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Have You Seen What the New Version of D2L Can Do?

D2L version 9.4.1 was implemented for the Spring 2012 semester at MTSU. This version included the major additions and improvements to the D2L Learning Environment released in version 9.4, as well as specific V9.4.1 enhancements such as extended browser compatibility with Internet Explorer 9 and Google Chrome.

The new Calendar tool is completely redesigned and built from the ground up to focus on the presentation of course material. The previous Calendar only reflected course event availability dates and required QuickLinks to point to associated course materials. The new Calendar integrates the Content tool into Calendar to greatly simplify the process of scheduling course content. You can easily schedule a module or topic and view its contents directly in Calendar.

Calendar also features views that let you arrange and visualize course events in a way that makes sense to you. In addition to standard day, week, and month views, a new “List” view lets you browse all events for any course, while an “Agenda” view displays the full details for upcoming events and lets you change the arrangement between dates, courses, or event type (e.g., learning materials, discussions, quizzes, and assignments).

You can also configure the date for events shown in the Agenda so you can focus on events today and tomorrow, the next week, the next two weeks, or the next three weeks.

iCal is also enabled to sync your Desire2Learn course events with external calendars such as Outlook and Google Calendar, and mobile devices such as iPhones, Android, and Blackberry.

The Seating Chart & Location tools are brand-new tools that enable you to create and manage a virtual room for your Classlist, using a slick drag-and-drop interface. The FITC team has created generic 30-, 50-, 75-, 100-, 150-, and 300-seat “locations” (i.e., classrooms) which can be tailored to a specific classroom’s seating configuration.

Once a location has been selected and customized, you can create a seating chart based on this location and populate it with your students. Of course, the drag-and-drop capability enables an instructor to easily move students to other seats, including swapping students by dragging and dropping one student on another student’s position.

Additionally, the Seating Chart & Location tools are integrated with the Calendar tool, enabling an instructor to assign seating charts for class meeting events established in the Calendar.

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The campus computing committees are charged to focus on University computing resources. The structure includes a computer executive committee, an instructional technology committee, an administrative computing committee, and an instructional technologies development committee.

The committees work with input from all areas of campus and make recommendations to the president and appropriate vice presidents.

**Computer Executive Committee**

This committee is charged with formulating a long-range information systems plan and developing a plan to integrate the use of technology throughout the University.

Brad Bartel, Chair, University Provost
Bruce Petryshak, Vice Chair, Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer
John Cothern, Senior Vice President, Business and Finance
Kim Nofsinger, President, Faculty Senate
Wayne Dornan, Academic Department Chair
Lana Seivers, Academic Dean

Tammie Dryden, Administrative Computing Committee Chair, Instructional Technology Committee Chair
Jeremy Peynter, SGA President
Wajid Choundhry, ITD Staff/Administrative Department Head

**Instructional Technology Committee**

This committee is instructed to make recommendations to the president for the allocation of student technology access fee (TAF) funds.

William Crabtree, Mass Comm
Kaylene Gebert, Liberal Arts
Alan Musciant, Behavioral & Health Sciences
Sherry Roberts, Business Communication & Entrepreneurship
Jay Sanders, Educational Leadership
Michael Allen, Academic Dean
Joan McRae, Academic Chair
Mike Gower, Administrator, Business & Finance
Bruce Petryshak, VP, Information Technology
Danny Kelley, Administrator, Student Affairs
Amy Burks, James Walker Library
Neal McClain, Computer Lab Director, Faculty
Kim Nofsinger, President, Faculty Senate

**Administrative Computing Committee**

The role of this committee is to develop new ideas for the use of technology in administrative applications; advise administrative users on technology needs; and advise administrative users on hardware, software, and services.

Mike Gower, Business and Finance
Tammie Dryden, Development
Hilary Stallings, Liberal Arts
Danny Kelley, Student Affairs
Bruce Petryshak, Information Technology
Barbara Patton, President’s Office
John Omachonu, Academic Affairs
Kathey Thurman, Business and Finance
Lisa Rogers, ITD, ERP Systems, ex officio
Jeremy Poynter, Student Senate

**Instructional Technologies Development Committee**

This committee makes grant and fellowship award recommendations to the vice president for IT and and CIO for projects related to innovative and effective integration of technology into teaching and learning. The committee selects the MTSU Outstanding Achievement in Instructional Technology Award recipients. The awards are given to faculty members who show excellence in creating technology-based teaching materials and successfully in-
Computing Committees  
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Tearing instructional technology in the classroom.

Tammy Bahmanziari, Business (Accounting)  
Willis Means, Elementary & Special Education  
Gina Pisut, Human Sciences  
Amy York, Walker Library  
Xiaoya Zha, Basic & Applied Sciences  
Clay Harris, Geosciences  
Elsie Annette Williams, University Studies  
John Donovan, Art  
Peter Cunningham, Graduate Studies Representative  
Brenda Kerr, ITD Representative

Digital Signage Coming to MTSU

From music and books to movies, everything is getting a digital makeover, and signs are no exception.

Middle Tennessee State University has partnered with a company called Four Winds Interactive to bring digital signage to the campus.

Digital signs employ technology such as LCD, plasma, and LED displays to communicate with target audiences. The innovative signs can be non-interactive and interactive through the usage of a touch screen, barcode scanner, card swipe, and other input devices.

The advantages of digital signage are tenfold. Not only does such state-of-the-art technology mitigate paper consumption, it also limits clutter and engages the audience.

The signs can display various types of media with customized designs, and the content can be displayed in a quick and timely fashion.

The University is currently working with Four Winds representatives to develop a prototype for the signs, which are slated to first appear in the College of Education.

A 65-inch monitor has been installed in the College of Education, and it will be operational later this spring, ITD Assistant Vice President Barbara Draude said.

The first sign using this technology will be an upgrade of the Tennessee Teacher’s Wall of Fame that had been formerly located in the LRC. This sign will allow visitors to search for teachers via an interactive touch screen by name or region of the state. Visitors can also view the teachers’ photos, read their bios, or view movie clips about them.

Draude said the plan is to implement the signs as University information boards, featuring a top-layered template that in the College of Education’s case will be used to display the Teacher’s Hall of Fame, but for future signs this layer might serve as a building directory or display upcoming athletic events.

If a patron selects an icon on the first layer, the sign will bring up a second-level template that will be University-focused. Visitors will be able to view current events and news, directories, maps, and more. For example, if you touch the sign for the College of Education but need to find the Business Office, you can bring up a map to help you locate it.

These innovative signs will provide information on events, news, campus directories, maps, dining locations, and athletics.

All of these signs will be managed through a content management system, similar to the Web CMS. Each individual sign will have its own computer attached to it that delivers content to the screen. There will be two kinds of digital signs: those that are interactive and those that are not. However, all the signs will still be managed through the CMS.

The CMS will also enable administrators to take over all the digital signs on campus in the event of an emergency. The departments that own the signs will control the content, but the templates will be maintained by ITD, Draude said.
Anytime, Anywhere Learning

It’s not every day that students hear their instructors ask them to take out their cell phones during class, much less use them. Some traditional educators may find such technology disruptive to the learning process, but MTSU Business Communication and Entrepreneurship professor Dr. Ronda Henderson is not your everyday instructor.

“When my students first heard me ask them to take out their smart phones, they looked at me in disbelief,” Henderson recalled. “I had posted a question on the projector screen about business ethics. The students would text either 1 for yes or 2 for no. After their response, a bar graph would appear that reflected their yes or no answers. That’s how I brought the concept of mobile learning into the classroom.”

After conducting a research project on the usage of clickers in the traditional classroom, Henderson learned that most students enjoyed using the devices but weren’t interested in personally paying for them. Further research led Henderson to a site called PollEverywhere that enabled polling using cell phone text messaging, which opened new doors in terms of communication with her students.

Henderson has redefined the learning environment by introducing mobile technology to her classroom.

The business professor encourages her students to provide their cell phone numbers on the inaugural day of class. Using Google Voice, she created a phone number designated specifically for her students. Calls, voice messages, and text messages are all automatically forwarded to her personal mobile number. This method allows Henderson to retain her personal number but maintain consistent communication with her students.

“I found that students didn’t respond to email as quickly as text messages,” said Henderson, who has been teaching at MTSU since 2006. “I think this is where education is heading. As educators, we have to adapt, otherwise we’re going to be left behind. I think we’re still in the infancy stage of what mobile technology can do, but we have to embrace it and try to keep up with the students because they are miles ahead of us in terms of using mobile devices on a personal and social level. It’s up to us, as educators, to come up with ways to use them in a learning environment.”

MTSU Business Communication and Entrepreneurship professor Dr. Ronda Henderson thinks outside of the box when it comes to education by incorporating mobile technology into the classroom.

Teaching, Learning & Technology

Henderson, who was awarded the 2010 Distinguished Educator in Distance Learning Award, is no stranger to using technology to enhance learning. The North Carolina native strives to stay abreast of emerging technologies by attending and presenting dozens of educational technology conferences, seminars, and workshops. In fact, she was recently invited to conduct a technology workshop on Web 2.0 Tools at the National Business Education Association Conference in Boston, MA in April of this year. She completed her requirements to earn the LERN Certified Online Instructor designation in 2009. In 2010, she completed a SLOAN Online Technology Boot Camp funded by Middle Tennessee Distance Learning Faculty Services. In addition, she also became a certified Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) in the areas of Word and Excel in 2009 and 2010.

Eight of Henderson’s 15 years of teaching have involved distance learning including teaching four online courses as well as numerous Web-assisted courses. Since her teaching career began in 1995 as a high school business and marketing teacher, she has always been the “go-to” faculty member regarding the integration of technology in the classroom. She has created a Twitter page for each of her classes in order to reach the broadest audience possible, which has become a fundamental learning tool for her business students.

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and track attendance and participation for each event. You can launch these Seating Chart sessions directly from the Calendar, and use the custom “focus filters” to assess and guide participation throughout the session.

Another tool with noteworthy modifications is the Dropbox tool. In particular, the layout of the “Leave Feedback” interface has been completely redesigned to provide more effective review and efficient assessment. The left side of the browser window serves as the main viewing frame for student submissions and is equipped to navigate between each student and each of their submissions (if multiple submissions exist). The viewing frame also provides zooming and paging capability, as well as the means to view document markups if TurnItIn’s GradeMark functionality has been enabled and utilized.

The right sidebar menu provides the necessary tools to “grade as you go.” In addition to the standard grade and feedback fields, the sidebar menu also provides ready access to an associated rubric (integrated with the Dropbox’s associated grade item) and a “Record Audio” feature for personalized feedback (up to one minute) on the assignment. Instructors can even quickly reference student information and past performance using the Profile and View Progress buttons which have also been added to the sidebar menu.

The News tool was improved with the practical additions of new access, dismissal, and editing buttons. A dedicated button now exists to access all news items on a single page, enabling ad hoc student viewing and full roster assessment for instructors when deciding news items to amend or delete. Accordingly, a new button enables students and instructors to “dismiss” news items once they’re read.

For instructors, new “Draft,” “Publish,” and “Update” buttons have been added to facilitate creation, modification, and timely posting of news items. The “Update” button also includes the option to restore previously dismissed news items, ensuring the changes are seen.

Another new button found in the News widget toolbar activates the new Notifications tool, which is primarily accessed from the My Home page Welcome box. This new tool enables instructors and students to be notified of new or updated news items, new discussion posts, and approaching Dropbox deadlines on their mobile phone (via SMS/text) or any email address. (NOTE: outside email addresses are only utilized for the Notifications function, and still cannot be used for forwarding D2L email.)

Rounding out the V9.4 overview are the new social networking and audio features that have been added to some D2L tools. The Profile tool (found in the Welcome box on the My Home page) now includes entries for your Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Google site links. Additionally, the Blog tool (if enabled for your course) permits you to share your blogs on Facebook, Twitter, and Google.

As previously noted with the enhancements to the Dropbox tool, a Record Audio button is now available in the News, Discussions, and Dropbox (Edit and Leave Feedback sections) tools, permitting an instructor to supplement their comments and descriptions with a one-minute (or less) message. These messages can be particularly helpful for visually impaired students in the course, as well as personalizing a message to all students.

A D2L V9.4 Features Guide with more details (and pictures!) is available in the Content area of the MTSU D2L Learning Community. We are also continuing to monitor some bugs that have been discovered during the course of implementation, and we will continue to provide updates in the designated News item on the My Home page. Feel free, of course, to call the FITC (X8189) if you have any questions on this release.
Communication is Key

Like most people from the sunny coast of California, Alana Johnson is accustomed to feeling the ground shake beneath her feet. However, the tornadoes that have been plaguing the Midwest and southern states as of late have left her more shaken than the earthquakes ever did.

“Tornadoes are something that I’m not used to, and quite frankly, I prefer California earthquakes,” said Johnson, who moved to the Volunteer State with her husband in 2008. “When you grow up in California you become so used to them that half the time you don’t even get out of bed. Since you never really anticipate earthquakes you get them over with. With a tornado, on the other hand, there’s all this anticipation and nervousness, and that just makes it so much worse.”

As the Information Technology Division’s communications technology specialist, Johnson has developed an uneasy relationship with those pesky tornadoes because she serves as the administrator for the University’s emergency notification system, also known as Rave Alerts. Every time severe weather or any other campus emergency arises, the MTSU community is notified of the impending threat through timely text and email alerts.

She also trains Public Safety and News and Media representatives how to correctly utilize the emergency notification system and works as a liaison with the company that supports the alert system’s technology.

In addition to her administrative responsibilities with Rave Alerts, Johnson also helps oversee MTMail administration, performing tasks that the ITD Help Desk can’t do such as resetting passwords for blocked accounts.

“I create accounts when they’re not automatically provisioned as they should be,” she explained. “We are basically the direct line to Microsoft. In addition, I also help with some of the Exchange administration.”

Johnson also provides smart phone support, specifically for the BlackBerry Enterprise Server (BES), Android phones, and iPhones.

She is a graduate of San Francisco State University with a degree in broadcast and electronic communication with an emphasis in educational media. Johnson initially aspired to produce children’s television shows, but her keen interest in technology led her down a different path.

After earning a master’s degree in computer information systems from Golden Gate University in 1999, she began working for the San Francisco Department of Public Health, where she participated in the performance of system/process analysis and project planning and management. She performed implementation and testing of software and was responsible for the technical and procedural documentation and training.

After relocating to Murfreesboro four years ago to escape California’s tumultuous economic climate, Johnson found the MTSU environment to be an ideal fit.

Johnson said her job’s capricious nature provides fertile ground for learning, and for someone who embraces change, that’s a good thing.

“I love learning new things,” she remarked, “and this position involves so many different things that I am constantly learning. You have to be very patient because I help a lot of people over the
ITD Assistant Vice President Barbara Draude recently attended the 2012 EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative Annual Meeting. The event, which was held in Austin, Texas in February, explored an eclectic variety of themes that captured the key opportunities and challenges confronting the teaching and learning community such as the ubiquity of mobile devices, cloud computing, and a new emphasis on evaluation, learning effectiveness, and accountability.

Draude is also representing the Learning, Teaching & Innovative Technologies Center (LT&ITC) at the SRFIDC (Southern Regional Faculty and Instructional Development Consortium) meeting in late March at the campus of Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina. She will be presenting along with LT&ITC Director of Faculty Development Tom Brinthaupt, instructional design specialist Paula Calahan, and associate professor Dr. Maria Clayton. Each year the SRFIDC meets to share information in the realm of instructional development.

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ITD Open Forums

The Information Technology Division is hosting a series of open forums during the course of each semester to help establish a culture of open dialog and to share ideas regarding information technology at MTSU.

For more information including agenda items and how to suggest agenda items, future meeting dates, and locations and times, visit http://www.mtsu.edu/projects/forum.shtml.

New Content Management System Continues to Take Shape

ITD continues to move forward with updating the content management system that controls the MTSU website (www.mtsu.edu). More than 350 departmental sites (over 16,716 individual Web pages) have been converted from the old Luminis system to the new OmniUpdate system. Starting the week of March 19, ITD will implement the first 25+ departmental websites along with the 63 root pages (About MTSU, Future Students, Current Students, etc.). Other departmental sites will follow in the weeks forward with a projected completion date of the end of April.

Departments will be contacted by a member of the ITD Web team to receive one-on-one training and to make the site live in the new system. Additional OmniUpdate training/workshops will also be scheduled in early April for those who missed the February workshops.

For more information about the new content management system, visit the ITD Projects Page at http://www.mtsu.edu/projects/cms/index.shtml.
Alana Johnson
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phone to help them help themselves. I prefer it that way because I think it’s important that when people get these new phones that they know how to use them. If you just did everything for them and handed them a phone, they wouldn’t explore what the settings are. I like educating people about their phones, and it’s a fun experience everyone gets excited about.”

Web specialists Charlene Christmon, Janina Hill, and Eric Niemiller recently attended the 2012 OmniUpdate User Conference in Universal City, CA. The event provided information about the newest capabilities and best practices of the OU Campus content management system, which now serves as the University’s CMS. The event featured a keynote address from Michael Berman, vice president for Technology & Communication at CSUCI, a plenary address from University of Buffalo Director of Web Services Mark Greenfield, technical and marketing/operations sessions, panel discussions, and hands-on training workshops.

Ronda Henderson
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Henderson uses cell phone technology for more than just texting.

“I use a lot of mobile apps for productivity purposes so that I will be able to use my iPad like I do my laptop,” she noted. “Also, there are apps that enable me to remote into my desktop from my iPad and educational apps that allow you to connect with my students online.”

Incorporating such technology into the classroom environment yields its fair share of challenges, Henderson noted.

“I don’t want to use the technology just for the sake of using it,” she said. “Trying to find different educational mobile apps relevant to my field can be difficult because we’re just in the infancy stage, and there’s just so much out there.”

With so many mobile applications floating on the market, sifting through them can be a daunting task for the uninitiated. That is why Henderson has joined with other MTSU faculty and staff to present a “Mobile Mondays” mobile device users group held on the second Monday of each month at 11:30 a.m. at the Learning, Teaching & Innovative Technology Center.

“It’s all about swapping information,” Henderson said. “The Mobile Mondays will allow us to share information about the apps that worked for us in the classroom and those that didn’t.”

For more information about mobile apps or Mobile Mondays, call 615-494-7671.

Staff News
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Assistant Vice President Lisa Rogers, senior systems analyst Debbie Warren, and senior systems analyst Theresa Stevenson, along with several members of the MTSU staff, recently attended the annual Summit Conference, presented by SunGard Higher Education. Summit is an international event that helps more than 6,000 higher education professionals from around the world connect with one another in its kind.

ITD Workshops Available For Faculty And Staff

Get started with computer graphic programs such as Illustrator; edit and enhance pictures with Photoshop; get familiar with D2L and Photoshop; get trained in Word 2010, Excel 2010, and Access; learn to design Web pages; and more!

Registration is required (except where noted)

- Register on the Web or call ITD at x5345
- Most workshops are offered at the ITD Training Center in the Telecommunication Building
- Classes are filled on a first-come, first-served basis
- Please give a 24-hour cancellation notice

Individual consultation for instructional technology needs can be requested by calling ext. 8189. Other workshops are available upon request.

See our website for more information at www.mtsu.edu/~itd/workshops