



UCD IT Services  
Seirbhísí TF UCD



# Annual Review 2008

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4GB disk key for all first year students

## Highlights in 2008

- Mobile Broadband
- New Improved UCD Connect
- New Blackboard 7 Features
- Access software from home
- Increased email and file storage
- New flexible teaching and learning spaces in Daedalus
- Data Centre and ICHEC cluster
- Redevelopment of IT Support Web
- New Content Management System
- Data Management Portal
- Online Module Management

## IT Services Website

The design and content of the IT support pages were enhanced to make them more user-friendly and intuitive. The main new features include:

A 'Get support' section providing easy-to-navigate topic pages with information on all our main services e.g. email, Blackboard, UCD Connect.

A 'Top Support Questions' section offering a shortcut to solving your most frequently asked queries.

A 'Search' facility using the Google Search Appliance.

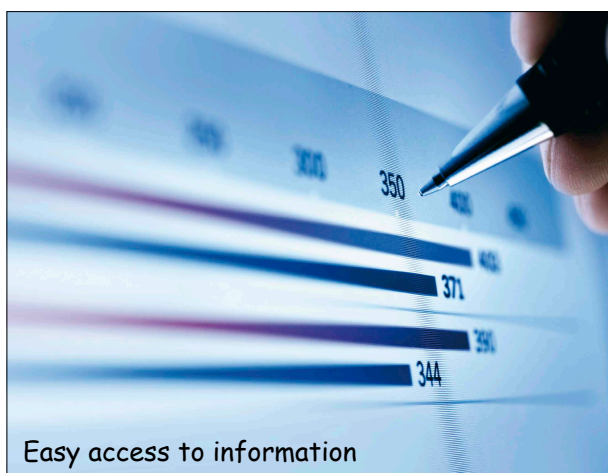
A colour coded and more accessible 'Service Announcements' section.

[www.ucd.ie/itservices/itsupport](http://www.ucd.ie/itservices/itsupport)

## Managing Information

### Information Management

In 2008, IT Services launched the UCD InfoView service on UCD Connect to provide easier access to academic and management reports. New reports have been delivered in key areas such as Finance whereby Principal Investigators can now access online reports giving details on the financial status of their accounts. We have also defined an **identity management architecture** that will form the basis for a strategic solution for the future provisioning of web services to staff and students.



Easy access to information

### Enhancing the Staff Experience

Together with Registry, IT Services developed a number of improvements for the academic community. Access to an online **curriculum archive** is now available and a new **Curriculum Builder** application was developed which will be rolled out in 2009. The new upload function in **Gradebook** provides an easier means for uploading students' grades. **Single sign-on to SISWeb** via UCD Connect provides access without the need for a separate logon.

Working with Finance, IT Services have rolled out our **eProcurement** solution in a number of areas including the College of Life Sciences. This gives staff the ability to purchase goods and services online. In collaboration with HR, the **eRecruitment** online recruitment system for university-wide vacancies has also been implemented.

### Enhancing the Student Experience

Enhancements were made to our **Online Registration** application, contributing to a very successful student registration season for 2008/09. Improvements also included a facility for students to see their **fee account online**. Other enhancements provide the ability to generate an **electronic transcript** for students completing modular programmes.

## Anytime, Anywhere Learning

### Mobile Broadband with O2

UCD was the first university to endorse **mobile broadband for students and staff**. The package is the cheapest on the market with two offerings tailored to students' needs.

### New Improved UCD Connect, 23,000 use it on a weekly basis

With double email quota available and number of simultaneous users increased, UCD Connect users regularly reach 16,000 individuals on a daily basis.

### New Blackboard 7 Features

#### Enhancing the Staff Experience

All Blackboard course requests can now be processed within one working day. The Discussion Board has been revamped, and other areas enhanced to be more user-friendly include Assessment & Gradebook and Test & Survey Managers.

#### Enhancing the Student Experience

Blackboard Backpack is a new feature that gives students anytime, anywhere Blackboard access to organise and personalise their Blackboard course material without needing an Internet connection.

### 'Software for U' to use anytime, anywhere

The benefit of this service is that both staff and students can now access a selection of the most popular academic software applications from laptops and home computers. Applications available through **Software for U** include: SPSS v15, Endnote X1, Macromedia Dreamweaver v8, ArcGIS v9.2, Adobe Photoshop CS3.

### Content Management

UCD's new **Content Management System (CMS)**, offers a user-friendly browser-based way to create, manage and publish content. It also facilitates search engine optimisation to increase web traffic. The UCD IT Services website has been fully migrated to the CMS along with numerous other sites in 2008. UCD IT Services staff are available to give training and guidance on moving to the CMS.

### Google Search

Searching for anything on the UCD website is now much easier due to the recently introduced Google Search Appliance (GSA) which provides more accurate and effective searching of all web content. The GSA is the enterprise version of Google's powerful search engine and is hosted here at UCD.



# Connecting Research and Learning Through Technology

## During 2008 the Daedalus Building was transformed into a centre for technology enabled teaching, learning and research

Three new spaces were developed. The advanced technologies which have been implemented within these spaces are cost effective solutions which could be implemented in various locations across campus.

### A New Flexible Learning Space offers students a wireless enabled area for group work or study

The aim for the redesign of this room was to trial new furniture and a new layout to create an open access work/learning space which was flexible, informal and functional. This room also incorporates SUAS stations. It has proved to be a very popular spot for students to gather and work together.

### A New Teaching and Learning Space offers lecture capture technology to facilitate podcasting

This space incorporates a state of the art Teaching Station which includes a **lecture capture system**. Aspects of lectures can be recorded by the lecturer and made available to students as a podcast via their Blackboard module.

The **Sypmodium Interactive Pen Display** allows a lecturer to make any presentation interactive. The lecturer can write over their favourite applications (Word documents, PowerPoint presentations, images etc.) in "digital ink" and save their notes.

## A New Visualisation and Collaboration Space offers researchers a solution for flexible collaboration



UCD IT Services also provide a Visualisation and Collaboration Space in the Daedalus Building, offering Video Conferencing, 3D Visualisation and Smartboard technologies to staff and researchers.

The **Video Conferencing** solution is based on Polycom hardware connecting to the HEAnet Video Conferencing service and has been successfully used by the School of Medicine for Undergraduate Medicine since start of term 2008.

**Smartboard technology**, whilst offering traditional whiteboard capabilities can be used in a variety of learning and collaboration situations.



The Flexible Learning Space

## Research Compute Clusters and Data Centre Expansion

### Data Centre Expansion and ICHEC Compute Cluster

During July 2008, the Data Centre was expanded to host the Irish Centre for High-End Computing (ICHEC) compute cluster and UCD HPC clusters including the UCD IT Services shared 'Phaeton' cluster.



The Research IT Data Centre

The 'Stokes' ICHEC 2,560 core cluster which is hosted in the UCD Research IT Data Centre was listed as number 117th on the November 2008 top 500 list of fastest supercomputers worldwide [www.top500.org](http://www.top500.org)

UCD has purchased 11% of the cluster for use by UCD researchers.

The [Research IT service](#) supports UCD hosting, storage and compute facilities in the Centre, while ICHEC will support and manage the national cluster.

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## Focus on CASL

The Complex and Adaptive Systems Laboratory (CASL) is a dynamic multidisciplinary research community advancing scientific knowledge through mathematics and computation.

Research IT Services work closely with many of the CASL Principal Investigators and their teams to facilitate their research.

To this end, a Virtual Server environment was provided for the TRIL Group (Technology Research for Independent Living), under the guidance of James Brennan. As a result, researchers could progress their work without the need to make initial equipment purchases or worry about configuration, thus saving time and energy. This service is complemented by the UCD IT Services Storage Solution and the group also host additional physical servers in the Research IT Data Centre.

A major client of both our Hosting and Storage Services is Dr Joe Kiniry. With his team, Dr Kiniry currently has the SenseTile Compute Cluster hosted in the Research IT Data Centre and a 25TB storage allocation on the UCD IT Services Storage Service. His work has attracted much interest from potential collaborators within the University concerned with gene sequencing.

Amongst the CASL community there are many users of both the Research IT Services HPC cluster (Phaeton) and the UCD ICHEC Service, part of the Stokes National Service. Notable contributors to the Phaeton Community Services are Professor Padraig Cunningham and Dr Gianluca Pollastri. A new concept within UCD, the Community Compute Cluster initiative was first set up with contributions from Dr. Scott Rickard, Dr David Browne and Professor John Sheridan.

The latest addition to the services in CASL is a high definition Video Conferencing system offering easy collaboration without the need to travel.



Visualisation at TRIL