

CTC HelpDesk News



Fort Hays State University

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Blackboard 9, Streamlined Course Creation Process Set for Spring

The CTC (Computing and Telecommunications Center) and CTELT (Center for Teaching Excellence and Learning Technologies) are excited to announce the final implementation of Blackboard 9 and the introduction of a new Blackboard course management process.

Blackboard 9 Implementation

Following a pilot program during Summer 2009, a one-semester "grace period" this fall, and several months of course development workshops and planning, FHSU will complete the transition from Blackboard 7 to Blackboard. Beginning in the Spring 2010 semester, all Blackboard courses will use version 9. Students and faculty will continue to access Blackboard by logging in through the **TigerTracks** portal or by going to the traditional location at blackboard.fhsu.edu.

In Blackboard 9, a new "Messages" feature which functions much like e-mail replaces the Digital Dropbox. Students will also benefit from the ability to personalize their view by choosing and rearranging content modules. Faculty will discover several new course development tools and a more user-friendly interface.

For assistance using Blackboard 9, **students** should **contact the CTC HelpDesk**. **Faculty** can receive course development assistance by accessing CTELT's videos and training materials at www.fhsu.edu/ctelt/Learning-Technologies/Blackboard-Tutorials/ or by contacting **CTELT**.

Standardized Course Creation and Access

In addition to the transition to the new version, the university has taken this opportunity to implement **standardized course names** and **course creation enhancements**. Course names will follow a consistent format, matching the name listed in TigerEnroll and indicating the semester of enrollment. Instructors will no longer be required to request enrollment on Blackboard for their students. Students will **automatically** be provided with access to their enrolled courses one business day before the first day of class each semester. After this date, students will automatically receive course access within one business day after finalizing enrollment (payment) for added courses.

After a course has been completed, removal of the course will be at the discretion of the instructor. After two years, CTELT will archive and remove the course shell from Blackboard. CTELT will maintain a library of the official course shells in case instructors should need to use them again.

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New Grade Entry Method Provides Convenience to Faculty

Submitted by Jackie Ruder, New Development Manager and Travis Taggart, CTC Programmer/Analyst

The CTC New Development Group recently completed an Online Grade Entry application, the first in a long list of faculty and staff portal tools. The newly created Faculty/Staff Portal will eventually house many applications currently only available on the CICS system. The application was successfully piloted by several instructors during the mid-term grade entry period. It will be made available to all faculty members this semester for the entry of final grades.

The transition from CICS to a Web-based application provides several benefits for the user, not the least of which is easy access from any computer connected to the Internet. Faculty members will log in to the system using their TigerTracks username and password. Once inside, a list of their current semester courses is provided. By clicking on a particular course, a roster is presented with a corresponding drop-down box of possible grades for each student enrolled. The user can select the corresponding grade value by pressing the appropriate key on their keyboard and may use the tab key to move from one student to the next through the roster.

Once all grades have been entered (as well as the last date attended for grades of W or U), the user clicks the Submit button to record the grades. Unlike the current system, a grade cannot be left blank; a grade must be entered for all students in the class before clicking Submit. The instructor can then go back and edit any grades as needed; access to the system will be open throughout the final grade entry period.

Grade entry through the CICS system will continue to be available during this initial rollout; however, faculty are encouraged to use the new on-line system. The website address for the application will be provided to faculty in early December.

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From Dave's Desk

Dr. David Schmidt, Computing and Telecommunications Center Director, provides an update on current activities at the CTC.

The CTC is involved in several projects that may be of interest to many of you. Some of these projects may have only an indirect impact on you; others have a more direct impact.

Data Security. We have written a fairly comprehensive policy to help ensure that the University's data is protected. The policy has just been approved by the President's Cabinet. As we create more data and store it in a variety of places (desktop machines, servers, laptops, flash drives, and other devices), it is easy to leave important data exposed. For example, if I create a spreadsheet for calculating student's grades when I teach a course, it would be easy to leave that file unprotected on my laptop or on a flash drive as I move the data to other systems. This type of information should be kept in a more protected location, and it should be encrypted and password protected.

In the past, departments have hosted conferences and taken credit card information manually. This type of information should not be stored. We program our web-based applications to pass it to a processing company using an encrypted format. We do not store any of the credit card information on our servers. The credit card industry enforces a variety of data security standards in order for the University to be PCI-compliant (payment card industry compliant). Departments should think about all of the data that is generated by the department and take steps to protect sensitive and regulated data. We are working on a checklist that should help Departments consider what types of data need to be protected. We will be providing some training materials to Departments and other means of security instruction, too.

The State of Kansas is crafting new security policies that will eventually affect all state agencies. We are negotiating with the state security council to get provisions in the policy that recognize the special needs of Regents Institutions.

New Voice Mail System. Our Audix system has been functional and reliable over the years, but it is rapidly nearing its "end of life." This means that the vendor, Avaya, will soon no longer support the system. We recently completed negotiations to purchase another Avaya product, Modular Messaging, which will replace Audix. This system costs much less each year to maintain, and Avaya will continue to provide new features for this product. We have not yet worked out the details of implementation, but we expect to put this in place before the Christmas break. **After it is in place, each user who wishes to record a personal message for voice mail will need to redo his or her message.** More details about this will be provided as they become available.

Entering Grades on the Web. As noted above, the web and mainframe programmers have created a new web-based grade entry program. A pilot group (assembled by Chris Crawford) tested the new application for the mid-term grades and suggested several changes. Those changes were incorporated into the new application, and all faculty are encouraged to use it for entering their Fall grades. We will be interested in your opinions after you use this application. You will soon be receiving information via e-mail with a link to this new program. This application and a web-based roster application will provide useful functionality when incorporated in a new faculty-staff portal sometime this Summer. We will be prioritizing a list of projects for TigerTracks in the next several weeks. We appreciate the help of all who meet every other Wednesday to help us design and implement these administrative applications.

New University Web Site. In preparation for the new FHSU web site, CTC staff members have configured the system to have a mirrored database, a second database that is identical to the master database. In case the database server that supports the university web site has a system failure, the staff can quickly configure the system to use the mirrored database housed on another server. Then the master database can be restored when the system failure has been removed. Since the new web site will be all database driven, we thought this to be a necessary precaution.

Rewired McCartney Telecommunications Room. McCartney Hall has Cat5 wire for the Ethernet, and it has switches that should provide gigabit connections to the desktop. Gigabit connections provide fast service because much more data can flow over the copper wire. Unfortunately, the data connections were not that efficient and needed to be rewired. There was some older technology in the Telecommunications closet that was the source of the problem. Jordan Munsch and Kevin Burd spent some long days during the week of Thanksgiving taking out the old equipment and simplifying the connections. It appears that the wiring is much more efficient now and there is a true gigabit connection to the desktop.

Rarick Hall Rewiring Project. The Facilities Planning Committee has approved rewiring Rarick Hall. This will allow us to put Cat5e wire and faster wireless access points in Rarick Hall. After this is complete faculty, staff, and students will have gigabit connections to the desktop and 802.11n wireless connections in the building. Because there are so many Ethernet connections in this building, this will be a very large project. It will include creating a new Telecommunications room on the second floor to provide more direct access to each Ethernet jack. The end result should be a faster, more reliable Ethernet network (both wired and wireless).

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Lotus Notes: Tips for Managing Your Space

Submitted by Mark Griffin, Assistant Director, Infrastructure and Support Services

Clearing Space in Your Lotus Notes Account:

Generally speaking, most users can free up a great deal of space by deleting or archiving a handful of documents. What I recommend to quickly find a few files for deletion is **sorting your Inbox or All Documents* folder by size** (click on the size column at the top) and then going to the top of the list where the largest documents are and looking to see if there are documents you don't need to keep in your email. Those pictures of your niece, nephew, or grandchild are nice, but you DO NOT need to keep them in your email!

(*Remember: If you delete a document from ONE folder or "view" in Lotus Notes, it is deleted from ALL views.)

You generally have about three choices on **how to handle attachments** you wish to keep: You can right click on it and **save** it to a folder on your computer or to a flash drive, but not an FHSU Server! After saving the attachment, delete the email. Another option is to **archive** the email document, which will save a copy of the email in its entirety (text and attachments) to your computer (see instructions below). Or, you can just **delete** the entire document if you don't need it any longer. Any of these solutions work fine from an email space saving standpoint.

Once you have deleted some files, be aware that you do not get that space back right away. Lotus Notes still needs to **compact** your mail database. This happens on a nightly basis beginning around 2:00 AM every night. So, when you first get the warning that you are running out of space, you need to take care of cleaning up your email right away before you actually reach the top of the quota. In most cases, the warning will appear when you are down to about 10% of your remaining space.

I also hear stories from individuals that say that they have deleted hundreds of documents and they still don't have any space. Well, that could be true. If you delete 200 documents that are all about 1K in size, this hasn't done much to help reduce space usage. Documents that are over 100K (kilobytes) or 1M (megabytes) in size are taking up a great deal of space. You will need to **get rid of those larger size documents to significantly reduce space usage.**

Another comment I occasionally hear is, "If I don't have anything in my Inbox or my Sent folder, how can I be out of space?" Well, you are certainly well organized by putting all your emails in folders, but the emails in those folders are still taking up server space! So, you've still got to delete or archive those emails periodically. Some of you may be wondering, "How can I archive my email?" There are a couple ways to do this.

My preferred archiving method is as follows:

1. Log in to your Lotus Notes and open your email.
2. From the title bar in Lotus Notes, choose **Actions -> Archive -> Settings...**
3. In the resulting box click on the **Settings** tab and check the **Enable archiving** checkbox so that it is active.
4. Click **OK**.
5. At this point archiving should be set up and ready for you to start using.

Manually archiving messages:

1. From your Inbox (or any e-mail folder) click to the left of the messages you wish to archive to place a checkmark beside them. The larger the document, the more space you will regain.
2. You can also go into various folders and select specific documents for archiving.
3. Once you have selected all the documents you wish to archive, go to **Actions -> Archive -> Archive Selected Documents.**
4. On the box that pops up, click **OK**.
5. The selected messages will now be archived to a file on your local computer.

Scheduled archiving:

Some of you may prefer automatically archiving documents that are a set number of days old, rather than specifying each document you want to archive. So, instead of manually archiving messages, set up scheduled archiving.

From your Lotus Notes Inbox, click **Actions – Archive – Settings**. Click on the **Edit** button and then the **Selection Criteria** button. Choose something like all documents older than 360 days, or whatever expiration threshold you prefer, and **click OK twice**. In the Archive Settings window, click on the **Schedule** tab. Check the **Schedule archiving** box, and select the time and day(s) of the week you wish for your automatic archiving to occur. **Note: This computer must be turned on and connected to the FHSU network at the specified time in order to perform the scheduled archiving.** Once this is set up, the files specified in your selection criteria will be automatically archived on a regular basis.

Accessing archived messages:

Archived documents will be copied to a corresponding mail database that is stored on your computer - not the server!

To access your archived messages, go to your **Inbox**. In the left pane, expand (click on the folder name or the '+' sign) **Tools**, then expand **Archive**, and finally click on the remaining icon, usually named **Default for Last Modified**. If you don't see this icon, close your email and reopen it, and then try again.

At this point you will now be able to read and modify the archived messages stored on your local computer. You should see the same folder layout as in your regular email, except the only documents in this database are those you have archived.

Notes about archiving:

Archived emails can only be viewed on the computer where the archived mail database is stored. Generally speaking, that is usually the computer on which the archiving occurred. You will not be able to view archived email from a web browser. Additionally, archived emails are only located on the computer which they were archived to, so if something happens to that computer, the archived emails are gone! A solution for that is to copy the archive database to another computer or to a flash drive. You can use Windows explorer to find your archived mail database. By default, the file will be located in the C:\Program Files\Lotus\Notes\data\archive folder. It will have a filename similar to this: a_mgriff.nsf

You can copy and paste this file into a folder on a flash drive or some other computer so that you have a backup of your archived documents. As long as you have this backup copy, we can make these archived documents available on any computer running the Lotus Notes Client.

Use care in sending email attachments as well: Try the Attachments Database

So far, we've basically just talked about the emails in your Inbox and folders and haven't discussed problems associated with sending emails. When you need to send attachments, there are a couple of things you can consider doing. If you are sending an attachment(s) to several individuals on FHSU's Lotus Notes system, try using our **Attachments Database**. Here are the steps:

1. Click **File – Application – Open**. Click on the drop-down arrow to change the server to (or Look in) **LNapps/FHSU**. Scroll down and double-click on the yellow **apps** folder, then scroll down again to locate the **Attachments Database**.
2. Click once the **Attachments Database** to highlight it, then click on **Bookmarks** and place it in your Favorite Bookmarks or somewhere that it is easy to find.
3. When you are preparing to send out an email, first go into the **Attachments Database** (you can click on your bookmark to open it) and click on **New Document**. Enter a **Subject** line to describe your attachment, **place your attachment in the Content area of the database**, and then click **Save & Close**. After saving the document with the attachment, highlight or **select your document** in the list, and then go to the main Lotus Notes menu and click **Edit** and **Copy as... Document Link**.
4. Next, go back to your email, create your message and **paste the document link in your message instead of the actual attachment**.

This process saves us space on the server, and on our backups. Plus it won't fill up individual email databases with large emails that put them over their email quotas - including your own copies in your Sent mail! **One thing to note with this; I DO NOT recommend placing attachments with private information in the Attachments Database.** However if you are sending public information,

or information that may be viewed by any FHSU users, then the Attachments Database is an excellent way to save space for everyone.

Compressing large files:

If you are **sending multiple files to a single individual**, you might consider **zipping the files** so they will be compressed and take less space prior to emailing them. Use Windows Explorer to select the files that you will be zipping. Next, right-click on one of them and click **Send To Compressed (Zipped)** folder. Then, in your email, just attach the zipped folder of files instead of all the individual files.

Many have asked, "Why can't we just have more space?"

Well, the truth of the matter is, we frequently do give users more space. And, wouldn't you know it, in a fairly short amount of time; the same individuals keep coming back asking for more and more and more space. So, even if we doubled or tripled everyone's email space, for most users, it still would not be enough and the complaints would still continue. It also costs money to add fast, highly available, redundant disk space so that we have a reliable email system. The ability to backup the extra space is slowly becoming an issue as well. It takes more space to backup the items, which of course costs more money, but part of the problem is becoming the amount of time that all of our backups are taking. Technology will continue to improve and eventually more space will be available for everyone, but I don't know if we'll ever be able to give everyone all the space they want any time soon. So, for now, please try to manage the space you have as best you can.

If you have problems with your email, or need assistance with managing your email space, don't hesitate to contact me (mgriffin@fhsu.edu or ext. 4026).

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Windows 7 Professional now \$29.99 on FHSU's Software Center!

Considering an upgrade to Windows 7? Let our Software Center make the transition easier on your wallet!

Windows 7 Professional Upgrade is now available through FHSU's Software Center for \$29.99! This price is only available until December 31, so it is important to take advantage of it **now**.

Select **Adobe products are also available** through the Software Center for up to 80% off of their full retail price! Save significantly on Adobe products ranging from Adobe Acrobat 9 Professional to the complete Adobe Creative Suite 4 Master Collection.

To view product information, prices, and system requirements, log in to the **Software Center**.

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Our Mission: To go above and beyond!

Recently, the CTC HelpDesk established our mission statement and objectives:

Our Mission Statement

As a dedicated team of professionals, the CTC HelpDesk strives to provide technical assistance "above and beyond" the expectations of the FHSU community.

Objectives

- To provide assistance with the access and use of FHSU computing resources and offer referral information for topics outside our **scope of service**
- To provide a helpful, courteous, and knowledgeable first point of contact, through e-mail, by telephone, and in person
- To listen carefully, ask questions, and communicate clearly to gain a thorough understanding of each question or problem, determine the most effective course of action, and follow through to deliver a satisfactory resolution

- To provide pro-active, accurate, straight-forward, and relevant resources to empower our users to find technical information and answers quickly and conveniently
- To cultivate a team environment that supports and encourages us to exceed our goals
- To maintain the quality and integrity of our internal documentation and processes and continually look for new ways to improve our services

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Spotlight on a CTC Employee

Let's meet **Travis Taggart**, Programmer in the New Development section within the CTC:

- 1. How long have you worked for the Computing and Telecommunications Center?**
I've worked here since July.
- 2. Do you prefer to use a PC or a Mac? Why?**
I prefer to use a PC. I used to use exclusively Mac, until I had to start buying them myself. Now I use a PC. They are a lot like a Mac.
- 3. What is your favorite hobby?**
Playing with the kids.
- 4. Favorite Food or Place to eat?**
Steak!!!
- 5. Most visited website (besides FHSU.edu)?**
Kusports.com
- 6. Favorite Cartoon Character?**
Elmer Fudd
- 7. Favorite Sport's Team?**
The Royals
- 8. What is your favorite location in Hays?**
Basketball game at Gross Memorial Coliseum

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Know Your HelpDesk Staff!

Logan Stanton a CTC HelpDesk Consultant since August 2009, from Ellis, KS, recently brought back national honors from the 2009 National FFA Convention in Indianapolis. Logan became a member of FFA, formally known as the Future Farmers of America, his sophomore year while attending Ellis High School.

He placed third nationally in the individual competition. The competition consisted of performing routine maintenance on a John Deere Gator, finding seeding rates for a drill or fertilizer spreader, reading a blueprint and brazing a metal pipe to a metal plate, and calculating a bill of materials. Stanton was recognized in front of an audience of 12,000 and awarded a plaque as well as a \$600 scholarship.

Logan also participated in the team competition. The team consisted of three Ellis High School graduates and one current Ellis High School senior and was accompanied to nationals by their Ag instructor, Bob Kohman. The Ellis team placed second overall at nationals. The team event consisted of constructing a small irrigation system out of PVC pipe.

Nationals was a week-long event in which three of the four team members had to get permission to miss college classes for that duration. Logan said that he did not grow up on a farm and was not a traditional FFA student, but that he definitely recommends that students take part in FFA because it is worth it.

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Focus on Tiger Info

As Tiger Info Call Center supervisor, **Michelle Schlyer** begins her fifth year as part of the CTC team. Her staff of fourteen students is busy answering phones and directing calls from students, faculty and staff to all areas of campus. By dialing 1-800-628-FHSU or 785-628-FHSU, the operators can provide you with various university information seven days a week. Hours of operation at the **Tiger Info Call Center** are Monday-Thursday 7am-11pm, Friday and Saturday 7am-9pm, and Sunday 9am-11pm. The motto at Tiger Info for 2009-2010 is simply, "Call Me." So here's a closer look at the people on the other end of the line, no doubt some of FHSU's finest!

Kristen Fleharty is a sophomore and began working at Tiger Info in May 2008 following her graduation from Hays High School. She is a member of the FHSU track team, running the 100- and 400-meter hurdles. Her major is biology and her interests include reading, traveling, and working out. Kristen's favorite part of being at Tiger Info is the friendships she has made with co-workers and knowing the various events happening around campus.

Emily Hulett, a sophomore from Colwich, is working her second year at Tiger Info. She is majoring in Allied Health and hopes to get into the Radiology Technician program this spring. Emily's hobbies include bowling, dancing, and reading. She enjoys working as a campus operator because she likes helping people and being able to work in a fun environment on campus.

Jayne Jansonious is a senior from Hays. She began working as a Tiger Info operator in August 2007. She will finish her time at FHSU this spring with an associate's degree in Art and then transfer to Colby Community College where she has been accepted into the Dental Hygiene program. Jayne's interests include reading, volunteering and spending time with family and friends. She has been very active in extracurricular college life with activities such as Alpha Gamma Delta sorority, Christian Challenge, Tigers4Life, Tigers in Service, and Tiger Wild. This past summer, Jayne also spent eight weeks in Africa sharing her faith with others. Her favorite part of working at Tiger Info is the people she has met and knowing more about the university.

Mark Schneweis is one of the newest members of Tiger Info. He is enjoying his freshman year experience of working and living on campus. Mark is majoring in accounting. His hobbies include music, soccer, funky t-shirts and art. He is notorious for bringing his favorite food, Wendy's, to the office. Mark especially enjoys the new friends he has made and being able to study when phone traffic is not busy.

Genna Shuler is senior biology major from Salina. She loves animals and completed an internship in Pittsburgh, PA, at the National Aviary, taking care of birds this summer. Her other interests include music, traveling, and visiting friends. After working two years at Tiger Info, she plans to graduate in May 2010. Genna's favorite part of the job is her co-workers.

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Holiday Hours at the HelpDesk

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Help Us Help You!

Have you recently contacted or visited the CTC HelpDesk? If so, how did we do? If you have ideas, concerns, or other feedback, let us know! **Contact us** to give us your suggestions. Thank you in advance for your feedback - we look forward to hearing from you!

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