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**News from the Head of School****NSS results published**

The [NSS results for undergraduate programmes](#) have been published. The School achieved an overall satisfaction rate of 88%. The University and Faculty averages for 2013 are 85%, so within the University we are doing reasonably well. However, amongst UK Computer Science departments we are 35<sup>th</sup> out of 111, with almost all of the Russell Group above us. We aim to be amongst the best in the country in research and teaching so this is a disappointing position to be in, but it is not impossible to improve our ranking significantly. If we raised our score by 5% we would be 5<sup>th</sup> equal in the UK. Around 150 students completed the survey and so changing the opinions of 8 students either way would make a huge difference to our position. I urge you all to keep that in mind when dealing with students this year.

**Two new lecturers in the APT group**

Dirk Koch takes up his new post on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> September, and Antoniu Pop will join us on 14<sup>th</sup> October. Dirk comes to us from the University of Oslo where he has been working on reconfigurable systems on FPGAs. Antoniu comes to us from INRIA Paris where he was working on programming language design and compiler optimisation for parallel architectures.

**New staff in the External Affairs Team**

Holly Dewsnip joins us as External Affairs Intern and Nina Agravat joins us as UG Admissions Assistant.

**New web pages**

The School's externally facing web pages have been totally revamped and go live today at <http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/> This has been a huge task for many staff in the School and the Faculty web team. The new look and feel is consistent with the rest of the Schools in the Faculty. So far the emphasis has been on the pages relating to student recruitment and admissions, the focus of attention will now move to research pages.

**New IT infrastructure for taught students**

The CSIS team, Faculty IS team and several academic staff from the School have undertaken a total rebuild of the IT systems that we provide for taught students. This has been a colossal undertaking for them, and has kept many people very busy through the summer. Once the new system is bedded in it should enable the CSIS team to manage our teaching systems much more efficiently and provide a higher level of service to the rest of the School.

**Samantha Bail and the Festival of Code**

Samantha Bail, who recently successfully defended her PhD thesis, helped to organise the Media City UK Festival of Code in association with Young Rewired State this week. Young Rewired State is a charity that gets young people to build software by pairing mentors together with young people across the UK in a week-long Festival of Code. There is a video of Sam describing the Festival in [Frith Ellingham's blog post from the BBC](#).

### **Laura Howarth Kirke**

Laura has been selected as one of the three finalists for the Information and Communications Technology section of the [Science, Engineering and Technology Student of the Year Awards](#). Laura's final year project was using Machine Learning for Gesture Recognition on the Microsoft Kinect. She developed a system which learnt and recognized dynamic body gestures, capable of controlling devices like a TV. The School awarded Laura the Kilburn medal and she won a University Outstanding Academic Achievement Award. She is now on the BBC's prestigious Future Media Graduate Scheme.

### **First aid session**

If you missed the first aid session on 4<sup>th</sup> September it will be repeated on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> Sept, 10.30 – 11:30, Alan Turing Building room G107. The session is not intended to turn you into a qualified first aider, but should make you a little more confident that you will know what to do if something happens in any activity that you are in charge of – lectures, labs, seminars, or at any other time.

### **Kilburn window replacement**

Estates are attempting to improve the temperature control of the Kilburn Building and make the environment a little better. They are trying double glazed opening windows, a sample of which can be found opposite the goods lift on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. These will initially be fitted to the windows around the inside of the courtyard because of ease of external access. If these are found to improve the affected offices they will be fitted more extensively.

### **IBM sponsor research school conference**

IBM have sponsored our annual research school conference which will take place in reading week of the 1<sup>st</sup> semester.

### **Steve Furber Welcome week lecture**

Steve Furber will give one of the University Welcome Week Distinguished Lecture series. Steve's lecture, "Computers with Brains" will be at 18:30 – 19:30 Monday 16<sup>th</sup> September in Lecture Theatre B, University Place. Booking is essential, you can book [here](#).

### **Computing for a Sustainable Future**

Steve Furber is an organiser of a Royal Society meeting in Manchester timed to coincide with the Conservative Party Conference, to be opened by the Rt Hon David Willets MP. *"More efficient computing – from smarter algorithms, better chip design, more energy-aware software, and improved power management – offers opportunities to reduce energy consumption, improve mobile computing function, increase large data use, encourage sustainable behaviour, and lower the cost. From developing countries to global business, the benefits will be felt by all"*. [More information and registration details can be found here](#).

### **SpiNNaker at the Conservative Party conference**

No, it's not a speaker, but SpiNNaker has been chosen as one of four research projects that the University will display at the Conservative Party conference (in Manchester) at the end of the month.

### **President's visit 2013/14**

The President's annual visit to the School will take place on Wednesday, 5 March 2014, 2.00 – 3.30pm. As usual the visit will include 30 minute open sessions for staff and students.

## Staff departures

Bernard Richards has left the University after 60 years, having joined as a Masters student in 1953, working with Alan Turing on Mathematical Biology and Morphogenesis. Aravind Vijayaraghavan is leaving Computer Science to join the School of Materials Science. Rina Sraonian has left the School for a post in the Faculty of EPS. Matt Makin in ACSO is leaving us for a new job in Physics, starting on 16<sup>th</sup> September.

## ...and finally: Talk like a pirate day

Thursday September 19<sup>th</sup> is [Talk Like a Pirate Day](#). I note from my diary that there is a meeting of Faculty Leadership Team, which might be interesting.

## Announcements

### Manchester Computer Science research ranked 5th in UK!

The School of Computer Science has been ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the UK in the 2013 Shanghai Jiao Tong Academic Ranking of World Universities ([ARWU](#)) for its research.

### Steve Pettifer featured in Nature!

Steve Pettifer has featured in a [Nature Careers](#) article talking about how using Altmetrics has strengthened his CV.

Altmetrics are a way of expressing research impact that go beyond academic citations; taking into account digital use and sharing of data — which can include the number of times a paper or research product (software, datasets etc.) have been tweeted, 'liked' on Facebook, covered by the media or blogs, downloaded, cited on Wikipedia or bookmarked online.

Altmetrics offer researchers a way to showcase the impact of papers that may have not yet gathered many citations, and to demonstrate engagement with the public. Steve used them in his CV for promotion to easily illustrate the importance of his publications. For example, the annotations showed that the PLoS article ['Defrosting the Digital Library: Bibliographic Tools for the Next Generation Web'](#) with Dr Duncan Hull and Prof. Doug Kell had been viewed or downloaded more than 68,000 times, making it the most-accessed review ever to be published in any of the seven PLOS journals!

## Events

### Research Photography competition

23 Sep 2013

All researchers at Manchester are invited to take part in the [Images of Research Photography Competition 2013](#).

Submit your original photographs that encapsulate the theme “**The Big Picture** and share the wonder, beauty and curiosity of what you do, why you do it, and how it matters to others. Entries should aim to raise the general public’s curiosity about the research issue that you are illustrating.

In addition to the original photographic image, each submission must include an interesting title and a 150-word abstract describing how and why your research matters to others.

**The Prizes:** Public vote: £200 Amazon voucher | Judges votes: First prize: £150 Amazon voucher | Runners up: £100 Amazon vouchers | Highly commended: £50 Amazon voucher.

**Submissions close 23 September 2013, 12 noon**, so get snapping!

## Funding Opportunities

## Research Support Office

Please contact us through [researchsupportcsm@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:researchsupportcsm@manchester.ac.uk).

There is information about support for grant writing and submission at <http://staffnet.cs.manchester.ac.uk/reso/> and the EPS blog [The Word](#) contains features News, Events and comment relevant to Postgraduate Researchers, Research Staff and Supervisors or PIs.

## Funding for engineering public engagement

30 Sep 2013

The Royal Academy of Engineering are looking for new projects to fund through [Ingenious](#) - the grant scheme for creative public engagement with engineering projects.

*Ingenious* aims to:

- inspire creative public engagement with engineering projects
- stimulate engineers to share their stories, passion and expertise in innovative ways with wider audiences
- develop engineers' communication and engagement skills
- create debate between engineers and people of all ages to raise awareness of the diversity, nature and impact of engineering.

If you're an individual or an organisation with an *Ingenious* idea, apply now for funding for up to £30,000. For queries contact Manisha Laloo at [manisha.laloo@raeng.org.uk](mailto:manisha.laloo@raeng.org.uk) or on 020 7766 0683.

[Research Professional](#) is a useful search engine for finding other funding opportunities.

## Featured Research Outcomes

**Research presented at MedInfo 2013**  
**Thamer Ba-Dhfari** (supervised by Andy Brass) and James Weatherall (AstraZeneca) attended the 14th World Congress on Medical and Health Informatics, the MedInfo 2013 in Copenhagen, Denmark (20th-23rd August). Together they presented their paper [Taming EHR data: Using Semantic Similarity to reduce Dimensionality](#).

The paper describes a methodology that reduces the dimensionality of Electronic Health Records (EHRs) to make it more amenable to visualisation, mining and clustering.

## Research Awards

Congratulations to all of those involved in the following awards!

**Lazarus: Resurrecting data and knowledge from life science articles by crowd-sourcing**

**Steve Pettifer, Carole Goble, Robert Stevens, Terri Attwood**  
Funding body: BBSRC

Award amount: £473k

The rate of publication in the life sciences is intense and accelerating. With over 200k articles downloaded each day from Elsevier's Science Direct system alone, the need for computational support to work which articles to read, and how to interpret, reproduce and validate the claims they contain is also growing.

The historical format of scientific articles makes accessing data for validation or analysis difficult. Lazarus aims to extend the functionality of existing Utopia tools to harness activities that are currently carried out by individuals for their own purposes (annotating, cross-referencing articles with databases, organising collections of articles), to recover the swathes of legacy data buried in charts, tables, diagrams and free-text. The system will liberate knowledge into a shared open access machine-readable repository that benefits the community by enriching the literature, augmenting existing data-integration initiatives and as a basis for hypothesis generation.

### **2013 IBM Faculty Award for CS in Big Data Engineering**

**John Keane**, Goran Nenadic

Funding body: IBM

Award amount: \$10k

John Keane is one of the winners of [IBM's 2013 Big Data and Analytics Faculty Awards](#). He joins 13 other researchers from around the world who will each receive \$10,000 to bring together their innovative research for the benefit of curricular development. The winning proposal at Manchester is one of only four 2013 IBM Faculty awards in the UK.

*Have we missed something? If you have some award news that you would like us to know about please contact [Sarah Chatwin](#).*