Over 40 faculty take advantage of Ready-Made Website Service

With less than a month under its belt, the new faculty ready-made website service is already popular. Why? Faculty can create professional websites in under an hour.

“We set out to provide faculty with an easy way to create a web presence,” says Jessica Brown, the OIT web designer who created the service using WordPress, software known for its blogging feature set. “Faculty don’t need to know programming or have HTML editing experience, says Jessica.” Creating a website is as easy as creating a Microsoft word document.

OIT decided to implement this new service in response to System Computing Services’ decision to no longer support faculty websites for Nevada institutions. With just a few months to roll it out, there was little time to engage faculty in the process. “We were at the end of a busy semester with an increased work load,” says Dr. Lori Temple, vice provost for information technology, “but the change was accepted with enthusiasm, as faculty adoption and feedback shows.” An announcement about the new service was posted to UNLV Today on May 7th. By the first week of June, over 40 faculty had taken advantage of the new service.

Go to faculty.unlv.edu to learn more about the product and to request an account.

Procedural change for WebCampus section creation

Faculty used to contact the IT Help Desk to request an academic section in WebCampus. This fall, thanks to data now available in MyUNLV, WebCampus sections will be automatically generated. “There’s no need for faculty or part-time instructors to request a WebCampus section be created by the help desk,” reports Wonda Yuhasz, e-learning coordinator. “Faculty will work with administrative staff to ensure that the instruction mode is set to supplemental web, web-based, web-based with on/off-campus meetings, or hybrid.”

If these settings are not correct, administrative assistants need to contact UNLV Scheduling (scheduling@unlv.edu). It may take up to two business days for scheduling to process changes inside MyUNLV.

Departments will also control who has access to the sections by adding instructors, secondary instructors and teaching assistants. Therefore, the calls from OIT staff to confirm teaching assignments will no longer be required. If information is correct in MyUNLV, and requests for changes are submitted in advance of the semester, WebCampus section creation will be quicker than ever.

If you have questions, please visit webcampus.unlv.edu or call the IT Help Desk at 895-0777. Wonda and her staff are updating the WebCampus website to explain the basics of the service, including changes planned for fall.

The MyUNLV screen where the instruction mode must be set to EN, HY, WB or WM in order for a WebCampus section to be created. As shown, this course would not generate a WebCampus section.
Infrastructure Enhancements Continue

OIT server room improvements
The systems and networking groups collaborated to configure and design firewalls for the servers in OIT server room located in CBC, SCS and HWB. Firewalls are intended to permit authorized access to services while blocking unauthorized access. Rules for the firewalls will be configured this summer.

Storage area network (SAN) to provide 25 terabytes of storage
Technology services like Lotus Notes, Sharepoint, and Novell require an ever expanding amount of data storage space. Over the past few years, as campus needs have expanded, OIT systems engineers creatively employed various pieces of hardware to provide the space required for university data. But now the installation of a new piece of IBM infrastructure, called a Storage Area Network, or SAN, enables OIT to provide a more streamlined centralized data storage area for support services.

"We can provide data services for campus departments more quickly because of the SAN's flexibility," says Russell Gelinas, systems engineering and administration manager.

"It's just more efficient," says Russell. "Plus, the SAN provides 25 terabytes (TB) of additional storage, bringing our total storage to over 100 TB, with a potential to expand to over 500 TB. We're running out of storage space on most of our other devices, so this will be really helpful."

The SAN also supports server virtualization which will help OIT provide an optimized repository for backup and data security.

Network core upgrades
Networking engineers upgraded UNLV's commodity internet link to 10 gigabits, improved redundancy for the Academic Success Center and Student Services buildings, and replaced the network infrastructure at University Hall. Over the summer they will replace all network infrastructure in Bigelow Health Sciences and add more redundancy to the southeast side of campus.

More clicker support underway
As the faculty institute continues to introduce more research-based learning into the undergraduate curriculum, OIT strives to provide the support for new technologies that would benefit the classroom. This fall OIT plans to launch an expanded clicker website that will offer training, tips, and best practices related to classroom response systems.

"We will provide information about TurningPoint and iclickers," says Darrell Lutey, who manages instructional technology services. "We want the website to be a place for faculty to share their experiences with the technology with their colleagues," he says.

The college of business recently standardized on TurningPoint clickers and more of its faculty are adopting the technology. The college of sciences leadership studied other universities and determined that, to be competitive with what other institutions are doing, they need to consider using clickers more widely, especially in large classrooms. So OIT installed iclicker receivers in most of the large auditoriums on campus in early May.

If you have questions about clicker use, please visit oit.unlv.edu/clickers.

Suggestions about the future of the clicker website can be provided in the "submit feedback" link located in the bottom, left hand corner of the site.

Classroom renovations on hold
Typically, over the summer, OIT converts eight to ten standard classrooms into technology-enhanced classrooms (TECs). But this year, the budget was not available. Nonetheless, over the spring semester BHS-133 was renovated, which has been a request from the health sciences departments for a long time.

Also, OIT added three TECs to the second floor of BHS, completing the conversion of all classrooms in BHS. OIT will no longer need to provide audio-visual cart deliveries to BHS.

Still, of the 162 general-use classrooms on campus, 43 do not have technology permanently installed. As funding becomes available, OIT plans to continue classroom renovations, with the goal of having technology permanently installed in most classrooms on campus within the next five years.
Use of new, secure wireless solution grows

Computer security can rarely be described as simple. But the new UNLV-Secure wireless service is simple and secure.

After you take a few minutes to complete the one-time set up, UNLV-Secure encrypts data as it travels between your wireless device and the wired network connection in that location. With minimal advertising, employees and students have surpassed OIT's initial goal of a 5% adoption rate to reach 11% in just under a month.

"We wanted it to be easy to use," says CJ Odgers, the network engineer who led the project. "The last secure wireless solution was used by less than 1% of our population." The challenge, of course, was to make UNLV-Secure easy to use on many operating systems (Windows XP, Vista, Windows 7, and Mac OS X) and a wide range of devices (iPads, Androids, iPhones).

CJ worked with engineers to develop a script that shortened the installation time to less than one minute on most Windows operating systems. It should please the Mac folks that Apple devices required no additional development work on behalf of OIT engineers. CJ also worked with web designers to create a user-friendly interface that leads customers through the correct decision-making process for setup instructions.

"We had excellent help from the staff and students in the law school where the pilot was conducted," says CJ. OIT staff set up temporary help booths in the Boyd School of Law in order to support the adoption in that building. "We closed early, though, because no one really needed our help." With fewer than 20 help requests related to the service, the team considered the project a huge success.

"Less than 1% of customers who adopted the service needed to contact the help desk for assistance," says CJ.

Go to wireless.unlv.edu to set up UNLV-Secure on your devices today.

"Thank you so much for finally implementing UNLV-Secure. The old system was such a pain for us Mac users. I always had to cycle my wi-fi several times or restart my computer to be able to get an IP from the old network. This system is so much better, and just makes using the internet at UNLV simpler, faster, and easier."

—ALEX, LAW SCHOOL STUDENT

Projector replacement project:*****

This past year we received complaints from faculty about dim projectors. Wright Hall (WRI) still uses the projectors that were installed five years ago. "We don't have funds to replenish these types of technologies on a regular basis as they age," says Darrell Lutey, who manages instructional technology. "We plan to install 45 new projectors in WRI this summer with funds OIT leadership secured, if we receive the equipment in time," says Darrell.

The instructional technology staff also plan to decommission many Epson 8300 projectors that are currently in auditoriums. A poor filter design forces OIT technicians to service them twice a month.

OIT asks faculty to continue to report concerns or problems with classroom technology to Classroom Support at 895-0771. "OIT continues to work on securing on-going funds for high quality, reliable technology in campus classrooms," says Darrell.

Gateways replaced with Dells in TECs

We never expected computers purchased in July of 2003 for the libraries to be around for seven years. Several years ago they were trickled to Technology-Enhanced Classrooms (TECs) located in Wright Hall, CBC C, BHS, and BEH. Thanks to end-of-year funds authorized by the Provost Office, OIT's technicians replaced sixty of these aging Gateways with new Dell OptiPlex computers, which came with wide screen LCD monitors and 4 GB of memory.

"Each Dell cost about $1,113. The total price tag came to $66,821 for sixty computers," says Darrell Lutey.

Contact Classroom Support at 895-0771 if you have questions about these new computers.

Software discounts for UNLV

Before spending full-price on software, why not see if UNLV gets it at a discount? OIT's software website shows what is available at a discount through our vendors. From our site you can see:

• How to get software
• How much support OIT offers for each software product
• Which computer lab provides the software

Be sure to tell students about software deals too. Students enrolled in Management Information Systems and Computer Science courses get free development software from Microsoft.

Go to oit.unlv.edu and click on Software & Hardware for more information.
Significant increase in help desk call volumes

Upgrading the student e-mail and information systems caused a spike in help desk calls this spring. In May 2010, OIT had a total of 4,928 requests: 1,442 were for MyUNLV (32%) and 1,129 were for Rebelmail (23%). Compare that to May of 2009 with a total of 2,133 requests: 0 for MyUNLV and 209 for Rebelmail (10%).

Michele Kraus, director of OIT operations, reports ways that staff are working to improve support for MyUNLV, “We’ve developed a support team which includes Advising Centers, Enrollment Services and IT Help Desk. We’re considering making tutorials about MyUNLV more accessible. We’re also talking about following up more on e-mail communications.”

Currently, students only get two e-mails that include usernames and passwords for MyUNLV. The support team is considering developing a welcome e-mail that would introduce students to the features of MyUNLV. The iIntegrate team is also modifying MyUNLV so that it does not require a full-time staff member to reset passwords, “Which will speed up the support times without decreasing data security,” says Michele.

The majority of Rebelmail calls are related to password resets and an account provisioning issue that was related to students of the “non-degree seeking” status. OIT believes it has resolved some of the provisioning issues so that the fall semester should be fairly smooth.

Rebelmail popularity increases with Gmail

On Mondays during the fall and spring semesters, about 5,000 students visited the Rebelmail website. Since moving to Google’s Gmail in March, that number has doubled to over 10,000 hits. Student sentiments are best expressed through Rusty Bell’s comment, submitted through OIT’s online feedback form, “Alright! Now we can be free from the sinking chains of the ancient Rebelmail! Haha, but yes, I do believe this is a great idea. Thanks guys!” Rusty’s right. Rebelmail was ancient. With a purple screen and only 250 MB of storage, the e-mail system originated in the early 90s.

“Students are liking the new Rebelmail system,” says DeAnna Schoendienst, manager of client services. “A few hundred former students have even contacted us to have accounts on the new system.” OIT is working with the alumni association to draft a policy regarding student use of their accounts after graduation, which will go to UNLV administration for review. If you have questions about the transition, please contact Don Diener, project lead, at ext. 50500. Please continue to encourage students to follow university policy and to either use or forward their Rebelmail accounts. PowerPoint templates and handouts to help with access and use of Rebelmail are located at oit.unlv.edu under About OIT and Publications.