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Aberdeen prepares a bumper welcome



PLANS are taking shape for a bigger and better SCHOMS annual conference at the ancient University of Aberdeen in May.

Following feedback from last year's conference at Hull, organisers have:

- extended the conference by half a day
- given more time over to SCHOMS Shorts presentations
- developed the supplier exhibition.

The conference will start at 9am on Tuesday 14 May and run until lunch on Thursday 16 May.

"We have included more time for SCHOMS Shorts because they were cited as extremely valuable in the feedback from Hull," said SCHOMS chair, Simon Birkett.

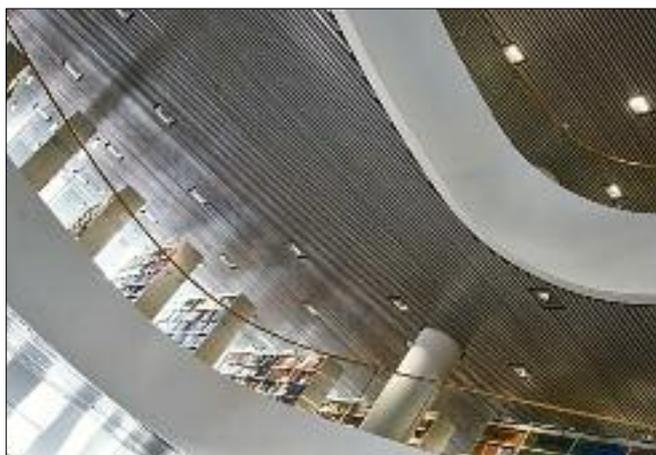
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PROPOSALS for SCHOMS Shorts sessions are being sought to fill the demand for extra 2013 conference slots.

"We are urging members to come forward and submit a proposal for a 15 or 30 minute presentation," said SCHOMS chair, Simon Birkett.

Clear and concise proposals of no more than 250 words should be sent by 28 February to info@schoms.ac.uk

For more information go to <http://www.schoms.ac.uk/node/253>



ABOVE: Elphinstone Hall, impressive venue for the supplier exhibition.

LEFT: The iconic new Sir Duncan Rice library, a tour of which will open the 2013 conference.

SCHOMS 2013: Aberdeen prepares bumper welcome

NEW sessions for delegates on training and personal development issues will be held alongside the supplier exhibition at SCHOMS 2013 in Aberdeen.

The exhibition has attracted 25 companies and will again feature on the middle day of the conference. It will end with a World Café session, an opportunity for the suppliers to listen to the ideas, concerns and suggestions from SCHOMS members.

The conference will open with a tour of Aberdeen's iconic new Sir Duncan Rice Library, opened recently by the Queen and designed to mark the ice and light of the north by Danish architects schmidt hammer lassen.

A tour of the University's historic estate will include new learning spaces, a refurbished lecture theatre and the 3D visualisation suite which is used for both teaching and research.

The main conference programme will be confirmed when formal online booking opens in late February but will include a keynote workshop and presentation by architect, Professor Alexi Marmot, of University College London.

The executive is being supported by the Aberdeen team comprising Iain Harold, Head of Media Services; David Walton, Audio Visual Services Manager; Rikki Gutter, Video Services Manager and Gordon Stables, Illustration Services Manager.



Time for change of date?

PREPARATIONS are under way to select the venue for the 2014 conference - and members are being asked for their views on changing the traditional date.

Appropriate space for conference sessions and the exhibition is at an increasing premium because May usually marks the start of the intensive examination season - which naturally takes priority over conference bookings.

However, by early June, the appropriate accommodation is freely available.

To let us know your preferences - sticking to May, moving to June or to another date - log on to http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SCHoMS_Conference and tick the appropriate box. There's also an open text box if you want to give us any supporting information.

Thank you. Attendance at conference is vital to our ongoing success.

Benchmarking survey deadline extended

THE deadline for taking part in the SCHOMS 2012 Benchmarking Survey has been extended until 31 January.

And there's a chance to win £100 in the process.

The survey is designed to bring together invaluable information on trends and current concerns in audio visual and media services throughout the higher education sector.

It was revamped following piloting with some members at last year's Hull conference and is now both shorter and easier to complete.

The deadline has been extended after several members indicated they would be able to complete the survey with some extra time.

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said SCHOMS chair, Simon Birkett.

"This is why we've spent time re-designing and shortening the old survey. Input to this unique sector report is greatly valued by SCHOMS members. The more data we have the more reliable, and therefore useful, the resultant report will be."

Benchmarking 2012 covers the period from 1 August 2011 - 31 July 2012, and seeks to gain insight into institution-wide provision of a range of

audio visual and media services across the HE sector.

You will find the survey at <http://www.survey.bris.ac.uk/routing/bm2012>

When the deadline has passed, participants will be entered in a prize draw to win one of three £100 vouchers from a store of their choice.

"I would ask everyone to complete as we have made significant investment in both time and resource to re-design, streamline and conduct the survey," said Simon.

"The survey can help make business cases and support service improvements in your own institution based on real and current evidence."

If you have any questions regarding the Benchmarking please contact Simon Birkett, Toni Kelly or info@schoms.ac.uk directly.

Record SCHOMS attendance at international showpiece

A RECORD number of members – 51 representing 35 institutions – is attending this year's Integrated Systems Europe (ISE) tradeshow in Amsterdam thanks to SCHOMS sponsorship.

ISE is Europe's largest tradeshow for the professional AV and electronic systems industry. ISE 2013 will take place from 29-31 January and is expected to draw over 850 exhibitors and more than 40,000 registered attendees to its Amsterdam RAI location.

The Executive has offered the ISE attendance scheme for the past three years with increasing success. It is up to individuals how long they attend the event and when they travel but they must attend four of the five sponsored sessions in order to qualify for the funding.

A SCHOMS lounge will be available at the showpiece event and presentations are timed to include refreshment breaks and to allow for informal discussion and networking opportunities.

The companies presenting to SCHOMS members this year will be:

Tuesday 29 January - Canon and Epson.

Wednesday 30 January – Crestron, Martin Audio and Christie.

Panasonic will also be hosting a drinks reception on their stand for SCHOMS attendees on Tuesday 29 January.

SCHOMS attendees will have the opportunity to post thoughts and suggestions about the best or most relevant products and which stands to visit.

ISE is in its ninth year of cementing a reputation for connecting new technologies, companies, regional markets and end-user industries. The 2013 event will be the largest ever, occupying all 12 halls of the RAI.

training update

Aim to build on acoustics courses

FOLLOWING a positive response from 20 institutions requesting a total of 27 places on the two-day Acoustics of Teaching Spaces course in March, the executive is investigating dates for a second course later in 2013.

To build on this initiative – and help the executive to better understand the needs of member institutions – a major discussion session on Training and CPD will take place at the Aberdeen conference.

The interactive session will explore members' requirements, priorities and barriers to providing staff training.

Executive member Jim Sheach urged members to give this some thought ahead of the conference. "It will shape how SCHOMS, in collaboration with training providers, develops training opportunities on their behalf," he said.

Toni brings home lessons of Australian experience

SCHOMS vice-chair Toni Kelly was invited to be the opening keynote speaker at the 3rd Annual Learning Space Design Summit in Sydney Australia, last November. Toni's invitation came as a result not only of her work with learning spaces at Birmingham, but also due to interest generated by her five-week tour of Asian Universities in April 2012. During her trip – jointly funded by SCHOMS and Universitas 21 – Toni kept a blog detailing each of the visits which to date has received over 11,500 hits. <http://learningspacedesignanddevelopment.blogspot.com> Here are the key highlights of her visit to Australia.

THE summit in Sydney focused on the psychology of learning and the design of spaces. Speakers included academics, architects, technologists and interior designers from across Australia.

Whilst in Sydney, I also took the opportunity to visit UNSW (one of Birmingham's U21 Partners) for a tour of their learning spaces including their 990-seat auditorium.

Afterwards, I travelled north to spend two days at the University of Queensland in Brisbane (another U21 partner) with Professor Phil Long.

Members will remember Phil's inspirational talk at the Greenwich conference in 2010. He heads up the Centre for Educational Innovation and Technology (CEIT), and is on a five-year mission to research how technology can enhance active learning.

The Centre is based in the Learning Innovation Building which has been purpose built to house the

CEIT, Centre for Innovative Professional Learning, CPD Activities and Teaching and Educational Development Institute.

It includes a wide range of technology-rich facilities including video edit suites/studio, workshop, meeting places and offices, all designed with the principles of openness and adaptability at the fore.

My final visit was to the newly-opened Science and Engineering Centre at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) which, although built to accommodate various research units, also houses learning spaces including interactive lecture theatres and flexible classrooms.

We are hoping that Dr Gordon Howell, Associate Director, Learning Environments and Technology Services at QUT will be attending the SCHOMS Conference in Aberdeen in May to talk in more detail about this new facility, his team and its work.

New interactive chapter for library

MAJOR redevelopment of an area of outdated library space at Southampton Solent University has transformed the learning experience for students.

Year-long work on Mountbatten Library began in September 2011 to create a flexible, modern networking space that embraced cutting-edge technology and promoted interactive study and innovative group learning.

And there has been a dramatic increase in the use of the space since it opened last October, according to Steve Rose, Head of Library & Learning Services.

"Our headcount figures show that 33 students were in at 3pm on Monday 12 November, compared to 15 at the same time the previous year.

"And 42 students were using the space at 3pm on Tuesday 13 November compared to 12 at the same time in 2011. This is not a large space so 42 is fairly close to full capacity.

"The meeting pods are fully booked by students throughout the week and the presentation area is also being well used, both informally with students dropping in and by our colleagues for training events."

The redevelopment was a joint



// Important we responded to student expectations and ensured we attract new students within the new fees-based environment //

project between the Learning and Information Service (LIS) and Estates and Facilities with Classroom Technology Support Analyst, Ian Taylor, called in to advise on audio visual aspects.

It involved creating:

- innovative spaces for group working - such as techno-booths with hi-spec PCs and modern tables and chairs where students can use mobile technology
- a zoned area for open presentations on key employability

skills, exhibitions and training

- small group working pods to be used flexibly for meetings and training as well as by students
- a central stairway to open up the area to the Library Foyer with links to learning skills support.

"Before the work, it had been a stereotypical library space with rows and rows of books, a couple of tables for group work and a main aisle with access to the next level up a small flight of stairs each side of a wing," said Ian Taylor.

"It was all opened up into work zones with computers, flat screens and connectivity at each table."

Steve Rose added: "It was important that we responded to student expectations and ensured we attract new students within the new fees-based environment."

