Newsline from EDINA

Ten years and counting: EDINA celebrates

On 25th January EDINA celebrated ten years of activity as a JISC National Data Centre. Over the last decade the centre has offered UK Further and Higher Education networked access to an expanding library of data, information and research resources. As part of the anniversary celebrations an afternoon event was held, followed by a Burns Night dinner and ceilidh all within facilities of this university.

The purpose of the event was to look to the next 10 years, with reflection on past achievement, promotion of present activity, and insight from others to help identify areas in which EDINA could flourish and continue to make a significant difference. EDINA has a broad remit as a JISC National Data Centre and several areas of strategic significance compete for attention.

The centrepiece of the afternoon event was a stimulating ‘balloon debate’, thoroughly enjoyed by the audience, which featured a number of expert speakers and covered a range of topics. It was recorded and is available to download, along with the programme and copies of the presentations from a link at http://edina.ac.uk/events/edina10th

Programme, and downloadable presentations and sound files at http://edina.ac.uk/events/edina10th

Forthcoming Events

JISC Conference 2006
16th March, ICC, Birmingham
http://www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm/name=cnt06_home

LILAC (Librarians’ Information Literacy Annual Conference)
27-29th March, University of Leeds

UKSG - Serials Group annual conference
3-5th April, University of Warwick
http://www.uksg.org/events/annualconf06.asp

GISRUK 2006 (GIS Research UK)
5-7th April, University of Nottingham
http://www.geog.nottingham.ac.uk/gisruke/

Celtic Connections
16-19th May, Cardiff
http://www.celticconnections.info/blog/?page_id=1

EDINA Exchange – a Briefing and Consultation Day
22nd June 2006, University of Leeds
http://edina.ac.uk/events/promo.html

HE Academy - 2nd annual conference
3-5th July, Nottingham
http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/events/2012.htm

ARCLIB (Architecture Librarians’ Group)
12-14th July, University of Bath
http://www.livwine.ac.uk/eaae/arclib.htm

ALLCU (Association of Librarians in Land-based Colleges and Universities)
12-14th July, Warwickshire College
http://allcu.org/

For up to date information on events at EDINA, see http://edina.ac.uk/events/

For events in the wider JISC world, see http://www.jorum.ac.uk/news/events.html

Go-Geo! Metadata workshops
Go-Geo!, the innovative geospatial portal from EDINA, has been running geospatial metadata workshops over the 2005-2006 academic year, following on from a successful couple of years at 12 universities.

Typically, the workshops run for about two hours and provide an overview of metadata and their relevance to the Go-Geo! portal and to data management and sharing, plus hands-on training for the Go-Geo! portal and Metadata Editor tool.

There are seven more workshops available for this year, so please contact Tony Mathys (tony.mathys@ed.ac.uk) to arrange for one. All that is required is a computer lab with Internet access and facilities for giving a presentation. EDINA can provide all the necessary support and publicise workshops. More information about Go-Geo! and geospatial metadata can be found at http://www.geog.ac.uk

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Jorum User Service Opens

VSM Portal Follow-up

Jorum User Service Opens

EDINA and Mimas have worked together with JISC to develop Jorum as the national repository for online learning materials, and are delighted to announce that universities and colleges can now register to allow for their staff and students. Over 50 institutions have signed up to Jorum User in the weeks since the launch.

Jorum User allows staff from registered institutions to search, browse, preview, download, review, reuse and repurpose resources in Jorum. This free on-line repository service hosts a range of learning and teaching resources, covering a variety of subject areas and educational levels, in a format that can readily be used in Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs).

The type, breadth and subject coverage of resources available in Jorum depends upon contributions made by the community. Jorum is built on the support and commitment of the JISC-funded service to provide a range of learning and teaching resources, covering a variety of subject areas and educational levels, in a format that can readily be used in Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs).

The newly updated Jorum Web site (http://www.jorum.ac.uk) has a comprehensive new section on Jorum User (http://www.jorum.ac.uk/user) offering support in registering and logging in, as well as a useful selection of support, training and promotional materials.

Jorum User Service Opens

VSM Portal follow-up

In September 2005, EDINA was funded by JISC to investigate, through initial scoping activity and then the construction of a demonstrator, the value and feasibility of a national Virtual and Sound Material Portal for both time-based media and image collections, intended to operate within the JISC Information Environment. (See the front page article in the previous edition of Newsline.) The scoping phase of this project is complete. A report from Phase 1 and recommendations for a Phase 2 are currently being reviewed by JISC. EDINA has also secured initial agreement from a range of content-supplier providers to expose their content through the portal demonstrator. More information can be found at http://edina.ac.uk/projects/vsmportal

A Major Step for SUNCAT

SUNCAT has reached an important stage towards becoming a full service from August 2006. At the end of March the current pilot service will run on a new server providing much faster access and processing times. Additionally, the SUNCAT database, which until now has comprised the serials’ holdings of the 22 libraries which participated in Phase 1 of the project, will be increased by the holdings of those libraries which began participation in Phase 2. By the end of March the holdings of another 15 libraries will have been added. The next few months prior to August will be extremely busy, adding remaining Phase 3 libraries’ data and ensuring the holdings of all participating libraries are as up-to-date as possible.

About EDINA

EDINA, based at Edinburgh University Library Data Centre, is a JISC-funded national datacentre. It offers a library of data, information and research resources. All EDINA services are free of charge at the point of use, for information on institutional subscription fees, visit the EDINA web site, or contact us (details below).

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Editor: Paul Milne
MasterMap to feature in Digimap

Week has begun on OS MasterMap Topographic, the replacement for Ordnance Survey Land-Lime, through the Digimap service.

Full featured data set
OS MasterMap is a more complex data product and is structurally different from the Ordnance Survey data currently provided, so delivering it requires considerable investment and development work. Work is now under way to create a separate delivery application which will be available through the current service interface.

OS MasterMap currently contains four layers, each comprising various mapping features. Two of these layers, Topographic and Integrated Transport Network (ITN), will be available through Digimap. Each feature has its own unique identifier or TOID (Topographic Object Identifier), a 16-digit reference number that can be shared with other users across different applications and systems for easy data association and greater accuracy. More detailed information about OS MasterMap is available online at http://www.edina.ac.uk/landline/products/mastermap.

User Community
The published timetable for development work is as follows:
- January 2006: Project launch and engagement with user community re-organizations regarding user requirements
- Summer/Autumn 2006: service development and iterative testing with expert users
- Spring 2007: Beta release to all users at early adopter level
- August 2007: Final release

More details of the timetable will be published on the EDINA web site as the project continues.

Land-Line data will continue to be available via the current Digimap Download facility throughout the OS MasterMap development process and for one year beyond August 2007. This will allow users to compare current versions using Land-Line, and allow institutions to make any changes required to support users of the OS MasterMap data. Land-Line maps, however, will cease to be available on 1 August 2007. The final update from Land-Line will be released in September 2006.

Shibboleth and EDINA SDSS

For some time JISC has been planning a major revamp of the access management software which JISC-funded services use, namely from Athens to a technology previously identified as a product of the Internet initiative (http://shibboleth.internet2.edu). Shibboleth is intended as the next generation access management system for UK Higher and Further Education, for use across a wide range of applications, not just those traditionally addressed by Athens. For further background please refer to http://www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=pub/shibboleth

National UK federation
An important component of the Shibboleth approach is the federation, made up of Service Providers (SP) and institutions with members who wish to make use of services; such institutions are known as Identity Providers (IDP), since their primary task in the context of Shibboleth is to manage the identities of the people associated with them.

While a Shibboleth federation is a technical construct, the main challenges are not technical, but rather legal and ethical. It takes time for the full implications and obligations of a federal structure to develop, and for the participants to appreciate the change of mindset required from a centralised access management system (such as Athens) to one which is truly federated.

The SDSS project was required to set up a development federation to enable JISC-funded Shibboleth projects to have a structure in which to locate their work, and to give everyone involved some experience of the federal way of working. From this start, SDSS operated their federation on strict guidelines so that it could be used as a model for production operation in due course. The SDSS federation has been seen as a success within the community and has been adopted as the forerunner for the UK national federation, scheduled to come into existence later this year. The best way for an SDSS member to become a member of the UK national federation is to join the SDSS federation now. A smooth transition has been agreed by JISC.

JISC has asked UKERNA, the group responsible for JANT, to manage the UK national Shibboleth federation. SDSS will provide technical support to UKERNA in this work.

SDSS contributions to Internet2 development activity
SDSS staff have attended Internet2 meetings in the USA. Current areas of activity include:
- iW/F development. The use of Shibboleth for an early test case of the iW/f (Where Are You From?/server and web page, which enables end users to specify which IP they belong to. SDSS made proposals last year on enhancements to the iW/F software to support multi-federation operation. These were accepted, and new code submitted by SDSS has now been incorporated into the Internet2 Shibboleth reference source code tree.
- OpenSAML library. SAML (Security Assertion Markup Language) is the protocol which underpins Shibboleth. Rod Widdowson, a member of the SDSS team, was seconded at the end of 2005 to work on the OpenSAML library in collaboration with Internet2 colleagues. This work is now largely complete, and clears the way for a release of Shibboleth 2.0, possibly in the third quarter of 2006.

Further collaborative work is likely.

News in Brief

Boundary Line Data for Digimap Digimap’s Ordnance Survey Data Collection (OS) Boundary Line data can now be accessed through the Digimap service. This can be accessed under the Boundary Download tool and includes GB administrative and NTF file formats. NTF grid outlines and national boundaries are also available here. Information on Digimap can be found at http://www.edina.ac.uk/digimap.

New face for Digimap Carto
The new face for Digimap Carto is a face lift. The new version will initially offer the same functionality, but will provide scope for adding new features over the future. Old versions will run in parallel for a short while. Release date to be confirmed.

Go-Geo! Metadata News

The third issue of the Go-Geo! Metadata News has been released and is available for download at http://www.gogeoo.ac.uk/Go-Geo/Metadata News is a biannual newsletter published for use in UK academics, researchers and students interested in issues and news involving spatial data sharing. It will also draw attention to geospatial standards and metadata, and announce service updates for the Grid and Digital Earth and the new Go-Geo! Metadata editor tool.

EMOL music collection

We are pleased to report that the EMOL music collection has been resolved and it will be incorporated in to the service as the 17th separate collection. For more info, see http://www.emol.ac.uk/description/collections.html

2004 Data Added to agcensus
Data for 2004 for England, Scotland and Wales, has been added to agcensus, the agricultural census service from EDINA. We intend to add further data to the service in the coming months as well as making developments to the interface. For more info, see http://edina.ac.uk/agcensus

New Land, Life & Leisure feature

See http://www.edina.ac.uk/ukborders for more info

New SDSS WAYF

On 25th January the SDSS federation’s WAYF server was upgraded with a new graphic design and enhanced functionality based on the latest Internet2 reference code contributed by SDSS (described above).

What’s next?

Another important part of the SDSS work is to assist in the conversion of EDINA services to Shibboleth access management. This work is substantially complete, and when the UK national Shibboleth federation comes into existence, later in 2006, EDINA services will be ready for the brave new world!