

Autumn 2008

## Launch of Enhanced Portal Service

The new version of the University Portal was launched on 19 September 2008. Portal usage (by staff and students) is increasing steadily and we have had around 42,000 logged in visitors with 180,000 associated page views. Daily usage is averaging around 1000 logins per weekday, with some 400 users logging in at the weekend.

The Portal team has revised the themes, layouts, styling and channel content for all users. A number of Single Sign-On connectors have been created, granting users access to other online services without the need to authenticate a second time. These include:

- Update My Business Card (Staff Only)
- Banner Student & Faculty Self Service
- PDS
- Careers GradNav website access
- OPUS
- Campus One/WebCT
- Student Lists and Emailer (Staff Only)

Other Single Sign-On connectors are in development and will be deployed over the coming months.

Every individual can tailor the Portal to suit their own taste or requirement. In addition to the University's



Pictured with the Vice-Chancellor are (from left to right): Mr Damian McGivern, Head of the Career Development Centre and Chair of the Portal Project Steering Group; Mr Andrew Trimble, Director of Information Services; and Mr Gareth McAleese, Assistant Director (Applications Delivery) of ISD.

layout, personal and role-based layouts can be created and merged into a composite arrangement. Tabs, columns and channels can be added and personalized 'quick links' added to a pre-defined set for all University staff and students.

Future developments include:

- Drag and drop channel selection
- Single Sign-On to Live@edu (Student Email & SkyDrive)
- Personal theme selection
- A dedicated library channel listing books on loan and Single Sign-On to library systems
- Animated help pages
- Further application inclusion, e.g. A new 'car mileage' system.
- A transition from the current emailed-based University notifications to Portal-based targeted announcements



## Learning Resource Centre opens at Belfast

Phase 2 of the campus refurbishment was completed during Summer 2008 and includes a Learning Resource Centre (LRC) which brings together IT, Library and Reprographics services. The LRC is located centrally on campus and is proving popular with staff and students alike. LRC staff provide support for all faculties based at Belfast and the single Information Desk provides a one-stop-shop for library, IT and reprographics enquiries.

In addition to traditional and electronic library resources, features of the LRC include casual and

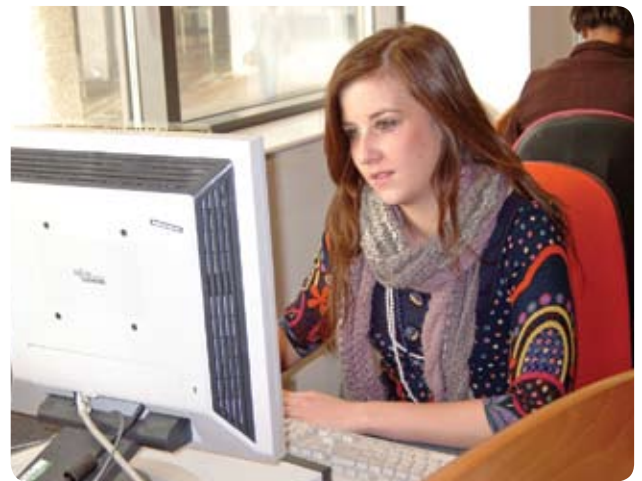
formal seating; quiet study rooms for students; 108 networked computers; wireless zones; photocopying, computer printing and scanning facilities and a range of assistive technology equipment and software.

The Library service has defined opening times but computers, photocopiers and careers information are available whenever the campus is open. Later this year, the LRC will provide a permanent location for some works from the University art collection.

## New Student Desktop Environment

The new student desktop environment (known as CITL2) was launched successfully at the beginning of the academic year. The service is based on Microsoft's Active Directory technology and replaces the Novell service which had supported our student network for over eight years. This was a major project for Information Services and included the replacement of the existing servers, the establishment of a new operating system environment and the deployment of a new desktop image to every PC in the corporate areas. The new service will provide ICT Customer Services with enhanced capability in the management of the student corporate areas by providing the centralisation of software deployment and security control.

The service is in operation in corporate areas including student workstations in IT laboratories and LRCs, the



video-conference suites and PCs within teaching rooms. All students (including those returning) were provided with new login details at the start of the term. Academic staff, and sponsored visitors, can now log into any PC in these areas using their own Active Directory usercode and password. Further information can be found on our website at:

[www.ulster.ac.uk/isd/itus/citl2/](http://www.ulster.ac.uk/isd/itus/citl2/)



Nigel, his wife Yolande and colleagues from ISD at Nigel's retirement presentation.

**Nigel Macartney**, Director of Information Services from 1999, retired from the University in April this year.

A native of Manchester, Nigel studied History at Cambridge and, after holding positions in a number of public and further education libraries, became Librarian at the University of Hertfordshire in 1982. In 1995, Nigel was appointed Director of the British Library Research and Innovation Centre.

During his time with Information Services, he undertook two major departmental restructures and led in the creation of the Learning Resource Centres on each campus. Nigel played a key role in the development of the University's Information and IT strategy, and its governing body, SUCCINCT. Nigel was Chairman of NIRAN (Northern Ireland Regional Area Networking) and took a keen interest in the enhancements to the University's network infrastructure. He was an advocate of innovation in the teaching and learning environment and ensured the department was in a strong position to deliver its programme of fixed digital projector facilities to teaching areas.

Nigel is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and is a member of CAMRA (The Campaign for Real Ale), the Manchester United Supporters Trust and Ballycastle Golf Club - undoubtedly activities he will be happy to pursue now that he has the time to do so!

All his friends in Information Services wish Nigel a long and happy retirement.

# TEK PANEL

## TEK Panels make for dazzling presentations for Students

It looks like a big plasma TV, but it is really a high powered PC. All our Learning Resource Centres now have study-rooms equipped with these new, 40-inch screen, all-in-one PCs. TEK Panels combine powerful processor computing, dazzling high-resolution graphics and a revolutionary touch-sensitive LCD screen into a single, free standing unit. They can make group work easy as everybody can interact via the touch screen or the wireless keyboard.

Students can log-on using their Network Accounts, and LRC staff can provide a short training session if they have not used a TEK panel before.



## Library Information Skills and Induction units

The Library has developed online Information Skills and Library Induction units that can be accessed from the Library home page. Aimed at helping students search effectively for information, these units will lead them through the steps of developing a search strategy, from analysing their topics to identifying appropriate resources. Students can find out about referencing, plagiarism, current awareness and, most importantly, where to get help.

Campus-specific Induction units are being developed to introduce students to the services and resources available in their LRC. A unit planned for distance-learning students will focus on online library provision.

# International Conservation Team Appointed To ISD



Photograph courtesy of the Londonderry Sentinel

Following the successful bid by the University to the Heritage Lottery Fund for funding to conserve the historical Diocesan Library of Derry and Raphoe, a conservation team has now begun work on the books. They are led by Jennifer Jarvis from the USA, and include Jennifer Murray (Dublin), Alessandro Scola (Milan), Tony Upton (formerly Nottingham), all conservators, and local woman Mary Delargy as learning and outreach officer. The very high number of top-quality applicants for the posts indicates the importance of this unique project. For further information, visit:

[www.derryraphoelibrary.org](http://www.derryraphoelibrary.org)

## Student Gets The Library Bug

Congratulations are due to Matthew Weir, First Year Built Environment Student, who won the prize draw in the Library Induction quiz. Matthew's name was drawn out of a hat for the prize of a Pure Bug DAB Digital Radio, for correctly answering the quiz which was run as part of the Induction Week for first year students by the School of the Built Environment. He was presented his prize by Jim Fitzsimons, Sub-Librarian, with Ian Hanna, organiser of the Induction Week, and Mick Carragher, who devised the quiz. Thanks to all the students who took part in the exercise.



## Human Resource Management: New Online Service

**XpertHR**  
Online HR Intelligence

Developed for the HR professional, the Library has taken out a subscription to an extensive new online service which offers access to over 24,000 journal articles, along with Butterworth's employment law reference manual, case studies, surveys, model policies and contracts as well as news information on all HR matters. The database will be of particular use to business and legal students but will also be of relevance to anyone involved in the management of human resources.

The library database may be accessed using an ATHENS password from:  
[library.ulster.ac.uk/electronic/](http://library.ulster.ac.uk/electronic/)



## Promoting Active Learning - Ask the Audience!

The Library has invested in a number of audience response kits (TurningPoint) for use in each of its LRCs. Popularised through use in the TV programme 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire' (Ask the Audience), the technology is being piloted by Library staff in delivering induction and information skills classes. With research showing that the attention span of students lapses between 6-20 minutes of passive listening, this technology promotes greater student interaction and helps check their level of understanding during a learning session. Student responses to the multiple choice questions can be recorded and then analysed by the tutor.

If you have a comment or query on any article in this Newsletter, please contact:

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