee Changes @ RSC Northwest

As you are no doubt aware, during February, two new representatives for the RSC Northwest Steering Committee were elected. We are pleased to welcome the new members for 2002 who are:

**Richard Nelson – Vice Principal, Curriculum, Eccles College in Manchester**  
**Steve Smith – ILT Manager, Runshaw College in Leyland**

Thanks to Nigel Peet of South Cheshire College and Peter Crowe of North Trafford College for their sterling work as the Steering Committee representatives for 2001.

# Focus On ...SCRAN



## How might this distinguished portrait of Vita Sackville-West be used to support learning in Further Education?

It would, of course, be an obvious resource for an art and design course.

It could also be used in a psychology class on the cognitive aspects of face recognition.

It could provide context for a literature or modern history course or be used as a starting point for discussion in a cultural studies class.



© SCRAN / Glasgow Museums  
'Lady with a Red Hat' 1918

Images are a rich and memorable source of learning and teaching material. In the past its not always been easy for lecturers or students to work with high quality, full-colour pictures. Thanks to the digitisation initiatives of the last decade, together with the availability of many different kinds of new learning technologies, there is now much greater opportunity to engage with this kind of rewarding resource.

One of the most exciting and extensive collections of digital resources for Further Education is SCRAN. For the last five years, SCRAN has been collecting digital materials from cultural organisations such as museums, galleries, media organisations, special collections and archives. The result is that over one million high quality images, sound files, video clips and text records are now available for download from the SCRAN website at [www.scran.ac.uk](http://www.scran.ac.uk). These cover a huge range of subjects; expect to find everything from images of ancient stone circles, medieval African sculpture and Art Nouveau jewellery, to interactive mountain panorama, rare poetry recordings and video clips from the zoo.



© SCRAN / National Museums of Scotland  
'Ganesha'

Anyone with internet access can visit SCRAN and carry out searches to view the contents of the resource base. A licence is required to gain access to the full-sized images and the functional multimedia files. The good news for Further Education is that the SCRAN licence fee is now substantially subsidised by JISC - the charge for 2002, for example, is £50 per institution which gives all staff and all students unlimited access to the resources for educational use. All the resources on SCRAN are copyright cleared and lecturers have considerable flexibility in how they can use them - in handouts, overheads and open learning packs, for example, or in Powerpoint shows, online tutorials, and virtual learning environments. SCRAN materials can also form the basis for all kinds of learner interaction. Students can use SCRAN resources directly too - for research (each object on SCRAN is accompanied by a detailed and authoritative caption) or for integration into their coursework and portfolios.



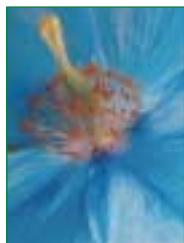
© SCRAN / Natural History Museum 'Opah'

SCRAN also provides considerable support and advice to its licensed users in FE (see [www.scran.ac.uk/tertiary](http://www.scran.ac.uk/tertiary)) including training workshops and specialised software tools. If you would like to find out more about what SCRAN has to offer, contact Elaine Mowat, the SCRAN Tertiary Education Officer (0131 662 1211, [elainem@scran.ac.uk](mailto:elainem@scran.ac.uk)) or sign up for the free SCRAN workshop on 15 March at Lancaster and Morecambe College - full details available on the RSC NW website or the back page of this newsletter.

Elaine Mowat - SCRAN Tertiary Education Officer  
[elainem@scran.ac.uk](mailto:elainem@scran.ac.uk)



© SCRAN / Orkney Islands Council  
'Antler Comb'



© SCRAN / National Trust for Scotland  
'Meconopsis'



© SCRAN / Ruaridh Pringle  
'Sgurr Fhuaran'



© SCRAN / Bridgeman Art Library 'Tulips & Fruit'

## News from the Region

### NW CMIS Group

The group is open to MIS officers and practitioners throughout the NW region. Membership is free and meetings take the format of a morning business meeting followed by an after lunch talk, demonstration by suppliers or dissemination of good practice from the region and elsewhere.



The group is chaired by John Burke of Myerscough College (jburke@myerscough.ac.uk), Associate Chair is Nigel Parkinson of Tameside College, secretarial support is provided by John Taylor of St Helens College and Treasurer is John Nugent of Stockport College. The Group's website can be found at <http://www.myerscough.ac.uk/nwcmis>

Details of the next meeting can be found on the website.

### NILTA—National Information & Learning Technologies Association



The NW Committee are due to discuss the regional events at their next meeting. Nationally, the "Access Technology - Making It Happen" conference will run on Monday 18th March at the Viking Moat House in York.

The NILTA website can be found at <http://www.nilta.org.uk> and North West Regional reports at [http://www.nilta.org.uk/regions/nor\\_west/nor\\_west.htm](http://www.nilta.org.uk/regions/nor_west/nor_west.htm)

### Learning and Skills Development Agency

As ever, the best place to keep up-to-date with the LSDA learning technologies team is via the website at [www.learningtechnologies.ac.uk](http://www.learningtechnologies.ac.uk)



Recent activities have included the organisation, in collaboration with the RSCs and NILTA, of a large series of events to accompany the pilot phase of the Computers for FE Teachers scheme. All beneficiaries under the scheme have received a pack of materials from the LSDA which is full of useful ideas, information and resources.

LSDA is evaluating the scheme - and continues to evaluate the impact on teaching and learning of the National Learning Network initiative. The final report from this work - and an associated 'good practice guide' will appear in the spring. The team is looking forward to a continuing central role in the next phase of the NLN, which the LSDA has been helping to design.

Innovative projects managed by the team will be showcased at a major event at the Business Design Centre in London on 2nd May - see the website for details.

Other R&D proceeds as normal - but with some exciting content and results. See the website for information on 'mobile' learning and in relation to the explosive growth of learning centres.

### Northwest Award Winners

During the FERL annual conference in November, the winners of the very popular FERL practitioners award were announced. Congratulations go to John Robinson and David Chick, of St. Helens College who were runners up in the category for the effective and innovative use of ILT to support learning and were commended for their production of an exemplary ILT resource to support students studying GNVQ ICT. John and David have created an interactive resource that makes the more theoretical aspects of IT accessible and welcoming to new learners.

All the materials from the award winners will be available on the FERL site <http://ferl.becta.org.uk>



## No time to learn how to use online resources? Have you thought of using your College's information specialists?



As a deputy manager of a busy and thriving learning centre, I am involved in the development of ILT across the curriculum. These are some of the services I try to promote daily:

- develop IT skills in our students and staff
- encourage tutors to recommend online resources to students
- train students and staff in the basics of information retrieval on the internet
- facilitate the development of essential skills required to enable successful use of online resources
- establish strong links with academic staff and get them involved with using their learning centre

### Do you know what Resources and Services your Learning Centre can offer you and your Students?

At a recent JISC workshop to examine the use of online resources in the curriculum I felt concerned by the experiences of students who had been searching an online resource for the first time. They were using InfoTrac, a vast newspaper resource with over 3,000 titles and almost certainly baffling to novices. Many of the students found it difficult to search successfully and retrieve relevant information during the lesson. This is an area where the skills of learning resources staff are sometimes overlooked. Staff of any learning centre or library should be able to offer assistance with information retrieval skills to help with the location of online materials.

At Lancaster & Morecambe College learning centre staff are experienced in guiding students to use a variety of technologies including the internet, and have an important role in training students and staff to use online resources. Our learning centre staff are eager to provide 'drop-in' and 'one-to-one' sessions, as well as group training to support users and ensure that they have the confidence to use information technology.

### How to get Students to use Online Resources

Online resources can significantly enhance teaching and learning but only if students are encouraged to use them. Experience shows that our students tend to follow the advice of teaching staff as to which resources to use. They are far more likely to act on a tutor's suggestion of a suitable information source than a librarian's recommendation of the same resource. It is clear that if students are being encouraged to use online resources by their tutors, but are hampered from doing so by lack of confidence or by poor or insufficient training, these students may be put off from accessing the resources altogether. Worse still, students often do not feed back failure to their tutor who may assume that these resources are being used successfully. Barriers such as unfamiliarity and unsuccessful searching are enough to deter many students from using online services.

### Plan Training and Support for Users

Do you know what support and training your learning centre can offer?

Training to search appropriate online resources is the most efficient way to teach information retrieval skills. This approach maximises the chances of the student locating relevant information, and minimises the chance of time being wasted through exploring resources that are not relevant to their assignments.

### Remember

- Include yourself in the training. It is unreasonable for a member of staff to recommend a resource they are unfamiliar with, they will be unable to support students with problems.
- Don't assume all students find searching on the internet straight forward - before setting assignments arrange a workshop with your learning centre to demonstrate searching techniques either generally or for a specific resource. This will provide students with confidence both in themselves and the resource.
- To match the growing trend towards online resources learning centre staff/Librarians have embraced the world of online searching. They are the obvious choice when it comes to supporting online resources and the correct way to perform an online search.

**Sandra O'Connor**  
Deputy Learning Services Manager

## Focus On ... TechDis

### Inclusive Technologies: a new way of saying IT

#### Are all of your online learning resources accessible to everyone regardless of disability?

New legislation and policy initiatives are changing the way in which students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are being treated in UK education. At the same time, information technology is being more widely applied within teaching and learning across the entire FE sector.

Changes to the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) mean that education is no longer excluded and inclusive provision will need to be addressed, not only at a strategic level but also operationally. For example, this could mean that individual lecturers will have to take responsibility for ensuring that their course materials are accessible to all students. Additionally, the Human Rights Act (1998) will undoubtedly have far reaching implications for all staff involved in the sector.



Advances in the field of information technologies have the potential, not only to greatly enhance the learning experience for students, but also ensure access to education by everyone, regardless of any disability or impairment. In order to provide equality of access, it is essential to ensure that the learning materials and environments are themselves accessible.

Responding to the needs of the FE and HE community, the Joint Information Systems Committee has set up a new service: TechDis - Technology for Disabilities Information Service. TechDis will provide information and advice to the

FE and HE sectors on the use of new and existing information and communication technologies, to enhance access to learning and teaching, research and administration activities for students and staff with disabilities.

Information about the new legislation, examples of good practice and the TechDis Accessibility Database, which provides links to more than 2,500 assistive technology products, can all be found at [www.techdis.ac.uk](http://www.techdis.ac.uk) TechDis is currently commissioning case studies for the website and we are particularly keen to include contributions from the FE sector so if you are working in the field of Inclusive Learning and ICT, please let us know.

We are also planning a wide range of events in partnership with Regional Support Centres. If you would like more details about these events, or simply want to know more about TechDis or any aspect of its work please contact your RSC or Allan Sutherland at [allan.sutherland@techdis.ac.uk](mailto:allan.sutherland@techdis.ac.uk) or ring the TechDis office in York on 01904 434027 or fax 01904 434247.

We look forward to working with you.



**Allan Sutherland – TechDis FE Co-ordinator**  
[allan.sutherland@techdis.ac.uk](mailto:allan.sutherland@techdis.ac.uk)

## Edina FE Digimap Trial



**EDINA**, based at Edinburgh University Data Library, is a JISC-funded National Data Centre, providing 24/7 access to a range of services for Further and Higher Education. In September 2001, we opened an office in St Helens College, Merseyside, through which we are working with the RSC Northwest to enhance our services for the post-16 sector.

St Helens College is currently using several EDINA services with staff and students and forthcoming services are under trial. St Helens is also one of seven trial sites for EDINA Digimap, which offers on-line access to Ordnance Survey digital map data and high quality cartographic products. The Digimap in FE project is currently assessing demand for the service in FE and will report to the JISC later this year.

Staff from the RSC NW recently met with colleagues from St Helens College, EDINA and MIMAS, another JISC-funded Data Centre, based at the University of Manchester. Both Data Centres are keen to work with colleagues in the RSC NW and colleges around the region to explore ways in which their services can be enhanced for use in FE. We are currently producing teaching and learning materials to enhance our services for Further and Higher Education.

The Data Centres have been asked by JISC to provide the repository for the National Learning Network materials and Content Access Tool. At the present time you can see the materials that have been delivered to date along with the Content Access Tool at <http://www.nln.ac.uk>

Work is currently under way at the Data Centres to mount the materials on our servers and augment the facilities currently available. We will keep you posted on our progress.

## Further Information

Please feel free to contact EDINA or MIMAS for further information about any of our services.

**EDINA** offers networked access to a range of data, information and research resources. All EDINA services are available free at the point of use to members of UK tertiary education institutions for academic use, with institutional subscription required for most, though not all, services. Staff and student users need to have an Athens login for most of our services. For more information about EDINA and our services see <http://edina.ac.uk>

**St Helens College:** As well as its many activities in providing both Higher and Further Education programmes, including a range of Foundation Degrees, St Helens College is active in creating online learning resources for staff development and for use in teaching and learning. These resources are offered via the Virtual Campus available at <http://www.vcampus.sthelens.ac.uk> and enquiries are welcomed from colleagues around the region. For more information about St Helens College, please see <http://www.sthelens.ac.uk>

**MIMAS** is a JISC-supported national data centre run by Manchester Computing at the University of Manchester to provide the UK academic community with flexible online access to socio-economic, spatial and scientific data, and to bibliographic and electronic journal data services. For further information about MIMAS, please see <http://www.mimas.ac.uk>

**Moira Massey**  
EDINA Learning and Teaching Projects Co-ordinator

# JISC Regional Support Centre of the Northwest

## Free Back Issues

Back issues are available from the Regional Support Centre. If you would like copies of the previous issue, please email [support@rsc-northwest.ac.uk](mailto:support@rsc-northwest.ac.uk) stating the number required, the postal address and a contact name and we will send them free of charge.

## Events Round-up

[www.rsc-northwest.ac.uk](http://www.rsc-northwest.ac.uk)

Date	Event	Venue	How do I book a place?
15 March 2002	SCRAN: Digital Resources for Learning and Teaching Workshop	Lancaster and Morecambe College	<a href="http://www.rsc-northwest.ac.uk">http://www.rsc-northwest.ac.uk</a>
18 March 2002	"Access Technology - Making It Happen" NILTA Conference	Viking Moat House, York	<a href="http://www.nilta.org.uk">http://www.nilta.org.uk</a>
20 March 2002	Leisure, Recreation & Sport Workshop	Runshaw College Leyland	<a href="http://www.rsc-northwest.ac.uk">http://www.rsc-northwest.ac.uk</a>
20-22 March 2002	ITIL 2002 -1st International Conference on IT & Information Literacy	Kelvin Conference Centre University of Glasgow	<a href="http://www.iteu.gla.ac.uk/IT&amp;ILit2002/IE/index.html">http://www.iteu.gla.ac.uk/IT&amp;ILit2002/IE/index.html</a>
26-28 March 2002	UKERNA Networkshop 30	University of Nottingham	<a href="http://www.ja.net/conferences/networkshop/index.html">http://www.ja.net/conferences/networkshop/index.html</a>
3-6 April 2002	First Joint CoFHE /UC&R Conference	University of Bath	Kate Gardner <a href="mailto:kgardner@wortech.ac.uk">kgardner@wortech.ac.uk</a> Worcester College of Technology
12 April 2002	Managing Organisational Information Conference	South Cheshire College	<a href="http://www.s-cheshire.ac.uk/new_scc/whatson/events/sis/itiner.htm">http://www.s-cheshire.ac.uk/new_scc/whatson/events/sis/itiner.htm</a>
15 April 2002	Computer Security – Threats and Promises UKERNA Workshop	Royal College of Physicians, London	<a href="http://www.ja.net/conferences/security/april02/">http://www.ja.net/conferences/security/april02/</a>
10 June 2002	NILTA Security Conference	Royal College of Physicians, London	<a href="http://www.nilta.org.uk">http://www.nilta.org.uk</a>
24 June 2002	NILTA CIS Conference	Viking Moat House, York	<a href="http://www.nilta.org.uk">http://www.nilta.org.uk</a>
2 July 2002	RSC Northwest Conference	Reebok Stadium, Bolton	<a href="http://www.rsc-northwest.ac.uk">http://www.rsc-northwest.ac.uk</a>