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## **AT YOUR SERVICE**

**Welcome to the first edition of your JISC Regional Support Centre newsletter**

Since Spring 2000 the SFEFC has become a funding partner of the Joint Information Systems Committee and has established Regional Support Centres across the UK to help Further Education Colleges exploit their connection to JANET, the UK's education and research network. We are your local RSC - Scotland South and West.

### **What we'll do for you**

#### **Managers**

- advise on ICT strategic and operational issues
- offer training and awareness-raising
- liaise on your college ICT needs
- organise appropriate events on current ICT issues

#### **Technical Staff**

- give technical advice to ensure that local area networks work well with regional and national networks
- advise on re-procurement issues
- technical help-desk
- site visits

#### **Lecturers**

- organise and deliver appropriate and relevant training opportunities
- help-desk

#### **Learning Resources**

- provide a liaison service with JISC Content Services
- site visits
- help-desk

### **MLE Conference Report**

Over 180 delegates attended a two day conference at Stirling University, one of the first events organised jointly by the RSC Scotland South & West and RSC Scotland North & East.



The conference focussed on 3 themes:

- **Strategy & Vision**
- **Implementation & Functionality**
- **Managing & Facilitating Learning**

A report on the conference can be found at our conference website

<http://www.rsc-ne-scotland.ac.uk/conf/index.html>

### **JISC Regional Support Centre Scotland South & West**

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## An Introduction to your JISC Regional Support Centre—Charles Sweeney

The RSC Scotland, South & West, was established from January 2001 and the staff have been working hard to co-ordinate their activities into a comprehensive and useful set of support services for the FE sector.

We have been busy!

All of the colleges in the region were connected to the JANET network ahead of the March deadline. We have already run a number of courses for different categories of staff as well as a major MLE conference and sector wide Training Needs Analysis jointly organised with the RSC North and East. We are working with 20 of our colleges on a JISC services mapping exercise to SQA unit descriptors down to learning outcome level. We have hosted on behalf of the Scottish e-Learning Forum, a pilot webcast series which focuses on four current issues aimed at ICT personnel in colleges.

Currently both the RSCs in Scotland are organising MLE deployment consultancy on behalf of the Scottish Further Education Funding Council.

The coming year presents a number of challenges to the RSC and we look forward to meeting these on your behalf. Naturally we also look forward to working with our colleagues at all levels within the sector. Our aim is to provide an excellent support service to FE. We look forward to working with you in achieving that aim.

## Information Helpdesk and Support

The RSC aims to provide information and advice on ICT issues which will enhance both learning and teaching, academic research and admin activities for all college staff.

To get current or new information on the JISC electronic content collection, online learning materials, data protection, new disability legislation, or even RSC short course provision then just give Fiona a call on the Information Helpdesk on (0141)-558 4098, consult our website on [www.rsc-sw-scotland.ac.uk](http://www.rsc-sw-scotland.ac.uk) or e-mail the RSC on [support@rsc-sw-scotland.ac.uk](mailto:support@rsc-sw-scotland.ac.uk).



Charles Sweeney is the Manager of the RSC Scotland South & West. Our strategic aim as an RSC is to meet with, and respond to the needs of individual colleges within our area. We will meet regularly with managers, staff development officers, librarians and ICT network staff to ensure our service matches requirements. Contact Charles at:  
0141 558 9001 x 295  
[cswee001@udcf.gla.ac.uk](mailto:cswee001@udcf.gla.ac.uk)



Fiona Drummond is the Information and Administration Officer for RSC Scotland South & West. Fiona's job entails providing administrative support to the RSC Manager and Team, as well as providing Information Helpdesk support on JISC and RSC services to Colleges in the Scottish (South & West) area. Contact Fiona at:  
0141 558 4098  
[fdrum001@udcf.gla.ac.uk](mailto:fdrum001@udcf.gla.ac.uk)



Fionnuala Cassidy is the Training and Outreach Officer for the JISC Regional Support Centre. Fionnuala's role is to liaise with Staff Development Officers and Learning Resources staff in colleges. Contact Fionnuala at:  
0141 558 9001 x 293  
[fcass001@udcf.gla.ac.uk](mailto:fcass001@udcf.gla.ac.uk).



Joan Walker is newly seconded from Glasgow College of Food Technology as Curriculum Development Officer and will work between the South & West and East & North RSCs. Joan's role is to link teaching practitioners with JISC services and expand the use of ICT within the curriculum. Contact Joan at:  
0141 558 9001 x 291  
[jwalk001@udcf.gla.ac.uk](mailto:jwalk001@udcf.gla.ac.uk)



Andy Wishart is the Network Officer for the JISC Regional Support Centre. Andy is currently seconded from the Computing Service at the University of Glasgow. Contact Andy at:  
0141 330 4857  
[a.wishart@udcf.gla.ac.uk](mailto:a.wishart@udcf.gla.ac.uk)

## Staff Development

The RSC's training programme aims to provide a full range of courses and workshops and is being developed in response to the needs identified in the joint RSC Training Needs Analysis, carried out at the end of the last academic year.

As well as courses hosted at the RSC, we will be happy to support internal college staff development events by offering awareness-raising sessions on JISC services and resources. The RSC welcomes feedback from colleges with regard to training. For further information or suggestions about training, please contact Fionnuala at 0141 558 9001 ext. 293 or [fcass001@udcf.gla.ac.uk](mailto:fcass001@udcf.gla.ac.uk).

**For up-to-date information on all our training events check our website [www.rsc-sw-scotland.ac.uk](http://www.rsc-sw-scotland.ac.uk).**

## Network Update

The initial challenge on the network front was to get all 22 FE Colleges in our region connected to the JANET Network. This was achieved well within the March 2001 target. The telecommunication circuits which currently deliver internet access to our colleges are in the process of re-procurement, which will result in the FE connections being upgraded to at least 10Mbps per college. The JANET routers are also being upgraded at this time. The new network will be operational by summer 2002.

A Networking group has been set-up which will meet quarterly. It will give network managers the chance to meet and discuss current network issues.

The first meeting has already shown that 'its good to talk'

Andy Wishart  
Network Officer

## Events

19th March 2002	Online materials for teaching & learning—NLN launch	West Lothian College
19th March 2002	Using the Internet for Teaching & Learning	RSC South & West training suite
20th March 2002	Getting to Grips with Dreamweaver	RSC South & West training suite
14th May 2002	Images & Multimedia	RSC South & West training suite
15th May 2002	Fundamentals of Flash	RSC South & West training suite
21st May 2002	Using the Internet for Teaching & Learning	RSC South & West training suite
22nd May 2002	Getting to Grips with Dreamweaver	RSC South & West training suite
11th June 2002	Getting to Grips with Dreamweaver	RSC South & West training suite
12th June 2002	Images & Multimedia	RSC South & West training suite

## SQA Unit Mapping

20 colleges in the Scotland South & West region are participating in a mapping exercise commissioned by the Regional Support Centre. Eighty units will be fully mapped by this exercise, each college mapping 4 units.

Staff from each institution are involved in identifying resources appropriate for the delivery of each learning outcome detailed in the four unit descriptors selected for development.

After the exercise is complete the results will be disseminated to all colleges in the Scotland South & West region as follows:

1. Resource guides will be hosted on the RSC website.
2. SFEU will provide a link from their Virtual Learning Centre to the mapped resources.
3. The resources identified will be integrated into the Distributed National Electronic Resources (DNER) JISC service. This is generally regarded as one of the most useful resources for the FE community currently offered by JISC <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/dner/>

Apart from identifying useful resources, the exercise has a further aim of embedding the use of JISC services within the Scottish FE curriculum. All staff are encouraged to use and comment to the RSC on the usefulness of services provided.

## WEBCASTS:

### Fad, or Training method of Tomorrow?

The RSC South & West has pioneered the UK RSC use of webcasting as a training tool in conjunction with the Scottish eLearning Forum (SeLF.)

Four issues of current topical value to ICT personnel were chosen to introduce the service and enable evaluation of its effectiveness as a training medium. The underlying premise of reaching staff who cannot afford to spend much time out of college, provided a self-selecting group in the ICT staff cohort. It is hoped the creation of programming which is focused and topical will reduce the need for out-of-college training to other staff cohorts, where this vehicle is appropriate and meets an identified need.

Initial evaluations are positive and we will continue to use webcasting as a communications resource.

Watch this space!



## Training Needs Analysis

The training needs analysis was commissioned to help the Scottish RSCs to determine how best to meet the training needs of the sector. The survey was conducted using 4 target groups

- Managers
- Teaching staff
- Support staff
- Network staff

Our thanks go to all who took the time to contribute to our findings. The complete report is available on the website below.  
<http://www.rsc-ne-scotland.ac.uk/tna/>

### Summary of the report recommendations

Training should be provided in the following areas:

- Awareness raising of the potential of online learning
- Sourcing & evaluating online materials
- Pedagogy in an online environment
- Designing online courses
- Designing online assessments
- Supporting online learners—communication methods
- Basic skills—e.g. support for ECDL
- Updating basic skills

A blended model of training combining face to face and online learning technology should be considered.

The most common barriers to training—issues of time / culture & equipment need to be examined carefully in order to prepare the way for effective training programmes.

There is a demand across all sectors for reliable sources of information and robust channels of communication between those who are charged with framing the College's ICT strategy.

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO PRESENT  
AN IDEA IN THIS NEWSLETTER,  
PLEASE CONTACT US  
0141 558 9001 EX 295**

## A-Z of JISC Services

### Part one A-D

#### ADAM

ADAM is the Art, Design, Architecture & Media Information Gateway, providing a searchable catalogue of approximately 2,500 Internet resources.  
<http://www.adam.ac.uk/>

#### AgriFor

AgriFor is part of the Biome subject hub. The AgriFor service includes a range of Internet sites for agriculture, food and forestry.  
<http://www.agrifor.ac.uk/>

#### AHDS - Arts and Humanities Data Service

AHDS provides access to and facilitates the creation and use of electronic resources in the arts and humanities, including the visual and performing arts.  
<http://ahds.ac.uk>

#### Athens

Athens is an access management system. This enables secure 'single sign-on' access to a range of JISC and other information sources. This allows staff and students to access a wide range of resources using the same username and password. Each educational institution has an administrator to manage the system.  
<http://www.athens.ac.uk>

#### BIDS - Bath Information and Data Services

BIDS provides access to a range of commercially supplied bibliographic databases and access to the Ingenta Journals full text service. BIDS services include a range of subject areas: science and engineering, social sciences, education, medicine and health.  
<http://www.bids.ac.uk>

#### Biome

Biome is the health and life sciences subject service of the Resource Discovery Network, providing access to a catalogue of hand-selected web sites and resources.  
<http://biome.ac.uk>

#### Biz/ed

Biz/ed is an economics and business gateway specifically designed for students, lecturers and teachers of business and economics across the educational spectrum. Biz/ed is designed to provide a comprehensive one-stop shop of educational resources in business and economics.  
<http://www.bized.ac.uk>

#### BUBL

BUBL is an Internet-based information service for the UK higher and further education community, based at Strathclyde University.  
<http://www.bubl.ac.uk>

#### BUFVC - British Universities Film and Video Council

The BUFVC exists to support and promote the use of moving images in UK higher and further education. At the heart of the BUFVC is its Information Service, which includes a number of databases, such as, AVANCE - a database of over 25,000 audio-visual materials in current UK distribution and the Television Index.  
<http://www.bufvc.ac.uk>

#### CETIS (Centre for Educational Technology Interoperability Standards)

CETIS represents the HE & FE community on the international IMS Project which works across education and business, developing standards that will allow the exchange of information between learning content, learning management systems, student profile systems, and administrative systems – including Managed Learning Environments (MLEs).  
<http://cetis.bangor.ac.uk/cetis/>

#### Data Archive

The Data Archive holds over 4,000 datasets in social sciences, economics and humanities. Data is acquired from many different sources including central government, academic researchers, opinion poll organisations and other data archives worldwide. (Conditionally free - registration required)  
<http://www.data-archive.ac.uk>