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News from Head of School**Adrian Cummings**

A booklet containing a collection of Adrian's photographs was distributed at his funeral last week; for those of you who were unable to attend, several copies have been put in the common room. They are well worth a look.

Research Profiling Exercise

As has been widely announced, the university has launched the 2010 Research Profiling Exercise (RPE). This activity principally supports the generation of aggregated data that is intended to reflect anticipated performance in the REF, and optionally allows individuals to obtain an assessment of their personal research performance on a four point scale. You are no doubt also aware that the union is encouraging staff to boycott the RPE.

Even if you are boycotting the RPE, please ensure that your eScholar publication list is up-to-date by the end of January 2011. eScholar Version 2 includes a collection of different upload methods, including import from BibTeX and EndNote. There are several reasons why this is important, including: (i) as a means of increasing the profile of published outputs, as eScholar is used for generating publication lists; (ii) as a basis for the creation of school-level guidance on publication strategy as we prepare for the REF, which will make use of data in eScholar; and (iii) because it is possible that the university will use aggregated RPE data to inform investment decision-making, so the school profile needs to be as strong as possible. My understanding is that the union is not discouraging the updating of eScholar entries.

The following URLs are relevant in this context:

- The University of Manchester Portal for the RPE: <https://www.portal.manchester.ac.uk>.
- eScholar: <https://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk/>

Message for academics from Media Relations

A group calling themselves 'Public Service' are directly contacting academics and attempting to pressure them into paying large sums of money to write news articles for their magazine. They apparently refuse to go through the Press Office and try to get academics to sign a contract, which they fax through, there and then.

If you are contacted by this organisation, please take the name and contact number of the person you spoke to and let me know as soon as possible, and do not enter into any negotiations about writing the article.

[Daniel Cochlin](#), EPS Media Relations Officer

Charity Auction and Book Sale

Many thanks to all those who contributed to the charity auction and book sale held recently. The final amount raised was £1225 and given the recent untimely passing of Adrian Cummings it has been decided that this year a donation will be made to:

Events

School Planning meeting

1 Dec 10

15:000-17:00, IT 407

Meeting to inform the School plan for 2011. The meeting will include a review of progress against the 2010 plan, ideas for the 2011 plan from the functions (UG, PGT, Research, ...) and breakout groups that seek to generate new ideas or refine those presented.

Infrastructure at Google

3 Dec 10

13-14:00, Theatre A University Place

Free talk by Dr Peter Dickman, Engineering Manager in Google's Zurich Office

Google famously builds systems that must scale enormously, handling vast quantities of data, offering a worldwide user base very rapid responses to searches, and providing support for large-scale cloud-based apps such as GMail and YouTube. In this talk, Peter Dickman will provide an insight into the infrastructure and software systems that make Google possible, and briefly show how the company culture and software engineering ethos have contributed to Google's technical success. He will provide a rapid overview of Google's infrastructure from data centres and server design through the OS and software stack to Google's approach to software engineering and their engineering-led corporate culture, all presented from the perspective of wanting to do computing at global scales. This talk is designed to be accessible to a wide audience, from undergraduate CS students to post-docs, experienced practitioners and academics.

Free of charge and no registration is required.

[More information](#)

Research Awards

Data linking with knowledge-blogging

Funding Body: JISC

PI: Robert Stevens

Award Amount: £22601