Migration complete

Over the Easter vacation the email for over 4,000 staff and researchers was successfully transferred to a new mail and calendaring system. This figure includes approximately 600 role based accounts - email addresses set up for a group of people to use for a particular role.

After an initial transfer of IT Services accounts on the 23 March, the transfers started in earnest on the 4 April and the majority were completed by 28 April 2011. The complex transfer process was written and managed by James Goodlet and ran seamlessly without causing disruption to the day to day work of staff and researchers.

The exercise required a big support commitment of IT Services staff and many people were visited on their transfer day to ease the migration process. There have also been over 800 requests for support of which the vast majority have been resolved. In addition over 340 people attended an email training session. ITS managed over 700 address book and/or contact list transfers in a process simplified using a bespoke web page written by Dave Guest.

Calendar migration started on 9 May 2011 and since then 819 calendars have been transferred. Again this process was simplified by using a special web page written by Dave Guest and Ian Eiloart. Over 150 members of staff and researchers attended a training session about using the new calendar system.

PLEASE NOTE: the old MeetingMaker calendar server will be switched off on 1 July

Coming soon...

Computer clusters

Once the major refurbishment of the Library is complete in the summer IT Services will review the PCs and Macs in the Library to ensure that all the available slots (where computers are to be installed) are occupied by up-to-date machines.

All cluster PCs campus-wide will be upgraded to a new desktop running Windows 7 by the beginning of the academic year 2011-2012. Software available on the PCs will include Microsoft Office 2010 and Adobe CS5. For more details of the new desktop see: sussex.ac.uk/its/softlist

WiFi improvements

On-campus WiFi is to be replaced with a new system capable of supporting a large number of users per access point (eduroam will continue as the principal WiFi network). Investigations will also be carried out into the installation of similar equipment in new university residences, providing coverage throughout the building where this can be economically achieved and subject to funding being provided as a part of the residence development project.

Remote filestore access

A service to improve remote access to the file store (namely N:drives, G:drives or other network file space) will be introduced which will allow students and staff to access their file space via a web browser without the requirement of installing any additional software.

Linux

IT Services is preparing to roll out a Linux desktop which may be installed on PC hardware as an alternative to Windows.

Additionally, the University’s venerable UNIX server Keeler is now more than 10 years old and will be removed from service on 1 September. A replacement machine, called Napier, is waiting in the wings ready to take over. Existing users of Keeler can try it now by replacing the old Keeler server or host name with:

napier.uscs.susx.ac.uk

Printing system

A new student printing service PaperCut is to be introduced during the Summer vacation. From a user perspective the new system is very similar to the current one, with payment for printing being accepted through new dedicated payment machines (below) or online using a debit / credit card via Sussex Direct (as now). Please note that the costs for printing will remain unchanged as they have for over ten years and all credit balances will be transferred to the new system.

An advantage of the new system is that it supports the submission of print jobs via a password protected web interface which will enable students to print from their own laptops.

PLEASE NOTE: the old MeetingMaker calendar server will be switched off on 1 July
Staff news
During the Spring, IT Services welcomed Zak Bruce-Merrie to the Student Desktop and AV Support team and Tim Cragg and Alex Havell to the Staff Desktop Support team within Client Services plus James Burton to the Business Applications team within Corporate Information Systems.

In addition, Amy Picasso moved from the Student Desktop and AV Support team to the Staff Desktop Support team within Client Services and both Fran Duffield and Jerry Sinclair moved from the Business Applications team to the Projects and Business Analysis team within Corporate Information Systems.

Getting a new office computer
The Centrally Funded Workstation Scheme is now in its 3rd year. The scheme ensures that each University funded member of staff has appropriate access to an up-to-date workstation that enables them to make full use of the services and systems provided centrally to support them in their role within the University.

In the first year of operation 312 new workstations were ordered, set up and installed on staff desks and this year (once complete) the number will be 337.

The computers provided through the scheme are selected to operate and interact with the University’s IT and business systems for a fixed life-time after which time they may be “retired”. It is expected that most computers will be retired after four years (48 months) use.

In September each year Schools and Professional Service Departments are allocated a number of e-vouchers based on the age of their current computers and the number and roles of staff in those units. Eligible staff must be employed from University funds.

Each computer provided by the scheme is fully supported by IT Services and any hardware repairs carried out at no charge to the department until the computer is scheduled to be retired.

The distribution of the centrally provided systems is the responsibility of each Head of School or Professional Service group (or their nominee). A full list of names, additional information and links to ordering can be found online at:

sussex.ac.uk/its/cfw

How is IT for you? Year 2
For the last three years IT Services has invited first year undergraduates to complete an online survey at the end of their first autumn term about how they found using IT during their first weeks at Sussex.

IT Services are now keen to hear about their continuing experience of using IT so we can continue to improve our services, and so are inviting second year undergraduates to complete a short survey before they leave for the summer.

The results of this second-year survey will be published online at: sussex.ac.uk/its/about/surveys

Software testing
The new Windows 7 PC desktop (see overleaf) is nearly ready for testing.

We will be inviting departmental testers along to IT Services to check applications that they will be using on the ITS student desktop in the 2011-2012 academic year.

From the vaults
The ITS newsletter was first published in February 1972 and has been produced ever since on a monthly or termly basis.

In the build up to the University’s 50th Anniversary in September 2011, IT Services have been looking back at how the use of IT at Sussex has changed over time. Past issues of the newsletter offer a clue:

10 years ago: May 2001

Off-site Access to On-site Services
The campus firewall will be reconfigured into “default deny” mode during the early part of the Summer vacation. This will disable access to all services on campus “from” the Internet that have not been registered with the Computing Service. This is a belated implementation of the policy agreed by the University’s Computing Facilities and Services Committee on access to campus electronic services.

The Computing Service will be contacting known technical contacts over the course of the Summer Term to finalise the initial “default deny” configuration of the campus. If you control any computers for which off-site access is required please ensure that your technical contact is aware of them.

20 years ago: June 1991

Getting Back to Sussex
If you are away from Sussex it may be possible to connect back to your favourite Sussex computer. The procedure depends on where you are located.

If you are somewhere that is connected to the UK network JANET, e.g. at a university, polytechnic, college or research council establishment, then you will need to know the JANET address of the Sussex computer. Typically you will use a terminal or PC connected to a PAD or maybe a PAD program on a computer.

30 years ago: June 1981

Initial VAX II Filestore
The filestore of the initial service will be very limited. We expect 120-150 users will need to use the system and all must be accommodated in 67 MB of disc store. This means an average of about one full size GEORGE 3 file (500 blocks) for each user. This will require careful management by users but a useful amount of work will be possible by most users in this space.

General enquiries and help
The IT Service Desk in Shawcross is open from 9am - 7pm (termtime) and 9am - 5.30pm (vacation) Monday to Friday, ext: 8090.

Help is available online at sussex.ac.uk/its/help or via email support@its.sussex.ac.uk.

New services, changes to existing services and announcements of any urgent changes that cannot be publicised in advance in ITS News will be published in Latest News at: sussex.ac.uk/its/news, RSS at: sussex.ac.uk/its/news/rss.xml, Twitter at: twitter.com/ITServices and Facebook at facebook.com/ITSSussex

Support for staff desktops
Please request support in the normal way by using the web form available at sussex.ac.uk/its/help or via email to sds@its.sussex.ac.uk.

Help with Audio-Visual equipment in General Teaching Space
Wall-mounted instructions are available in every room, along with details of the AV helpline (8022). To report faults on audio-visual equipment please email gts-faults@its.sussex.ac.uk

Videoconferencing
Our suite - available to staff for University business - is located in Arundel 1E. Enquiries to videoconf@its.sussex.ac.uk.

Please send any contributions for the next issue of ITS News to Chris Limb at C.Limb@sussex.ac.uk by the beginning of Autumn Term 2011. ITS News is normally published termly.