Wireless Project-Phase I Complete

Like many institutions in the UNC System, UNCG has launched an aggressive campaign to install wireless technology infrastructure throughout the campus. In July 2005, ITP completed Phase One of the University Campus-Wide Wireless Project, the first step in preparation for the Wireless Initiative Plan proposed by the Office of the Provost.

Planning for wireless began in Spring 2003, and was announced as an initiative by Provost A. Edward Uprichard in Fall 2003 during his convocation remarks to faculty. Meetings were held with each of the academic units and ITP during the 2003-2004 academic year, and ITP established pilot programs with the EUC and three Schools. Project work officially began in Spring 2005 and involved collaboration between staff in ITP areas such as Technology Planning, IT-Networks, IT-Services, and Telephone Services as well as an outside vendor.

In specific areas of the EUC and the Bryan, Curry, and Moore buildings, an operational wireless network exists. Infrastructure is in place for the Graham, HHP, Music, New Science and Stone buildings and the 1st floor of the Jackson Library; however, wireless access is not yet functional.

Wireless usage will be limited until August 2006.

The establishment of a wireless environment provides many benefits to UNCG students, faculty, and staff. According to Dr. Alan Boyette, Senior Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, a key benefit of wireless is “to create an opportunity to further strengthen teaching and learning.”

Wireless access offers increased mobility and convenience, while expanding access to areas beyond the current wired network, such as outside areas and older buildings or other hard-to-wire locations. Additionally, wireless access encourages usage of classroom management system resources, such as Blackboard.

Beginning this fall, a faculty development program will be launched by Academic Affairs related to using wireless computing in instruction. In fact, wireless technology has already been integrated into teaching. Currently, students entering specific graduate programs in the Bryan School are required to have wireless laptop computers.

As part of the wireless initiative, Academic Affairs will recommend that incoming freshmen purchase a wireless laptop computer in Fall 2006. Laptop computers will be a requirement for freshmen in Fall 2007. These computers will be purchased through UNCG or its partners and will conform to the specifications and configurations identified by the faculty committee designated by Academic Affairs.

Scheduled to be complete by Fall 2006, the next phase of the project will include extending wireless to all major academic buildings, freshman residence halls, and common areas on campus. For more information on the UNCG wireless network, please visit http://it.uncg.edu/docs/wireless.

ITP Begins Monthly IT Professionals Roundtable

In June 2005, ITP held its first Information Technology Professionals Roundtable meeting. The standing monthly meetings will replace the prior Tech Talk and Liaison meetings and are designed to launch an open exchange of information between IT Professionals on campus and ITP’s central IT organization. The meetings provide a forum for IT to get input on campus technology needs and share information regarding existing or planned technology initiatives. Recent topics include an overview of the IT organization, network security, and the web development environment at UNCG. Meetings will be held on the second Wednesday of every month, from 3:30-5pm. Directions for subscribing to the group’s listserv can be found at http://www.uncg.edu/cis/itrroundtable. This web page also includes information about the meetings, including locations, schedules, topics, and minutes.

SPAM Control

In the June 22, 2005 article “E-Spartan Implementation Complete,” the ITP Newsletter stated that 31% of e-mails received in April 2005 were identified by e-Spartan as spam and blocked from delivery. Actually, the number was even larger—69%—and includes all junk-email (spam, viruses, fraud, and policy violations). More recently, in July, 77% of 4,381,310 e-mails were identified as junk e-mail. Faculty, staff and students can help control the amount of spam that reaches their inbox by adjusting their personal junk e-mail blocking settings. To select your desired spam blocking level, login with your Novell username/password to Mail Frontier (https://spamcontrol.uncg.edu) and click on Anti-Spam Techniques, Rules and Collaborative.
Banner Moves from VMS to UNIX

A major change to the UNCG computing environment became a reality on July 11, 2005. ITP staff from MIS, Networks, and Systems spent over 3500 effort hours to accomplish the transition of the Banner database servers from the enterprise operating system OpenVMS to Solaris UNIX. This transition offers features that benefit all UNCG faculty, staff, and students who rely on Banner, UNCGenie, Nolijweb, and other enterprise applications.

The University refreshes the hardware that runs campus-wide applications such as Banner every four to five years. Planning for the transition to UNIX began as early as the previous hardware upgrade in 2000. The project to replace OpenVMS with Solaris UNIX began in August 2004.

Two identical servers and disk storage arrays comprise the new production database UNIX environment. The secondary server will automatically perform the functions of the primary server in UNCG’s computing environment in a matter of minutes in the event of a failure.

UNCG will be able to take advantage of the fact that Banner and Oracle releases for Solaris UNIX are released earlier than OpenVMS versions and have a larger customer base which results in more extensive testing.

Nolijweb, a document imaging/customer relationship management application, is designed to perform more effectively on UNIX than on VMS. Since the transition from OpenVMS to UNIX, the performance of Nolijweb in the UNCG environment has improved greatly. Clients can now expect Nolijweb to run more smoothly.

A new enterprise back-up system was needed to support the new UNIX servers. Veritas Netbackup was purchased to back-up the new UNIX environment as well as all computing systems supported by ITP.

The VMS to UNIX project is expected to end formally in November 2005. ITP is now working to finalize the many changes brought on by the implementation of Solaris UNIX as an enterprise operating system.

UNCG TeleLearning Center Moves to Stone Building

The TeleLearning Center moved to the lower level of the 1929 wing of the Stone Building in early May 2005. Clients did not experience any interruption of service during the transition period. The TeleLearning Center connects UNCG to a learning community beyond the campus, providing faculty, students, and staff with facilities, equipment, and technical assistance to communicate via two-way interactive video to sites in North Carolina, the United States, and the world. The TeleConference Room and new TeleLearning Classroom are located in 169 and 186 Stone, respectively. For more information, please visit http://www.uncg.edu/cis/telelearning or contact Lane Ridenhour, Video Manager/Program Coordinator at 334-3969.

Technology at UNCG

EDITOR: Amie Mabe
e-mail: armabe@uncg.edu

Getting Help
6-TECH.................................256-8324
6-tech@uncg.edu
http://www.uncg.edu/cis/help.html

Telephone Services........................334-5937
http://www.uncg.edu/tsv

Element K (e-learning site) http://it.uncg.edu/elementk

Almost everyone at UNCG relies on information technology to do his or her work. This means relying on the skills and commitment of Information Technology and Planning staff and IT professionals outside the ITP division. Some of ITP’s recent hires include the following.

Brad Lytle is the new Manager for the Technology Service Center (TSC) in IT-Networks. Mr. Lytle has ten years of management experience in the corporate sector. For the last four years, he has been IT operations manager for Discovery Communications’ network infrastructure that includes 34 domestic and international sites.

Tim Lowrance, who has worked in UNCG’s Data Base Administration (DBA) group for five years, has been named Manager for the DBA group in IT-Systems.

Kevin Latimer has begun work as the IT-Services staff member responsible for managing the campus-wide laptop program. Mr. Latimer has a Master’s degree in Electrical Engineering and 18 years of management experience in the corporate sector. Most recently, he was a project delivery manager for EDS.

IT professionals in Academic Affairs, Business Affairs, University Advancement, and Student Affairs also play a vital role in meeting University goals. ITP has begun a program called the IT Professionals Roundtable, to bring together IT professionals across the campus for monthly technical discussions and workgroups on focused issues. (See box on previous page). We look forward to a good partnership with these professionals.