

Tom

Thankyou for contacting Information Services. From your email below, and previous correspondence, I conclude that you are one of our most technically literate students, and that you have an informed opinion on many of the issues facing University Information Services organisations.

You correctly identify that members of The University have a right to expect reliable systems, and I fully appreciate that the outage we have suffered in the last 24 hours is at a critical point in the University's exam period.

At approximately 5 p.m. yesterday (Monday 22 January), Information Services experienced an outage of the filestore supporting the University Web sites, Portal and a number of related on-line services, including WebCT, Blackboard and past exam papers.

Colleagues worked late into the night to recover services onto a replica set of systems, bringing the Website back into operation at about 1:30 a.m. However, at around 9am today serious problems became evident with the mirrored set of data, and it was necessary to take these off line to preserve data integrity and undertake further repairs.

A team of University IT specialists and external engineers is working to recover services, and as a contingency data is also being restored from backup tapes. Outbound internet access was also affected for a short time this morning, but this has now been resolved.

I am very aware that this is causing some serious concerns. In particular, I understand that students currently need to access exam timetables, past exam papers and other examination and study-related information that is currently not available. Colleagues are currently working to publish the examinations timetable in an alternative location. For further information about examinations, please contact the Examinations Office on 0115 95-15747.

On behalf of Information Services can I apologise for this serious disruption, and assure you that we take incidents such as this one very seriously. I will continue to devote all available resources at my disposal to recover the affected systems as possible.

The promised improvements to the Residential Network service are ongoing, and I hope to arrange the first SNS focus group as soon as the exams are out of the way.

Best wishes
Richard Smeeton

Head of Network & Systems Section
Information Services