

News Roundup

Artifact Launch

Artifact was successfully launched in both Manchester and London early in November.

Lloyd Grossman, journalist, writer and TV presenter and Sir George Sweeney, Principal of Knowsley Community College joined guests at the London Institute Gallery and Manchester Art Gallery to help launch a major new information service for the arts and creative industries.

Artifact is a freely available internet gateway providing quick and easy access to the best arts and creative industry information on the internet. It covers a vast range of subjects, from traditional art and design disciplines to new media and the creative industries eg dance, fashion, music and sculpture. It has been specifically designed to support the learning, teaching and research needs of those in post 16 education but is also perfect for anyone interested in any aspect of the arts and creative industries.

JISC Collections Financial Strategy and Economic Models

The JISC Collections team is keen to ensure that the UK further and higher education community understand how public money allocated to them is used to benefit the education community in terms of acquiring electronic content. The team has now published the JISC Collections Financial Strategy, which clearly outlines:

- How JISC Collections provide value for money
- Why the acquisition of innovative content often requires financial support from the JISC to ensure adoption and embedding in learning, teaching and research
- Special Cases, and why the JISC continue to fund some essential niche electronic resources

In addition, the strategy includes details of commitments which the publisher agrees to fulfil through its partnership with JISC.

You can see the JISC Collections Financial Strategy at http://www.jisc.ac.uk/coll_financial_strat.html

RSC Northwest Website www.rsc-northwest.ac.uk

The RSC Northwest website has been substantially updated over the last few months following feedback from the NW FE community. New features now include:

- an area for IT and Network Managers to list any spare equipment that they are willing to loan to other colleges and also to register any equipment that is required
- a newly developed News area to incorporate online copies of the RSC newsletter, the JISCmail discussion lists and our new E-Bulletin.
- colour coded NW events to indicate the audience suitability
- a new technical project on setting up a web server
- a new database behind the resource catalogue to enable the RSC staff to add resources quickly and easily
- Athens helpsheets to assist with implementing the Athens Access Management System
- a new subscription database to allow users to search across resources to find out more about them and also to see which colleges subscribe
- a dedicated subject specific email forum area to allow users to search the archives, join or participate in the forums
- a specific Ferl Practitioners Programme area
- and a new search engine

The website is available at www.rsc-northwest.ac.uk All feedback is greatly received and we will endeavour to incorporate as many ideas as possible. Please send any ideas to support@rsc-northwest.ac.uk

Chrissie Mason
Learning and Teaching Resources Adviser

JISC Regional Support Centre of the Northwest

www.rsc-northwest.ac.uk

RSC Northwest News

JISC Regional Support Centre of the Northwest



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Our new home at Darwin Court



New Year, New Challenges

Welcome to another addition of the RSC NW newsletter. It has been a period of great change here over the last few months.

Firstly, we have finally moved from our very cramped offices into some rather palatial new accommodation just a mile up the road from Blackpool and The Fylde College where we now have our own business unit on Blackpool Technology Park. You will find the full address and contact details at the bottom of this page.

You will probably be aware that the RSC is currently managed by a partnership between Blackpool & The Fylde College and Lancaster University. Following discussion between the JISC and the two institutions it has been decided to transfer the sole responsibility for the RSC to Lancaster University.

The details of the transfer are still being discussed but it is likely that the RSC will remain in Blackpool for at least the remainder of the academic year before moving to the main Lancaster University Campus.

The RSC will also be expanding into new areas and we will soon be advertising for a new member of staff to work with smaller HE institutions and those delivering HE programmes in FE colleges. We will also be moving towards support for providers of Adult and Community Learning (ACL) and will shortly be advertising for an ACL Co-ordinator.

As you can see, there are some significant challenges to face over the coming months and we are very conscious of the need to maintain the same high level of support to our existing FE clients.

In the meantime, I hope you find this edition of our newsletter informative and please feel free to contact myself or a colleague at the RSC should you wish to discuss any issues.

Jonathan Day – RSC Manager
jday@rsc-northwest.ac.uk

We have moved
The RSC NW can now be contacted at:

12a Darwin Court,
Hawking Place,
Blackpool, FY2 0JN
Tel 01253 503180
Fax 01253 503182

Announcing new Technical Services

Multi-site Connectivity Advisory Service www.ja.net/mcas

The UKERNA Multi-site Connectivity Advisory Service (MCAS) is now fully operational and can provide advice and guidance to organisations with inter-site connectivity issues beyond their main JANET links. The service provides independent technical support to organisations wishing to connect or upgrade data links between campuses and to remote centres. Advice can be provided on what technologies are available and the suitability of such technologies for the particular situation. The service will hold information on suppliers and expert advisers who may be able to assist colleges further. MCAS also commissions and publishes technical information papers and wide area connectivity case studies.

The purpose of the service is to provide a means for the JISC community, particularly FE colleges, to obtain free expert advice on multi-site connectivity issues. The Regional Support Centres will continue to provide networking advice directly to colleges, but will be able to seek information and advice through MCAS when required. Other members of the JISC community not presently served by the RSCs, including FE colleges, specialist colleges and ACL providers can access the MCAS help desk and information service directly. The service aims to answer questions on a wide range of subjects, including the following:

- Availability and capability of telecommunication providers in local Regional Network Operator areas
- Indicative costs and help in procurement of Wide Area Network services
- Connections from main campus to outreach centres or small remote locations
- Advice on availability and suitability of connection technologies - wireless, private fibre and leased line, and Internet services
- Selection and suitability of interconnection equipment (routers and switches)
- Broadband or satellite network access technologies
- JANET/UKERNA policy regarding additional/multiple connections to JANET
- Operational aspects of running a multi-site network

For further details, see the MCAS web site <http://www.ja.net/mcas/>

To make an enquiry in the first instance you should contact us at the Regional Support Centre or JANET Customer Service http://www.ja.net/customer_service/ tel. 0870 850 2212.

OSS Watch

www.oss-watch.ac.uk

A new JISC service, OSS Watch, is now up and running. The Advisory Service on Open Source Software for UK further and higher education has recently been set up by the JISC and aims to provide neutral guidance about open source software and related standards.

OSS Watch informs and advises about free and open source software. It will facilitate co-operative OSS activities through the development of best practice guidelines and outreach activities aimed at institutional managers, software developers and IT users. It will offer a web-based clearing-house for up to date information, focused assistance for institutions and software projects and investigative reports.

OSS Watch invites you to explore its initial online service at <http://www.oss-watch.ac.uk/> where you will be able to learn more.

If you would like to stay informed of ongoing developments at OSS Watch you can join the JISCmail list OSSWATCH-ANNOUNCE at <http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/osswatch-announce.html>

JISC Regional Support Centre of the Northwest

New Member of the Ferl Practitioners Programme John Moulson

I am one of the newly appointed FPP Development Officers and have been asked for a brief summary of my career to date to introduce myself to you all. I have been involved in education since 1966 after qualifying as an English teacher in Leeds. I developed a wide curriculum base during my early career due to a desire for knowledge which has kept me interested for most of my working life. I have had responsibilities for Communication, Mathematics, Social Studies, Languages, Sport, Health and Safety and Computing. In 1980 I piloted the use of computers in schools as a tool for learning and was one of a task force evaluating and developing on-line materials for use in the curriculum.

My interest in computing started thanks to Clive Sinclair and his ZX81. I developed an interest in programming and this led me to move to FE in 1981 when I became a lecturer in Computing at Grimsby College. Natural inquisitiveness and an insane desire for more responsibility saw me undertake the development of the College's networked resources which at the time were two rooms of Nimbus computers.

Over the next five years I progressed through various stages to Head of the School of Computing and became involved with all levels of curriculum development and strategic management. I recognised the future role of IT within the curriculum at an early stage and negotiated my own job as Head of ILT. This included responsibility for all the College's IT resources, the three libraries, internet/intranet development and Reprographics. At the last inspection the area received a Grade 1 and has since been recognised nationally for its innovation in the use of ILT. I then progressed to developing the College's new Open and Distant Learning Unit and in December 2002 I was appointed Director of Quality.

This job tempted me away from the College as it was an ideal opportunity for me to work in a wider perspective and help develop the use of IT on a wider scale. My belief that FPP is the answer to many of our problems in using IT in the curriculum only strengthened my desire to undertake the role. I have been involved with Becta for several years being a deliverer on the ILT Champions programme and a member of the FPP steering group whilst undertaking the pilot. I have served on many committees including being the NILTA Curriculum Representative for Yorkshire and Humberside. I welcome this challenge and hope we can all work together in developing FPP in your colleges.

We are pleased to learn that Paul Brown is to join John in supporting FPP within the region and will also be covering the region as the Ferl Development Officer. We look forward to hearing from Paul in future editions of this newsletter.



John Moulson

Winners of the Oxford Online Quiz

Thank you for all the entries to the Oxford Online competition in our last issue. We are pleased to announce the winners who are ...

Preston College. They have chosen a years' free subscription to OXFORD REFERENCE ONLINE
The runners up were Bury College who have received 6 months of OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY ONLINE

And just in case you have been puzzling over any of the questions, here are the answers for you: (the questions can be found in our previous newsletter on the RSC website)

Oxford English Dictionary Online

- 1 A hot drink composed of ale and spirits, or ale sweetened and spiced
- 2 1978
- 3 Canary
- 4 M Lowry
- 5 No, Doh! was first spoken by Diana in a BBC radio script by T. Kavanagh in 1945

Oxford Reference Online: The Core Collection

- 6 1894
- 7 Tórshavn (Streymoy)
- 8 Transmission Control Protocol / Internet Protocol
- 9 Farmstead of the priests
- 10 The football pools

Grove Music Online

- 11 Maddy Prior
- 12 Kathleen Ferrier
- 13 1858
- 14 Liverpool
- 15 Jethro Tull

Grove Art Online

- 16 Rent collector and clerk with the Pall Mall Property Company
- 17 Sir Norman Foster
- 18 Antony Gormley
- 19 Ford Madox Brown
- 20 Humphrey Spender

JISC Regional Support Centre of the Northwest

Salford Software Working with Further Education www.salfordsoftware.co.uk

In August 2003, Salford Software made a commitment to the FE community and employed a dedicated resource for FE. Since making this commitment, it has become apparent that many colleges are unaware of what they are actually entitled to, and what Novell software can do for them. Many think that Novell is still solely a Network Operating System, but this couldn't be further from the truth. While it is true that Netware is still a major product for Novell, these days it's all about choice, integration, portal technologies and security.

Salford Software is a non-profit making company which is owned by Salford University. It has existed for many years to provide support and a wide range of services solely to the academic community and are especially known for working with Novell Software. This comes from a special agreement which Salford brokered on behalf of the academic community about 12 years ago. This enables academic institutions to have access to a unique license agreement which allows for site licenses and is hugely discounted from the standard price list.

Included in the cost of the licence is:

- Unlimited telephone and email technical support for 2 contacts.
- If the support call cannot be solved at Salford Software, it is passed directly to Novell.
- Product maintenance – including all patches, fixes and upgrades.
- Regular free technical update roadshows, allowing an opportunity to liaise with other academic institutions, sharing ideas and experiences.
- Free help and advice on other products and upgrade routes.

Further details about licenses and other products are available by contacting Andrew Garner at Salford Software, or by attending one of the regional technology roadshows which run regularly throughout the year.

andrew.garner@salfordsoftware.co.uk
Tel. 0161 906 2233

JISC infoNet

www.jiscinfonet.ac.uk

JISC infoNet is one of the newer JISC Advisory Services. It has been established as a centre of expertise in the planning and implementation of information systems within further and higher education. Based in Newcastle at the University of Northumbria, the service also has some staff based in different parts of the country. One of these is John Burke, a well known figure in MIS circles over many years, who fulfils the role of FE Liaison Manager and is based at Myerscough College in Lancashire.

The service's website provides access to authoritative training materials known as "infoKits". Currently there are four infoKits covering system selection, contract negotiation, process review and project management. These are designed as "dip into" resources for institutions to use as they see fit.

The service also provides guidance on VLE and MLE systems and is producing materials for institutions wanting to implement and embed e-Learning. The MLE pack is due for publication on the JISC infoNet website in January 2004. For more details contact Jacquie Kelly, MLE/VLE Manager (jacquie.kelly@northumbria.ac.uk)

Records Management, a role and process becoming a hot topic because of the Freedom of Information Act, is also supported by JISC infoNet. Records Management Consultant, Alan Cameron, is setting up events around the country to talk about how records management techniques can help ensure legal compliance with the new legislation.

You can contact John Burke via email j.burke@northumbria.ac.uk or call 01995 642118.

JISC Regional Support Centre of the Northwest

Britannica Online search.eb.com



From print volumes to CD ROMs and onto the internet, Encyclopedia Britannica has been at the forefront of using technology to provide reference resources to adults and students alike. Using the solid foundations of Encyclopedia Britannica, new products are emerging to give students the opportunity to learn more about the world around them.

Britannica Online includes the complete encyclopedia, with more than 72,000 articles, updated and revised by EB editors and contributors; over 10,000 illustrations, including photographs, drawings, maps, and flags; and more than 75,000 definitions - including pronunciation guides and word histories from Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary and the Britannica Book of the Year. Plus, the Encyclopedia Britannica Intermediate which offers over 38,000 articles and 4,000 images, illustrations, maps and flags. You can also use Britannica Online to search an internet directory that includes more than 130,000 links to Web sites selected, rated, and reviewed by Britannica editors.

Britannica Online is regularly updated and includes:

- The full text from the main 32 volume Encyclopedia plus additional articles and the Britannica book of the year series
- Images, maps and illustrations
- Hypertext links between articles
- Internet links to related websites, reviewed and updated by Britannica
- Spotlight features - offers a series of in-depth multimedia presentations.
- Spotlights provide links to related articles throughout the Encyclopedia to enhance the learning experience further
- Britannica Classics - a compilation of articles by famous authors e.g. Freud, Einstein
- Nations of the World
- Britannica Lives
- Events in History on this day
- Year in Review
- Personal Workspace



The latest version of Britannica Online (<http://search.eb.com>) also provides students and teachers with a unique combination of reference information and learning tools. It features a suite of reference works, including the Encyclopedia Britannica and other Encyclopedias serving students of all ages, periodicals, an Internet guide and a variety of learning materials. The latest version of the product includes several new features:

- Historical timelines that show people, events, and discoveries in rich graphical form, with points on the timelines hot-linked to related articles
- A "year in review" section, with extensive highlights from each of the past several years, giving students a unique source for current events and social studies research
- Interactive study guides on writing style, writing persuasively, grammar and punctuation, and how to organise research papers.

Britannica Online is now a welcome part of the JISC Collections solely for FE. Advantageous pricing and features have been agreed. For further details go to www.jisc.ac.uk/coll-britannica.html

Adi Wickramaratne
Online Co-ordinator – Encyclopedia Britannica

JISC Regional Support Centre of the Northwest



TechDis

The JISC TechDis service aims to improve provision for disabled staff and students in further and higher education through technology. It is our aim that, by sharing knowledge and increasing collaboration, disabled students will find transition to other parts of the education system easier and even exciting rather than formidable and at times frustrating.

By acting as the primary information and advice centre for technology and disabilities, as well as providing high quality staff development material and workshops, TechDis aims to support a coordinated and coherent UK approach to technology and disabilities in further and higher education.

Regular workshops are held at the Techdis offices in York available, free of charge, to all staff working in further or higher education, covering topics such as web accessibility, assistive technology, distance learning and dyslexia and e-learning. Details of future workshops can be found at www.techdis.ac.uk/workshops/. TechDis can also run workshops in institutions upon request, subject to staff availability.

Online support materials are available on our website. These include reports, searchable databases of information and tools, such as the Web Accessibility and Usability tool that can be located at www.techdis.ac.uk/seven/.

A variety of resources are available on our website, which should be the first port of call for anyone in education who has a question relating to disability and technology. These include the TechDis Accessibility Database (TAD), which contains information on over 2000 products that can assist disabled people, such as screen readers, virtual learning environments and adaptive keyboards – visit www.techdis.ac.uk/access.html to view and search the database.

Staff development - as well as a regular workshop programme, TechDis are now developing 'off the shelf' workshop packs that can be integrated into institutions' staff development programmes, these workshop packs will cover such issues as accessible assessment, dyslexia and technology, website accessibility and auditing websites. These workshop packs will be launched early in 2004.

Specific enquiries relating to any aspect of technology and disability can be emailed to our helpdesk – helpdesk@techdis.ac.uk, where TechDis and our range of associates will endeavour to answer them.

Specialist Colleges join the NLN

Over the last 18 months the Learning and Skills Council, through the National Learning Network (NLN) programme, has established a sub group for specialist colleges to look into understanding their requirements more fully so they can be integrated into the NLN.

We at the Regional Support Centre have been asked to help support a number of specialist colleges in the Northwest.

Currently these are:

Arden College Southport, Bridge College Stockport, Beaumont College Lancaster, Belford College Oldham, Langdon College Salford, Lindeth College Bowness and the David Lewis Centre in Alderley Edge.

Staff at the RSC have been out and about visiting the colleges, making the initial introductions and ensuring that the installation of the JANET connection goes smoothly. For many colleges this is the first time that they have had an adequate internet facility and the RSC has been assisting the colleges to develop their internal infrastructure sufficiently to be able to take advantage of this new service.

Of course it's not just a JANET connection that links the specialist colleges, they are now part of an active community developing e-learning through the National Learning Network (NLN). Over the coming weeks and months we shall be involving the specialist colleges more and more with a range of RSC activities as well as introducing them to some of the learning resources available through the NLN and the JISC.

I know that you will want to join me in extending a warm welcome to our newest members of the NLN community and I am sure that there is a great deal of expertise on both sides that we can begin to share.

JISC Regional Support Centre of the Northwest

TechDis



BECTA ICT in Practice Award for Inclusion Another Northwest Winner

Wirral Metropolitan College lecturer, Ruth Jones, was the winner of the BECTA ICT in Practice Award 2003 in the category "Inclusion - Post 16". Those who know Ruth professionally were not surprised when she scooped the award. When it comes to the area of inclusiveness, Ruth is exceptional in both her understanding of the potential for the use of ILT and in the translation of that knowledge into practice. Her strength lies not in the "high tech" arena, but in being able to see ways of using existing applications and resources imaginatively beyond their intended purpose.

In common with many FE Colleges, Wirral Met provides educational opportunities for students with severe and moderate learning difficulties. For over 10 years Ruth has had a pivotal role to play in developing the use of ILT as a cross curriculum resource on programmes such as Independent Options, Vocational Options and Vocational Access Certificate. Many of the students are disaffected as a result of their learning difficulties and some have severe physical disabilities. The driving force behind Ruth's application of ILT has been to enable these students to access the curriculum and achieve individual learning goals. More specifically, she regards ILT as a tool to be used to develop independence, communication skills, personal and life skills.



Ruth Jones



John learning with help of technology

In searching for methods to unlock her students' potential, Ruth uses applications and software in ways that the manufacturers would not have envisaged! One of the earliest CD-ROMs to be networked at college some years ago was World Atlas – she used it to teach mouse skills and colour identification. Many of her students are unable to verbalise their feelings – she uses the "emotions" Clipart in Word to enable them to express themselves. Mobile phones are used to develop numeracy and communication skills, digital cameras and scanners to enable independent working and control. The Internet is used to develop Basic Literacy skills and to bring a view of the wider world into the classroom. Of particular value to students is the recognition of their professional outcomes from hesitant beginnings, e.g. the enhancement of literacy through group projects determined by the class and displayed for the whole college to admire.



Supported Entry Level Students learning with the help of technology

As well as using ILT to excellent effect with students, Ruth has also developed and introduced learner tracking systems using hyperlinked Word documents. These enable staff to keep track of each student's individual learning goals and to link them to lesson plans. This has had a knock on motivating effect on students as their achievements and progress are recognised more rapidly.

The relatively simple but effective methods and systems developed by Ruth for use within Supported Entry Level could be applied with equally good effect across a range of curriculum areas. Within Wirral Met, it is hoped that the dissemination process will enable this recognised good practice to become widespread.

Fiona Grady

Teaching and Learning Champion – Wirral Metropolitan College

Other Award Winners ...

Congratulations go to the other award winners within our region

Ferl Award 2003

The Hospitality and Catering team in the College of Science at St Helens College

Association of Colleges Beacon Awards 2003-04

Basic Skills Agency Award for ESOL, Pendleton College

CoLRiC Award for the Effective Integration of Libraries/LRCs in Curriculum Delivery, Nelson and Colne College

Commission for Black Staff and Network for Black Managers award for Promoting Race Equality, Oldham College

LSC Award for Equality and Diversity, Blackpool and The Fylde College

Ufi/learnirect Award for Delivering Learning through learnirect Centres in Colleges, Wigan and Leigh College

JISC Regional Support Centre of the Northwest