Introducing The Smart Home

Imagine a home so technologically advanced that when you wake up in the morning a 'good morning' button on a remote control by your bed can turn on the kettle, open the curtains, turn on the radio and start the shower, setting it to your preferred temperature. Windows can be opened by remote control and doors open as you walk towards them - ultimate convenience for everyone and a godsend for the arthritis sufferer or elderly person living independently at home.

Research conducted by David Gann and his team at SPRU has led to the creation of two such "smart" homes, one in York and the other in Edinburgh. Both have just been officially opened and are already attracting a considerable degree of interest from the press and public.

The SPRU team is involved in a two year project funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and by Scottish Homes. The first phase of the project involved an analysis of user needs, which was conducted mainly through focus groups. This was followed by an extensive audit of available technologies and the next stage was the drawing up of the actual specifications for the demonstration homes. Now that the homes have gone on display, the team will be monitoring visitors' reactions in order to assess the effectiveness of the technologies and identify those areas that require adaptation or development.

According to Tim Venables, one of the members of the research team, smart homes are not so much futuristic as overdue. "Society as a whole is becoming more and more exposed to digital control technology in the workplace and consumer goods - for example, we are now used to cars where one button locks all doors, all windows and sets the alarm. But despite changing patterns of lifestyle whereby people are spending more time in their houses, and despite the fact that the technologies currently exist, there is nothing equivalent in the home. Nor are there commercial companies out there with the expertise to install the existing technologies in the home."

The benefits of this project for the disabled

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and elderly are potentially considerable. But we can all stand to gain from the smart home. Think, for example, how the frustrations of getting home in the evening would be eased were we able to send our smart home a signal as we finally get off campus. This signal, via our mobile phone, could close the curtains, turn on the lights, turn up the central heating and warm up the oven. As we approach home the radio will be turned on and the bath run.

According to Tim, all this is now technically possible, "But what is needed now is to gain the level of general market acceptance which will drive down the costs of production and encourage the construction and manufacturing industries to make homes better for everyone - from the busy executive to the frail older person."

The full and final report on the project will be published in December and will be accompanied by a CD and video.

The console used to operate the smart home in York.

Professorial Lecture
Dmitri Vassiliev
Professor of Mathematics

Spectral Theory of differential operators: what is it all about and what is its use?
Chichester Lecture Theatre Tuesday 10 November at 6.15 all welcome!

No one ever suspected that the traffic queue off campus was really part of some Experimental Psychology research into road rage.

The second trial of a pilot project to improve traffic exit from campus starts next week. See inside for details.
Biology Gets Stamp Of Approval

Excellent grades from Quality Assurance Agency.

Biology is the latest subject group to be reviewed by the Quality Assurance Agency. The Group was awarded 22 points out of a possible 24 and achieved the following excellent set of grades: Curriculum Design, Content and Organisation – 4, Teaching Learning and Assessment – 3, Student Progress and Achievement – 4, Student Support and Guidance – 4, Learning Resources – 4, Quality Management and Enhancement – 3. The review team gave its provisional comments at an oral feedback meeting at the end of the visit. The biology group was commended for its broad-based relevant and interdisciplinary curriculum, its high standard of teaching and the high level of achievement of its graduates. Amongst other commendations were the excellent University and School resources, the rigorous cycle of evaluation and effective mechanisms for student feedback.

New Research Centre for History Of Art

A new research centre has been inaugurated at Sussex this term: the Sussex Centre for Research in the History of Art. The Centre is co-ordinated by a newly-appointed Research Administrator, Dr Michelle O’Malley, who is a scholar of Italian Renaissance art and was formerly Head of Exhibitions at the Royal Academy of Arts. According to Michelle, "The Centre will develop the diverse and challenging culture for research in art history at Sussex. We shall encourage innovative scholarship by supporting long-term research projects, studentships and postdoctoral fellowships, and by drawing scholars together for lectures, conferences, symposia and seminars. We shall also explore partnerships with other institutions in the field and generate external funding for the range of our activities."

History of Art at Sussex was awarded the 5* grading in the last national Research Assessment Exercise, one of only three departments in the UK to receive this accolade.

The Volunteer Fair Needs YOU!

The University is holding its annual Volunteer Fair on Tuesday 3 November from 10am to 4pm. Over forty charities and voluntary groups from the Brighton and Lewes area will be present at the Fair, trying to recruit volunteers from the University’s students, staff and members of the public. The Vice Chancellor will be attending, meeting students and groups, and saying a few words to open the fair. Following the success of last year’s fair the Students’ Union is hoping that this year’s event will be bigger and better than ever. This year sees a change of venue in the warm Terrace Room of the refectory. Happily the refectory is providing free refreshments for hungry visitors.

The fair opens up many and varied possibilities for volunteer work, giving students a chance to enhance their CVs. As a result of the last fair, one Sussex student, Tom Greaves, spent part of the summer vacation in Scotland working with birds. Student Development Worker, Andrea M. Baldwin, who is organising the Fair says, "We are working hard to give people new opportunities to broaden their skills and to gain valuable experiences in Brighton and the wider world. Everyone is welcome to find out what’s on offer. This is a chance for the University to co-operate with local groups for the benefit of all."

GETTING HOME AT NIGHT - One Way System, Repeat Trial

A repeat trial of the one-way traffic system on Boiler House Hill and Eastern Ring Road, to ease the flow of traffic leaving campus in the evening, will start on Monday 2 November and will last for four weeks.

The aim of the system is to speed the flow of Lewes-bound traffic thus reducing the queue length for traffic heading across the A27. The map depicts the measures that will be taken. Full details are being mailed to staff and students and are also published on the University’s web page on http://www.sussex.ac.uk/USIS/news/traffic.html. Any queries or suggestions should be addressed to Rob French on ext. 8306. Email: robf@admin.sussex.ac.uk.
Sussex Celebrates Fifty Years of the Children’s Act

Essex House was host to an event organised to commemorate the 1948 Children’s Act last week. An archive exhibition featuring original photographs and documents of the early days of child care both nationally and locally, as well as adverts from the 1950s recruiting 'housemothers' for children's homes, brought back many memories for those attending. These included both current and former social workers, members of the early Children’s Department and Committee, and academics from the Centre for Social Policy and Social Work. Organised jointly by John Jacobs, senior lecturer in Social Policy, and East Sussex Social services, the event also included speeches from two distinguished figures in the field of social policy, Joan Cooper and Professor Olive Stevenson.

Olive Stevenson, Emeritus Professor of Social Work at Nottingham University spoke in an upbeat but honestly critical tone about the changing themes governing childcare practice over the last fifty years. She pointed out that remembering and commemorating the Act was crucial 'not as an elderly kneels up and trip down memory lane', but because there is a tendency now to "rush to and from immediate gimmicks for solving problems without much of a sense of history." As part of this criticism she cited the example of children who have been placed with families of their own ethnic background at the cost of being wrenched away from non-ethnically compatible foster families in which they had been settled and happy.

Prof. Stevenson has a personal connection with Brighton, having sat on the tribunal that enquired into the tragic death if Maria Colwell that so shocked the country in 1973.

Joan Cooper’s speech showed that childcare has come a long way since the 1948 Act, which conferred upon local authorities the responsibility of acting as a good parent to children who were deprived of good parents of their own. Joan Cooper was involved from the outset, being the first Children’s Officer in East Sussex, and later as the government’s chief professional advisor for child care policy. Joan pointed out that the childcare institutions of the 1940s were "grim", and that the "Poor Law punished people for being poor" by institutionalising and separating families in need. The picture she painted of these big, forbidding institutions made it clear that, whatever the problems which remain in 1998, the lives of children in need have improved since the Act of 1948.

A Degree Of Note

Sussex degrees awarded at Trinity College of Music

The first students of the University-validated MMus in Performance Studies graduated earlier this month from Trinity College of Music. The graduation ceremony, which was attended by Vice-Chancellor, Alasdair Smith, was held at St. John's, Smith Square in London. Pictured right is MMus student, Jeremy Foster, receiving his degree from the Patron of Trinity College, HRH the Duke of Kent.

Research Funding Opportunities

This is a selection of Research Opportunities. More details of these and other opportunities are available from the Research Grants and Contracts Office, ext. 3812. For an extensive listing of funding opportunities see REFUND on the Research web site: http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/research or SUSIS Home Page under Research.

The Leverhulme Trust invites applications for research grants, pilot projects and large project grants. Virtually all fields are eligible and grants are up to £50,000.

The Nuffield Foundation has funds for small scale projects and pilot studies in social science. New research ideas are very welcome.

Vehicle Technology research grants are available from Foresight Vehicle Link. Examples of considerations are fuel efficiency, resource intensity, comfort and safety. Outline proposal deadline 9 November 1998.

The Leverhulme Trust Fellowships are available to experienced researchers. Contributions to loss of earnings are obtainable. Deadline 12 November 1998.

Growing older research programme is set to examine how people’s lives can be extended and improved in old age. The Economic and Social Research Council has deadline 18 November 1998.

Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities at Edinburgh University have two year fellowships. Candidates must have doctorates. Deadline is 1 December 1998.

Knowledge and power is a priority area for any network proposals to ESRC. Integrated projects lasting up to five years can receive funding. Deadline 11 January 1999.

The Mac Arthur Foundation has up to $100,000 on offer for research into global security and sustainability. Deadline 1 February 1999.

The European Science Foundation invites proposals from organisations of plant adaptation aimed at the integration of ecological, physiological, molecular and evolutionary approaches. Deadline 1 February 1999.

The Distinguished Geologists Memorial Trust Awards for professional development in earth science are for applicants under 30.

The McDonnell-Pew Programme has research grants for innovative, interdisciplinary research in cognitive functions. Applications by 26 February 1999.


US National Institute of Health has invited research proposals for the prevention of foetal alcohol syndrome. Letters of intent in by 23 February.
Lectures, Seminars, Colloquia

Monday 2 November

2.00 pm International Relations and Politics Research-in-Progress Seminar: Zdenek Kavan, Human Rights and European Citizenship. D310.

4.00 pm Sociology and Social Psychology Graduate Faculty Seminar: James Shephard, University of Florida, Bracing for the Worst: Exchanging Optimism for Pessimism in Personal Predictions. D310.

7.00 pm The New Metaphysical Art Event: Geoff Hearn and Ken Hyder, Summoning the Spirit: Aspects of Revelation in Contemporary Jazz Music. Sallis Benney Theatre, conc 2E, others E3.

Tuesday 3 November
2.15 pm Sussex European Institute Research-in-Progress Seminar: Effie Pitasos, The European Commission and Central Eastern Europe: Continuity and Change in Policy Patterns. Rm A71.

4.15 pm Biochemistry and Genetics and Development Seminar: Dr Dave Lydall, University of Manchester, Yeast checkpoint proteins in DNA damage metabolism. Biology Lecture Theatre.

4.30 pm Social and Political Thought Graduate and Faculty Seminar: Warren Breckman, Pennsylvania, Rethinking the Political Intellectual in Contemporary France: Castoriadis, Lefort, Nancy. D630.

5.00 pm Media Studies Graduate Seminar: Mandy Merck, The Media and Diana’s Death. Rm D710.

5.00 pm Social Anthropology Graduate/Faculty Seminar: Stephen Hugh-Jones, Cambridge University, Teaching Americans their Own Culture: an Anthropological Apotheosis? D722.

5.15 pm German Research Colloquium: Joanne McNally (University of Brighton) Changing Discourses of German Cabaret in Response to National Socialism. Arts A155.

Wednesday 4 November
2.00 pm USIE Faculty Seminar: Dr Trevor Pateman, Lifelong unlearning. Arts D710.

Thursday 5 November
4.00 pm CPES School Colloquium: Dr Jim Hanson, Attack and defence in the natural world. Chichester Lecture Theatre.

4.00 pm Laboratory of Experimental Psychology: Don Mitchell, Exeter, Parsing: A Pinkerian Instinct? Evidence from cross-linguistic studies of sentence processing. Biology Lecture Room.

4.00 pm Geography Research Seminar: Prof Adam Tickell, University of Southampton, Rogues, regulations and the culture of finance. D340.

5.00 pm Sussex Development Lectures: Mick Moore, What is political development? A1.

5.00 pm French Thought Seminar: Marian Hobson (Queen Mary and Westfield), Philosophical Relativities. A71.

5.00 pm History Work-in-Progress Seminar: Catherine Lacey, Early radio and the modernisation of listening. A155.

5.00 pm Centre for Statistics and Stochastic Modelling Seminar: Steve Coad, A comparison of the randomised play-the-winner rule and the triangular test for clinical trials with binary responses. PEV/2A2.

Friday 6 November
4.00 pm Applied mathematics and Numerical Analysis Seminar: Colin Please, Southampton, Diffusion and convection problems arising in the dynamics of multi-cell tumours. Rm PEV-2813, Pev I.

4.00 pm Chemical Physics and Materials Seminar: Prof. Bob Newport, University of Kent. Amorphous Carbon. CHI-3R241 (MS3).

Philosophy Mini-Conference, The Isle of Thorns, Chelwood Gate, 6-7 November inc. speeches by Andrew Chitty, Murali Ramachandran, Michael Morris, Thomas Beament and Manuel de Pinaudo Garcia. For details contact Sue Murray-Smith, Tel (067)89800.

CDU Info
Please sign up in CDU beforehand.

NHS Management Training Scheme
- 3 November, 5.30 pm, CDU. Talk on management and financial management opps. Any discipline.

Saatchi & Saatchi - 4 November, 6.30 pm, Top Floor, Refectory. The world of advertising.

Oxfam - Thursday 5 November, 5.30 pm, CDU. Talk on what it does, who and how it recruits - any discipline.

Amnesty International - Monday 9 November, 5.30 pm, CDU. Presentation on working for Amnesty - who and how it recruits.

The Gardner Arts Centre
This week’s free tickets are for The Kaos Master and Margarita, an adaptation of Bulgakov’s novel. Tickets for the performance on Tues 3 November available free to the first five readers who approach the Gardner Arts box office clutching their copies of the Bulletin.

USSU Info
TIME MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP for students on Thursday 12 Nov., 10 am-1 pm, £3.50. Introduction to practical techniques to handle specific time pressures of being a student. Book at SU Reception, Falmer House, tel. 678152. Places limited. Please pay at time of booking.

Miscellaneous
The University of Sussex Golf Society Are there any new golfers in the University? The Society plays a number of fixtures against local clubs during the Summer Term and a Club Championship. Please get in touch! James Hirschfeld, SMS Tel: 8080, jwhp@sussex.ac.uk

Small Ads
TO LET: Lewes basement flat, avail 1 Nov. Self contained; own entrance. Two rooms, hallway and separate WC. Fully furnished, w/machine & phone. £70 p/w + a third of electricity bills. N/S please. £70 deposit. Apply E. Stern, 477579.


FOR SALE: Vauxhall Astra, Belmont, 1991. long MOT, sunroof, history, red, good condition. £1400 ono. Tel. 556588.

WANTED: Dolls House and Fort/Castle. Tel. 813126.


FOR SALE: Mountain bike, men’s, front suspension, 21 speed Shimano gears, mint condition. £115 o.n.o. Three piece (two 2-seaters and 1 armchair) plus footstool, all in good condition, £160 o.n.o. Log effect gas fire, perfect working order, £30 o.n.o. Contact George ext 8518 (day), 01273 507610 (eves), or e-mail G.Kemenes@sussex.ac.uk

Bulletin
The Bulletin appears every Friday during term time with copy deadlines the preceding Friday lunchtime. We welcome any suggestions for news, events, letters and small ads from staff and students of the University. Please contact the Information Office in Sussex House on Ext. 8209 or Email: Bulletin@sussex.ac.uk.