The annual Learning, Teaching, and Innovative Technologies Center (LT&ITC) Faculty Fair was held last month at the LT&ITC in Walker Library. The one-stop-shop event provided opportunities for faculty to learn more about the technological resources and services available at MTSU.

This event also gave faculty an opportunity to meet peers who have distinguished themselves by developing innovative teaching practices and integrating technology in their courses. Faculty Fair exhibitors included MTSU grant recipients, outstanding teachers, experiential and service learning faculty, and others who share their pedagogies and outcomes with colleagues through creative exhibits.
Does Your Department Need a Fax Fix?

Due to programming changes in how the University routes incoming and outgoing telephone calls, it is possible that your office is no longer receiving inbound faxes from off-campus, nor can you send outgoing faxes to sites that are off-campus. Symptoms include blank faxes, incomplete faxes, and garbled data. Know that you aren’t alone, and there is a simple solution: FaxMaker!

FaxMaker is a centralized fax server solution that doesn’t need a physical fax device, only a dedicated fax telephone number, which, in most cases, departments already have. Providing the ability to send and receive faxes electronically, FaxMaker makes sending and receiving faxes an efficient, convenient, simple, and cost-effective process.

Here’s how it works.

Incoming faxes are answered by FaxMaker, converted to PDF, and routed to your department’s fax inbox. ITD can provide access to those in your office who need access to the fax inbox. This inbox will display as a secondary inbox within the user’s Microsoft Outlook program. Some departments also choose to have one person tasked with reviewing all inbound faxes and routing them to the appropriate person instead of granting access to the fax inbox for multiple users. This is completely up to you and what works best for your department.

Outbound faxing is available to everyone in your office with an Exchange email account. Users simply create a new email. In the TO: field, type in the recipient fax number@faxmaker.com and attach the document(s) to the email. Internal faxes are four digits, external faxes are formatted using the 7- or 10-digit number, minus the 9+1. FaxMaker automatically creates a cover page for your fax.

Your name and email address will be added to the FROM: field; the number you are sending the fax to will be added to the TO: field; the subject of the email will be added to the SUBJECT: field; and the body of the email will be added to the body of the cover page. ITD can customize this cover page for you if your department needs to add a confidentiality statement or other standard language. Documents attached to your email (PDF, JPG, TIFF, TXT, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher) will be sent as subsequent pages of the fax behind the cover page.

There is no cost to move your department’s fax number to FaxMaker, and no additional cost, beyond the annual line charge for the fax telephone number, to use FaxMaker. In order to move your fax number to FaxMaker, please email Emily Harper (emily.harper@mtsu.edu) the following information:

1. Department fax number
2. Name and phone number for main point of contact
3. Building and room number for main point of contact
4. Names of others who need access to fax inbox

For additional questions regarding FaxMaker, please contact Harper at (615) 898-2206.

Lync Update

After extensive testing and additional fine-tuning of MTSU’s Lync 2013 environment, final preparations are being made to begin deployment of Lync 2013 to over 75 staff members in the Information Technology Division. Upon completion, ITD Telecommunication Services will begin scheduling appointments with other campus departments to develop their migration strategy. Included as part of the Lync 2013 deployment will be a migration from Intuity Audix to Exchange UM (Unified Messaging) for voice mail.

Unified Messaging will work in conjunction with Microsoft Exchange to route voice mail messages to email, providing a speech-to-text written preview of the voice message and allowing playback of the audio file, all through a single inbox. In addition, through the subscriber access number for UM, users will have access to voice mail, Exchange email, calendaring, and contact information. Imagine having all this information just a phone call away, accessible whenever and wherever you need it! With Exchange UM, it will soon be coming to an inbox near you. For additional updates and information, please visit the ITD Lync Project Page at http://mtsu.edu/projects/lync/index.php.

Editor: Dan Copp
Managing Editor: Robin Jones
Publications Committee: Emily Harper, Steven James, Brenda Kerr, Jeff McMahan, Dave Munson, Janae Peterson, and Bill Shadrake.
Other contributors to this issue: Barbara Draude, Brian Holley, Steve Prichard, Aaron Schmuhl, Tom Wallace, Albert Whittenberg, and Photographic Services.

The Communicator is a publication of the Information Technology Division, 3 Cope Administration Building, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37132, (615) 898-2512.

The Communicator is published five times a year and is distributed free of charge. Portions of the Communicator may be reproduced in nonprofit publications without written permission if proper acknowledgment is included and a copy of the reproduction is sent to the editors.
Digital Signage Goes Campus-Wide

The MTSU digital signage project, which began as a single sign in the newly built College of Education building, is steadily growing—currently more than 60 signs are in development phases, from conception to operational.

Content displayed on signage varies from campus dining facility hours to images from Homecoming to upcoming events in the Student Union Ballroom and Tucker Theatre and much more. The emergency channel displaying critical alerts has been used to provide immediate notification to the University community.

To support this growth, the University has recently acquired campus-wide licensing of the signage software from FourWinds Interactive. This new license agreement allows an office/department/college to install a sign without the expense of purchasing an individual license and its subsequent annual maintenance fee.

To install a digital sign, the office/department/college would supply the display hardware, cabling, installation, and control PC; ITD will provide the player PC software, and create the design template, building the sign display and working with content providers to develop a plan for content deployment.

For more information on installing a new sign, requesting content to be added to a current sign, content-creation guidelines or other digital signage questions, visit http://www.mtsu.edu/digital-signs/.

Keep Tabs on the MTSU Scorecard

Did you know that MTSU now publicly displays a scorecard displaying some of its own performance indicators compared to peer and sister institutions? The MTSU Scorecard can be accessed by clicking the blue “MTSU Scorecard” button in the middle, right hand side of MTSU’s homepage or at http://www.mtsu.edu/scorecard/. Comparing MTSU to eight Tennessee public, four-year universities as well as 14 national peer institutions, the scorecard displays indicators of how MTSU is ranked in regard to institutional and student performance and financial characteristics.

In each category, MTSU is ranked in the top, middle, or bottom third according to the color code in the key on the scorecard: green, yellow, or red respectively, and white for NA. A list of the 14 national comparison institutions can be viewed by clicking the national button, and a listing of the eight sister Tennessee institutions can be viewed by clicking the Tennessee button. Click the arrow beside “Institution/Student Performance” or “Financial” to expand the scorecard.

An example of the MTSU Scorecard.
As technology continues to evolve, so do those who use it. Students today don’t necessarily learn like students of yesteryear. Books are being supplanted by mobile technology, as are movies and music.

Steve Decker in the Department of Speech and Theatre realized this when he redesigned his speech classes by incorporating innovative technology into his curriculum.

By flipping his course—that is, moving course content coverage such as lectures outside of the class in order to devote in-class time to activities and practice—Decker has become a class coach rather than a “sage on stage.”

“Millennials want to learn in a way that is compatible with the tools they enjoy such as iPhones, iPads, tablets, etc.,” said Decker, who began teaching at MTSU in 1997. “Even if they don’t have a mobile device, all of my class materials are still accessible on a PC. With that in mind, this process has revolutionized my concept of teaching.”

After flipping three of his five classes this semester, Decker has already detected substantial improvements in the way in which his students absorb information.

“Students say they like this because they can rewind my lectures if they don’t understand a certain concept,” he said. “I definitely know that the students are coming to class more prepared and are taking responsibility for their learning. That is my major goal with this endeavor.”

Some of the technological tools Decker uses in his redesigned classes include Prezi, YouTube, Connect Lucas, and Twitter. He believes that many instructors and students have become desensitized to conventional lectures and presentations, where classes are confronted with lots of slides containing too much information in quick, disjointed succession.

“Too often PowerPoint slides are notes from lectures and appear as a wall of words to students,” Decker said. “It’s too much for them to take in visually. Prezi’s zooming canvas opens up the classroom to active learning and interactivity, making lessons understandable, memorable, and fun. It’s perfect for interactive classroom sessions or group projects.”

Decker uses the Tegrity screen-casting tool to record and post his Prezi presentations. Students are able to download the Tegrity application and view lectures from their mobile devices.
Profile–Steve Decker (continued from page 4)

He has also posted all his lectures on YouTube, allowing students to view him on their mobile devices or conventional desktops.

“Since my classrooms are flipped, I have the students watch the lectures outside of class and take notes on the lectures using the Cornell note-taking system, on which I grade as they come into class,” Decker explained. “The class time is spent working in groups and answering critical-thinking questions that apply to the materials they covered in the recorded lectures. Students tell me they enjoy watching the videos versus listening to long lectures in class. I am simply taking the mobile devices they are addicted to and using them as a tool for learning.”

In addition, Decker records all of his lectures on the Connect Lucas website, which allows students to access D2L and view lectures on their devices.

“Connect Lucas has recorded speeches that we watch and analyze as groups in class,” he said. “This allows the students to make observations and draw conclusions.”

Each student group includes four members with assigned roles such as facilitator, recorder, timekeeper, and presenter.

“Each of the roles has a specific responsibility which I outline in a short video they are required to watch,” Decker said. “This keeps large groups of students well organized and prevents chaotic class sessions. This is an effective technique in very large classes.”

Decker has a Twitter account, from which he plans to dispatch weekly inspirational messages and coaching tips as a way to instill confidence, morale, and motivation in his students.

The rebooted classes are a stark contrast to Decker’s traditional courses, which were clogged with verbose lectures, little-to-no group work, and disinterested students.

“They just didn’t absorb the information,” he said. “The sit-down-and-feed-me type of learning wasn’t working. What I’m trying to do is not only flip a classroom but flip the students’ philosophy. Instead of saying that it’s the teacher’s responsibility to teach them, they’ll be responsible to learn while the teacher will be there to coach them.”

Decker recalled several success stories related to the integration of technology into learning. In one instance a student had missed four of the first five classes due a scheduling conflict. After making an arrangement with his employer to return to the class, the student found himself significantly behind.

“He was five class lectures behind and had missed key content necessary to create a speech,” Decker recalled. “However, because all lectures were available on YouTube along with a video on how to do his first speech, he was able to catch up with the class and won’t have to retake the course.”

One student was having health issues that kept her out of class. Instead of withdrawing and repeating the course or even drop-ping out of school entirely, the student was able to take advantage of the course’s online materials in order to keep pace with the rest of the class. Decker was able to help this student meet her obligations and keep her in school.

The flipped classroom structure allows Decker to teach his students discipline and time management skills such as “slicing and dicing” their tasks rather than getting overwhelmed with homework.

“So they’re learning life principles that will carry them into a career that will allow them to succeed,” Decker said. “The only security is excellence. Those who are excellent at what they do are able to persevere when the economy falters.”

Decker taught himself how to use the technology necessary to design his flipped classroom by voraciously reading books and watching online videos about effective research methods on the subject. He continues to research different means of improving student engagement in and out of the classroom.

“It’s an ongoing process,” he remarked. “I haven’t stopped learning, and I will never stop learning. I will continue to research and read as many books as I can. I want to be a catalyst to help faculty who are interested in learning how to redesign their courses to fit the current learning styles of the students.”

MTSU Retires Old PLUS System

October was a month of mixed feelings as MTSU’s Alpha hardware and VMS operating system were officially retired, taking with them the last vestiges of the University’s long-running PLUS administrative software system (i.e., SIS, HRS, FRS, ADS, and LMS). It was sad to see an old friend go. In 1985, MTSU adopted the predecessor to the PLUS software, which used the VMS operating system running on VAX servers. The VAX hardware was eventually updated to Alpha hardware but still ran VMS as the O/S.

The University used the PLUS/VMS system for 20 years before Banner finally entered the picture. PLUS provided data for and integration with TRAM, MTSU’s voice response self-service system, as well as WebMT, MTSU’s first Web-based self-service system that preceded RaiderNet. If you have memories of “BON-NIE,” “CLYDE,” FOCUS programming, COBOL, or even green bar paper, you are recalling this system. All user accounts were turned off on October 11, 2013, and the plug was pulled on October 31, 2013.
Offices around the world are trading in their printers, paper, ink cartridges, and fax machines for network servers, and Middle Tennessee State University is no exception.

As MTSU endeavors to become paperless, it is Laura Spivey’s task to convert the stacks of existing archived documents into digital formats. As an imaging specialist, Spivey works in tandem with Rosland Grigsby-Rhyne to provide imaging services to create and maintain computer-imaged records.

“Our ultimate goal is for the University to become paperless,” she said. “We started with two departments (the Business Office and Human Resources), but ultimately we aim to make MTSU paperless. Right now we are scanning documents for HR; much of it is backlog files, but there are some current items as well.”

Before joining the Information Technology Division in 2010, Spivey had worked at Belmont University as an admissions visit coordinator, scheduling visits for prospective students. While working in financial aid at the University of the South, she helped implement that university’s very first digital imaging system, the Banner Document Management System (BDMS). She is a 2007 graduate of Martin Methodist College with a B.S. in management information systems.

With office paper consumption decreasing by nearly 40 percent from 2000 to 2011, Spivey’s knowledge of digital imaging and BDMS has become instrumental in the University’s ongoing mission to move away from ink and paper.

“There are so many backlog documents to scan that the majority of what we do is to get the University caught up,” she said. “One of our biggest challenges is to maintain the quality in an efficient manner. But I enjoy helping these other departments reach their goals. I think it’s neat to be involved in something as large as helping the entire campus go paperless. That’s a goal they will reach at some point and it feels great to be a part of it.”

When she’s not buried in piles of documents at her scanner, Spivey enjoys jogging and volunteering at an animal rescue organization called PITTIE (Pit Bull Initiative to Transform, Image, and Educate). The Nashville affiliate of PITTIE strives to educate the public about pit bulls and to dispel the myths surrounding the animals.

In addition, she is pursuing a master’s in education for administration and supervision and expects to graduate next summer. Spivey also serves as a mentor for Nashville Achieves, a program that assists high school seniors with college access and success strategies.

Spivey is a resident of Smyrna with her husband, Brad, and two dogs, Polly and Sis.

Taking the Paper Out of Paperwork

Security Corner

Please do not use the same password for multiple accounts. Many online sites use your email as your user ID. By using the same password for multiple sites (i.e., PipelineMT, email, Facebook, etc.) chances are greatly increased that your account can be compromised.

If a site on which you registered is compromised, you can bet a hacker is going to try the same password on your email account that was used on that site. If they are successful, they can quickly take over your identity using email history and password reset services.
Curt Parish is the Information Technology Division’s new senior network engineer. In this capacity, Curt reports to the director of Network Services and manages projects including time, resources, and labor across different departments for the design, administration, and management of all data, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), and networks across campus. He designs, installs, maintains, troubleshoots, and documents network infrastructure and maximizes network performance by monitoring performance, troubleshooting network problems and outages, scheduling upgrades, and collaborating with network architects on network optimization. Curt enhances his job knowledge through participation in educational opportunities, reading professional publications, and participating in professional organizations. He researches and implements approved new technologies to increase network performance, reliability, and functionality. He also develops technology roadmaps by testing new and modified network configurations and new/upgraded hardware and software, and he develops plans for implementation, integration, cost and timelines for updating new and existing technologies. He performs detailed analysis of traffic flows and patterns identifying and resolving performance, scalability, and availability issues and reports network operational status by gathering, prioritizing, and formatting data to inform management of current status and applicable trends. Before MTSU, Curt worked as a senior network engineer for Union University in Jackson, Tenn. He holds a bachelor’s degree in computer science from Union University and is certified in CCNA (Cisco Certified Network Associate). Curt lives in Murfreesboro with his wife, Nancy, and two Yorkshire terriers, Dexter and Sophie. His daughter works as an attorney in Memphis. Curt plans to put his best effort into supporting the University’s growth and helping nurture the campus’s network infrastructure.

Telecommunication Services Director Steve Prichard, Telephone Systems Assistant Director David Senior, Assistant Director of Accounting Services Ronda Vaughter, and Voice Mail Coordinator Emily Harper recently attended Enterprise Voice and Online Services for Microsoft Lync Server training in Nashville. The five-day course emphasized how to design and configure Enterprise Voice and Online Services in Microsoft Lync Server 2013. The course also provided attendees with the knowledge and skills to configure and manage a Lync Server on the premises, in the cloud, or in a mixed deployment. In addition, it provided skills needed by IT or telephone consultants to deliver a Lync-based enterprise voice solution. The training provided

Continued on next page

With the holidays quickly approaching, you may find it necessary to disable your voice mailbox so that callers can’t leave you messages while you are away. Simply follow the instructions below:

1. Log in to your voice mailbox.
2. Press option 5 from the main menu (not a spoken option).
3. Press option 7 to administer call answer options.
4. Press option 1 to prevent callers from leaving messages.

After activating call answer disable, you may want to record a personal greeting informing callers that you will be away from the office and when they can expect you to return. For instructions on recording a personal greeting, please visit http://www.mtsu.edu/itdtele/services/voicemail.shtml. After returning to the office, remember to log in to your voice mailbox to turn off call answer disable, allowing callers to once again leave voice mail messages. To turn call answer disable off, follow the itemized instructions above.

For questions regarding call answer disable or any other voice mail feature, please contact the voice mail coordinator at extension 2206.
ITD Staff News (Continued from Page 7)

information on how to configure Lync Server 2013, and guidelines, best practices, and considerations that will help optimize the Lync server deployment.

Assistant Vice President Brian Holley and Systems Programmer Paul Collette attended the annual EDUCAUSE Conference during the week of October 14 in Anaheim, California. The event featured numerous beneficial seminars relating to Banner security, data storage, and disaster recovery. Many topics were relevant to today’s operations and looked to the future for long-range planning.

Director of Database Services James Foster and senior systems analysts Sylvia Bergant and Eve Jones attended the CoHEsion Summit in October in Nashville. CoHEsion (Consortium of Higher Education) is a membership organization of the community of users from all the global education solutions of Ellucian. CoHEsion is an independent association run by and for the users of Ellucian solutions, where users can share and learn new ideas and processes.

Information Technology Help Desk Hours

The Information Technology Help Desk will be temporarily operating from the basement of Cope Administration Building until its new location is fully renovated. The Help Desk hours are as follows:

Sunday, 2:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m.
Monday, Thursday, 7:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m.
Friday, 7:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
Saturday, 8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

The Help Desk will be open for emails, telephone calls, and walk-in traffic on the days and times listed above. The Help Desk will be closed on official University holidays and will work a modified schedule when classes are not in session.

For more information, contact the Help Desk at (615) 898-5345.

Launch Taskbar Apps without Clicking

You probably have all your favorite apps pinned to your taskbar in Windows 7. Launching each requires moving your mouse all the way down and clicking. An easier way is to press the Windows key on the keyboard and the position of the app in the taskbar.