

Paper B - Report from Head of Computing 2022-10-31

EdLAN replacement project

The Appleton Tower and Kings Buildings DRT migrations were completed by the end of July. This will allow us to simplify the routing between Informatics and EdLAN which should help to reduce some of the network instability we have recently suffered – this work is now expected to take place in November. It is still no clearer when our network edge will be migrated – progress on the project is being seriously hampered by continuing supply chain issues.

Recent incidents

- A small number of student and staff accounts have been reported by Janet and/or ISG to have been compromised – usually as a result of an individual being a victim of a phishing attack.
- A small number of self-managed personal devices have been found to have been compromised whilst connected to the University network – the users have been advised to wipe and reinstall.

Improving security – firewalls

The process for requesting firewall holes for self-managed machines has been tightened up. All requests are now asked to make a business case which will be considered by Head of Computing, who in turn will consult where appropriate. Self-managed servers with firewall holes will be expected to log system events to a central School managed loghost – this will aid any investigation of suspected compromises. As previously, holes will be reviewed on a periodic basis. It is planned that a similar process is introduced for systems which are managed by School computing staff.

IS developments

- Have been running an MFA (Multi Factor Authentication) pilot for O365 for 18 months or so. IS now planning rollout to everyone. (Several Informatics COs have been involved in pilot).
- EdWeb (on existing Drupal 7 based platform) was migrated to an externally hosted service in July. Individual sites are being slowly migrated to a new Drupal 9 based platform - Kasia is working on planning the move of 'infweb' to this platform.

Staffing

- George Ross has indicated his intention to retire at the end of the year. Ian Durkacz retired at the end of May. We have taken the opportunity to restructure the computing team slightly. Authentication, authorisation and directory services have become the responsibility of the Services Unit. The Managed Platform Unit has morphed into the Systems Unit and gained responsibility for networks and server room infrastructure. A new Computing Infrastructure Manager, Bruce Duncan, has been appointed and started early October. Bruce sits within the Systems Unit. Permission has been sought, from College, to appoint a Computing Infrastructure computing officer who will report to Bruce. This CO will also be responsible for coordinating AV installs across the School.
- Nikolaos Dandoulakis has accepted a position in Geosciences. Recruitment for his replacement has begun. This post is CDT funded.
- Victoria Dishon, the CSE Head of IT, has moved to Heriot Watt University. Recruit for her successor has begun.