New Virtual UNCG Desktop and App Store

Faculty and staff may access private cloud services

Information Technology Services has launched a new virtual UNCG desktop service and UNCG App Store.

The virtual UNCG desktop service offers faculty and staff access to the UNCG private cloud where the University applications, devices, and data they need (the "UNCG desktop") can be accessed as an on-demand service—anytime, anywhere, almost any device. Because the virtual UNCG desktop runs on servers in the campus data centers (not on the user’s local computing device), users can access a fully functional virtual UNCG desktop from an Internet-connected device without the requirement of having a powerful workstation or laptop computer. All of the computer processing is performed in the "UNCG private cloud" and the local computer is used only as an interactive display.

The UNCG App Store (available April 1) works like iTunes or Android Marketplace, but is populated only with UNCG licensed software applications, which are provided at no cost to faculty and staff. To access University licensed software applications, users will open the "UNCG App Store" and select the applications they want to run on demand. Applications accessed through the "UNCG App Store" require internet connectivity, but otherwise function just like they do if installed locally on the end user’s computer. For more details about either offering, go to http://its.uncg.edu/Virtual_Services/Virtual_Desktop/.

Technology Services Survey

In February and March, ITS will conduct a campus-wide, web-based survey to assess the perceived service quality of technology services at UNCG.

“Tech Qual+”, a national survey for higher education institutions, will be used. The primary objective of the survey is to assess client satisfaction with technology services by measuring the desired level of service against the perceived level of service.

ITS will use the results of this survey for planning the use of campus technology resources and setting technology priorities. The survey results will be reviewed by ITS management and will be used to make decisions about how to invest resources to support the technology needs of students, faculty, and staff. Overall findings will be shared with the UNCG client community.

Invitations to participate in the survey will be sent to full time faculty and staff, all graduate students, and a percentage of undergraduate students. Faculty and staff who are also students (i.e., are taking a Spring 2012 class) and have the confidentiality flag turned on in Banner will not receive a survey invitation. Participants who complete the survey will be entered into a drawing for one of three $50 Amazon.com gift cards. For more information on the TechQual+ survey, go to http://www.techqual.org/.

Information Security Office: Mobile Device Security

Many UNCG staff members are currently using a personal smartphone to conduct University business. A smartphone is not just a phone but a sophisticated mobile computer. It is also designed and marketed as a consumer device. These two factors can lead to concerns over risk to the individual, department, and University.

Software bundled by telephone service providers may track and report user activity to the phone provider or affiliates. Most mobile devices obtained from a service provider will be bundled with applications the provider locks in to attempt to further monetize the user’s activity on the phone. While the use of this software may be explained and covered in agreements to which the owner of the phone assents, the potential exposure of University assets generally is not going to be considered when a phone is purchased. Additionally, such agreements do not receive review by University counsel.

Criminals are actively developing malware to harvest user data and credentials. A personal smartphone is unlikely to have significant malware protection nor will it be used in a way to minimize the risk of infection. Some cell service providers do not make it simple to update software in a timely manner, as upgrades can make some phones non-functional. If your phone supports operating system and application updates, you should keep both operating systems and applications up-to-date.

An additional concern is the smartphone’s exposure to loss or theft. Probably the most critical issue is that of cached credentials. The keyboard limitations of most smartphones make entering a strong password inconvenient each time a user wants to check email or access another resource.

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The implication is that a user’s credentials are cached on the phone leaving them exposed to loss or theft with the phone itself. A malicious individual can access the data it contains, including any cached passwords, even if you use a wake-up password. You should consider all information stored on a mobile device to be highly vulnerable.

Risks such as these can be mitigated. One route is to provide employees with managed devices that offer network and device security. Another is to avoid using a smartphone to access any resource that might contain sensitive data, or that shares a password with such a system. Data accessed by a mobile device is vulnerable, unless tools such as the new “virtual.uncg.edu” service offerings are employed so that the smartphone only provides passthrough access to UNCG information.

Unfortunately, some of these options are difficult for a UNCG employee or department. You have the option to maintain separate passwords on some of your more sensitive access, including Banner. No enterprise encryption solution currently exists for any computing device, including smartphones.

Departments and data owners need to think carefully about mitigation strategies to protect their sensitive data from risk due to personal smartphone usage. If you would like more information about mitigation strategies, contact the Information Security Office via 6-TECH at 256-8324.

**Campus Technology Updates**

**Extending UNCG Network**

This winter, ITS began the process of extending the campus computing network to the upcoming Glenwood Mixed-Use Village across Lee Street from the main UNCG campus. This work involves the installation of a new fiber optic loop to support the estimated 25 buildings planned for that area. Ultimately the fiber will be routed from the McNutt Building through the new Glenwood properties, and then back into McNutt.

ITS has been working with Facilities Design & Construction to obtain the required permits from the City of Greensboro, the N.C. Department of Transportation, and North Carolina Railroad to begin construction. The first phase of the new fiber loop is expected to be completed in May, and the entire loop is scheduled to complete with the Pedestrian Tunnel project, targeted for late 2013.

**Google+ Now Available for iSpartan Users**

UNCG has added Google+ to the list of services available to iSpartan users. Google+ provides a social environment for you to collaborate with other iSpartan and Google+ users and to share information online. For more details about Google+, go to [http://itsnews.uncg.edu/2012/01/13/google-is-now-available/](http://itsnews.uncg.edu/2012/01/13/google-is-now-available/).

**Blackboard Mobile Learn**

Blackboard users may connect to [blackboard.uncg.edu](http://blackboard.uncg.edu) with their mobile device using Blackboard Mobile Learn. (Supported devices include Android, Blackberry, iPhone, iPod Touch, iPad, and Palm.) For information on how to download the Blackboard Mobile Learn App and connect your device to UNCG, go to [http://its.uncg.edu/Blackboard/Mobile/](http://its.uncg.edu/Blackboard/Mobile/).

**Blackboard Collaborate Upgrade**

In December, Blackboard Collaborate version 11 was integrated into Blackboard Learn ([blackboard.uncg.edu](http://blackboard.uncg.edu)). However, for technical reasons, users will continue to see a link that says “Elluminate Live” rather than “Blackboard Collaborate” in Blackboard Learn. Clicking on the “Elluminate Live” link, however, will open a Blackboard Collaborate version 11 room. Therefore, the usability is exactly the same inside and outside of Blackboard Learn.

An update was also applied to Blackboard Collaborate overnight on January 7. Blackboard, Inc. has announced that the update addresses the following:

- Chat focus moving to the bottom when a new message arrives
- Follow check box unchecked when additional participants join a session
- Web Tour mode becoming unavailable after multiple attempts
- Multimedia file continuing to playback after multimedia and Multimedia library windows closed and Web Tour started

The update will be automatically downloaded to participants’ computers the first time they join a session after the upgrade. The download is approximately 11 MB, so participants should allow extra time when joining their first session following the update. If you are a Collaborate room moderator, notify your room guests/students of this requirement.

ITS offers training for Moderators (those who conduct a Blackboard Collaborate session) and Participants (those who use Blackboard Collaborate in classes or meetings). To register for the training, go to [https://freyr.uncg.edu/workshops/](https://freyr.uncg.edu/workshops/) and click on the Blackboard Collaborate link.

If you have questions about Blackboard Collaborate, contact 6-TECH or go to [its.uncg.edu/blackboard/collaborate/](http://its.uncg.edu/blackboard/collaborate/).