Behind the Scenes

Have you ever wondered what the staff of AHS Computing is up to when they aren’t off helping someone? In the forthcoming editions of the newsletter we hope to shed some light on the activities that keep us busy. To start off this series, we are going to focus on the various committees in which each member of AHS is currently involved.

Terry Stewart (IT Director) is our representative on the top technical committee at UW the Computing Technology and Services Committee. He is also head of the Web Advisory Committee and the project chair and technical lead on the Web Content Management Committee. These groups are the driving force behind the move to a Web Content Management System named Drupal. Terry also is a member of the Faculty Computing Users Support Group and the Security Working Group. Within AHS, Terry is the representative for the Computing Office on the Web Steering, Computing Executive and Computing committees.

Craig McDonald represents AHS at the Campus Network Advisory Group. This group is instrumental in the development of the wireless network and other infrastructure items such as cabling & switches. He also sits on the Campus Software Licensing Committee, which monitors and secures software agreements with vendors. Craig is also part of the Username Investigation Committee and is the Staff Representative to Faculty Council.

Brent Clerk runs point for the Faculty on the Computer Systems Advisory Group. More recently, Brent has been a key player for the Exchange Calendar Project. With the demise of Bookit and its replacement Exchange, Brent has been instrumental in the configuration and training for this new cross-campus initiative.

Lowell Williamson is the secretary for the Waterloo Nexus Advisory Group. This group is the management council for the domain Nexus. He is also chair of the Green IT Advisory Group. This committee’s mandate is to help facilitate Green IT infrastructure and practices across campus. Lowell also serves with Terry on the Faculty Computing Users Support Group and is a cursory member of the Macintosh Users Group. In addition, Lowell is also the incoming Programming Chair for the annual WATITIS Conference. In the previous 2 years he has served as a committee member.

Calendar is Dead, Long Live Calendar

On Monday, December 13, the University will no longer support or provide access to the Oracle Calendaring system (commonly known as "Bookit"). The official calendaring system will be Microsoft Exchange Calendar. Over the weekend of December 10-12, all entries in the Bookit system will be migrated to Exchange. Exchange Calendar, typically accessed through Microsoft Outlook, is a powerful, user-friendly system that integrates calendaring functions with e-mail. It also integrates seamlessly to Blackberry devices via Blackberry Enterprise Server.

AHS Computing has already offered several courses on how to use Exchange Calendar, but if you are interested in getting help contact any member of AHS Computing.

Note for Blackberry Users: If you are using SyncJE to synchronize your Blackberry calendar with Bookit, you should uninstall SyncJE from your Blackberry, or minimally, turn off the scheduled synchronize in the Options panel.
**Computer Jargon**

Often times, computer terms (jargon) get misused. Members of the Computing Office often hear things like, "My Outlook Explorer is not working!". Deciphering what statements like that really mean can be difficult. In this new feature of the newsletter we will hopefully clarify computer lexicon. We’ll start off our series with one of the most common terms that is a confusing concept.

**A mapped drive** is a drive located on another computer and is connected via the network. The drive is then presented to you the user as a local drive on your computer. Most drives in the faculty are housed on the main faculty server called healthy. For example, when you do updates to the faculty webpages you are actually just editing files on a specific share (i.e. drive) located on healthy. The drive letter could be different from computer to computer. Sometimes a share on healthy might be mapped to W:\ on one person's computer and as S:\ on another.

If you have a suggestion of what terms you would like explained please let us know at:

ahs-computing@connect.uwaterloo.ca

**Virtualization Project**

Behind the scenes, AHS Computing is always working on projects of various sorts. Currently, there is a project underway to develop a Remote Application server that will be available to our undergrads and grads. We’ve been looking at ways to improve the student computing resources and, in turn, the entire experience for our students. Students will be able to browse to a webpage, authenticate and then run the programs that are presented to them. This method uses the same protocol as remote desktop, but displays only one application. One of the main reasons students use the labs is to access software that is not readily available or affordable to them. PASW and SAS are prime examples of software packages that are planned to be deployed as part of this project.

**ITMS Staff on the Move**

**Instructional Technologies & Multimedia Services (ITMS)** staff are on the move. The staff members of ITMS who currently reside in E2, in the former Audio Visual department, are moving to their new home in the MC. The customer service areas, Equipment Loans & the Media Resources will now be in the CHIP to facilitate "one stop shopping" for IST services. The move will be staged with some areas targeted for Fall 2010, depending on renovations being completed. As the dates firm up, they will be advertised and sent to various client areas.

**Windows 7: The New And Improved Aero Features**

In Windows 7, the Aero theme is made up of glass windows that are translucent, makes Windows easier to access to programs. It has come up with 2 new features: Aero Peek and Aero Shake. It has also greatly improved the quality and usability of the snapping feature first brought up in Vista (now called Aero Snap).

**Aero Peek**: Is a feature that allows you to see what is happening behind a program. By hovering over the icon on the task bar, the window will become transparent allowing users to view what is happening behind the window. This makes it easier to preview various windows in programs such as Internet Explorer & Office. There is also a “show desktop” button at the far right of the task bar if you hover over it, all windows will become transparent and allows you to see your desktop.

**Aero Snap**: Is a new feature in Windows 7 that allows you to manage the size of your windows in an easier way. You simply have to move the window to the edge of the screen and it will automatically resize it. This is very beneficial if you have to read a PDF and write a document at the same time, in which case you can snap the PDF to the left and snap the document to the right, which will increase productivity and save a lot of time from switching back and forth between windows.

**Aero Shake**: The Aero Shake feature is a very useful design especially if there are a lot of windows open on the screen at once. If you have many programs running and too many windows that are cluttering your screen simply click and shake the window you are working on to minimize all other windows.