

Office of University Information Technologies (UNIT)

Instructional Technologies year in review

By RICHARD WACK

UNIT's Instructional Technology Group, also known as CIT, implemented several initiatives in the 2006/2007 Academic year which provided significant improvements to further enhance the teaching and learning environment.

Four key new or on-going initiatives are:

- Blackboard Vista
- Villanova on iTunes U
- e-Portfolios
- Synchronous Web Conferencing Tools

The new Blackboard Vista (formerly WebCT) course management system was launched in the fall semester. Blackboard Vista is a course management system used by instructors to supplement in class content delivery, communications, assessments, and group activities; it's also a very effective medium for distance education. The new Vista system, not to be confused with Microsoft's new operating system, delivers improved functionality compared to the previous Campus Edition version. The new features

include Learning Modules, improved testing capabilities, Announcements, Who's Online and Sign-up Sheets for Student Group activities. Please be aware that the original WebCT Company was acquired by their competitor Blackboard Inc. Blackboard renamed the WebCT Vista product to "Blackboard Learning System, Vista Enterprise License." The education community has been slow to adapt to the name change therefore you're likely to hear the system still referred to as WebCT.

In fall 2006, Villanova on iTunes U was introduced. The partnership with Apple Inc. positioned the University to provide another venue to deliver digital content and information to the campus community. Apple's iPod device is the number one personal audio device on the market. Villanova on iTunes U allows the community to access University information and events through the iTunes software. Enhancements are coming to include integration with Blackboard Vista. This will allow faculty to record and

disseminate lectures and other content from their courses to be accessible by their students. Podcast training is available through the Center for Instructional Technologies Group.

CIT, along with faculty volunteers, have been piloting electronic portfolio (e-portfolio) products. As a brief overview in case you're not aware, an e-Portfolio is a student-centered, structured environment from which students may collect learning materials, provide reflection and share their portfolios with others to demonstrate competencies and/or showcase their work. Portfolios may be aligned with professional, discipline specific standards (e.g.: ABET, NCAPE). It differs from the course management system in that it's a cumulative collection of work; it comprises works from a student's entire college experience. Many incoming students have used e-portfolios in high school. Villanova's Honors Program launched a collaborative e-portfolio program in the fall which has been well received by the

students and administrators. Based on feedback from faculty who've participated in the pilot, the plan is to select and standardize on one product. Three products from TaskStream, iWebfolio, and Blackboard are under consideration. We are planning to have the selected product available in the fall '07 semester. We believe that this will be a valuable medium for educators and students moving forward.

Another on-going initiative has been an evaluation of synchronous web conferencing tools. These tools are intended to supplement the features of Blackboard Vista by providing additional capabilities to replicate the in-class, in-person experience. These tools utilize audio and video features, allow for interaction between the instructor and students and have application sharing capabilities. Asynchronous components such as voice e-mail and voice discussions are among the many additional available features. Sessions can be easily archived for later review. We've been

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New telephone system coming to Villanova

By BOB MAYS

What took two years of planning, one network assessment, three committees, multiple vendor trips, and extensive travel and phone calls? ... the selection of a new telephone system for the university.

The University's current telephone system vendor is Aastra Intecom. Back in 2002 the University was informed by Aastra that our platform would no longer be supported by them, both hardware and software, by the end of 2003. Also the support on our current voice mail system, Octel, is being discontinued at the end of this year. So the decision was made to begin the evaluation of new voice architecture for the university.

The vendor due diligence started in the spring of 2006. The overall goal was to provide the University with an up to date

and feature rich voice system within the established budget target. The evaluation criteria established by the voice architecture team included the following areas; architecture (including features), total cost of ownership (acquisition as well as on going maintenance), vendor and integrator viability, optimal implementation plans and training (both technical and user). With the exception of the incumbent vendor all selected manufacturers who received RFPs (Request for Proposal) were "top tier" as rated by a number of leading research organizations. The team also sought input from numerous external entities including other consultants, references, corporations and universities.

The University ultimately selected Avaya as the system and Empire Technologies, located in Conshohocken, as the integrator.

The Avaya system comes with

a host of new and improved features including:

- incoming caller ID
- enhanced E911 capabilities
- unified communications
- mobility via Villanova 802.11 access points
- enhanced management tools
- enhanced system administration.

The cutover to the new system will begin on July 4 (holiday) and continue through the weekend of July 8. Not everyone will have a telephone on their desk when they come to work on Thursday, July 5. It will take Empire at least three days to place new telephone sets on everyone's desk. *YES everyone will receive a new telephone!* However, no one will lose a phone call. To retrieve your incoming telephone calls if you are one of those who do not have a set on their desk on Thursday you would have to call into the voice mail system as you would from off campus.

Every employee will be offered training, either real time or via the web. There are many questions people have so UNIT has established a web site where employees can go to get many of their questions answered at www.unit.villanova.edu/voip

Students will not have dial tone service in their residence halls nor voice mail boxes on the new phone system. Based on student usage data and student survey input it is clear they prefer cellular phones (and text messaging) as their primary means of communication. Emergency telephones are being installed on every floor of each residence hall for students to make on campus phone calls and to contact Public Safety. These phones can also be used to make local and long distance calls if the user has a prepaid calling card, or to dial a toll free number.

V Laundry

By KATHY GALLAGHER

Villanova University's Information Technologies University Card Systems along with our campus card vendor Cbord is pleased to announce the new "web accessible – wildcard based" laundry view product now known as **V-Laundry**.

From the convenience of one's computer in the dorm or anywhere on campus, a student can:

- View what washers and dryers are available in his/her residence hall laundry rooms.
- Request an e-mail or text message be sent to them when a machine becomes available.
- Place a five-minute hold on a machine.

If a student finds a machine that has completed its cycle and still contains laundry, he can send a notification to the last



user to remove their laundry. When a student finds a machine not working properly, a notification can be sent to the appropriate offices through this web site and the administrator of the web site can mark the machine unavailable.

Laundry day is no longer a chore!! Our new V Laundry system makes doing laundry worth while, time saving and super efficient!

In addition to checking and reserving the washers and dryers, a lost card hold can now be set from the web site when a student's campus ID card is lost. The student can even run his/her own transaction reports. Check out our new features on the Wildcard site: www.villanova.edu/wildcard and the new laundry site: www.laundry.villanova.edu site.

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using products from iLinc and Wimba. The tools are also valuable for distance courses as well as supplements to regular classes for purposes such as office-hours. We will be eliciting feedback from faculty who have used the products. All of these factors will be considered in selecting the best product to serve the University.

We're planning to have the single solution in place for the fall semester.

Please contact CIT if you have any questions. We may be reached by phone at: 95777 or through e-mail at: cit@villanova.edu. For more information on the products discussed in this article, please refer to the web site addresses listed below. Have a great summer!

Blackboard Vista	http://www.unit.villanova.edu/cit/webct/vista/
Villanova on iTunesU	http://www.unit.villanova.edu/cit/about_cit/podcasting/
e-Portfolios	http://www.unit.villanova.edu/cit/about_cit/eportfolio.htm
Synchronous Web Conferencing	http://www.unit.villanova.edu/cit/about_cit/projevents/horizonWimba.htm
Tools	http://www.unit.villanova.edu/cit/css/ilinc.html

Preparing yourself for Microsoft Exchange

By JOSEPH SOLLAZZO

With the end of the semester close upon us, our minds are wandering to thoughts of summer vacations, warm beaches, and of course ... migrating to the new Microsoft Exchange mail platform. With just a few weeks until the start of migrations in June, there are a few steps that we can take in order to best prepare ourselves for the new system.

Step 1 – Clean up your address books. In Mozilla Thunderbird, you may notice an address book named "Collected Addresses." A feature of Mozilla Thunderbird, every time you responded to an e-mail, if the user was not already in your Personal Address Book Thunderbird would create a contact for those individuals and place them in Collected Addresses. Over time, the number of contacts could grow substantially, especially if you deal with campus distribution lists. By going through your address books now, you save yourself the trouble of navigating potentially hundreds of unwanted contacts to find the people you want in your address book. Once you clean up your Personal Address Book and Collected Addresses, you can turn off the collected addresses feature so you no longer record unwanted contacts. For assistance in cleaning up your address books, an instructional guide is available on <http://www.unit.villanova.edu/exchange/firststeps.html>

Step 2 – Review your local mail folders. Just as our desks and

file cabinets get cluttered with old papers, magazines, and print outs, so do our mailboxes. While the UNIT team will move all of your local and server mail to the new system, now is a good time to go through your mailbox and remove any unwanted or unnecessary e-mails. While a single e-mail is small, storing hundreds or thousands of them does add up. With e-mails becoming more elaborate than just plain text (picture and graphics attachments, Microsoft Office documents), individual e-mails could grow to be megabytes in size. Combine that with years of saving e-mails, you can see why it's so important to manage your local mail folders. Information on how to manage your local mail is available on <http://www.unit.villanova.edu/exchange/firststeps.html>

Step 3 – Familiarize yourself with Microsoft Outlook 2007. While training will be available all summer for you to familiarize yourself with the changes and new features that Microsoft Outlook 2007 has to offer, you can get a jumpstart on your learning by going out to Microsoft's Office Online web site. There you can view a number of training courses and demos covering topics ranging from Calendaring basics to creating signatures and business cards. You can access Microsoft's Outlook Help and How-To site on: http://office.microsoft.com/enus/outlook/FX100647191033.aspx?CTT=96&Origin=CL_00626971033

June will be here before you know it!