IT News
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
@ WILLIAM PATERSON UNIVERSITY

Blackboard Upgrade

For the Fall semester Irt will be debuting the latest version of the Blackboard virtual learning environment. New functionality includes a sophisticated discussion board and more robust, feature-rich gradebook.

Discussion Board Upgrades

·Instructors can set up multiple forums around different topics and embed those forums in appropriate content areas or lessons.

·Instructors can determine whether students can moderate, modify, delete, post anonymously, include attachments, and other options.

·Forums can be sorted or viewed by thread, author, date, or subject and are completely searchable. Discussions can be graded for a participation grade and also peer rating may be enabled as well.

·Discussion Board Grades are included in gradebook calculations by default. Instructors do not need to set new gradebook items of inclusion from inside the gradebook.

·Students are allowed to subscribe to threads via email. Lastly, there are specific statistics that report on each user's participation level.

In addition version 7 will also correct some continuing problems with the visual text editor. Faculty will not have to do anything to transfer courses to the updated system. Existing courses from Fall 2005 forward, including Fall 2007 courses modified during the summer, will all be migrated to the new system. Course material from any semester can be transferred into a Fall 2007 shell by filling out the form at http://euphrates.wpunj.edu/bb/default.cfm

Important documentation:
·What Faculty Need to Know about Bb: http://www.wpunj.edu/irt/teambb/faculty/what_faculty_need_to_know.htm
·What Distance Learning Faculty Need to Know about Bb: http://www.wpunj.edu/irt/teambb/faculty/what_dl_faculty_need_to_know.htm
·Blackboard Virtual Commons: http://www.wpunj.edu/irt/teambb/
·Blackboard Support Center: http://euphrates.wpunj.edu/bb/sc/
·Blackboard Home: http://bb.wpunj.edu

Contact IRT
(973)720-2659
www.wpunj.edu/irt

Upgraded SPAM Filter

In response to a growing SPAM problem affecting WPUNJ email, the filters that attempt to block the unwanted email have been raised to a higher level by Information Systems. Hopefully, this will reduce the amount of SPAM received in your WPUNJ email |inbox. Some of this blocked email will be automatically deleted and some will be found in the Junk E-mail folder. The automatically deleted email is targeted at known SPAM messages; the suspected SPAM is directed to the Junk E-mail folder. You can review or simply delete email contents in the Junk E-mail folder, however all email in this folder is automatically deleted after two weeks.

As a friendly reminder, responding to unsolicited e-mail, or to the many other Internet communication resources, particularly to a person(s) that are unknown is a risk and vulnerable to fraud. The following links provide additional information you might have regarding Internet fraud.
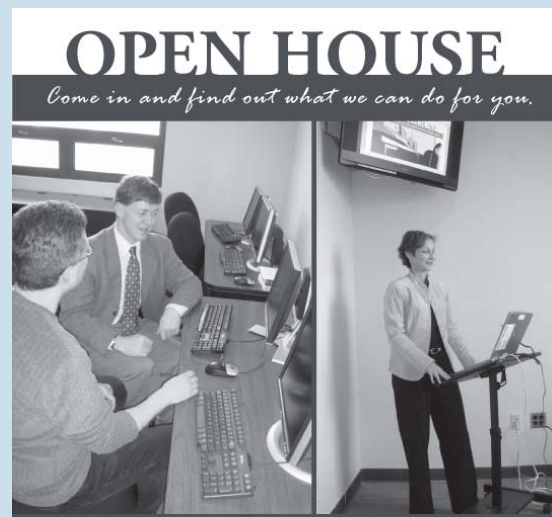http://www.sec.gov/investor/pubs/cyberfraud.htm

Computer Renewal and Replacement Program

The IT Management Team is pleased to announce the implementation of a Computer Renewal Program that will ensure faculty, staff and computer labs maintain current level computers.   Key objectives include significant cost efficiencies, eliminating the disparity of computer levels across campus, removing outdated computers, and most importantly, to provide a computing environment that can more quickly adapt to new and creative technology supporting instruction and student success.

As an integral part of the University's IT Plan 2007-2009, the replacement of computers will be more centrally funded and managed. In general, this means departments will no longer need to directly order PC or Mac computers for faculty, staff or the labs as has been done in the past. The new Computer Renewal Program will be centrally budgeted with a three year replacement cycle and the general guideline of oldest replaced first. The Network and

Center for Instruction and Research Technology Open House

Welcome back! Are you ready for another year of teaching and learning? Have you enhanced your own skills lately? Consider stopping by IRT's Center for Instruction and Research Technology, a one-stop shopping service for all your curriculum integration needs with the latest and most effective technologies. Meet the new Academic Technology Assistants (ATAs), a newly formed Student Technology Consultant team designated just to help faculty with their projects and classroom needs. Come to Atrium 113 on October 1st-5th for a quick stop. It could mean all the difference in your coursework for the year.

OPEN HOUSE
Come in and find out what we can do for you.

Center for Instruction & Research Technology
Atrium Room 113

Monday-Thursday 9:00am – 8:00pm Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm

Create Pedagogy & Research Solutions · Collaborate with IRT Professionals to Develop Course Work · Upgrade Your Technology Skills with FTC workshops · Use Online Resources to Improve Your Skills · Train One-on-One with IRT Professionals · Explore Technology Solutions for Teaching and Learning Enhancement

For more information, please contact the IRT Department at 973.720.2659

Tegrity Classroom 2.0

If you have always thought that adding an audio-visual component to your classes would be difficult, costly, or require the use of a professional broadcast studio, you should think again. Many of you are already familiar with the Tegrity system, which allows you to create and upload multimedia presentations that add audio and video to your existing PowerPoint presentations. But what you are likely not aware of is that IRT is now able to offer faculty members a new, more flexible, and easier to use system that will make it easier than ever for you to add multimedia to your classes and enhance your ability to reach your students.

With Tegrity Classroom 2.0, and with IRT's support and assistance, you will be able to create streaming presentations, complete with video and sound, in practically no time at all. And if you prefer, and if you have (or have access to) a webcam, we can even help you to create these presentations right in your own office. Otherwise, of course, you can always make arrangements to meet with an Academic Technologist in the Atrium and create your presentations here. For more information about Tegrity Classroom 2.0, please contact IRT at 973-720-2659 and ask to meet an Academic Technologist and/or refer to our Academic Technologist Availability web page at http://www.wpunj.edu/irt/atcalendar/.

Continuation of another article or a new article

Poster Printing in Media Services

Are you giving a poster presentation at a conference soon? IRT can print your poster professionally now. IRT acquired a color HP posterprinter that will print posters from 24 x 30 up to 42 x 52.5 inches on regular, heavy stock or photo paper.   A request form is available on the IRT website. Our Instructional Design team will work with you in creating an attractive poster that can be saved as a file and then printed. A week's notice is requested so that the team member can work with you and develop the poster that you need to highlight your work.

CLICKERS

Instruction and Research Technology / Media Services recently purchased a Turning Point student response system consisting of 30 student response "clickers", a USB based response receiver that plugs into a faculty's laptop and Turning Point programming software. Clickers represent a dynamic new interactive technology to encourage learning. This article reprinted from EDU-CAUSE Learning Initiative talks of the benefits as well as downside of "CLICKERS" in the classroom. If this article excites you about this new technology and you wish to learn more please contact Dr. Sandra Miller, IRT at extension 2659.

http://www.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI7002.pdf

7 Things You Should Know About...
"CLICKERS"

Scenario
Charlene enters her General Chemistry lecture and takes her place along with other undergraduates. As they settle into their seats, they fish their "remote personal response system" devices—clickers—out of their backpacks in preparation for the lecture. Today's lecture begins with a review of an important chemistry concept that everyone must understand for the upcoming midterm exam. After Professor Speert reviews the concepts, he asks the class to answer a multiple-choice question designed to determine how well the students understand the topic he just reviewed. Out come the clickers. Displaying the question to the class on the overhead projector, he tells the students they have 90 seconds to answer the question. "Think before you click," he reminds them. Charlene reads the multiple-choice question and selects her answer by pressing the corresponding button on her clicker. As the other students enter their selections, a running tally of student responses is projected on the screen. At the end of the 90 seconds, Professor Speert displays a bar chart of the poll results. It is immediately obvious that there is confusion; responses are fairly evenly split across all 5 options. Although the students are surprised, Speert isn't; he used a question designed to test for common misconceptions. Now he's got everyone's attention—a teachable moment. He asks the students to pair up and convince their partner that they have the right answer.

After a few minutes of boisterous discussion, Professor Speert polls the class again. The responses are better, but still not perfect. Now he really has their attention; he explains the concept, highlighting the source of confusion. Charlene now knows three things: 1) although she thought she understood, she really didn't, 2) she had some fundamental misconceptions that had to be cleared up, and 3) she now knows what to study to improve her performance. On top of all that, she has now met a new potential study partner.

1. *What is it?*
The simplest remote personal response systems (clickers) resemble pared-down TV remote control units, and they work the same way. Clickers use radio frequency technology to transmit and record student responses to questions. A USB based response receiver plugged into your laptop is placed in the front of the class to collect and record student responses. Each clicker can be registered to a student (or not, depending on the teacher's prerogative) and generates a unique, identifiable signal. The system allows for active participation by all students and provides immediate feedback to the instructor—and the students—about any confusion or misunderstandings of the material being presented.

2. *Whose doing it?*
Clickers have been making inroads in college and university courses since about 1998, as faculty explore how to increase student interaction. Interaction and feedback are particularly challenging in large lecture environments, where class size limits faculty-student interaction. Clickers can be used to ensure students understand fundamental concepts; getting the answer right is less important than identifying a knowledge gap or misconception. Faculty—across all disciplines—use these devices to help keep their students motivated and engaged in what's going on in class. Although they are particularly valuable in large lecture classes, they are also useful in small classes. Some faculty rely on clickers to bring small group discussions to their large lecture classes.

3. *What makes it unique?*
Clickers give faculty the ability to fine-tune their instruction based on student responses. Some faculty

refer to this as just-in- time teaching—making adjustments or adaptations to their course as needed in any given situation. Personal-response technology works well both for large lecture halls and for smaller classes. Regardless of the class size, the instructor is always able to gauge student understanding due to the immediate feedback the technology provides. Results from class responses can be saved and then displayed in a variety of formats (histograms, pie charts, and so forth) or saved to spreadsheet programs for semester-long analyses that may inform subsequent curriculum development.

4. *Why do we think it's significant?*
Clickers represent an easy-to-adopt technology that can enhance the learning experience. For faculty, clickers are being used extensively to evaluate student mastery of content and to identify concepts that are proving difficult for students to grasp. For students, they provide a quick way to validate their own learning, helping them identify areas that need improvement. Clickers can also be used to gauge student opinion on controversial or sensitive issues. They are often used to catalyze debate and discussion, turning a passive lecture into an interactive exchange. And, significantly, students say they are fun! Clickers are easy to use and inexpensive to acquire and can be used for more than one class.

5. *What are the downsides of clickers?*
The cost of acquiring and using clickers can be a downside. Some remote response systems have specialized keypads (not just a simple five-button unit) that can be expensive to purchase. In addition, the receiver, connection wires, and related software for the system may cost several thousand dollars. Other costs can be incurred in staff and/or administrative overhead. For example, systems used in large lecture halls (300–400 students) might require an on-site technician or staff member to operate and maintain them during lectures. Some costs are passed on to students. For the smaller, individual keypads, students typically must purchase the remote unit (typically about $10) and then register it for use in a course. If lost, the student has to buy and reregister the new device. And it is possible to use clickers incorrectly— good questions are important for their effective use.

6. *Where is it going?*

Clickers, by virtue of their simplicity, are finding broad applicability in virtually any instructional setting and any discipline. Faculty are increasingly using (and advocating) these remote response systems as an integral part of their instructional repertoire. The underlying technology is also rapidly advancing to the point where we might imagine the ubiquitous cell phone being able to not only transmit a clicker response in any given class but also download and save the results of each interactive session.

7. *Implications for teaching and learning*
Interaction and engagement are often limited by class size and human dynamics (a few students dominate the conversation; most avoid interaction). Interaction and engagement, both important learning principles, can be facilitated with clickers. But asking the right questions is more important than the technology. Poorly structured questions or ones that don't focus on key concepts and reveal misunderstandings can undermine the value of personal response systems. Identifying misconceptions and providing frequent feedback is important. Clickers can also facilitate discipline-specific discussions, small work-group cooperation, and student-student interactions. |Clickers—plus well-designed questions—provide an easy-to-implement mechanism. Clicker technology enables more effective, more efficient, and more engaging education.

IRT's Online Institute

Have you ever thought about teaching online? What do you think it's like for your students? Learn how to teach in cyberspace and manage your students so you know they are truly learning although you can't "see" the expression on their faces. It's amazing when you begin to realize that you can be just as effective online as face-to-face and that sometimes your students actually can get to know you even better. What's different? Lots! But that doesn't mean it isn't fun or creative or engaging. Join the Online Institute for July 10-21, 2006 to actively participate online in learning about online pedagogy. More information about the course is available here:

http://www.wpunj.edu/irt/OnlineInstitute.htm

Only experienced Blackboard users should take this course. Call ext. 2659 or email giummarrad@wpunj.edu to enroll.

Joining the IRT Department

Evan Gregor

Evan Gregor is a first year graduate student in the jazz performance program. Since graduating Berklee College of Music in Boston with a degree in jazz composition, Evan has been making a living as a freelance bassist/ composer and has been represented in several international events. During the fall semester he participated in a tour of London and Eastern Europe performing original music.

In the IRT Department, Evan works primarily in the studios, assisting with student-run shows and TV production classes while maintaining the lights and studio equipment. He often provides an extra set of hands or works as crew member for productions such as Commencement or the Society of Leadership and Success.

Paola Morici

Paola Morici is a graduate student pursuing a Master's Degree of Education in School Counseling. Paola anticipates completion of her requirements in Spring 2009. During her time as a graduate student, Paola joins the IRT team. She is currently working on projects that include creating and editing web pages for different academic programs on campus. Paola is skilled in using Dreamweaver software to update, create, and design new web pages. Her strength is instructing and teaching others to become familiar with and efficient in using this software. Paola is able and willing to help in any way she can and can be contacted through the Department of Instruction & Research Technology.

Mark Sandford
Joins the David Cheng Library

Mark joined the Resource Management Division in the beginning of February, where he is the Special Formats Cataloger, handling the media, electronic resources and music scores. Mark received his Masters in Library and Information Science from the Long Island University's Palmer School of Library and Information Science. Before coming to William Paterson, he interned at Columbia University's Burke Library as well as at a private cataloging company working on their website catalog. Mark is very excited to be joining the wonderful staff at the Cheng Library.

Vladimir Pichardo
Joins Information Systems

Vladimir is a recent William Paterson University Computer Science Graduate. During his four years at WPUNJ, he worked for the Help Desk Technical Assistant (HDTA) program assisting faculty and staff with any computer related problems. He now works part time out of College Hall for the Information Systems department. He oversees and coordinates software and image deployment to the all the labs here on campus as well as all the maintenance work that is associated with newer versions of software when they are released.

Christian Kourkoumelis
Joins the IRT Department

Christian joined the Instruction & Research Technology Department, after serving four years as an officer in the United States Army. He is a graduate of the Valley Forge Military College, and Colorado State University. His primary responsibility is to administer the processing of the STCs timesheets. His secondary responsibility is to assist in any administrative functions for the IRT leadership.

Although he only works 20 hours a week, Christian is always willing to assist anyone with any issue that may arise. Please feel free to stop in Atrium 108 or call him at X3078 if you need anything.

Ken Templin
Joins Information Systems

Ken Templin joined Information Systems in July 2005 as a support specialist. Prior to that, while studying Computer Science at WPUNJ as an undergraduate, he worked in the STC program as a Help Desk Technical Assistant (HDTA), and took on the role of Team Manager. Now he serves as the HDTA Program Coordinator in addition to providing desktop support all over campus.

Ken says about his job, "I like the work atmosphere at WPU. I am part of a team in which everybody gets along," and "My student assistants are great – it's exciting to train them, see them learn and get involved. I give them lots of responsibility, and they deliver."

The Net Generation in the Classroom

Can you Hear Me Now? Delivering Vital Campus Information Over Cell Phones

Lectures on the *Go*- Podcasting

Mightier Than the **Pen** Alone— Tegrity Links the Pen to its Video Streamed Lectures

If you would like more information about any of the ways that students are using technology to enhance their learning as pictured above, contact IRT (ext. 2659 or millers@wpunj.edu) and we will demo, discuss and describe it all for you.