

Information and
Computer Sciences

NEWSLETTER

Issue 10 July 2008



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WELCOME

ON behalf of the Information and Computer Science Subject Centre we would like to welcome you to the tenth edition of the newsletter.

As is typical of this time of year, things are a bit quiet on the news front, but we've pulled together what we feel are the most relevant articles from the ICS and HEA sites, along with items from other computer science-related sites.

In addition, there's funding updates and links to the latest resources added to the ICS website, including presentation materials and book reviews.

Just to remind everyone, the centre's 9th annual conference is taking place in Liverpool Hope University on the 26th - 28th August and there are still some places available.

For the next issue we're planning a bumper edition with full coverage of the conference for those who can't make the trip.

GET INVOLVED

REMEMBER this is *your* newsletter so as always we welcome all contributions and comments.

If you are involved in any good practice and are willing to submit an article or share your views and ideas on any aspect of teaching, learning and assessment, then please let us know using the following contact details:

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ICS CENTRE NEWS

Still time to book a place for the ICS 9th annual conference

THE Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Information and Computer Science's annual conference will take place from Tuesday 26th to Thursday 28th August, 2008, at the Liverpool Hope University.

Liverpool has been named European Capital of Culture 2008, so it's an excellent time to visit the city. Also, the International Beatles Week is taking place from 20th to 26th August, celebrating the work of the

popular beat combo - another great reason to register. For more information on the 9th annual conference please visit:

<http://www.ics.heacademy.ac.uk/events/9th-annual-conf/>

We are now taking registrations for the conference, you can register by visiting the following link:

<http://www.ics.heacademy.ac.uk/events/9th-annual-conf/register.php>



Applications for the General Development Fund now welcome

THE Higher Education Academy subject network for Information and Computer Sciences is pleased to announce that applications for the Subject Development Fund are now open.

Proposals for funding should be made using the downloadable application form which is available in two formats, PDF or DOC. Applications should be submitted either on paper or electronically.

Final decisions on which projects will receive funding will be made by a meeting of the full review panel. Unsuccessful projects

will receive feedback as to why funding has not been allocated.

Proposals will only be accepted from members of UK HE institutions or FE institutions delivering HE programmes in ICS. Collaborative proposals involving more than one institution are actively encouraged.

The maximum funding available for any single project should not exceed £3,500.

***Deadline for submission applications is Friday 10th October 2008**

Visit: <http://www.ics.heacademy.ac.uk/projects/development-fund/general.php>

For all the latest news updates visit
the news section of our website!

<http://www.ics.heacademy.ac.uk/news>

FUNDING UPDATE

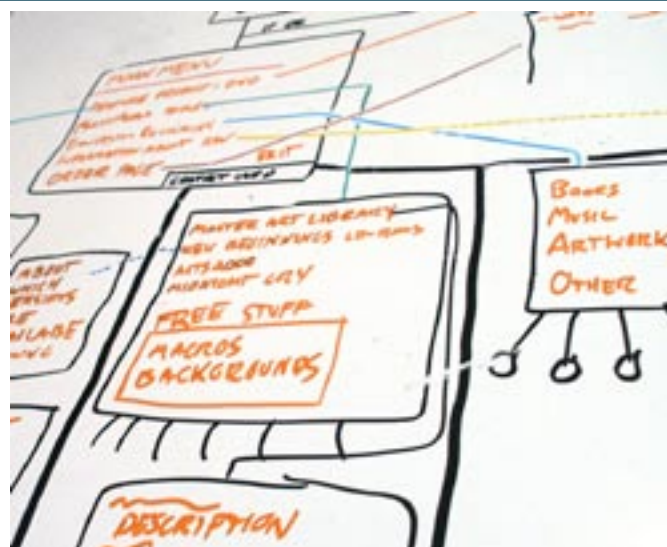
Call for National Teaching Fellowship Scheme project bids

THE 2008 to 2009 call for National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS) project bids is available. Teams are able to bid for funds of up to £200,000 for up to three years.

The NTFS project strand offers funding for institutions providing higher education to build on the expertise of National Teaching Fellows (NTF). Projects must focus on HE practice, based on evidence-informed developments, and result in direct improvements to HE pedagogy.

The closing date is 29 September 2008.

Visit: <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/funding/detail/ntfsprojects>



HIGHER EDUCATION

Nominations open for HE in FE teaching award scheme

THE Subject Centre HE in FE Teaching Award (Stem) provides an opportunity for lecturers in further education colleges to receive national recognition for their outstanding learning and teaching practices, or their work which in some other way enhances the student learning experience.

This award, and winner's cheque of £500, is open to both full and part-time staff and is intended to showcase commitment, imagination and innovative ways of inspiring students and make their learning relevant.

It is specifically for lecturers in the areas of sciences, technology, engineering and mathematics, delivering higher nationals, foundation degrees and any other

undergraduate programmes. For further details and an outline of last year's winner, please visit the website link below and view our HE in FE section.

Visit: <http://www.ics.heacademy.ac.uk/HEinFE/teachingAwards.htm>

This award is to showcase commitment, imagination and innovative ways to inspire students

Online Question Bank

The Question Bank is a pilot repository of over 1,000 Computer Science and Informatics questions

<http://www.ics.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/qbankpro/>

GENERAL NEWS

HE podcasting enjoying a sonic boom among students

THERE has been a phenomenal rise in the use of podcasts over the past three years, with significant use in HE.

A recent article from the BCS, *Podcasting in Higher Education*, discusses the “revolution that is going on in the university sector” where the adoption of podcasts has been significant.

The main uses of podcasting in higher education are course lectures, pre-class listening material/extended course material, and coursework feedback. The article provides top tips for podcasters and discusses future trends.

Last month University College London and the Open University became the first UK HEIs to make audio and visual content freely available for download on iTunes U - Apple’s free online portal for educational video and audio downloads.

It seems that many more institutions will follow their lead with podcasting becoming a major element of teaching.

Visit: <http://www.ics.heacademy.ac.uk/news/fullstory.php?id=140>



Opera hits right note with online web standards course

THE web browser Opera has released the first 23 articles of a free online course covering web standards.

The Opera web standards curriculum, which is available to the public under a creative commons license, seeks to provide educational institutions, companies, and private users with a complete, up-to-date course to teach web standards.

Every article focuses on a different topic, such as CSS, HTML, or JavaScript, and has been written by experts in each field.

The aim of the curriculum is to reach web developers who are new to web standards, arming them with the tools and information they need to deploy web standards easily and efficiently. In total, the course will con-

sist of more than 50 articles. Opera plans to deliver 10 new articles every month during the next three months, and incorporate feedback from users. The web-browser company also wants to translate the web standards curriculum to several languages to make it available worldwide

Visit: <http://www.opera.com/wsc/>

E-assessment white paper

THIS white paper outlines the benefits of e-assessment, for Scotland and beyond, and is a must-read for any organisation looking to implement e-assessment on a large scale.

Visit: http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/SOLARWhitePaperMay2008.pdf

GENERAL NEWS

Report finds universities sharing notes on student plagiarism

THE results of the second phase of the Academic Misconduct Benchmarking Research Project (Amber) show that while HEIs vary in their application of plagiarism policies, there are clusters of consensus within groups of universities.

The details highlighted by the research will be used by higher education institutions to review and develop their individual plagiarism policies in the future. Institutions are also encouraged to use the project's results to examine their existing procedures and engender a complete and transparent picture of activity within the sector.

The research, the first of its kind in the UK, was conducted by the Academy Jisc Academic Integrity Service (Ajais), and aims to benchmark current policy and practice in UK HE with regard to the methods used to manage student plagiarism.

Building on the previous desk-top survey of academic misconduct regulations - the first phase of Amber - higher education institutions were asked to report on the number of cases of plagiarism recorded in a given year and the penalties that applied to each case.

Dr Fiona Duggan, of Ajais, said: "We had an excellent response to this phase of the Amber project with 100 institutions voluntarily reporting over 9,200 cases, the majority of which were first offences."

While all universities were found to manage the issue of student plagiarism on an individual basis, the research showed the most common ways of dealing with the issue were the resubmission of assessments, where the resulting mark would be capped and the assignment of a formal warning.

More than 50 per cent of the recorded instances of plagiarism were dealt with in one of these ways.

Within each of the three types of university identified in Amber's first phase, areas of commonality in dealing with the issue were identified. This indicated that the character-



Picture: PHOTOEDITORVISION/Michael Brunsten

istics of an institution may play a role in its plagiarism policy.

The results also showed that while not all HEIs were in a position to break down the recorded figures into first, second or third instances, where institutions were able to do so their majority were first occurrences.

Dr Duggan added: "As this is the first time the issue of student plagiarism has been researched in detail in the UK, the results will be highly beneficial for the sector.

"This project has been made possible by the development of understanding among institutions of the issues around plagiarism and what can be done to address it.

"The Amber study has highlighted that this common understanding must also extend to the recording and monitoring procedures of student plagiarism and these findings will underpin the support provided to UK HEIs through the Higher Education Academy Jisc Academic Integrity Service in the coming years."

Visit: http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/AMBeR_PartII_Full_Report.pdf

GENERAL NEWS

Phoebe guides teachers through maze of course design

THE final report from the Phoebe project is now available. The principal achievement of the project has been the development of a usable and useful pedagogy planner tool, which is freely available.

This is a purpose-built application that guides teachers through the construction of designs for courses (modules) and individual learning sessions.

The tool enables teachers and lecturers to make use of digital technologies to promote active, motivating and productive learning for students in a way that affords positive teaching experiences for themselves.

Intended for practitioners working in FE, HE and ACL, the Phoebe tool brings together the key components of a learning design, prompts teachers' thinking, allows them to record ideas and requirements, and makes

It provides access to a wide range of models, case studies and examples of truly innovative learning designs

it easy to cross-reference components as they design the activities that make up a learning experience.

It offers both flexible and guided paths through the planning process, and provides access to a wide range of models, case studies and examples of truly innovative learning designs.

Visit: <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/publications/publications/phoebefinalreport.aspx>

Survey finds institutional infrastructure tops staff concerns

A NEW survey carried out by Jisc Infonet reveals that the most pressing strategic issues facing both further and education institutions are related to "organisational infrastructure". The online survey received 86 responses from 75 institutions with the responses showing that "organisational infrastructure" eclipsed financial concerns and the stresses of operating within an increasingly competitive market-driven sector.

Where time was not necessarily effectively used within institutions participants stated this was in areas "relating to the quality and efficiency of processes, communication and

The results make for fascinating reading and indicate that most problems stem from within the institution itself

collaboration, IT infrastructure, information quality and access, and poor decision-making processes".

When asked the reasons for this, respondents pointed to "external factors beyond their control" as the principal factor.

Steve Bailey, senior advisor at Jisc Infonet said: "These results make for fascinating reading and seem to indicate that for all the challenges institutions face as a result of constantly shifting external forces, the majority of the issues of greatest concern to managers and staff, actually stem from practical, procedural and infrastructural matters within the institution itself.

"The challenge for those charged with determining their organisation's strategic direction is to find ways of ensuring that their high level strategies actually make a real and positive difference where most required."

Visit: <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/news/stories/2008/07/strategyinfonet.aspx>

GENERAL NEWS

Students think their tutors should get a Second Life

NEW research commissioned by Jisc and carried out by Ipsos Mori suggests that students are starting to mix their social networking sites with their academic studies and inviting tutors and lecturers into their virtual space.

The research builds upon an initial study – Student Expectations – carried out last year when 500 students were asked to indicate their expectations of technology

provision when entering into higher education.

This new data is based on students that are studying as first years at higher education institutions, compared to the previous study when they were still at school.

Visit: <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/news/stories/2008/06/greatexpectations.aspx>

Visit: <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/publications/publications/greatexpectationsbp>

YET MORE ICS CENTRE NEWS

New staff welcomed on board the good ship ICS

SINCE the last newsletter there have been a few changes in our office staff, with three new members having joined the ICS centre.

- **Audrey Graham** joined in June as academic liaison officer to cover Hazel White's maternity leave. Her main responsibility will be managing the development funds.

Audrey has spent more than 20 years developing, teaching and assessing a wide range of computing courses in further and higher education.

More recently she has been involved in project management, in particular the e-assessment project for the Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator (Ofqual) in the area-based colleges of further and

higher education and the online induction programme for new lecturers in further and higher education.

- **Suzanne McMullan** has just recently joined our team and is responsible for administrative support within the centre.

Suzanne provides clerical support such as analyzing evaluate feedback on workshops, organising travel and accommodation for staff and speakers and maintaining the centre's database, spreadsheets and supporting financial procedures.

- **Conor Magee** is the centre's new web developer, currently in the process of taking over duties from Danny Turley who is returning to full-time study in September to complete a BSc in Interactive Multimedia Design.

NEW RESOURCES ON ICS WEBSITE

Presentation material available for download

PRESENTATION material is now available from the following events that we have recently hosted.

- **Student Recruitment** on 28th May 2008

- **Teaching, Learning and Assessment of**

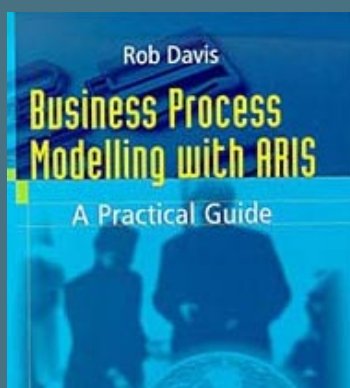
Databases (TLAD 08) (BNCOD) on 10th July 2008

Details and presentations can be found at the this url:

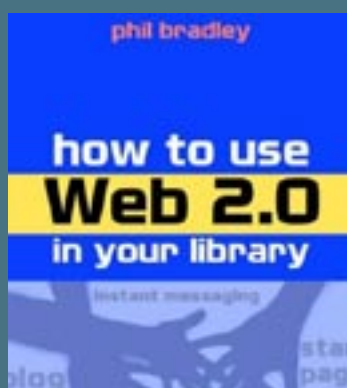
<http://www.ics.heacademy.ac.uk/events/archive.php>

NEW RESOURCES ON ICS WEBSITE

Recently reviewed books



Title: Business Process Modelling with ARIS
Author: Rob Davis
Year: 2008 **Edition:** 1st
Reviewer: Richard Hill

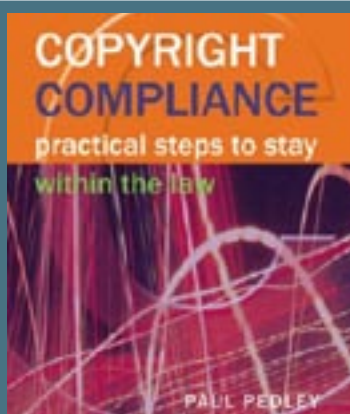


Title: How to use Web 2.0 in your Library **Author:** Phil Bradley **Year:** 2007
Edition: 1st
Reviewer: Kate Friday

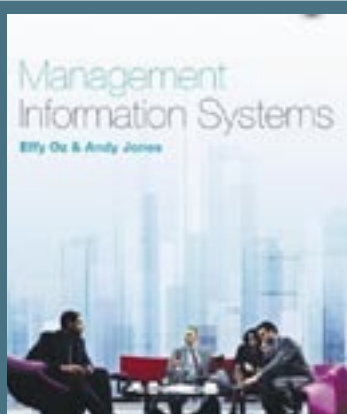


Title: Specifying Software: A Hands-On Introduction
Author: R D Tennent
Year: 2002 **Edition:** 1st
Reviewer: Phil Brooke

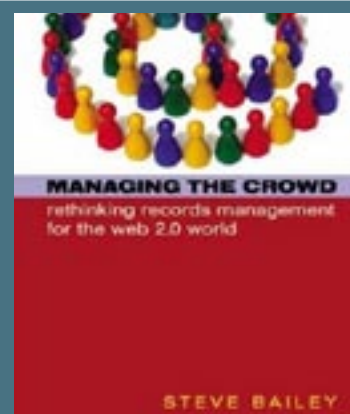
Books available for review



Title: Copyright Compliance: Practical Steps to Stay Within the Law **Author:** Paul Pedley
Year: 2008 **Edition:** 1st



Title: Management Information Systems **Author:** Effy Oz & Andy Jones **Year:** 2008
Edition: 1st



Title: Managing the Crowd: Rethinking Records Management for Web 2.0 **Author:** Steve Bailey **Year:** 2008 **Edition:** 1st



British Computer Society

Boredom outweighs bright prospects for potential IT students

THE vast majority of undergraduates think that although the IT sector has a bright future, the work is boring.

The research, by Crac: the career development organisation, based on nearly 2,000 responses from undergraduates, found that the single most important reason for students not wanting to enter the sector was their perception that working in IT would be boring.

Crac development director Robin Mellors-Bourne said: "Over 60 per cent of non-computing students cited boring work as the main reason they would not join the sector.

"Employers should be able to counter that kind of perception. We found that very few of the students hold negative perceptions about the IT profession or its people."

The research also revealed significant differences in motivation for the career choices made by male and female students and the sorts of jobs that would attract them. While female computing students were every bit as keen as their male counterparts to work in the sector, this was not the case for students in other disciplines.

Mr Mellors-Bourne added: "The survey suggests that many women will be attracted by the impact that IT projects have in other sectors and areas of life, while the men tend to like the technical projects.

"Less than 10 per cent of respondents felt that the benefits of a computing degree had been effectively communicated to them at school.

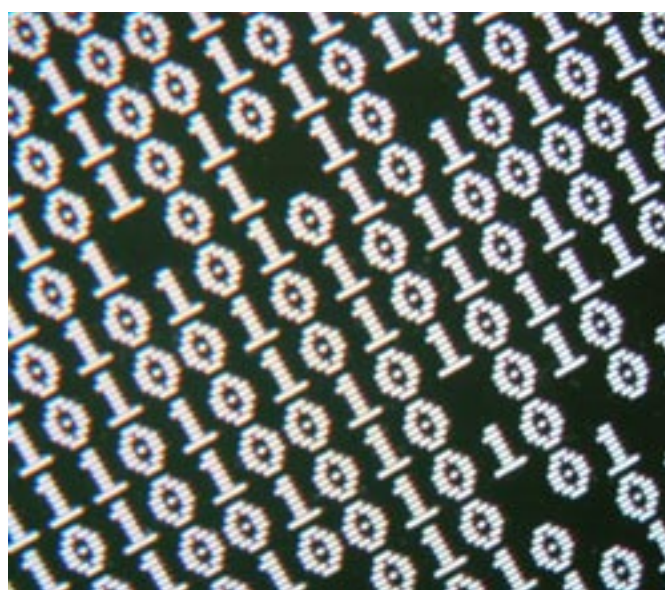
"We need to encourage more students to study computer science and computer related studies at universities in order to ensure that the IT industry can meet the demand for workers in the future."

Mike Rodd, director of BCS Learned Society, which is driving an outreach campaign to schools, said: "Studying a computing or ICT A-level at school also has a surprisingly

big impact on whether a student ultimately goes into an IT career, irrespective of their degree."

The research also showed that work experience remains the strongest influence on career choice for undergraduates, and that existing schemes are very successful in portraying work in the sector in a good light.

There appears to be great scope if these schemes can be targeted to students who



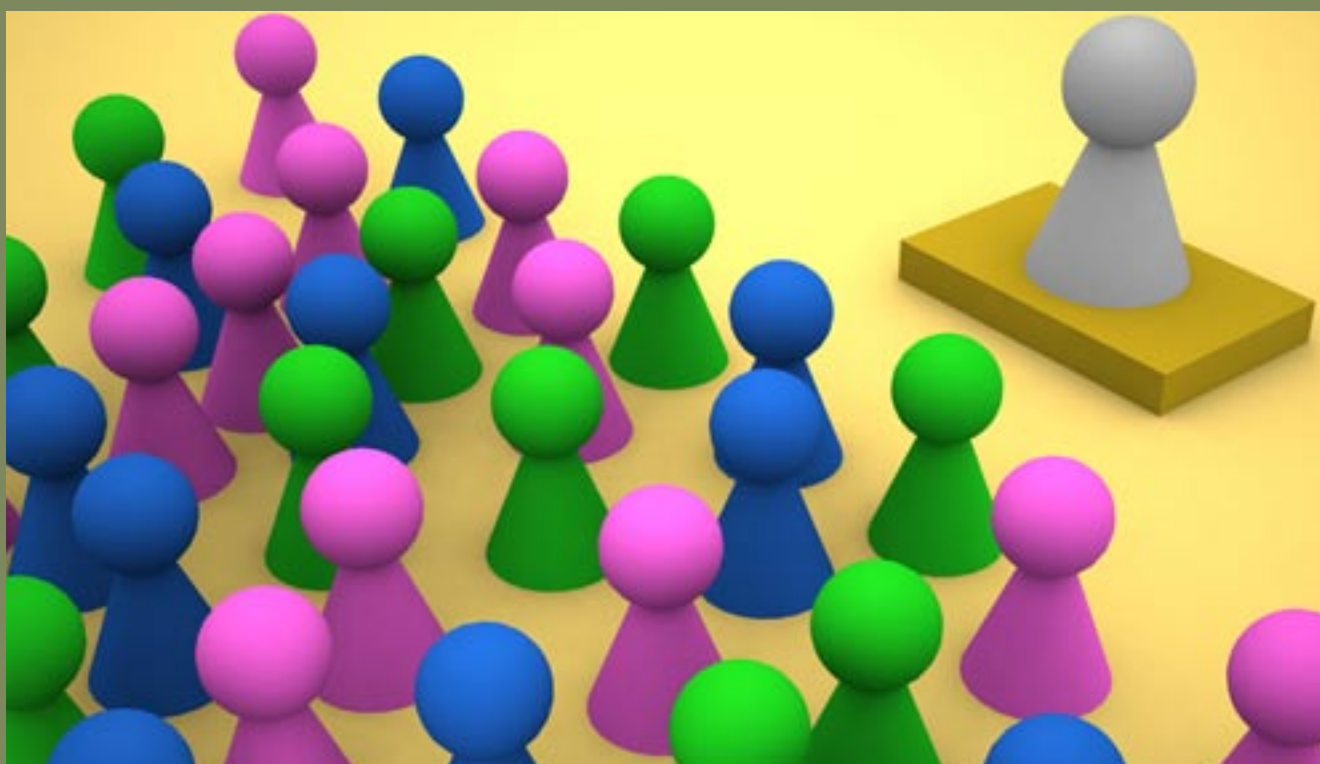
would not otherwise be considering work in the sector.

Mr Rodd added: "Greater exposure of young people to the merits of a job in the IT sector is vital, we need to show them the variety of roles in IT and the importance that IT carries today - IT is at the heart of business these days and there are real opportunities now to have a career in IT which will ultimately lead to a position on the board."

Mr Mellors-Bourne added: "If the UK IT sector wants to remain competitive it needs to harness the best talent. It is already doing a lot right but we have identified a few key areas in which some decisive change could be really effective."

View: <http://www.bcs.org/server.php?show=ConWebDoc.20157>

UPCOMING EVENTS



9th Annual Conference of the ICS HE Academy

Date: 26th August - 28th August 2008
Location: Liverpool Hope University

Novel Approaches to Student Engagement

Date: 30th October 2008
Location: University of Ulster at Coleraine

Teaching Ethical Hacking

Date: 6th November 2008
Location: University of Abertay, Dundee

PDP/Games and simulations workshop

Date: 13th November 2008
Location: University of Bedfordshire, CETL

Robotics in the Curriculum

Date: 20th November 2008
Location: University of Southampton

Computer Forensics

Date: 27th November 2008
Location: University of Glamorgan

Social Media Tools for Student Engagement

Date: 1st December 2008
Location: University of the West of England

Teaching Over Performers (TOPs)

Date: TBA
Location: London South Bank University

Next Issue

OUR next newsletter will be out in October 2008. If you have any comments or would like to contribute in any way please contact us:

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