Rebranding of the BCS

By now there can be few members who are unaware that the BCS has a new logo and that all its literature and web materials have been redesigned. Our branch newsletter has been given a facelift to conform with the new image.

Opening Talk of the 2001/2002 Programme
E-Business in Scotland

The explosion in ICT, including the investment and, in due course, 'the grid', is transforming societies, businesses and the lives of individuals. It has, therefore, enormous implications for government in all its manifestations from the electoral process itself through the use of e-referenda, to on-line purchasing, from on-line delivery of healthcare and education to the funding of public agencies like Scottish Enterprise (SE).

The talk will be given by Dr Robert Crawford of Scottish Enterprise, who will consider how SE is responding to this challenge and what opportunities it offers the organisation and its customers.

Lubricated Networking

To help you network with other BCS members, the Branch Committee has booked a room at the back of the Standing Order, George Street, on **Tuesday 9th October from 6 to 8 pm**. This is a chance to meet us, and each other, and to gain access to the wide variety of skills and contacts that BCS members have.

Members will be present from a wide variety of backgrounds including web developers, project managers, infrastructure technicians and consultants. **This is a social meeting and we warmly encourage you to come along.**

Networking on-line

We have set-up a on-line discussion area at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bcsedin-lan where you can talk to other BCS members and make suggestions to the Branch Committee. At present only 5% of members come to Branch meetings, so this is a new way to keep in touch and tell us if we can do more for you.

There are two ways to use the new service - by joining the e-mail list, or by using the web to contribute to on-line discussions. You will need to register a Yahoo account if you want to use the web-based service and this is free. To use the e-mail version send an e-mail to "bcsedin-lan-subscribe@yahoogroups.com"
(subject heading does not matter).

We encourage you to start using this service to let us know what you want and also to get in touch with other local professionals on topics of interest.

Edinburgh Branch domain name

To make things easier for members the domain names edinburgh.bcs.org and edinburgh.bcs.org.uk have both been set up. As we go to press we are waiting for www.edinburgh.bcs.org and www.edinburgh.bcs.org.uk to go live. By the time you receive this issue of Capital we expect these web addresses to have been implemented. If you try too early, go back to www.cee.hw.ac.uk/~bcsed

A new venue for Branch Meetings

Unfortunately the low inflation rate in the general economy does not extend to the hiring of meeting rooms in hotels. So, as part of our budget management the Branch Committee has decided that, except where otherwise indicated, Branch Meetings will be held at the **Royal Pharmaceutical Society, 36 York Place, Edinburgh EH1 3HU**. We are confident that the facilities at this central location are of a suitably high standard.

Additional Programme Item

On your programme card you will observe a hiatus between 13th February and 13th March. At the time the card went to press we were not certain whether a meeting between these two dates would be possible. We can now confirm that there will be a talk entitled Information Age Government on 27th February at 6.30pm, York Place. It will be given by Alan Fraser of the Scottish Executive.

We suggest that you write this in the gap on the card.

Branch Courses

Over the next few months four short courses are being offered. These are:

Principles of good web design
Four Tuesday evenings starting 25th September, Heriot-Watt University, Riccarton, 6:30 - 8:30 pm.

DSDM
Four Tuesday evenings starting 30th October, Heriot-Watt University, Riccarton, 6:30 - 8:30 pm

IT Security
Four Thursday evenings, starting 25th October, . Barnton Hotel, Edinburgh, 6:30-8:30 pm

Software Testing
Four Tuesday evenings starting 7th February 2002, Heriot-Watt University, Riccarton, 6:30 - 8:30 pm.

The fee for each course is £115 for BCS members or £150 for non-members, both figures include VAT.

Further information about the first of these courses is shown below. Details of the others, as well as application forms for them all will appear shortly on the branch web site.

In the meantime to reserve a place contact PeterBarker@bcs.org.uk, telephone 0131 667 6455

Principles of good Web design

Presented by:

Dr. Patrik O'Brian Holt
Dr. Christian Jones
Image Systems Engineering Laboratory
Department of Computing and Electrical Engineering
Heriot-Watt University
Edinburgh

Usability issues in the design and implementation of the World Wide Web are becoming increasingly important and can determine the success or failure of any Web based activity. Enhancing the usability of Web sites through evaluation can improve the number of visits and result directly in improved revenue in e-commerce.

The main focus of the course is on the application of Usability Engineering and Evaluation Methods to improve the usability of Web sites by collecting empirical data from users and applying it to design and re-design. The course will include an element of practical work.

The course is aimed at Web designers and implementers but is also relevant to individuals who commission or manage Web sites.

Course content includes:

- Usability and Web
- Setting usability criteria for Web sites
- Guidelines for design and the human factor
- Usability Engineering, User Centred Design and the Web
- General approaches to evaluation
- Evaluation in the context of layout, look-and-feel and structure
- Observation - tools, techniques and measurement
- Protocols and events
- Usability checklists, questionnaires and interviews
- Expert prediction techniques
- Card sorting and cognitive mapping methods (semantic differentials)
- Automatic data logging and navigation histories
- Summarising and analysing usability evaluation data