ITS Launches Digital Pilot Initiative

14 classrooms upgraded to higher-quality digital standard

Over the summer, ITS upgraded 14 classrooms with newer, higher-quality digital audio-visual equipment. The upgrade is part of the Digital Pilot project initiated by ITS to provide opportunities for practical experience with new technology and to identify ways to better promote technology-enhanced instruction and learning. The Pilot will also assess ways to improve technology support for classrooms, while maintaining cost-effective services. Todd Sutton, Director of Learning Technology, noted that the upgrades are “part of an ongoing move to digital in the classrooms.”

In addition to the standard equipment in a typical classroom, the digital pilot classrooms have the following equipment: digital capable video/data projector or “lampless” laser projector, Blu-ray player, digital document camera with webcam capabilities, and a ShareLink 200 (enables wireless display of content from up to four simultaneous devices, while control of the content being shared is maintained via a moderator mode). Pilot classrooms were selected from 14 of the top 20 most utilized classrooms on campus.

During the 2015-16 academic year, ITS will solicit input from faculty and students about their experience with the digital classrooms and use this information to help plan future classroom technology upgrades. For more details about the Digital Pilot project, including a list of the 14 classrooms that have been upgraded, go to http://its.uncg.edu/Classroom_Technology/Digital_Pilot/.

Mediasite Lecture Capture System Project

Mediasite by Sonic Foundry has been selected as the lecture capture system to be piloted in the fall semester. This software allows lecture-capture of classroom activities from a desktop or laptop computer. Recordings can then be uploaded to the recording owner’s MyMediasite library in the cloud.

The project team that selected Mediasite consists of members from ITS, the Academic Learning Spaces Council, the Academic Computing Committee, and the Academic Technology Coordinating Committee.

A hardware recorder has been placed in Bryan 114 (a new technology-enhanced classroom), and is connected to the Mediasite service. Prior to the fall semester, ITS worked with the Bryan School Instructional Technology Consultant staff for training and support. MyMediasite is available on a limited “opt-in” pilot basis for interested faculty. Faculty desiring to pilot Mediasite should contact the Instructional Technology Consultant (ITC) for their school/college, who will then relay the information to the pilot implementation team.

A larger rollout of Mediasite is planned for the spring semester. Visit https://lecturecapture.uncg.edu/ for more details about this project.

ITS Forms Mac Advisory Committee

Due to the substantial growth of Apple products at UNCG and the unique challenges that supporting Mac workstations poses to an organization, ITS has created the Mac Advisory Committee.

The primary charge of the Mac Advisory Committee is to provide a more agile support pipeline for campus Mac users. This collaborative team is comprised of both ITS staff and technology professionals from across the University who have key roles in infrastructure and end-user support. Using best practices in IT governance as a foundation, the committee tries to deliver value by staying ahead of the technology curve and leveraging their collective experiences to provide better customer service.

The committee plans to launch a Mac support focused Web presence during the fall semester. This website will house the combined knowledge and resources that the committee researched and developed during the summer. The intent is for this website to contain the most recent developments in Mac support and maintenance on campus.

To date, the committee has made progress in streamlining the provisioning of new systems, printer management, and improving network connectivity.

During the fall semester, the Mac Advisory Committee will create and lead a Mac user’s group to offer a platform for Mac users to communicate their challenges and requirements directly to those who can affect change. If you are a dedicated Mac user, ITS encourages your participation in the Mac user’s group.

For more information about the Mac Advisory Committee, contact Derrik Jones, ITS Operating Systems Specialist, at dtjones2@uncg.edu.
Qualitative Data Analysis Product Study

ITS recently worked with faculty and others interested in qualitative data analysis (QDA) to complete a QDA product study, as announced in Fall 2014 (http://itsnews.uncg.edu/2014/11/18/qualitative-data-analysis-software-evaluation-project/). In study results, ATLAS.ti was the highest rated of the 4 products considered in the final evaluation.

As a result of this study and broader software management discussions, ITS will fully support ATLAS.ti and plans to discontinue support for NVivo, and will work with clients in that transition. (In the UNCG QDA product study, NVivo was ranked 3rd of 4 products by project participants, and NVivo has had compatibility issues in the UNCG network environment.)

In addition, a new Provost-mediated process will be developed over the next six months, to help decide which instructional software should be supported institutionally versus departmentally or not at all. Faculty/staff interested in any QDA software will have an additional opportunity in that process to express preferences.

Campus Technology Updates

Canvas Migration Project

The migration from Blackboard Learn to Canvas is ahead of schedule, and will be completed by January 31, 2016. The full timeline is available at http://courses.uncg.edu/timeline/. Approximately 97% of courses are being taught in Canvas for the Fall 2015 semester, with only a few courses remaining in Blackboard. Blackboard Organizations’ migration will also be complete by the end of January.

Synchronous Learning Management System Pilot

The Synchronous Learning Management System (SLMS) Pilot will take place during the fall, as the University compares Blackboard Collaborate and WebEx by Cisco. A new version of Collaborate (called “Ultra”) is not yet fully featured (limited recording, polling, breakout rooms), but will be available as part of the pilot for those interested in testing. The SLMS Study team will post pertinent information at https://slms.uncg.edu/ as it becomes available.

Data Storage Options

ITS rolled out unlimited storage for Box during the summer. This change means that all students, faculty, and staff have two unlimited storage offerings (Google Drive and Box) available from devices connected to the internet. ITS encourages users to familiarize themselves with the data storage options, and data storage guidance, available at https://its.uncg.edu/services/service/data-storage-services/.

Cloud Based Storage Training

ITS is offering a new workshop this fall named “Cloud Based Storage Solutions at UNCG.” This workshop covers several different cloud-based file storage solutions available at UNCG including: Box, Google Drive, and Microsoft OneDrive. An overview of features and restrictions will be presented, as well as basics of using each solution for file storage and collaboration. Workshops are currently scheduled for October and November. To register, go to http://workshops.uncg.edu/.

Mobile Printing Service Now Available

In response to student interest, UNCG has introduced a web/mobile printing solution (Pharos Print Center @ UNCG). Replacing a service that only allowed printing from computers, this updated service offers the ability to print from wireless-configured laptops and mobile devices such as iOS and Android smartphones and tablets.

This new service allows you to upload files to a printer queue and then release the print jobs from an ITS-managed computer lab or from certain department locations. The job is printed only when you release it from a Pharos print release station, thus not compromising privacy. To log in directly to the Pharos Print Center, go to mprint.uncg.edu. Anyone with a UNCG computer account has the ability to print to any of the ITS-managed computer lab or printer kiosk printer queues on campus. Visit http://its.uncg.edu/Labs/Hours/ for a list of lab locations and hours.

Uploading print jobs through the Pharos Print Center is simple and costs the same as printing from any wired lab computer. For more information about printing costs and the Pharos pay-for-system on campus, go to https://its.uncg.edu/Labs/Pay_For_Print/.

The Pharos Print Center website requires a Web browser and has been tested on the following browsers: Internet Explorer 10, Mozilla Firefox 39+, Google Chrome 45+, and Apple Safari 6.0+. The supported file formats are: Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint; Portable Document Format (PDF), images, text (CSV, RTF and TXT), and Visio. The upload size limit is 50 MB.

To learn more about the Pharos Print Center, visit https://its.uncg.edu/Printing/Print_Center/. If you have questions, contact the ITS Service Desk via 6-TECH at 256-TECH (8324) or at 6tech@uncg.edu.