



Faculty Technology Newsletter

Winter, 2014

A note from the editor: Snow and cold have dominated the campus scene this winter, but the technology scene has been active. New technologies that may change the way we teach include the Canvas learning management system and Academic Innovation Programs. ITS continues to offer new tools to faculty to support research and teaching, and faculty email will be migrating to Google Apps. See below for more details. As always, please send me your comments, suggestions and technology news!

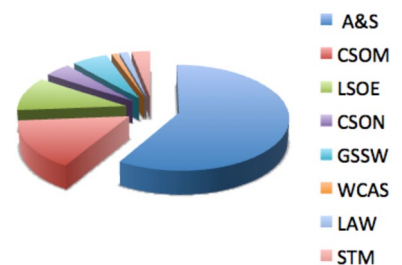
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Canvas learning management system rolls out to an enthusiastic response

The first phase of the Canvas implementation is underway. Thanks to considerable behind-the-scenes work of ITS and IDeS, the transition has been smooth. Canvas courses are now linked to UIS, the portal, library course reserves, Lecture Capture and iClickers. Currently, over 100 faculty have published close to 200 courses. The distribution of published courses between the different schools is shown below on the right. Beginning this summer, ALL courses will be moved to Canvas.

Faculty early adopters have generally been able to transition smoothly from Blackboard Vista, with some assistance from the IDeS staff and Canvas online documentation. After the initial learning period required to learn the Canvas “vocabulary” and site organization, faculty have liked its streamlined navigation and feature integration. For example, when an instructor adds an assignment to a course, the assignment is automatically linked with the syllabus, calendar and grade book.



The student response to Canvas has been overwhelmingly positive. Canvas works well on mobile devices and students are able to arrange automatic notifications for class assignments and discussions. Students are particularly fond of the Canvas calendar, which organizes their courses and assignments and sends notifications to their mobile devices. (Some students are even using it for their personal planner.) For more information on Canvas, consult the information provided by IDeS at:

bc.edu/canvas

Mark your calendars for eTeaching Day, scheduled for May 14

A panel of faculty members will discuss their Canvas courses in the morning, and the afternoon will include a variety of hands-on workshops in Canvas. More information will be forthcoming.

Faculty and staff migration to Google Apps will be complete on June 16.

You may have noticed that student email now originates from Gmail. Following the recommendations of Faculty Technology Consultants (FTCs) and the Academic Technology Advisory Board (ATAB), faculty and staff email will be migrating from Microsoft Exchange to Google Apps. Based on their experiences with a pilot group, the ITS staff expects this to be a relatively seamless transition. Information about the exact timetable, which will entail several weeks, will be forthcoming.



In addition to email and a calendar, Google Apps offers 30 Gbytes of file storage and a suite of authoring and communication tools. Another plus—Google Apps integrates well with Canvas. As the migration approaches, ITS will offer targeted training for individuals and groups. For more information on the Google Apps tools, see: bc.edu/content/bc/offices/help/comm-collab/g.html

Academic Innovation Programs use technology to enhance faculty-student interaction

Following an extensive series of faculty conversations led by Rita Owens last spring, the first AIPs have been funded. With combined support from the University Council on Teaching (UCT) and ATAB, projects are being developed across the University. A sampling of projects that are expected to affect large numbers of students:

- In *Reimagining the History Core*, students will upload digital records of their visits to historic sites and cultural activities to MediaKron, a platform developed at BC that allows instructors to organize images, text files, video and audio clips with metadata that includes dates, geographic location and other instructor-defined tags.
- *Redesign of Computers in Management (CSOM)* involves the restructuring of a foundational CSOM course, including self-paced online modules to liberate class time for deeper discussion.
- *Using Technology to Enhance Student Experiential Learning* will allow LSOE faculty to prepare and maintain better contact with students in their practice teaching and clinical assignments.

For more information on these and other projects, visit:
<http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/offices/atab/innovation.html>

Word Press—Websites made simple—here at BC



Are you interested in developing a website, but not sure how to start? WordPress offers open source software that allows users to develop websites without learning code. Today, about 20% of all websites on the Internet are based on WordPress. WordPress is easy to use and offers thousands of page styles that can be easily customized by non-specialists. BC faculty have already developed Word Press sites to support teaching and research.

A few of the publically accessible DIY sites developed at BC include:

- Stephen Wilson's (Physics) research lab site: capricorn.bc.edu/wp/wilsongroup
- 671, an online magazine for Christopher Boucher's (English) publishing class: capricorn.bc.edu/wp/671
- Clare O'Connor's (Biology) site for distributing course materials: capricorn.bc.edu/bi204
- Liane Young's (Psychology) research lab site: Moralitylab.bc.edu

In addition to these sites, there are many private WordPress sites that support research. Contact Barry Schaudt, Director of Research Services, for more information about developing a Word Press site on the BC server. To learn more about Word Press, visit: wordpress.org



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