TECHNOLOGY NEWS

Our Mission:

"The mission of the Office of Information Technology is to support and enhance the academic and administrative activities of Southern Methodist University.

To fulfill its mission, IT provides computing, information processing, and communications resources to satisfy the needs of faculty, students, and staff, and offers comprehensive support services to help them use technology effectively and creatively.

IT is dedicated to actively seeking input from customers, understanding their needs and challenges, and working with them to implement appropriate solutions. In its leadership role, IT is committed to creating and nurturing the vital information technology environment required for SMU to achieve its vision of excellence in education".

Questions, comments, or suggestions?
Contact
IT Communications
oitcommunications@smu.edu

Lyle Email Migration Update

The Lyle email consolidation project is well underway. During the month of January, 70 accounts were successfully migrated to the SMU servers as part of the early pilot phase. Teams from both Lyle and OIT worked quickly to manage the migrations as well as resolve a few technical glitches along the way. Overall, the pilot phase was very successful and well received.

During the month of February, all remaining Lyle email services will be migrated to OIT. It will be quite a busy month as the team migrates 211 Faculty and staff accounts, 264 Student accounts, 17 Public folders, and approximately 100 mailing lists, distribution lists or additional aliases hosted on the Lyle servers! Each of these migrations requires communication and configuration changes often coordinated with the Lyle faculty and staff. The teams are working diligently to ensure that all details of the project are well communicated, scheduled and handled as quickly as possible to minimize the disruption to the Lyle employees.

The following is the general migration schedule for the month of February:
- Week of February 1: Migrate 81 Exchange accounts and 17 Public Folders
- Week of February 8-19: Migrate 65 Unix accounts and Distribution groups
- Week of February 22: Migrate all mailing lists
- Week of March 1: Migration of Student Accounts and final project items

For additional details about the project or to view the daily progress of the migrations, visit http://www.smu.edu/OIT/Projects/Lyle.aspx.

Mathematica Site License-- Coming Soon!

SMU is in the final stages of securing a site license for faculty, staff and students for the use of Mathematica software. Once the license is finalized, students, faculty and staff will be able to download the software on their personal machines free of charge. For employee office machines, the installation will continue to be managed by OIT under a different license code. A campus wide email will be sent with specific instructions once the software is available.

ITAC Update

The Information Technology Advisory Council (ITAC) had its second meeting on January 29th. The group is made up of 12 faculty representatives from each of the schools and 7 members from other administrative divisions across campus and 2 student representatives. The group's goal for this meeting was to finalize the formation of several focus groups to provide advice directly to the CIO on specific areas related to technology. Five groups have been formed so far: Academic Technology, Administrative Technology, Communications, Intellectual Property, and Research. For more details regarding this council or the various focus groups, please visit our website at http://www.smu.edu/OIT/ITAC.aspx.

Account Maintenance Automation-- Part 2

The December Newsletter introduced the Account Maintenance Automation project which is scheduled to go live during the Spring semester. This article will focus on the various process changes for the SMU community once this new program is launched.

Initial Password Creation

When new accounts are created, an initial password will no longer be assigned. Instead, the student or employee will visit http://smu.edu/activate and answer a series of questions. Once they have successfully answered the questions, they will be able to set their initial password.

The Help Desk will also follow a similar procedure for password reset requests. If a customer is unable to reset their password via the online password reset tool (smu.edu/password), the help desk will verify answers to several security questions and then provide a PIN number. The customer must at that point use the PIN number to choose a new password.

New Employee (Faculty or Staff)

Once the SMU ID is generated and an active job record is entered or the faculty is assigned to a class, AMA will automatically create the basic authentication account, email address, bulk list membership, and Access.SMU Self Service account. A supervisor would then be responsible for completing a request form for any additional permissions such as access to departmental drives, Admin Images, administrative permissions in Access.SMU, etc.

Faculty or Adjunct Faculty who are NOT assigned to a current or future class

If a Faculty or Adjunct Faculty is only scheduled to teach during certain semesters, departments need to request a sponsored account in order for that faculty member to continue using their accounts between teaching contracts. AMA grants account access to a faculty member based on 2 criteria: the employee has an active job record or the employee is assigned to a current or future class in Access.SMU. If neither of these criteria are met, the account will be terminated. Departments *must* notify IT of any faculty or adjunct faculty members who will fall into this category in order for an override to be processed.

Sponsored Accounts

There are several types of sponsored accounts that can be handled by the new AMA process. Sponsored accounts may be requested for contractors or guests by contacting the Help Desk. All Sponsored Accounts will be assigned an expiration date. An email will be sent to both the Sponsor and the Sponsored Account in advance alerting them of the upcoming expiration. The Sponsor must respond and request an extension of the account in order for the account to remain active. A sponsor must be a current full time employee of the University.

Overrides

The account termination rules have been built in to AMA in order to automate the account lifecycle and is driven by the data from the office of record (HR, Registrar, etc). Accurate, timely and consistent process updates (paperwork/electronic workflow) with the functional area will ensure quality in the Account Management process. During a transition period to higher levels of process automation, situations will arise that require an exception to the normal account handling process. If any exceptions are needed, the supervisor must notify IT in advance. An override will be evaluated and implemented if appropriate to allow for the exception. IT will then work with the appropriate functional area to address root cause issues and eliminate the need for future exception handling.

Initial Implementation

AMA is schedule to go live this Spring. To minimize impact to the community, a notification will be sent to any former faculty, staff or contractors with an account that is marked as no longer eligible. These accounts will be maintained for 30 days after the initial notification process is run. If you receive an email indicating that your account will

be discontinued, please respond quickly if the account should remain active. The messages will come from Access@smu.edu, will not contain hyperlinks, and will not ask for your account information.   You will simply need to have your supervisor or department open a help desk ticket (either via help.smu.edu or email help@smu.edu) with an account sponsor, expiration date and explanation for maintaining the account.

The account maintenance process is quite complex and there are hundreds of rules built in to address that various relationships an individual may have with the University. General information about the process and the various processes to request account changes or exceptions has been posted on our website at http://www.smu.edu/OIT/Projects/Current Projects/AMA.aspx. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the Help Desk.

New account forms will be posted online at help.smu.edu in conjunction with the AMA Go Live date.

The Dedman College Academic Advising Center Goes Digital

Associate Dean Robert Pocklington and Advisor, Timothy Norris are launching a new technology and communication campaign. This initiative will help the SMU Pre-Major Advising Center meet the academic planning needs of students through digital collaborative resources, customer management software, and online networking tools. The campaign, Let's Go Digital, will officially launch on February 1, 2010.

"Students of the millennial generation enter into college with a vast expanse of information at their finger tips," says Tim Norris, "and providing high quality and informative experiences digitally is no longer simply a luxury. It has become an expectation."

Let's Go Digital
Their goals include providing important information to students through various, self-service resources outside of in-person appointments, and using technological tools available at SMU to simplify workflow and foster productive partnerships between advisors, faculty, and staff.

"By using available technologies at SMU in fresh ways," Tim explains, "Projects that may have taken hours in meetings or multiple complex emails to come to fruition, can be accomplished in a fraction of the time and within the individual's timeframe."

Academic Advisor-Tim Norris

A New Look at Some Old Tools

Tim is spearheading this new initiative by exploring ways to maximize functionality of Microsoft Outlook (Exchange), the SMU Wiki space, Digital Locker accounts, along with Web 2.0 social networking spaces and media sharing accounts. Newer web-based technologies such as Jing, Wink and Mindmiester are also being tested as helpful training tools for acclimating advisors to this digital revolution. The search is on to find the best utilities that can be seamlessly integrated in SMU's digital academic and working environment.

Here's a quick rundown of some of the SMU tools they are planning to use in this campaign.

Microsoft Outlook (Exchange) - Customer Relationship Management: They will leverage the shared calendar feature to enable online appointment scheduling for students, and enhance the E-mail contacts feature to collect, categorize, and share advising notes, student photos, and unofficial documents in a centralized location. This approach will streamline each advisor's process of managing over 200 students-a process that was once done with physical file folders.

SMU Wiki - Collaborative Information Staging and Sharing:
They are planning to use the SMU hosted wiki system for staging, sharing, and editing web content prior to publishing online with the new web content management system, Sitecore. Currently the wiki space is home to the Let's Go Digital campaign overview and an interactive time-line/plan for goal implementation.

Digital Locker - Organizational Repository: They will use their organization Digital Locker space to store and share official university forms/petitions, house a simulation of the departmental website for viewing before publishing, serve as a temporary location for digital interactive forms/notes that are to be linked to students' records using WebNow6, and store and distribute short instructional videos for academic planning that are easily embedded in social networking spaces and departmental websites. They will also enable notification functions in Locker so advisors are sent email when official documents are changed or edited.

It all sounds pretty complicated. In reality, the Let's Go Digital campaign is just a very thoughtful and coordinated effort to harness the power of a few readily available technology services. These same technologies that will be used to engage students using contemporary communication platforms will also be used to enhance communications within the Academic Advising Network.

"Honestly, how many meetings have you left thinking, 'Wow…that is 45 minutes of my day I will never get back'?" asks Tim, flashing his Cheshire Cat smile. "Technology enables us to collaborate more effectively outside of meetings. This supplemental activity will excite partnerships and transform the way we work together."

Is your school or department effectively using new technology to enhance teaching or business processes? If you are interested in being featured in our newsletter, please email oitcommunications@smu.edu.

Have You Subscribed to ITChanges?

IT implemented a change management process about 18 months ago to better coordinate and communicate changes to IT resources and services. As part of this process, a weekly email is sent to the itchanges mailing list outlining the various maintenance and upgrade schedules. Messages are sent every Wednesday morning. If you'd like to begin receiving those updates, please send an email to join-itchanges@list.smu.edu.
The information is also published on our website at smu.edu/intranet/itchanges.

We have also created a mailing list for notifying faculty and staff of service outages. If you would like to receive updates when systems are down (emergency outages only), please send an email to join-itoutages@list.smu.edu.

Online Training brought to your desktop!

The University has purchased a limited number of licenses for Atomic Learning. Atomic Learning offers over 30,000 tutorials covering a wide range of software applications. All of the tutorials are accessible online through your internet browser. Most of the tutorials are brief, lasting approximately 2-3 minutes. Most have audio as well as video and closed captioning. The available tutorials allow you to quickly learn a new skill just in time! For example: if you need to create a pivot chart in Excel, there's a quick tutorial for that! If you need a quick demo on mail merge, it's available. In fact, Microsoft Word 2007 has over 52 different tutorials available!

These licenses are available for current SMU faculty and staff only. To request a login to Atomic Learning, visit http://help.smu.edu. Login using smu\smuid as the username and select Atomic Learning under the Additional Services menu. Your account will be created within 48 hours.

Introducing the Help Desk Team!

This is the first of many articles to introduce you to the staff in the Office of Information Technology. In this issue we would like to introduce you to the Help Desk team. There are four people who regularly "man" the Help Desk both in person and on the phone. They are Jan Wellington, Gina Conklin, Barb Dietz -Help Desk Team Lead, and Janet Asberry (Pictured from left to right).

Jan Wellington is the most experienced Help Desk member. Jan started working here in May of 1987 when the name of the department was Computing and Information Services.   Jan's favorite movie is "Breakfast at Tiffany's with Audrey Hepburn". The most unusual job that Jan has ever had was "Working for 10 Engineers in Florida that built artificial Kidney machines". Jan is most proud of her three children: Fred, Chris, and Jennifer. In the last two years they have given her five grand children! They are: "Ella Scott 2 years; Carson Patrick 18 months; Lila Marie 10 months and Luke Wellington 8 months and one on the way."

Gina Marie Conklin started working on the Help Desk as a student worker in June 2005. She accepted a full-time position on the Help Desk a few years ago. Gina's favorite gadget is her camera. When asked about her favorite movie, she replied "Spanglish" with Adam Sandler. Gina's most unusual job: she worked for Southwestern Medical Center as a patient simulator beginning at age 6. When asked to name something or someone she is proud of, she said "I am very proud of my family and how strong we are!"

Barb Dietz is the newest member of the Help Desk team. She started working for SMU (on the Help Desk) in June of 2008. Barb says that her favorite gadget is "my iPhone-not only cause I talk on the phone a lot – but love the apps, listening to music, web browsing, emails, etc. " About her job, Barb says "Love the people I work with and the work that I do." Her favorite movie is the classic Julia Roberts movie, "Pretty Woman", she adds "although The Blind Side is rivaling as one of my favorites as well." Barb's most unusual job was "Production Director for an Apparel company". This was unusual for her because most of her work experience is in technology. Barb was born and raised in Pittsburgh, PA (Barb: "GO Steelers!!!") Now she lives in McKinney with her husband, Rick. They have two daughters, Brittni (20) and Kayla (18).

Janet Asberry has started working for SMU twice! In February of 1997 she began working for the Central University Libraries. The second time was in February 2007 when she joined the Help Desk team. When asked about her favorite gadget, she replied "my whole family is obsessed with our Wii". A song on her MP3 player that might surprise people is "Eazy E – Eazy Duz It". Janet's most unusual job ever was "Coordinating food service for murder mystery dinner theater". The best part about working on the Help Desk is getting to talk with so many different people from all of our departments. I enjoy helping people use technology and truly love my job!