Space Determines Destiny – the SSB449 Learning Studio

Welcome to the Fall issue of Iterations! I mentioned the new SSB449 Learning Studio (also known as the “flexible technology enhanced classroom”) in the Spring 2007 issue. We now have two semesters of experience with the space and can describe some preliminary outcomes. This article is excerpted from a longer paper that will be submitted for publication.

The Learning Studio is an important harbinger of change on our campus – in our conceptions of learning and in our approach to development of physical space. We were struck by how the completed space itself challenged faculty and staff to rethink the possibilities at UMSL – and thereby redefine what learning at UMSL could mean.

The idea that physical space can express culture and mold outlook is familiar to architects and designers, but not so much to technologists or even to university administrators. The genesis of the title is suggested by a student entry in the assessment blog for the room:

“...This is my 2nd semester in this classroom, and every day, I like it more than the first. I feel that this classroom promotes a positive learning environment the second you walk in the door. No longer do we sit in a stark classroom, walls white, with windows that make a classroom feel like a prison. No longer are we confined to one hard-walled desk. No longer do we stare at one chalkboard with feet on tile floors. In this classroom, the mood is different. The warm walls and pictures, colorful carpet and welcoming couches beg to be noticed! Students sit where they choose, at group tables or individual tables...When you walk in the room, you want to learn...The technology and comfortability [sic] of this classroom does not compare to any other classroom I’ve been in. It is my hope that the university will take this into consideration, and create more classrooms like this...”

This is a poignant affirmation of what Project Kaleidoscope calls the “self-evident” effect of “attractive, well-designed, well-equipped contemporary spaces for teaching and learning” and the creation of “excitement and learner” in student and faculty achievement. Since our campus intent is to increase recruitment, retention and engagement, space may be the key determinant.

Process

As with many innovations, the impetus for new classroom design began with a few forward thinking people. Principal among them was Bill Klein, who organized a “Provost’s Forum” on Innovative Classroom Design in early 2006, following the model established by ITS, which had organized several “Provost’s Forums” on Teaching and Technology the previous year. He and Rocky Keel conceptualized a Forum in a working paper that captured the characteristics of an “innovative classroom.”

One concern that loomed large from the start was finding space in which to establish the new classroom. UMSL has no “spare” space, especially of a size and accessibility that would be suitable for a new classroom. Taking an existing classroom out of use in order to convert it would also decrease our overall classroom stock. In a serendipitous development, the Center for Academic Development was in the process of re-organizing and there was a possibility that their previous remedial and testing space would be available. ITS staff worked with the Director, who was intrigued and excited about the potential of a different kind of classroom, to negotiate the terms and responsibilities for converting the space from one use to another.

Design and Creation

The design principles articulated by the Forum include flexibility, comfort, collaboration and accessibility. The design and implementation team was truly cross-functional. Although involvement of individuals ebbed and flowed depending on need, they came from ITS, faculty, Facilities, Design and external companies. Associate Dean of A&S Terry Thiel, and other faculty were pleased that we were involving faculty in the design of classrooms. We announced availability of the classroom late in Fall Semester 2006 for classes starting in January 2007 (Spring Semester). The facility was about 75% booked by the start of the semester. Faculty included instructors from Languages & Culture, English, Mathematics & Computer Science, Education and Business.

We have begun to call the facility a “Learning Studio,” not only because the term “flexible, innovative technology-enabled classroom” is awkward, but the word “studio” better conveys the sense that this is an experimental or even provocative space in terms of:

- innovation for the campus,
- its new approach to physical planning,
- being a prototype which we intend to learn how to develop other spaces...
- supporting new ways to learn and to teach.

These were high expectations of a single classroom renovation, so we built in an assessment process from the beginning, using:

- Faculty observation
- Blogs
- Video observations
- Surveys
- Debriefing meeting of the faculty (video streams available at: https://annimedia.umsl.edu/umsl/S88449Event Part 1.m4v and https://annimedia.umsl.edu/umsl/S88449Event Part 2.m4v)

Reflections

Whether the Studio has “succeeded” depends on the definition we use. Based on the assessment results, we think that the Studio has clearly succeeded in stimulating change. For example, instruction in the Studio coincided with a stimulating change in contemporary spaces for teaching and learning, and the creation of excitement and learner in student and faculty achievement. Since our campus intent is to increase recruitment, retention and engagement, space may be the key determinant.

Beyond the Tools: Environments for Learning

Conversations about Teaching and Technology:

Assessing Practice, Internship, and Performance-Based Skills

November 30, 2007 - 1:00-3:00 pm

134 Social Sciences Building

• Anticipating student questions about course and performance-based assignments
• Providing options and flexibility for learning
• Developing process and product assessments
• Selecting hardware and software
• Piloting the process and assessing results

Cathy Bledsoe
Instructional Designer: Center for Teaching & Learning
bledsoefm@umsl.edu

Focusing on Teaching and Technology Regional Conference

November 1-2 J. C. Penney Conference Center

You are invited to join colleagues who will be show-casing new and successful practices for improving and documenting learning using technology. This year’s Focus on Teaching and Technology Conference theme is Learning: Impact and Evidence.

Key note presenters include:

Dwight W. Allen, Eminent Scholar of Educational Reform, Old Dominion University. He will kick-off the conference, Thursday, November 1, 3:00 PM, with the topic of “Using Technology to Create Student-Generated Content.”

Charles Dziuban, Director of the Research Initiative for Teaching Effectiveness, University of Central Florida will share his experiences in “Promoting Information Fluency” at the noon lunch, Friday, November 2.

Vendors’ exhibits and presentations will involve faculty innovators and provide additional opportunities to see cutting-edge applications.

Find additional information and register for the conference at: http://www.umsl.edu/CTT.

This 2007 conference is co-hosted by Maryville University, St. Louis Community College, and Saint Louis University, as well as UM-St. Louis.

Cheryl Bledsoe
Instructional Designer
Center for Teaching & Learning
bledsoefm@umsl.edu

The Learning Studio is an important harbinger of change on our campus – in our conceptions of learning and in our approach to development of physical space. We were struck by how the completed space itself challenged faculty and staff to rethink the possibilities at UMSL – and thereby redefine what learning at UMSL could mean.

The idea that physical space can express culture and mold outlook is familiar to architects and designers, but not so much to technologists or even to university administrators. The genesis of the title is suggested by a student entry in the assessment blog for the room:

"...This is my 2nd semester in this classroom, and every day, I like it more than the first. I feel that this classroom promotes a positive learning environment the second you walk in the door. No longer do we sit in a stark classroom, walls white, with windows that make a classroom feel like a prison. No longer are we confined to one hard-walled desk. No longer do we stare at one chalkboard with feet on tile floors. In this classroom, the mood is different. The warm walls and pictures, colorful carpet and welcoming couches beg to be noticed! Students sit where they choose, at group tables or individual tables...When you walk in the room, you want to learn...The technology and comfortability [sic] of this classroom does not compare to any other classroom I’ve been in. It is my hope that the university will take this into consideration, and create more classrooms like this...”

Assessing Practice, Internship, and Performance-Based Skills

November 30, 2007 - 1:00-3:00 pm

134 Social Sciences Building

• Anticipating student questions about course and performance-based assignments
• Providing options and flexibility for learning
• Developing process and product assessments
• Selecting hardware and software
• Piloting the process and assessing results

Cheryl Bledsoe
Instructional Designer: Center for Teaching & Learning
bledsoefm@umsl.edu

Dept.

- 1:00-3:00 pm

134 Social Sciences Building

• Anticipating student questions about course and performance-based assignments
• Providing options and flexibility for learning
• Developing process and product assessments
• Selecting hardware and software
• Piloting the process and assessing results

Cheryl Bledsoe
Instructional Designer: Center for Teaching & Learning
bledsoefm@umsl.edu

Don’t forget to register for Short Courses! www.umsl.edu/training

Information Technology Services • University of Missouri – St. Louis

OCTOBER 2007

Iterations
Removing Social Security Numbers from Your Files

We have all seen the news stories about identity theft and many of us have been victims. For years Social Security Numbers were used on campus as identifiers, but now there are very few cases of the information needed for the computer systems. Having files with SSNs in them opens the door to identity theft opportunities. UMSL along with the other UM System campuses have initiated a project to clean SSNs out of our internal systems wherever possible.

We need your help with this project. Many of you have files containing Social Security Numbers on your computers and we need you to remove or clean those files. If you actually need the SSNs, we can also help you protect them. You may have hundreds of thousands of files that need to be searched.

This could be a daunting task. ITS is working on a program that will scan through all of your files and help identify the ones with SSNs. It will search through your local hard drives and your network storage. This program will be available for download in the next few weeks for the PC and Mac. Please look for an email that will contain links to the programs and instructions on how to use them. This is a very serious issue and we ask the entire campus to help by cleaning out their files.

Mark Morrow
System Security Analyst
morrowm@umsl.edu

Windows XP Firewall

Why do I need a firewall? The Internet can be a hostile environment and you are susceptible to attacks whenever you are connected. The Microsoft Windows XP Firewall is considered to be a strong, inspector bankruptcy used to set restrictions on what connections can be made to your computer from the Internet and to define the type of connections that are not allowed.

The XP Firewall was designed to work with personal firewall applications, not to compete with them. It doesn’t block any outbound traffic. Its rules are rather basic compared to other personal firewalls. But the XP Firewall has no cost (other than the OS cost). It has little or no complexity, so if the average home user uses the wizard to configure his Internet connection, he may not even know that it is in place. The Windows XP firewall is designed to block all inbound packets, unless those packets are in direct response to a query that was sent out from the machine.

The firewall is designed to help you keep hackers out of your system.

Is the Windows XP SP2 Firewall sufficient? The answer to this is a little more difficult. I give it a “yes” and “no”. Windows Firewall is a tremendous improvement over earlier versions and certainly better than no protection at all. Having a stateful host firewall that will block unrequested Internet traffic can only help most people. It is also a step up that it is more customizable and configurable than its predecessor.

The downside is that users who choose to rely on it need to understand its shortcomings and not fall for any false sense of security. It may do what it was designed to do, but it is not protecting everything. Win- dow firewall for any false sense of security. It may do what it need to understand its shortcomings and not fall do what it need to understand its shortcomings and not fall

Paula Smith
Associate Vice Chancellor for Information Technology
smithp1@umsl.edu

Duplex Printing is now the default setting for IC Lab Printers!

Along with providing monochrome printers in all of the computer labs and color printing in select labs, Instructional Computing has added the ability to print in near real-time to all IC Staffed computer labs. These duplex printers allow users to print on both sides of the paper thus saving paper and space. These printers offer a wide variety of additional services offered are published in various locations. For a complete list of campus computer labs and their resources visit the Lab Resources Matrix at www.umsal.edu/technology/instructionalcomputing/labs/resourcemail.html

Debra Williams
Chief Information Officer
Instructional Computing Labs
williamsdou@umsl.edu

Guest and Wireless Access at UMSL

Getting wireless internet access on campus will get a little easier soon. In our current system you can only connect to the wireless network but cannot get to the web without then connecting through TritonNET, the Virtual Private Network. During the fall semester, ITS will be converting our wireless access to a registration system. This new system, named "Wireless," will allow you to connect to the wireless network and register for a day or week of services without using a VPN. It will also allow basic internet access and email access via the web, much like you have at most public-internet cafés.

This is not public internet access. The first time that you connect to TritonNET your system will be registered to your UMSL SSD ID and access will be made available. Access to the TritonNET program will be available 24/7 and can be given to campus guests that need access to the Internet or webmail. TritonNET will also be used to allow internet access for different conferences and campus events. Look for an email soon with more details and the live data for TritonNET.

Mark Morrow
System Security Analyst
morrowm@umsl.edu

Space Determines Destiny (cont’d)

The Studio is a low investment, and so another set of goals has to clearly relate to learning outcomes: engagement, attitude and collaboration. Measures of those indicators are qualitative at this point, but based on the comments from students and faculty who actually learned and taught in the space, we would cautiously say that the Studio has succeeded in those goals as well.

UMSL is preparing for re-accreditation in 2009. An important theme from the accrediting agency is “continuous improvement” and linking everything that the university does to student learning and outcomes. This applies not only to newspace in the former language laboratories but also to areas such as classrooms, auditoria, as well as a studio that was once a peripheral space.

We are also working with the Advancement Office on fund-raising opportunities. While the Studio was expensive relative to the IT budget, it’s also much less expensive than an entire building. A Learning Studio presents a focused and defined opportunity for a donor, that we can show at least preliminary effects on student outcomes should also be attractive. The result is tangible and could be a naming opportunity for a donor who desires that recognition.

We have had casual and organized visits to the space, including from the faculty and students for sharing their thoughts, observations and experiences in the Learning Studio.

Acknowledgements

ITS thanks Steve Bailey, Beth Eckelkamp, Rocky Keel, Bill Klein, Kim Sallee, Donna Wadsworth-Brown, Susan Yoder-Kreger and their students for sharing their thoughts, observations and experiences in the Learning Studio.

"We help you be successful with technology"
Jim S. C. Smith
Associate Vice Chancellor for Information Technology
smithp1@umsl.edu

Desktop System Plan

The UM-System Volume Purchasing Committee has approved the signing of new contracts with Hewlett Packard and Gateway for the purchase of desktop and laptop computers. The VIP standards committee is currently working on the system configurations for the new standard desktop and laptop offerings for all UM campuses. ITS is currently evaluating these new systems and will make a decision soon regarding which hardware platform to provide as DPS replacements. Our current contract with Dell will be expiring at the end of the calendar year. ITS will be making the switch to the new hardware for this year’s plan participants.

Christopher Boyce
Director, Instructional Computing
boycec@umsl.edu

Unix Migration Leads to Samba Changes

Many Instructional Computing users may have noticed that Samba is no longer available as a means to connect to their Linux boxes. Samba was a utility that allowed users to access their free Unix Space as a network drive to store documents. Previously accessible via the Start menu on Instructional Computing computers or via download for home use, Samba allowed users to sign in and access their files stored on the Unix or Admiral servers. Due to the Unix migration project in August, however, the Samba tool is no longer available.

Instead, from any Instructional Computing computer, users may simply click on “My Computer” and the drive will be automatically mapped as part of the user authentication process when logging in. For students, this will show up as “administr,” and for faculty and staff, this will show up as an additional mapped drive labeled “jinx.” Furthermore, for faculty and staff, there is now a link to their Steamboat directory within the root directory of their jinx account, however the normal path to their Steamboat will still be accessible under “My Computer” after login as users have been accustomed.

An important item to note: If faculty or staff must map a new network drive for departmental use, they will be required to delete the existing drives before doing so, and then re-map them.

For faculty and staff, ITS recommends using a Secure File Transfer Protocol (FTP) utility such as SFTP Secure Shell, which can be downloaded from the Technology Support Center’s Website. This FTP utility will allow users to upload and download files in a Windows-type environment. Faculty steamboat files will be accessible by the Steamboat folder located on the root directory of their jinx account.

Christopher Boyce
Director, Instructional Computing
boycec@umsl.edu

Paula Smith
Associate Vice Chancellor for Information Technology
smithp1@umsl.edu

Windows XP Firewall

Why do I need a firewall? The Internet can be a hostile environment and you are susceptible to attacks whenever you are connected. The Microsoft Windows XP Firewall is considered to be a strong, inspector bankruptcy used to set restrictions on what connections can be made to your computer from the Internet and to define the type of connections that are not allowed.

The XP Firewall was designed to work with personal firewall applications, not to compete with them. It doesn’t block any outbound traffic. Its rules are rather basic compared to other personal firewalls. But the XP Firewall has no cost (other than the OS cost). It has little or no complexity, so if the average home user uses the wizard to configure his Internet connection, he may not even know that it is in place. The Windows XP firewall is designed to block all inbound packets, unless those packets are in direct response to a query that was sent out from the machine.

The firewall is designed to help you keep hackers out of your system.

The Windows XP SP2 Firewall is sufficient? The answer to this is a little more difficult. I give it a “yes” and “no”. Windows Firewall is a tremendous improvement over earlier versions and certainly better than no protection at all. Having a stateful host firewall that will block unrequested Internet traffic can only help most people. It is also a step up that it is more customizable and configurable than its predecessor.

The downside is that users who choose to rely on it need to understand its shortcomings and not fall for any false sense of security. It may do what it was designed to do, but it is not protecting everything. Window firewall for any false sense of security. It may do what it need to understand its shortcomings and not fall do what it need to understand its shortcomings and not fall

Paula Smith
Associate Vice Chancellor for Information Technology
smithp1@umsl.edu

Guest and Wireless Access at UMSL

Getting wireless internet access on campus will get a little easier soon. In our current system you can only connect to the wireless network but cannot get to the web without then connecting through TritonNET, the Virtual Private Network. During the fall semester, ITS will be converting our wireless access to a registration system. This new system, named "Wireless," will allow you to connect to the wireless network and register for a day or week of services without using a VPN. It will also allow basic internet access and email access via the web, much like you have at most public-internet cafés.

This is not public internet access. The first time that you connect to TritonNET your system will be registered to your UMSL SSD ID and access will be made available. Access to the TritonNET program will be available 24/7 and can be given to campus guests that need access to the Internet or webmail. TritonNET will also be used to allow internet access for different conferences and campus events. Look for an email soon with more details and the live data for TritonNET.

Mark Morrow
System Security Analyst
morrowm@umsl.edu

Duplex Printing is now the default setting for IC Lab Printers!

Along with providing monochrome printers in all of the computer labs and color printing in select labs, Instructional Computing has added the ability to print in near real-time to all IC Staffed computer labs. These duplex printers allow users to print on both sides of the paper thus saving paper and space. These printers offer a wide variety of additional services offered are published in various locations. For a complete list of campus computer labs and their resources visit the Lab Resources Matrix at www.umsal.edu/technology/instructionalcomputing/labs/resourcemail.html

Debra Williams
Chief Information Officer
Instructional Computing Labs
williamsdou@umsl.edu

T 516-6702