Instructional Computing: Facilities and Services

Instructional Computing offers a variety of technology options to the faculty and staff of UMSL to be used for instructional purposes. This includes the management of forty-three technology enhanced classrooms (TECs) as well as audiovisual services to "open classrooms" across campus. Training on the use of all equipment and TECs is provided by Instructional Computing to the faculty and staff prior to the start of each semester.

All of the TECs are equipped with a multimedia enhanced instructor workstation including a VCR and ceiling mounted projection system. In addition, eleven of the TECs have student workstations. The "stick rooms," those rooms that are equipped with just a multimedia enhanced instructor workstation, are perfect for PowerPoint presentations or classroom demonstrations. All of the TECs are Internet accessible and loaded with the same software available in the Instructional Computing labs.

TECs are available for semester long courses and one time classroom use. TEC requests for semester long courses are handled by individual departments in conjunction with the Office of the Register. One-time use requests for TECs for the current semester should be directed to Instructional Computing at x6852 or by email at av@umsl.edu. A minimum of twenty-four hour notice is required when requesting a TEC, though more notice is appreciated. It should be noted that demand for these rooms is high and priority is given to courses using the rooms for an entire semester.

Instructional Computing also provides audio-visual (AV) resources to "open classrooms". An "open classroom" is defined as a classroom not under the control of a specific department and is determined by the Office of the Register. There are over a hundred of these open classrooms on campus. AV requests can be submitted to Instructional Computing via our website (http://www.umsl.edu ~iclabs/linked/avservice_request.htm), email (av@umsl.edu) or phone (x6852). A minimum of twenty-four hours notice is also required for all AV requests. The AV equipment provided by Instructional Computing includes TV/VCRs, slide projectors and more. A complete list of available AV equipment can be found here:

http://www.umsl.edu/technology/instructionalcomputing/Audio_Visual/audio_visual.htm

Instructional computing continues to grow to meet the needs of faculty and staff at UM- St. Louis. A new stick room will be added for the Intersession 2002 semester, and an additional 10 stick rooms will be added for the Fall 2002 semester. For the latest news, check the Instructional Computing website at:

http://www.umsl.edu/technology/instructionalcomputing/

Student Email: Accounts and Forwarding Information

All UM-St. Louis students are given a 10 MB account on the server studentmail when they register. All former students where moved over to the studentmail server at the end of Fall 2001. Student email addresses for all University correspondence are:

gatewayid@studentmail.umsl.edu

Many students come to UM-St. Louis with email accounts from the online services (yahoo, msn, hotmail, etc.) that they have used for years. Although students have the option of forwarding their studentmail account to these accounts, we discourage the practice. Here's why:

1. Accounts on studentmail are 10MB; online services typically give no more than 6MB of space without paying a fee. It is very easy to fill up a mail account this small, especially if the student is trying to forward 6mb of mail from their studentmail account to a mailbox that already has email and is being flooded with Spam. A locked Yahoo account that no longer receives mail, is no longer receiving grade information, class announcements, changes, etc. If you choose the forward your mail, keep an eye on your allocated space.

2. Web Hosts use a variety of anti-spam filters. Hotmail, for example, offers free Spam filters that are supposed to prevent unsolicited mail from clogging up the inbox. Hotmail users must configure their Spam filter to accept the UMSL domain, else all email forwarded from their studentmail account will not make it through the Spam filter and is placed directly in the users trash. The trash is automatically emptied by default when the user logs out, thus deleting all messages from the individuals studentmail account. Grades, class announcements etc., are deleted without ever being read. Know your online host's rules about Spam, and configure your account accordingly.

3. Reliability: rarely does a day go by that these systems are not inaccessible for some portion of the day. This can be very frustrating when deadlines need to be met, assignments due or announcements acknowledged.

4. Lastly, security is an issue with online web mail. As soon as the email is forwarded outside of the UMSL domain, it is susceptible to being intercepted by anyone so inclined.

We discourage students from forwarding their studentmail accounts anywhere outside of UMSL, though we will not stop the practice. However, Instructional Computing will not provide technical support nor will the Technology Support Center. If you forward your mail, you are on your own.

Mike Jones
Site Supervisor – Instructional Computing

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Lab Software Upgrades

Beginning Winter 2002, all lab and classroom pc's were upgraded from the Windows NT platform to Windows 2000. This upgrade, coupled with a server upgrade provides a more stable computing environment and faster application delivery.

Because of Windows 2000 more restrictive security model, and the complexity of Windows 2000 Logo certification, many applications that were written "for Windows" have difficulty running on the 2000 platform. As a result there are some things to keep in mind when evaluating software for use in the classroom:

- Is the software 32 bit? If it will run on Windows 3.11, it's likely 16-bit software, and we cannot install it. Unfortunately, most of the software bundled with educational textbooks cannot run on the Windows 2000 platform. Evaluate the software yourself. If the software is nothing more than videos, or documents, and if the copywrite allows, try uploading them to My Gateway for online availability to your students.
- **Can the software be run from a Network server**? If it cannot, we typically will not be able to make it run in our environment. The exception of course is browser plug-ins, which must be installed locally. But these too, must be tested and installed, so browser plug-ins must be submitted like any other software request.
- **Does the user have to be an Administrator?** Software not designed to be run on a Network, typically requires administrative rights on the local machine to function properly. None of the machines in the computers in the labs and classrooms have Administrative rights. Your Vendor can tell you if this is a requirement.
- **After installation, does the software require you to reboot?** Install the software on your own machine, if you are required to reboot, this typically means that the software must update certain registry keys that are loaded when the machine boots. As a result, your students will not be able to install and run this software on their own in the open computing labs. It must be installed on the server. Again look to make documents, PowerPoint presentations and videos available through My Gateway.
- **New software is installed in the labs and classrooms three times a year: Before each Fall, Winter and Summer semesters.** The upcoming deadline for software to be installed for Fall 2002 is May 31, 2002. (The summer 2002 deadline has already passed) The lengthy timeline is necessary for purchase, vendor support and testing before rollout to the lab and classroom computers.
- **Lastly, plan ahead.** Don't assume any software package will run on our net work. Use the resources available to you (The Faculty Resource Center, the Lab and Classroom group in SSB 103) for testing and information gathering. We will be happy to assist you any way we can. A final note: because it "works in your office" doesn't mean that it will run on our network.

Marty Jones
Systems Administrator – Specialist
Instructional Computing

Virus Protection at UM-St. Louis

New computer viruses appear almost daily and their existence is often the subject of E-mail that is sent around campus. Since these viruses occur with such frequency, Information Technology Services does not, itself, make it a practice to alert the campus to their existence. The reason we have adopted this policy is that we have a strategy in place that has done a good job protecting the campus from these viruses. We do alert the campus when we feel that we do not have the situation under control.

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Teaching with Technology

Chances are good that if you are reading this column, you are using MyGateway, the computer-based course management system that UM-St. Louis has adopted to support instruction. During this winter 2002 semester, 560 instructors are using MyGateway in 827classes. Faculty are learning the software's features as they consult with a colleague or TA, experiment with control panel features, or attend one of the frequent workshops offered by Information Technology Services or the Center for Teaching Excellence. Using MyGateway, course information is uploaded so that students can print copies of misplaced syllabi, read lecture notes, review power point presentations, link to websites, take quizzes, participate in online discussions, and send e-mail messages to their professors. Now that you've increased students' self-sufficiency, how can you use MyGateway to increase how effectively they learn?

That question captures the varied challenges of using a course management system. Students assume responsibility for obtaining course documents, but they could mistakenly conclude that attending class is not necessary because materials are available at the touch of a button. The challenge to faculty, then, is to use the features of MyGateway to provide learning experiences that are interesting, meaningful, and encourage students' thinking and problem solving skills.

Consider these ideas. Putting a lecture outline on-line rather than uploading the entire lecture's notes requires that students pay more attention in class, think about the lecture content, and insert it into the outline. Students could be required to prepare for class by responding (using complete sentences and at least one current citation) to a discussion board question about the chapter assignment. Most classroom and on-line activities can be creatively adapted for MyGateway so that students actually spend more time outside of class meetings thinking about the course, applying content to relevant problems, and preparing for the next class meeting. Faculty are designing such strategies and refining them as they are implemented.

The monthly noon Conversations about Teaching and Learning are designed so that faculty can learn from one another's experiences and accomplish the dual goals of adapting the latest technologies as instructional tools and engaging students in meaningful learning. ITS/CTE Summer Institute 2002, Teaching with Technology, will offer faculty the opportunity to develop skills that will enhance traditional classroom interaction, as well as provide a foundation for developing strategies and techniques for active, online learning. Look for further details on Summer Institute 2002 in the coming weeks. Send suggestions for workshop topics on MyGateway to Robert Keel rok@umsl.edu or Peggy Cohen Peggy_Cohen@umsl.edu.

Peggy Cohen
Director, The Center for Teaching Excellence
Interim Associate Vice Chancellor
for Academic Affairs

Robert O. Keel
Lecturer, Sociology
Specialist, Information Technology Services

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

The following contacts are whom to call to arrange for various services in ITS due to recent administrative changes. The remainder in the "Faculty Technology Guide" are still correct.

AV equipment for classrooms:
Chris Scheetz ext. 6742

AV equipment for seminar rooms or non- instructional use:
FRC ext. 6704 or
SCFRC ext.7317

Scheduling ITV or ATC class rooms for courses or classes:
Ken Voss ext. 6987

Video Production, Internet 2, or Streaming Video requests:
Marcel Bechtoldt ext. 6173

Don Boehnker,
Managing Editor

New Contract for Computer-Based Learning Products

The University system had a new contract for computer based learning products. The contract is with NETg and provides over 700 courses for computer based learning. The courses range from end-user based titles to technical titles that focus on product/vendor certification. The courses are simulation-based and are accessible through Internet Explorer. University faculty, staff and students can access these courses. To logon and access a course, use Internet Explorer, go to http://www.umsl.edu/technology/training and follow the instructions on that site. If you have questions or would like more information, please contact Mary Brown: X6016 or mary_brown@umsl.edu.

Great Ideas

Faculty who are integrating My Gateway into their face-to-face and online classes shared some of their great ideas at a recent Conversations about Teaching and Technology session. They mentioned benefits to their students, as well as course management shortcuts they personally have found advantageous. Here is a brief listing (with thanks to these innovative colleagues):

Leighanne Heisel, Communication, has used email, file exchange, and discussion forums to shift time and place constraints of her students, who are mainly working adults with families, enrolled in Evening College. The flexibility she has built into her courses has permitted them to complete courses they might have otherwise dropped.

Tivoli Majors, English, incorporates the web resources' searches done by her students in external links. She also uses the quiz feature for review and preparation in taking the face-to-face tests and exams. Her textbook publisher provides question banks.

Peter Acsay, History, also reported using quizzes as study aids and has incorporated them as counting toward class participation. He posts lecture notes weekly.

Michael Grissom, Business Administration, has transitioned BA 103 Computers and Information Systems to a self-paced online course for multiple sections. He has assembled "Frequently Asked Questions" in a file folder in Course Documents.

Mary Cooper, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, posts frequent announcements, saying, "It's all about communication." She announces deadlines, new materials, and thoughts of the week. "Allowing students to communicate in a Discussion Forum without jumping in immediately helps to create a classroom culture. It's a version of staying silent after you (the instructor) ask a question," she added.

Margaret Scordias, Teaching and Learning, utilized the sequential nature of learning units in Course Documents to introduce students to key concepts, application and synthesizing learning activities. She has added I-movie classroom videos as archived video streams as part of the learning units.

Sandra Lindquist, Nursing, has integrated a variety of online content provided by the textbook publisher. She cautioned that some resources are promised, but not available at the time they're needed. Do reviews of the online resources in advance of selecting publishers.

Cynthia Mitchell, Nursing, described the online RN-to-BSN program which was launched Fall Semester, 2001. Each student cohort will proceed together through the two-year program of courses. Students sign agreements that they have the necessary computing equipment and experience per a Computing Requisites and Skills Inventory.

Please contact the faculty members directly for details about these (and additional) great ideas. You may contact the Faculty Resource Centers for help in preparing online learning materials, too. Email frc@umsl.edu or phone 314.516.6704.

Cheryl Bielema
Instructional Development Specialist

Virus Protection at UM-St. Louis (Cont'd from page 1)

What follows is a review of UM-St. Louis' virus protection strategy.

We are currently in our third year of running an anti-virus software program called Antigen from Sybari on our Exchange email servers. This software works in two ways. First it scans all email messages and attachments as they are sent through the system using both an anti-virus definition file and a custom file filter list. The anti-virus definitions are updated automatically every day. Sybari is very diligent in keeping up with any new virus threat and we typically see two or more new updates each week from them. The custom file filter is a list of files that we maintain which are filtered out of any email message. It will even look inside of zip files for viruses. This allows us to protect the campus from viruses during the period between when a virus is discovered and when a new definition is available. When an attachment is filtered out by Antigen, a file with the name "original_filenam.txt" is sent in its place explaining that the original attachment was removed because it was infected with a virus.

The second way Antigen can be used is for scanning Exchange mailboxes and folders housed on the server. This would only be used in a catastrophic event where a virus got into the system and infected many mailboxes before a definition or filter was in place.

Antigen has been extremely successful for us in stopping the spread of rampant viruses. On an average day, we stop anywhere from 15 to 30 virus infected emails from reaching their destination. This can go as high as several thousand when some of the new Outlook worms have hit. We do still need our users to practice responsible computing though. There will always be a lag time between when a virus is released onto the Internet and when it is discovered and can be stopped.

Kyle Collins
Principal Systems Administrator
and MCSE, MCP+I