IS Services works hard to deliver a welcoming IT experience to new students at the start of each academic year, while also remaining dedicated to assisting existing students and staff. It takes a lot of work to get things started properly and we would like to share a few support statistics and a summary of some of the continuous service improvements that were in place for the start of the academic year.

- We improved our ‘New Student Welcome’ web pages which include links to videos, guidebooks, and other Induction materials. Our web pages received over 32,000 hits during the 6 weeks of New Student Orientation and Induction.

- The new Password Recovery Service for students is a service which allows students to reset their passwords easily, remotely and securely. It has been used daily by students since its launch, with a usage peak just before teaching started in September.

- During the week of Induction, IS Services had an Information Desk in the BLU Library and the Hamilton Library and we met 3,500 students. As well, we provided induction talks to an additional 2,100 students as part of their school and department orientation.

- 12,000 New Student guide books were distributed during the week of Induction.

- The Helpdesk handled approximately 7,800 calls during the 6 weeks of New Student Orientation and Induction; that’s nearly 3,000 more calls than during any other 6 week period throughout the academic year on average.

- TCDconnect was upgraded ready for the new Academic Year and for the first time ever the service saw over 10,000 calls during the first week.

- During the 6 week period of New Student Orientation and Induction, ISS provided an additional 1,878 hours of support across our training courses, TCD-connect clinics and IS Services Information Desk.

- TCDconnect was upgraded ready for the new Academic Year and for the first time ever the service saw over 10,000 calls during the first week.

Best Wishes for the Christmas holidays!

We would like to wish you all the best for the festive season and good luck on your exams!

The ISS Helpdesk will be open until 23 December 2013 and then again from 2 January 2014.
Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) and Cloud Computing at TCD

Interest in cloud computing has exploded over the last few years and many definitions have emerged. A Google search for 'cloud computing' will generate over 400 million articles replete with industry acronyms such as Software as a Service (SaaS), Platform as a Service (PaaS) and Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) and pictures of computing devices all connecting to an illustrated cloud. Everyone is talking about ‘the cloud’, but with varying definitions of what ‘the cloud’ means.

Let us take a few moments to lift the fog on cloud computing and describe how it will benefit you at TCD.

What does it all mean?

When people talk about ‘the Cloud’, they’re talking about a way of delivering IT services. Cloud services can be public or private services. When you use Google, Facebook, Yahoo, and Amazon, you are using a service that is available to everyone and thus are using services in a public cloud.

TCD operates its own private cloud on which IT services are delivered. This essentially means that we host the infrastructure on our network for supporting certain IT services.

The three main services delivered through cloud computing include:

Software as a Service (SaaS): These are applications. They can be e-mail services like Gmail or Yahoo mail or social networking sites such as Facebook. TCD’s MyZone is SaaS.

Platform as a Service (PaaS): Facilities for people to develop applications. The hardware and systems are in place and the developer does not worry about these. For example you can build web applications to run on Google Apps Engine.

Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS): Provides servers and storage in a virtualised service model that can operate with an efficiency and elasticity that physical hardware isn’t capable of. Put simply, IaaS replaces old servers, storage and cabling with modern integrated computing, networking and storage which is configured largely in software. For example when you want a server these days, it’s still a server but delivered on software and not on a physical box like it was 5 years ago. Nowadays a server is called a ‘VM’ – a virtual machine. If they are a paid for service, you pay for these services usually via a subscription for a period of time. You don’t pay for hardware, software and networks.

IaaS in TCD

The objective of IaaS within TCD is to provide a resilient compute and storage infrastructure in a private cloud that will support IT requirements outlined in the College Strategic Plan. It is built on the Green Data Centre infrastructure which provides for 99.99% uptime and the current IaaS equipment provides capacity for 270 terabytes of storage and 400 virtual servers.
Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) and Cloud Computing at TCD

The project work behind IaaS has included a large-scale migration of existing data and servers from old hardware to the IaaS in the Green Data Centre and HPRC (High Performance Research Computing unit within IS Services). At present, services such as the Finance System (FIS), the staff email service, the Student Information System (SITS), and Library services are hosted in this virtual environment in the Green Data Centre and IS Services are completing the process of moving the remaining College IT services.

In addition to increased resilience and computing capacity, TCD’s private cloud can expand easily. This scalability allows for current and future College requirements in research and for business systems.

The benefits of Infrastructure as a Service

These state-of-the-art technologies allow for optimum use and management of the resources available to TCD.

College now has the ability to provide ‘Highly Available’ systems and IT services across two data centres. Those on the College network want their systems available at all times and now we have the potential to provide that availability.

This means that if a service is down in the primary data centre, it will be automatically transferred to the secondary data centre and thus the end user will experience relatively no disruption. At the moment, FIS, the student information system (SITS), TCDconnect and the staff email service are ‘highly available’ services.

In addition to high availability, other benefits of IaaS include the following:

- more capacity for servers (‘VMs’) and data storage
- faster delivery to College community
- Network Attached Storage (NAS) - a subscription based storage service
- easily expanded capacity
- reduced environmental costs in terms of space and power consumption
- a framework agreement in place with suppliers for five years, eliminating the need for prolonged tendering engagements

2013/14 Satisfaction Survey for Staff & Students

In the new year, we will be holding our third annual IS Services satisfaction survey.

The feedback from this survey will allow us to gain an understanding of what is of greatest importance to staff and current students in relation to the IT services provided in College and will feed directly into our continuous service improvement plans.

Keep an eye on your email for details on how to participate!
(continued from front page ... )

users and 15,000 devices connected, including Android devices. By the end of October 2013, the number of students connected was an increase of 37.5% from the previous academic year at that date.

- Network Access Advisors assisted students connecting to the College network. They helped over 1,000 new students get connected.

- Wi-Fi improvements included the installation of high-density Wi-Fi in the 1st & 3rd floors of the Ussher Library and two lecture theatres in the BioSciences building.

We hope that the work we did made a difference to ensuring the Academic Year 2013-14 started successfully and we are committed to delivering service improvements going forward to maintain that success.

**IS Services Annual Review 2012-2013 ...**

Our new Annual Review brochure was designed in-house by IS Services to be an engaging view over the last year. In it, you will find highlights of the work that IS Services has delivered in the 2012/13 Academic Year, including details of IT service improvements for staff and students as well as a summary of what IS Services are doing to support teaching, learning, research, business and support areas in College.

You can find a PDF version of the brochure on our website.

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**Important Deadline**

**Windows XP – end of support from Microsoft ...**

Windows XP and Office 2003 reach end of support in April 2014. After this date Microsoft will no longer provide any support including no further security patches, hotfixes or technical updates. Windows XP was released in 2000 so it is a 13 year old operating system, that pre-dates always on Internet connections and had it’s last major update, Service Pack 3, in 2008.

The risk of continuing to run this unsupported operating system is significant. Today vulnerabilities in Windows XP are security patched and so the threat from a virus or hacking attempt is limited but following the end of support no patches will be released and if Windows XP is attacked we could suffer serious system downtime or loss of data. Microsoft believe it will be highly likely that as Windows 7 is based on Windows XP, virus writers and hackers will see what is being security patched in 7 and use this information as a guide to what they might be able to exploit in an unpatched XP when support ends.

The risks are too great to allow this to continue to run on the College Network and if you are still running Windows XP you need to take action now and please do not delay. For more information see, please visit our FAQ page.

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**In Memoriam**

The loss of our colleague Noreen Murray on November 30th is keenly felt across IS Services and much of College.

Noreen was the Senior Database Administrator in Management Information Systems. To this demanding role Noreen brought a level of professionalism, attention to detail and patience that was unmatched. The stability of much of College’s information structures is a tribute to Noreen’s vision and expertise.

A member of staff since 1984, Noreen had mentored many in IS Services.

If one quality has to be picked out, it would be Noreen’s conscientiousness. Every email or document that crossed her desk was thoughtfully considered and acted on.

Noreen’s approachability and helpfulness made her a natural confidant for many and she volunteered much of her time as a staff representative. Finally Noreen’s many personal and professional qualities were recognised in her election to the College Board. This term was sadly cut short by her illness, which she courageously faced.

Of course there is so much more to Noreen. A proud Cork woman she travelled to many distant places and was a devoted daughter, sister and aunt.

The messages of sympathy received by IS Services from throughout College are testament not only to the high regard of colleagues but also to the sheer extent of the work she was involved in. It was consolation to her many friends and colleagues in IS Services, who will greatly miss her.

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Finally, at this special Season, may all of us in IS Services offer our heartfelt sympathies to her family and thanks for their kindness to us at her funeral.

May Noreen Rest In Peace.