

Technology Project Update

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10/23/2007

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Active Directory

We are implementation of an enterprise Active Directory. An Active Directory is the platform that provides a single-point of managing information security of Windows desktop computers. It stores and manages information about resources on the network and provides a means of centrally organizing, managing, and controlling access to the resources. It will be used to install security patches remotely on Windows desktop computers, thereby saving time and cost for maintaining and securing desktop computers. We plan to connect about 4,000 users and computers to the Active Directory by the end of the year. For more information about the Active Directory project, please visit the project Web site at <http://fiuad.fiu.edu>

eClassrooms

Thanks to the strategic initiative funding, we have added 18 new mediated classrooms (eClassrooms). Five of these 18 mediated classrooms were installed on BBC Campus. We are just begin to install another 20 eClassrooms and plan to complete the installation by next July 1, 2008. Of the 20 classrooms, six will be on BBC, one at the Engineering Center, and the rest 13 on UP campus. Although these 38 new mediated classrooms will help enhance the learning experience for our students, compared with our peer State universities, we are lagging behind in the arena of mediated classrooms. For example, University of Florida has nearly 100% of their classrooms mediated, FGCU also has 100%, FAU has 65%, and USF has 62%. In contrast, we have less than 40% of our classrooms mediated. As of today, we still have 105 classrooms on UP and BBC campuses that remain to be mediated. We still have a long way to go in terms of mediated classrooms.

University-wide Wireless Network

We have deployed a secure wireless network on the University's two campuses and three centers. Over 625 wireless access points were installed. As a result, all of our general-purpose classrooms have wireless network coverage. In addition, all main open areas on the BBC and UP campuses have been equipped with wireless access points for students to connect to FIU information resources. All FIU students, faculty, staff and guests may use our new wireless network. A Web-based logon screen is used to authenticate users to the new wireless network. After the user logs onto our wireless network, the logon process automatically checks if the user's computer is secure to connect to our network. If the user's computer needs security patches or anti-virus protection, the authentication

program will remind the user of updating the computer's security before permitting the access to the information resources on our network. The new authentication method is also flexible. It permits different types of users with different levels of access rights. For example, when a guest user is using our wireless network with a temporary logon ID or without an FIU ID, the authentication program will direct the user out to the Internet without giving the guest the access to the information resources on our internal network. In contrast, when a student logs onto our wireless network, the student will be granted to access student information on our network. We also collaborated with the University Residence Office to use the same wireless technology in student houses, so that students can use the same authentication method and seamlessly roam between the student residence wireless network and the campus wireless network. For more information about the wireless project, please visit the project Web site:

<http://uts.fiu.edu/index.cfm?action=wirelessfac>

Emergency Notification System

Following the tragic event at Virginia Tech, leveraging on our telephone system, we have deployed Informacast as our emergency notification system. This notification system sends both voice and text notices to all of our telephones. In addition, working with Valcom, the vendor of the emergency communication system used in the Student Residence buildings, we were able to integrated our emergency notification system with Valcom emergency broadcast system. As a result, students in Lakeview, Panther Hall, Everglades Hall, and Panther Towers are also able to receive emergency announcements made with the university's emergency notification system. We are installing phones and speakers in selected classrooms and open areas to extend the scope of our emergency notification system.

Online Software Store at Low Prices

To enhance services to our students, the Division of Information Technology recently launched an online service for students, and also for FIU employees, to purchase software and other computer items at substantially discounted prices. For example, students and employees may purchase McAfee, the top rated antivirus software, for only \$0.99. In contrast, the same software is sold for \$35 or more at most computer retail stores. Other software programs we sell online at discounted prices are:

-Microsoft Office Pro (MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access) for employees working at home: \$10 (compared to \$499 retail price)

- Microsoft Office Pro for students: \$75 (compared to \$499 retail price)
- Microsoft Windows Vista or XP: \$75 (compared to \$199 retail price)
- Apple OS X: \$76.80 (compared to \$129 retail price)
- Adobe Photoshop CS 3: \$350 (compared to \$649 retail price).

This new online service is user-friendly and is Web based. At the click of their mouse, students and FIU employees may purchase their needed software anywhere and anytime. For more information about the new online software service, please visit <http://shoputs.fiu.edu>.

Email Roadmap - Proposed E-Mail Solutions and Partnership

We currently maintain two email systems, Lotus Mail and Mirapoint Mail (FIU Web mail). Mirapoint mail contains about 62,000 email accounts. All students are on Mirapoint mail system with a limited mail storage space of 100MB. In addition, about 8,000 employee email accounts are also on Mirapoint mail system with a limited storage allowance of 300MB. Separate from the Mirapoint mail system, another 1,200 employees are on Lotus Mail system with a limited storage space of 500 MB. Students and faculty have been complaining about not having enough email storage space for their FIU activities and requesting more email storage space. In addition, faculty and staff have also been complaining about Lotus mail's user interface as not being user friendly. Additionally, Departments and units have been complaining about the cost of receiving email with POP3 clients.

Proposed Solution for Students Email Service:

Partner with Google Education Services to provide student email services on Google servers in January 2008.

Benefits to students:

1. 2 GB email storage (20 times more storage space than the current storage limit)
2. Integrated calendar
3. Integrated secure online chat function
4. Life-time FIU accounts*
5. Customizable portal service with FIU logo
6. FIU email user name and password remain the same (i.e., student@fiu.edu)
7. No advertisement

Benefits to the University:

1. Avoid the cost of \$1.4 million to \$2.7 million per year to provide 52,000 student email accounts with 1GB to 2GB email storage space per user.
2. Free hardware and software
3. Retain the university's domain (i.e., student@fiu.edu)
4. FIU controls who gets the email account with what user ID and password (no interruption to the existing workflow for creating email accounts)
5. Free life-time FIU alumni email accounts*
6. Google's 24/7 email availability and backup
7. Google has built-in anti-spam and anti-virus programs in their email. We do not have to install anti-virus and anti-spam programs for students.

Please note that we also approached Microsoft for partnership about email service. Microsoft offered us the same email service as Google, except that email messages would be deleted automatically if our students have not logged onto Microsoft email system for 60 days. We do not believe that Microsoft's automatic email deletion policy will meet the needs of our students. Therefore, we selected Google as our partner for student email service over Microsoft email solution.

Proposed Solution for Employee Email Service:

Consolidate our two employee email services to MS Exchange Email in July 2008

Benefits to employees:

1. User friendly email interface
2. 1 GB email storage (double the current storage space)
3. Reduced logon (use the same Active Directory logon ID and password)
4. Supports all mainstream Web browsers as Web client or Outlook mail client for both Mac and Windows
5. Offers POP3 mail option free of charge (currently there is a charge of \$4 per POP user)
6. All employees use the same email service (get rid of the current two-tier email service)

Benefits to the University:

There will be substantial savings on both hardware and software. The savings will afford us to provide 1GB email storage for all FIU employees. There will be no software license cost. Exchange mail license is covered by our Microsoft campus license

agreement. All employees will be treated equally and served with the same email service, resulting in easier meeting scheduling and easier email distribution. The hardware cost will be lowered too. Exchange mail system runs on standard Intel or AMD chipset servers while both Lotus mail and Mirapoint mail systems must use vendor-specific hardware.

Academic and Research Computing Projects

CHEPREO (Center for High-Energy Physics Research and Educational Outreach) is a joint research project hosted and supported by the Division of Information Technology with faculty at FIU, University of Florida, Florida State University, California Institute of Technology, and researchers from Brazilian high energy physics community. It is a five-year project funded by NSF and it is in its fourth year. Researchers conduct high-energy physics study on an inter-regional grid and provide a cyber learning environment for high school teachers and students. With our high-quality computing facilities and cyber infrastructure, CHEPREO has extended FIU's research activities at Jefferson National Laboratory to the long-term high-energy physics research program with the Compact Muon Solenoid (CMS) experiment at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), creating a robust outreach activity based on CMS research. We are proud that we have developed a scalable and high-performance networking and grid computing infrastructure that draw in new collaborators from South America. The project is enhancing science and math education in South Florida for underserved minority students through pedagogic enhancements and teacher training led by a Physics Learning Center (PLC). For more information about CHEPREO, please visit <http://www.chepreo.org>

Global Cyberbridges is another NSF funded project (NSF Award N°. OCI-0636031). The project aims at improving the technology training for a new generation of scientists and increasing the rate of discoveries in all domains. The program offers two-semester fellowships to science and engineering Ph.D. students. Through collaborative work with the Computer Network Information Center of the Chinese Academy of Science, the City University of Hong Kong, and the University of Sao Paulo's School of the Future in Brazil, FIU graduate students on the program develop their understanding and knowledge of cyber infrastructure and learn skills in cross-discipline communications and international collaboration. For more information about Global Cyberbridges, please see <http://www.cyberbridges.net/>

Building a Disaster Recovery Site

To better prepare the University's response to natural disasters or unexpected events, the Division of Information Technology is in the process of setting up a disaster recovery site at the Northwest Regional Data Center in Tallahassee. Over 150 servers will be relocated to the disaster recovery site. Once it is completed, we will be able to provide all of our mission critical services during a disaster, such as student information systems, accounting and financial services, and Web services.

Enterprise Data Backup

Partnering with college IT staff, we are setting up an enterprise data storage and backup system. The system backs up college and departmental mission-critical information on backend data storage via the University's high-speed fiber network. Then, the data are backed up onto tapes and stored 150 miles away from our University. In the event of a disaster, the backup data can be quickly restored onto re-built servers. Because this is not a University funded project, the cost of this service is shared between the colleges and the Division of IT.

PantherSoft Upgrade Roadmap

We plan to upgrade the University's ERP systems (PantherSoft Student Administration and Financials) to the latest versions. Specifically, PantherSoft Student Administration system will be upgraded from version 8.0 to version 9.0 by November of 2008, and Panthersoft Financials will be upgraded from version 8.4 to version 9.0 by July 1, 2009. In addition, we will also install and roll out PeopleSoft grants management system version 9.0 by July 1, 2009. The primary reason for the upgrade is that vendor (i.e., Oracle) is stopping technical support for the PeopleSoft versions we have. In order to keep our PantherSoft systems in working order, we must upgrade them to a version supported by the vendor.