



IT Activity Report

February - March 2010

• Support on your path to Success •

WordPress MU: A New Option for UD Web Sites

WordPress MU (multi-user), an easy-to-use content management system for creating a Web presence, is now available to the University community.

WordPress MU is an open source, dynamic publishing tool for creating and managing complete Web sites using only a Web browser, eliminating the need to learn HTML or more complex Web editing programs. It is the ideal Web development environment for

- Faculty who need a small site for publicizing research work,
- Departments with a limited Web presence, or
- Registered student organizations.

You can choose from seven UD-branded themes to help you get your Web site up quickly, allowing you to concentrate on content. Having WordPress MU as an option for UD Web site development fills a gap in the offerings for campus Web developers. WordPress MU

- Provides some of the content management features of Drupal without requiring extensive technical expertise;
- Allows the quick presentation of content without needing to know complex HTML;
- Enables you to create an attractive, UD-branded site without requiring graphics expertise;
- Provides a mechanism for collecting and moderating user contributions without requiring knowledge of programming languages; and
- Allows for a Web site's future expansion to a more complex site, if needed.

WordPress MU is only one of the options for UD Web development. IT continues to support Web development on our central UNIX servers, using DreamWeaver or other tools; our Drupal service; and Google Sites (under Google Apps @UDel.edu). To learn which option is best for you, sign up for IT's [Web Presence and Web Strategies: Choosing the right tool](#) class.

For more information about WordPress MU or to request a site, go to <http://sites.udel.edu>.

Update on Google Apps @UDel.edu Conversion

UD is in the process of converting all undergraduate student email services to Google Apps for Education, giving students access to Google's Gmail, Docs, Sites, and other applications. **All undergraduate student email will be processed at Google Apps @UDel.edu beginning June 1.**

Over 5,000 undergraduate students have already switched their email to Google Apps @UDel.edu, and another 1,500 forward their UD email to other service providers. To encourage the remaining undergraduates to switch to Google Apps before June 1, we are sending email reminders to those who have not yet made the switch. Students who do not switch will have their email delivered to Google Apps @UDel.edu starting June 1 and will not be able to access mail on UD's current mail server (mail.udel.edu). Prior to June 1,

students can follow the procedures at the [UD Google Apps Web site](#) to move saved email to Google Apps @UDel.edu.

Faculty and students are using Google Apps to share documents and create course-related Web sites. Any faculty, staff, or graduate students who wish to use the Google Apps for Education software suite may do so *without* switching to Google email.

Constituent Groups and Feedback

TechQuest forum: Users helping each other

In February, IT announced [TechQuest](#), a technology forum where members of the University can post technology-related questions, answer each other's questions, or discuss a technology-related topic. TechQuest was launched to facilitate student-to-student discussion, but faculty and staff are also welcome to participate. For more information, go to the TechQuest [About This Forum](#) page.

Teaching and Learning

Summer Faculty Institute

At the 14th annual University of Delaware Summer Faculty Institute, faculty will discuss the opportunities, successes, and challenges of teaching and learning in a technology-rich educational environment. This year, from June 1–4, faculty can attend a weeklong, hands-on series of workshops designed by UD faculty for UD faculty. This year's program will be developed from workshop and presentation proposals received from UD faculty. Information Technologies (IT) staff members will complement the faculty presentations with technical instruction sessions. Faculty can submit a new proposal or vote on submitted proposals until April 11 at the [IT Academic Technology Services \(IT-ATS\) Web site](#).

CFEE grants support e-portfolios in Sakai@UD

The Center for Educational Effectiveness (CFEE) awarded electronic portfolio development grants to faculty in 12 departments and programs. The main purpose of these grants is to gather artifacts of student work for the assessment of the UD undergraduate general education goals. The data will be used to determine if students are reaching the general education goals throughout their degree and will provide valuable data for reporting to accrediting agencies.

IT Client Support & Services (IT-CS&S) is working with all grant recipients to implement the assessment portfolios in the Open Source Portfolio toolkit, a part of the Sakai@UD environment.

Planning meetings, coordinated by CFEE with support from IT-CS&S, are underway so that phase one of the project can begin in fall 2010.

Classroom clicker evaluation

IT-ATS continues to work with faculty to identify the best product to succeed the current personal response device (clicker) model, which is approaching the end of its product life cycle. Interested faculty, staff, and students have several opportunities to become involved in the process. They may contact ats-info@udel.edu to request an individual consultation, attend one of 12 drop-in hands-on demonstrations in April, or join the Clicker Finale Rally on May 19 live or via webcast.

The timeline for implementation of a new clicker is as follows:

- Work with selected faculty on a pilot basis this spring and summer,
- Select and announce the new clicker in late May, and
- Roll out the recommended system for campus adoption for fall 2010 courses.

For more details about this project, see our [Clicker Conversion Conversation](#) Web pages.

Web conferencing evaluation in progress

IT-ATS is currently evaluating options for faculty interested in using Web conferencing. Web conferencing delivers synchronized live presentations along with shared documents, Web pages, and white boards. Web conferencing shares the presenter's voice and Webcam video over the Internet, with options for the audience to chat through text or voice. This technology can be used to have a remote guest join a face-to-face class meeting, accommodate local and distance students in the same class, and create an archive recording of the session. Faculty who are interested in reviewing Web conferencing options should email ats-info@udel.edu.

Update on UD Capture

Almost 50 faculty members have chosen to have their lectures recorded using the UD Capture system. Student interest is high for this form of reviewable content. You can still try it out this semester. Simply sign up to have your course recorded, and you will be sent an email containing the link to your online recording. At that point, you can decide how you might want to use this service for your course. Additional classrooms are being outfitted with UD Capture systems. Recommendations for specific locations can be submitted by email to ats-info@udel.edu. Although not all requests can be accommodated immediately, IT-ATS will work to address your requests as soon as possible. For more information and the sign-up form, visit the [UD Capture Web site](#).

MyCourses/WebCT to be discontinued on June 4

Over the past 2 years, IT staff have been guiding University faculty as they convert the online components of their courses from the WebCT learning management system to Sakai@UD. This semester, no course sites remain on MyCourses (WebCT); all 1,226 courses with an online component are hosted at Sakai@UD. Faculty and course developers must have any WebCT material they wish to archive downloaded by June 4. If you have any questions about archiving WebCT files or data, submit an [IT Help Center request](#).

Business Systems

Improved services

IT Web Development (IT-WD) recently implemented several applications to improve University business processes:

- Research Office:
 - Effort Certification — improvements plus audit requests are completed.
 - Materials Transfer Web Form — this new Web Form moves the process to the Web.
 - Proposal Approval Web Form — first round of enhancements are live, and more requests are in progress for this spring.
- HR Performance Appraisal: moved the appraisal process for professionals and staff to the Web.
- Returning Student Housing Application: Enhanced the usability and improved customer service for over 3700 students who applied for housing for next year (part of our Student Services Initiative [SSI]).

Business software upgrades

Oracle: IT Management Information Services (IT-MIS) has completed the planned Oracle database software upgrade to version 10.2.0.4 in anticipation of the PeopleSoft application software upgrade that will eventually affect the Human Resources, Financials and UDSIS PeopleSoft applications. The HR Oracle databases were previously upgraded; the UDSIS and Financial Oracle databases are now updated. The effort involved over 20 databases across five servers. The same software upgrade is planned for the central Web Forms databases in the near future.

PeopleSoft maintenance: IT-MIS and other University departments are planning the next rounds of PeopleSoft (PS) maintenance.

- We are planning to start the upgrade to PS HR tools in May and the application upgrade in October.
- PS Finance tools will be upgraded beginning in August with the application upgrade beginning in September 2011.
- PS Student tools will be upgraded in September with the application upgrade to start in November.

PeopleTools upgrade: A trial of the upgrade of the PeopleTools software from version 8.48 to version 8.50 is nearing completion. Once the trial upgrade is successfully completed, the HR development environment will be the first live implementation of the process. We will apply what we learn to subsequent upgrades, first to the quality assurance environment, and then to the production environment.

HR tax update: The most recent HR tax update was applied on April 1.

Financials patch status: IT-MIS successfully patched the production environment with PeopleSoft Financial Bundles 34, 35, and 36 on March 20. FIDMO was patched during the week of February 15, and FIQA was patched during the week of February 22. Twelve PeopleSoft definition retrofits and one SQR retrofit have been identified and completed. The changes affected all PeopleSoft modules that are currently active at UD: Grants, General Accounting, Budget Office, Accounts Receivable, and Procurement. Users have reported a few problems during testing, most of which have been fixed. A few issues are still pending with PeopleSoft.

Compliance

Staff in IT-MIS and IT-WD have been working on a variety of compliance issues during the past three months. IT-WD completed the Research Office Effort Certification system audit requirements and has been working to remove ProCard use from intra-University Request for Service Web Forms. That work will be completed this month.

IT-MIS and IT-WD staff continued work on compliance with Payment Card Industry (PCI) standards. One issue was the capture of too many digits of our ProCard purchases in several reporting tables. We addressed that by shortening the data held to the last four digits of the ProCard and adding a field for the card holder's EMPLID. This pair of changes was made on current purchases and on all purchases on current ProCards. These changes allow UD to meet its PCI compliance requirements, while maintaining the ability to reconcile financial data in reporting tables.

Financial Systems

IT-WD has been working on several applications and forms that improve University money management. You should see business-process improvements in the following applications during this activity period. If you will be affected, the department that owns the form will inform you of changes in their processes.

- Procurement
 - Request for Service Web Forms — two new forms for Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) and Central Stores
 - Request for Service Web Forms — converting ten Web Forms to remove the use of ProCard and to use Chart of Accounts instead
- General Accounting
 - UDeposit—new service developed with IT-MIS to deposit credit card receipts into the University Financial System and to allocate credit card revenue. The interface to put those transactions into General Ledger was tested and then implemented in the January-March Quarter.
 - A new service called "My accounts" for setting up Chart of Accounts used on RFS Web Forms
- Housing
 - Returning Student Housing Application Deposit — improved the deposit process, which improves bill accuracy (SSI)
 - Be a Blue Hen deposits—improved the deposit process for admitted students, which will improve bill accuracy (SSI)

Encumbrance management: The University's reporting tables have long kept a record of encumbrances, promises to pay, that result from pending purchase orders. IT-MIS and the Treasurer's Office are doing a study of University encumbrances and how to improve their reporting in the Trans Detail table. The process itself has already been optimized and takes less time to run. This project will continue next quarter.

Bank of America Works: A new interface for Bank of America Works went live on February 1. The implementation was a cross-department, multi-person effort. We made changes in our UD ProCard system, with new feeds going to and from Works. Existing processes for UD ProCard and the UD Business Expense Request Web Form were altered to process both sets of input. A daily extract from PeopleSoft to send GL codes to Works was written and a daily extract, load, and process of Works allocations and reimbursements was created.

Human Resources

Stale-dated payroll checks issued by PeopleSoft HR are moved to a reserve account in PeopleSoft Financials prior to escheatment or re-issuance. This manual process in PeopleSoft Financials created difficulties for General Accounting staff during reconciliation of the payroll account because the same payroll checks in PeopleSoft HR system were not updated with the new status (moved to reserve, escheated, or re-issued). A custom automated process with online pages and Excel reports has been created in PeopleSoft HR to help general accounting staff reconcile payroll accounts more efficiently.

AAUP (The American Association of University Professors) reporting is currently being done by downloading PeopleSoft HR data to a custom Access database and running queries and reports against the data. Two new screens and 16 new reports have been developed by the IT-MIS HR group to meet these reporting needs, eliminating several manual steps and an external database.

UDSIS

UDSIS patch bundle 23 and an INAS critical fix were applied as planned during the weekend of March 20. These changes dealt with important Financial Aid regulatory patches, as well as fixes to other modules in the Student system. The next round of patches will be applied over the summer.

Scholarship awards process: The Financial Aid office is in the process of testing the second phase of automating scholarship awards, matching students with available scholarships. The next phase, to determine the amount of funds available for each scholarship, is currently being programmed.

Data Warehouse

New Data Warehouse development environment: IT-MIS continued to redesign and configure the Data Warehouse environment for Human Resources, Financials and Student Administration. The three data areas are being isolated on their own servers, and the QA and production warehouses will be separated from the development environment. We now have all three development areas set up on the Leda server. The HR QA and production environments are now housed on Pollux. Next, new Financial QA and production environments will be configured on one server.

Increased availability of Web Forms database for Public Safety: To address concerns from Public Safety regarding timely access to Web Forms during the early morning hours on Sundays when the weekly offline database backup had run and the database was down, the backup process was redesigned and shifted to a later time. The new backup process resulted in a decrease in down time from approximately 40 minutes to 15 minutes. Shifting the time of day allowed Public Safety to better handle incidents early on Sundays while still allowing IT to meet its obligation to provide backup and recovery of critical data.

Event Production and Media Services

Video support for Admissions

Producers and technicians in IT University Media Services (IT-UMS) have been working with Admissions staff on a variety of projects. IT-UMS staff have been shooting footage for a new series of Major Finder videos that Admissions is making available to prospective students. In addition, UMS staff provided video and editing support for “Delaware: the Musical.” (See the [UDaily article](#).) The final production will be released by Admissions later this month.

iMusic3: An Ode to the Earth

IT-UMS has been working with the Music department; the College of Agricultural and Natural Resources; and the College of Earth, Ocean, and Environment on the videos and production to be incorporated into “iMusic3: Ode to the Earth” performances on April 16 and 17 in Mitchell Hall. Part of UD’s Master Players Concert Series and UD’s Earth Week celebration, these performances will include live music and videos that celebrate the 40th anniversary of the first Earth Day. IT-UMS staff will also provide technical support at these performances.

Training Opportunities

LearnIT@UD

Over 200 faculty and staff attended LearnIT@UD sessions during the past two months. Join us for one of the many classes being offering during the remainder of the spring. For a full listing, visit the [LearnIT@UD course calendar](#). Many of our classes fill to capacity quickly—make sure you register early for the classes you want to attend.

In addition to our current lineup of classes, we will offer five new classes in April and May.

- [Google Apps @UDel.edu Overview](#) is an introduction to this new service focusing on the uses of Google Docs and Gmail.
- [LearnIT@Lunch: Windows 7 - Discover What's New](#) introduces the new features included with Windows 7, examining some of the differences between XP and Windows 7.
- [Intro to Social Media and Web 2.0 tools through faculty practices](#) uses faculty examples and testimonials to discuss how Web 2.0 tools are helping to increase productivity. Although the focus of this session is on teaching and learning with technology, staff and students are also encouraged to attend.
- [Introduction to GIS \(Digital Mapping\) with ArcGIS 9.3](#) introduces basic ArcGIS tools and functions that are used to create maps.
- [Web Presence and Web Strategies: Choosing the right tool](#) has been updated to include a discussion about Google sites and WordPress MU.

We continue to receive requests for custom training sessions. Custom classes are a great way to match training with the specific needs of a unit or department. To request custom training, select the "Contact Us" link from our new [LearnIT@UD](#) Web site. For a complete list of all courses and resources, go to the "Find a Training Course or Resource" link from the site home page.

New LearnIT@UD Web site

IT-CS&S has launched a new Web site for LearnIT@UD to showcase the technology resources IT provides for our clients. The redesigned site offers more flexibility in finding an IT course or training resource. You can still view a calendar of courses, but you can also search by topic (e.g., Microsoft Office or, more specifically, Microsoft Excel) or by type of resource (e.g., instructor-led courses or Web resources).

The site also includes new features. You can

- Subscribe to the LearnIT@UD Café for announcements and interesting articles about IT's training series,
- View a series of tips for using technology, and
- See a "Worldwide IT" news feed.

The new site's URL is <http://www.it.udel.edu/learnit>.

IT Help Center

Information Technologies assisted 2,634 individual clients during February and March. The heaviest volume of requests related to email (which reflects the undergraduate student move from Mirapoint to Google Apps @UDel.edu), desktop systems (including virus cleanup), and Sakai support.

There were 2,917 telephone calls and 1,251 email contacts during the period, resulting in the creation of 3,721 trouble tickets and 593 network requests. Help Center staff assisted 47.7% of the clients on the first contact. Overall statistics can be found at <http://www.udel.edu/help/stats>.

Personnel News

Dick Sacher, Associate Director of IT-CS&S, received a prestigious award from his peers last month. At the statewide Delaware GIS 2010 conference, Dick received the 2010 Vern Svatos Geographic Community Service Award from the Delaware Geographic Data Committee (DGDC). The award was for outstanding service and consistent commitment to Delaware's geographic community. Most recently, Dick has been venue and technical coordinator for the DGDC's annual Delaware GIS conferences, served as its treasurer and is statewide academic representative to the DGDC Executive Council. He has been an active member of past GIS conference organizing committees and the statewide GIS community, particularly in the development of statewide and national GIS data and metadata infrastructure.

The IT Activity Report is published 4-6 times a year. Archived reports are located at <http://www.it.udel.edu/activity-reports>. If you have comments, questions, or suggestions for future articles, contact the IT Communication Group at it-commgroup@udel.edu.