Gardens & Museums IT

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Gardens & Museums IT Contact Details

- Feedback Email: it@glam.ox.ac.uk
- IT Support Email: it@museums.ox.ac.uk

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format, please contact us via it@museums.ox.ac.uk**

Welcome

Welcome to the Summer Edition of the Gardens &
Museums IT Newsletter!

Spring is always a time which goes really fast , and
particularly so this year. What we've found - despite
considerable planning (and we spend so much time
planning) - is that a variety of high-profile activities and
projects have come to fruition all at the same time.

I've been here a while now and we've always been busy,
but I can't remember a time when so many projects are in
their final and particularly time-consuming stages, where
service implementation, delivery and transition are truly
taking place. Many of these activities and projects are
detailed in this newsletter so please read on to get an
insight into the world of the Gardens & Museums IT Team.

Alongside the project delivery we've seen a rise in support
requests as we continue to bed in Single Point of Contact.
The increase was expected, but occurring at the same time
as the fruition of so many projects is less than ideal. The
team are coping admirably with the additional demand
and I'm truly grateful to all their efforts.

And in respect to the team, and quite simply perfect timing
with the work which is going on and coming up, we
welcomed Aidan Whiting to the team at the beginning of
June. Aidan is settling in well and has made an instant and
positive impact on the team.

You can find out more about Aidan on Page 4 of this
newsletter and the other developments in and from the
the Gardens & Museums IT Team throughout the
newsletter. Happy reading!.

All the best

Carl

What's been going on? And what's coming?

Connect Aged Computer Replacement

Work on the replacement of the older Connect computers within the Gardens & Museums has continued throughout Spring and has been taking up considerable time with respective conversations, inventory activities, and establishing requirements. I am happy to report that we're getting there though!

Computers are beginning to be replaced at the Museum of Natural History, and the requirements for the History of Science Museum have been determined and shared with IT Services and orders are being placed. Also I'm incredibly close to sharing the information for the Pitt Rivers Museum, Botanic Garden and Harcourt Arboretum.

And in respect to the Ashmolean an inventory activity has just been completed, and I'm actively reviewing data and will be completing the requirements for the Ashmolean to share with IT Services for the end of June.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their patience, support and flexibility throughout what has been quite a tricky, and at points exhaustive process - it's greatly appreciated!

Windows 11

The deployment of Windows 11 has continued throughout Spring in preparation for Window becoming End-Of-Life in October. For those considering the upgrade the process was detailed in the last newsletter (https://it.museums.ox.ac.uk/sitefiles/gmit-news-issue-21-spring-2025.pdf) so if you are considering the update please do have a read before doing so.

Central IT Services have committed to having all compatible CONNECT machines upgraded by the end of July 2025, so if you have been invited to upgrade, please do progress. And if you have any concerns or would like support with this then please do get in touch via it@museums.ox.ac.uk as we're more than happy to help with the update process or carry this out for you.

Artifax - Single Sign On

We have recently been working with the GLAM Commercial Systems Team to enable Single Sign On integration with Artifax. This process has improved the log in process and added additional security.

Well done to all those involved in this.

What's been going on? And what's coming?

Service Desk As A Service

During Autumn last year we launched a trial Service Desk solution after discussions with a variety of departments across the Gardens & Museums who were looking at the ways and means they receive support question and how to efficiently and effectively service them.

As the trial has been successful, we're now able to onboard further departments into this service, with the Commercial Systems Team getting set up earlier this month, and the Ashmolean Finance Team due to be onboarded relatively soon. If you're interested in this or currently assessing how you deal with requests, please do get in touch so that we can discuss with you.

Procurement

Once again there's a lot of procurement going on, and once more technology is high on lots of people's shopping lists. We're working hard with our trusted suppliers to obtain quotations as quickly as possible, and in turn they've been working incredibly hard to have the equipment delivered. So, if you are in need of some IT or AV equipment and have some available funds then please do get in touch.

Dell Desktop & Laptop Availability

Dell have recently changed their ranges of desktops and laptops, and whereas in previous years the changes have been quite discreet with slightly adjusted model numbers and perhaps a colour change, this year has seen a change from the well known Optiplex Desktops and Latitude Laptops to the Dell Pro Series.

This has seen a bit of a delay with the availability of these new devices within the University as new arrangements and pricing have needed determining, but standard specification devices are now beginning to become available, with customisations due really soon. Once all the options are available, I'll update the Windows Standard Equipment Document (https://it.museums.ox.ac.uk/article/documents) with the new models and specifications.

Colleague Feedback Survey

As with last year we'll be carrying out another Colleague Feedback Survey to establish once again what's good about the IT provision that you receive and what needs work.

This took place during the summer last year, but we're planning on carrying this out a little later this time around and sending the survey during September to hopefully capture the thoughts and opinions of as many people as possible. Please keep your eyes out for the survey and thank you in advance for taking the time to complete.

Welcome to Aidan!

At the beginning of June Aidan Whiting joined the Gardens & Musems IT Team as IT & AV Officer, coming to us from just down the road at Oriel College, where he served as AV Technician.

And in the few weeks that he's been with us he's been very busy visiting the various sites, meeting as many people as possible, and generally getting stuck into the varying workstreams which are currently going on. We're delighted that Aidan has joined us as he brings new AV experiences, knowledge and ideas to the Gardens & Museums, further expanding the AV competencies we have.

For those who may be slightly worried at this point, and may have missed previous communications, Calum is still with us! He was promoted to Senior Infrastructure Officer earlier this year to directly assist and lead in a number of Cyber Security and Information Assurance initiatives and embed new practices.

For those who have yet to meet Aidan, he has kindly put together the below to introduce himself to you, and we look forward to bringing him around to meet you all soon.

"Hi, I'm Aidan, the new IT and AV officer at the Gardens and Museums.

Post university, I made my start assisting game, film and audio students in their studies and maintaining their workstations and studios. I was eventually able to transfer those skills to join the university and work in the Oriel College IT team as the AV Technician.

I have worked in the university for around a year and a half. In that time, I spent many of my lunch breaks visiting the museums, so I am looking forward to now getting to work in them.

Aside from working here and getting to play around with all of the gadgets, I like to be creative through drawing and sculpting, I play the bass guitar and train in track and field.

My favorite exhibits here are Egypt and Japan so if anyone needs IT support while visiting these countries, I'll be happy to come along and assist. I am excited to get started and meet everyone!"

Cyber Security Update...

Being very conscious that there has been a lot of discussion on Cyber Security I had planned to have an Information and Cyber Security free newsletter. But due to the recent cyber attacks on a number of high-profile retailers, and that our respective endeavours span a variety of sectors (including retail) it seemed prudent to give an update (of sorts) and share some news and advice.

And although the information from the incidents has been limited, there has been a level of discussion and advice to ensure certain practices and processes are in place alongside further conversation on whether current MFA methods need refinement or strengthening.

Account Resets & Recoveries

The University Information Security Team have recently asked Local IT providers within the University to review their processes for validating requests for Accounts Resets and Recoveries. This relates directly to a rise in fraudulent requests to recover accounts, which in turn have afforded access to resources and systems for external and nefarious parties.

For reassurance we've always had relatively strong mechanisms for validating such requests and action in a safe and secure manner. But I wanted to stress that in an instance where a self-service reset mechanism doesn't work and a manual intervention is needed to restore access; we do need to verify this. Usually this will be via asking you to visit us, to have a video call, or for your Line Manager to corroborate the request.

Please understand that this isn't to be difficult, but it's simply to ensure we're conversing with who we think we are, and in turn helping to restore resource access to the correct person.

Multi-Factor Authentication - strengthening authentication

Multi and Secondary Factor Authentication has become the norm for accessing many day-to-day resources, both at work and in our personal lives, and have proven to restrict and prevent a variety of compromises.

As threats are constantly evolving and adapting, MFA also needs to adapt and evolve to protect us. As such guidance on which are the better forms of MFA is also changing, with the Authenticator App and MFA Security Keys and Hardware Tokens now being the ideal methods. Later in the year, and once guidance is fully established within the University, we will be holding an Open Session to advertise and support transition to these mechanisms. But if you would like to change your method beforehand or need further guidance on this please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Computer Updates

Many of us will have noticed that the need to update applications, operating systems, and hardware drivers due to a threat or vulnerability is becoming a more and more regular occurrence.

As much as possible with the devices which we manage we have tried to automate these processes, but often for the update to actually apply the application or device needs to be restarted. We're aware that restarting your device can sometimes be difficult or undesirable but in order for the update to be fully applied, and so that it can protect you, could we please ask that people regularly restart their computers and applications.

GMIT Open Sessions – Spring 2025

The Gardens & Museums IT Open Sessions have been organised for over the Summer and into early Autumn, with details below.

For the September session we're planning a little collaboration with Jon Ray (sustainability extraordinaire) to run a Digital Clean Up advice and guidance session (more on this on page 9).

On a similar fashion we're also hoping to carry out an Multi Factor Authentication specific session in either October or November in respect to changing requirements for MFA as briefly described on Page 5. Further information on this will be provided in the Autumn Newsletter.

As always please do come along and make use of the sessions so that we can keep running them.

Date	Location	Time
Wednesday 16th July	Seminar Room History of Science Museum	11.00AM - 12.30PM
Wednesday 6th August	Westwood Room Museum of Natural History	11.15AM – 1.00PM
Wednesday 17th September	Headley Lecture Theatre Ashmolean Museum	11.00AM - 1.00PM

The sessions will offer an opportunity….

- To meet us face-to-face in an open forum to discuss any matter.
- To discuss or get advice on any IT issues or problems which you may have, whether big or small.
- To discuss any upcoming projects or innovations within your respective departments and location.
- For new members of staff to meet with us and receive an overview of IT within the University and the Gardens & Museums.

Audio-Visual Stuff & Things

As mentioned on the front page we've seen a number of long-term projects, or activities which have required considerable time, collaboration and conversation come to fruition all at the same time - and this has certainly been the case with AV.

Over the last few months certain projects have either been completed or have really leapt forwards in their progress. And this busy AV period will be continuing throughout the Summer as we focus on the completion of some other pieces of work, alongside identifying further improvements which can be made. And Aidan has joined at the perfect time to assist and support the various workstreams!

Rome Gallery - Ashmolean Museum

So, when they say Rome wasn't built in a day, they obviously weren't applying that phrase to the Rome Gallery at the Ashmolean Museum, but after an almost sixth month closure for renovation and 2 years of planning and background work the New Rome Gallery has just opened! A massive well done to everyone involved.

Having been involved in the project from the early stages and the varying strands, conversations, working groups and practices which have gone in to realising this, I'm aware of the considerable number of people who have been involved in this and the amazing efforts (and hours) required to pull this off. It looks amazing and I'm truly honoured and grateful to have been part of this.

And I just want to quickly say a thank you to Calum and Jona for their technical expertise throughout the project and more recently the AV and networking installation and integration works alongside Monards and the AV consultant Aura. Thank you both!

Museum of Natural History Annexe

Calum has recently completed what started out as a relatively small piece of work to repair a HDMI socket, which turned into an opportunity to make further improvements to the space.

Always one to sense an opportunity, Calum established that the work to repair the fault would require an external consultant, but in doing so we could action some other improvements at the same time and maximise the consultation and engineer fees. Alongside having the socket fixed, a control panel has been added and connectivity restored to the audio system in the room. Well done Calum and thank you for Aidan for getting immediately involved.

Audio-Visual Stuff & Things...

Ashmolean Welcome Desk Videowall

The Ashmolean Welcome Desk Videowall is a key component of the Ashmolean Welcome Desk Area. And due to the age of technology and some regular disruptions in its availability as a result of failing components, it has been the subject of much discussion (and concern) for what seems a very long time now.

With this in mind, I'm very happy to report that the Videowall will soon be replaced with a new LED Panel based solution. We're currently deep in discussions with suppliers GVAV and Roger and Paul from the Ashmolean Facilities Team with a hope for the new display to be in place by the end of July.

Look out for an update on this in the next Newsletter, alongside some photos of the installation, and the final result of this exciting update to the Welcome Desk space!

Oxford Botanic Garden Digital Signage

Jona has recently been in discussions with the Botanic Gardens and Central IT Services regards external digital signage. This is a conversation which has popped up a few times, but on this occasion some funding has been established, and this exciting project will soon start moving forward!

More to come over the Summer…

As part of the CONNECT Replacement Cycle, we've held discussions with some sites about their AV spaces and the computer use alongside potential requirements and improvements which could be made.

In doing so we've been able to identify 4 separate locations across the Gardens & Museums which would benefit from new AV based computers and other technology which will greatly improve these spaces and offer new opportunities for use.

We're also in active conversation in respect to AV equipment improvements for two other Museum spaces. We'll have updates on all these pieces of work in the Autumn Newsletter.

Environmental Sustainability…

The Environment is a considerable concern to many of us right now, and as such environmental sustainability is a commonplace talking point and a consideration in much that we do. Although technology and the environment doesn't necessarily always go hand in hand, new initiatives and innovations do have considerable environmental considerations.

In line with this, and as a team, the environment is something which we're incredibly mindful of in respect to our decision making. As such we have some current and upcoming projects where environmental sustainability is a key factor.

Computer Procurement and Replacement

The production and procurement of computers has a significant impact on the environment, and we're often faced with needing to purchase a new machine because true consideration wasn't originally made for the specification of the device and ensuring that its fit-for-purpose throughout it's expected life-cycle. This is one reason why we make considerable effort to capture and consider specific requirements on a case-by-case basis. We understand that through this approach not only are we ensuring operational efficiencies but also making a positive effect on the environment and helping computers remain fit-for-purpose throughout their lifetime.

Digital Cleanup Day! Let's clear the clutter!

The September Open Session will be a collaboration between the GMIT Team and GLAM Sustainability Manager Jon Ray to talk about and assist with "Digital Cleanup".

Please keep your eyes out for further announcements on this!

Did you know that 65% of digital content is used once or not at all and 90% of digital data is not used after three months! That's a lot of digital dust piling up in our drives, inboxes, and shared folders!

Everyone will be invited to the Open Session to do a quick digital tidy-up. It's a small step that makes a big difference - for your productivity, our shared storage, cybersecurity, information compliance as well as the environment.
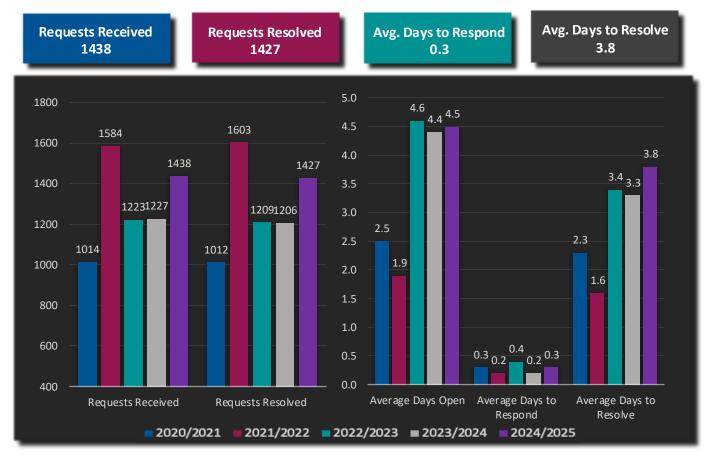
Closer to the time, we'll be providing some guidance and setting up some competitions for the most amount cleaned, or the oldest file removed!

Printing Review

Printing is often a business area which is under scrutiny for its impact on the environment and as such, and once again alongside Jon Ray, we'll be looking at the printers across GLAM and reviewing their use in view to identifying environmental improvements whilst balancing operational needs. We'll be analysing the impacts of reducing the number of printers, replacing printers with new sustainable models and retaining existing printers and lengthening use. It's looking like an interesting exercise which we look forward to sharing the results of!

Service & Support Statistics – 1st February to 30th April 2025

Quarter 3 has once again been a busy period for the Gardens & Museums IT Team and included a significant change in our service operations with the introduction of Single Point of Contact (SPOC) moving away from the previous dual support method. During Q3 there was an increase in the number of requests received (1438) equating to a 17% increase on the same period in 2023/24.

Requests Received	Requests Resolved	Avg. Days to Respond	Avg. Days to Resolve
1438	**1427**	**0.3**	**3.8**

Chart legend: ■ 2020/2021 ■ 2021/2022 ■ 2022/2023 ■ 2023/2024 ■ 2024/2025

Location	Requests	Percentage
Ashmolean Museum	466	32%
Museum of Natural History	148	10%
Pitt Rivers Museum	136	10%
History of Science Museum	81	6%
Botanic Gardens & Arboretum	70	5%
GLAM Divisional Office	86	6%
Bodleian Libraries	33	2%
GLAM Stores	10	1%
All sites - requests and activities which benefit or impact all locations	408	28%

Full Service Reports are available on the Gardens & Museums IT Website: https://it.museums.ox.ac.uk/article/service-reports

2024/2025 Gardens & Museums IT Roadmap