

# networking

the update on services for your institution from London Metropolitan Network

spring2008

## TECHNOLOGY THAT HELPS COLLEGES ADAPT TO CHANGE

**LMN has initiated a drive to bring more Further Education Colleges into membership so that they can gain the benefits of advanced technology in tackling today's agenda for change.**

"We are keen to share the benefits of high speed connectivity and value services with all the Further Education Colleges in London, as part of our offering to the wider academic community in the capital," said Maria Iliu, Head of Business Development at LMN.

"We recognise that, as for our members in HE and local government, there are continuing challenges for Colleges in the drive for efficiency and in providing quality education to students. Our existing FE members have found value in both the technology and networking dimensions to LMN and we are committed to supporting new members too as we develop our services for the future."

John Perks is Manager of Policy and Practice at AoC NILTA, the ICT arm of the Association of Colleges, and is fully committed to the use of information technology to support further education today. With a strong background as an IT director in Further Education, he understands well the challenges that colleges face today and has met with

LMN to discuss shared interests and potential co-operative ventures.



John Perks, Manager of Policy and Practice at AoC NILTA

"The AoC has a memorandum of understanding with BECTA which is driving the national strategy for harnessing technology," he explains. "At AoC NILTA we are concerned with funding issues and with quality of provision, and I think in both these areas new technology can be of real benefit."

"For example, high speed connectivity is very useful to colleges in supporting quality learning as it enables students to access 24x7 rich multimedia material and especially video streaming worldwide."

"From the administrative and funding point of view, advanced technology is very important for improved efficiency and business process. Connectivity supports secure and efficient data transfer which is increasingly important for online returns to government and other agencies. Secure networks are vital as personal and confidential information is included in returns such as Individual Learner Records and this data must be protected."

"With the government efficiency drive for improved procurement in the public sector, I can also see the value of groups such as LMN buying services for improved value."

"Advanced technology that enables colleges to be agile in their response to change is vital," stresses John Perks.

"Technology, whatever funding mechanisms and policies exist, will always play a part in key administrative tasks such as the returns of results. There will always be the need for efficient planning, auditing and sending in data to funding and other bodies."

"The ability of colleges to react to change efficiently will depend on their use of technology in terms of their ability to plan and take on board changes to funding while still remaining competitive in the marketplace. In key areas of curriculum and business planning the provision of data and the effective use of connectivity and technology will be key."

AoC  
Association of Colleges

NILTA  
National Information and Learning  
Technologies Association

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## IMPROVED NETWORK DESIGN FOR COLLEGES

LMN is investing **£120,000** to make improvements to the network which will provide additional reliability for members in Further Education.

"I am delighted that we can achieve these improvements for our members in FE," said LMN Technical Director Peter White. "We are committed to providing FE with the additional resilience which is vital for administrative and academic staff and their students."

The network enhancements follow a research project with LMN partner Thus plc.

"We have been working with Thus to find a solution which will give FE Colleges additional resilience in case of outages," explained Peter White.

"Thus will install extra equipment at their PoP sites and deliver a protected FE solution offering an alternative path should one of their aggregated circuits fail. This would mean that out of the four outages which have occurred in recent years, only one would occur with this new design – the other three outages would have been rerouted over alternative paths."

The project with Thus has included a full review on how the design of the network could be improved for delivering FE circuits. The LMN Board has now given approval for the investment which will allow this improvement plan on the production network to be implemented.

As parts of the original design, FE circuits have been connected to the network in an aggregated manner, with a single 100Mbps or 1Gbps circuit carrying typically 10 to 20 FE circuits; this has meant that when one of these aggregated circuit has failed, multiple FE institutions have suffered outages to their internet connections.

"Four such multiple FE outages have occurred in the recent past and this is clearly unacceptable, although overall LMN has continued to meet our availability commitments to JANET(UK)," said Peter White.

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# prestigious ▶ LONDON ◀ associates

**The Museum of London and the Royal Geographical Society are among new organisations in the capital that have recently become Associate Members of LMN.**

*"We are proud to welcome these leading institutions to LMN,"* said Business Development Director Maria Ilia.

*"Fast, robust connectivity and services are important to all modern institutions and the professional networking element of membership is very attractive to our Associates as well."*

An important element in the mission of the Museum of London is to facilitate and contribute to London-wide cultural and educational networks, so that the Museum is a prestigious member of the wider academic community in the capital. The Museum aims to inspire a passion for London by communicating London's history, archaeology and contemporary cultures to a wider world. It also aims to reach all of London's communities through playing a role in the debate about London.

The Royal Geographical Society is the learned society and professional body for geography. Established in 1830, it is the largest and most active scholarly geographical society in the world with membership of around 15,000 people in more than 100 countries. Members range from professional geographers, researchers and teachers, to expeditioners and enthusiasts.

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# CAMPUS AGREEMENT MEANS LOWER-COST LICENCES

**With advice from Research Machines, Newham 6th Form College has been able to buy licences at a significantly lower cost than expected.**

"I think that other members of LMN may be interested in this, as it does not seem to be widely

known and it could save them cost too," said Newham Head of IT Holger Agha.

"We have got to a stage where we probably need to upgrade our system and were facing the cost of paying a licence fee for every workstation," he explains.

"Through Research Machines, we have been able to buy Microsoft's Campus Agreement licences, where the number of licences relates to the number of staff in the College, rather than the number of workstations. Clearly, this means far fewer licences and substantially less cost."

"This is the kind of specialist education know-how that our members find valuable through professional networking and social events within our academic community in London,"

said Maria Iliu, Director of Business Development at LMN.



# EXTRA VALUE WITH INTECHNOLOGY SERVICES

For the Managed Archiving Service there is a 20% reduction in the Monthly Data Storage Charge. A service to archive 2TB of infrequently accessed Staff Home & Shared Directories for an LMN member will now cost in the order of £32,500 per annum, inclusive of high availability disk storage-based archives in two geographically diverse InTechnology data centres. By Year 3, aged archived data will now cost in the order of £8,400 per annum per TB of data originally archived. Service benefits include substantially reduced Institution backup / DR effort and cost as well as increased campus-based NAS & SAN efficiency

(A sample Storage Audit Report for an LMN member is available, which will be of interest to other members: for 3.6TB of Filestore data, 10% was found to be duplicated,

2.2TB immediately eligible to be archived, and the full backup able to be reduced by 72%.)

For the Managed Backup Service there is a 20% reduction in the Monthly Data Storage Charge. A service to backup 500GB of critical and current Finance, HR/Payroll, Student Records, VLE and Staff E-mail data for an FE College will now cost in the order of £10,800 per annum.

The above examples available to LMN members "under an institution-controlled archiving policy with 24 x 7x 365 institution user-initiated search & retrieval".

For LMN members with NHS links, there are further updates on InTechnology's N3-related accreditations. InTechnology has completed the NHS CfH Information Governance Statement of Compliance (IGSoC) migration process, allowing it to continue providing the "Managed Backup Service" to N3-connected NHS Organisations. InTechnology is designated a Commercial Third Party (CTP), with the NACS Code: 8GY91. InTechnology is also a NHS CfH-approved "N3 ISP" (Network Access Agreement Number: NAA0740) regarding the Electronic Transmission of Prescriptions Service. This allows pharmacies to privately connect to the InTechnology National Network and securely route traffic over N3 via InTechnology's resilient interconnection with N3.

**inTechnology**



## Simon Cooper from JANET(UK) offers practical points for FE colleges in tackling access issues.

# answers on access for FE

As the UK Federation Operator, JANET(UK) are currently engaging with the FE and HE community to assist institutions in determining the best way to approach federated access management. After July 2008 the Athens service ceases to be subsidised by the JISC and so institutions have to consider how they wish to continue to provide their users with access to online resources.

Providing access for end users to external resources is probably the first priority for most institutions. It is therefore a necessary exercise to audit which external resources they subscribe to and establish how these resources can be accessed – whether it is through IP authentication, Athens or the UK federation.

Institutions looking to deploy access management and move towards a single sign-on (SSO) system can achieve this by implementing the Shibboleth technology to enable access to external resources via the UK federation and protect internal services, for example email. FE institutions may find that participating in the UK federation can improve curriculum delivery through access to a wider set of resources, including educational material for the 14-19 age group, covering the new national diplomas.

Delivering an access management solution within the institution will require a mixture of administrative and technical collaboration and it is therefore essential that Learning Resources and IT departments work together from the beginning.

Service providers are now joining the UK federation as they begin to recognise the benefits for them, as well as for institutions and end users. Educational institutions may choose to continue with Athens, but will be able to access resources within the UK federation by requesting to make use of the Athens-to-Shibboleth gateway. This will require membership of the UK federation, which is free to all UK education and to those providing online resources.

Visit the UK federation website: <http://www.ukfederation.org.uk> and for information about the status of online services for implementing federated access management, provided by the JISC visit: <http://access.jiscinvolve.org/federated-access-and-publishers/>

## LMN PROFILE – COMMITTED TO EDUCATION IN LONDON

LMN runs a powerful, fast and resilient IT network supporting the vital IT systems that underpin the teaching and research of London’s universities, colleges and public sector bodies associated with education. LMN aims to foster, cooperation and learning in the Capital, connecting around 1 million users in the

Greater London area to the Internet and offering value-added services, professional networking events and technological support.

**A not-for-profit organisation, financed by government, LMN Ltd receives most of its funding from JANET(UK) and sets membership fees at a low level to provide a contribution towards its running costs.**

## MESSAGELABS UPDATE

The latest **MessageLabs** report highlights the importance of an **effective protection service**, such as that supplied to LMN members at special rates.

**The Storm botnet has dramatically decreased to just five percent of its original size, whilst web-based malware has increased by 23.3%.** The sudden reduction in Storm-infected machines, now estimated at approximately 100,000 compromised computers worldwide, is evident by the 57% decrease in malware-laden emails distributed by the Storm botnet during April.

As the Storm botnet decreased in size, analysis of web-based malware showed that 36.1% of web-based malware intercepted was new in April, an increase of 23.3% since March. **MessageLabs also identified an average of 1,214 new websites per day harbouring malware and other potentially unwanted programs**, an increase of 619 per day compared with the previous month.



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