Learning Management System Study

UNCG to pilot top three candidates in 2014

Earlier this year, UNCG launched a project to evaluate alternatives for the Learning Management System (LMS) to be used at the University. The purpose of the study is to determine which product best meets faculty and student needs and what the University can cost-effectively support.

UNCG has used Blackboard Learn as its LMS for a number of years. Over the years, a number of faculty have voiced concerns regarding some of the characteristics of the Blackboard product.

In November 2012, the Academic Technology Coordinating Committee (ATCC) was tasked with administering the study, which is being steered by Dr. Robert Hansen, Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Todd Sutton, Director of Learning Technology in ITS, is serving as technical advisor. In addition to providing technical support, ITS will evaluate the impact of potential LMS decisions on other Blackboard products being used at UNCG.

Vendor presentations of Blackboard Learn, Desire2Learn, and Canvas by Instructure were held in August and September. An in-depth pilot of all three candidates will take place during Spring Semester 2014. A recommendation is expected from the ATCC by the end of April.

For more information about the LMS study as it becomes available, go to the LMS study Web site at http://lms.uncg.edu/.

ITS Opens 313 Graham Computing Lab

This semester, ITS opened a new computer lab in 313 Graham Building. This lab is the largest teaching lab on campus (60 student workstations) and is equipped with several interactive technologies.

The lab is outfitted with a SMART Podium monitor at the teacher workstation, two SMART Board interactive whiteboards, a Mondopad interactive video conferencing board, and a Promethean interactive whiteboard with a classroom response (“clicker”) system. The student and teaching station computer monitors include built-in Web cams. In addition, an assisted listening device for the hearing impaired is available on the teacher workstation.

Visit http://its.uncg.edu/labs/description/ for more details about the new computer lab.

Information Security Office: Security Awareness Training

The University’s Information Security Office has made available, to all faculty and staff, online security awareness training hosted on the Blackboard Learn learning management system.

Security awareness training provides the participant with a better understanding of the threats and risk to the University’s data and ways the participant can help maintain the security of the organization’s information assets. In addition to data security benefits, security awareness training can help departments and individuals meet compliance and audit needs. It is not uncommon for annual security training to be included in a list of audit or regulatory requirements. This training may well meet those needs.

The training is presented as a series of brief (3-5 minute) videos on a specific topic followed by a three question quiz. Some examples of video topics are Telecommuting, HIPAA, Data Retention and Cloud computing. Because the training is presented one video at a time the training can be taken over multiple sessions.

This set of training videos has been licensed from SANS (www.sans.org), an internationally renowned security and information technology training organization. Their “Securing the Human” courses are appealing for a number of reasons. The content is regularly updated and appropriate to the current threat environment. It has been widely accepted and deployed, including at institutions of higher education. The presentation of the material in short, focused lessons provides a more learner-friendly approach. This sort of training is very important to the security of the University and we want the experience to be as positive as possible.

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To enroll in the security awareness course, log in to Blackboard Learn (blackboard.uncg.edu).

- On the top right of the page are a number of “tabs.” Click on the “Organizations” tab.

- On the next page you will see an area called Organization Catalog. In this area is a folder named “Security Awareness Training.” Click on that link.

- You will see the security awareness courses listed. If you mouse over the course name “ORG-Securing_the_Human” a small drop-down arrow will appear beside the name. Click on the drop down arrow and choose “Enroll.”

- On your Blackboard home page you will now see the SANS Securing the Human course listed and can proceed to the training. Training instructions are provided.

If you have issues enrolling in the training, contact the ITS Service Desk at 6-TECH at 256-8324. If you are a manager who has assigned this training to your staff and would like to receive a report of scores, you may submit a request through 6-TECH and this will be provided.

### Campus Technology Updates

#### Lenovo Online Store Now Available

The Lenovo online store is once again available for UNCG’s Campus-wide Hardware Procurement (CHP) program.

Restoring the service required some changes to the purchasing policies. Lenovo store pricing no longer includes “Keep Your Hard Drive” and “Accidental Damage Coverage” for laptops, or “Keep Your Hard Drive” for desktops, by default. ITS recommends that you add these items when purchasing these computers. For more details regarding recommended options and limits on model/operating system selection, go to [http://itsnews.uncg.edu/2013/09/27/Lenovo-now-part-of-chp-program/](http://itsnews.uncg.edu/2013/09/27/Lenovo-now-part-of-chp-program/).

Models with the new Intel processor (Haswell) should be available this month. For CHP pricing and purchasing information, visit [http://its.uncg.edu/Technology_Purchases/CHP/Purchase/](http://its.uncg.edu/Technology_Purchases/CHP/Purchase/).

#### Box Cloud File Storage

The new Box cloud file storage service will be released to faculty and staff in limited pilot mode by early 2014. Box stores your files online, allowing you to easily access files and collaborate with others from anywhere. Box works with PCs, Macs, and mobile devices and offers integration with Google Apps.

The pilot will help determine whether Box is a suitable replacement for some locally-provided network file storage such as “SpartanDrive” directories (“S:" drives). The pilot is not intended for data with strict protection and reporting requirements, such as data covered by University policies regarding Identity Theft Protection ([http://policy.uncg.edu/identity_theft_prevention/](http://policy.uncg.edu/identity_theft_prevention/)) and HIPAA Compliance ([http://policy.uncg.edu/hipaa/](http://policy.uncg.edu/hipaa/)). ITS will help provide guidance to pilot participants who have questions regarding the types of data suitable for the pilot.

#### UNCG Transitions to Banner/Ellucian XE

Over the next several years, UNCG will be transitioning its Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system from Banner 8 to Banner/Ellucian XE (Extensible Ecosystem). This change will be a major upgrade to the University’s Banner system and will include a completely new architecture, although the Oracle database used by the system will stay the same. The new structure will add new fields in the Oracle database, and will change the way users and ITS programmers interact with the system.

Although the conversion to XE will involve a significant investment in training and resources, the conversion is a necessary change that will position Banner to continue to be an effective tool for UNCG for the next decade and beyond.

Benefits of the upgrade include: a “modern look and feel” to the interface (it will function and look like what users expect from a modern Web application), and modern programming tools and ideas, making it easier to maintain and manage system capacity and responsiveness.

The conversion to XE will be a multi-year project. ITS estimates that it will take 4-5 years to make a full transition from Banner 8 to XE. In the interim, ITS will maintain both systems during the transition period.

Banner XE will operate in parallel with Banner 8, allowing incremental migration and functional users to compare Banner 8 and Banner XE.

For more information as it becomes available, visit the ITS Web site at [http://its.uncg.edu/](http://its.uncg.edu/). You may also contact 6-TECH at 256-8324.

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ITS offers a range of technology training opportunities for students, faculty, and staff. To register for on-campus workshops, go to [http://workshops.uncg.edu/](http://workshops.uncg.edu/). Online technical training is also available through LearnSmart and Microsoft E-Learning. For more information, visit [http://its.uncg.edu/training/](http://its.uncg.edu/training/).