

# News from IT Services: Hilary 2018

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## Feed your mind - lunchtime learning



You are probably aware of the courses and workshops run by IT Services' IT Learning Centre, and the video learning resources offered by [Lynda.com](#), but did you know we also run talks at lunchtimes covering topics from virtual

reality to making the most of administrative systems?

These free talks are themed and this term our themes are **do:**, **imagine:** and **code:**.

**imagine:** is a series of talks about Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR); two disruptive technologies that push the limits of imagination. The talks give an overview of key aspects of these technologies and associated app development within and around the University. Guest speakers will illustrate the use of VR/AR for different applications, such as training, learning, designing and research.

Five talks are confirmed, with others being arranged. Search our [Courses overview](#) page and filter by imagine: for an up-to-date list.

**do:** is a long-running series of lunchtime talks highlighting the use of IT technology in support of business systems and processes in the University. This

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term's topics include using technology to make the University gardens, libraries and museums more accessible; the challenges and opportunities that come with commercialisation; Excel date and time functions, formulas and formats; creating simple but highly effective databases to solve a practical need.

These popular talks are given by people from around the University, so come along and find out what's happening. You can read more about **do:** on our [blog](#).

**code:** features talks by people using programming in both the research and business sides of the University. These will demonstrate an interesting outcome, a new approach, a successful collaboration, a practical application that deserves wider awareness or a similar, compelling story. The sessions are still being finalised but talks will take place on various dates between 12 February and 12 March 2018.

All talks are free to members of the University but you do need to book: go to our [Courses overview](#) page and click on the appropriate Details link. The talks are held at IT Services, 13 Banbury Road and run by the IT Learning Centre. More information about the IT Learning Centre can be found on our [web pages](#).

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## Highlights

### Nexus 365 update

Delivery of Nexus365 (the University's Office 365 cloud-based service which will replace the current Nexus email and calendaring service) is scheduled to start in April and is expected to take approximately three months.

The service will be piloted with IT Services staff in February in order to test the migration process, communication and support model. As well as email and calendaring, Nexus365 users will have access to a range of Office 365 applications including OneDrive for Business, Skype for Business, Office Online, Teams and Delve.



For more information please see the [project website](#) or contact [nexus365@it.ox.ac.uk](mailto:nexus365@it.ox.ac.uk).

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## The VLE Review process: selecting a new supplier



The VLE Review, the project to review the requirements for the University's virtual learning environment (VLE), has selected a preferred supplier and we are currently working to agree contractual and commercial terms. Details will be shared as soon as the terms are agreed.

Next we will be working on implementation planning and solution design ready to launch an Early Adopters phase in the 2018/19 academic year. We are also planning to run a number of roadshows to demo the new VLE and share plans during Trinity term.

The University's current VLE, WebLearn, will continue to remain available, including for purposes other than teaching and learning, until alternative solutions are identified, support is in place and prior notice has been given.

If you have any questions or queries please contact us on [edu-it@it.ox.ac.uk](mailto:edu-it@it.ox.ac.uk).

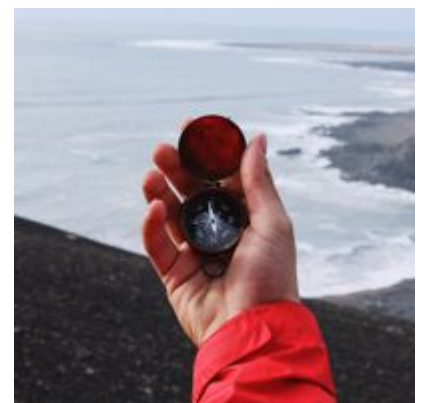
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## Improvements to the University web search (Funnelback) service

Funnelback is the search technology used to carry out searches on the University website. Recent changes have seen improvements in result accuracy and an increased number of tools available to site owners. The Funnelback service is maintained and managed by IT Services and is the preferred method for providing University searching and internal searching. Recent enhancements include:

**Click tracking enabled.** Funnelback can track which results are clicked and this data can be used to provide improved result rankings. This will be used to improve the quality of search data on Oxford sites.

**Curator rules available.** Site owners can define a trigger and resulting action to customise search results on a site; for example, for a specific search result you can specify that a certain page or document should be promoted based upon a user's query (also known as 'best bets'). Site owners can also define synonyms for common search terms to ensure users are presented with the best results.



**Improvements to indexing schedule.** It now takes less time for Funnelback to crawl sites meaning that pages get indexed more quickly, results are more up to date and the process is much more efficient.

If you are a site owner interested in using these enhancements, please email [help@it.ox.ac.uk](mailto:help@it.ox.ac.uk) and the Web & Emerging Technologies team will provide guidance on setting them up for you. For general enquiries about Funnelback, please refer to our [web pages](#) or email the team: [ssm-wet-team@maillist.ox.ac.uk](mailto:ssm-wet-team@maillist.ox.ac.uk).

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## Easier WiFi set up for visitors

Jisc are running a pilot project to evaluate a free, simple WiFi access service for University visitors known as eduroam Visitor Access (eVA). This is available to all staff in the University to create accounts for academic visitors, conference guests, etc.



With eVA, any member of staff may create an account via any web browser. By doing so, they are sponsoring their visitors and giving them access to the eduroam Wi-Fi network in the UK for a limited duration. A sponsored visitor must have a link to education or research at the University of Oxford. The [service level description](#) (SLD) lists the qualifying visitor types and there is a limit to how many eVA accounts a

person can create.

Additionally, the pilot allows people who are current OWL Visitor Administrators to create larger numbers of accounts, for conferences for example.

The principle aim of this pilot is to evaluate the suitability of this service for the University. One of our key goals is to ensure that University staff are able to use this service with little extra demand on IT support and Service Desk staff. We are keen to hear back from you on your experiences and assessment of this service.

Departmental and college IT support staff and a few others have been using the eVA service for a few months and feedback has been very positive so far. The trial has been extended to 31 March so there is still time for more people to sign up to the pilot. IT Services are supervising the eVA pilot in Oxford so please contact Henryk Glogowski ([henryk.glogowski@it.ox.ac.uk](mailto:henryk.glogowski@it.ox.ac.uk)) if you are interested.

We welcome your feedback which will be collated and provided to Jisc. If all goes well, and Jisc roll it out as a full service, eVA is likely to replace the current OWL Visitor Service within the University.

To find out more, including how to access the eVA portal, see our [webpages](#). Please send all feedback and any questions to Henryk Glogowski ([henryk.glogowski@it.ox.ac.uk](mailto:henryk.glogowski@it.ox.ac.uk)).

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# Goodbye University Backbone Network

On 19 December 2017, power was finally switched off to the old University Backbone Network (UBN). This is the culmination of the Oxford Network Evolution (TONE) project which, over the last 4 years, has taken us from user consultation and requirements investigation, through tendering and supplier selection to installation, testing and establishing support. The project has involved many people for many hours to successfully oversee the transfer from the old UBN to the new [Odin network service](#).



UBN was designed in 1999 and underwent a number of major refurbishments so served the University well. When it was installed, downtime of up to three days was considered acceptable, quite unbelievable in these times of instant connectivity.

We are pleased that the transfer to Odin greatly improves the resilience of the system as well as significantly upgrading fibre provision, increasing bandwidth and speed. Even the transfer of systems involved minimum downtime, around 15 minutes for most people, which was advised and agreed well in advance. Odin has been designed to be very modular to allow for further expansion; the Networks team are already considering further enhancements and even the next replacement system. But let's hope that is not for another few years!

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## Chorus implementation is complete



We are pleased to announce that the implementation of the Chorus system, the University's new telephone service, across the collegiate University has been completed, with around 19,000 phones installed between October 2016 and the end of December 2017. This was achieved three months earlier than was initially planned. The successful conclusion of this work has eliminated the risk to the University from the previous telephony system being out of support.

A further project is now underway to assist staff in making better use of the advanced communications features of Chorus, including making calls via computer, tablet or smartphone. Later in 2018, we will be undertaking a detailed evaluation of the online conferencing and collaboration features delivered by Chorus and other systems with a view to providing more guidance to users on the facilities available to them.

Chorus service information and support is available via the [Chorus web pages](#), via the IT Service Desk at [help@it.ox.ac.uk](mailto:help@it.ox.ac.uk) (include 'Chorus' in the subject line) or (01865 6) 12345.



# Stay Secure

## Training for secure coding

The Information Security Team (IST) and IT Services are running a free professional training course in secure software development for staff and students.

The five-day course runs from Monday 5 February to Friday 9 February at IT Services, 13 Banbury Road and is based on the Certified Secure Software Lifecycle Professional (CSSLP) course.

It provides an opportunity to gain skills in developing an application security program, and tips on how to reduce source code vulnerabilities. The aim is to improve the credibility of services, departments, and the University, and lower the risk of incidents and losses due to insecure software breaches.



Although the course itself does not include an exam or professional certification, a sample examination will be provided to allow attendees to prepare for an official CSSLP® examination, should they wish to do so.

For more information, including how to apply please visit the [course webpage](#).

## Top tips for mobile working



These days you can work pretty much anywhere. Whether you're working from home, getting through some work on the train or travelling to exotic locations, you still need to protect your data. This term the Information Security team is sharing some simple advice on working securely in public places:

### **Use a Virtual Private Network (VPN) to connect over public WiFi**

WiFi hotspots are all over the place from coffee shops to libraries, airports, hotels, the list goes on... While convenient, these hotspots can be an easy target for hackers trying to steal passwords, credit card information or other personal details as data sent over public WiFi networks can be intercepted. By using a [VPN service](#) when you connect to public WiFi, you'll effectively be using a 'private tunnel' that encrypts all of your data that passes through the network keeping cybercriminals and would-be eavesdroppers in the dark about what you're doing.

## Be aware of 'shoulder-surfing' when working in open-plan offices, in public and while commuting

Shoulder surfing is a social engineering technique used to obtain information such as passwords and other confidential data by looking over your shoulder. At a minimum, shoulder surfers are annoying, but they can also lead to more serious repercussions, depending on the data they capture. Not all data is created equal after all! Being aware of your surroundings goes a long way but if you work with confidential data on a regular basis, it may be worth considering also using a privacy screen that can lower peripheral visibility of your monitor.

You can find more information on the InfoSec [website](#) or, if you have any specific questions, contact us at: [infosec@it.ox.ac.uk](mailto:infosec@it.ox.ac.uk)

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# Learning, Teaching and Research

## Review of plagiarism screening tools

During September 2017, IT Services carried out a survey on plagiarism screening and awareness tools (including Turnitin and iThenticate). The results, along with information gathered from the higher education sector, recommended that we retain licences for both Turnitin and iThenticate and promote their use more widely.

Turnitin is an electronic text-matching system that can be used to screen student work for text that matches existing electronic sources. The resulting Originality Report can be used to help students improve their academic writing practices or to screen for possible copied text. The Originality Report needs to be carefully interpreted by a subject-matter expert.

Our Turnitin licence allows the screening of coursework, theses and dissertations of registered Oxford students only (maximum file upload size is 40 Mb). Academics and researchers should refer to the use of iThenticate.

iThenticate allows the screening of work of prospective students, and that of academics and researchers prior to publication (the maximum file upload size is 100 Mb).

Details about the review, including a summary of survey findings, are available from the [Turnitin and iThenticate Review](#) web page.

To support the University's use of these tools, IT Services offer [lunch-time plagiarism awareness courses](#) for students and Turnitin courses for staff. Staff are encouraged to join Turnitin user group meetings held once per term. The next [user group meeting](#) is on 23 March.

For further information, see the [Turnitin website](#) or contact [turnitin@it.ox.ac.uk](mailto:turnitin@it.ox.ac.uk) or [student.systems@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:student.systems@admin.ox.ac.uk) (iThenticate).

The logo for Turnitin, featuring the word "turnitin" in a lowercase, sans-serif font. The letters "turni" are red and "tin" are blue.The logo for iThenticate, featuring a blue checkmark icon to the left of the word "iThenticate" in a bold, sans-serif font. The "i" is lowercase and blue, while "Thenticate" is uppercase and black.

## Lynda.com news



New users sign up every day to [Lynda.com](#) and the IT Learning Centre offers a range of opportunities to engage with the resource.

Throughout the term we offer free 'Learn IT with Lynda' sessions at the IT Learning Centre, 13 Banbury Road. These sessions provide a quiet place where you can concentrate on your learning. There will always be someone on hand for guidance about which Lynda.com course might suit you best, and answer questions about your training. Computers and headphones are provided.

You can also use the Lynda.com app available for Apple and many Android devices to learn on the move. More details about the app are available from [our mobile page](#).

One of the few 'criticisms' about Lynda.com is that there are so many courses (over 6,000) it is hard to know where to start! To help with this, Lynda.com has introduced *learning paths* - collections of courses that lead you through gaining the skills you need. In addition, the IT Learning Centre has selected around fifty Lynda.com courses that we think are particularly useful to members of the University. You can see this collection on our [webpages](#); see courses which have a format of 'online'.

At the end of January, we will be launching the 'Lynda Challenge'. Look out for flyers and emails about this.

Access [Lynda.com](#) here.

## Submit your research thesis digitally from February

In mid-February, all research students will be given access to the new Research Thesis Digital Submission (RTDS) application, a simple, safe and secure way that they can submit a digital copy of their research thesis and additional materials for examination. Examiners can then use RTDS to access the digital copy, and return corrections, referrals or notes to the students.

IT Services is rolling out RTDS for optional use in all divisions in February following a successful pilot within the Medical Sciences Division in 2017. Details are on the [Research Thesis Digital Submission](#) web page.





# Engagement and Global Reach

## IT Services roadshows

On 6 February IT Services staff will be visiting the Manor Road building with our roadshow. The purpose of the roadshows is to tell staff and students more about what we do and what we can offer, and to gather feedback on our services and other work. We offer a mini-service desk to offer on-the-spot help and have leaflets, freebies and contact sheets available.

If you have any IT questions, for example about user accounts, connection to eduroam, configuring email, etc. we will be happy to answer them at this event.

Information Security will be with us from 12-2pm and they will be happy to help with any questions about encryption, secure file transfer and other data security related topics.

We will also have staff from the IT Learning Centre with us all day to discuss IT courses available to both staff and students.

Find us in the Atrium at Manor Road from 10am-4pm on 6 February.



## Innovation Challenges return



We are delighted to announce that funding has been granted to run both a student and staff round of the [IT Innovation Challenges](#) this academic year. Expect to see calls for ideas before Easter with the student round starting on 29 January.

The scheme supports innovative projects that bring benefit to the University, its staff or students through digital means. It started in 2014 and has run five staff and three student rounds so far. Success stories from last year include the [Workplace Finder](#), which helps people find a study space to suit their needs from over 150 workplaces around the University, and the [VR/AR Hub](#) at Oxford,

which is establishing a network for Oxford people interested in VR and AR.

More information about these and other funded projects can be found in the [IT Innovation Challenges blog](#). Further details about the forthcoming calls for ideas will also be published there.

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## Other news

### Bomgar remote support tool

In the Michaelmas edition of News from IT Services, we introduced a [new remote support tool called Bomgar](#). Bomgar allows service desk staff to remotely access any device via their web browser and investigate issues as if the device was in front of them. This service went live in December and is now available for departmental and college IT staff to use.

See our [service catalogue](#) for further details of the service and the [web pages](#) for costs, documentation, installation guides, etc.

Note, although this is a chargeable service, no charges for use will be levied this financial year. You are welcome to subscribe to the service, understand its capabilities and, as long as you cancel your subscription before the end of July 2018, no fee will be charged.



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SharePoint Nexus User Group (SNUG) is meeting on 23 February, 12.30-2.30pm, IT Services, 13 Banbury Road. If you would like to attend, please book via the [Courses](#) booking page (lunch included).



New members of staff are invited to join us for [Afternoon tea at IT Services](#) on Thursday 1 February. Over coffee and cake, we will introduce you to the many important services that are available to you. Please [book your place](#).

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[Meet with members](#) of the WebLearn team, give feedback and share ideas. "All the talks were very good. It is inspirational to hear of others' uses". [Book for WLUG Wednesday 21 March](#).

## Keep in touch

We hope you have enjoyed this edition of our newsletter. For contributions or comments, please contact the Communications and Web Office via [communications@it.ox.ac.uk](mailto:communications@it.ox.ac.uk).

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- Research Thesis Digital Submission: istock lightkeeper
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