

e-Update December 2007

Welcome to the 34th edition of e-Update, the monthly electronic bulletin from the Buckinghamshire ICT Curriculum Support Team.

The purpose of this bulletin is to keep you informed with the latest developments in ICT.

The information in e-Update has been taken from Becta and other information sources. Details on how to subscribe to these can be found at the end of e-Update.

For information on how to subscribe to/ unsubscribe from e-Update, please see the section towards the end of e-Update.

e-Update can also be found on the Buckinghamshire ICT Curriculum Support Team's website at <http://www.bucksict.org.uk/e-update/> and on the Buckinghamshire Grid for Learning website at <http://www.bucksgfl.org.uk/resources/course/view.php?id=126>.

If you have any comments on e-Update, please send them to adickson@buckscc.gov.uk.

BETT 2008

Becta

9–12 January 2008, Olympia, London

As usual, the BETT Show has a comprehensive seminar programme and is the perfect opportunity to view a wide range of educational technology products and resources under one roof. You can find out all about what's going on at BETT from the website of the BETT Show <http://www.bettshow.com>.

Diary Dates 2008

Mike Woods, ICT Adviser

Following on from last year's successful event, we hope that you will be able to attend the forthcoming Creativity, Innovation and E-Learning Conference and Exhibition to be held on the 12th February 2008 at the Civic Centre, Aylesbury.

We are also hosting a conference to Celebrate Success in E-Learning in Buckinghamshire schools. This will be held on the 20th June 2008, at the Teaching and Learning Centre, Aylesbury.

Further information will be sent to schools in the new year.

Buckinghamshire's own 'BAFTA' awards?

Mike Woods, ICT Adviser

Well not quite, but the ICT Curriculum Support Team announce the "Just a Minute" Digital Animation and Video Competition. We would like to provide you with advance warning of a competition being launched in the New Year. Individuals and/or teams of pupils from schools will be invited to submit a digital animation or video they make on any topic, but not exceeding one minute in length, to have a chance of winning a trophy and valuable prizes! Entries will be judged in several age groups and the "Just a Minute" awards will be made at the Celebrating Success in E-Learning conference in June.

Further information will be available soon.

Schools Computer Animation Competition

Andy Dickson, ICT Consultant

2008 sees the 60th anniversary of the world's first stored program digital computer, designed and built at the University of Manchester.

As part of the celebrations the University of Manchester is running a Computer Animation Competition for schoolchildren aged from 7 to 19.

To enter the competition, entrants will create a short (up to 1-minute) animated Computer Graphics film using Alice, a free downloadable drag-and-drop computer animation system that requires no knowledge of programming (<http://www.alice.org>).

The film can be about any topic that links to National Curriculum material, and need not be about computing or the 60th anniversary (but could be).

The competition will be open 1 January - 1 April 2008. Full details at <http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/Digital60>

Primary ICT Co-ordinators' Meetings - Spring Term

Karen Fagan, Management Support Officer

Please find below details of the primary ICT Co-ordinators' meetings for spring term 2008. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact Karen Fagan on telephone no. 01296 334994 or by email to kafagan@buckscc.gov.uk.

Primary Meetings are 1.30-3.30. You do not need to book for these sessions, just turn up on the day. Although these meetings are arranged in Liaison Group clusters, please feel free to attend whichever is the most convenient.

	ICT Consultant	Spring 2008	Venue
Beaconsfield/Burnham/Chalfont/Evreham	Pat	23rd January	Stoke Poges
Chesham/Misbourne/Amersham	Pat	22nd January	Prestwood Junior
Mandeville/Quarrendon/Grange/Colet/Bernewode	Geoff	22nd January	BTLC
Winslow/Buckingham/Wing	Geoff	24th January	Winslow
Wye Valley/Cressex/Great Marlow	Andy	23rd January	Foxes Piece
Dashwood/Rye/Wycombe N/P Risborough	Andy	24th January	Booker Hill

Asus Eee PC

Andy Dickson, ICT Consultant

Asustek has announced the low-cost Eee PC which offers a 7" screen and uses flash memory in place of a hard disk, in a compact case. Education supplier RM has announced that it will be marketing the device as the RM Minibook. Initial units run a version of Linux, but Windows XP versions are expected to become available.

The Asus Eee PC comes bundled with a whole bunch of Open Source software:

- OpenOffice for documents, spreadsheets, presentations
- Firefox (for Internet, of course)
- Thunderbird for email
- Pidgin for Instant Messaging (MSN, Yahoo, IRC)
- Skype
- PDF Reader
- Music, Photo and Video Managers
- A range of educational programs including TuxPaint
- A range of games (Solitaire, Sudoku etc)

You can see what is available and test drive some of this on the Asus Eee PC Online Interactive Demo website <http://honeypothack.com/eee/>

The specs of the Asus are:

- Mobile Intel Celeron-M ULV 900MHz processor
- Asus-developed Linux-based operating system
- 7" TFT screen
- 256MB or 512MB Memory
- 2GB or 4GB Solid-State Hard Drive
- Integrated LAN

- Lithium-Ion battery
- Integrated IEEE 802.11b/g wireless
- Integrated webcam
- Integrated microphone and speakers
- Ports for external microphone and speakers or headphones
- Options of wireless 3G module
- 3 USB ports
- VGA-out port
- SD card reader

These are taken from RM: <http://www.rm.com/Primary/Products/product.asp?cref=PD1030046>

Prices are £169 for the 2Gb model and £199 for the 4Gb model. There are plans to release an 8Gb model next year.

Future of Microsoft Windows XP

Becta

Microsoft has announced that it will continue to offer sales of Windows XP until June 2008. Microsoft is expected to shortly announce Service Pack 3 for Windows XP for release in early 2008. This will extend the products overall supported lifecycle. Microsoft products follow a published schedule of support before updates are stopped.

<http://support.microsoft.com/gp/lifecycle>

Open Source update

Becta

IBM has released a new Office suite called Symphony. This currently offers a word processor, spreadsheet and presentation graphics based on the OpenOffice code (<http://www.openoffice.org>). The software has been released for Windows and Linux and Mac OS X support will follow. This is a combination of developments from earlier Lotus and IBM technologies.

<http://symphony.lotus.com/software/lotus/symphony/home.jspa>

Key stage 3 ICT - Pupil familiarisation and Data handling tasks

National Assessment Agency

Onscreen familiarisation materials and key stage 3 ICT data handling assessment tasks at level 3-4, level 4-5 and level 5-6 are now available to schools who have installed the latest version of the key stage 3 ICT delivery software. For information on how to upgrade to the latest version of the software please contact our customer services team on 0870 870 1025 (Option 1).

The familiarisation materials can be used to help pupils become familiar with the software used in the key stage 3 ICT onscreen assessment tasks. Further information on the familiarisation materials is available from the support materials section of the website <http://www.naa.org.uk/naaks3/424.asp>.

Development of common interactive whiteboard format

Becta

With more and more schools installing and operating interactive whiteboards and more and more suppliers coming into the market, issues have arisen over the ability to make sure some files can be read on all systems.

Currently most content files developed for any one type of interactive whiteboard cannot be opened by the software of others. This means that it is not possible for teachers, the National Whiteboard Network, local authorities, or other content publishers to create content that can be used on the software of more than one type of interactive whiteboard.

To tackle this problem Becta has, after completing a tendering process, appointed RM (<http://www.rm.com>) to develop a common industry-wide standard that will bring huge benefits to schools, allowing the exchange of resources within and between schools.

The aim of this development is to provide the industry with an interoperability standard, followed by demonstration of support for the format with the production of an open-source file viewer. Becta will support the development of the specification and, by devising the interoperability file format to support certain agreed file features common to interactive whiteboards, work to obtain whiteboard vendors commitment to support the standard.

The project will be divided into two phases. The first phase will deliver the file specification; the second will deliver the Viewer application, accompanying supporting documentation and a code library which can be used by software publishers to integrate support for the file format into their own applications.

Phase one started on 19 November and it is anticipated that the final file specification and documentation will be produced at the end of June 2008 when Phase two will start. The source code of the viewer, library, all documentation and installer will be published on the SourceForge website (<http://sourceforge.net/>) by the end of June 2009 followed by the roll out of a support programme for publishers.

RM will carry out the development work in close liaison with Becta, Besa, whiteboard developers, publishers and other stakeholders. Invitations for others within the industry to participate in the development will be made on both the Becta and BESA websites.

<http://news.becta.org.uk/display.cfm?resID=35000&page=1658&catID=1633>

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4. In the Course Categories section on the main page, click on **ICT**, then click on **e-Update**.
5. You will be asked if you would like to enrol on the e-Update course. Choose **Yes**.

Once you are enrolled, you will be emailed each edition of e-Update to your BucksGfL email address when they are posted on the BucksGfL website.

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6. Visit the BucksGfL website <http://www.bucksgfl.org.uk>.
 7. Click on the **Login** link in the top right corner.
 8. Login using your BucksGfL username and password (your BucksGfL username is the first part of your BucksGfL email address i.e. the bit before the @. Your password is the same as for your email).
 9. In the Course Categories section on the main page, click on **ICT**, then click on **e-Update**.
 10. On the left, click on the **Unenrol me from e-Update**.
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Becta

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RM

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