ITS Update

Virtualization

Data Centre VMWARE technology is growing rapidly with a goal of 60% of systems running as virtualized sessions.

Beside reducing costs, and the green benefits of reducing cooling requirements, and saving energy in the Data Centre, virtualization provides some key benefits for service resilience and data management. The complexity of performing backups and restores is greatly reduced, and development environments can be quickly created to test security patches or bug fixes.

The next step is testing desktop virtualization technologies to see if we can gain the same success there. In this scenario ITS could improve data recovery, enhance security, and drastically reduce the total cost of ownership for desktop environments.

project SAGE
Banner Implementation
Officially Energized

In Issue 1 of the ITS Update we told you that TRU was going to be hearing a lot more about **Project SAGE** this year.

On January 29th TRU staff and faculty members were invited to the official Project SAGE launch.

In place of a traditional ribbon cutting ceremony, President Dr. Kathleen Scherf did the honours of "energizing" the formal launching of Project SAGE, in the TRU Campus Activity Centre Grand Hall.

Dr. Scherf "energizing"
Project SAGE

Other highlights of the launch included previews of the Student, Advancement, Finance, and HR/Payroll systems including myTRU, the self-service portal for students, faculty and staff. With the first components going live in February for Purchasing, then

HR/Payroll and Finance in April 2009, TRU will begin operating on new streamlined processes.

There was a refreshing excitement in the room as project leads emphasized TRU's support for environmental responsibility with the use of new online tools and services.

To name a few services, TRU employees will soon enjoy a number of conveniences online including the ability to check vacation balances, enter timesheets for approval, view benefits and pay information, and even set up multiple bank accounts for direct deposit.

Specific details will be communicated in the near future during the Web Time Entry Training, which is scheduled throughout the month of March for all TRU employees. In the meantime, you can read more and get other updates on Project SAGE at http://www.tru.ca/sage.html

TRU - ITS

Automating Processes

One of the most important contributions that ITS can make to any organization is the automation of time consuming manual processes, which allow us all to perform more high value work.

Project SAGE for example, will introduce on-line time sheet entry with workflow for approval and on-line pay stubs, replacing the current, time consuming paper based processes.

integrify™

With integrify© it will become easier to move other processes online to improve efficiency, cut cost, and hopefully reduce the mounds of paper produced every day at TRU.

Currently Information Technology Services is planning on replacing the Applications and Systems Access Request (ASAR), process and the Educational Programs Committee is getting ready to allow the academic approval process to be started and completed electronically using integrify©.

Information Security Awareness Training

Coming your way in spring 2009...

One of the most important things we can do to enhance information security at TRU is to ensure that we all understand our responsibilities and what we can each do to improve our management of information.

ITS has been developing a one hour Information Security Essentials course over the last several months. Our four training teams will be ready

You have a Secret Admirer...
login to find out who?
Don't fall for Phishing Scams
For more information visit www.tru.ca/its/infosecurity
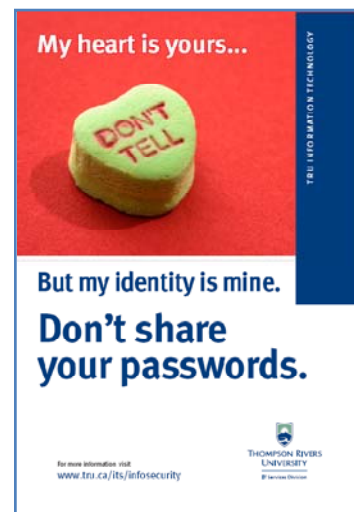THOMPSON RIVERS UNIVERSITY
IT Services Division

to begin presenting this course on In-Service Day, February 18, 2009.

This introductory course is intended for all staff and faculty, and faculty may list attendance in their APAR report.

ITS will be sending out formal invitations soon.

Come find out what you can do to reduce risk and increase your Information Security IQ.

We look forward to seeing you!

My heart is yours...
But my identity is mine.
Don't share your passwords.
For more information visit www.tru.ca/its/infosecurity
THOMPSON RIVERS UNIVERSITY
IT Services Division

Clickers @ TRU

Audience Response Devices (clickers) are a faculty lead initiative and are used to improve class participation and to provide instant feedback and assessment. Faculty have been using these devices for several years at TRU and the initiative has been showcased at the Teaching Colloquium and at a variety of PD sessions and has received a very positive response from students and faculty.

The technology is not new however; it was originally piloted by IBM in the 1980's, but as technology improves, the current devices are smaller and easier to use/setup, and integrate with learning management systems and presentation software.

The system requires a wireless receiver with software (currently installed in three of the large lecture halls) and the "clicker" which students purchase with their textbook or through the bookstore.

IT Services will be installing an additional 10 receivers and software in the larger lecture halls in support of this initiative. Please contact the Centre for Teaching and Learning for more information (local 5438).

TRU - ITS
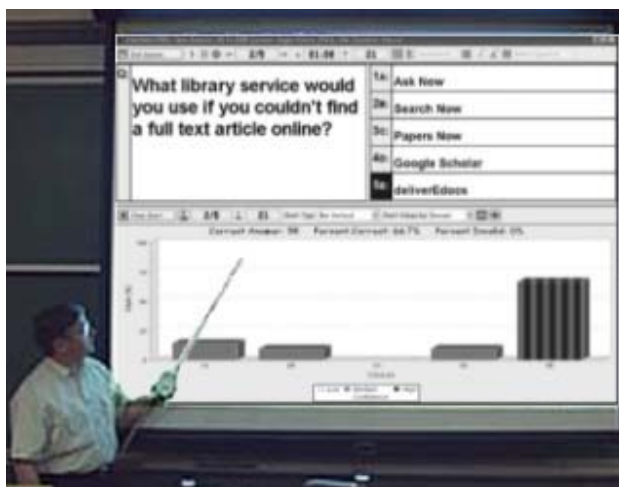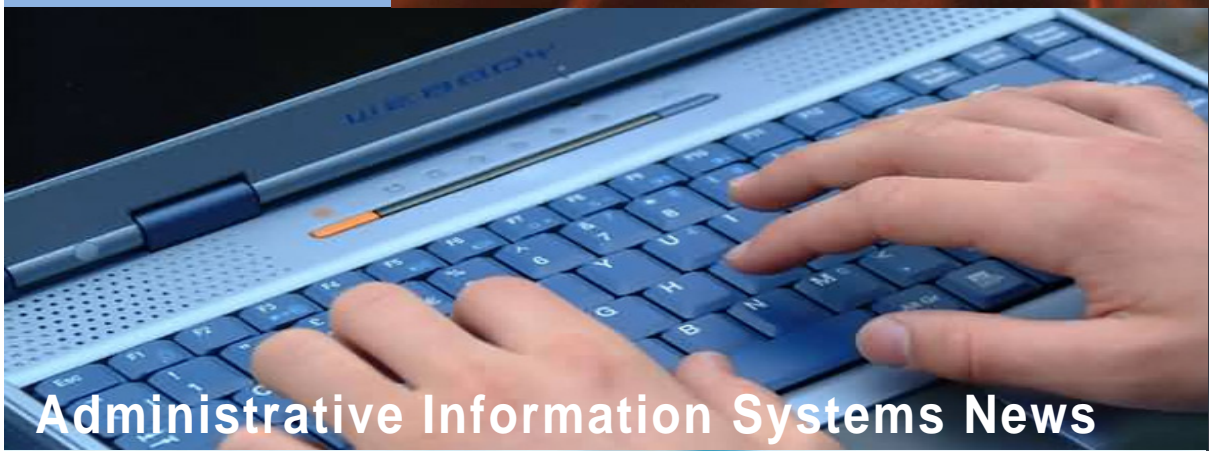
Administrative Information Systems News

SAGE is really big, but it's not the only project that AIS has been working on for the last six months.

AIS were successful in helping Open Learning to implement a CRM/Contact Management solution which will go live any day now.

The intergify/Workflow project is making huge strides. Although the requirements changed just before we were hoping to go live, we expect that a workflow solution for the Educational Programs Committee will be live soon.

Although our Senior Web Developer, Ruth Hughes, receives very little help from the rest of us right now, and is working on other tasks as well, we accomplished quite a bit on our Website.

TRU World is now publishing their website, truworld.ca, through the TRU Active Content Management (ACM) system.

IT Services is currently testing the latest version of the Active Content Management system which promises to enhance the web editing experience for web content providers.

A second Google mini appliance has been put into production as well as a global update of the tracking code for Google Analytics.

A new version of the Bio-generator has been released which allows faculty and staff to create and update their web biographies using Novell's LDAP Authentication.

Most of our resources are concentrated on the "*big*" project. The last one and half months saw most AIS staff involved in one way or another in making sure that Finance can have a successful go live on February 2nd.

Two nearly full time staff and four part time staff are helping with the HR components of the SAGE project. This includes making sure that employee self service is functional via Luminis on April 1, 2009.

It seems as though all of the SAGE sub-projects have reached the point that they need custom code, reports, or data conversion; work which will keep AIS busy well into 2011.

TRU - ITS

The Future of Video Conferencing

This year ITS has begun delivering better video conferencing services between Kamloops and Williams Lake.

We aren't talking about 3D holographic telepresence just yet, but faculty are now presenting lectures to and from Williams Lake using good quality sound, provided by wireless microphones. As we move ahead, proper lighting, and High Definition cameras and screens will improve the videoconferencing experience providing a sound alternative for in-person lectures and meetings.

Improvements to videoconferencing and synchronous collaboration tools will reduce the requirement for travel and further reduce TRU's carbon footprint.

Under & Around the House of Learning

Even before the first stages of construction begin, ITS is starting to prepare for the new House of Learning. As of Dec 21st, 2008 a new Communications duct has been completed around the HOL building site. This will allow ITS to move the existing communications pathway which runs directly runs under the House of Learning construction site.

These moves are expect to be completed sometime in late April or early May 2009 once the final decisions are made on which optional path will be used for re-establishing services to the south side of campus. Plans have also begun for Housing new technology infrastructure in the HOL . Check out upcoming issues of the ITS Update for details.

SPAM, SPAM, SPAM

Many of you have raised concerns about the amount of Spam being received. Spam and viruses put a real strain on our IT infrastructure, but we have tools in place to reduce the amount of Spam that gets through to your mailbox. For example, on a daily basis we handle approx. 392,000 inbound messages destined to faculty and staff alone. (This number excludes our student email systems.)

Of those 392,000 messages, a staggering **90%** were thrown away and never delivered because they were spam. A paltry **0.5%** were not considered spam and delivered and **0.5%** were marked as [suspected junk mail] but delivered anyway. The other **9%** were removed because they contained suspected viruses. It is important to recognize that even with all of the efforts IT Services puts into preventing spam from landing in your mailbox, some will still get through.

What can you do?

- Set your Junk Mail filter on to remove the [suspected junk mail] messages - http://www.tru.ca/its/gw/gwspam.html if you still get quite a few.
- Don't use your TRU email on web sites that you visit, create an alternate Yahoo or Gmail email account for these purposes.
- Delete emails that are suspicious. Do not respond to them even just to complain, as you have now provided the bad guys with a valid email address to continue to spam further.
- If you are responsible for a TRU List-serve, you can ask IT Services to limit the messages to only those with a TRU email address rather than continuously deleting Spam messages.

If you have technical problems or questions-
Contact us by Phone: 250-852-6800
Or email: Itservicedesk@tru.ca

Metrics that Matter

Systems that never sleep

• **Not so many years ago, it was only the night operator that didn't sleep. Everyone else went home and all ITS services were halted for day-end processing and backups. How times have changed. These days many systems never sleep. The GroupWise user graph below is typical of many systems at TRU. The systems are definitely busier throughout the work day, but there is never a point where they are idle. This type of usage metrics graph helps ITS understand how these "critical" systems are used and where to place maintenance windows.**

ns-Groupwise - Post Office - POFFICE.UCCARIB

■ Connected Users   Current: 686   Average: 525   Maximum: 1269