Introduction to the Use of Computers

Departmental and College Computing Resources

Friday 5th October 2012

This lab session introduces you to computing resources made available by the department and by the college: by performing these actions, you should become familiar with logging in to lab machines; checking your college e-mail; backing up important files; and connecting to your account remotely.

1. This part of the lab addresses logging into and using the lab computers.
   (a) Make sure the lab computer you are sitting at is turned on. If it is not, turn it on, and wait for the login dialog box to appear.
   (b) Log in to the computer, using the username and password you have been given by the college. At this point, you should be faced with a Mac OS X desktop. Experiment with it a little: can you launch any programs? Make any open windows go away? Terminate any running programs?
   (c) After a short period of experimentation, log out from the OS X desktop, and reboot the computer while holding down the 'alt' key; when the choice of boot partitions is presented, select the Windows partition.
   (d) Log in to the computer, again using the username and password you have been given. Attempt to perform the same tasks as before
   (e) Write down any differences you have noticed in your interaction with the two different Operating Systems.

2. This part of the lab addresses accessing College e-mail and other services through a web browser.
   (a) If you have not already done so, log in to one of the Operating Systems offered by the lab computers.
   (b) Launch a web browser (a program used to access the World Wide Web, using the HyperText Transfer Protocol: some examples of such programs include Firefox, Safari, Chrome and Internet Explorer).
   (c) In the browser, navigate to the following url: `http://goldmail.gold.ac.uk/`
   (d) Log in to webmail by providing the login credentials provided by the College for your e-mail account.
   (e) Send me an e-mail, containing your name and student number; this will be used to indicate completion of this part of the lab.
   (f) Using a search engine, find the web site for the on-line catalogue of the College library, and use that catalogue to find the class mark of one of the recommended books for this course.

3. This part of the lab addresses accessing your Departmental file storage space through file managers, and backing up your work.
   (a) Every student has some file space on the department's server (called '`igor.gold.ac.uk`'). In the lab, each individual user's file space is made available to the local computer: under windows it is mapped as the `G` drive, while under Mac OS X it

is under `/Volumes/homes`. Files stored in this location will be available at all computers within college, including in the library. Create a directory (folder) within this space called '`backup`'.

(b) Using a text editor or word processor, on the local machine, create a file named '`IS50004A-LAB1`' containing your full name, username and student number. Save your file to the local file system, and make a copy and save it in the `backup` folder in your networked filespace.

(c) Log out of the computer you are currently at, find a different currently unused one, and log into that instead. Verify that you can see the copy saved to your networked filespace. Can you see any local copies?

4. This part of the lab addresses various ways you can access your departmental account from outside the College.

(a) The best way to access your departmental account remotely is using the Secure Shell (SSH) protocol. In order to do that, you will need an ssh *client* program: on Windows, one such program is called '`PuTTY`', and should already be installed; on Mac OS X, you will need to start a `Terminal.app` program (in *Applications/Utilities*) and use the command-line. In either case, use your ssh client to connect to `igor.gold.ac.uk` using your username and password; note down carefully the contents of any messages or dialog boxes.

(b) Once you have made a connection to `igor`, you will be presented with a text-only interface. We will cover this interface later in the term; for now, you can simply list the contents of your directory (type '`ls`' and hit the Return key) and compare this with the view of your mapped drive in the file manager.

(c) If you merely want to transfer files between your local machine and `igor`, for example for backup, you can use an SFTP (secure file transfer protocol) client. Again, clients should already be installed on the lab machines; use a web browser to locate documentation on SFTP, and transfer one file from your lab computer to your filespace on `igor`.