

**Information Services Committee
June 2009**

Plans for the Staff and Students Desktops

This paper outlines the planned development of the staff and students desktops over the coming twelve months – with particular reference to the versions of Windows and the core applications.

Student Desktop

The development of the 2009/10 student desktop is currently under way and it will be rolled out to all student PC rooms over summer 2009 – in time for the start of Autumn Term 2009.

The student desktop will be based on Windows Vista and will include:

- MS Office 2007
- Internet Explorer 7 (IE7).

The development of the student Vista based desktop includes a complete review and overhaul of the start-up process with the aim of reducing start-up times.

Students will continue to use the KentMail email service for the coming year, which they will normally access via the web-based interface Communications Express (CE).

Teaching PCs

The Windows Vista based student desktop will also be installed on all PCs connected to audio-visual (AV) equipment in teaching spaces – lecture theatres, seminar rooms and PC classrooms.

IS is aware that occasional users of AV facilities in teaching spaces have sometimes experienced difficulties and means of improving this situation are being investigated. As mentioned above, the start up process is being reviewed with a view to speeding it up. IS is also looking at how accounts are created for occasional users of teaching AV facilities, such as visitors to the University and senior members of the University.

Staff Email

The migration of staff email to the MS Exchange based email service, ConnectMail, is nearing completion. The department-by-department schedule was completed on 16th April 2009. Since then IS have turned their attention to the remaining non-standard “staff” accounts, ie visitors, external users, consultants, etc.

Once they have been migrated to ConnectMail, staff should be using MS Outlook on their desktops or Outlook Web Access (OWA) in order to get the full benefits of the MS Exchange service.

Staff Desktop

The current staff managed desktop is based on Windows XP and, by default, has MS Office 2003 and IE6. Options to install Office 2007 and IE7 are available to staff. For security reasons, it is recommended that all staff upgrade to IE7. (IE8 is not yet mature enough for IS to recommend its use.)

For staff wanting to upgrade to MS Office 2007, the following is planned:

- An upgrade to Office 2007 is available to staff following their migration to ConnectMail.
- A new version of the staff managed desktop based on Windows XP with Office 2007 and IE7 is available for installation on new PCs.
- Office 2007 awareness sessions are now available and it is felt that most staff familiar with Office 2003 will be able to move to Office 2007 following attendance at an awareness session.
- Online training in Office 2007 is already available to all staff and students.
- Some courses in Office 2007 are available now and the full range of Office 2007 training courses will be available from Autumn Term 2009. Office 2003 will continue to be supported via online learning.

It is recommended that staff move to Office 2007, once they are using ConnectMail. However, it is also recommended that the rollout of Office 2007 is on a department-by-department basis. IS will be contacting departments to discuss when they wish to move to Office 2007.

Windows Vista

IS was planning to develop a Windows Vista desktop for staff later this year – following on from the development of the student Vista desktop – which would require development time and effort by IS. However, Windows 7 Release Candidate 1 (an early test version available to the public) was released on 1st May and the expectation is that Windows7 will be available before the end of 2009. Therefore, there would appear to be little to be gained by staff from the development of a Vista desktop.

The views of the Panel are sought on whether or not a Windows Vista desktop for staff should be developed by Information Services.