



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Issue 54 January 2009



Password

The ScoMIS ICT Magazine

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Spring Event for ScoMIS
- Security Awareness
- Anti-virus Update
- Merlin News
- Dear Madge

...and much more!

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



ScoMIS is going on the road...

We are hosting ScoMIS ICT Roadshows on the **4th and 5th of February** for school leaders to explore ways in which ScoMIS can support schools in both administrative and curriculum areas to maximise impact on teaching and learning.

There will be individual half-day sessions for primary and secondary schools covering a wide variety of topics on the theme of working together to develop ICT in schools. Schools can choose to attend either the Moorland Links Hotel, Yelverton on the 4th or the Tiverton Hotel, Tiverton on the 5th February.

Individual sessions will be short and are designed to stimulate interest which can be followed up after the event. There will be a variety of ScoMIS staff and other service providers and partners on hand to answer questions or arrange for additional information for anyone who has a particular interest they would like to develop further.

Items on the agenda are still being finalised but it will cover such topics as:

- How ScoMIS can help embed ICT throughout the whole school
- Security and Encryption of Data in a Digital World
- Having the right information to make informed decisions about pupil attendance, assessment, behaviour and achievement
- Using information for driving school improvement
- Merlin – providing exciting on-line learning and collaboration
- Engaging parents with their child's learning through SIMS Learning Gateway
- Sharing information for 14 –19 agenda
- ScoMIS Managed Services

Devon has invested in a robust, resilient and powerful infrastructure with SWGfL connectivity and managed services and there are plans to develop this service even further. ScoMIS is at the forefront in helping to

develop systems which exploit the benefits of this technology for learning in order to deliver tangible and measurable improvements and outcomes.

To attend one of these sessions, for which there is no charge, please book a place as soon as possible. Contact Course Bookings on **01392 385301** or email **bookings@devon.gov.uk**.

Wednesday 4th February

Moorland Links Hotel, Yelverton

- | | |
|-----------|---------------------------|
| Session 1 | 9.30am to 12.30pm |
| | Primary & Special Schools |
| Session 2 | 1.30pm to 4.30pm |
| | Secondary Schools |

Thursday 5th February

Tiverton Hotel

- | | |
|-----------|---------------------------|
| Session 1 | 9.30am to 12.30pm |
| | Primary & Special Schools |
| Session 2 | 1.30pm to 4.30pm |
| | Secondary Schools |

Open letter to Headteachers in Local Learning Communities

Dear Headteacher

Following a recent restructure, ScoMIS now have three dedicated Consultants who aim to develop a closer working relationship with its schools and work with them to develop their expertise and advance their ICT development strategies. We are also looking to work more closely with colleagues who support the curriculum in the three Authorities to develop complimentary links for ICT.

ScoMIS are looking to engage with Headteachers within Local Learning Communities to optimise the use of the data held within their SIMS system to assist in the delivery of effective learning and teaching. Recent and future developments in the Primary Vision for

Assessment Manager, Behaviour and Attendance and the addition of the Teacher View screen give a complete picture of how each pupil's learning is progressing.

Such meetings will also allow us to discuss agendas such as Exploiting Technologies for Parental Engagement, E-safety and updates on Learning Platforms as well as offering advice on Whole School ICT Support.

The Consultants are also looking to attend Local Learning Community meetings attended by administrative staff to provide them with updates on SIMS software, address any issues they may have in terms of support, development and training etc.

Our intention is to offer to attend each Local Learning Community at least once each year.

We are also providing a portfolio of chargeable Consultancies aimed at Senior Leadership within schools in conjunction with our extensive training directory to supply administrative staff with the expertise to ensure data entered into SIMS is used effectively for all aspects of school leadership and management.

Communicating and listening to the needs of our schools will ensure we deliver a high standard of support and service across a diverse range of products.

If you would like further information or to book a Consultant to attend your Local Learning Community, please email the Consultants at **scomis@devon.gov.uk**.

Welcomes and Farewells

Welcome to Dean Holland,
Darren Westlake, James
Roberts and Mark Taylor

Goodbye to Tim Coleman

Coming Soon in SIMS...

SIMS.net Password Changes

From the March 2009 release of SIMS.net, users will be able to change their passwords from the initial login screen.

SOLUS 3

Only minimal information is currently available, but imminent changes to SOLUS appear to relate to the way that an upgrade is rolled out to SIMS and FMS workstations after the upgrade files have been downloaded into the setups folder on the SIMS file share. *This will not mean any change to the way in which the ScoMIS upgrade service is delivered as the upgrade is delivered to the Server machine, but it will mean an improvement to the workstation upgrades.*

What has been described is a system of deployment which will see the introduction of a 'Deployment Server' – an application or service that will be installed on a single central point within the school's system – and 'Agents' installed on each SIMS / FMS machine. The Deployment Server will communicate with each Agent (which will 'know' the role of the machine it is installed on (SIMS workstation, FMS workstation, Document Management Server, etc.) and manage the upgrade of that machine.

According to Capita the benefits are that this should remove the need for visits to upgrade each machine individually, and enable client installs to be done remotely. It will be easy to schedule upgrades for a time when it is suitable for you, and new PCs can have SIMS easily installed. Additionally users' access rights to workstations can be reduced as they aren't doing the upgrade – it is being done by the Agent which will have appropriate permissions.

Field Trials are planned to commence from March 2009, with the full release scheduled for June 2009. More information will be made available in Password and on the ScoMIS website, as it becomes available.

System Manager 7

The .net version of System Manager is scheduled to be in field trial in 'late 2009' with a full release due in Spring 2010. We are yet to see a 'scope' document detailing what functionality will be included in the release, but will release information as we receive it.

SIMS / FMS / Nova Reporting

There are currently a number of different areas within the SIMS software (including FMS and the Nova suite) that handle the production of reports. Capita have announced that these varying approaches are to be consolidated into a single reporting tool, based upon Microsoft's SQL Server Reporting Services (SSRS) software (described by Capita as an 'Industry Strength Reporting Engine').

Implementation is due in Spring 2010. Nova-T4 reporting will be migrated first, followed by FMS, and then SIMS. This will also coincide with the migration from SQL Server 2005 to SQL Server 2008. We will publish more detailed information in due course.

Tracking Pupil Progress in Primary Schools with SIMS Assessment

Capita's 'Assessment Primary Vision' is a set of resources based on a generic primary assessment policy that can be imported into SIMS.net and used 'out of the box', so that primary schools can make use of SIMS Assessment (the new name for Assessment Manager) and SIMS Analysis without having to invest the time and expertise that was previously required to set these modules up.

The main focus of these resources is to enable pupil tracking, which Capita suggests...

- Provides a picture of pupil progress at whole-school and class level;
- Provides a focus for professional dialogue to support assessment for learning and personalised learning;

- At whole-school level, it enables targeted mapping of intervention to support pupil learning. It helps to track the progress of individual children who are slow-moving, stuck, in need of support to accelerate progress and/or who are achieving or exceeding age-related expectations;
- Provides evidence of the impact of actions on progress and strengthens the accountability of teachers and head teachers.

Since the August release of SIMS.net (version 7.108) a number of Marksheet Templates have been added to the AMPA folder (c:\program files\sims\sims .net\ampa or g:\sims .net\ampa). These are easily imported, and creating Marksheets is simply a case of selecting which pupils you wish to record results for.

The Marksheets that are available allow the following to be recorded:

- Results in the form of National Curriculum fine grades (Wc, Wb, Wa, 1c, 1b, 1a, etc. to 7c, 7b, 7a and E)
- Results in reading, writing, speaking & listening, maths and science for all year groups 1 to 6; a subject-level result for English for years 3–6, plus end of year targets for these same subjects
- Results can be recorded up to three times a year (Autumn, Spring and Summer)

The screenshot shows the 'Marksheet Entry' window in SIMS. It displays a list of pupils with columns for 'Year Group', 'Subject', and 'Mark'. The pupils listed include names like 'MAYNARD, M', 'MAYNARD, T', 'MAYNARD, J', 'MAYNARD, K', 'MAYNARD, L', 'MAYNARD, P', 'MAYNARD, C', 'MAYNARD, A', 'MAYNARD, S', 'MAYNARD, D', 'MAYNARD, E', 'MAYNARD, F', 'MAYNARD, G', 'MAYNARD, H', 'MAYNARD, I', 'MAYNARD, J', 'MAYNARD, K', 'MAYNARD, L', 'MAYNARD, M', 'MAYNARD, N', 'MAYNARD, O', 'MAYNARD, P', 'MAYNARD, Q', 'MAYNARD, R', 'MAYNARD, S', 'MAYNARD, T', 'MAYNARD, U', 'MAYNARD, V', 'MAYNARD, W', 'MAYNARD, X', 'MAYNARD, Y', 'MAYNARD, Z'. The 'Mark' column shows values like '1.00', '2.00', '3.00', '4.00', '5.00', '6.00', '7.00', '8.00', '9.00', '10.00'.

The Marksheets contain formulas which will calculate the difference between the pupils' actual results and their targets, and will colour code ('traffic lights') depending on whether the pupil is below target, on target or above target.

- There are also Marksheets which show progress across every year group, and that will take the summer results from Year 2 and Year 6 and link them to the end of Key Stage 1 and 2 Marksheets, reducing the data entry necessary using the Key Stage Wizard.
- All of the required Aspects, grade sets, result sets and Templates for the above are imported 'in the background', significantly reducing the amount of time incurred in setting them up.

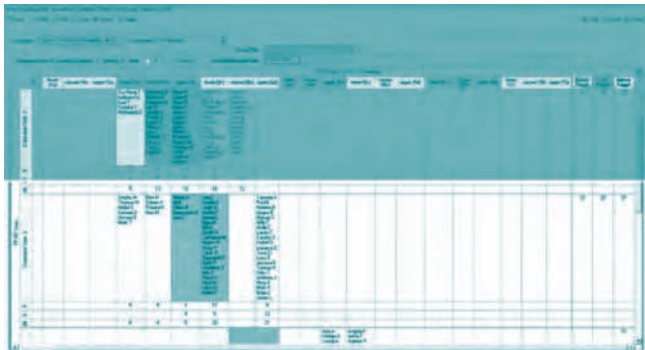
This is designed to be used in conjunction with the existing functionality already available in Assessment Manager, much of which has been recently enhanced: for example, showing additional pupil data on Marksheets (attendance data, SEN, etc); showing the distribution of grades on a Marksheet (which can now be plotted onto a graph) and export to Excel.

The functionality to filter Marksheets so that only certain groups of pupils' results are included has also been enhanced.

Finally Capita have also introduced a new Analysis Grid – called a Tracking Grid – which show the names of students having attained particular grades and colour coding those who are on target. These Grids clearly and graphically show which pupils are on target and which are above or below. There are a set of Tracking Grids available for import which relate to the Marksheets detailed above.



ScoMIS' Assessment Manager training courses for primary schools have been re-designed to emphasise these new facilities, and courses will be running from January.



What is the On-line Reporting Agenda?

By September 2009 all secondary schools will be expected to provide information to parents covering achievement, progress, attendance, behaviour and special needs, on a timely and frequent basis – this should be at least once per term.

By September 2010 all secondary schools will need to offer parents real-time access to this information (including the opportunity for secure online access) wherever they are and whenever they want. See

http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2008_0006

What does SIMS Learning Gateway do?

Teachers have live write access to:

- Attendance
- Assessment
- Profiles
- Behaviour coming in 2009

Parents and pupils can only have read access to data the school releases to them.

Schools have their own autonomy no matter where SIMS Learning Gateway is hosted.

Capita Web Parts are the only way to get live read write access to SIMS data.

What can ScoMIS offer?

A hosted Microsoft SharePoint based environment

- Document, resource & learning content management
- Microsoft Office integration
- Accessible via any web browser, all from a single point
- Quickest way to get going!

Centrally hosted

- No Microsoft SharePoint expertise required
- All Microsoft licensing costs included
- All user management performed via SIMS client
- As flexible as required by school

For an on-site demonstration and discussion, please contact ScoMIS@devon.gov.uk.

Academic Matters

Course Manager

We have received a number of calls about post 16 Learning Aims recently. These points throw some light on how Course Manager works:

- Where a student's membership to a class is ended early whether its because they are leaving school or changes are made through academic management, Course Manager will assume the student has completed the course IF the date is put in ahead of time. If a leaving date is put in retrospectively, or a student's membership to a class is ended retrospectively, Course Manager will assume the student has not completed the course.
- Leaving dates must be put in through Routines / Students / Leavers NOT in the student's record.
- It is no longer necessary for Year 11 leaving dates to be put in at the end of August for Exam results to import.
- Course end dates are inferred from the end date of the timetable, but student's membership to courses are inferred from their membership to classes following the course, which for the most

part is the last day of the last term. In order to avoid inconsistencies we are recommending that all schools send the 2009/2010 timetable with the date range from 01/09/2009 to the last day of the last term as specified in SIMS .net (Routines / School / Academic Year).

- Presentations will be scheduled in early May for Post-16 Learning Aims and the School Census. We will discuss the problems schools had in the October census and how to avoid them for the May census. Information about the presentations including dates and venues will be sent nearer the time.

Cover 7 and Nova T4

Support for Nova T4 Cover will end in February 2009. All scheduled courses for Cover 7 have now been completed. If you need training in Cover 7 a school visit can be arranged, or where there are a number of requests we may schedule another course. Please contact ScoMIS bookings.

Nova T4 will still be available for reporting purposes until March 2011. Replacement reports for Nova T4 reporting are scheduled to be made available in SIMS .net in March 2010.

Did you know?

One of the small changes that almost sneaked in unnoticed as part of the SIMS upgrades was the Student Teacher View screen.

From a student details page a link takes you to a summary view of all the essential data a member

of your teaching staff might need.

Key details and performance indicators are available on this screen and can be colour-coded for when the student approaches threshold levels for Attendance or Behaviour.

Quick letters can be generated at the click of a button, and the students current class is instantly available. If further information is needed then you can drill down further to obtain more detailed information.

Attendance, Assessment and SEN needs can all be seen at a glance. This development is an excellent example of how Capita are making sure SIMS becomes a real tool for teaching and learning in the classroom, and parallels developments in products such as SIMS Learning Gateway.

FMS6 Plymouth Job Evaluation - pay-related files

All Plymouth Schools are advised to apply the November upgrade before downloading the Personnel 7 Update for December. This will bring in the new JE Service Terms and Pay Scales. Full guidance will be given from Plymouth City Council in the Bulletin which will be provided with the Personnel Update Download.

New functionality in the Employment Details area in the November SIMS .net (7.112 release) allows for contracts to be cloned, therefore, you will be able to clone the existing current contract and set the new contract to take effect from 1st January, 2009. You will only need to change the Service Term and Pay Scales and check all other information is correct. It will be necessary to end all non-teaching staff contracts from the 31st December, 2008.



Merlin Update

There are now a number of early adopter schools using SWGfL Merlin. They range from large secondary to village primary schools, all of whom are beginning to use

the collaborative online spaces. Whether providing subject-based areas for Wikis and Blogs, a

Document storage space for school council

to host minutes and agendas,

or looking at collaborative projects between schools, there is a lot of exciting work beginning.

For up-to-date information on Merlin, the SWGfL website is the place to go:

http://www.swgfl.org.uk/services/learning_platforms/default.asp.

There is also a series of SWGfL Merlin Awareness and Planning Sessions available for schools. See

<http://www.deseducation.org/courses/bookings/default.asp> and type Merlin as the Keyword to book on a session.

This half-day session, aimed at school decision makers, will include a description and demonstration of SWGfL Merlin, an opportunity for schools to assess their readiness to implement Merlin and time to discuss what priorities the school may have in starting to use Merlin. Information will also be given about training and support for implementation.

Following this session schools can then decide when to implement Merlin.

This course is funded but supply costs are to be met by the school.

The next two sessions are:

Wednesday 21 January 2009 – 09.30-12.30

Monday 23 February 2009 – 09.30-12.30

Both sessions are at the Tiverton Hotel, Blundells Road, Tiverton, Devon, EX16 4DB.



SWGfL Merlin

RM Community Connect 4

ScoMIS have had a close working relationship with Research Machines PLC (RM) and have successfully installed RM Community Connect 3 networks into schools across Devon. Technology moves on and RM are now providing Community Connect 4 networks, building on the features of CC3.

As ICT becomes more fully integrated, and 21st century teaching becomes reliant on more high quality digital resources, it becomes essential to have full class sets of maintained computers. It is important for the recovery of machines to be simple and quick, for software deployment to be centrally managed and for us to personalise user experiences.

As partners, ScoMIS will be able to install, configure, train and support a new Community Connect 4 installation. When debating whether a CC4 network might be suitable for your school, the following points should be considered:

Sustainability

- ▶ Increase the life span of older PCs by using Thin Client Technology.
- ▶ Reduce hardware costs by introducing Thin Client Devices.
- ▶ No need to upgrade Windows XP stations – CC4 fully supports XP and Vista.
- ▶ Reduce energy costs by scheduling the start-up and shutdown of PCs via Local Support Tools.
- ▶ Assign Printer Credits with RM Printer Credits & PCounter to encourage responsible printing.
- ▶ Target ICT spend in the right areas by monitoring SW/HW with Asset Manager and RM Auditor.

Personalisation

- ▶ Allows customers to use the right tools for the job by distributing technology to the right areas.
- ▶ Apple Macs for Design/Music.
- ▶ Thin Client for Open/Low Usage areas.
- ▶ XP/Vista for Classrooms/Libraries.
- ▶ Use Securus to monitor Internet and ICT use: ensuring a safe working environment for learners.
- ▶ Gives customers the opportunity to implement their Acceptable Use Policy.

Just Teach

- ▶ My Connect – gives teachers the power to change passwords, add printer credits and disk space. Prevents disruption in a class and gives quick resolution to minor problems.
- ▶ My Connect – proactively alerts users to low disk space/printer credits. Prevents issues before they arise.
- ▶ RM Tutor 4 – gives teachers total control of the classroom. Allows control over audio, removable storage, printing and web blocking. View student screens or broadcast teacher screens to the class. Less input from technical team in day to day running of the classroom.

Freedom to Innovate

- ▶ Automated downloads of RM and Microsoft 'hotfixes' – reduces network manager workload.

- ▶ Scheduled software installs. Allows technical team to plan software install and reduces disruption to the network.
- ▶ Software Asset Manager allows ICT/SMT to quickly and accurately determine where software is installed on the network. This can also be exported for Licensing purposes
- ▶ Internet Access Manager allows tracking of banned users as well giving customers the power to fully enforce their AUP.
- ▶ Internet Access Manager allows extended school evening classes access to the required resources only, preventing misuse of the network during these periods.

SWGfL e-safety Conferences

This year's **South West Grid for Learning e-safety Conferences** were well attended and as thought provoking as usual.

If you weren't able to attend the conferences, or would like to review any of the content covered, you can now download workshop materials from the conferences in the 'Downloads' section of this SWGFL E-Safety website:

http://www.swgfl.org.uk/esafetyconferences/default.asp?page=esc_downloads

Podcasts of workshop sessions and video footage of the drama production and closing keynote speech will be made available in the coming weeks.

The conferences delivered a comprehensive programme of seminars and keynote speeches, delivering crucial information on the latest developments in the e-safety arena.

The programme was developed from a cross-curricular perspective, enabling all educators to share good practice and gain ideas to take back

to school, to help support the use of the internet and related technologies not only in the classroom but within the wider community.

Read through the following and if you aren't able to respond with confidence, then you need to have more development time on E-Safety.

- Felix is 12. He is using the internet in his bedroom when a message pops up on his screen: "Hey I'm Justin and I'm 10 years old. I'm looking for a friend in England. Click here to send me an e-mail".
- Millie is in an internet café, trying to find pictures for her project about big cats. By accident, she finds some pictures and photographs that make her feel uncomfortable and embarrassed.
- At home Osian is using Instant Messenger (like MSN). One of his online 'friends' asks him for his address and telephone number.
- Kiereen is in year 7. She has received a text message on her mobile. It says "We h8 yuhh. We r goin 2 get yuhh l8r".

Categorise the risks into three categories:

- There is little or no danger to the young person – the activity is one they may continue with.
- Encourage safe behaviour – the young person should be supported in their e-safety activity. They should stop the activity or take no further action.
- There are significant e-safety risks, and the incident must be escalated – this may involve reporting the activity to the service provider (for example, phone company or internet service provider), reporting abuse (for example, to CEOP or the police) and/or involving local authority support services.

More of these scenarios are available in the BECTA publication *Safeguarding children in a digital world* available to download from <http://publications.becta.org.uk/display.cfm?resID=35446&page=1835>.

BECTA Information Management Strategy Framework

BECTA have recently published some Guidance on School's Information Management Strategy Framework. This formalises the processes by which data is input and processed in schools.

Briefly the guidance shows that all schools collect and process a great deal of data – pupil details, assessment and attainment data, examination results, SEN provision, medical information, free school meals, pupil destinations – as well as RAISEonline data, financial information and employment details on school staff. More and more data now comes into schools in electronic format, and increasingly schools are expected to produce data electronically for parents, the local authority, government and other agencies.

This means that schools now rely heavily on the quality of their data and on how effectively the data is managed. A good information management strategy will help to deliver your school's aims for learning and teaching, management and administration. It can also help you to make best use of your local authority's expertise.

Other benefits include:

- better evidence to support discussions with local authorities, Ofsted, school improvement partners, governors and other stakeholders
- more efficient tracking of learner progress and achievement
- better monitoring and setting of targets
- faster response to attendance and behaviour problems
- more effective communication with parents on pupils' progress.

In line with the Self Review Framework, BECTA have identified four strands:

- A Leading an information management strategy
- B Developing capacity and capability
- C Gaining effectiveness and efficiency
- D Improving data management

with each strand being evaluated on a scale from 5: Little in place to 1: Aspirational and Innovating.

If you would like to find out more from ScoMIS on how we can help you with your Information Management Strategy, then please contact us through the normal contact details.

Remote SIMS Terminal Server Hosting Service

This service involves moving schools' SIMS systems from site to be hosted at ScoMIS. SIMS applications are accessed from the school across existing schools' broadband links.

Staff can access their SIMS data securely on our servers from school, or if they buy the Remote Access service from home via a secure VPN (Virtual Private Network) link.

This fully managed service includes the implementation of SIMS and other upgrades, conversion processes, backup and general server maintenance. This service has been available for several years and hosts the data for about one hundred schools.

Future enhancements for existing and new users of this Service

Currently, this service is based on Microsoft Windows Server 2003 and we intend to pilot a move to Windows Server 2008 before rolling it out to all users of the Service.

What benefits can users expect from the migration to Windows Server 2008?

- Printing – every time any user connects a new printer, we need to install a driver for

this printer before the user can print.

Windows 2008 introduces a new service called EasyPrint and from initial testing, it appears that Microsoft have indeed made printing easy. An additional program may need to be installed on the workstations, but once this is in place, any printer will just work without us needing to install any drivers on our servers.

- Desktop Shortcut –we are investigating a feature that includes launching individual Terminal Server applications directly from a desktop shortcut. This means that the programs will appear to be running on the user's workstation, just like any other program.
- Load Balancing – at the moment, each school can only log on to a specific Terminal Server, but with load balancing enabled, users will be able to access their data from any of the Terminal Servers. This means that if any of the servers fail, users will simply need to log on again and will automatically be directed to a working server. The system will automatically direct users to the most suitable servers, ensuring that no server has a greater load on it than the others.
- Improved Performance – we are in the process of adding some new powerful database servers to the existing suite. Over the next few months we will balance all the databases across these servers which will help to improve the performance of data intensive tasks.

If you would like more information about this service or the changes we are about to implement, please contact the ScoMIS Service Desk in the normal way.



Anti-Virus software licensing 2009-10

As last year, automatic entitlement to anti-virus software is not included in ScoMIS Service Level Agreements – Contracts A and B. This change was made in response to requests from schools who wish to make their own arrangements and choose alternative products. Schools that purchased the ScoMIS antivirus software service are reminded that existing licences, purchased through ScoMIS, for Devon, Plymouth and Torbay schools expire on March 31st 2009.

Negotiations are currently taking place with the supplier for the 2009-10 scheme and prices will be available in the New Year. Once ScoMIS have the full details we will publish these details on the ScoMIS website at www.devon.gov.uk/scomis.

ScoMIS recommend that schools carry out a full inventory in both the curriculum and admin area to enable the school to purchase the correct number of licences to cover each PC and laptop within the school (including any home use PC).

If schools choose not to purchase anti-virus licences from ScoMIS, they will need to source their own software and remove the software supplied by ScoMIS from all their PCs by the 31st March 2009.

For further information please contact the ScoMIS helpline on **01392 385300**.

Netbooks

A huge variety of netbooks are coming out from manufacturers such as Asus, Acer, MSI, Dell, Samsung etc on a seemingly weekly basis. They are sub-laptop sized devices, cost around £300 or less, and are designed for ease of use, portability and speed at a low cost.

They have taken the education market by storm - see the RM Minibook as an example (a

rebadged Asus eeePC). In some cases, two or three netbooks can be bought for the cost of one mid-range laptop, enabling more pupils to get their hands on the technology.

There are some quite large differences between netbooks and laptops, which can cause support headaches and more importantly, false expectations that they can do everything a laptop can do, and this article will try and explain some of the choices that need to be made.

Netbooks provide a convenient mobile platform to access the Internet, use applications such as instant messaging, voice over IP (such as Skype), web cam, basic digital photo imaging/storage and music storage. In addition, other applications can be used - such as Office suites - providing a simple way to create documents on the move. Most devices have several ways to connect to the internet – wireless, wired and Bluetooth. Screens are generally in the 7” to 9” diagonal range, therefore the screen resolution is unsuitable for some software applications – they also have a smaller than average keyboard

The following sections explore some of the advantages and disadvantages of netbooks and how we can support them:

Operating System Choice

Advantages

Netbooks can come loaded with Windows XP or Vista, but the lower priced end of the range may come with a customised version of an open source (and free) Linux operating system. The benefit of having XP or Vista is that it is well known and easily supported. Linux can be heavily customised, and in the RM Minibook, will boot up and be usable in around 30 seconds. Linux has less of a hardware requirement than Windows, and will work quicker on lower specification netbooks.

Disadvantages

The downside with Linux is the overhead of specialist knowledge required to maintain it. It is

usually possible to upgrade a Linux loaded netbook with Windows at a later date, but a full retail copy of Windows XP is around £90 – buying it at time of purchase will cost a fraction of this. When Windows XP or Vista is loaded onto a netbook, you can expect the same features you get on a laptop, but running at a slower rate. As with laptops, the more RAM memory you buy in the base model, the better.

ScoMIS support

We can support netbooks with Windows XP or Vista loaded as we would any normal device. Support for netbooks with Linux on is currently solely for the RM Minibook. The support will consist of assistance to the user in reloading the device back to factory defaults on a 'best endeavours' basis.

Additional Software Application

Advantages

Most netbooks come loaded with a wide range of applications. The RM Minibook includes (among others) the OpenOffice productivity suite, Antivirus, multimedia applications and the installed web browser is Firefox. With Linux knowledge, other free open source software can be downloaded and installed. Microsoft Office can be loaded onto Windows netbooks, as can the ScoMIS McAfee Antivirus package as can any other software which meets the minimum hardware requirements - the web browser installed will be Internet Explorer.

Disadvantages

With Linux netbooks, it is much harder to add additional software and the range of mainstream educational software is limited. Files created in OpenOffice will need to be converted before being readable in Microsoft Office later and Firefox may not be compatible with some web applications.

With Windows netbooks, care must be taken before purchasing educational software as the graphics and other hardware are limited. Whilst ScoMIS would not recommend this - if attaching

to a Windows server on the network, client access licences will be needed which will incur further costs. Applications such as Microsoft Office and the ScoMIS McAfee Antivirus package are cost options also and it is worth noting the speed they will run at will be considerably slower than a laptop. ScoMIS would not advise the use of Netbooks for accessing SIMS.

To keep them as small as possible, netbooks have no CD/DV ROM drive, and a separate USB one will be required in order to install software.

ScoMIS support

With a wide variety of software available for Windows netbooks, care must be taken in installing software that is appropriate for the device. We will support Microsoft Office loaded onto a netbook as we would a laptop. We can't support any software that is loaded on Linux netbooks.

Network Connectivity

Advantages

Most netbooks have built in wireless, wired and Bluetooth network connections, or a combination, and the option of 3G mobile connectivity. For Windows netbooks, the setup of these options is fairly straightforward, and all should be readily available. Connecting to network printers should be fine, as will Terminal Server access, both for Admin and Curriculum – this is where netbooks shine, as the applications running in a Terminal Server session are processed on the remote server, and the speed of the netbook is irrelevant. Setting up a shortcut to a Terminal Server on Windows netbooks is straightforward.

Disadvantages

Setting up connections to Terminal Servers on Linux netbooks is quite complex and requires Linux knowledge. Some connectivity options such as Bluetooth and 3G are also complex to setup and manage, as is access to network printers.

ScoMIS Support

We can support network and printer connectivity problems in Windows as we would with a laptop. With Linux netbooks however, we can only provide basic notes for the initial setup of wired and wireless network connections for an RM Minibook and not connection to printers or other network devices.

Security

Advantages

Windows netbooks can be setup to allow logins for multiple users, and user accounts can be customised to limit the rights a user has, as with a laptop. Windows users should be able to connect to mapped network drives and save data centrally for backup purposes.

Disadvantages

Linux netbooks are generally setup with one user, with full administrative access, giving them permission to run applications and access system settings. Any documents would be saved in a shared area. Setting up individual accounts requires Linux knowledge and connecting to Windows server mapped drives is also complex.

ScoMIS Support

We would recommend saving Linux netbook work/documents onto a USB pendrive to transfer onto a server later as backup is an issue. No netbook should contain any sensitive information. We can support and provide information for Windows netbooks in these matters.

In Conclusion

Netbooks were created for simple web access and quick on-the-go usage – they are intended to (ideally) be one device per person, with nothing stored locally - hence the open access

The connectivity options do make it easy to save within your collaborative Learning Platform environment or Terminal Server, access web-based email and other web applications

There is no doubt that the netbook is here to stay, and undoubtedly, they will be tailored further to meet the needs of the educational market. Hopefully this (not exhaustive) article will have given you a brief insight into what they can do and assist in choosing the correct type for you. It is worth noting that in this quickly changing market, ScoMIS are monitoring the types of devices being used by schools and will adapt support appropriately over time.

Software Licences – Proof of Licence Ownership

If your school is ordering Microsoft or other software licences through ScoMIS, a certificate of purchase for the licence will be sent, by Trustmarque Solutions, directly to your school's main admin e-mail address, or occasionally by post.

As ScoMIS do not receive a copy of this licence, it is necessary that schools take responsibility for retaining a copy of the certificate of purchase for audit and asset management purposes.

Please contact ScoMIS on **01392 385300** for further information.

ICT Procurement – End of Financial Year 2008-9

Orders must be received by ScoMIS no later than Friday 13th February 2009 to enable delivery, installation and invoicing of schools ICT procurement for the 2008-9 financial year.

Please note that no further orders for IT hardware or software will be processed for the 2008-9 financial year after Friday 13th February 2009.

For further information please call the ScoMIS Helpdesk on **01392 385300**.

ScoMIS Courses – Spring Term 2009

We will be running the following courses during the Spring Term, but if you find that the dates advertised are not convenient or you are interested in a course not advertised below please register your interest in any particular area and we will try and cater for your needs. It may be that you would like to train together with members of your own Learning Community and this could be arranged either as a course at one of our training centres, or as an on-site visit at one of the schools.

You can access our full training directory on the web www4.devon.gov.uk/eal/scomis/training/index.php

For all course bookings or on-site training enquiries please contact **01392 385301** or email **bookings@devon.gov.uk**

Date	Course	Location	Times	Price
27/01/2009	FMS New Users Day 1	Plympton	09.30 – 15.30	£145 per person
29/01/2009	FMS New Users Day 1	Exeter	09.30 – 15.30	£145 per person
10/02/2009	Reporting from Personnel 7	Plympton	09.30 – 15.30	£145 per school
10/02/2009	FMS New Users Day 2	Exeter	09.30 – 15.30	£145 per person
11/02/2009	SIMS .net for New Administrators - Introduction to Pupil Records	Exeter	09.30 – 15.30	£145 per person
11/02/2009	FMS New Users Day 2	Plympton	09.30 – 15.30	£145 per person
12/02/2009	Personnel 7 for New Administrators	Exeter	09.30 – 15.30	£145 per person
24/02/2009	Personnel 7 for New Administrators	Barnstaple	09.30 – 15.30	£145 per person
24/02/2009	Reporting from Personnel 7	Plympton	09.30 – 15.30	£145 per person
24/02/2009	Attendance 7 for New Users	Exeter	09.30 – 15.30	£215 per school
24/02/2009	Assessment Manager 7 Primary Vision	Exeter	09.30 – 15.30	£215 per school
25/02/2009	Introduction to Reporting in SIMS .net	Exeter	09.30 – 15.30	£145 per person
25/02/2009	Personnel 7 for New Administrators	Plympton	09.30 – 15.30	£145 per person
26/02/2009	Examinations – Seating/Clashes/Reports Workshop	Exeter	09.30 – 12.30	£215 per school
26/02/2009				
27/02/2009	Community Connect 4 FastTrack	Exeter	09.30 – 15.30	£430 per school
03/03/2009	SIMS .net for New Administrators - Introduction to Pupil Records	Plympton	09.30 – 15.30	£145 per person
04/03/2009	Assessment Manager 7 Primary Visions	Plympton	09.30 – 15.30	£215 per school
04/03/2009	Introduction to Reporting from SIMS .net	Barnstaple	09.30 – 15.30	£145 per person
04/03/2009	Assessment Manager 7 Primary Vision	Plympton	09.30 – 15.30	£215 per school
06/03/2009	Course Manager Workshop for Secondary Schools	Exeter	09.30 – 15.30	£215 per school
10/03/2009	Attendance 7 Workshop	Barnstaple	09.30 – 12.30	£135 per school

11/03/2009	Special Needs in SIMS .net	Barnstaple	09.30 – 13.00	£135 per school
10/03/2009	Community Connect 4 for ICT Coordinators	Exeter	09.30 – 15.30	£610 per school
11/03/2009				
12/03/2009				
17/03/2009	Equipment Register for New Users	Exeter	09.30 – 12.30	£135 per school
17/03/2009	Maintaining and Managing your SIMS .net Data	Barnstaple	09.30 – 15.30	£145 per person or £215 per school
17/03/2009	Special Needs in SIMS .net	Plympton	09.30 – 13.00	£135 per school
18/03/2009	Effective Use of Nova T6	Exeter	09.30 – 15.30	£215 per school
18/03/2009	Attendance 7 Workshop	Plympton	09.30 – 15.30	£135 per school
19/03/2009	Special Needs in SIMS .net	Exeter	09.30 – 15.30	£135 per school
19/03/2009	Maintaining and Managing your SIMS .net Data	Exeter	09.30 – 15.30	£145 per person or £215 per school
24/03/2009	Effective Use of Nova T6	Plympton	09.30 – 15.30	£215 per school
24/03/2009	Introduction to Reporting	Barnstaple	09.30 – 15.30	£145 per person
25/03/2009	Effective Use of Nova T6	Barnstaple	09.30 – 15.30	£215 per person
25/03/2009	Equipment Register for New Users	Plympton	09.30 – 12.30	£135 per school
26/03/2009	Effective Use of Nova T6	Exeter	09.30 – 15.30	£215 per school
26/03/2009	Reporting from Personnel 7	Exeter	09.30 – 15.30	£145 per person
31/03/2009	Maintaining and Managing your SIMS .net	Plympton	09.30 – 15.30	£145 per person or £215 per school
31/03/2009	Equipment Register for New Users	Barnstaple	09.30 – 15.30	£135 per school



Dear Madge



Dear Madge
How do I enter an occasional day?
Confused Connie

Dear Connie
Go to Focus/school/school diary, right click on the relevant day and choose New public holiday. Click on categories, Type in Occasional Day and select Add. Click OK Select Occasional Day from the drop down menu and click OK.

Dear Madge
How do I find my Server name/database name? When applying my School Workforce Return Licence Key I need to run dbupgrade but I am not sure how to find out the server name and database name.

Suffering Susan

Dear Susan
Go to Start, Run and type in G:\sims\connect.ini (If standalone PC then substitute G:\ for C:\). Click on OK and this should display, in notepad format, your server name and database name. It is important you then close this notepad without making any changes or saving it.

Dear Madge
I am a Terminal Server school and sometimes I am not able to access FMS. I have been told that this is because I have not mapped my printer but I do not know what this means.

Puzzled Peter

Dear Peter
When you log into Terminal Server there is an option to tick Printers and Drives, FMS will not work unless it can detect a printer so it is important you have this ticked. If you are experiencing difficulties log out and make sure this box is ticked and then log back in again and FMS will work.

Dear Madge

My LA has informed me that when I report a staff absence of one day the end date should be the day after the start date. However, when I then create an absence analysis report in reports/personnel, the absence is recorded as two days.

Anxious Abbey

Dear Abbey
The correct way to record an absence of one day in sims.net is to have the start and end date both the same. The correct statistics will then be recorded in the absence analysis. Your LA may have another system for recording absences and you would need to contact them with regards to this.

Dear Madge
I want to add a column to my Assessment template but the buttons are greyed out.
Muddled Marilyn

Dear Marilyn,
You will only be able to add a column to templates that have been created within your school. If you have imported a template and wish to make changes you will need to clone the template.

Dear Madge
Our school has purchased your Attix Remote Backup Service, which is very good by the way. I don't like leaving my computer on over the weekends and have been advised to leave it on constantly. Will this cause any problems if I don't?

Troubled Terry

Dear Terry
It does not matter if you turn your computer off over the weekend, but you must remember it will not back up any of the work that you have completed on Friday until the following backup on Monday. So, if anything happened over the weekend you could lose your data from Friday inclusive of any changes made.

Attix will know that the backup has failed and will try to backup the next time you turn your PC on. You can let this continue or delay it until later. You will also have received an automatic email from ScoMIS explaining that you have not backed up and to leave your PC on. This is an automatically generated email.

Dear Madge

I want to input a Z code in Edit Marks but it is not available for me to select.

Ponderous Pam

Dear Pam

This is a system-generated code and cannot be input directly by you. If you need this code it is likely you will need to edit the registration history for the pupil. Go to the pupil's record and click on the Registration tab, then on the History button. Confirm that the start and end dates are correct in here. If these are correct and you still require the Z code please log a call with the ScoMIS Service Desk.

Dear Madge
I am getting an error each time I try to preview a Contract Letter in the Contract Printing. Everything was working fine before Christmas.

Alarmed Anne

Dear Anne

Following installing the November SIMS .net release Schools were requested to update the Contract Printing Software. This update is available from the Download/Upgrades area of the ScoMIS Website. Please download the update and all will work.

Dear Madge
I cannot see the screen correctly when trying to enter invoices in FMS.
Bothered Burt

Dear Burt

To resolve this go to Control Panel>Display>Settings and make sure the screen resolution is not less than the standard 1024x768. You should then be able to see the screen correctly.

