



BCS

THE BRITISH COMPUTER SOCIETY

Capital

News from BCS Edinburgh Branch, January 2002

The Sidney Michaelson Lecture Sunday 7th April 2002 at 4.00pm in the Royal Museum Lecture Theatre Chambers Street Edinburgh

The Search for Usable Web Sites

Jared Spool, UIE, Boston

Jared Spool is a leading authority on web site usability. Founding Principal of User Interface Engineering, Boston, he and his team have conducted hundreds of evaluative studies, trying to understand which designs produce the best results. He claims that no known web site meets its users' needs more than 50% of the time.

In what promises to be an informative, entertaining and controversial lecture, Jared will discuss why it is so hard to create a usable web site today. He will demonstrate how several recent breakthroughs in research have advanced the field and where the next breakthroughs need to be.

This lecture forms part of the Edinburgh International Science Festival and is a ticket only event, but free tickets will be available from the Branch Secretary close to the date.

Women in IT

Few members can be unaware of the gender imbalance in the IT industry. This is nowhere more evident than in undergraduate computer science courses, where typically less than 20% of students are female.

There have been a number of initiatives to understand the roots of this and to try to redress the situation. For example Women into Computing (www.wic.org.uk). Scottish Computer Headline have recently launched a new promotion, with sponsorship from Newell and Budge, to bring fresh impetus to these endeavours in Scotland (see www.computerheadline.com/News/december2001/wit.asp).

Carole Fitzgerald, the Editor, would like to hear from any members who have time or expertise to give to raising the profile of women in IT (carole@computerheadline.com).

Jimmy Robertson to be honoured by the BCS

Jimmy Robertson FBCS was an early Chairman of Edinburgh Branch and long time member of ISEB. A senior civil servant, he was Head of SOCS (Scottish Office Computer Services) from its inception until he retired to start a second career as leader of a new computer centre for the Scottish Exam Board.

In recognition of his contribution to The Society and to the Profession, a citation will be presented to Jimmy's family on 16th January. There will be a reception at the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, 36 York Place, Edinburgh, at 5.15pm and the presentation will be made just prior to the regular Branch Talk which starts at 6.30pm.

Old colleagues and friends are welcome to attend the reception. Please mail jamesb@ker.clara.net if you plan to attend.

Branch Course

Following the successful course on **Software Testing and Analysis** which we offered last year, the course is being repeated on four Thursday evenings beginning on **31st January**. See the reverse of this newsletter for details and an application form.

Networking Evenings

Your branch committee has reviewed the evening meetings at "The Standing Order". Those who attended spent a convivial couple of hours, but overall the committee felt that the numbers participating did not justify the cost to the branch budget. This form of networking will therefore be **discontinued** forthwith.

Edinburgh Branch domain name

The domain names mentioned in our September newsletter are now operational. These are:

edinburgh.bcs.org
edinburgh.bcs.org.uk
www.edinburgh.bcs.org
www.edinburgh.bcs.org.uk

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