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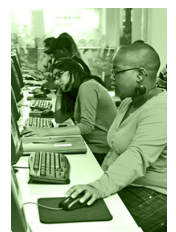
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## Bits & Bytes



Volume 7 Number 1

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### UCT's eResearch HPC blog is SA's second most popular Science and Technology blog

The results are in and UCT's High Performance Computing (HPC) blog, **Big-Bytes**, came second in the Best Science and Technology field of the 2015 South African Blog awards.



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**NRAO Forges Agreement with new South African Astronomy Institute**  
February 25, 2016 | Andrew Cass | Unpublished  
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**Leap Motion Orion Driver**  
February 18, 2016 | Timothy Carr | application programming  
The team at Leap Motion have released their new driver to power the current Leap Motion hand gesture devices. The

Travel Start was named the overall winner for 2015.

Best Digital Street SA took top honours in the Best Science and Technology Blog, followed by UCT's Big-Bytes blog and the Silicon Cape Initiative.

Big-Bytes has been running since June 2009 and documents the experiences of the UCT HPC team, providing insight into their technical research as well as their ability to provide solutions to problems they encounter. The blog describes a lengthy technical journey to deliver a stable and robust HPC platform for UCT researchers.

Senior Technical Specialist, Timothy Carr, one of the blog administrators, said that this is the first time they've entered the awards.

"The SA Blog Awards provides a platform to showcase the blog so that other institutions, who have never heard of what we do, can read about the technical challenges we encounter," said Carr.

The annual awards showcase and recognise the best South African blogs. Bloggers can enter their blog into any two of the 16 categories. The public is then invited to vote from 25 November to 31 December.

With this sort of success Carr says the team are determined to publish articles more regularly. "For 2016 our readers can expect a 'Year of Adventure' with the blog not only focusing on High Performance Computing, but also other research domains within the University. The journey continues ..."

### ICTS assists with 2016 registration process

Student registration worked slightly differently this year. The Office of the Deputy Registrar (Academic Administration) together with the Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching (CILT), ICTS and the various faculty offices, implemented a process that allowed identified groups of students to submit their proposed course registrations online. This was done using data and communications from PeopleSoft and tools such as Vula and custom-developed websites to authenticate students and allow them to



### Dates to remember:

#### ICTS scheduled maintenance slot

The next ICTS scheduled maintenance slot takes place on **Sunday, 17 April 2016** from 09:00 to 17:00. There will be no or limited ICT services available during this time.

Please remember to check the [2016 ICTS maintenance schedule](#) before planning any

courses, meetings, tests or exams that require ICT services during this time.

## Training

Learn how to create and distribute electronic forms quickly and easily using Adobe Acrobat. During the [Create eForms course](#) from **04 to 05 April 2016** (09:00 – 12:00) you will learn how to create, submit and track a PDF form, add form fields, compile returned forms and organise compiled data. You will also be shown how to turn an existing document (Word document/scanned document) into a fillable PDF form.

Managing a database can be easy if you know the basic functionality. During the [Access 2013: Essentials Skills course](#), your trainers will show you how to design, build and query a database, manage data in a table, design forms and generate reports. The course takes place from **04 to 08 April 2016** (13:30 – 16:30).

The new Excel 2013 [Advanced Formula Magic](#) course has been developed to assist you with handling complex data analysis tasks. The course which takes place **11 April 2016** (09:00 – 12:00) will kick off with an overview of named ranges and array formulas. Thereafter, the ICTS trainers will show you how to format, combine, extract and manipulate text and dates using functions. The course also includes tips on how to handle formula-related errors.

Long documents can get tricky when it comes to ensuring that the formatting is consistent. There are two Word 2013 workshops in April that will keep you in control of your lengthy document.

submit registrations.

In addition, ICTS was asked to help set up a centralised registration venue at the UCT Sports Centre. Normally, students register at their respective faculty building, but this year an alternate venue was set up in the Sports Centre and students were given specific dates on which they could register.



While the UCT Sports Centre is an ideal venue for such a large number of people, it has no network points, power points or computers. Properties and Services was tasked with installing temporary power while ICTS had to source 60 laptops and ensure that there was network connectivity in the venue. Wireless coverage was also increased in order to cater for the increased number of staff and students using the venue at the same time.

IT Helpdesk consultants configured the laptops, setting up wireless and installing applications such as Skype for Business so that faculty staff could make and receive calls from the venue. An ICTS Front Office consultant was based at the venue for the duration of registration to assist with any ICT-related queries.

## UCT colleagues rate their satisfaction of ICT services

Overall ICTS achieved a satisfaction level of 3 out of 4, which we are pleased about. More than 30% of UCT staff who took part in the ICTS Customer Survey indicated that they have seen a definite improvement in Internet access on campus. In addition, 47% of those who responded to the Classroom Support Services section indicated that they were satisfied with the work that this team is doing. Based on their overall experience of ICTS, one respondent said "Aside from waiting on the phone line, I believe that the quality of service and communication has improved," while another added: "ICTS has improved significantly in the last few years. I can say that quite honestly, you guys are doing well."



ICTS conducts its customer survey every two years to determine if there has been an improvement in the ICT services that we offer and to give campus the opportunity to provide feedback. Due to the large number of services that we offer, ICTS opted to have a longer survey, but gave staff the option to choose at least two sections to complete. Internet-access and Internet-based services, software, voice and other communication services as well as network access and files storage were the most popular sections that respondents selected to complete. Some staff even chose to complete more than the requested two sections.

In terms of logging a call, most respondents indicated that they prefer sending an email to the IT Helpdesk, instead of making a call. This is mainly due to the lengthy waiting period while trying to speak to a consultant. They were, however, satisfied with the professionalism and friendliness of the consultants.

ICTS would like to thank the more than 250 respondents who completed the survey, especially those who completed additional sections of the

The first is the [Automation in Word](#) workshop which takes place on **14 April 2016** (09:00 - 12:00). The course includes sections on how to create macros in minutes, use auto correct, benefit from document templates and work with building blocks and Quick Parts.

The following day (**15 April 2016**) at the same time, you can learn more about [word templates, styles and page breaks](#). This workshop looks at how to create and use templates; apply and modify styles; and insert and troubleshoot page breaks.

You can book for these workshops and courses by completing the [online course booking form](#).

### Is your document difficult or easy to read?

Writing is an essential life skill. Whether you're writing a thesis, policy document, news article, email or simply sending a text to a friend, it's a task that we perform daily.

Have you ever written something that makes sense to you, but when others read it they interpret it differently or they don't understand what you are trying to say? If that happens to you, then a readability tool may just be what you need.

Readability-Score.com uses the Flesch-Kincaid reading grade level to rate your writing. It's quick and easy to use and it's available online so that you can check your text even when you're on the go. Simply navigate to <https://readability-score.com> and enter your draft in the text field. In a matter of seconds the tool

survey. Your feedback will assist us in adapting our strategy so that we can continue to offer you our very best service.

### New ICTS Senior Manager plans to get things done by identifying the most important tasks first

Keeping things simple is what the new Senior Manager: Systems Portfolio, Glenn Hurlow, plans to do in his role at ICTS.



With a BCom (Accounting) degree, Glenn was on his way to becoming an auditor and had completed his articles, when his involvement with a software project introduced him to the far more dynamic world of IT. He made the switch and started managing IT systems instead - and he hasn't looked back since.

Glenn leads a team of ICTS analysts, developers and integration specialists who provide second and third level support to a portfolio of IT systems (SAP, Business Integration, Business Analysis and Customer Relationship Management). The team delivers projects that satisfy the institution's requirements.

After just a few weeks at UCT, Glenn says that trying to understand the workings of UCT and ICTS is like "drinking water from a fire hydrant. Everyone and everything is still new to me. Change is refreshing but the speed, pressure and volume that things are coming at me is overwhelming, but it's an interesting experience."

When it comes to managing a team, Glenn says that he believes in people reaching their full potential and using their strengths to achieve results. He is looking forward to mentoring his team and showing appreciation for the work that they do.

"I am a very committed person and I believe in keeping things simple. We are always under pressure, but determining what is most important is key in managing the workload. To me outcomes are more important than the way it is done. I trust my team to get things done on time", added Glenn.

When he is not managing systems, Glenn is an avid health freak and nature lover and can either be found trail running, playing beach volleyball or surfing. A father of two, he is also keen on giving back to the community and is involved in church work and with Meals on Wheels Community Services, an organisation that provides meals to the aged and to schools.

As a UCT alumnus he already had a connection to the university and has been looking for ways in which to support higher education. "I believe that education is the key enabler for our country and it can make a massive difference to the lives of people. I hope that my small role at UCT can make a difference in transforming the country."

### Accessibility is at the heart of new crowdsourcing initiative

Imagine paying for your overseas accommodation, only to discover that you cannot use your wheelchair or walker to get in to the building, let alone into your room. Hotels, restaurants and shopping centres often advertise that they cater for people with special needs, and while most establishments have the necessary infrastructure in place, there are a few that may make getting into their buildings a bit more challenging.

will assess your text and give you a reading ease rating out of 100. The higher your score the easier it is to read and vice versa. Reader's Digest and Time Magazine aim for a readability score of 65 and 52 respectively, while a Harvard Law Review would normally score in the low 30s.

This article scored 71.4

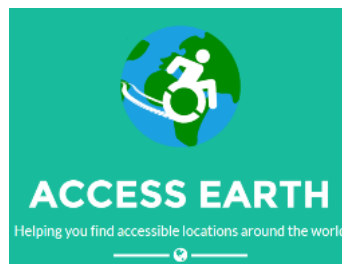
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National University of Ireland Maynooth (NUIM) graduate and owner of [Access Earth](#), Matt McCann, previously endured such an encounter and made a vow to create a resource that would allow people with disabilities to find suitable places to eat, sleep, drink and shop. The [Access Earth](#)



platform and app seeks to provide a global user-generated platform for users to add and search for data on accessibility in hotels, restaurants, theatres, stadiums and other businesses. Still in its infancy, McCann together with his colleague Ryan O'Neill, have already gathered sufficient data for establishments in Ireland, but are encouraging people from across the world to contribute information.

"People see a wheelchair and Access Earth, and we tell them it's a platform for accessibility, so they think disability straightaway. It shouldn't be like that," said O'Neill. "At the end of the day, accessibility impacts all of us. It might not be yourself, but maybe you have a grandparent and they have trouble with steps. I know with my grandparents, they don't use walking aids, but they can't go to a restaurant where there are 10 steps," said McCann.

The team are hoping that this platform will become the Google Maps for people with disabilities.

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