Major Campus Technology Migrations

**ITS completes Active Directory, iSpartan projects**

This year, ITS has completed the implementation of two major technology initiatives: Active Directory/General Computing Network and iSpartan email and calendaring migrations.

**Active Directory/General Computing Network**—In June 2011, ITS completed the migration of campus departments to the Active Directory/General Computing Network environment for network file space, printing, and application delivery.

The migration required the move of more than 4,000 computer workstations, 2,500 faculty and staff accounts, and network file space for 37,290 student accounts. The Novell environment was decommissioned on June 24. During the migration, ITS upgraded most departments’ computers to the Windows 7 operating system.

Cost benefits of consolidating the mixed Windows and Novell server environment into a Windows-only server environment include eliminating the need to have two sets of personnel, hardware, software, administrator tools, licensing and maintenance costs; repurposing of technical staff who supported the Novell platform; and a reduction of the University’s data center energy footprint and consumption.

Service benefits include but are not limited to: an environment designed to be fully extendable to and customizable by departmental technical staff to meet unit-specific needs, a more stable and secure computing environment (automated workstation patching and virus definition updates; moving computing devices off of the public Internet and onto a private campus network makes them less vulnerable to intrusion and attack; use of centrally-managed computing policies lower the risk of station compromise), and reduced personal responsibility for ensuring that computers are in compliance with University computing and data security standards.

**iSpartan email and calendaring**—In early 2011, ITS completed the migration of approximately 4,000 faculty and staff (non-archive) email accounts from Lotus Notes to UNCG’s iSpartan service hosted by Google.

The migration to iSpartan reduces the University’s hardware and software costs to maintain email and calendaring services (including email archives and spam/virus filtering). The reduction in ITS staff time required to maintain the email and calendaring systems results in an overall reduction of full-time staff dedicated to these activities, a reallocation of staff to under-resourced activities (e.g., Active Directory/Windows infrastructure development and maintenance), and more efficient work in areas with service-request backlogs (e.g., less time required for “desktop” email client maintenance.)

The campus migration to iSpartan also allowed for better capability to support email/calendar access for a variety of mobile devices and the introduction of Google Talk as the first text/video chat supported for University-wide use (at no additional hardware and software cost to the University).

Blackboard Collaborate: Features, Upgrade

Blackboard Collaborate (formerly Elluminate) is a synchronous online learning/collaboration tool available for teaching, meetings, training and other university-related purposes. Collaborate is made available to all classes through Blackboard Learn (blackboard.uncg.edu), or may be used through a web link to a Collaborate room.

On December 15 and 16, UNCG will implement Blackboard Collaborate version 11 for users both inside and outside of blackboard.uncg.edu. This will be a change from the current semester during which all classes in blackboard.uncg.edu have used version 10. For Fall 2011, those using Collaborate outside of blackboard.uncg.edu have had the option of using either version 10 or 11. Beginning Spring 2012, all new rooms will be created in version 11.

Those wishing to use Collaborate outside of blackboard.uncg.edu may request a room by contacting 6-TECH at 256-TECH (8324) or 6-TECH@uncg.edu. If you use Collaborate from within blackboard.uncg.edu and would like to practice using version 11 before the December upgrade, you can request a Collaborate practice room.

Documentation for version 11 can be found at [http://its.uncg.edu/Blackboard/Collaborate/](http://its.uncg.edu/Blackboard/Collaborate/). ITS is also offering training for those who would like to learn how to conduct a Collaborate version 11 session (Moderator Training) and for those who will be using it in classes or meetings as a participant (Participant Training). To register, go to [https://freyr.uncg.edu/workshops/](https://freyr.uncg.edu/workshops/) and click on the Blackboard Collaborate link.

During the early Fall 2011 semester, the University experienced several Collaborate service problems, including a major outage of the remotely hosted service at Blackboard, Inc. At this time, all service issues have been resolved.
Banner Workflow

Banner Workflow is designed to help administrative offices work more efficiently by providing a structure and sequence for common administrative tasks that often involve the transfer of paperwork between several offices in many parts of the University. Workflow can also send notifications/reminders to people involved in business processes.

People from administrative offices across campus and Banner programmers from ITS met for Banner Workflow training in May and June of this year. In addition to beginning some simple Workflows that will be completed as part of the formal Workflow project, attendees were also able to collaborate on solutions to problems beyond the scope of Workflow.

The University already owns the Workflow software as part of its Banner package. During the implementation of Banner HR, the project team created a Workflow to be used for the electronic personnel action form (EPAF). After successfully implementing EPAF as a Workflow and conferring with other UNC campuses about how they use Workflow, a formal project began to set up the Workflow infrastructure and investigate how it can be used to meet existing administrative needs. Pilot Workflows will be identified for each of the University’s divisions and are expected to roll out as they are completed.

Campus Technology Updates

Blackboard Mobile Learn

Blackboard Mobile Learn is now available to the UNCG client community. This technology allows Blackboard users to connect to blackboard.uncg.edu in a mobile-device friendly format. Supported devices include Android, Blackberry, iPhone, iPod Touch, iPad, and Palm.

With Blackboard Mobile Learn, students can check announcements, view their grades, read blog posts and post comments, check class rosters, and review and post to threaded discussions. Faculty can post announcements, view course rosters, and view, create, and reply to threaded discussions.

For details on how to download the Blackboard Mobile Learn application and connect to UNCG, go to http://its.uncg.edu/Blackboard/Mobile/. Contact 6-TECH at 256-TECH (8324) or go to the Technology Support Center in 101 Forney Building for additional support.

Google Services Available via iSpartan

UNCG has expanded the number of Google services (e.g., Google Analytics, Maps, and Reader) available to faculty, staff, and students via iSpartan. For a complete list of services, go to http://itsnews.uncg.edu/2011/08/03/ispartan-service-expansion/. Support for these services will be handled by Google. UNCG will have the ability to add additional services in the future.

ITS Computer Lab Reservations

The priority deadline to submit reservation requests (2012 Spring semester) for ITS-managed computer labs was November 4. That deadline was for requests coordinated first at the department level or by lab committees before being submitted to ITS. Faculty or staff wishing to make additional reservation requests should visit http://its.uncg.edu/Labs/Reservations/ for details about the reservation process.

UNCG, NC State Join Together to Support High Performance Computing

To better support the research mission of UNCG, ITS has entered into a partnership with NC State to provide researchers with access to high-performance computing (HPC) services.

High-performance computing services are especially appealing to those who need computing power beyond that of their desktop/laptop to solve research problems. Researchers who need such computing power may opt to use the HPC Henry2 Linux Cluster (a collection of processors available for high-performance computing) at NC State. For more information about the Henry2 Linux Cluster, go to http://its.uncg.edu/research/.

UNCG and NC State share a position for technical support of faculty, research staff, and students (with a faculty sponsor) who use the HPC Henry2 Linux Cluster. UNCG has purchased several nodes for the Henry2 research computing cluster, and University faculty, research staff, and students may request an account at no charge. For fiscal year 2011-12, ITS will cover the cost of technical support to UNCG clients at no charge back to departments. Depending on the level of interest and use, the support and training partnership may continue beyond 2011-12 with a cost-sharing arrangement between UNCG departments/researchers and ITS.

To request an account on Henry2, contact 6-TECH. Students requesting an account should submit written proof of faculty sponsorship. Any requests for software to be added to the cluster should be submitted to 6-TECH for review by ITS.

Pending sufficient interest, ITS will host training workshops on high-performance/parallel computing. To locate currently scheduled workshops, go to https://freyr.uncg.edu/workshops/ and click on the ITS Training - High Performance/Parallel Computing link. To request alternative training dates for your department or group (minimum 5 participants), contact 6-TECH. (Contact 6-TECH to request an account on Henry2 prior to participating in a workshop.)