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Andy Martin Smith came to Thames Valley University in April 2004 as Head of the School of Computing at the former Slough campus. He oversaw the move of the School to the St Mary's Road, Ealing campus in summer 2009 until his sudden death in late May 2011. During his seven years as head of department he succeeded in taking the School forward on a very strong footing and began to successfully shift the organization from a mainly teaching department to one in which research activity was actively beginning to take root.

A number of friends and close colleagues have already published a tribute in *Interfaces: the journal of the BCS HCI special interest group*. The editors of *Interfaces* have given permission to reproduce their tribute article in *VISTAS* and we are very grateful and pleased to be able to do this.

As their tributes are very much ones from personal experience, an editor of *VISTAS* has taken this opportunity to tell a little bit more about the career of a remarkable computer professional who spent his last seven years at the University of West London. In setting out to write about a colleague in one's own institution however straightforwardly and simply you can discover that it is both more revealing and challenging than might be thought. Indeed, it can prove to be a stimulating and creative experience.

In doing so the starting points have been the personal recollection of the writer himself, his knowledge and experience of the events, and recollection and memory as much as empirical research and data collection which Andy would surely have admired and hoped for in such a biographical exercise. Such a well researched study could no doubt be done, but alas, not by this writer, at this moment. My ambition was certainly greater than my grasp, resources of time and technique. Andy had gathered together an impressive bibliography as part of his CV and to some extent this has provided some 'hard data' to supplement recollection and memory. Alas, the bibliography was not complete after around 2007, but this material along with the standard items of the CV has proven a useful supplement. In fact a critical bibliometric biography would be a very good piece of work to undertake.

So, having made my caveats I have also judged that others would be interested in an ' however provisional view' of Andy's life and times at UWL. What follows is what I have been able to do so far until some other person can follow the path. I hope it makes some contribution and it is done on behalf of his colleagues in the School of Computing and Technology which he himself worked diligently to create, and which we might all hope we can continue to sustain.

Early years and formative years
Andy Smith was born on 9th July 1955 and spent much of his early years in West London. From 1966 to 1973 he was a pupil at Isleworth Grammar School. Early on he took a science based track (perhaps favouring his mind and temperament) and achieved good results in A-levels in Mathematics, Applied Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry. Not unpredictably he decided to pursue a degree in civil engineering and in 1973 enrolled at the University of Nottingham. Whether or not the engineering industry appealed as a route to employment he soon decided on a move towards education. Immediately on graduating Andy took a graduate traineeship at Mouchel and Partners. This was a summer job but gave experience and confidence to then enrol on the PGCE at the Nottingham School of Education specializing on mathematics and computing. This was indeed a time of growing industrial opportunities in computing, and these decisions taken then were to serve him in good stead.

The experience of the PGCE seemed to give a good impression of teaching possibilities. Over the next seven years he worked in two secondary schools. From September1977 to August 1979 at Sondes Place School in Dorking, Surrey. In September 1979 he moved to Langley Grammar School (close to Slough) to be a teacher of mathematics and computing. During this time he attended the Polytechnic of North London as a part-time student on the PG Diploma in Computing (August 1980 to July 1982) and achieved a Distinction. In early 1982 (before he had completed the PG Diploma) he achieved promotion to Head of the Computing department. By April 1983 Andy was contemplating a move from the secondary sector to the Further Education sector.

Professional education in computing.
Andy began as a Lecturer (L2) in Computing in April 1983 at Bracknell College, getting promotion in 1984 to Senior Lecturer and then became head of the Computing Section. In the mid-1980s Bracknell in Berkshire had established itself as a major industrial and commercial base in the UK computing industry. It was part of the UK's Silicon Valley par excellence. With Andy's growing commitment to computing this was clearly a good place to be and a stepping stone to further progress.

In June 1986 it was time to move on within the sector. He became a Senior Lecturer in Computing at Richmond upon Thames College, and in September 1989 he became Principal Lecturer and Head of the Computing team. Whether this was the result of getting a taste for management (likely not!) it was certainly a matter of industry and competence coupled with quiet motivation and a growing commitment to the field. This was recognized because in September 1990 he became Director of Marketing in addition to Dean of the Faculty with responsibility for 77 staff.

In Autumn 1993 Andy made the move into higher education. He was appointed to the post of Principal Lecturer at the University of Luton in the Faculty of Creative Arts and Technologies. Continuing a wide range of responsibilities in a large Computing group saw continued engagement in teaching and programme related work. In addition came the task of co-ordinating research across the Department, supervision of Post-graduate programmes, income generation activities (e.g. with Microsoft), staff development, BCS Accreditation of the Departmental portfolio of courses, membership of the University Staff Development Committee and the Faculty Academic Standards Committee. In 2003 he became Sub-Dean of Research in the Faculty at Luton. Research was by now becoming a greater focus of attention. From 2002 to 2004 he was the Director of the Centre for Software Internationalisation as well as project manager and co-convenor of IESUP (Indo-European Systems Usability Partnership). In the course of his Luton period Andy worked with the Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation (2001 – 2002). In March 2000 he was involved with a consultancy firm as Director of Optimum Web limited (www.optimum.web.co.uk). Optimum.web is now one of the UK's leading usability consultancies. He was also involved with Netpoll another consulting firm.

From 1992 – 2000 he was a BTEC external examiner for Edexcel. This experience was to continue to stand him in good stead at TVU/UWL where the need for a strong sense of quality management supported by fit for purpose procedures was essential in strengthening the direction of that institution.

By the time Andy was ready to move on to Thames Valley University, it was clear that some of the interests that were to shape the next phase of his career were already in place. Usability, software internationalization, HCI and socio-technical systems research were key areas of interest and activity, as well as research and publication. During his time at Luton Andy had undertaken the necessary sorting out and prioritizing that academics have to do. During this period he had extended his contacts and networks in the field and had developed a fruitful working relationship with Lynne Dunckley who had over that period established herself at the Open University. Lynne had moved to TVU and Slough before Andy obtained his position there in 2004. They shared many research and professional interests and it was their opportunity to combine forces again at TVU that proved decisive in laying down a new foundation for computing and information systems education there.

Moving to Thames Valley University.

Andy formally took up his post at TVU in April 2004. He came into a setting where there was a strong need for reconstruction. Why? Thames Valley University had come into existence in 1992 as one of the post-1992 sector institutions, after a rather successful life as Ealing College of Higher Education (ECHE). But the 1991 Higher Education Act was a sign of the structural changes which UK HE had to face. The decision to make the polytechnics into universities had been taken, thus ending the binary sector of HE. HE expansion, sectoral reform and the need to widen opportunities to access HE were all part of a strategic movement of change. It created an opportunity for smaller institutes and colleges to redefine themselves and to create new futures. Mergers of smaller institutions was one way to create viability. ECHE and Thames Valley College of Higher Education (Slough) had been encouraged to make a link with the London College of Music (LCM) and Queen Charlotte's Hospital College of Health Care Studies (QC), to create an institution of 'polytechnic scale' which could become a new

post-1992 university. The decade of the 1990s were turbulent ones for TVU. The history can be pieced together elsewhere, but there had to be a period of recovery, redirection and reconstruction. In Andy's case we can focus on the academic field of computing and IS alone.

The move to TVU was clearly an opportunity for Andy. There was a tough and immediate agenda that had to be followed. If this could be addressed more and better things might follow.

Andy's arrival in the department had immediate impact and effect. The former head had stepped aside but continued on the team. Lynne had earlier arrived from the Open University. After a short period a modus operandi was established. Andy clearly relished the challenge and felt sufficiently supported to do what had to be done. Andy's experience in education coupled with strong and clear organizational ability was decisive in helping a redirection to take place. He had two senior colleagues who provided support. The task of bringing round and welding the staff into a new grouping was no easy task. A certain thickness of skin had to be deployed although some colleagues may have missed the essentially sensitive and fair nature of Andy! No matter, progress was clearly being made not only at the level of process and procedure, but also (slowly) in terms of culture. Andy did not lose sight of a necessary vision although not all staff shared it on a daily basis! This is not uncommon!

An early sign of a real future as a proper academic school of computing came with the establishment of the Institute for IT. This has become the basis for the present School of Computing successes in research and scholarship. In 2004 the School itself had been renamed losing its 'Technology and Information Systems' designation for a more forward and upbeat 'Computing'. In addition, the university had also acquired its link with Reading College. The department was increasing in size and complexity with new areas of FE to service, foundation degrees and collaborative networks as well as continuing to be responsible for computing in arts and media.

In the mid-2000s the investment in systems was paying off in terms of quality, structures and efficiency. External reviews and internal peer reviews had seen many improvements for which Andy was ultimately responsible and for which he had been a prime mover.

Nothing however could be achieved without a sense of team effort and ownership and this was growing. No doubt, too, that Andy drew strength from several very close associates in the Department and he continued to gain the support and trust of programme leaders.

Following this period of development and the arrival of Professor Peter John as new VC in 2007, the economy of TVU required attention. From 2009 resources were under a much more severe constraint as the economic downturn began and higher education funding tightened. In this period it can be said that the affairs of TVU were finally stabilised after difficulties in the late 1990s. The damage to reputation had been repaired and the links between stakeholders could be developed and enriched. Right from Andy's arrival he had understood the need to build links with the computing industry and his work with Microsoft and Hewlett Packard especially were essential and paid dividends. If the computing industry had not experienced some down turns the results of these growing links would have been even better and stronger.

Expanding horizons: building a strong department
Difficult conditions at home however did not discourage Andy from kindling some research based links with overseas. His contacts in the internationalization field lead to work with contacts in China and India and slowly this created conditions for what he had long had in mind. This was to have a department that could bid for research funds with credibility and use this as a means of growing the academic reputation and level of activity. The mid-2000s saw the growth in demand for higher education in all fields expand but none more so than from China and India. TVU and computing did not have the capacity nor the clout to be part of the first wave, but Andy saw the possibility of entering in at the niche level. He was an energetic traveller and made research visits to China and recruitment visits (especially to India). From 2008 the number of Indian students recruited to the MSc programmes started to rise.

Whilst there could be tangible successes in overseas recruitment, the need to reshape the organization was also a growing concern (again) for HODs and the Directorate. External domestic forces and policy were driving change, not least finance but also issues of philosophy and purpose. The arrival of Professor Peter John signalled the intention to re-strategize

and to rebrand the institution. It can be said that Andy was in good shape to take this on and to play his part. He had by then created a department which was a 'strong player' in the university. He received good support from the Faculty executive and at this level and in the senior team his ability and capacity were noted. Notwithstanding, he maintained a characteristic modesty which perhaps covered some rather deeper turmoil and anxiety.

As a HOD Andy was increasingly involved in management of university at the strategic level. Peter John needed to have a supportive executive made up of heads and senior officers and Andy progressed to develop his role in this area. Like most senior academics in UK universities Andy was no stranger to the need for and vagaries of organizational change. At TVU there has been continual adjustment as part of the process of being responsive to change and opportunities, as well as modification in order to meet constraints (often of finance) but equally of markets, demand and operational conditions. When Andy came to TVU in 2004 a Faculty system had been introduced and was bedding down. By 2009/2010 this Faculty basis was being run down. A smaller number of Schools would acquire budgets, powers and responsibilities and a major layer of systems and organization (the Faculty level) would be taken out. Peter John was to lead the university into a new phase of development and Andy Smith showed himself responsive to these needs and actively took up the challenge.

After a long period of expansion since 1992, and a period of turbulence and adjustment, a combination of financial conditions, market needs and policy changes were to indicate a strategic change of great magnitude. Peter John had to bring in an agenda of concentration after the decision to cease the FE/HE combination which had built a major campus in Reading. Balancing the budget and a shortage of capital funds (and a lack of reserves) lead to the decision in 2010 to withdraw from the campus in Slough. This broke the links which had constituted an early part of Andy's work at the university.

As a Head of School it was inevitable that Andy came to play a significant role in the overall concerns of the University by informing and shaping policy and helping to implement it. He was a strong advocate of efficiency in use of resources and time. His technical outlook ensured a systematic approach to

implementation in practice: timetabling, assessment specifications, problem solving, timely delivery and a strong sense of process in managing quality were matters where his touch was felt in getting results. Whilst Andy played a very full part in all this, it never dimmed his ambition to focus on what became the main theme of his leadership. The idea of a research based school was always a desire and a motivator and Andy set out to achieve the best that could be done in the situation.

The 2007 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) has proven to be a catalyst for helping to realize the ambitions Andy nurtured. The School of Computing achieved good results from its RAE efforts so that in 2008/2009 it was able to benefit from new funding. The School acquired five Vice Chancellor PhD bursaries out of the RAE money and other research active staff have been able to access funds to travel, attend conferences and to build research networks. The School had already become a research grant earner before the RAE success, and it is Andy's legacy from his build of contacts prior to that which we should acknowledge. It is always a little of 'to those who have shall be given' but Andy was also giving before his School received those (RAE) gains. Reputation signals attraction and the School gained new professorial posts and some new teaching staff.

His achievements in computing were increasingly carried over into the wider realms of university research development. There is no doubt that he would have gone on to play an even more significant part. He was the Associate Dean for Research in the Faculty of Professional Studies and in the last year was making detailed proposals as to how activities in this area could be conducted. The research legacy to UWL and to the School of Computing is what Andy Smith must be remembered for. Teaching and learning and pedagogy and quality standards were not forgotten either in the last years. It is fair to say that he has left behind much of which he had hoped to continue. His story has been a rich and beneficial one for the School and for himself. He has left behind a strong group which under new leaders will surely realize the benefits of following what Andy had begun.

Prepared by Stephen A. Roberts for the School of Computing and Technology.