WyoLync

Video Conferencing and More from Your Computer

Information Technology is introducing a new service, WyoLync. Based on Microsoft’s Lync™ software, WyoLync allows users to instant message, video conference, share applications or desktops from their computers.

WyoLync lets you do video calls easily. With a click of a button you can connect to one individual or a group of individuals in different locations for a video conference. No special set up, no training required. Just your desktop or laptop’s microphone and camera are required. WyoLync makes it easy to connect with a faculty or staff across campus, across the state or internationally. Meeting organizers have more control over the meeting than with other systems. The meeting organizer can see everyone that is currently attending the meeting, can mute all attendees, and add or drop attendees while keeping the meeting open. With WyoLync, scheduling a video conference is as simple as creating an Outlook meeting request and clicking the “Live Meeting” button. The information on how to connect is added automatically. WyoLync can also be used to create audio only telephone conferences whether or not all the attendees use Outlook.

Being able to see meeting attendees is not the only advantage to WyoLync, enabling collaboration is another. WyoLync can also be used to share the view of an application, such as a PowerPoint presentation or Word document, or an entire desktop, making it simple for others to follow along with the meeting content. The meeting organizer can even transfer control of a document or desktop to others. Collaboration can happen with a few people working on a document together in one meeting space.

Included with WyoLync is instant message functionality. See who is currently available, leave a note for others to see, and instant message with an individual or a group of individuals.

IT will be offering training sessions in April to show all of WyoLync’s features. Please check the IT Training workshop schedule page (www.uwyo.edu/infotech/services/training/schedule.asp) for times and online sign-up.

WyoLync is a free service for UW faculty and staff. See the WyoLync web page (www.uwyo.edu/infotech/services/multimedia/wyolync/) for instructions on how to install Lync for
Information Technology’s Operational and Strategic Planning

Information Technology has initiated a planning process that will engage a wide variety of faculty, staff and students in the formulation of technology strategies that support the university’s goals and priorities and meet the expectations of IT customers.

The purpose of IT’s planning process is to provide a channel for the university community to discuss technology issues and opportunities facing them in the next few years. The goals of the planning process includes strategizing how to meet changing and growing technology needs and collaborating with our customers to formulate sustainable plans of implementation and operation.

IT’s short term goal is to build and strengthen relationships with units across the university that will enable IT to best respond to their technology needs and provide the highest and most flexible level of support possible with existing resources. IT will to accomplish this by balancing needs and leveraging technology advancements to increase sustainability. Long term goals include addressing technology infrastructure and support deficiencies, collaborating with customers to be innovative in accommodating new programs, processes, and technologies, supporting the university’s expanding research capacity, and assisting faculty in teaching and helping students.

Information technology budgets are relatively fixed and demands for information resources continue to expand rapidly. Technology strategies arrived at through consensus and collaboration ensure that IT meets budgetary and resource challenges as efficiently and effectively as possible. IT’s success in the role of enabler and promoter of technology depends largely upon customer input gathered the IT planning process.

We are seeking your feedback concerning the technology needs of your department, college, and division to help us formulate a technology strategy that will balance increased technology needs and limited resources. To create those strategies, IT needs to understand your changing technology needs. Collaborating with you will enable IT to build sustainable operational plans, make consistent technology decisions, and provide the highest and most flexible level of support. Please share your thoughts and concerns with us about your current technology needs and those you envision for the future.

Please email us at UWITPlan@uwyo.edu to provide input that will guide IT in our planning efforts.
Classroom Technology Assistance –
No Numbers, No Menus, No Buttons – Just Help!

All classrooms that have open scheduling for classes and are supported by Information Technology have been equipped with telephone hotlines that have been programmed to immediately dial the IT Help Desk. If there are technology problems in one of the classrooms, simply pick up the phone. The phone will automatically dial the help desk, the call will go to the top of the IT Help Desk call queue, and a helpful IT representative will answer. In the case of emergency "class-down" situations, someone will immediately be dispatched to assist. No numbers, no menus, no buttons – just get help!

High Performance Computing (HPC) Update –
UW Joins Top U.S. Computing Facilities

Starting this fall, the University of Wyoming research community will have access to one of the world’s biggest and fastest supercomputers. The NCAR-Wyoming Supercomputing Center (NWSC) is a peta-scale, supercomputing center designed to maximize data-intensive science, and Wyoming has played a critical role in its creation.

The NWCS will initially have approximately 75,000 compute nodes performing 1.6 Peta-FLoating Operations Per Second (PFLOPS) and store 12 Petabytes of data (Peta = 1(10)15, 12 Petabytes = 187,500 64GB iPods). The data center facility, located just outside of Cheyenne, is completed, support staff is moving in, and the hardware has been ordered. The University is connected to the NWSC with a 10 Gigabit/sec network connection that is poised to upgrade quickly as the researchers demand it. According to the existing schedule, the University will begin to use the NWSC in August 2012.

Access to the NWSC will be granted to qualified researchers. A seminar to discuss the application process and logistics for using the facility was held February 24th.

In addition to the NWSC, the University is also building a substantial, local HPC resource. This world-class facility will comprise thousands of computing nodes, large-scale storage and seamless access through fast networking. This supercomputer will be available to UW researchers, faculty and students. The combination of the NWSC and the UW Supercomputer places the UW among the country’s top research computing facilities. The facility will be in place and operational by the end of summer.

For more information regarding the NWSC or Research Computing at UW contact Tim Kuhfuss at (307) 766-4864 or tkuhfuss@uwyo.edu.

Research Support -
New Faces, New Hardware and New Customer Support

Information Technology is embarking on a new journey. We are preparing to support the University’s diverse research communities computing needs. One step towards accomplishing this goal is to build a campus high performance cluster and storage system. This substantial system will have high speed connectivity to similar and larger systems across the country and throughout the world as well as be tightly coupled to the planned University visualization center.

The challenges:

- Researchers are 24x7 users
- Researchers need ready access to systems
- Researchers are highly sophisticated with regard to technology and its capabilities.

In order to overcome these challenges the UW IT Research Support Department will focus on the following three areas:

1. Availability – The systems will have to be reliable and available to researchers when they need them. This will be accomplished by using a proven system design and using industry best systems administrative practices.
2. Usability – Users will need the support mechanisms to allow them to easily use the campus cluster and national resources such as the NWSC. User assistance will span from online self-help to personal consulting from IT.
3. Performance – Not only will the computing resource have to run at top speeds, research software and researchers’ code will have to be tuned and optimized.

IT is in the process of procuring the systems hardware and software. We are actively recruiting top notch, HPC systems support personnel
and we are seeking ways to leverage the University's existing IT support infrastructure to best accommodate the researchers.

For more information on the vision and progress of Research Computing Support contact Tim Kuhfuss at (307) 766-4864 or tkuhfuss@uwyo.edu.

Considering New Software for Departmental Applications?
Call IT

New software applications can help a department improve their operations and services. However there are many factors to consider in making an informed software purchasing decision, including:

- Investment in time and personnel resources to implement and maintain the software,
- Cost, including Total Cost of Ownership (TCO),
- Who will be using the software and how available the system it resides on needs to be,
- How it will integrate with other UW software and the UW network, and
- Necessary security for the data being stored.

Some of these factors may compete with one another, such as a program that many individuals need to have access to but requires strict data security. There is help in weighing these factors and making a decision that will best meet the goals of the department.

Information Technology has extensive experience in selecting, implementing and maintaining software. IT provides free assistance that can help in the decision-making process. We will help with:

- Conducting a needs analysis to determine the priority of functionality in the software.
- Reviewing potential software options available from vendors and knowing what might already be available at UW.
- Understanding the advantages and disadvantages of developing custom software versus using vendor software.
- Understanding the benefits and drawbacks of purchasing software and running it at UW versus subscribing to a system that is hosted by a vendor.
- Developing and reviewing a Request for Proposal (RFP) or Request for Information (RFI).
- Developing a total cost of ownership (TCO) analysis to understand the full immediate and long-term costs of implementing software.

A large software implementation can have substantial effects on a department. IT’s goal to help ensure success. If you would like to discuss any of these services, please contact Jennifer Chavez, Interim Director, Information Services at 307-766-4874 or jchavez@uwyo.edu.

End of Windows XP – Moving to Windows 7

It is hard to believe that Windows XP is already over 10 years old; it came out just a couple months before the first Apple iPods with 5 GB memory were released. Being 10 years old makes XP increasingly difficult to support. It is time to phase it out. Windows 7 has numerous advantages over XP. Many users across the University have already embraced the upgrade to Windows 7 with its many advanced features, including:

- New awesome “Search” capabilities, which can dramatically improve productivity.
- Utilizes memory (RAM) better than Windows XP, meaning Windows 7 will perform better on your existing computer hardware.
- Enhanced security and customizable firewall.
- If your hardware is 64-bit capable, Windows 7 64-bit can enhance performance even further.


IT user consultants will be working with each department to identify opportunities to upgrade existing Windows XP computers to Windows 7. The upgrade to Windows 7 is free for university owned computers. During this phase out cycle, in the rare circumstances that there is unusual software a department requires, which is incompatible with Windows 7, and there are no newer versions, IT staff will work with those software companies to find the best option for support going forward.

Transitioning everyone to Windows 7 is one way that IT is working to provide students, faculty, and staff the most reliable, full functionality, and secure computing environment.
IT Help Desk Uses Social Media – Making It Easy for You to Stay Informed

In January of 2011 the IT Help Desk launched its Social Media Presence with sites on Facebook, Twitter and the newly created The IT Blog (http://uwithelpdesk.wordpress.com/). These social media sites allow IT to share information about current happenings in IT and informative articles on computing with the UW community. They also allow users a place to interact with UWIT.

The IT Blog has articles generated by the IT Help Desk staff about important practices for computing. The entries have covered everything from password security to fun people to follow on Twitter. The content is based on experiences of the Help Desk staff both in supporting computing at UW and also with their own mobile devices such as the iPhone, iPad, Droids, etc. The IT Blog is a good place to find short articles to help with your everyday use of technology.

Along with announcements about blog entries, our Twitter (www.twitter.com/uwithelpdesk) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/pages/University-of-Wyoming-It-Help-Desk/173517919346) sites contain up to date information on planned and unplanned system outages and notes to campus about IT events. This makes Facebook and Twitter often the fastest place to find up to date information on network and systems outages.

IT video content is also available on YouTube at the UWIT Userhelp Channel (www.youtube.com/uwituserhelp). Here there are videos on how to handle common issues encountered in the Help Desk. We will add more video for subjects you want to see. If you have an idea for a video, any of our Social Media sites would be a great place to request a video to be created or you can email userhelp@uwyo.edu with your idea.

After a year The IT Blog and Social Media presence is gaining success. The IT blog has had 20,800 hits over the year. Have an idea to help us connect and provide better service, please let us know.

Best Practice Training and Certification for IT Employees

A group of IT staff members recently completed an on-site, three-day course in Foundations of IT Service Management based on the Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL). ITIL is a collection of industry best practices that is respected throughout the technology industry world-wide as a standard for excellence. The course described the key concepts, processes, functions and roles for IT services and prepares attendees for the ITIL Foundation Certificate examination. All 19 IT staff attending the class passed the exam and received certification. See the list of ITIL certified staff in the ITIL Training and Certification (www.uwyo.edu/infotech/aboutit/news/stories/0212itiltraining.asp) news release.

The onsite professional development IT employee training was given to provide our employees with a better understanding of how IT services create value for the university, our customers and how we can best deliver our services. IT service management is important to service efficiency and our continual improvement philosophy. In the coming year, using the ITIL methodology, IT will be modifying many of our processes to better meet our customers’ needs and provide improved customer service. Additional IT staff will receive education and training for certification to increase IT’s capability to consistently produce quality services in a responsive, timely, and cost-effective manner.

Remote Computer Support Unit

Last November, IT’s Client Support Services created a new unit with the specific purpose of providing remote computer support to UW’s faculty and staff located in Laramie and around the state. The new Remote Support Unit (RSU) will provide same-day assistance via phone and screen-sharing technologies on computer issues that don’t require an on-site visit. Screen sharing means that the IT consultants can remotely access the customer’s computer, diagnose the problem and correct it. Customers can literally watch on their screens what the consultant is doing to correct the problem.

The RSU is staffed by a full-time consultant that will tackle problems the same day they are reported and continue working on the issue until it is resolved. If a remote session doesn’t result in correcting the issue, another consultant will be assigned the problem to make a personal visit to the customer. For computers that are located outside of Laramie, the departmental consultant will help to determine the best options to get the computer working again.
Information Technology is glad to be able to offer this additional support option. With remote support, computer problems can be resolved more quickly. Your consultant may recommend remote support based on the issue, and if you would like to try remote support, feel free to ask the Help Desk or your consultant.

What Do You Need from IT?

In Spring 2011, the Division of Information Technology asked students, faculty and staff to respond to an annual on-line survey to help improve IT service offerings and support. There were 1,371 responses from students and 724 responses from faculty and staff.

The 2011 responses (www.uwyo.edu/itsurveys/2011/) indicate that a majority of respondents own laptops with WiFi wireless capability – 60% of students and 66% of faculty and staff. Additionally, 50% of students and 41% of faculty and staff report having smart, web-based phones or other mobile computing devices, such as iPads. Results of previous surveys showed cell phone use among students at 95% and 84% among faculty/staff indicating that cell phone use had become nearly universal. New technology has made smart phone or other mobile computing device use more readily available and the explosive growth over the past few years is reflected on the graph below. A result of the growing number of wireless devices is increased use of UW’s wireless network – 51% of students and 37% of faculty and staff reported routinely using UW’s wireless network. This number has increased significantly over previous years. When asked which new or improved IT service was the most important, students, faculty, and staff all responded “more wireless.” In response, IT continues to expand wireless across campus to provide better coverage and connectivity as funding becomes available.

Respondents who completed the questionnaire were entered to win their choice of a Nintendo Wii, an Apple iPod Touch, or a digital camera. The winning student, selected at random, was Sunny Kaste, a student in the Fay W. Whitney School of Nursing MS program, studying to become a Family Nurse Practitioner. Missy Stuart, Laboratory Tech/Lab Manager for the Schatzl Lab in the Veterinary Sciences/Molecular Biology department was the faculty/staff winner, also selected at random.

Thanks to all who responded to the survey and made suggestions to help identify how to improve technology offerings and services at UW. IT looks forward to hearing your feedback in the 2012 Technology Survey that will be out in April.

IT Consolidation Update

IT Consolidation reviews have been completed for non-academic units and certain primary academic areas of the university. Approximately 50 positions have been reviewed with more than 20 positions being consolidated into IT. The consolidations are showing substantial benefits to the departments and the university as a whole. The benefits include improved security, a more efficient and effective path to updating computing equipment, more support depth, personnel backup, more efficient processes and backlogged departmental technology projects beginning to be addressed.

Student Affairs was the first to complete the IT Consolidation. Sara Axelson, Vice President of Student Affairs, said this recently about the IT support Student Affairs now receives: “We have had outstanding results from the consolidation in direct support for students and units in Student Affairs. The technology needs of our varied Student Affairs units are being met and many major initiatives have been accomplished as a result.”

The consolidated technology infrastructure and support structure will clearly continue to benefit the university by:

- streamlining and improving technology operations across the university
- eliminating duplications in services and equipment
- providing depth in programming and support
- building better collaboration to meet growing technology needs
- strengthen the university’s technology infrastructure to set the stage for the future

Implementation activities occur over several months of collaborative efforts between the departments and IT. Assessment and continual improvement are ongoing.

Is It Time to Replace Your Printer?

Many printers are not designed to function in a centralized management configuration. To ensure quality performance of printers and the centralized management of networked workgroup printers (printers typically providing service to five or more connected users) IT needs to limit support for printers to those listed on the IT PrintPress Policy & Recommended Printers (www.uwyo.edu/infotech/services/support/printpress/) web page. This link also has specifics about special devices, purchasing new printers that are not on the approved list, and grandfathered in printers. Departmental staff members across campus have already been notified of this requirement.

If your printer is not on this approved list, please consider replacing it before June 2013. Dell offers trade-ins on old Dell and HP printers when new Dell printers are purchased. Please contact IT Computer Sales at 766-2875 or email itsales@uwyo.edu for current pricing on the recommended printers.

Director of Research Support – Tim Kuhfuss

Tim Kuhfuss is taking on a new position in IT, Director of Research Support. Tim brings a passion for research and being an early adopter in the information technology field to the University of Wyoming where he will work with researchers across the university to support their computing and high performance computing needs. He has already started the process of evaluating ways to continue to increase UW’s High Performance Computing capabilities. Please see his article, High Performance Computing (HPC) Update – UW Joins Top U.S. Computing Facilities, in this newsletter for more details on his goals and strategy for supporting research across the campus.

Tim has experience working in a wide variety of areas in IT from High Performance Computing clusters, storage, and network design to grant applications. His work with Fortune 500 companies and the national research community earned him the distinction of being named one of Network World’s 25 Most Powerful People in Networking. Along with being a self-proclaimed lifelong nerd, Tim is an advocate for high quality IT service delivery, which makes him a perfect fit in IT. IT is fortunate to have Tim heading up this exciting new area for UW.

Interim Director of Information Services – Jennifer Chavez

Jennifer Chavez is now bringing her years of experience with Information Technology to the role of Interim Director of Information Services. Jen is looking forward to continuing Information Services’ focus of improving customer service for application support. One of her strengths is in laying out various options clearly so IT customers can make fully informed technical decisions.

Jen graduated from the University of Wyoming with a BS in Marketing in 1998 and soon after joined the IT team. In her last 15 years of serving the UW, she has worked on countless projects. More recently Jen has been involved in project management efforts relating to PeopleSoft, Document Imaging, Info Ed, Advance, and many more. Jen was recently awarded IT’s Excellence in Leadership Award for her excellent work understanding customer needs and efficiently leading her team to address those needs. She is currently participating in UW’s Leadership Academy and is looking forward to using new learned skills to meet her goal of ever improving IT’s customer service.