CampIT Inspires New Ideas

CampIT was held from May 20 – 31 in the Telecommunication Building classroom. The first week was held virtually, with faculty reading online assignments about developing Web-supported, Web-enhanced, blended, and fully online courses. Attendees experienced taking an online course from a student’s perspective, learning to use most of the basic D2L tools. They also learned about accessing files of various types from a student’s point-of-view using several different Web browsers. Week one stressed the importance of developing a community of learners in an online course.

As week one kicked off, participants introduced themselves and got to know the camp counselors by participating in a scavenger hunt designed to familiarize participants with common D2L tools. They investigated online course design and implementation methods and established a D2L space to initiate their own online course development. Participants also learned about appropriate online content and how multimedia file types could be integrated into D2L. Campers learned about different online evaluation methods which will not only teach and test students but also reveal the effectiveness of online course design. Week one was wrapped up by reviewing and using D2L tools that help the instructor get to know students including how to maintain a confidential means of communication with students throughout the course.

During week two, attendees learned about the flipped classroom approach, COURSE DESIGN Model, and D2L tools from the faculty perspective. Day one D2L sessions included an introduction to D2L and grading, creating quizzes, and using Respondus. Day two was spent learning to grade using D2L’s dropbox and tools that can be tied to each dropbox to enhance the grading and feedback experience, D2L rubrics, and TurnItIn originality reports and comments. Emphasis was placed on creating community using the D2L discussion boards for whole class or small group discussion. Participants also learned about the D2L email, LiveRoom, chat, checklist, calendar, and blog tools. Day three started out with more detailed instruction on using the TurnItIn dropbox tools followed by COURSE DESIGN Model and a mini-workshop on designing PowerPoint and online presentations for instruction and accessibility. On day four, the final day of camp, participants learned to create SoftChalk lessons from existing course materials and enhanced these lessons using media, quiz questions, and interactive activities.

During the camp show-and-tell session, attendees shared their plans for online, hybrid, and Web-enhanced courses. Week two ended with a tour of the Learning, Teaching, and Innovative Technology and the Faculty Instructional Technology Centers.
The Importance of Complex Passwords

The next time you change your password for FSA/Email or PipelineMT, it will have to meet new complexity requirements.

As of April 15, 2013, complex passwords will be required when changing your password for FSA/Email and PipelineMT accounts.

On June 3, 2013, ITD began activating the six-month password change requirement. If you have not changed your password within the last six months to the new complexity requirements, your account will be locked, and you will have to call the Help Desk to get your account reactivated.

You must meet at least three out of the four requirements when creating a new password including uppercase letters, lowercase letters, a number, or a special character such as a question mark. Those who haven’t changed their passwords in the last six months will be asked to update their passwords to meet the new guidelines.

Listed below are the mandatory requirements and guidelines you must follow when selecting a FSA/Email or PipelineMT login password:

- Password must be changed every 6 months.
- Minimum password length is 8 characters (should contain more).
- Maximum password length is 24 characters.
- Passwords must not match user name (ex: jsmith01).
- Passwords must not match your name. (ex: Jacksmith).
- Passwords cannot use the words MTSU, password, change, or temporary.
- Passwords must contain THREE out of the following FOUR items:
  - At least 1 uppercase character;
  - At least 1 lowercase character;
  - At least 1 numeric digit;
  - At least 1 special character, for example: %, {, ?, +, etc.

In addition to the requirements list above, the following are also strongly recommended:

- Passwords should never be shared, written down, or e-mailed to others.
- Passwords should be easy to remember (for you, not others!). The temptation to use loved ones’ names, birthdays and anniversaries is great. But “easy to remember” can also become “easy to guess.” And, in a world where hackers use sophisticated software to crack passwords, an easy password is an open invitation for trouble. The challenge is to create something that is memorable for you but tough for others to decipher.
- Passwords should be changed if there is a chance that it has been heard or seen by anyone else.
- Don’t use typical patterns on the keyboard. Some people will use passwords that meet complexity requirements, but are created by typing certain keys in sequence. An example is 1qaz!QAZ.

Notice that this is constructed by hitting the same four keys on the keyboard, then hitting them again with the <SHIFT> key held down. These patterns are now part of the standard dictionary attacks, so don’t be tempted to use them.

While complexity is important, length is also a key component. If your password meets complexity requirements with sufficient length, then hackers can’t use standard dictionary-based tools to crack your password. They must resort to brute force attacks. This is where long passwords are much harder to crack.

If you want to check the strength of your password (how hard it is to crack with a dictionary-based attack), go to this website: http://www.passwordmeter.com/

To check how long it will take to crack your password by brute force, visit https://www.grc.com/haystack.htm.

If you can’t think of a password at all, visit http://www.pctools.com/guides/password/ to have a password generated for you.

For more additional information, contact the ITD Help Desk at 615-898-5345 or at help@mtsu.edu. For more information about password changes, visit http://www.mtsu.edu/passwords.php.
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
Michael Arndt, President, Faculty Senate
Dwight Brooks, Academic Department Chair
Terry Whiteside, Academic Dean
Barbara Patton, Administrative Computing Committee Chair
Coby Sherlock, SGA President
Wajid Choudhry, ITD Staff/Administrative Department Head
Willis Means, Instructional Technology Committee Chair

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 Musicant, Behavioral & Health Sciences
Sandy Benson, Accounting
Willis Mean, Elementary and Special Education
Michael Allen, Academic Dean
Joan McRae, Academic Chair
Kevin States, Administrator, Student Affairs
Mike Gower, Administrator, Business and 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
Michael Arndt, Faculty Senate
Watson Harris, Director of Academic Technology
Coby Sherlock, Student, SGA President
Charles Chusuei, Chemistry

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
Michelle Stepp, Alumini Relations
Hilary Stallings, Liberal Arts
Danny Kelley, Student Affairs
Bruce Petryshak, Information Technology
Barbara Patton, President’s Office
Mitzi Brandon, Academic Affairs
Benjamin Coman, Public Safety
Lisa Rogers, ITD, ERP Systems

Instructional Technologies Development Committee

This committee makes grant and fellowship award recommendations to the vice president for IT 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 integrating instructional technology in the classroom.

Nita Brooks, Computer Information Systems
Jay Sanders, Education
Gina Pisut, Human Sciences
Cossette Collier, Mass Communications
Andrew Worsey, Mathematical Sciences
Peter McCluskey, English
Elsie Annette Williams, University Studies
John Donovan, Art
Peter Cunningham, Graduate Studies Representative
Brenda Kerr, ITD Representative

ex officio
Coby Sherlock, Student

ITD 988-5345
making IT work for you
A Collaborative Effort

Applied statistics has become a popular general education course at MTSU in recent years, enrolling approximately 1,000 students annually. With that many individuals involved, how do the students and instructors stay on the same page?

A team of MTSU mathematicians believe they have found an answer to that conundrum thanks to an ambitious project called Modules for Teaching Statistics with Pedagogies using Active Learning, or MTStatPAL for short.

In a collaboration between the Department of Mathematical Sciences, the University College, the Information Technology Division, and Mathematics and Science Education PhD graduate students, a team created a technology-facilitated initiative to develop learning materials designed to help each instructor effectively use active learning to teach important concepts in applied statistics.

With the assistance of ITD, the team, which is comprised of Associate Professors of Mathematics Drs. Lisa Green and Nancy McCormick; Associate Professor of Mathematics Education Dr. Jeremey Strayer; Associate Professor of Universities Studies Mathematics Dr. Scott McDaniel; Professor of Mathematics Dr. Ginger Holmes Rowell; and graduate students Natasha Gersten-schlager and Brandon Hanson, used Camtasia Studio and other technologies last summer to create a pre-class activity, instructional tutorials, a tip sheet with a script for the in-class activity, activity solutions, and additional assessments to assist lesser-experienced instructors in teaching the ever-popular applied statistics course.

“We want to make sure that everyone who’s taking that class has the benefit of what research has shown to be good teaching practices for teaching statistics,” Green explained. “There has been a lot of research on how to teach statistics effectively, but the problem with that is that people who have been implementing that research are not teaching the majority of the intro statistics classes.”

Green noted that this problem is a nationwide issue and is not exclusive at MTSU.

“The project includes the implementation of in-class activities designed to promote student discourse and help students gain an understanding of statistical concepts through active learning processes.

To allay concerns about classroom control stemming from in-class activities, the team created a video tutorial featuring an experienced instructor conducting similar lessons.

“That way the inexperienced teachers can see how the classroom functions using this lesson and what they can expect,” Green said. “For concerns on how to cover all of the material we’re also implementing the out-of-classroom components of the module that include independent work for the students so that they’re prepared as they come into class and get the value out of this activity.”

The innovative module also includes online quizzes and a student note-tak-

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Microsoft Lync Update

With completion of the network assessment and topology design, preliminary work has been completed for MTSU’s Lync infrastructure. In early June, MTSU Telecommunication Services will work with the local service provider, Windstream, to convert traditional PRI (Primary Rate Interface) service to SIP (Session Initiation Protocol), which is a signaling communications protocol widely used in voice and video calls over the IP network.

While existing Avaya campus telephone users will notice no change in how they make and receive calls, the conversion to SIP will allow future development with Lync to be 100 percent IP-based.

Upon successful conversion of PRI service to SIP, MTSU Telecommunication Services plans to migrate the first users from the Avaya telephone system to Lync. This initial target group, which will only include ITD staff, should be completed in July, with a phased rollout to targeted groups within the campus community to begin in the Fall.

Telecommunication Services will be working closely with targeted groups to discuss implementation strategies, training, and ongoing user support. For further updates, please visit the Lync Project site at http://mtsu.edu/projects/lync/index.php.

Emerging Technologies That Impact Learning

The Emerging Technologies for Teaching and Learning Faculty Learning Community (ET-FLC) is a cooperative venture of the Office of the Provost, the Learning, Teaching, and Innovative Technologies Center (LT&ITC) and the University College. The ET-FLC is a group of interdisciplinary faculty who identify, explore, experiment, and share emerging technologies that impact teaching and learning. One of its primary outputs was a one-day conference/series of demonstrations called “Innovative Technology for YOUR Classroom and Gadget Petting Zoo” which was held on April 4, 2013.

The six workshops/demonstrations include the following:

Collaborative Effort
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“Of the most important goals is making sure the teachers feel comfortable when implementing the program,” McCormick added.

The team was confronted with the challenge of making inexperienced instructors feel at ease when teaching new materials in a style not necessarily their own.

“It’s hard to use someone’s activities for the first time,” Rowell said. “We have many talented teachers that are adjuncts. Maybe they haven’t taught statistics before and are asked to teach it because enrollment is increasing. And we also have a lot of very smart graduate students who might know statistics, but maybe they have no experience in teaching. So we’re really trying to make it easier for those individuals.”

Meanwhile, Strayer, a math education researcher, analyzed data to measure the team’s success in this endeavor, and the results are exceptional because they reflect that crucial student-to-student discourse is occurring.

According to the team’s findings, 69 percent of students said the module’s pre-class activity helped them understand regression, and 87 percent said the in-class activity helped them understand regression. In addition, 68 percent indicated they would prefer having lessons using this new method.

“The results are fulfilling in terms of the students learning the material,” Rowell said. “We want them to think rather than have a teacher just tell them what to do.”

These results were especially gratifying for the team which spent many painstaking hours compiling data to get the project off the ground.

MTStatPAL’s success is also raising eyebrows and generating interest among colleagues all over the country. The team recently presented the module at the Tennessee Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Conference and the U.S. Conference on Teaching Statistics in North Carolina. They will present research findings at the August 2013 joint Statistical Meetings hosted by Montreal.

McDaniel said he and his colleagues hope to have 10 similar modules created, tested, and evaluated over the next two years.

“There are two components to this project,” he explained. “It’s about curriculum development and it’s about professional development for the teachers of introductory statistics. So we’re trying to make it easier for the teachers and effective for the students.”

Graduate student Gerstenschlager assisted the team by generating ideas and data analysis.

“This project has opened us up to learning about research in statistics education,” she said. “By just doing data analysis I’m able to practice the things I learned in class. That’s been very beneficial to me, as well as presenting at conferences.”
Embracing the Change

If there’s anything that Data Center Services Director Toney Flack has learned during his three decades of IT experience it’s that when it comes to technology nothing is certain besides change.

Because of technology’s nature, it constantly evolves.

“Any organization of this size and vintage has a lot of inertia and a lot of resistance to change,” Flack said. “You have a lot of people who are comfortable with not changing whatever version of product that they learned originally such as a favorite email client or Windows version. But change is inevitable and is beneficial. It is necessary for continuous improvement.”

As the Information Technology Division’s Data Center Services Director, Flack manages ITD’s data centers and DR site and oversees technical operating system administrators, storage administrators, the data center assistant director and operators, and the University’s fundamental administrative computing infrastructure.

Flack and his team continuously improve IT operations at MTSU by facilitating and enabling projects that interject new technologies and processes and deprecating or eliminating old ones through the use of NetApp storage, Dell blade servers and Citrix and VMWare virtualization technologies. This reduces costs through improved effectiveness and efficiencies resulting from simplicity and commonality.

“We’re busy with a lot of diverse projects presently,” he said. “But I still enjoy working with my team at Data Center Services. We have built a team that’s comprised of both legacy and newer talent. It’s the best team I’ve ever had the pleasure of working with. They’ve worked extraordinarily hard to improve the operation and look of the Cope and Telecommunications Building data centers. These facilities are in tremendously better condition than they were when I started here four years ago.”

One of the Data Center Service’s most notable accomplishments has been organizing and cleaning up the data centers so as to make them more supportable and serviceable than they were and less expensive to operate. Flack and his team did this by eliminating old systems with little or no substantive usage such as VMS, HP/UX (Frank), Mirapoint, Optidoc, and numerous DEC, Compaq, and HP EVA3000 and 8100 disk storage systems.

“With as many new students as we have annually, we cannot stagnate at any certain level of technology,” he said. “Technology is highly important and integral to our business. All of our students come with expectations because they have learned technology in school or at home or on their own in terms of iPhones, iPads, Droids, etc. So, I think that we’re entering an era of bring-your-own-device, where the students are demanding secure, ubiquitous high-speed Wi-Fi and cellular wireless connections, and bullet-proof e-mail and Web applications from anywhere.

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Chad Mullis is the Information Technology Division’s new systems administrator. In this position, Chad will maintain the Windows server systems. He previously served the University as the director of Business and Finance Support Services. Chad holds a master’s degree in Accounting and Information Systems and is a Citrix Certified Administrator. He is also certified in XenApp 6.

Instructional Technology Specialist Brenda Kerr recently obtained her LERN (Learning Resources Network) Faculty Developer certification, which prepares faculty developers to assist faculty members in improving instructional quality at their institutions. Upon receiving the certification, the developers identify current trends and issues that need to be addressed by faculty development programs; become aware of the latest innovations and best practices in instructional strategies; become apprised of emerging technological advances; understand the needs and characteristics of today’s learners; and address the changing role and needs of faculty.

Assistant Vice President Brian Holley presented at the Middle Tennessee Cyber Summit. The event, which was held on the MTSU campus May 7-8, addressed criminal, intelligence, disruptive, and information cyber threats and featured presentations from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security, Federal Bureau of Investigation, the United States Secret Service, and several private cyber security organizations.

Associate Vice President Tom Wallace, Assistant Vice President Lisa Rogers, Assistant Vice President Barbara Draude, Assistant Vice President Brian Holley, Web specialists Eric Niemiller and Charles Cantrell, and student MTSU Mobile App team members Chelsea Rath, Robert Reaves, Matt Houglum, and Reid Wiggins recently attended the 42nd Annual Tennessee Higher Education IT Symposium, which was held at Fall Creek Falls State Park near Pikeville. The yearly event allows participants to present and gather information related to the technological needs of higher education institutions. Attendees include information technology professionals at higher education institutions, faculty members integrating technology into instruction, and staff providing support for critical administrative tasks of higher education institutions. Presentations included “Digital Signage: A year of lessons learned” by Draude; “Changing Perspective: The University Website as a Marketing Tool” by Niemiller and Cantrell; and “Challenges in Developing a Mobile Application in a Team-Based Environment” by Rath, Reaves, Houglum, and Wiggins.

It is important to keep your campus phone number and location up to date. This information is given by the campus operator and automated speech directory and is also published in the Campus Directory and on the Find People search on MTSU’s website. To verify the information supplied, simply login to PipelineMT, click on the “RaiderNet” tab, then click on “Update Addresses and Phones,” paying careful attention to the information supplied for “Campus Location and Phone.”
Toney Flack

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Do you work on confidential information? Budget reports? Student Data? Are you worried about someone stepping into your office and seeing this info while you walk down the hallway for a drink of water? Insta-Lock your desktop in Windows 7 by pressing Win+L. This keeps all of your programs open in the background (whereas logging off closes everything and makes you reopen everything) but keeps your data safe from prying eyes.

Toney Flack

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on campus or off.”

Before joining MTSU in 2009, Flack worked as an IT director for the Detroit-based Lear Corporation, a global automotive supplier, where he was responsible for that company’s data center operations, system administration, and worldwide telecommunications.

He holds a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering from Lawrence Technological University in Detroit, a master’s degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Michigan, and has completed most of the coursework for a Ph.D. in systems engineering from Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan.

In addition, Flack holds certifications in CISSP, PMP, ITIL, Six Sigma, PE (professional engineer), IBM AIX (Unix), and Juniper JNCIA – SSL.

He lives in Murfreesboro with his wife, Kelly; and sons, Andrew and Christian. Andrew is a senior Spanish major and education and art minor at MTSU and plans to become a high school Spanish teacher. Christian is a freshman psychology major at MTSU attending on a President’s academic scholarship.

Flack enjoys jazz music, film, theater, and spending time with his family. In addition, he also enjoys working on cars and does volunteer work for Habitat for Humanity.

ET-FLC

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• Creating QR Codes;
• Developing a WordPress Site;
• What is Screencasting?
• Using Google Hangout and Blackboard Collaborate;
• Educational Apps for the Classroom;
• Building Your Professional Life with BePress and Google Scholar.

A “Gadget Petting Zoo” was also available where faculty could use some of the latest technology hardware such as a Microsoft Surface, Kindle Fire HD, Nook HD, iPhone, iPad, mini wireless keyboards and projectors.

The following faculty members participated: Becky Alexander, Debra Sullivan, Kevin McNulty, Melinda Richards, Mirza Murtaza, Jason Vance, Gloria Green, and Ronda Henderson. Robin Blackman, and Albert Whittenberg acted as facilitators for the FLC.

ET-FLC plans to continue meeting in Fall 2013 and beyond possibly organizing future events for the MTSU community.

For more information, visit http://etflc.wordpress.com/.