New year, new web look

After nearly two years of work, a project team comprised of UITS and the Office of Communications and Marketing launched the re-designed website with the Web Content Management System (WCMS) on January 5, 2012. The implementation of WCMS has taken the IU South Bend website to a higher level of flexibility, maintenance, and usability.

WCMS is a web-based application that allows users to easily write, edit and publish information and images to the website without the need for specialized software, HTML knowledge or other technical skills. The new system enables all users, regardless of skill level, to easily participate in maintaining and enhancing their websites.

“From a marketing perspective,” says Ken Baierl, Director of the Office of Communications and Marketing, “the new website is more colorful, has more images, is more dynamic, and contains more information for visitors. The launch signifies the beginning of a new era for the IU South Bend website.”

Eric Souther, assistant professor of New Media and Informatics says, “[The new website] is nicely designed, it’s elegant, it’s easy to use. If I wanted to update it in 10 minutes I certainly could … and I have.”

The WCMS project team, led by Gary Browning (UITS), Lucas Eggers (Office of Communications and Marketing), Vincci Kwong (Library), Bev Church (UITS), Phil Mikulak (UITS), Amy Pawlosky (UCET) and Kathleen Weidner (UITS). The team has migrated nearly 150 sites to WCMS, and more than 150 people on campus have been trained in the new system.

“All of the project team members worked so well together,” explains Bev Church, “leveraging their expertise to successfully launch the project as scheduled, bringing the updated website to completion.”

After all the hard work the project team has put into the migration, Gary Browning is looking forward to returning to a regular sleep schedule. “It feels good that the site is up and there have been a number of compliments about the new look.”
It has been a full semester since Instructional Media Services (IMS) and University Information Technology Services (UITS) combined into one campus service organization, and as director of IMS, I could not be more pleased with the outcome.

The six years that IMS was a part of Academic Affairs were great; we worked shoulder-to-shoulder with faculty, librarians, and professionals in the University Center for Excellence in Teaching (UCET). We were close to the classroom, and if one works in higher education, that’s “where it’s at”.

And now we are leveraging those experiences with the talents of IT professionals from our campus and around the state to further the UITS “human-centric” approach to information technology. The IMS staff is energized, inspired, and enthusiastic about our new roles. Kathleen Weidner has been promoted to Project Manager and Communications Officer, and will now oversee the completion of major UITS projects as well as disseminating official communications to the campus. In his new role as Manager of Media Services, Joel Langston continues to focus on media services, but is now able to collaborate directly with faculty and staff in designing media projects. As the need for media support continues to grow, Joe Haase, in addition to his video-conferencing duties, is increasingly called upon to use his considerable skills and talents in the production of media. Jason Sykes is now the Manager of Classroom Technology Services, and also oversees AV support of special events.

Positioning IMS in UITS has “closed the circle” by ensuring that media that is recommended by UCET and created by IMS plays properly in the classroom and works well with the university network. And, we are able to coordinate our campus level plans with IU future directions.

As we begin the new year, I am thankful for friendships new and old, for a talented and hardworking staff, and for the promise of a bright and exciting future as part of a world-class organization.

Progress on the project to increase the numbers of computer workspaces in the Library continues. As announced earlier, 36 additional PCs will be placed in the open areas north of the elevators on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th floors. If furniture arrives in time, we expect installation to take place during Spring Break in March 2012. The illustration shows the workstations that will be installed, which are similar to those in the Information Commons.

My favorites ... Top 5 (Android) Apps from UITS staffer June Hall

1. TeleNav GPS Navigator 7.1 goes beyond turn-by-turn directions to help on-the-go people run errands around town, explore and discover what's around them, or commute to work or school.

2. Calorie Counter Pro is an intuitive application that offers users an abundance of features, and covers nearly every aspect of a daily healthy life. From measuring your daily intake of vitamins to water consumption as well as calories taken in versus burned through exercise, this application is a great one stop for all your dietary needs.

3. Google Maps is one of the many applications bundled with the Android platform. As far as mobile mapping goes, Google Maps for Android offers one of the best experiences you can get. Voice-guided navigation takes you turn by turn, and voice search keeps your typing fingers fresh.

4. Gasbot. Download a little tool called GasBot, it shows you the gas prices nearest your location.

5. Barcode Scanner. Scan barcodes on products then look up prices and reviews. You can also scan Data Matrix and QR Codes containing URLs, contact info, etc. Also share your contacts, apps, and bookmarks via QR Code.
Meet the staff ...

Jason Sykes is the Manager of Classroom Technology Services. He started at IU South Bend in August of 2006 with Instructional Media Services and has provided technology support for events and multimedia projects. Jason has worked on re-designing the IMS webpage, designing and installing AV systems around campus and provides oversight of the campus cable TV system.

What do you like about working in IT at IU South Bend?

I enjoy working with the faculty and staff to find solutions to their technology needs. Working with a great group within IT makes my job even more enjoyable.

What brought you to IU South Bend?

I have enjoyed working in the higher-ed environment since my time as a student. After moving to South Bend to be with my (now) wife, I was looking for an opportunity to continue working in this setting. After interviewing with IMS, I felt this was a great opportunity, and have not looked back.

What do you like to do in your free time (hobbies, interests)?

With an active 3yr old, I do not have much free time, but I enjoy spending time with my wife and son and watching hockey.

Can you tell us something about yourself that might surprise others?

I have a degree in Environmental Science and I am a vegetarian.

Updates and Upgrades

University Grill and Quiet Lounges

A high-definition projector and full range sound system have been installed in the main seating area of the University Grill, and one in each of the two divided rooms in the former Quiet Lounge area. When the divider wall is open, the same content may be displayed on both screens simultaneously, and when the divider is closed, the screens function independently.

Videoconferencing

High-definition videoconferencing units are ready for installation in NS 037, NS 038, NS 072, DW 1001, and on a mobile cart for the Administration building. As a result, IU South Bend faculty, staff and students are able to collaborate and communicate in high definition around the state and around the world.

Greenlawn 201

The classroom technology in Greenlawn 201 has been upgraded with a new projector, speakers, control system, computer, doc cam and DVD/VHS combination player in a rack. This technology will be moved to the new lab in the Education/Arts building when construction is complete.

Wiekamp 1001

DW 1001 is currently undergoing a technology upgrade which includes a digital switcher with touch-screen interface, audio mixer, connection plates, wireless microphones and cabling. A high-definition videoconferencing system will be installed, allowing for live streaming and archiving of events and classes.

Rooms moved under UITS support

The technology systems in NS 207, NS 245 and Riverside 146 are now supported by Classroom Technology. Support includes upgrades, lifecycle funding and maintenance.

Additional upgrades planned for spring include three labs in Northside Hall (rooms 124, 148, and 149), and SAC 223 and 225.

Printing in Labs

All main IT computer labs (both open & classroom lab) have black and white laser printers which are capable of duplex printing. We have also added color printers (also duplex capable) in our main open computer labs: Library, NS 0040, Greenlawn, DW 1225 and Elkhart. Always remember that duplexing is better for the environment, uses less of students’ GoPrint allotments, and makes printouts easier to carry!

Student Technology Center Equipment Upgrades

STC’s which have either already been upgraded with new computers or will be before Spring semester are: DW 1205, DW 1225, DW 1235, DW 1265, DW 1270, AI 121, NS 211, DW 1105, AI 124 and LM 005. The library lab also received new laser printers this semester and we will soon be upgrading the black and white printers in the NS basement labs. Some of the equipment which is coming out of our main STC’s will be used to allow upgrades in some departmental student computer labs.
How do you use information technology in your work?

Even though I use several different types of technology and in fact, have been accused of being professor gadget, i.e., always wanting to try the newest “techy toy”, I am going to focus on the videoconferencing equipment that I use to supervise student teachers. I currently conduct synchronous, two-way video and audio conferences between myself (the university supervisor) and school sites where teacher candidates are student teaching. I am using standards-based H.323/IP LifeSize videoconferencing technology equipment. This videoconferencing technology allows me to be able to hear the student teacher’s conversations clearly and see P-12 students’ work and provide immediate feedback related to the teaching interaction in the teacher candidate’s ear.

Tell us about a positive experience you have recently had with UITS (IT).

It takes a village to use videoconferencing for university supervision and IT is part of it. My current research is determining the usability and feasibility of using video conferencing as a way to supervise student teachers. My future research goals are to: (1) determine if critical self-reflection can improve and increase in student teachers as a result of watching university supervisor and student teacher video; and (2) determine if Bug-in-the Ear technology can be used to give student teachers immediate research-based feedback on their instructional practices. To meet these two research goals necessitates being able to record the transactions between the university supervisor and student teachers. Joe Haase, in collaboration with Steve Egyhazi, in Bloomington, worked together to form a solution for me to be able to digitally record the sessions. Their solution ensures that the student teaching and university supervision critical information is easily accessible, live and on demand, in immersive high definition.

PC or MAC?

Ambidextrous…leaning towards the Apple in my eye.

What technology can you not live without and why?

Being professor gadget, I find this question somewhat difficult. That said, if put another way, if Greenlawn caught on fire and I could only have one techy toy, what would I grab? It would be my Mac laptop. Why? Because I use it everyday. Of course, there is usually an iPad2 and iPod touch and cell phone in the laptop carrying case. I use the iPad2 to answer students’ questions, respond to their emails, and read books. I use my iPod Touch to Skype with my students during additional scheduled office hours while shopping at Martin’s Supermarket (free Wi-Fi). As for the cell phone, I encourage my student teachers to text me if they have any questions.

How will your relationship with technology change in the next 5 years?

Here is my version of coming home from work and how my relationship will change with technology in the next 5 years (or so)…. I am leaving IU South Bend, of course in my driverless car, while enroute, I use my mobile handset to contact my house, telling it to start brewing my coffee, feed the dog and cat, and of course, have dinner ready for the family. My refrigerator will wirelessly send a message to my local grocery store telling it what items I need and the groceries will be sent immediately to my house. Once the groceries arrive, my personal robot will start dinner. Meanwhile, in my driverless car, I will be video chatting with my students and engaged in critical thinking tasks with them. I am also checking their work since all classes have gone mobile, my mobile handset displays holographic images and has 3D Internet capabilities so I can search and explore like I’ve never been able to before. This is my vision. I believe that technology will change my future… the way I teach, the way I research… the way I live.

New hire in the Support Center

UITS welcomes Gary Allison as he fills our new full-time Support Center position. Gary had been working with us in a part-time Support Center position for eight months, so you may have already received assistance from him. With an associate degree in electronics, certifications from Microsoft, Novell and Cisco, and 20+ years of experience in technology support, he brings the technical and personal skills that help to ensure faculty, staff and students receive the computing help they need.