



IT Activity Report

June-August 2009

• Support on your path to Success •

News Highlights

IT Goals for FY 2009-2010

Information Technologies' goals reflect institutional needs and support the University's strategic plan. This year, our goals include the following:

- Disaster Preparedness—Address vulnerabilities and establish redundancies and contingencies to ensure uninterrupted IT service.
- Information Security—Address compliance and risk, facilitate incident monitoring and response, and promulgate and enforce standards.
- IT Infrastructure—Establish a robust, wide-reaching institutional computing and network infrastructure.
- Institutional Business—Partner with campus business units to improve business processes, timeliness of services, reliability, customer service, and ease of use.
- Teaching and Learning—Provide support to faculty and students for technology solutions and tools that facilitate teaching and learning.
- Research—Provide support for the growing technology needs of researchers and the increased sophistication of research-related technologies.
- Funding—Determine new funding models to respond to budget changes introduced by Responsibility Based Budgeting (RBB) and the slowdown of the economy.

IT Unit Changes Name to Reflect Emphasis on Service

IT has made a number of organizational changes to better meet the needs of the University. The most recent change is a new name for one of IT's units: IT-User Services is now IT-Client Support & Services (IT-CS&S).

The new name emphasizes the long-term relationships the unit has built, and will continue to build, with members of the University community.

IT-CS&S has redesigned some of its space in Smith Hall to reflect this emphasis on service and collaboration with clients (e.g., a redesigned training room and some student collaborative work spaces). Over the coming months, we will continue to redesign our functions and facilities to find innovative ways to improve the support and services we provide.

Planned Outages

UDSIS

UDSIS will be down for part of the Sept. 19 weekend to apply patch bundle 20 and related fixes from PeopleSoft. These fixes deal primarily with changes for FISAP (Financial Aid) reporting and the Ethnicity component of PeopleSoft reporting, which will enable the University to meet new federal guidelines and adapt to new financial aid requirements for the upcoming year.

PeopleSoft Financials

PeopleSoft Financials will be down for part of the Sept. 28 weekend to install bundles 32 and 33. This upgrade includes a variety of general fixes to the software.

Security, Privacy, and Safety

UD Hosted Information Security Class for Greater Wilmington Community

The week of Aug. 24, IT's Information Security Office and IT-CS&S hosted a comprehensive information security class for governmental agencies, institutions, and organizations in the greater Wilmington area.

Delaware is one of three states selected to participate in a Department of Homeland Security program to provide leadership training and awareness at the state and local levels to prepare communities to respond to attacks on the nation's cyber infrastructure. A key component of the program is to improve information sharing between state, local, and federal agencies; large corporations; healthcare facilities; law enforcement agencies; utility providers; transportation facilities; educational institutions; and financial institutions. IT and Public Safety are coordinating UD's involvement in this program.

Infrastructure

IT Helps Students Move into Their Residence Halls

Over 1,200 new students asked for help setting up their computers, printers, televisions, and other devices on Sat. and Sun., Aug. 29 and 30. More than 40 IT staff members and 20 IT student employees were on campus during move-in days to help students connect securely to UDeINet and the Internet.

Special challenges this year included issues raised by the increasing number of Internet-capable devices each student might bring (e.g., computer, iPod, game console, DVR, etc.), the number of personal wireless routers, and conflicts between vendors' equipment or software.

Disaster Recovery

IT has chosen Cavalier Telephone to provide an off-site disaster recovery location for the University. The facility will house redundant hardware, systems, and network access to enable recovery of critical systems if the services provided from our Chapel Street computing center are interrupted.

Administrative Databases Now Available 24/7

The PeopleSoft Financial Information and Human Resource databases are now available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. These databases are available for extended hours to accommodate international partnerships with the University and to provide the database component of the Disaster Recovery initiatives. Each of the databases executes an online backup during a time period that minimizes performance impact. The databases are fully available during this time. These changes provide a significant improvement in overall customer service by expanding the availability of data and ensuring that database recovery time is kept to a minimum.

NSS Begins Trial of New Phone Technology

Network and Systems Services (IT-NSS) is evaluating Verizon's "Hosted IP Centrex" (HIPC) service, which uses Voice over IP (VoIP) technologies to provide services comparable to those provided by our current Centrex telephone system. In advance of the expiration of the current Centrex telephone contract with Verizon (August 2010), IT-NSS is comparing the traditional Centrex offering and the new HIPC offering and is investigating other VoIP technologies and vendors. We expect to decide on the replacement system by the end of 2009.

VoIP telephones—even the most inexpensive—generally have more features than "plain old telephones," including caller ID, message waiting, missed calls, etc. VoIP phones use the existing IP data network to communicate and generally contain a two-port switch that allows them to share an existing data connection with a computer so an additional data outlet is not necessary. If we choose VoIP, existing telephone outlets can be converted to data outlets in the future.

Improvements to Student Datamart

The time and resources required to build the Student Datamart repository have been significantly reduced. This repository is used by the Institutional Research group to help college staff members provide more accurate information in response to student questions and administrative inquiries. The effort resulted in a 50% reduction in time and resources to assemble and build this complex repository. It has greatly improved the availability of this data, allowing staff members to provide better customer service to students.

Teaching and Learning

Sakai@UD Upgrade

Sakai@UD was upgraded to Sakai version 2.6.0 on Aug. 18. This release contains hundreds of bug fixes, improvements, and new features. However, the overall look and feel is very similar to the previous version. New capabilities include importing iCal feeds from external calendars like UD Web Events and Google, a drop-down menu allowing instructors and project maintainers to temporarily view their site in another role (e.g., allowing faculty to see what a student would see), and the option to allow students to resubmit new drafts of assignments without pre-approval.

For more information on new features in this version please visit the "What's New in Sakai 2.6" page on the Sakai@UD training site:
<http://www.udel.edu/sakai/training/gettingstarted/new26.html>.

Sakai@UD training and consulting are available through Academic Technology Services (IT-ATS) and IT-CS&S. See <http://www.udel.edu/sakai/training/faculty/support.html> for links to online resources and contact information.

Classroom Capture Pilot: Fall 2009

IT-ATS will offer course capture services this semester. The spring course-capture pilot was so successful that we've doubled the number of available rooms for the fall semester. Faculty members who teach in Gore Hall (rooms 103, 104, and 116) or in Smith Hall (rooms 102, 103, and 104) can have their courses recorded automatically. The system works on a schedule to record the projected image from the laptop and the audio from the podium. The recordings are made available to students to review, to make up a missed class, or to study for exams with peers. Faculty can also use the system to capture lectures by guest speakers for use in later semesters.

A survey for the spring 2009 pilot program indicated that students continue to attend class and that recorded lectures were not a factor in deciding whether or not to attend class.

Business Systems

Student Services Initiative Update

Several Student Services Initiative (SSI) projects were released over the summer. The aim of all SSI projects is to provide better service to staff in the University offices that interact with students, and ultimately, to students themselves.

Financial Systems—Several Financial Systems SSI projects were completed over the quarter.

- File transfers between the State of Delaware and UD were successfully automated, as were e-mail notifications of various aspects of Financial Aid. Both these projects resulted in saving several hours of staff time and made student bills more accurate by showing estimated financial aid early in the billing cycle.
- Self-service printing of Electronic Promissory Notes and financial aid acceptance online were also completed this quarter, further streamlining functions that had been handled manually by the Financial Aid office.

Residence Hall Online Check-In—The residence hall online check-in system went live in August. This SSI project was a combined effort of IT-Web Development (IT-WD), Housing Assignment Services, and Residence Life.

Students living on campus were asked to check in online prior to their arrival on campus, using a system similar to those used by airlines that request passengers to check-in before arriving at the airport. As keys were issued to students during move-in days, residence hall staff updated a Web-based roster that interfaces to the student's housing record to produce more accurate bills and facilitate reporting.

Over 2,500 students used the new system. Residence Life reported that the new system made check-in operate more efficiently.

UDSIS Updates

IT-MIS developed a file upload utility to enable certain UDSIS users to upload files from their PCs or shared drives for processing by UDSIS and other systems. This utility is particularly useful for staff in Financial Aid and Student Financial offices.

Human Resource System Updates

Online "Onboarding"—Onboarding, an HR process of transitioning new employees to the University, was centralized by the development of a new Web site, applications, and webforms.

To support the Human Resources (HR) initiative to streamline and centralize this process, HR, IT-MIS, and IT-WD developed a new onboarding Web site that directs new employees to first complete the HR Quick Bio form. A basic record is then created in PeopleSoft that assigns a UD ID and records the PIN created by the employee.

The new employee is able to immediately log in to the onboarding menu, an application that provides a checklist to all required employment forms, which can be completed either on- or off-campus. By centralizing and moving the onboarding process online, IT-WD has helped HR to

- provide a consistent and effective process to welcome new employees to the University,
- create a positive first impression,
- minimize the delay in entering new employees into the Payroll and Benefit systems, and
- eliminate the delay in granting new employees access to University systems that require authentication as a UD employee.

For more information, visit <http://www.udel.edu/onboarding/>.

HR Position Management Module—IT-MIS has created two new bolt-on modules for HR's Position Management system.

The first allows HR to add or update budget information for each position as an aid to implementing Responsibility Based Budgeting (RBB). An accompanying process allows HR to update position funding with information from an employee's job employment data.

The second allows HR to track positions created or retained via funding received under a federal stimulus grant from The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), which requires us to produce a detailed report on how Federal stimulus dollars are spent. The University is collaborating in a National Science Foundation (NSF) pilot program called STAR to create job information for all such employees for use in the University's ARRA reports.

HR System Maintenance—IT-MIS applied two maintenance packs to the HR Quality Assurance module. These packs include all current tax updates and are now being tested by HR.

Upgrade to Alumni Applications: Advance and Smartcall

A significant upgrade to the Advance and Smartcall applications was completed. The Advance application tracks critical alumni-related information for various events and fundraising. The Smartcall application assists in phone solicitation of alumni contributions to the University. A rare convergence of multiple upgrades was required: Sixteen new or upgraded databases, new UNIX servers, migration through two new versions of Oracle database software, and three levels of application software. This intricate upgrade was successfully accomplished over a long weekend, and the application and databases were up and running on Monday morning.

Better Tracking of Purchases

As part of our support of the billing of UD Facilities to individual JVs and work orders, IT-MIS has added the ability to tie the work order number to a purchase requisition to make it easier for University departments to reconcile these charges on their budgets.

Training Opportunities

LearnIT@UD

This summer, IT-CS&S offered over 90 training sessions including several new classes that focused on creating and maintaining an up-to-date Web presence. IT also hosted two new sessions in August about social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter in an academic environment. Nearly 50 staff and faculty attended each of these sessions. Similar sessions will be offered again throughout the fall semester.

We continue to look for ways to appeal specifically to our student body and faculty. One example is a new session on Internet Safety. This session is available to any faculty member who would like to incorporate Internet safety topics into his or her curriculum. Currently, faculty teaching First Year Experience (FYE) classes are choosing this session for their fall FYE curriculum. As always, these classes will be offered to Lewes and Georgetown locations through our ITV rooms in Pearson Hall.

To read summaries of upcoming classes and to register for a class, go to <http://www.udel.edu/learn/> and select *Calendar and Class Registration*.

IT Help Center

The IT Help Center reported 5,427 calls and 1,972 e-mail contacts for the months of June, July, and Aug., which resulted in 5,474 trouble tickets and Network Services requests. Online documentation was accessed 22,543 times through the Center's Web site. Overall Help Center statistics can be found at <http://www.udel.edu/help/stats>.

Call volume was heavy, in part, because both the summer term and fall semester began during this report period. Requests for assistance were higher over the same time period last year in the activation/deactivation of student e-mail accounts, network connections, and activation of handheld devices. There were also a large number of users who replied to e-mail phishing scams resulting in their accounts being temporarily suspended.

Personnel

Cedric Childs joined the IT-Web Development group in June as a Programmer/Analyst III. Cedric is a Java programmer in the Technical Resource Group and is working on various Web applications. He comes to us with extensive experience, most recently from Bank of America/MBNA where he was a Software Engineer who used Java/C++ to develop internal loss prevention banking applications.

Dony Thomas has joined IT-MIS as a Programmer/Analyst II. His main responsibility is supporting the HR Administrative system. He comes to the University from Nashville, TN where he was employed for 4 years as a Systems Analyst for Satyam Computer Services Ltd. At Satyam he worked on the PeopleSoft HR module for Nissan North America and Caterpillar Inc.

Jennifer Zappo joined the IT-NSS Telephone Services group as a Records Analyst/Coordinator. Jennifer has been employed at the University for more than 4 years providing financial and office support, most recently for the Department of Physics and Astronomy.

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