

Dense deployment of wireless in law school supports teaching, learning & collaboration

OIT's latest and densest deployment of wireless on the first floor of the Boyd School of Law (BSL) supports many new classroom activities, such as real-time polls.

While clickers are typically used for polls in the classroom, law professor Jean Whitney uses a combination of UNLV Wireless, laptops and TWEN, the law school's course management software.

Whitney posts hypothetical cases online, for example, and students use their laptops to respond to questions posted in TWEN. Whitney says that technology works as well as clickers and can also be used for other purposes, such as posting drafts of documents for in-class editing.

Wireless is also used to conduct online essay tests. Students are given three hours to answer one essay question via their laptops. They load a program called SofTest, which secures testing computers by preventing access to all other locally stored or Internet



Wireless in Boyd School of Law, 1st floor, now manages a high capacity of students accessing the Internet. Photo by Marsh Starks.

accessible programs and files.

"These tests are very competitive. In our 12 years of using SofTest program we have only lost one test," reports Don Castle, computer technician for the law school. He explains, "About 95% of our students bring laptops to school even though they're not required."

In September, law school students were frustrated by wireless because they could not connect to the few overworked

access points installed on the second floor. Castle had already placed an IT help request for more wireless, OIT staff provided quotes, and Castle processed the purchase order. Contractors installed the wiring and access points in October, and OIT configured the 14 access points that now provide service to five classrooms on the first floor. On average, about 170 students are logged in to the law school's

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iNtegrate PeopleSoft Campus Solution goes live

The UNLV portion of the Nevada State Higher Education (NSHE) iNtegrate project went live on September 14, 2009. This was a major milestone and positioned UNLV as a leader in the statewide project.

UNLV is the first NSHE institution to go-live with the PeopleSoft Campus Solutions, which will eventually replace the legacy Student Information System (SIS).

Fourteen OIT staff,

including systems and software engineers, IT security, business analysts and managers worked diligently toward an aggressive delivery date. As would be expected with the first go-live, the team experienced a number of challenges. Through great communication, solid teamwork and hard work, the iNtegrate team was able to overcome those challenges and met the delivery date with a quality implementation.

Rebelmail to be powered by Google

UNLV's e-mail system for students, Rebelmail, will soon be powered by Google. Below are answers to a several common questions. To find out more, go to oit.unlv.edu, and click on the E-mail and Collaborarion link.

When will UNLV switch to Gmail? Mid to late Spring 2010.

Why are we switching to Gmail? The current technology that runs Rebelmail, hosted by System Computing Services, will be decommissioned in June 2010. As a replacement, UNLV has adopted Gmail, which is free to us. Truckee Meadows Community College has also adopted Gmail and more NSHE institutions are considering it. We follow universities like University of Arizona and Notre Dame.

Will students' e-mail address change? No. Their UNLV addresses will remain the same.

Who can use UNLV's Google Gmail?

- Current students (those who are enrolled in a course at the time we make the switch and all future new students).
- Students who have taken at least one class since Spring 2008.

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A FASTER, MORE
RELIABLE
WEBCAMPUS **PG. 2**

STUDENTS TALK ABOUT
WEBCAMPUS **PG. 3**

SURVEY SHOWS BIG
IMPROVEMENT **PG. 4**

Now online: A faster, more reliable WebCampus

On one Wednesday this past September, 14,319 customers had logged in to WebCampus. With that many students and faculty dependent on UNLV's course management system, it was a little scary to take it offline just before classes started this fall. But the 3.5 day outage provided ample time for technicians to transfer the vast amount of data already in WebCampus into a faster, more reliable infrastructure.

I don't have time to multitask."

A team of nine professionals, including database, system, software, application and network engineers spent more than a year designing and implementing the new hardware environment for WebCampus. While the project also included new storage and backup hardware, the key components of the new infrastructure are the servers, high-powered computers shared by many users over the network. The new configuration replaces 10 servers with 25 smaller, more efficient devices with a total cost about \$50,000 less than the original ones installed five years ago. The new servers eat up less space and less power, saving UNLV energy costs over time.

"A major advantage of our new set up is that it's scalable. It can grow with UNLV. It's also designed to make the application more available," says Russell Gelinas, systems engineering and administration manager. The servers are configured to work together. If one should slow or fail, the others will pick

up the workload, and faculty and students will not notice any interruption or slowdown in service. Plus, now students connect via one of ten shared gateways into the system, instead of five. These changes double the speed and capacity of WebCampus. The hardware lives in the System Computing Services data center, which has high availability power, generators, and multiple network connections.

Students will notice that their "My WebCampus" and course pages load faster. Instructors can upload and import content, and copy course content from previous semesters in a fraction of the time. Plus, WebCampus support staff can process support requests in half the time.

This hardware upgrade did not affect the system's interface. However, UNLV will upgrade to the latest version of Blackboard Vista, version 8, in the near future. This new version is said to fix several bugs in the current software program.

i 25 students used WebCampus in 1998. In 2009, over **20,000** use it.

"I can't believe how quickly I can upload my course materials," says Yvette Aqui, WebCampus administrator and part-time instructor for the college of education. "I used to find something else to do while I waited for section requests to process. Now my administrative tasks are processed so fast

We value feedback from campus

Talk to us about WebCampus & your e-learning needs

If you are experiencing a bug or problem in WebCampus, let us know. Our team works closely with Blackboard to request bug fixes. The only way we can help is if we know about your issue.

IT HELP DESK
895-0777
CBC C131 or MSU 231

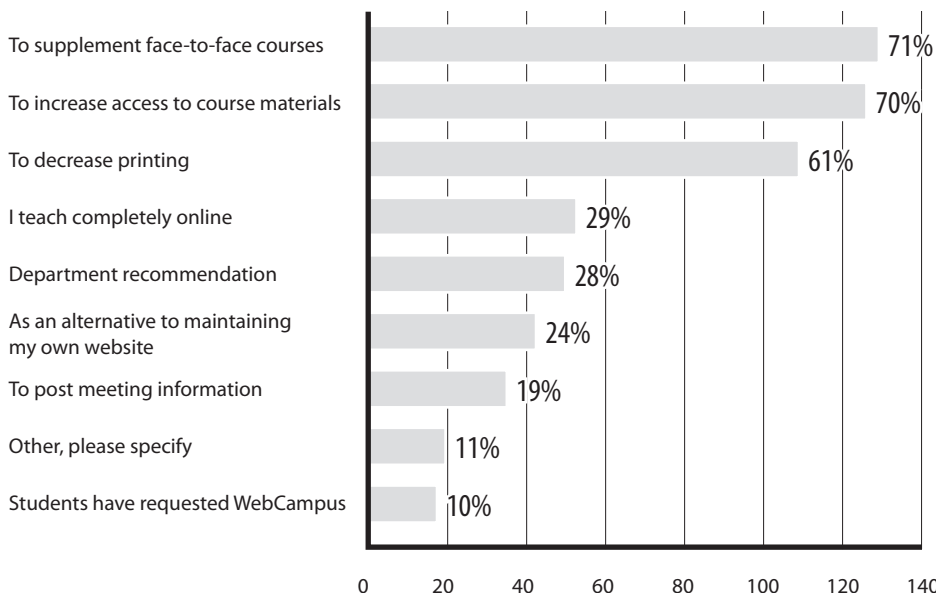
Not quite satisfied with WebCampus?

Want it to do something new or different? Looking for a new e-learning tool? Contact Wonda Yuhasz, E-Learning Coordinator. She listens to your technology concerns and determines if WebCampus can meet those needs.

WONDA YUHASZ
895-0730
WebCampusAdministrator@unlv.edu

Why do teaching faculty use WebCampus?

In OIT's 2008 survey, 178 teaching faculty respondents identified the reasons they use WebCampus. In the "other" category, respondents put comments such as "to post grades, to give quizzes" and more.



Students talk about WebCampus

Of the 714 students who responded to OIT's 2008 survey, 89% use WebCampus. We asked those students to provide additional comments about the course management system. Here's what they said:

"I wish there were more classes available."

"Three of my five classes are on WebCampus this semester, which I use on a daily basis. It is great that you can go to the WebCampus 24 hours a day since I am a bit stretched out on time this semester. I am a night person and it is nice to know I can do my logs at 2 to 3 o'clock in the morning as I am playing catch up. Thanks again for the availability."

STUDENT COMMENTS	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
<p><i>WebCampus is not used by most of my teachers, but I wish it were</i> more prevalent. <i>I love that I can check my grades, view my syllabus, and so on.</i></p>	<p>Teaching faculty can get started with WebCampus by signing up for an introductory course at the Teaching & Learning Center, now located in RAJ 143.</p> <p>They can also drop in to an Open Lab held every Friday, 9-11 a.m. in CBC C307.</p>
<p><i>WebCampus just takes so</i> long to load.</p>	<p>WebCampus is at least twice as fast as it was in 2008 when this survey was conducted, so we hope that the complaints about load time will subside. Students should contact the IT Help Desk if they experience problems.</p>
<p><i>I hate it when I click on an item and</i> it kicks me back out to the main screen <i>and I have to go back into my class page and select the item again.</i></p>	<p>Help us tell students that this bounce-back issue is an easy fix. Students just need to tell their web browsers to "trust" the website: webcampus.nevada.edu. If they're getting kicked back to the start of the course, their web browser security settings do not recognize WebCampus as a safe site.</p>
<p><i>Sometimes it can get hard to keep track of things when a professor posts too many items on WebCampus.</i></p> <p><i>I think it should be kept</i> simpler and more organized in order to be more user friendly.</p>	<p>WebCampus training courses are recommended and available through the Teaching & Learning Center.</p>
<p>The ease of using WebCampus depends on the skill level of the moderators and instructors; <i>the more knowledgeable and organized the teacher, the easier it was to find what I am looking for and to perform my assignments. WebCampus is also a useful tool, but only when it is actually utilized, and utilized well.</i></p>	<p>OIT offered additional open labs before and during the start of the fall semester. We will continue to do that in order to meet last minute support needs before class starts.</p> <p>We will also offer open labs on Fridays at lunch time.</p>

Benchmark data show improvement in new employee experience

Survey data show that new employee technology experiences have improved significantly in the past two years.

We ask new employees to report their level of agreement with the statement, "My first few weeks at UNLV were technically successful." Chart 1 shows that in 2007, 22% marked Strongly Agree as compared to 39% in 2009. That is a 17 percentage point increase in the highest level of agreement, in just two years. Likewise, the number of respondents who marked Disagree decreased from 17% in 2007 to 8% in 2009.

In all, our overall scores show that new faculty have the technology they need to be successful, and are getting it more quickly than they did in 2007.

Our staff plans to reduce the number of logins on campus and increase the number of technology-enhanced classrooms, which were concerns respondents identified in the survey. View more survey results at oit.unlv.edu under About OIT.

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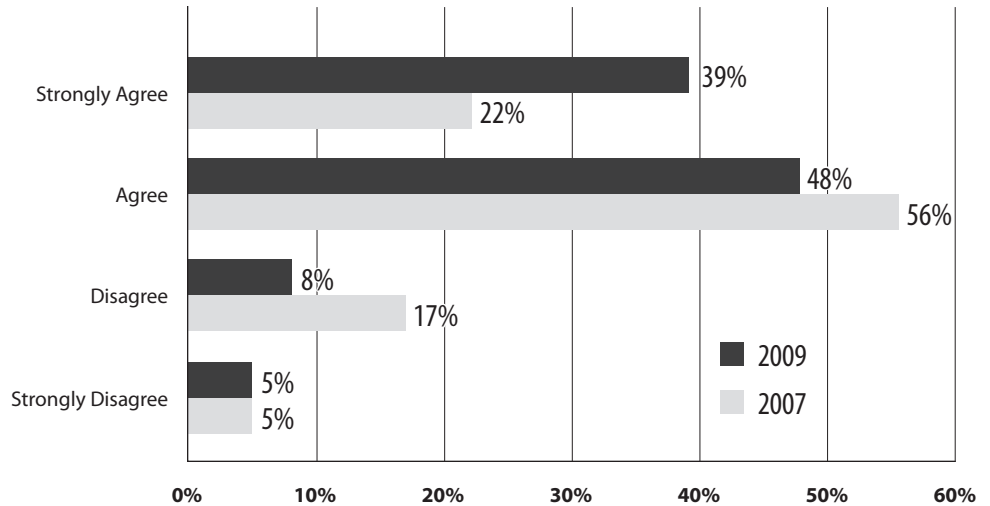
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wireless network between 6 a.m. and noon.

But students aren't the only ones benefiting from increased network availability. "We also use wireless and Adobe Connect for faculty discussion groups," says Whitney, who with the law school's curriculum committee has been hosting informational panels about curricular evaluations. When the panel discussions begin, Whitney connects to wireless through her laptop and logs in to Adobe Connect, an online service she uses to record and share the audio for each discussion. Faculty who can't make it to the live panels log in to Adobe Connect later and hear the conversations. "It's great because we don't need any special equipment," says Whitney.

With a \$20,000 investment, a dense wireless deployment like this can take anywhere from 2 to 6 months and all it takes is an IT help request to get started.

CHART 1. 2009 compared to 2007 — New academic & administrative faculty response to: "My first few weeks at UNLV were TECHNICALLY successful."



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- Current faculty and staff who have activated/use the current Rebelmail system. Google Gmail is not a replacement for Lotus Notes.
- Emeritus faculty.

Can faculty & staff who do not use Rebelmail use Gmail? This will be discussed with faculty senate and in consideration of legal counsel advice and current resources. We may not have an answer until July 2010. As soon as we have more information, we will provide it. Our first goal is to move individuals with accounts in Rebelmail to Gmail to continue e-mail service for those customers.

What will I get? The community members listed above will get Gmail service, an online e-mail application that offers 6 Gigabytes of storage space. The ad-free service will maintain the @unlv.nevada.edu domain name. In the future, they will also have access to the entire suite of Google Apps, which includes calendaring, document sharing, and chat features.

Where can I get more information? Check out OIT's website at oit.unlv.edu.

You can get incident notifications fast



If you are interested in getting more immediate notice when a university system is unavailable, OIT posts incident notifications and news to its homepage. You can also follow OIT at:

[Twitter.com/unlv_oit](https://twitter.com/unlv_oit)

The BlackBerry license cost...

decreased from \$150 per year to \$100 per year because of an increase in the number of customers using the services. The more customers we have, the more we can share costs, and the cheaper it is for everyone.