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TRANSITION TO GOOGLE APPS

The rollout of Case Google Mail is successfully underway with over 30% of students already using this feature of the Google Apps suite. By May 18, 2009, all students must have transitioned to Google Mail in order to access Case email. This includes students who read emails on mail.case.edu or forward their Case emails to another email account.

All newly admitted students are automatically provisioned for Google Apps. Faculty and staff will follow in early 2010.

Ever increasing storage needs and uptime requirements are very expensive and generally outpace the IT budgets for most universities. Yet, in the information technology world storage and uptime are especially important - if not the most important - metrics of user satisfaction. This explains in large part why, along with other universities, CWRU is migrating to Google Apps. For users, the immediate benefit is the increased storage capacity of each mailbox, which will increase from 200 MB to 7 GB, representing a 35-fold increase (200 MB = 0.20 GB).

In addition to email, Google Apps offers an integrated suite of services that comprises IM, voice chat, document sharing, project team sites, and much more. Moreover, Google Apps offers a clean web interface, formidable storage capacity, ubiquitous access, practically infallible uptime, and the highest standards in privacy and security safeguards.

Case Google Mail can be accessed online through a user-friendly, commercial-free, web interface or be viewed through a variety of popular email programs such as Apple Mail, Outlook, Thunderbird, etc...

For more information including conversion instructions, please go to

<http://www.case.edu/its/services/GoogleApps.htm>

COLLABORATION TECHNOLOGY SUMMIT 2009

From the wildly popular MediaVision Courseware offerings to the futuristic Second Life virtual-world learning, Case Western Reserve University pioneers and champions emerging technologies in innovative ways to advance Case's teaching and research missions. Indeed, Case is recognized as a leader among universities in the creative integration of technology in teaching and learning.

To celebrate this legacy, share its vision and success, and build on its foundation, Case will host Collaboration Technologies Summit 2009 on Thursday, May 7, 2009, in Thwing Center. This daylong event will showcase the diverse ways that Case leverages its technology assets into the teaching and learning spheres. In addition to featuring faculty innovators from Case, presentations, demonstrations, and panel discussions will also highlight faculty innovators from Stanford, Cornell, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Northwestern, and Central Florida University.

"CollabTech 2009 promises to be an eye-opener for just about anyone interested in the intersection - and immense possibilities of - technology and, teaching and learning," says Lev Gonick, vice president for information technology services and chief information officer at Case.

Indeed, the program will feature six distinct tracks, a keynote address by Dr. Laurence F. Johnson, CEO of the New Media Consortium and a world-wide expert on the effective application of information technology in higher education, and stimulating kick-off and concluding plenary sessions about collaboration technologies and the future of technology in education, led by Dr. Kenneth C. Green, founding director of The Campus Computing Project. (See graphic below for details.)

This event is open and free to all faculty, students, staff, and the community at large. For those unable to attend in person, the keynote address and panel discussions can be attended virtually in Cleveland Plus in Second Life, and also be viewed via live streaming at <http://www.case.edu/its/collabtech09/>.

More information about CollabTech 2009, including registration information, is available at <http://www.case.edu/its/collabtech09/>

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

- Track 1: Faculty Innovations
- Track 2: Collaboration Tools and Learning
- Track 3: Green Computing
- Track 4: Intelligent Webs and Privacy Issues
- Track 5: Mobility
- Track 6: Portfolios/Learning Assessments

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Dr. Laurence F. Johnson, Ph.D.
The Horizon Report: Emerging Technologies and the Future of Education

PLENARY SESSIONS

- Dr. Kenneth C. Green, Ph.D., moderator
- Collaboration Technology & Education
 - The Future of Technology & Education

DATA CENTERS UNDERGO EXTREME MAKEOVER

Steven Organiscak, project director in ITS, likens the recent renovation of the data center in the Kelvin Smith Library - where the “brains” of the ITS infrastructure live – to an extreme makeover.

This critical facility, along with its sister facility in Crawford Hall, have evolved organically over the last thirty years to accommodate the university’s exponential growth in technology needs. This spontaneous growth resulted in a lack of standardization as the data centers morphed into cluttered areas full of hundreds of servers housed on mismatched racks where cooling and power demands often outstripped the supply.

In March 2008 ITS received special funding from the university to renovate the data centers, upgrade the power systems, increase the cooling capacity, and provide an uninterruptable power supply (whereby if the power level drops, the uninterruptable power supply kicks in immediately and provides power for electrical and cooling needs until the generators are fully powered up).

These improvements, along with the required asbestos abatement, have doubled the air conditioning and power capacity in the data centers. Moreover, 98% of Data Center cabling is now converted to fiber optics and has greatly reduced the cabling infrastructure, while allowing a more distributed network design, which will help isolate and minimize server downtime.

While these backroom renovations might seem trivial to average users at Case, the payback to the university in terms of increased efficiencies and worker productivity is substantial. Greater power and cooling capacity will significantly impact network uptime, facilitate maintenance, and improve worker safety.

Ideally, Organiscak would have preferred to undertake this “extreme makeover without tenants living in the house.” But he and his team did not have that luxury. Like a shuffle puzzle, they would shut down servers in a certain part of the data center, move them to another location, bring them back online as quickly as possible, renovate the original location from the subfloor up to the ceiling air ducts, and then, when the work was completed, painstakingly move to the next piece of the puzzle.

Organiscak is proud of his team’s efforts and achievement. “We did a lot of work at odd hours without having an alternative staging area and tried hard to minimize the impact to Case users.”

RESEARCH COMPUTING BENEFITS FROM MAKEOVER:

For disciplines requiring intensive computing power such as research computing, there is now an additional 1,000 square feet allocated specifically to this field with enough power for 36 full racks of servers housed in a secure room equipped with extreme density cooling.

In the super-competitive grant world, that’s a grand slam.

YouTube Case

Since its launch less than a year ago, YouTube Case has had over 135,000 hits from world-wide viewers. No, these videos are not humorous vignettes of campus life or remakes of Saturday Night Live episodes, but rather substantial lectures, talks, seminars, and meetings hosted regularly on the Case campus.

A runaway phenomenon around the world, YouTube has become a force in the media and communications world. Statistics from mid-2006 show that – even back then – over 100 million videos were watched on a daily basis on the YouTube site.

Now, thanks to innovative thinking on the part of ITS’s Instructional Technology and Academic Computing, select content from Case events can be posted on a Case branded YouTube channel, viewable by anyone worldwide for free.

With over 200 videos currently posted on the YouTube Case site, we showcase our campus and its rich resources to the world.

And to the local community.

So if you missed a special lecture at Case, go to YouTube Case and catch up.

More information, including guidelines for posting to the site, is available at <http://www.youtube.com/case>

IN THE ITS PIPELINE... An HCM Upgrade

The Human Capital Management system ("HCM") will be upgraded this summer. The system is one component of the suite of ERP services which includes financials, grants, budgets, and the student system. Together these critical applications provide the tools to the university to support efficient processes and effective decision-making.

For most users, there will be little or no perceived change in the system or services. However, there will be a number of back office improvements that will help align human resources to make use of some new features and meet federal requirements. For example, the HCM upgrade will incorporate new tax codes and will allow Case to implement the eVerify system which will soon be required by the Department of Homeland Security.

Tony Kramar, project manager for HCM and assistant director in ITS, states that "the upgrade keeps our system current and protects the university's investment in information technology."

Green & Worthy

As part of the Relay for Life campaign on campus in March, ITS partnered with Cellular Recycler and set up a program to collect used cell phones. Collection bins were set up in several locations on campus and proceeds were donated to the American Cancer Society.

Cellular Recycler collects used cell phones from not-for-profit organizations and refurbishes them for additional use or recycles them safely in accordance with U.S. EPA standards. The company pays a modest sum, ranging from \$.25 to \$30 depending on the make and model, for each phone it collects.

For organizations like Case, such a partnership is a win-win: it prompts participants to recycle used cell phones (and get them out of their drawers), and simultaneously raises funds for a worthy cause.

For more information on this program, please contact Bob Sopko at bob.sopko@case.edu.

TECHNOLOGY INNOVATORS @ CASE

CAROLINA PERERA

Students enrolled in Carolina Perera's intermediate Spanish language courses regularly enjoy field trips to Spain, strolls through Colombian art galleries, salsa dancing classes, and lively conversations in street cafés.

Virtually.

Through a creative marriage of innovative teaching and enabling technology, Perera teaches the Spanish language by immersing her students in the culture, history, and traditions of Spain and Latin America.



Carolina Perera, featured above, leverages Second Life virtual world simulations to immerse her students in language study.

While using technology to teach language is not new (some of us might remember the old language labs in high school), Perera leverages the dynamic Second Life application platform with its voice chat facility to enact language and cultural experiences that mimic real life interactions.

At its essence, Second Life allows users to enter a three-dimensional virtual world where, through avatars, they engage in exchanges that enrich the learning experience. Second Life plays a critical role in language study as it allows users to leave the textbook and language tapes behind and dialogue directly with fluent speakers.

A native of Venezuela, Perera is a lecturer in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures. Convinced that creative use of technology would help her students learn more effectively, she first used the program ALICE in 2007 to create interactive 3D animations to help demystify the usage of prepositions in Spanish.

Now, in collaboration with ITS's instructional designer Sue Shick, Perera has established an area in Second Life for her students to practice Spanish in meaningful contexts with native speakers from Spain and Latin America. Not only do the students chat and improve their verbal skills, they actually experience the cultural, political, and social scene through their online avatars.

To her delight, Perera has found that in Second Life her students often go well beyond the basic requirements of the course. For example, by surveying native Spanish avatars, one student conducted a research project about attitudes toward the use of "Spanglish" in Spain and Latin America; another student arranged for an elaborate field trip complete with tour guide - the avatar of a Colombian Second Lifer - to a famous art gallery.

Perera believes strongly that immersion in local culture, history, and politics is critical to comprehensive language study. And now thanks to Perera's creativity and Shick's virtual world acumen, her students morph seamlessly from mere students of Spanish to explorers of all things Spanish in Second Life's virtual world.

Technology Question

Q: What's the best way to erase a hard drive?

With computers getting smaller, more powerful, cheaper, and obsolete by the hour, disposing of an old - or sometimes not so old - computer has become an inevitable part of modern life.

Whether you choose to donate your computer to a charitable organization, hand it down to a niece or nephew, or dispose of it (responsibly), you should always erase your hard drive of all personal information.

There is however considerable debate in technology circles about the efficacy of erasing ("formatting") hard drives. Most experts agree that a quick format may leave PCs vulnerable. At a minimum, PC users should reformat their hard drives by performing an "unconditional" format multiple times. For Mac users also, "7-pass erase" or "35-pass erase" is recommended over a single or quick erase.

If you choose to use one of the many disk erasing software packages available on the market instead, be sure to verify its claims and reviews.

Finally, if you are really, truly, incredibly concerned about your data, you may opt to physically destroy your hard drive. This would involve removing the hard drive from the body of the computer and, either drilling holes in it, smashing it with a hammer, or, for the not-so-faint-at-heart, torching it.

For more information on responsible computer waste disposal in Cuyahoga County, go to <http://www.cuyahogasd.com>

Meet Sue Shick...

Sue Shick's avatar in Second Life, Susanne Patrono, is almost as busy as Sue herself. Most recently, both Sue and Susanne were busy working Research ShowCASE 2009. While Sue had painstakingly laid the groundwork, designed, and programmed much of the backdrop, animation, and décor for the ShowCASE in Second Life ("SL"), Susanne attended the ShowCASE itself - in SL - and fielded questions and inquiries from other SL attendees.



It's quite a partnership and hardly one that Sue could have imagined during her many years as a high school science teacher. A biochemist, Sue taught high school science to at-risk students for 15 years in Cleveland Heights – University Heights and Orange High Schools. To engage her students, Sue incorporated multi-media technology into her lesson plans. For example, she taught her students to use Flash to animate scientific phenomenon. In the process, unbeknownst to them, they actually learned the science behind the phenomenon.

As a member of Case ITS's Instructional Technology and Academic Computing group since early 2007 (by way of John Carroll University), Sue is an instructional designer and the go-to person for Second Life adventures at Case.

While language learning is a natural match for a virtual world platform like SL, applications in other areas from medicine to bioethics are limitless, according to Sue. In medical and dental education, for example, data show that SL experiences can offer students invaluable opportunities to practice critical patient interviewing skills. Recently, in collaboration with the Cleveland Clinic, Sue created a virtual world experience for third year medical students on a psych rotation: through avatars, students interviewed a schizophrenic patient (an avatar played by an expert on schizophrenia) and gained invaluable interviewing and diagnosis skills in this challenging and elusive area of medicine.

Sue enjoys her job because it allows her to marry both her geeky programmer side and her creative, artistic interests all while helping faculty to incorporate powerful technologies into their teaching repertoire.

ALSO AVAILABLE ONLINE @ www.case.edu/its/publications

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