

This is the first issue of a newsletter that will provide information on LMN business and service development projects to members of London Metropolitan Network Ltd and partner organisations.

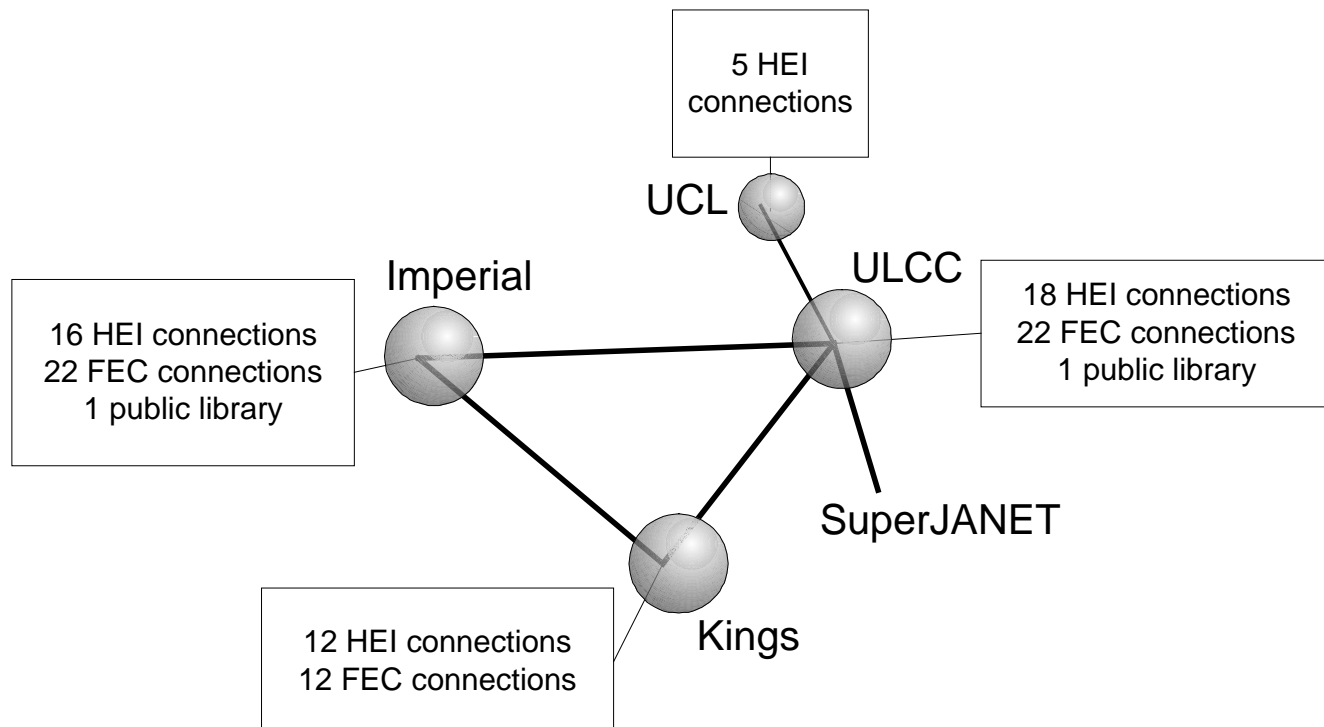
## New Chair

Professor Tim O'Shea, the Chair of the LMN Ltd Board for the last two years, is moving on following his appointment as Principal of the University of Edinburgh. We wish him well in his new post.

We are very pleased to welcome Professor Rick Trainor Vice-Chancellor of the University of Greenwich as the new Chair of the LMN Board. He is a social historian who has promoted the use of computers in teaching and is a member of the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC).

## LMN2 launch

To celebrate the successful completion of the LMN2 network upgrade, London Metropolitan Network Ltd and its telecommunications supplier, THUS plc, are hosting a launch event on 29 October at Trinity House in the City of London. The new network provides a fifteen fold increase in core capacity to 2.4Gbps and, for the first time, connects all London's higher and further education institutions to the same network. The guest speaker will be George Barlow, Chair of the London Development Agency.



## **Web hosting**

A number of institutions have expressed an interest in externally hosted web site services. After collecting more detailed information from a range of institutions it became clear there were two distinct types of services required; dynamic web mirroring and static web content hosting. The dynamic web mirroring regularly synchronises database contents on the web servers, which would enable it to be used as a full backup or for load sharing. The static content hosting option would have less functionality and only periodically synchronises the static content of the main site so as to act as a partial backup web site.

We are currently working with THUS to develop a web hosting package to meet the needs of LMN members.

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## **Remote backup service**

In response to an e-mail survey a significant number of LMN members expressed interest in a data backup service using LMN. Most of those interested provided detailed technical and business requirement information. We are currently conducting a technical feasibility study with ULCC (University of London Computer Centre) and aim to run a trial with two or three institutions. Our aim is to provide a service which would back-up an institution's data over LMN network to a central location to meet the needs for an off-site copy of the data for disaster recovery. It is also expected to reduce the need for on-site backups.

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## **Extended hours help desk**

A workshop was held in November 2001 jointly with UCISA to identify the requirements for help desk support outside normal working hours and the potential for collaborative provision. We are currently working with the University of East London to set up a pilot service to explore the practicality of providing such a service to other institutions. We have already been approached by a number of institutions who are willing to be the users of the service.

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## **Register of experts**

The register of experts is a web based central database that enables individuals from the LMN community to register their experience and knowledge. This is a self help collaborative initiative which facilitates the sharing of knowledge, information, expertise of information technology projects and products within our community.

A pilot study was conducted with 5 institutions between July to September 2002. All participants agreed it was an excellent idea and would be a very useful tool. A project team has been formed with representatives from London Business School, London School of Economics, The London Institute, University of East London, University of Westminster.

We are now in process of implementing the changes that were identified as part of pilot review and will be launching the register to whole community by January.

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## **Public libraries**

LMN worked with the Association of London Chief Librarians (ALCL) during the planning stages of the People's Network project, which is funded by re:source, the Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries. Two public libraries, Enfield and Westminster are already connected to LMN, being the first connections in the wider learning community outside HE and FE.

## **Resilience project**

After completion of the delivery of the core services there was still some funding available in the allocation to LMN from the SuperJANET4 regional network upgrade programme. After consultation with the community it was agreed that the priority was to provide increased resilience to HEIs (being HEFCE derived funding, it could only be applied to HEIs). A project was established to consider the specific requirements of institutions and to explore the solutions with our telecommunications supplier, Thus.

We were very pleased to be able to fund the full capital cost of the project for those HEIs that wished to participate. The institutions themselves will pay the recurrent costs. In most cases the solution deployed is to connect a second campus of the HEI to a different PoP to the one used for the main LMN connection. Existing inter campus connections complete the resilient paths. In a small number of cases two HEIs have been directly linked where geography and existing collaborations make this an economic and manageable solution. In the Bloomsbury area the existing local fibre links managed by UCL have been enhanced. Installations are expected to be complete by the end of 2002.

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## **Staff development**

In the 2001/2002 LMN organised two highly successful events for LMN members. The first was a workshop to identify the requirements for 7 by 24 hour support and the potential for collaborative provision. As a result, a pilot is being established for basic help desk services.

The second event was a London Networkshop which brought together networking staff from HE and FE for the first time to share knowledge and experience. LMN members have asked for further events.

To facilitate the administration of events LMN has secured the services of the M25 HE Libraries Consortium Staff Development Office to organise the practical details. It is planned to hold six events during the 2002/2003 academic year. Other providers of staff development, such as RSC London will be consulted to avoid duplication of provision. The first event is likely to be on mobile computing and suggestions for other events are welcome.

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## **Small HEIs**

The HEIs in London range from some of the largest in the UK to very small specialist colleges. These smaller institutions do not have sufficient resources to deal with all networking issues that arise and have relied on ad hoc support and consultancy provided as a continuation an earlier UKERNA support scheme for new JANET sites. Seeing the success of and the demand for continuing support for the FE Colleges provided by RSC London, LMN has agreed to fund a similar support package for the small HEIs for one year. It will be provided by ULCC alongside the RSC technical team. It is expected that about ten HEIs will participate. The service will be reviewed after a year.

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## **New Technology Institute (NTI)**

During the last six months, Kingston University, in collaboration with seven partner FE Colleges, has been developing a New Technology Institute (NTI) to deliver e-skills education and training aimed at meeting the need of businesses to develop e-business solutions. A major feature of the NTI is the design and implementation of a wide area managed learning environment with partner Colleges.

The delivery of learning materials will feature many content-rich web services including audio, video and streaming media. A major feature of the solution is that Kingston University will be the leading provider for the majority of courseware, hosting resources within their infrastructure on dedicated servers. The NTI design affords a unique solution, by utilising the advantages furnished by a Metropolitan Area Network (MAN), like the London Metropolitan Network, to provide the level of true wide area integration necessary to establish a collaborative managed learning environment between partner institutions.

To further enhance the depth of training available, Kingston University has negotiated key partnerships with Microsoft and Cisco Education to provide vendor training and certification. This will result in the university being accredited as a Cisco Networking Regional Academy and a Microsoft Regional IT Academy.

To provide the wide area connectivity, Kingston University will be using the London Metropolitan Network (LMN) as the primary communication carrier. LMN has negotiated with suppliers to provide the project with a successful costing model to allow all the partner Colleges to have 100Mbps fibre links installed. Together with the existing 100Mbps link to LMN from the University, the network enables an effective basis to support the expected traffic requirements. In addition, LMN and the JISC RSC for London have been very helpful in the provision of technical advice and services to enable the smooth transition to the new 100Mbps network.

Project completion is targeted by end of December 2002 and subsequently the partner Colleges will be able to offer NTI courses from the first semester of 2003. For further information regarding the project, please contact Mr Andrew Harris (*Director – New Technology Institute*) at Kingston University on 020 8547 8236.

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## **Business Development Manager**

In order to realise our objective of developing value-added services for our members we appointed a Business Development Manager in June 2002.

Mahmood Javaid has over 15 years experience of technology and business development projects. He left the Post Office as senior manager after a career of 10 years in a variety of roles including project management, business consultant and business development. Prior to joining LMN, Mahmood worked for Cap Gemini Ernst & Young (CGEY) as a principal business consultant working with a range of clients including Microsoft, CISCO, BBC, Virgin trains.

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