University at Buffalo *The State University of New York* | REACHING OTHERS

Fall 2013

While School Was Out, Technology Was on the Move

Published September 2013

By Tom Furlani, furlani@buffalo.edu

Summer was a particularly busy time for Computing and Information Technology (CIT). While most students were away, it was the perfect time to perform upgrades and introduce technology to make the lives of UB students and employees easier. In this issue, we'll reveal several new IT initiatives that I hope you find helpful.

In the past, connecting to the UB Secure Wi-Fi network could be a daunting task depending on your mobile device, with the CIT Help Desk experiencing a substantial increase in calls and emails from mobile device owners. However, thanks to the recent launch of the UB Secure WiFiSetup wizard, connecting to the UB Secure network just became much easier.

Wi-Fi coverage across UB's campus is a hot topic and, with new devices constantly emerging, it's difficult to keep up with increasing bandwidth demands. Simultaneous Wi-Fi sessions at UB have recently peaked over 18,000. As a result, CIT is constantly upgrading our technology and increasing on-campus wireless access points, with nearly 3,000 currently in use. You can find an overview of our Wi-Fi buildout plan in this newsletter.

Gamers will be pleased to learn about the new UB Gaming Wi-Fi network. This dedicated network is available for gaming consoles and media devices without Web browsers. Although we're happy to provide Wi-Fi access to UB's gamers, as a parent, I would be remiss not to remind our students that schoolwork comes first!

Virtual conferencing technology has made it easier than ever to connect remotely with colleagues. Using the Microsoft Lync software, UB students, staff and faculty can now launch a video conference at any time at no charge. The Lync client comes bundled with Microsoft Office 2013, available for download, or you can download it separately (beneficial if you're using a Mac).

In addition to these initiatives, CIT has also been working to deploy an electronic document management system, implement an improved mail client interface, provide MATLAB training and upgrade classroom technology.

I hope you find our newsletter interesting and informative. As always, we look forward to comments and suggestions for future topics, as well as feedback on IT services and initiatives. Don't forget to enjoy our past newsletters.
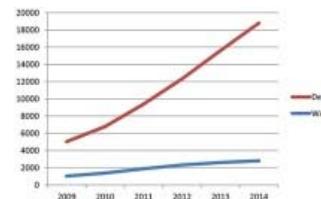
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UB Wi-Fi Usage Spikes over 18,000

As of September 23, 2013, UB's Wi-Fi system hit a peak, surpassing 18,000 simultaneous sessions, while wireless access points (WAPS) haven't increased much at all. Take a look at the chart above to see how the numbers have grown.

Take A Look Back: Interface Computer Services Newsletter

Computing and Information Technology at UB is more than 40 years old. Here's a look back at the *Interface* newsletter from February 1990. (Please note: this PDF file includes perturbations natural to the duplication process at the time.)

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Connect Auto-Magically to UB Secure Wi-Fi

Published September 2013

By Diana Tuorto, dianatuo@buffalo.edu

Getting devices connected securely on UB's Wi-Fi network has been a problem for new UB faculty, staff and especially students. As of August 15, a new automatic configuration service called UB Secure WiFiSetup has made those problems a thing of the past.

According to Leslie Evans, Project Manager for Network and Classroom Services (NCS), "Our goal was to make connecting to the UB Secure wireless network seamless for students, as well as UB employees. UB Secure WiFiSetup should also reduce the number of calls to the CIT Help Desk."

UB Secure WiFiSetup uses a simple configuration wizard to set up your devices to automatically connect safely to the UB Secure Wi-Fi network whenever your device is on campus. You only need to authenticate once using your UBITName and password, and it will be entered automatically for you from then on.

If you've already configured your devices to use UB Secure, there's no need to change your settings. However, if you're currently using UB Wireless or UB Guest Wi-Fi, which are unencrypted and can leave personal information at risk, it's strongly encouraged that you follow the UB Secure WiFiSetup wizard.

UBSecure WiFiSetup is compatible with Windows 8, 7, Vista, XP; Macintosh OS 10.5+; iOS 2+; and, Android 2.1+. If you're using an older, non-supported device, or have trouble using the wizard, manual configuration instructions are still available.

A team of CIT Network and Classroom Services staff worked to research and implement this new service. According to Leslie, "Rob Colantuoni, Mark Ferguson, and Matt Suarez began researching tools in July 2012. Kathleen Murphy, Anthony Smith and Robert Ballachino also offered their assistance, and Jerry Bucklaew was instrumental in launching the new service as he configured UB's wireless controller settings to allow traffic to UB Secure WiFiSetup."

Leslie added, "Cloudpath, the provider for UB Secure WiFiSetup, had been previously evaluated for another project. The team consulted other universities about the products they used and their performance and feedback about Cloudpath was very positive, especially from Syracuse University."

"Our goal was to make connecting to the UB Secure wireless network seamless for students, as well as UB employees."

Leslie Evans, Project Manager
Network and Classroom Services (NCS)
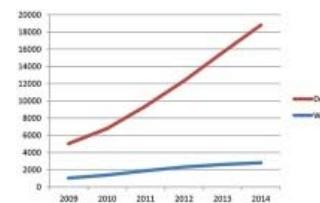
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According to Matt Suarez, Systems Software Programmer with Network and Classroom Services, "UB Secure WiFiSetup simply makes life easier for people trying to connect."

Learn more about UB Secure WiFiSetup at www.buffalo.edu/ubit/ubwifisetup, then configure your mobile device via http://ubwifisetup.buffalo.edu. If you have any questions or problems using UB Secure WiFiSetup, please contact the CIT Help Desk at 716-645-3542 or cit-helpdesk@buffalo.edu.

Fall 2013

New Places & Updated Spaces

Students stop at the colorful new Lockwood Express Stations.

Published September 2013

By Ashley Steves

Students were greeted this semester with new and updated technology spaces, designed to make collaborating or connecting easier.

Three classrooms on UB's North and South Campus got a much-needed facelift for the fall. Norton 112 (Woldman Theater), Kimball 108 and Kimball 126 were all remodeled and given a complete architectural refresh.

Workers gutted and remodeled the rooms over the summer from floor to ceiling, improving the acoustics, and replacing the seating and lighting.

In addition to the floor-to-ceiling remodeling, each classroom was fitted with new instructional technology. Teaching stations have new control systems, upgraded touch screens, document cameras, computers, microphones and access to high definition video.

Laptop display capabilities were also added to ten small classrooms in Bell, Norton, Capen, Cooke, and Talbert. The added technology in these classrooms allows instructors to utilize their own laptops for PowerPoint and other applications to enhance instruction.

"We measure success by how many technology classrooms we have, and the goal is to get all classrooms to be technology classrooms."

John Pfeffer, Associate for Instructional Resources
Computing and Information Technology (CIT)

A new look for the Woldman Theater (Norton 112).

Architectural updates around UB's campuses aren't stopping any time soon. As UB 2020, the university's expansion plan, continues to thrive and buildings are added, more construction will occur and with it more technology classrooms.

"We measure success by how many technology classrooms we have, and the goal is to get all classrooms to be technology classrooms," said John Pfeffer, Technology Program Manager for Learning Spaces with UB Computing and Information Technology CIT).

Classrooms are not the only part of UB's expansion plan, however, and not the
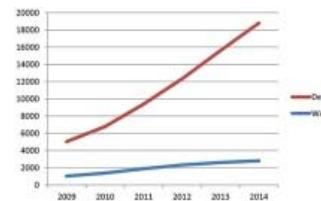
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only part of CIT's summer renovation.

Over the past five years, informal learning spaces have provided convenient places for students to meet and access technology outside classrooms. New informal learning spaces have also been created in Baldy Hall and the Biomedical Education Building (BIOED). Three spaces were added to Baldy's third floor walkway, in addition to one on BIOED's third floor elevator lobby, making it more convenient for groups to collaborate outside the classroom. Each space offers a large LCD screen that you can run from your laptop, as well as fixed-floor seating and a desk.

Areas seen as lobbies or stopping points around campus are chosen for renovations and designed to make more comfortable places to learn and work. The new learning spaces are in addition those already in buildings such as Knox Hall, Diefendorf and the Natural Sciences Complex, just to name a few.

Baldy Hall's new informal learning space is a great location for studying or group collaboration.

Plans are underway to add more in future academic years. Going forward, John and his team are looking for ways to make the spaces a little more private, as well as schedulable like the spaces available in Lockwood Library.

"I think they're too out in the open, I think students that do want to use them need to have a little more privacy," he added.

An exciting addition are the colorful new Express Stations in the Lockwood 2nd Floor Cybrary, which are perfect for printing or a quick email check. With monitors mounted on the wall at eye-level, there's lots of space on the desk for you and your stuff. Bulky computer towers have been replaced by slim "virtual machines."

While work and school can always be hectic, these new and updated locations offer a chance to kick back and enjoy the space and technology you need on the go. Find computing sites and learning spaces on campus.

Fall 2013

Lync'd In

Published September 2013

By Ashley Steves

"Scheduled meeting" doesn't always have to mean packing up and hauling everything across the campus, or even the country, only to sit in an uncomfortable conference room. In fact, with the help of UB's new communication tool, Virtual Conference, you can meet whenever you need from the comfort of your own home or office.

UB launched the new Virtual Conference service using Microsoft Lync this summer to give UB faculty, staff and students more flexibility when it comes to planning and attending group meetings.

The software is used in conjunction with web cameras and microphones and allows you to initiate and conduct virtual discussions, conferences and classes from anywhere.

According to Saira Hasnain, Director of Enterprise Infrastructure Services (EIS), "We've had a number of requests for reliable web conferencing that would allow for classes or meetings to be conducted virutally in real time. A proof of concept environment was created for interested UB departments to test extensively before the launch. UB is comprised of a large number of Windows and Mac users, so it was important for the tool to have similar capabilities for both platforms."

Lync gives you the power to conference call people in groups, share Powerpoint presentations or use a digital whiteboard by scheduling meetings with either the Outlook email client or the Lync Web Scheduler. Instant messages can also be sent between parties.

Perhaps Lync's greatest selling point is how much it cuts down on travel time, especially for faculty and students who don't have the time or means to commute across UB's three campuses.

"Lync is very helpful for meetings, classes or group projects. It will save on commute times and travel expenses," Saira continued. "Faculty can even use it to have office hours with their students."

UB students can host meetings with a group of up to 10 attendees (presenter and nine others), while UB faculty and staff can conference with up to 250 (presenter and 249 others). The large allowance for faculty and staff members is perfect for use in classrooms or online courses, allowing big groups of students to connect and chat with each other. This also allows for alternative learning, such as conferences and webinars, to be implemented in the classroom.

"Lync is very helpful for meetings, classes or group projects...UB is a great place to innovate."

Saira Hasnain, Director of Enterprise Infrastructure Services (EIS)
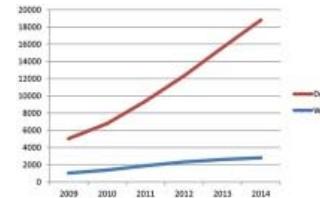
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A large team of UB staff from CIT and the Teaching and Learning Center collaborated to make Virtual Conference possible. They include: Sharon Arieno, Chris Bates, Dave Dudek, Beth Fellendorf, Matt Helmbrecht, Tom Jauch, Linda Kingsbury, Margie Muniak, David Shurtleff, Thom Slomka, Matt Stock, Robin Sullivan, Diana Tuorto and Mark Woodard.

"UB is a great place to innovate," said Saira. "The team was excited and everyone worked well together. Since this was a discovery project, there were some surprises, as there always are. Technology does not always perform as the vendor says it will, but we were able to get necessary modifications and upgrades in place that make Lync a very stable, reliable tool for the campus."

Lync is available for use on Windows and Mac devices, as well as Windows 8, Android and IOS mobile devices. Now you can meet from home, from work or on the go – the choice is yours. Learn more about Lync.

Get Your Game On

Published September 2013

By Robert Poleszak

Gamers at UB are in for a treat. As of April 2013, UB is offering a dedicated Wi-Fi network for gaming and media devices.

For example, students using a PS3 or 360 can now successfully connect their devices to the UB Gaming Wi-Fi network. In the past, students may have found connecting these devices to UB Secure or Wireless impossible because the devices don't have a browser to manage the UB Secure login process.

Using UB Gaming is a two step process. First, the device's MAC address (a 12 digit hexadecimal number, which is typically found on a sticker on the console or the device's setup menus) is registered at the UB Gaming registration website using a computer already connected to the UB network. Then, UB Gaming is selected for connection with the newly registered device, which automatically authenticates the device for then on.

UB Gaming is available campus wide, not just in residence halls. Staff and faculty are encouraged to use this Wi-Fi connection with any devices that do not support a browser-based login.

While recommended for gaming devices, UB Gaming is the same speed as UB Secure. For the fastest high-speed Internet connection on campus, connect gaming consoles, media devices and routers to ResNet's wired network whenever possible.

Learn how to connect to UB Gaming.
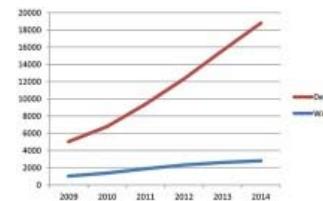
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Blocking Spam at the Source

Published September 2013

By Rick Lesniak

Keeping spam at bay is a never-ending progression of checks and balances. For a long time, UB's Central email system administrators used firewalls, spam identification engines and enterprise level anti-virus software to protect the email system. This level of protection afforded UB the delicate balance between openness, typical of colleges and universities, and closing our systems to unauthorized use.

Over time, people with malicious intent figured out workaround methods to bypass these barriers. In response, system administrators needed to start closing the doors through a series of technology measures that increasingly required proofs. These measures, including closing down open email relay usage on campus and requiring password protection to send email through UB's Central email system, have blocked the growing tide of spam that could—without warning—choke our campus networks.

"The key is to stop spammers at the source."

Saira Hasnain, Director of Enterprise Infrastructure Services (EIS)

But what if the spam comes from what seems to be legitimate sources? The increasing sophistication of phishing emails puts UB's Central email systems at risk through the unwittingly release of legitimate UBITNames and passwords by those who share their credentials. Using those credentials, spammers from outside our network can appear as UB members making legitimate requests. (As an aside, I've heard IT staff debating whether an email was a phish or legit, so it's not just the hapless being duped.)

Anti-spam, anti-virus, anti-phishing—these are all reactive measures that require identifying the "vector" and pushing out prevention definitions to update our safeguards. Even if it takes just a few minutes for this to happen, it's enough time for the infestation to plant itself in the system, and credentials to be stolen. Just seconds later, those credentials are being used to drop huge amounts of what masquerade to be legitimate email coming from "one of us" on our own network, hogging huge amounts of network bandwidth and potentially UB's Internet connection.

"The key is to stop spammers at the source," says Saira Hasnain, CIT Director of Enterprise Infrastructure Services (EIS).

When asked to describe the "source," Saira talks about areas "out there" on the net—computers and networks—that are linked to spamming. Since 1997, Real-time Blackhole Lists, or RBL's, have been used by the Internet community to keep track of these areas so that Internet Service Providers, like UB, can refuse to accept
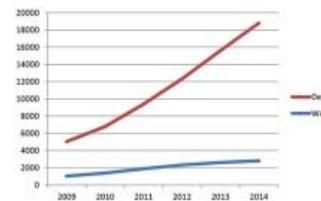
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their requests. This doesn't come without controversy, however, since RBL's blindly block all email requests from an IP address, legitimate or not. Central email system admins have enabled RBL's at our email front door; if the email comes from a Blackhole, the front door stays locked.

The effect has been dramatic: on average, UB is stopping 4 million email requests, more than 85-92% of the incoming queue. There is a more subtle effect than not having spam show up on your inbox, however. Stopping spam at the front door means the Central email system will no longer need to determine the legitimacy of each of those messages, sort the good from the bad, and deliver them into our inboxes. "We no longer need to process badness," said Saira, "It's bye-bye at the door."

"RBL's are not the end-all, however. It's a moving target. They are another way for us to prevent spam. We're likely to need more [ways]," Saira reports. When asked what might be the next step, Saira spoke about the potential for rate limiting email at the individual level, "but how much bandwidth should an individual use for their personal or business related emails?" That is a discussion for another day.

Learn Anywhere with UB Course Captures

Published September 2013

By Diana Tuorto

Missed a class, or wish you could relive it to retain more? Now, thanks to UB's new course capture software, you can anytime.

Course capture software has been used by UB for several years now, but as Matt Stock, Manager of Customer Assistance with Network and Classroom Services (NCS) points out, "It wasn't reliable. The new system is much easier for both faculty and students to use."

Earlier this year, several products were evaluated and the Echo360 software was put in place in time for the School of Medicine's arrival in August. It has many new features that students will enjoy, including the ability to download and fast forward, as long as the professor allows it. "The software has more robust features and offers a better experience," Matt continued. "Professors will soon also be able to edit videos after recording."

Echo360's software works on all devices and allows videos to be published to YouTube and iTunes U. Students can access videos through links under their courses in UB*learns*. "In the future, UB's course capture software could be used for training videos and more," Matt added.

Nearly a dozen video capture classrooms were upgraded over the summer, but the hope is to update more spaces going forward. "The new course capture software is very cost effective," Matt said.

The new software also offers analytics, allowing faculty to track how many people have watched a video. Down the road, a "personal capture" feature will be made available, allowing faculty to record classes from a more mobile device like a tablet, smartphone or tablet, instead of a stationary box.

A high-speed wired Internet connection is recommended for streaming videos, so students living on campus are encouraged to use ResNet. Learn more about UB's course capture software.

> *"The software has more robust features and offers a better experience,"*
>
> **Matt Stock, Manager of Customer Assistance**
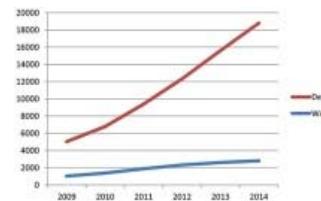> *Network and Classroom Services (NCS)*

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UBmail Web Client Gets a Makeover

UBmail (Central Email)'s new Classic skin.

Published September 2013

By Robert Poleszak

The UBmail (Central Email) web client enjoyed a facelift over the summer.

In July, the UBmail (Central Email) Web interface provider was changed from Atmail to Roundcube. The new webmail interface offers the following improvements:

- More visual consistency across modern Web browsers

- Cleaner interface

- Improved stability and security

- Choice between two skins, "Classic" and "Larry"

- Ability to sort messages by "threads" (conversations)

- Ability to save your sent messages in the same folder as the message being replied to

- Access to a host of time-saving keyboard shortcuts for common email tasks

"The new webmail system is so much easier to use than the old one! File handling is especially pleasant."

Margaret Hollingsworth, Associate Professor
Biological Sciences

"Larry" Skin (Default)

If you use UBmail (Central Email) through a Web browser, be sure to import your contacts into the new system by following our instructions. After December 17, 2013, you'll no longer be able to access your old contacts.

Central UBmail is used by faculty, staff and students in the following schools:

- Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
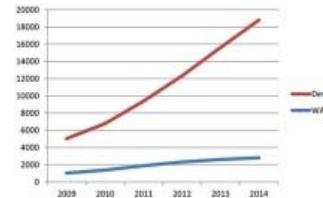
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Dental Medicine

Medicine and Biomedical Sciences

Faculty and staff from the College of Arts and Sciences and the School of Engineering who have not been migrated to central Exchange email

According to Margaret Hollingsworth, Associate Professor of Biological Sciences at UB, "The new webmail system is so much easier to use than the old one! File handling is especially pleasant."

Campus Wi-Fi Update

Published September 2013

By Ashley Steves

After six years of hard work, CIT is taking the next step in providing complete Wi-Fi coverage at UB.

Network and Classroom Services (NCS) will wrap up phase one of the two-phase Wi-Fi Buildout plan this December, a project that initially began in 2007 and has focused on providing Wi-Fi coverage across UB's three campuses.

During that time, nearly 3,000 wireless access points, devices that allow Wi-Fi devices to connect to a wired network using Wi-Fi, covering 10 million square feet have been installed. UB has seen recent spikes of over 18,000 simultaneous Wi-Fi sessions.

Throughout the course of the project, the team has consisted of two full-time staff members and—at the peak—six full-time electricians pulling wires for the system and working through both public academic buildings and private residence complexes alike.

"We're happy with the progress so far," said Jerry Bucklaew, Network Architect with NCS. "But now that we've gotten to the end of the project, we need to go back through and do replacements and adjustments for the change in technology and massive explosion of Wi-Fi users."

At the beginning of UB's Wi-Fi buildout plan six years back, it was decided to install for Wi-Fi coverage only and not performance. This is due to the fact that it would have taken twice as long to complete if each building was designed for high density. Now that there is basic coverage almost everywhere at UB, phase two of the Wi-Fi Buildout Plan will focus on improving the coverage for high density and for performance.

Phase two will give people on campus better signal strength, better throughput (the rate of successful message delivery), better bandwidth and a more reliable connection. It will also replace about 500 access points that had been installed in previous years and update them with the latest standard of 802.11n. The order in which buildings will be updated is weighted by factors such as building size, amount of people in the building and if the building is student-serving, such as libraries and residence halls.

Phase two is expected to start in January 2014. In the meanwhile, UB and CIT are stressing the importance of Wi-Fi and Bluetooth conservation– not just to meet the university's environmental stewardship goals, but also to improve Wi-Fi coverage on campus.

Because Wi-Fi is a limited commodity, it's advised to take better alternatives if

"We're happy with the progress so far."

Jerry Bucklaew, Network Architect
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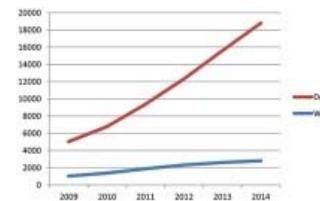
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they are available. Students living on campus in residence hall rooms and apartments have free access to ResNet, UB's wired Ethernet connection with the help of a personal Ethernet cable. Not only is ResNet 1,000 times faster than using a Wi-Fi connection, it also conserves Wi-Fi for those who need it (those using devices such as iPads, or laptops in academic buildings). Another step to be taken is to shut off Wi-Fi and Bluetooth on devices that don't need it. For example, most modern printers and routers have Wi-Fi enabled by default, but if they're connected to a wired port, these devices don't need Wi-Fi access and should have it turned off.

Additionally, one of the biggest difficulties the university's network faces is interference from unmanaged access points, or access points that people —especially students—bring from home and install in order to connect devices to UB's secure Wi-Fi network. These unmanaged access points share the spectrum with UB's Wi-Fi system, meaning UB's network has less bandwidth and poorer performance than it should be able to provide. Since they aren't able to avoid spectra conflicts, these access points can interfer with each other.

The access points installed by CIT communicate with each other through a central server, so they actively avoid interfering with one another, which could other cause chaos with 2,500 access points across campus. When other access points transmit at the same time, it disrupts the ability of the CIT access points to coordinate with each other and degrades network performance for everyone using Wi-Fi in the area.

![University at Buffalo, The State University of New York | REACHING OTHERS]

Don't Lose Your Data: Stay Safe Online

Published September 2013

By Robert Polezak

Information security at UB is a high stakes game. The best way to ensure that both your personal information and UB's data stays secure is to monitor your computer and make changes to your browsing behavior.

According to the UB Information Security Office, UB's online infrastructure is quite secure from a technical aspect. Several layers of firewall and security software helps keep UB's network safe from outside attack. Technology only goes so far, however, as compromises can still occur when a person clicks an unknown link in an email.

"Don't click on links that you're not absolutely sure about, especially something that comes through email," said Jeff Murphy, UB's Interim Information Security Officer. "Phishing, or defrauding an online account holder of personal or financial information by posing as a legitimate entity, is our number one problem when it comes to causing a compromised account."

Phishing scams don't just target UB students. It's important for everyone at UB to remember that no one at UB will ever ask for your password.

If you are a member of our faculty or staff you also want to keep a close eye on your university computer's behavior. If it is acting strangely, bring it to your local IT support's attention, especially if you're handling sensitive data such as Social Security Numbers and credit cards or other regulated data.

A single virus could simply be a sign of more underlying problems. According to UB Information Security Analyst Cathy Ullman, "Often, someone will notice anomalous activity because of only one virus. However, just because you see one doesn't mean there aren't four that you don't know about."

Cathy continued, "Part of my job is to investigate and get the full picture. What triggers us to review a machine might be an annoying virus sending out spam emails or causing pop-ups, when in fact it's created a backdoor for software looking for credit card numbers or Social Security Numbers. It's very important to report a compromised machine or account as soon as possible."

By ignoring a compromise, you're not only risking your information, but opening UB to a potentially costly security breach. Industry estimates point to an expected cost of $180 per record potentially compromised. Considering most

"Phishing...is our number one problem when it comes to causing a compromised account."

Jeff Murphy, Interim Information Security Officer
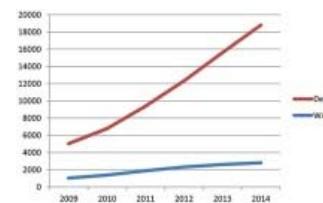*University at Buffalo*

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computers and employees rarely work on just one record, these fines could add up to well over $100,000.

If you work with regulated data and you believe your UB-owned computer is compromised, report it to your local IT support. They will work with the Information Security Office to make a copy of the hard drive. Your local IT support will then fix the issue and get the computer back to you. In the meantime, the Information Security Office will analyze the drive to find the nature of the virus, whether it's simply one causing frequent pop-up advertisements, or one that could potentially be sending regulated data to hackers.

Questions about Internet and information security and compromises can be directed to the Information Security Office at sec-office@buffalo.edu.

Fall 2013

Hands On MATLAB Sessions

Helping Out (L to R): Dr. Nate Barlow and CCR's Cynthia Cornelius assist a MATLAB session participant.

Published September 2013

By Ashley Steves

Everyone says the best way to learn a language is to learn it hands on; computing languages are no different.

The Center for Computational Research (CCR) and MathWorks teamed up this last April and May to offer a series of MATLAB presentations and workshops.

MATLAB, or matrix laboratory, is a numerical computing environment and high-performance programming language. It integrates computation, visualization and programming in an easy-to-use environment where problems and solutions are expressed in familiar mathematical notations.

The seminar series began as a joint effort between Mathworks and CCR. The two sessions were held on March 21 and 22 in Clemens 120 and given by Mehernaz Savai, a MathWorks engineer, and Debbi Cohen, a MathWorks account manager. The first demo, entitled "Data Analysis and Visualization using MATLAB," taught approximately 85 faculty, staff and students in attendance tasks such as importing data into MATLAB, building graphic user interfaces (GUIs) and generating reports and automating analysis.

"Sessions and workshops [like these] are part of the CCR's mission to enable research and scholarships at UB."

Cynthia Cornelius, Systems Analyst
Center for Computational Research (CCR)

Dr. Nate Barlow teaching an April 2013 session.

"Sessions and workshops [like these] are part of the CCR's mission to enable research and scholarships at UB," said CCR Systems Analyst Cynthia Cornelius. CCR's mission statement matches those sentiments, stressing the importance of "providing faculty with access to high-performance computing and visualization resources" and "[providing] education, outreach, and training in Western New York."

The March 22 session, a demo on Parallel Computing with MATLAB, yielded approximately 45 attendees. Between the first two days, Cynthia estimated the audience was about five to 10 percent faculty.

Following the completion of the sessions, attendees were given the opportunity to work with MATLAB hands-on at two workshops on April 8 and 10. Attendees
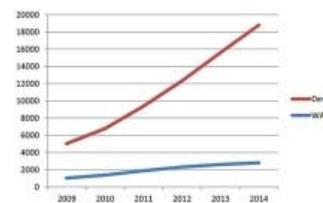
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brought their own laptops and learned how to create and submit code through MATLAB's Distributed Computing Server (MDCS).

CCR's Dr. Nate Barlow gave both workshop sessions in April. The attendance for the April 8 and April 10 sessions were 17 and seven, respectively, and attended by a receptive group of grad students and post-doctorate students.

"I would say it was very positive," said Nate. "Maybe 60 percent of people had already used MATLAB before and were pretty comfortable with it, and they were just coming to learn what the latest and greatest is that had been added to the new version, but they had really good questions."

This isn't the last of seminars from CCR. According to Cynthia, comments from the attendees showed the sessions were a success, and now Nate and Cynthia are planning to give another MATLAB workshop on Tuesday, October 1, 2013. The new sessions will focus on using MATLAB's parallel computing toolbox, as well as the MATLAB Distributing Computing Server.

"I think what we'll be doing will be talking about the parallel computing toolbox and most of the talk will focus on that," said Nate. "That is something that everybody on campus that has the UB-licensed MATLAB has access to, so that will get the widest audience."

Additionally, future workshops on graphics processing units (GPUs) and big data/Hadoop are currently under development.

For more information on the October 1 session, please visit CCR's website.

Fall 2013

Virtual Machines Expand at UB

Students use "zero client" devices in Lockwood Cybrary.

Published September 2013

By Ashley Steves

Good things come in small packages, especially when it comes to computing at UB.

Last year, Computing and Information Technology (CIT) began the Virtual Desktop Initiative, a pilot project that replaced nearly 50 personal computer workstations in public computing sites with small "zero client" box devices.

Fast-forward one year, and there are now 200 zero clients all around campus at public workspaces and printing release stations.

The newest devices were rolled out over the summer following the pilot project's initial success. CIT replaced the Cybraries' bulky under-the-table desktop units with Wyse's P25 Model "zero client" boxes. The boxes provide display, keyboard and mouse connectivity to a virtual workstation emulated on a server, as well as a USB and headphone jacket.

Saira Hasnain, UB's Director of Enterprise Infrastructure Services (EIS), has led this project since the pilot's early stages three years ago. Part of the project's success, she says, has been the organization's consistency in direction throughout.

"It took us a couple years to let the technology mature before it was prime time ready to be deployed, but we have stayed the course," Saira added. "We have done a lot of things, and VDI is in line with our principles of trying to get away from physical as much as possible. We're going the virtual route."

The "zero client" device brings several advantages to both UB students, faculty and staff. Besides freeing up more space for personal items at work spaces, it also allows new software or updated versions to be deployed much more efficiently. In the old workstations, software had to be loaded on each individual physical device. With the virtual devices, everything is managed from one central server which can make software changes in the virtual workstation immediately.

The university also enjoys the added benefits of cost and energy reduction. The devices cost far less–approximately one-fourth less–of the investment of a traditional workstation, and use far less energy to run, an aspect that aligns directly with UB's environmental stewardship goal.

CIT is now in talks to begin two additional pilot projects for the devices during the fall semester in the Facilities Department and academic labs in the School of

> *"Will we get to a place where there will be no hardware devices? I think only the future of technology can tell us that."*
>
> **Saira Hasnain, Director**
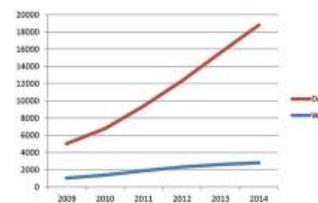> *Enterprise Infrastructure Services (EIS)*

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Architecture and Planning. The School of Engineering is also looking at expanding this initiative. The replacements in the Facilities Department will mainly benefit staff, allowing them to use the zero clients in locations where there is a need for shared machines, but not a lot of desk space. It will also provide a more secure desktop environment for areas that handle sensitive information.

Eventually, Saira says the goal is to replace everything in public sites with the zero client devices, but don't expect that to be an immediate change.

"Some form of computer or hardware device will continue to remain available at the public sites, as we still have a need to provide for those students that don't have them themselves," Saira said. "Will we get to a place where there will be no hardware devices? I think only the future of technology can tell us that."

Fall 2013

Stay Safe with Identity Finder

Published September 2013

By Robert Poleszak

Think your personal information is secure? Your credit card number, Social Security Number and more may be hiding on your computer without you knowing. To track down this data and properly remove it, UB offers Identity Finder. This software is available to keep personal information safe from scammers, who may gain access to your devices and accounts, and put you at risk for identity theft.

In addition to quarantining sensitive data, which includes passwords, credit card numbers and bank accounts, Identity Finder allows you to shred the information, leaving no trace on your hard drive. Identity Finder's removal process uses US Department of Defense standards. You can also password protect your personal information once found, making it only accessible to you when needed.

Identity Finder comes in two versions: managed and desktop. The managed version is required on UB owned equipment for use by UB faculty and staff who frequently handle sensitive data, such as the Financial Aid department. The desktop version is provided free of charge for both UB students and employees to use on personally-owned computers to keep personally identifiable information safe.

"We recommend that all UB students, faculty and staff take advantage of Identity Finder," said Jeff Murphy, UB's Interim Information Security Officer. "This software not only keeps your information safe, but allows UB to comply with laws that regulate our data."

"[Identity Finder] not only keeps your information safe, but allows UB to comply with laws that regulate our data."

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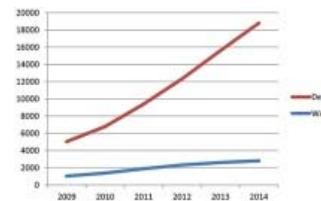
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Fall 2013

Preventing Future Bandwidth Blocks

Published September 2013

By Ashley Steves

Last summer, Network and Classroom Services (NCS) began a project that will replace building switches throughout UB's campuses, increasing building bandwidth and speed to the university network and Internet.

Network switches in nearly 90 buildings across UB's three campuses will be updated. A network switch acts as a controller, receiving and distributing messages from connected network links throughout the building and university as a whole. Once completed, each building will have a pair of 10 Gigabit per second (Gbps) network links installed, replacing the existing 1 Gbps links. Total bandwidth will increase to 20 Gbps in and out.

"It's the bang for the buck. The switches will be rolled out to where the most [people] will be using them first."

Joe Pautler, Senior Network Engineer
Network and Classroom Services (NCS)

Overall, the project will do a lot to help UB's Computing and Information Technology (CIT) group thanks to improvements regarding redundancy, resiliency and reliability. The update will increase the number of power supplies in each switch from one to two, providing a presently-absent backup if one supply should fail. It will also swap out the current Nortel switches with Cisco switches to accompany the other Cisco equipment currently used by CIT. The move will make many aspects of maintenance and support much easier and allow very little room for error.

Three buildings (Computing Center, Fronczak Hall and the Educational Opportunity Center) were tested as pilots during May and June 2013. "[Being in the Computing Center,] it gives us a good opportunity to be the guinea pigs," said Joe Pautler, Senior Network Engineer for Network and Classroom Services (NCS). "We're really sensitive to any network issue or blip, so we could notice it right away and quickly respond to it."

The pilot project was a success, and the list of remaining buildings has been divided into two phases. Phase one began with UB's on-campus apartment complexes (South Lake Village, Flint Village, Hadley Village and Creekside Village) at the beginning of September.

"Everything is in place to 'hit the ground running' as soon as our semester startup/change freeze window comes to an end," said Joe.
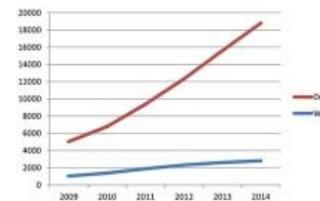
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Buildings and student housing that require the most network connections will be updated first. "It's the bang for the buck. The switches will be rolled out to where the most [people] will be using them first," said Joe.

Phase two is expected to continue seamlessly once the first phase is completed, which is tentatively scheduled to end in May 2014. See the current schedule.

Fall 2013

CIT Staff Unite through IGNITE

*Team iCode (L to R): Andrew Gianni, Irene Holohan-Moyer, Joe Grupp and Kevin Eye.
(Not pictured: Andrew Ryan)*

Published September 2013

By Robert Poleszak

What inspires change? Giving someone the opportunity to innovate and be recognized for their accomplishments.

Open to all CIT employees and organized by the CIT Professional Development Committee, CIT IGNITE is an innovation challenge. Five cross-functional teams from various CIT departments present proposals for new services that best demonstrated innovative uses of IT to improve the UB experience for faculty, staff or students. All CIT employees were invited to watch the presentations and vote on each proposal.

In addition to providing a proposal, the contest required teams to pitch their idea and produce a timeline and budget. Teams were judged on impact, usefulness, originality and creativity.

The proposals were judged by a combination of scores from the audience and the following panel:

> Tom Furlani, *Interim Associate Vice President for Information Technology (CIO)*
>
> Robert Orrange, *UB Career Services*
>
> Kevin Cleary, *CSE System Administrator*

A total of five proposals were judged, but Team iCode, which consisted of Andrew Gianni, Irene Holohan-Moyer, Joe Grupp, Kevin Eye and Andrew Ryan, was ultimately victorious. Their proposal for securely exposing select institutional data to UB "citizen developers" and encouraging app development captured the imagination of judges and attendees. Resources have been committed to develop a proof-of-concept.

"We are actively working on the planning phase of the project, defining the project plan and identifying resources for implementation," said Andrew Gianni, Application Development Analyst with Enterprise Application Services (EAS).

According to team member Kevin Eye, also an EAS Application Development Analyst, team iCode hopes to develop a UB Application Programming Interface (API), which will allow controlled access to specific university data. An example of other APIs spurring citizen development is Facebook. Facebook created its own API that allows limited access to an IT data warehouse and, since its release, hundreds of innovative apps using Facebook data have been created by developers outside of Facebook. Team iCode hopes to see this sort of grassroots development here at UB.

Andrew added, "While public APIs are offered by many commercial enterprises, there are a limited number of universities that are currently offering this kind of service. Citizen developers could range from University staff members, who might
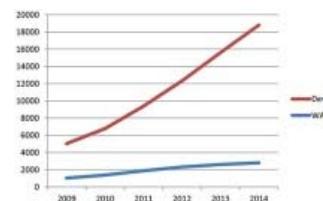
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develop an application or data-driven Web page for their department, to a student creating a new application using the API."

Although team iCode won out in the end, many great ideas were proposed during the IGNITE competition. Among them was a proposal for an app to simplify UB events and groups, better facilitating campus involvement. Another idea was to combine different communication tools into one unified suite to improve collaboration across UB departments. A cloud computing system was also proposed to help researchers utilize UB's computing resources in addition to a new way finding system to help people who could otherwise be easily lost roaming the halls of Capen Hall.

Organizers believe IGNITE has the potential to encourage greater collaboration with the campus community given the external interest shown this year by some groups including UB's School of Management and Infotech Niagara.

A New Digital Storage Solution

Published September 2013

By Robert Polezak

It's never been easier to share files while also keeping them secure at UB. ImageNow by Perceptive Software, UB's document management system, is in the early stages of being rolled out to store files digitally on campus.

Initially rolled out for limited use in 2009, ImageNow offers a streamlined, eco-friendly way to store and manage documents. It's designed to digitally transform many of university processes that previously involved a cumbersome paper trail. Staff can scan their documents and organize them into an online filing cabinet, allowing a significant reduction in the space and paper required to keep concise records.

This software was instrumental in streamlining the awards process for the Financial Aid department and enables the UB School of Dental Medicine to store over 35,000 student transcripts. According to Jim Gorman, Manager of Application Development with Enterprise Application Services (EAS), there won't be any lack of places for ImageNow to benefit the campus. Jim added, "The university has countless opportunities for utilizing this technology."

UB's Undergraduate Admissions department, which handles thousands of documents from each year's incoming freshman, also recently transitioned to ImageNow. The hope is that other departments will begin seeing a change in their processes and filing systems soon.

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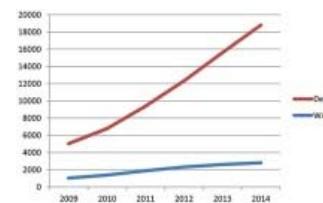> *Enterprise Application Services (EAS)*

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Fall 2013

Welcome New Staff to CIT

New CIT faces (clockwise): John Quinn, Geoffrey Selzer, Leigh Przepasniak, Michael Benner and Joe Buscaglia

Published September 2013

By Robert Poleszak

We're pleased to welcome five new staff members to CIT. In April, John Quinn, Geoffrey Selzer, and Leigh A. Przepasniak joined the CIT Help Desk and Network and Classroom Services (NCS). Enterprise Infrastructure Services (EIS) also has two new faces: Michael Benner, who joined in February, and Joe Buscaglia, who came on board in July.

Our three new CIT Help Desk additions have a variety of outside interests. Leigh enjoys spending her spare time outdoors: snowboarding, gardening and bike riding are just a few of her hobbies. She said, "I wanted to work in a challenging environment by working for a team that supports a large, diverse customer pool. UB is a cutting edge environment that is always growing and supporting the latest technologies." Leigh also participated in the "Ride for Roswell" for the 7th time this past summer.

John can also be found outside often. He enjoys fishing, camping, hiking and playing basketball. In addition, John enjoys building PCs in his free time. For the past five years, Geoffrey has devoted much of his time to "home brewing," hoping to develop a fresh, new beer product line to sell in the near future.

Michael joins CIT as a Systems Administrator, working as part of EIS' Virtual Machine Infrastructure Services team. His group is responsible for the maintenance of hundreds of virtual servers, which run many important UB services like security cameras, document managements and databases. Michael enjoys woodworking, drawing and computer generated imagery. He also enjoys reading and traveling throughout America, Europe, and even Japan. Michael returns to UB after living in England for six years with his wife. "It's very satisfying to work at UB," Michael added. "The university is clearly dedicated to being on the cutting edge of technology, and has a wide range of diverse projects."

Joe is CIT's latest addition, joining EIS as a Unix Systems Administrator. A self-described "old school Unix/Linux geek," He looks forward to learning and developing with these tools at UB. Bringing a wealth of experience, including 25 years of working with small businesses at his own company, Joe said, "I'm excited as UB gives me a chance to maximize my skill set." Away from UB, Joe's hobbies incl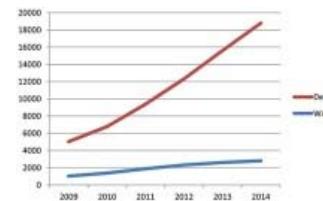ude home roasting coffee and sailing.