MTSU Website Revitalization Project Underway

The MTSU Website Revitalization Project continues with exciting events happening in the new year.

With a scheduled unveiling in April 2013, the new MTSU website will launch with a fresh new look designed to be viewed on all media including traditional desktops, laptops, tablets, and smartphones.

One of the reasons that inspired this endeavor is the complexity of the current University website, which consists of over 17,000 pages and has grown to a point where it has become challenging to navigate. The new website aims to do away with extraneous or esoteric information to become more user-friendly in order to attract prospective students.

In preparation for the launch, members of the ITD Web Team and Marketing plan to visit representatives from each of the University’s programs to develop engaging Web page content to highlight each program’s expertise and uniqueness.

Future additions include further content updates such as custom audio and video for each program page.

Stay tuned for more updates.

Virtualization (VDI) Update

Progress continues to be made on the Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) project, also known as C@M or “Cloud at Middle.” The project aims to deliver software applications and services to students and faculty anywhere they are and on any device (including thin clients). For example, when a student logs into the network from a smartphone, he or she will be able to access the software associated with their courses from any location.

Technicians have virtualized approximately 41 MTSU employee computers with two being used by fulltime staff. The University has also published three Banner-related applications, including AppXtender Desktop Application Generator, AppXtender Desktop Document Manager, and Banner Spreadsheet Budgeting.

Approximately 653 student computers have been virtualized, 14 of which were recently virtualized in the Student Services area in KUC 308.

Meanwhile, 35 student/public stations have been virtualized in the...
Faxes Without the Paperwork

Did you know you can now send and receive faxes without hooking up a single fax machine?

All employees already have access to send faxes, but to be able to receive a fax you will need to have an incoming phone number and mailbox configured for your department.

GFI FaxMaker makes sending and receiving faxes an efficient, convenient, simple, and cost-effective process.

In essence, it is a centralized fax server solution that doesn’t need a physical fax device.

Here’s how it works.

**For outbound faxes:**

You can send a fax from your computer using Outlook and attach recognized files from your hard drive. Emails are sent to (phone number)@faxmaker.com. Internal fax numbers are four digits, but external numbers must include a 9, 1, and the area code just like a normal outgoing phone call would require.

The email never leaves campus. All faxmaker.com addresses are sent to the MTSU FaxMaker server to convert to a fax and are sent over a standard phone line.

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 it 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. 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.

**For incoming faxes:**

Calls are answered by the FaxMaker server.

The fax is converted to a PDF document and forwarded to the designated department’s email account for faxes.

The fax is already in a PDF format and can be detached and imported in BDMS or any other document management system.

Faxes can be printed if required, but by default they are in electronic form to reduce paper consumption. Because the FaxMaker feature is paperless, high volume faxes are limitless.

For more information about the GFI FaxMaker or if you have any additional questions, contact the Help Desk at 615-898-5345.

Enhanced Wireless Service

MTSU and AT&T recently partnered to install a small antenna repeater system in the Cope Administration Building to improve AT&T Wireless signal strength in the basement. The system has a rooftop antenna to receive the signal. It then amplifies the signal and distributes it to small antennas mounted overhead in the hallway. AT&T Wireless users will find they have a strong signal now where in the past the signal would have been weak or non-existent.

VDI Update

Continued from page 1

Walker Library; 11 stations on the first floor (four under the stairs, one in a cubby across from the Library Technology Services area, and six at the end of the stacks in the center of the building). Eight of them can be found on the second floor, eight on the third floor, and another eight are located on the fourth floor.

These stations are only utilized for the exploration of the library’s catalogue system via a browser and are used for the sole purpose of locating academic resources.

The library also has two “test” machines that have been virtualized. The first machine has the standard classroom image and the other machine has a personalized image with common software that is found within the Digital Media Studio (DMS). These machines are being tested by staff and faculty only, and a log is being kept of issues and concerns that may arise.

For more information about C@M, visit http://mtsu.edu/projects/virtualization/index.php.
Are you considering designing a new course or re-designing a current course? Course design and effective teaching go hand in hand. Taking the time to plan and design courses is of the utmost importance in creating learning environments and experiences that enhance student engagement and learning. While designing (or redesigning) courses can be quite overwhelming, breaking the tasks down into practical steps can be less daunting. There are a number of course design models available (see references), but hopefully the tips/steps shared here will help you get started:

1. Identify the course learning outcomes. In an effort to promote quality courses and keep consistency in the curriculum, most (if not all) departments have a pre-determined set of learning outcomes per course. However, if learning outcomes have not been predetermined, ask yourself: “What should students know or be able to do as a result of taking this course?” The concept to this approach to course design is called “backward design,” a term coined by instructional designer Grant Wiggins.

The premise to this approach to course design is to “begin with the end in mind.” Ultimately, the idea is to make “learning” the central focus in course planning and highlight specifically the learning that is expected to take place as a result of enrolling and participating in the course. In the book titled How Learning Works: 7 Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching, the authors write: “Learning and performance are best fostered when students engage in practice that focuses on a specific goal or criterion, targets an appropriate level of challenge, and is of sufficient quantity and frequency to meet the performance criteria” (p. 6).

2. Determine how student learning will be assessed. Revisit the course learning objectives identified in step one. What should students know or be able to do as a result of taking and participating in the course? What projects, activities and assessments can be constructed to enable students to demonstrate the desired learning outcomes? In true “backward design” fashion, constructing assessments prior to gathering content resources supports a more targeted effort in content selection for meeting performance and learning goals.

3. Gather course content resources appropriate for the student-learner. Conduct a textbook review (if one has not already been selected). Review relative journals, periodicals or other publications. Search for multimedia possibilities via YouTube, Vimeo, TED, iTunesU, etc. Identify other resources (simulations, for instance) that will contribute to course content, promote student engagement and enhance the learning process. Do you know another content expert to consider inviting into the classroom to serve as a guest lecturer? Organize the content resources by learning outcome to be better prepared when proceeding to the next step.

4. Divide or “chunk” the content into sections. Identify the learning objectives for each section of content. (Note: Learning outcomes are the overall goals for the course; learning objectives are the building blocks necessary for reaching those goals.) This task not only helps to determine the sequence in which the course will be taught, but also takes into consideration brain-based research and models how students learn. Also mentioned above: “Students naturally make connections between pieces of knowledge. When those connections form knowledge structures that are accurately and meaningfully organized, students are better able to retrieve and apply their knowledge effectively and efficiently. In contrast, when knowledge is connected in inaccurate or random ways, students fail to retrieve or apply it appropriately” (pp. 4-5).

If teaching in a face-to-face classroom environment, break the sections into class meeting; if teaching in a blended, hybrid or online environment, break the sections into units or modules.

5. Evaluate. Reflect. Modify and adjust. Keep a journal and take notes throughout the semester and particularly at the conclusion of the course to serve as reminders of areas for improvement. Set aside time to reflect upon what areas worked well and which areas could use improvement. Make modifications and adjustments when applicable. Course design assistance is available for the campus teaching community in the LT&ITC, located in Walker Library, room 348. Center hours are Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Please contact Paula Calahan at 615-494-7671 or paula.calahan@mtsu.edu for more information or to schedule an appointment.

In addition, the LT&ITC is currently hosting a faculty learning community for the purpose of redesigning existing face-to-face and hybrid/online courses. Pending feedback from current members, it is anticipated that this FLC opportunity will continue on an annual basis and a call for proposals will be conducted each fall semester.

Continued on Page 8
Those involved in the construction industry can tell you that it’s very competitive. In order to be successful in such a venture participants have to have a thorough comprehension of who the key players are and the specific roles of an organization. Students enrolled in the Concrete Industry Management (CIM) program are expected to hit the ground running after they graduate with a thorough understanding of the interrelationships and interdependencies that exist among these key players.

In order to foster this ability in their CIM students, Middle Tennessee State University associate professors Heather Brown and Ayaz Ahmed turned to technology.

“Everyone is learning differently now,” Ahmed said. “It’s a lot more interactive as opposed to reading a book. So we decided to come up with a 3-D model that would exhibit all of the interactions between all of the players within the construction industry.”

Using programs such as AutoCAD, Revit 3D modeling software, and Prezi, the professors collaborated with the Computer Science Department and ITD to create a dynamic learning tool that enables students to see firsthand the roles of each construction project participant.

Brown and Ahmed even received an innovation grant for their efforts.

“The project started out as a 3-D model that featured participants (e.g., the owner, contractor, subcontractor, etc.) and allowed you to click on that particular player to show you what documents they initiate,” Ahmed explained. “Ultimately the goal is to create an immersive environment, where students gain points based on the decisions they make.”

The interactive construction model will serve as a supplemental learning tool that allows students to understand the roles of each participant in the field; the sequence of activities; the interaction amongst all participants in the industry; and the flow of communication between project players and the timeline of information. In addition, the model will feature actual examples of construction-related documents used throughout the building process.

The interactive construction model will also be able to view a 3-D representation of the actual construction process throughout various phases of development.

The 3-D model will be delivered through the CIM website and can be accessed at any time.

As a student, Ahmed felt that his most influential instructors were those who could transcend the textbooks to speak to their students in terms of real-life experiences. As someone who’s worked within the construction industry for several years, Ahmed believes being a teacher is the most important project he’s ever undertaken.

“I always wanted to be that person who comes in and says, ‘This is what the book says, but this is how it really happens,’” said Ahmed, who came to MTSU in 2011. “I think the students appreciate the fact that someone from the industry is on the other side of the fence so to speak to coach and mentor them. What I really enjoy doing is making an impact in a student’s life and their way of thinking. I think that will serve the construction industry a
lot more than me just going out and doing a particular project. It’s longer lasting than anything I’ve done in the industry.”

Ahmed and Brown hope their 3-D model will help facilitate CIM’s goals to be the premier provider of highly trained graduates to the concrete industry and to be a leader in utilizing technology in helping students gain a well-rounded understanding of the construction business.

Ahmed believes there is a distinct difference between memorizing a piece of information and learning it. In contrast to forgetting information gleaned from a textbook, experiencing the inner workings of a construction project firsthand allows students to understand it in a way that no textbook can provide.

“When I teach a class I ask myself what I could do to engage my students in critical thinking and trying to understand as opposed to memorize,” he said. “By understanding the information and learning it, it can last a lifetime. The goal is to work with our students and gain their confidence.”

The interactive model aims to engage the students in understanding the underlying forces and relationships that are critical to the successful completion of a project.

Ahmed said technology is crucial when it comes to enhancing his students’ learning process.

“Technology is absolutely necessary,” Brown said. “If you don’t use it you’re missing out on a whole lot. I think learning is not one-dimensional. It’s through multiple mediums. The way we consume information nowadays is totally different. There is an instant barrage of knowledge available to you, so really the focus now in education is not necessarily providing knowledge but using knowledge wisely once you have it.

“Technology plays the most critical role in providing knowledge through as many means as possible,” she added.

MTSU Employees Eligible for Microsoft Home Use Program

As a full time MTSU employee, you are eligible to participate in Microsoft’s Software Assurance Home Use Program (HUP). This program enables you to get a licensed copy of most Microsoft Office desktop PC applications to install and use on your home computer.

Under HUP, you as an MTSU full time employee and a user of qualifying applications at work (e.g. Office enterprise) may acquire a licensed copy of the corresponding HUP software to install and use on your home computer. You will only be allowed to obtain one license. You may continue using HUP software as long as you are employed by MTSU.

Please note that some product and language versions may not be available at the time you place an order. For up-to-date information on the availability of HUP software, visit http://microsoft.com/licensing.

To access the Microsoft Home Use Program, go to PipelineMT, then RaiderNet. Click on the Employee tab, then click Microsoft Home Use License. You will be given an access code that is assigned to MTSU for full time employees’ sole use in accessing the HUP site. You are not to share the access code with anyone.

If you should terminate employment at MTSU, it is your responsibility to uninstall HUP software.
If anyone’s ever scheduled some time in the ITD conference room, they’ve likely encountered Cassie Mullins.

As an administrative assistant to Vice President and Chief Information Officer Bruce Petryshak, Mullins coordinates and schedules all activities for the vice president. In addition to her other duties, she is responsible for scheduling, facilitating and monitoring the ITD conference room.

Before coming to the Information Technology Division, Mullins’ tenure at MTSU began in 2005 when she worked as an executive aide in the University’s Office of Professional Laboratory Experiences.

She joined ITD in 2007 as then-CIO Lucinda Lea’s administrative assistant.

Working with two CIOs has given Mullins a broader perspective on ITD because both Lea and Petryshak have two different styles of organization.

“To my benefit it has been a blessing to have been an administrative assistant to Lucinda Lea and to Bruce Petryshak,” she said. “They’re two individual people, and their styles are totally different, but both styles work well.”

Mullins also gathers, investigates, researches, analyzes, and/or studies information affecting University-wide, interdepartmental, or intradepartmental issues and makes recommendations to the vice president as appropriate. Plus, she supervises four student workers and serves as the ITD representative for the TBR Employee Giving Campaign.

As a student advocate, Mullins mentors five students to ensure they receive the most out of their college experience.

“Having been a student at MTSU and the mother of an MTSU graduate, my philosophy is to always treat the students the way I would want my daughter treated,” she said. “I love working with the students; they are our future.”

Maintaining ITD’s calendar and being the department travel facilitator can be daunting tasks at times because of the sheer volume of projects, but Mullins said the relationship she has with her co-workers makes it all worth it.

“The most challenging thing is being abreast of all the services ITD provides the University,” she noted. “It’s a very busy division.”

Bruce is an outstanding leader with his efforts to keep us focused and afloat. Bruce and Associate Vice President Tom Wallace are constantly working together to keep ITD up to date with modern technologies.”

When she’s out of the office, Mullins enjoys horseback riding, stock car racing, camping, and other outdoorsy activities. She and her husband, Bobby, were married October 20, 2012 at a farm on horseback.

She also has an affinity for cooking, especially her signature brownies. Mullins’ cooking skills were tested when she was tasked with preparing an entire Thanksgiving dinner for 22 people, at the age of 14.

She has a 2-year-old grandson, Harper, and is awaiting her second grandchild due this August. Being recently married, Mullins and her husband share residence in Murfreesboro and McMinnville.
Dustin Hampton recently joined ITD as a systems administrator. Dustin previously worked as the assistant chief of technology at Jackson Madison County Schools, where he managed and maintained all technology and ITD personnel in the school system. In addition, he also assisted the chief of technology in any administrative and budgetary duties.

Dustin holds an associate’s degree in computer information systems from Jackson State Community College and is in the process of earning his bachelor’s degree in organizational leadership at Union University. He has amassed extensive training and experience in the field of IT throughout the past eight years along with several certifications.

Alecia Heidt is ITD’s newest Web specialist. She comes to MTSU from Communication Components, where she served as a graphic and Web designer who was responsible for designing and producing graphic designs for both print and online content. She also designed and developed user interface, graphics, and styles using a combination of HTML, CSS, and Flash. As a Web specialist, Alecia will design, develop and implement various multimedia technologies on the MTSU website; consult with clients to create and upload site pages; create graphical elements for digital signage; and research new methods, techniques, and software for Web design. Alecia is a 2003 graduate of Purdue University with a degree in computer graphics technology (with a focus on multimedia and Web development) and a minor in computer technology. She currently lives in Murfreesboro with her husband, Andy; three dogs, Mona, Lola, and Ali; and a cat named Bruno. She looks forward to using her background in design and programming to help bridge the gap between print and multimedia content.

Donald “Mac” McCarthy has joined ITD as its senior IT security analyst, where he will monitor the networks for unauthorized and/or suspicious activities, assist with disaster recovery in cases of major network outages or compromises and to advise faculty, staff, and students of the University on IT security-related matters. Before coming to ITD, Donald worked as a systems administrator for the University’s Computer Science Department. His team was responsible for the daily operations of the departmental IT infrastructure, and he also helped build the new computer clusters that are now operational and are conducting advanced scientific research for the Computational Science, Chemistry, Physics, and Biology departments.

Donald has netted 10 years of experience in systems administration and has worked for both small companies and large organizations such as the U.S. Army’s First Infantry Division. He lives in Murfreesboro with his wife, Sara; son, Samuel; and daughter, Emily. Donald plans to continue to educate the MTSU population on ways to better secure their digital identities and make it harder for cyber criminals to access their information.

Instructional technology specialist Brenda Kerr and MTSU computer information systems professor Melinda Korzaan attended the Lilly Conference in Oxford, Ohio last November.

Melinda and Brenda developed a hands-on workshop to expedite the learning curve for instructors using Second Life (SL) as a teaching platform. This session was designed for beginners, but seasoned SL users were also encouraged to participate. Attendees engaged in activities formulated from four years of SL experience gained by the presenters. Activities took participants from the novice level to collaborative tasks. Participants left with a foundation of SL knowledge and experience, a few freebies, and some innovative ideas of their own. For more information about the event visit www.units.muohio.edu/lillycon/.

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. ITD will kick off the 2013 forum season at 2:30 p.m. Feb. 19 in room 475 at the James Walker Library. Additional forums will be held from 11 a.m. till noon on Wednesday, Feb. 20 in room 201 of the Student Union Building and from 10-11 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 21, also in room 201 of the Student Union Building. For more information including agenda items, future meeting dates, locations and times, or how to suggest agenda topics visit http://www.mtsu.edu/projects/schedule.php.
ITD Faculty/Staff Workshops

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 http://www.mtsu.edu/itd/facstaff_train_itd.php

Resources


Course Design
Continued from page 3

Tired of chasing your mouse? Use keyboard shortcuts to open programs. Click Start > All Programs, and locate the application you want to set a keyboard shortcut for. Right click it and select Properties. Under the ‘Shortcut’ tab, there is a section for ‘Shortcut key.’ Click inside there and press CTRL + ALT + whatever key you want to use to open the application, and it will register in the window. Click OK and test it out! It could save you lots of time over the course of your work day.

Using PipelineMT Credentials to Log into Rave

In order to simplify the management of your emergency notifications (MTSU Rave Alert) account, the login process has been changed to allow you to log into your Rave account with your current MTSU PipelineMT credentials. Please remember that all staff, faculty and current student email addresses are loaded into MTSU’s Rave Emergency Alert system. You still have the opt-in process available for adding landline and mobile phone numbers for text alerts, as well as additional email addresses. Please visit https://www.getrave.com/login/mtsu to manage your account. You do not have to do anything right now if you do not wish to make any changes in how you are notified presently, and all currently-defined notification settings will remain as they are during this authentication change.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Alana Johnson at 615-898-2677 or e-mail Alana.Johnson@mtsu.edu.