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Educational Technology Group

Providing technology support to faculty for teaching and research

<http://www.holycross.edu/edtech/>

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Introduction

As we all begin looking forward to a new semester and a new year, the Educational Technology Group invites you to take a few moments to read about some of the technology-related developments on campus.

There are several items that describe new or upgraded technologies and services on campus, including EndNote Web, Moodle, and classroom equipment. You will also find information about upcoming workshops offered by Educational Technology and the ITS Training Group. Finally, procedures for acquiring computer software are outlined should you wish to try something on your own.

We hope that by reading this newsletter you will become interested in trying some of these technologies. We always welcome your requests for support or questions about new technologies.

January Training Workshops

Educational Technology will be offering 4 workshops the week before Spring classes begin for faculty who would like to integrate new technology tools into their teaching or research. Interested faculty should e-mail edtech@holycross.edu to pre-register. All sessions will be held in the Scalia Electronic Classroom (Dinand 202).

Wednesday, January 9th

Creating a Course Website in Moodle (10 -12 noon)

Introduction to SPSS (1:30 – 3:30 p.m.)

Thursday, January 10th

Managing Digital Library Resources (10 -12 noon)

Tips for Using ARTstor: A Multidisciplinary Online Database of Images (1:30 – 3:30 p.m.)

Information about training workshops for the Spring semester will be distributed after January 1st.

Software News

With EndNote Web, students and faculty can create on-line databases of bibliographic citations that can be accessed using a web browser from any computer with an Internet connection.

EndNote Web (<http://www.endnoteweb.com/>), a web-based version of the popular EndNote desktop software for managing bibliographic information, is now available to the Holy Cross community as part of the Web of Science library database. With EndNote Web, students and faculty can create on-line databases of bibliographic citations that can be accessed using a web browser from any computer with an Internet connection. EndNote Web also works with the desktop version of EndNote, creating a powerful combination of software tools for use in research and writing. EndNote Web can import references from hundreds of online bibliographic databases and organize a library of references. Using a downloadable Microsoft Word plug-in, EndNote Web can instantly insert references into Word documents and format bibliographic material in papers. For more information on both the Web and Desktop versions of EndNote, visit the EndNote support blog, accessible from the Resources area of the Educational Technology website (<http://www.holycross.edu/edtech/>).

Updated versions of SPSS for Mac/Windows and ArcGIS for Windows are also now available. Support blogs for each of these applications are also available from the Educational Technology website. Contact Rich Lent (rlent@holycross.edu, x2576) if you would like additional help in installing these applications.

Academic Software Purchasing

Information Technology Services assists faculty with fulfilling their software needs. If you need software to be available in a computer lab, on the campus network, or for your academic work on your office machine, ITS may be able to assist you. Many software packages are already available on our network. However, if you need software that Holy Cross does not currently own – or even if you just need more licenses of a package that we do have – there is a process to handle such requests.

Historically, we have been able to satisfy most requests, if not in the current year then in a subsequent year.

Twice a year (in November and in May), the faculty department Chairs will solicit the faculty in their departments regarding software needed for the next semester. The Chairs will gather up the needs into lists, and then submit these to ITS. We compile and review all requests carefully in consultation with the Dean's Office. In part, this effort is to help with the costs of software, as ITS can frequently organize bulk purchases or site licenses which reduce the overall cost per license. Additionally, if the same needs are seen in multiple departments, or if the software will also be used by students, ITS will work on acquiring software packages that can be readily shared on the network. Once this analysis is complete, ITS will contact faculty about their options. Historically, we have been able to satisfy most requests, if not in the current year then in a subsequent year. Even in cases where ITS cannot directly fund the software in a given year, our group is aware of other resources on campus that can assist with funding such purchases.

If you have any questions about software purchasing, or network available software at Holy Cross, feel free to contact James Pinkerton, Technology Support Director (jpinkert@holycross.edu, x3061).

Comparing Moodle and Blackboard

Last spring, Holy Cross began a comprehensive study of Moodle Course Management System, an open source alternative to Blackboard. To date, it has been tested by a dozen faculty members and their students who, for the most part, have had positive experiences using this tool.

Currently, ITS and Educational Technology are engaged in systematically evaluating Moodle's features and technical requirements to determine if it could replace Blackboard. Students and faculty who have used Moodle have been asked to complete a survey comparing the two course management systems. In addition, all faculty will receive a survey during study period asking them about their usage of Blackboard. All faculty are encouraged to complete this survey so that we can determine how changing our course management system might impact their teaching. Once all of the data have been collected, it will be reviewed by the Educational Technology Academic Group (ETAG), the AAC and the IT Steering Committee. A decision about switching from Blackboard to Moodle will be made in April 2008.

Faculty who are interested in learning more about Moodle are encouraged to attend the Moodle Demonstration on January 9th, 10-12 noon or to contact Mary Morrisard-Larkin (mmorrisa@holycross.edu, x3796) for additional information. All Spring 2008 courses have been set-up in Moodle so faculty can also log-in to the system (<https://webwork-www.holycross.edu/hcmoodle/login/index.php>) and experiment on their own.

Classroom Upgrades

Last spring, the Audio-Visual department worked with ETAG to redefine the basic "classroom technology" standards. Under the new standards, rooms are defined as amphitheaters, classrooms, seminar rooms, teaching computer labs, or music classrooms. There are a few rooms recognized as unique (such as Stein 208), and some labs and studios remain unclassified. Rooms are further classified by how accessible they are to the college community, with rooms fully open to scheduling by the Registrar getting the highest levels of support.

There are some variations in the types of equipment that will be deployed in the different rooms, but most will have a video projector or plasma display, projection screen, computer, DVD/VCR, and input for a laptop. Seminar rooms will be equipped with a wireless keyboard so that faculty can control the room's computer from the seminar table, and classrooms will additionally be equipped with sound systems and overhead projectors.

Over the summer, A/V surveyed our teaching spaces, and found that 25 out of a total 75 rooms were not in compliance with the standard. Over Christmas Break, we plan on upgrading 18 of the non-compliant rooms (mostly with sound systems and new video projectors).

Rooms that are planned for upgrade include Beaven 403, the Scalia lab in Dinand, Fenwick 434, Smith 324 and 426, Stein 124, 132, 203, 212, 216, 217, 223, 225, 302, 307, 311, 316, 319, Swords 302 and 328. Routine maintenance (filter cleaning, lamp checks, etc.) will also be performed on all teaching spaces with a/v equipment.

If you have any questions about these upgrades, please contact Audio-Visual Services (x3414).

All faculty are encouraged to complete the Blackboard survey so that we can determine how changing our course management system might impact their teaching.



The NEC VT700 projector will be installed in some campus classrooms during Christmas Break.

ITS Training Group

The Information Technology Services Training group (Anne Barry and Tricia Chuplis), provides software training to faculty and staff on all standard Holy Cross products. These standard products include the Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, Powerpoint, and Access), Groupwise email, Dreamweaver, PeopleSoft Financials, KRONOS Timekeeper, Adobe Acrobat, Photoshop, and Visio. We also provide the initial introduction to Holy Cross Computing for all new employees. We are available to answer software questions on any of the above mentioned products. To view our web page which includes a link to our monthly training schedule, go to <http://www.holycross.edu/its/training/>. You'll also receive a monthly email from PC_Training listing the upcoming software workshops and how to register for them.

Digital Imaging Project

Traditionally, the library catalog contained records for books and print journals. Recently we've added records for thousands of electronic journals. Last year, we also experimented with entering digital images in the catalog. The Hewlett-Mellon Committee sponsored a pilot project entitled "Cataloging Images in Millennium: A Central Repository for Faculty Owned Images." The project was a collaboration between 6 Faculty members (Biology, Classics, History, Modern Languages, and Visual Arts), Ed Tech staff, and Library staff to test the usefulness of the library software for image cataloging. To date, 792 bibliographic records and 1,175 images have been entered and can be viewed at <http://library.holycross.edu/screens/imcoll.html>. They can also be found via the link "Faculty Image Collection" on the library catalog website, or by keyword, author, title, and subject searches. In other words, digital images may be found as the result of any type of search and will be found in the same browse list as print material.

The library catalog software is capable of describing, storing, and presenting many formats of material, including images and sound. This pilot project proved that it can be done, but it also proved that the software has limitations. The labels available to us are not adequate for a complete and thorough description of some images, thumbnails are not available until an individual record is reached, and it is labor intensive. We may continue to add image collections to the catalog. However, we will also continue to explore other technologies.

Visual Arts Resources Coordinator Hired

The Library and the Visual Arts Department are pleased to announce that Janis DesMaris has been hired to fill the new position of Visual Arts Resources Coordinator. Janis holds a Master of Arts in Art History from the University of Massachusetts and a Master of Science in Library and Information Science from Simmons. Janis will become the primary campus resource for assistance with ARTstor and other digital image resources. Janis previously worked for Holy Cross as the Library Assistant at the Worcester Art Museum Library.



This horse statue from the Tang Dynasty was one of Karen Turner's Chinese Cultural Images which was cataloged as part of the digital imaging project.