

Mini-profile:

a day in the life of a MIMAS Service Manager



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Well, it's a Wednesday and my first day in the office, having started the week with two meetings. On Monday the UKSG Education Group, which I chair, met at the British Library, St Pancras and on Tuesday I chaired the 'WoSEC' meeting at Eduserv in Bath – I'll explain later.

First task is to backup all last week's e-mail and Office documents from my PC (bitter experience), followed by e-mail download from my central mailbox and virus/spam checks to finally get sight of new e-mails. In common, I suspect, with anyone whose e-mail address is visible and frequently posted, only around 40% of the e-mail I receive is genuine and it is getting steadily worse.

As a national data centre, we provide access to a variety of services, all of which have their own helpdesk, and queries e-mailed to them are automatically entered into our helpdesk system, Remedy's Action Request System (or ARS – yes, I know!). The user gets an e-mail acknowledgement

together with a reference number and the query is assigned to support staff for resolution. The time taken to resolve the query is monitored (less than one day in 98% of cases) and daily reminders are sent to me should it exceed five days. After ten days my Director gets daily e-mails! I am responsible for managing two of the MIMAS services: 'ISI Web of Knowledge Service for UK Education' and the British Library's 'zetoc' service. Though I don't answer them myself, I do receive a copy of every query, every resolution and most of the intervening correspondence. So I spend a little while catching up on the queries raised – nothing unusual: requests for access, typically from ineligible individuals; naive questions such as: "Where's the full text?"; a couple of data correction requests; task support ("Please help me to do ..."); and so on. So nothing to worry about there, all dealt with by the services' highly efficient support staff (Norma, Jane and Suzanne). I do follow-up

with a couple of phone calls to ensure the enquirers are satisfied, as well as to communicate other than via e-mail.

Next I turn my attention to actions from the 'WoSEC' meeting I referred to at the start. The WoSEC = Web of Science Enhancement Committee and was set up (in 1999) with two primary objectives. Firstly, to oversee transition arrangements affecting the service. Secondly, to provide a forum in which user comments about the service could be discussed by the publisher (ISI), the director of product development (ISI-US), the service provider (MIMAS), the funding body (JISC), the negotiator (CHEST), and user community representatives (JIBS). MIMAS classify every feedback request received and, twice yearly, consolidate the (typically 300 or so) requests and, with JIBS, produce a joint report of prioritized enhancements for discussion at the meeting. This has significantly influenced the development path for the product on a number of occasions, affecting both functionality and timing of releases. This time virtually all are met with the new version of the Web of Knowledge (WoK). We are currently planning the transition of our UK user base to this latest version during 2005 and this was discussed at length. Now back in the office, I find in my post a proposed promotional pack for issue to all (156) subscribing institutions and am agreeing with ISI colleagues what announcements are made when, by whom and via which routes.

I have lunch at my desk, watching some of the freshers' week activity out of the window, and try to convince myself I was expecting the weekly fire alarm test at 2pm.

A fairly mixed bag in the afternoon, starting with zetoc-related tasks and the successful granting of access to zetoc for an Irish college. I also set up a meeting for next week to discuss the porting of the zetoc service to a new server (funded by JISC) before Christmas this year. We will also discuss some enhancements, including a new 'AAA'-compliant version of the web site and some changes required to zetoc Alert resulting from sites' use of AthensDA. (It is down to our choice of identifier, not a problem with Athens.)



I have a short technical discussion regarding Shibboleth. JISC have provided funding for MIMAS to 'shibbolize' our resources. Thus far we've established a limited test environment, but there will be a large push during 2005. I confirm my attendance at a national workshop in November.

From 1 October, I shall be employed by the newly created institution 'The University of Manchester', combining the current Victoria University of Manchester and UMIST. As one small part of this, new job descriptions had to be written for all staff and formally agreed with them. I've just confirmed final acceptance of mine and those of my staff.

With a mug of tea in hand, I read (on screen) a number of articles from e-journals. I've set my zetoc Alert to send me the table of contents for some 24 titles (including *Serials*, naturally) that I know I'm entitled to access online, thanks to my library, so I can get from e-mail to full text in three or four clicks.

Lastly I fill out some expense and future travel forms, power-off my PC and head home.