

Special points of interest:

- Administrative Computing Update
- ITS Academic Help Desk Opens
- Office 2007, Blackboard & Macintoshes

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News from the ITS Academic Help Desk

Information Technology Services' Academic Computing group recently decided to open the Academic Helpdesk in order to provide a centralized point of contact for hardware and software support to the academic community. The goals in developing the Academic Helpdesk are to provide a unified, single point of contact for the academic community to direct questions, report problems, and request assistance regarding supported software and hardware and to answer users' questions or resolve problems as quickly as possible. If the staff member on the helpdesk cannot immediately answer the question, they will research it or distribute the call to the appropriate staff member within the ITS office. We want to ensure customer satisfaction by providing resolution to technical issues. We would like the ITS Academic Helpdesk to become the first and foremost resource for academic computing and technology needs.

The Academic Helpdesk is staffed by full-time professional employees who are members of the ITS Academic Computing group. The Helpdesk

office is located in Steinmetz Hall room 104. The hours of operation are 9:00 am through 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday. Please feel free to stop in with your questions or concerns. The Helpdesk may also be reached by calling 388-6400.

In addition to personal or phone assistance, there is a website available for academic users to submit requests for assistance. When you go to the help desk website for the first time, you will be prompted to login to the system. Your username is your Union College username; your initial password has been set to **changeme**. Once you login, you will be immediately asked to change your password. The URL for the website is: <http://helpdesk.union.edu>

We would like to cordially invite the Union College community to the **Grand Opening** of the Academic Helpdesk on Friday, November 2, 2007 in Steinmetz Hall. Please watch your mail for an invitation. We hope to see you there.

Summertime and the Implementing Is Easy (Not) - Administrative Computing Update

Summer was a particularly eventful season in Administrative Computing this year, and probably the most eventful the College has ever had for our campus-wide enterprise computing systems. For the first time ever, three major system implementations occurred within a one month period giving the term "threading the needle" a whole new meaning. Two of the implementations involved converting the College's Student Information Systems (Admissions, Financial Aid, Registrar, Housing, and Student Billing) to their newly re-engineered technology plat-

forms. These were easily the most technically complex enterprise computing projects completed in almost 15 years. And the completion of the start of the Fall term and school year have gone smoothly and been uneventful (boring implementations are good implementations in the enterprise computing business). The third major system implementation involved installing a new Human Resources system at the College. This implementation was also technically challenging as it required the implementation of a new HR system

and the revamping of payroll processing at the same time. A sure indication of the success of this implementation was the fact that everyone continued to receive their paychecks, and we never found any threatening notes attached to the windshield wipers of our cars. Last, but not least, in our "spare" time we implemented a few enhancements to the Web-Advising system, including the deployment of an automated system for students to use for registering via online for their "Card/Petition" courses.

Interested in video or audio editing? Need to know how to publish a webpage? Want more information about podcasting and iTunes?

Check out the Curricular Support website for tips:

curriculum.union.edu

Forgot your thumb drive?

Try using your network storage on *ufiles*.

For more information, see:

acaddocs.union.edu

Got a Mobile Device?

All mobile devices (e.g. PDAs, iPhones) that are 802.11 wireless compliant can be registered for use on the campus network. Please contact Bob Babb or Matt McClosky at resnetstaff@union.edu if you have this kind of device and want to use it on the campus wireless network.

Electronic Classrooms – New and Improved

Two new electronic presentation classrooms were created during the basement renovations of the Social Sciences building. Social Sciences 016 (an auditorium that held about 190 seats) was subdivided into two classrooms (016 and 017) that each seat 50 students. Both classrooms contain the standard electronic classroom equipment – Macintosh and PC computers in the lectern as well as VCR, DVD player, document camera and sound system. All equipment is connected to the 3000 lumens ceiling-mounted data projector. Both rooms are configured with tables and fixed seating.

Social Sciences 010 has been configured as a laptop classroom similar to the seminar rooms in the Minerva Houses or the laptop classroom in Humanities. It has a ceiling-mounted data projector, and a combination DVD/VCR player which is mounted in a table for the instructor. There are cables pre-connected that allow the faculty member to hook up a laptop (either PC or Macintosh). The faculty member will need to provide the laptop.

During the renovations, the existing electronic presentation classrooms (Social Sciences 012

and 014) were upgraded and remodeled. Both rooms received new audio systems, new screens, upgraded lighting and brighter, 3000 lumens data projectors.

Information Technology Services also upgraded equipment in two other electronic presentation classrooms during the summer. Both S & E N210 and Olin 332 received new projectors, document cameras and DVD players.

During the summer, ITS also upgraded all

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Software Licensing

Information Technology Services maintains site licenses for a number of popular software applications in use on campus. The current list includes:

- ChemDraw (Mac; PC)
- Mathematica (Linux; Mac; PC)
- MatLab (Linux; Mac; PC)
- Microsoft Office (Mac; PC)
- SAS (PC)
- SPSS (PC)

Generally, these site licenses may not be installed on privately-owned computers. Also, academic pricing/licensing is available for a number of other applications including Adobe products. If you are interested in obtaining any of these programs for your office computer, please contact your department or division contact in ITS for more details.

Curricular Support Summer Projects

This summer, nine faculty members in Sociology, Philosophy, Psychology, Chemistry, Biology, Management, Minerva Programs and History participated in the Curricular Support Summer Projects program. Eight projects were completed.. Examples of the completed projects:

- Enhanced course web sites and Department web site
- Video DVDs and video podcasting
- Course web site with scanned PDF documents, figures and images.
- Freshman Summer Reading online discussion on Blackboard for Minerva programs
- Course web site for Community Service miniterm 2007
- Course web site for Cyberfeminism
- Online research projects and server setup
- Audio and video podcasting, web site development and designing assistance provided
- Image gallery project, which allows faculty and students to upload images, and post comments either on campus or term abroad.

Using Email within Blackboard

Blackboard Email is a safe, user-friendly way for instructors and students to contact each other. In addition, email functions can be added to group pages so that groups can quickly contact each other.

We recommend that you use your Union College (i.e. @union.edu) email address. To change your default email address listed in Blackboard:

1. Login to Blackboard (<http://online.union.edu>)
2. Click **Personal Information** on the left-hand side of the Welcome page
3. Click **Edit Personal Information**
4. Under the **Personal Information** section, enter the email address you want to use
5. Scroll down and click **Submit**

If you use a non-Union College email address, be sure that you "white-list" @union.edu in your SPAM filter. This will permit any email messages from Union College addresses to get delivered.

Office 2007, Blackboard, and Macintoshes

Many students have returned to campus with new computers and new software. Office 2007 to be exact! Students are posting Office 2007 documents to Blackboard and emailing Office 2007 documents to faculty as part of course assignments.

Faculty members who use the Windows operating system will be prompted to install the Office 2007 Compatibility Pack if they try to open an Office 2007 document and have older versions of Office on

their computer. Once this has been installed, the documents will open with no problems.

Unfortunately, Office 2007 documents are not yet compatible with the version of Office that is used on the Macintosh (Office 2004). This has led to some problems with users of the Blackboard system (online.union.edu).

As a workaround, ITS is recommending that Macintosh users download and install the converter

that Microsoft has made available on its website. While this converter is still in BETA format, it appears to function well with Office 2004 and with Blackboard.

The converter for Macintosh Office 2004 can be downloaded from:

http://www.microsoft.com/mac/downloads.aspx?pid=download&location=/mac/download/Office2004/ConverterBeta_0_2.xml

Students – Need Technical Support??

The USTAR (Union Student Technical Assistance Resource) Tech Team provides students with a centralized resource for general computer support on a daily basis. While virus protection and spyware removal are the primary requests for assistance, USTAR provides basic technical support for all ITS-supported software, remedies basic networking problems, and helps with some hardware issues. Last year alone, nearly 200 students were assisted with various computer problems. These problems ranged from simple tasks like setting up a printer to catastrophic issues like recovering from the dreaded Windows "Blue Screen of Death".

The USTAR Tech Team can troubleshoot problems on both the Windows and Macintosh platforms. Additionally, they have experience with several versions of Linux. Our technicians are available Sunday through Thursday from 6PM to 10PM in the USTAR office (Steinmetz Hall, Room 108A). To obtain their assistance, go to the USTAR website at:

<http://ustar.union.edu> and fill out a request form.

Or stop by the USTAR office (Steinmetz 108A) during the office hours.

Note: the USTAR office has moved from the Olin Center to Steinmetz

ResNet Connections

In the first 3 weeks of the Fall 2007 term:

- ~1800 ResNet connections
- 120 first-year students helped by USTAR to connect to the network
- 200+ students assisted by ResNet staff in Reamer

Electronic Classrooms – New and Improved (continued)

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lectern Macintosh and PC computers in all electronic classrooms. The new lectern computers have USB and FireWire Ports located in the front of the computers which provide easy access for USB thumb drives or FireWire hard drives. Also, all electronic classroom lecterns were upgraded to LCD flat panel displays replacing the existing CRT monitors. The LCDs are more energy efficient than the CRTS. The flat panel displays were installed

slightly tilted to allow for maximum viewing without glare on these screens.

For assistance with any of the ITS-managed electronic classrooms or the Minerva House seminar rooms, call x2442 between the hours of 8am – 8pm Monday through Thursday (8am – 5pm on Friday). You can report any problems in an electronic classroom by calling x2442 or pointing your web browser to <http://classhelp.union.edu>

As a reminder, for any software requests in the classrooms (including for special events), please give ITS a minimum of 72 hours notice. For more information about the electronic classrooms, please contact Jim Strohecker at x6750 or by email at strohecj@union.edu

Information Technology Services

Union College
Phone: 518-388-6293
E-mail: its-acad@union.edu

8:30am–4:54pm Monday–Friday

ITS @ Union



ITS is committed to understanding and supporting the growing and ever-changing uses of information technology for both academic and administrative purposes. ITS will ensure a robust, stable, secure and innovative technology infrastructure that allows members of the Union community to work efficiently and effectively from facilities both on and off campus. We will create, in partnership with members of the community, facilities that support and enhance the learning, teaching, research and collaboration processes. ITS will assist faculty in the integration of appropriate technology into their curriculum and pedagogy to further enhance student learning.

We're on the web!
<http://its.union.edu>

Faculty Support Provided by USTAR

USTAR (Union Student Technical Assistance Resource) consists of three separate “teams” that provide services to students, faculty and academic departments. The “Tech” (for Technology) Team provides students with a centralized resource for general computer support on a daily basis. In addition to the Tech Team, USTAR also has a Web Team and an Applications Team. These two components of USTAR work in conjunction with the Curricular Support office to assist Faculty and Academic departments with web support (and maintenance of page pages), video editing, audio editing, podcasting and general application support on multiple platforms. Examples of past projects include website development, support for podcasting, and training for students on various applications.

To request assistance, go to the USTAR website at <http://ustar.union.edu> and request assistance through the link under “What Can We Do For Faculty?” Assistance can also be requested through a request to Kesheng Yu (Curricular Design Specialist – kesheng@union.edu) or David Sindoni (USTAR manager – sindonid@union.edu)

Password Profile Software Implementation

Previous Information Technology Services newsletters have mentioned that a self-service web-based password method for resetting passwords would be forthcoming. The self-service system allows you, the user, to create a personal profile that will allow you to validate your identity by answering a series of questions to which you have previously provided unique, personal answers. Many of our users are familiar with this type of system because of online services they already use.

That service is now available to Union College students, faculty and academic staff!

Go to <https://mypassword.union.edu> and select the **Enroll** option. This will allow you to set up your self-service access. You must set this up first before you can use it to reset your password or unlock your account if you have inadvertently forgotten your password. You must know your current password in order to enroll for the first time.

Information Technology Services is providing this self-service capability to students, faculty and academic staff to make it easier for them to deal with the password change policy being implemented. More than 25% of our users have not changed their password in the past 3 years. Be proactive! Set up your profile, change your password and be secure.