A new IT Services Windows desktop for students has been introduced in PC cluster rooms as well as on the Lecturer’s PCs in the 130 seminar rooms and lecture theatres across campus.

The new desktop is based on Windows 7 (64 bit) and incorporates a number of new software packages, including Microsoft Office 2010 and Adobe Master Collection CS5.5, the industry standard suite of graphic design, video editing, and web development software.

Users are finding the transition to the new system fairly straightforward - and many new and returning students may have already been using Windows 7 on their home systems. However, for those who are still finding it a little unfamiliar, we have produced a short user guide to using Windows 7 which is available from the IT Service Desk in Shawcross and online at: sussex.ac.uk/its/windows7

When using Windows 7 you will find that you have much more control over the look and feel of the desktop and over the programs and files that appear there and in the Start menu. The first time you login on Windows 7 you will be presented with a desktop that is blank aside from the Recycle Bin and a Using this PC icon. Any changes you make to this desktop - including changing the background image and creating shortcuts - will subsequently be visible on any Windows 7 PC you log into around campus. Files and shortcuts saved to the desktop will also be available on the desktop should you login to an IT Services iMac.

A Windows 7 desktop for staff is in preparation, and will be rolled out in the near future. IT Services will be contacting schools and departments to discuss suitable dates and times for the Windows 7 upgrade.

Where some systems are unable to run Windows 7 - usually because they are very old and have insufficient hardware resources (memory, hard disk space, CPU) - it is hoped that schools and departments will manage their replacement via the Centrally Funded Workstation scheme: sussex.ac.uk/its/cfw

The old staff Windows XP system will continue to be supported until the end of the academic year (June 2012).

New PCs

In addition to replacing all the computers in cluster Arts C169 with brand new PCs running the Windows 7 student desktop, IT Services has taken responsibility for maintaining the Engineering CAD laboratory, Richmond 3B3. The room has been refurbished and 48 new high specification PCs installed with the standard student desktop plus specialist engineering software. The room is available to all students during building opening hours when it is not booked for taught classes, and contains two A3 printers (one colour, one black and white) the first A3 printers available outside IT Services Shawcross.

iMacs for Media, Film and Music

IT Services has installed over 90 new iMac systems in the School of Music, Film and Media. The School obtained funding for the new equipment from the University and IT Services developed the necessary software environment and installed the systems. These systems include the latest releases of the Apple professional video and image editing software which are now being used for teaching in the School.
New printing system

A new system, known as PaperCut, has been introduced to manage users’ printing accounts.

This system works in a very similar way to the previous system. Payments for printing can be made through one of the two new dedicated payment machines (below) in the Library and in ITS Shawcross. Online payments using a debit/credit card can also still be made via Sussex Direct where the minimum amount has been reduced to £5 in response to comments received from students over the past year.

One very useful additional feature offered by the new system is the ability to check your account balance and printing history online via a web interface at:

[printingsussex.ac.uk](http://printingsussex.ac.uk)

The costs for printing remain unchanged as they have for over ten years. The current charges, including double-sided where available, are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>type</th>
<th>size</th>
<th>single-sided</th>
<th>double-sided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>black &amp; white</td>
<td>A4</td>
<td>5p</td>
<td>8p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>colour</td>
<td>A4</td>
<td>20p</td>
<td>36p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>black &amp; white</td>
<td>A3</td>
<td>30p</td>
<td>54p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>colour</td>
<td>A3</td>
<td>40p</td>
<td>72p</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All credit balances on the old system were transferred across to the new system.

Users returning will find that the printer queues now have new names. The new name format is simpler to understand and consists of the building name followed by the room number and a code for the kind of printer (bw for A4 black and white, bwa3 for A3 black and white, col for colour and cola3 for A3 colour. Thus:

pevensey_1b4_bw

indicates a black and white (bw) printer in Pevensey 1B4.

Connectivity issues

A series of separate, serious connectivity problems occurred over a short period of time during Freshers’ Week and at the start of term. The fact that some of them happened simultaneously made them far more difficult to diagnose and resolve.

These problems put an additional load on IT Service Desk staff at a very busy time of year. We appreciate the patience shown by students during this period and would like to thank our Service Desk staff and advisors for the hard work they put in.

The background to some of the problems are detailed here.

ResNet

In computer networking terms a “switch” is a device connecting one segment of a network to another. As part of a programme of works to improve reliability and performance, all two hundred ResNet switches were replaced by IT Services at the end of the summer. This work could only take place during a narrow time window as during the summer itself the residences were in use for conferences and other external bookings.

In early September some ResNet problems were diagnosed and fixed, but unfortunately the fix applied led to new complex connection problems. The faults were eventually traced to the newly updated version of the controlling “firmware” (semi-permanent software built into a system) in the new switches. IT Services were able to resolve these problems by going back to the previous version. This fault has been reported to the switch manufacturer for investigation.

Once this had been done IT Services were able to adjust the systems to allow more traffic to flow which resulted in a more acceptable network performance.

WiFi

During the summer IT Services received funding to begin replacing the campus WiFi with a newer system offering improved performance and better scaling. The installation began in the University Library in late September leaving the old system in place in other areas of the campus.

The new WiFi system worked well but its ability to handle more connections than our previous system caused some conflicts. This, combined with a huge increase in the number of WiFi enabled mobile phones being brought onto campus during Freshers’ Week resulted in many students not being able to connect.

Once IT Services staff identified the cause of these failures the system was reconfigured to handle the higher load.

Investment in IT

In response to feedback received during the National Student Survey 2011, the University is investing a significant amount of money in the provision of further improved IT facilities for students. This includes:

- Buying 150 new computers and replacing 250 old computers
- Replacing campus WiFi with a faster and more reliable service
- Greatly increasing WiFi coverage to include every room in University-run student residences and other places used by students
Lecture Theatre AV upgrades

IT Services
are pleased to
announce that Phase I of
a programme delivering major
upgrades to audiovisual equipment
in campus lecture theatres has now
been completed.

Training in using the system is covered in the ITS course
Using Audiovisual Equipment course. For further information
and to book a place please see:
sussex.ac.uk/its/training

Instruction sheets are available in each theatre and online
as PDFs at:
sussex.ac.uk/its/avresources

Since December 2010, six theatres - Arts A1, Arts A2,
John Maynard Smith, Richmond AS3, Pevensey 1A7 and
Chichester - have been fitted with brand new audiovisual
equipment and control systems. Designed and built
in-house by IT Services’ Multimedia Development team
(Paul Pettit and Paul Gratton) the new systems offer
enhanced technology for teaching and learning, along with
a fully-standardised interface for ease of use.

In order to bring these older theatres into alignment with
the new Fulton building, full HD projection for Blu-Ray, DVD
and PC has been installed, along with surround sound
audio playback.

Each lectern features a ‘Sympodium Monitor’, which can
be used for live annotation of PowerPoint presentations.

In addition to a lectern microphone, radio lapel and hand-
held microphones are included as standard. In response to
requests, greater provision has been made for the connection
of external devices, such as DVI or HDMI laptops.

The Document Cameras (aka ‘Visualisers’) which magnify
and project images of 3D objects and documents, are now
of HD standard. They can also be used to capture visual
content (still, video and handwritten) to the resident PC.

Standardised equipment and cabling will permit swift and
easier maintenance, reducing downtime. In the event
of technical difficulties, all six theatres are now remotely
supportable, so that potential disruption can be kept to
a minimum. Work on upgrading equipment in the next
lecture theatre will start in December 2011.

Induction 2011

Following on from the new format introduced in 2010, the
IT Services induction once more consisted of a 20 minute
presentation including two short films. This was supported
by a printed booklet, Using IT@Sussex, and web portal at:
sussex.ac.uk/its/welcome

The booklet (copies of which are still available from the
IT Service Desk in Shawcross) covers basic topics from
Connecting to the Internet to Getting Help and Training, all
of which topics are covered in more detail on web pages
linked to via the portal, which also contains links to the
induction films which are available on the IT Services
YouTube Channel:

www.youtube.com/itssussex

By the end of Freshers’ Week the ITS Induction
had been seen by over
2,300 new students,
which consists of over
60% of the year’s intake.
Software savings

By investing in appropriate site licences, which allow students to borrow software from the library (and now download from the IT Services website), ITS is saving the student population at large a significant amount of money. For example, SPSS - the powerful statistics package used extensively at Sussex - was borrowed 1303 times during the academic year 2010-2011. The purchase of this number of individual licences would have come to £208,480 even taking into account a significant student discount, or £3,909,000 full price!

For further information and to download a copy of SPSS 19, please go to:

sussex.ac.uk/its/spss

In addition, Exceed onDemand is now available to download for home use (for PC, Mac and Linux). This allows you remotely log in to and run programs on our Linux server Napier. For further information and to download, see:

sussex.ac.uk/its/exceedondemand

Please note that both the above pages require you to login with your ITS username and password.

Lez Oxley

Lez Oxley retired at the end of July 2011 after working at the University since September 1973. Lez was a key member of the team which introduced the MAC software suite to the University; this software has been the foundation of the business support systems in the University since the early 1990s (and is only now being replaced).

Within the IT Services department, Lez’s role changed to include the lead responsibility for purchasing IT equipment, software and services, a role in which he continued until his retirement in July.

Many colleagues around the University gathered for Lez’s retirement “do” in the newly refurbished bar in Bramber House to wish him well. It was a great event with a number of former colleagues joining us and Lez made a great speech recounting some of the interesting and amusing events during his long career at Sussex. Lez was presented with Apple vouchers which he intends to use to support his own “technology refresh”. We understand that Lez is enjoying his retirement and has been seen driving trams along the promenade at Blackpool.

From the vaults

The ITS newsletter was first published in 1972 and has been produced ever since. As part of the University’s 50th Anniversary, ITS contributed a chapter to Fred Gray’s Making the Future book and 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: October 2001

New Home Page for Campus

The University of Sussex Information Service, USIS, has spent the Summer working to create a new “intranet” homepage for Sussex students and staff. The new design means it is easier for people on campus to find what they are looking for on the University site, as well as making it a straightforward matter to keep up-to-date with the latest news and events taking place on campus.

To coincide with the launch of the Intranet, the Computing Service made a small change to the web server. As a consequence anyone on campus requesting the University’s web home page (i.e. www.sussex.ac.uk) will now see the new “intranet” page.

In particular, anyone using a Computing Service PC will, by default, see this page when they start a web browser.

20 years ago: October 1991

Computer Viruses: Precautions

In order to prevent invasion of viruses it is imperative that all floppy disks are checked prior to insertion into PCs. Please note that whenever any of our machines become infected we will have to take the machine out of service until they have been inoculated.

Some points to remember:
- do not have a floppy disk in the drive when you turn on the computer or reboot the computer,
- never use pirated software as this is how many viruses spread,
- always check your floppy disks before you read or write to them.

30 years ago: October 1981

Documents

The following documents have been revised or newly published during October.

A FORTRAN Primer
Correcting Compilation errors: The EDER Command
A Primer to DATATRIEVE
An Introductory Guide to using a VAX Terminal
Producing Results as Graphs
An Introduction to UMRCC

A complete list of the Centre’s publications can be obtained by using the DOCUMENTS command.

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

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 Spring Term 2012. ITS News is normally published termly.