

CTC HelpDesk News

Fort Hays State University

www.fhsu.edu/ctc/helpdesk/

December 2010

Table of Contents

Page 2

From Dave's Desk:

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

Page 4

New Technician Joins PC Support Software Center Introduces New Products

Page 5

Tips for Basic Computer Maintenance and Care

Page 6

Know Your HelpDesk Staff!

Page 7

How to Achieve a Stress-Free Online Experience

Page 8

What's New in Media Equipment Checkout

Page 9

Focus on Tiger Info!

Page 10

New Features in Blackboard 9.1

Page 11

Help Us Help You! Holiday Hours at the HelpDesk Other HelpDesk Headlines



See Next Page

From Dave's Desk



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

In this newsletter, I will list some selected short updates. There are also many other projects in progress here at the CTC, but it is not practical to list them all. Here is a snapshot of some of the recent and current projects of our staff.

CTC and Jointly Sponsored Action Plans

- The CTC Action Plans include a request for a new Storage Area Network (SAN). Our current SAN provides storage for many different systems (Blackboard, ImageNow, PowerFAIDS, Lotus Notes, VMWare servers, and others) but will no longer be supported. SANs provide quick access to files and centralize storage for multiple servers. The new SANs provide for tiered storage: slower, cheaper storage where great speed is not necessary, and faster, more expensive storage where speed is essential.
- Another Action Plan is for disaster recovery. Negotiations are close to providing fiber to Sternberg Museum from the main campus. When the fiber is in place, we will be able to back up many of our systems at Sternberg. This Action Plan also targets replicating our mainframe system there and creates space and infrastructure for recycling servers that no longer have service contracts for use at Sternberg in case of a disaster affecting the

machine room on campus. Once we select some usable servers, we would be able to host TigerTracks, TigerEnroll, and some other critical services at Sternberg. We believe it is also important to have a web server there to keep people informed of what is happening during a crisis.

- A joint Action Plan (also sponsored by the Provost's Office) is for three redesigned classrooms. We plan on adding new, high definition video (two projectors or monitors) to one large classroom and selecting two smaller classrooms and designing them for collaboration. The two smaller classrooms will have different kinds of furniture, but both classrooms will make it easy to reconfigure the rooms for different kinds of teaching styles. There will be a research component to this project to see if indeed there is more collaboration in these rooms.
- **Mike Nease** has determined that the tablet with the most bang for the buck is the new Fujitsu tablet. This new tablet can make use of a stylus or finger touch due to Windows 7 and a special touch screen. If some carts are upgraded with Action Plan funding, they will have the new Fujitsu tablets. Also in the Provost's Action plan for faculty and staff upgrades, these will be the default new tablet computers.

Various Projects

- A search is in progress for a new web application developer. We expect to bring in two or three candidates in the next several weeks.
- We will be outsourcing the development of eight web applications. The bid for that should be published in several weeks. **Jackie Ruder** and **Suzanne Klaus** are finishing the specifications for those applications. I am working with **Kathy Herrman** on language concerning the selection process.
- **Derek Johnson** will work with Enterasys-Siemens to design the deployment of new high-speed wireless access points (802.11n) for McMIndes Hall. Since many students use the wireless data network for all of their network connectivity, this should help meet their bandwidth needs more effectively.

From Dave's Desk (Cont'd)

- **Odus Trober** completed work installing four high resolution cameras for the Department of Nursing. The Nursing Department received a grant to acquire a very lifelike mannequin. A wireless radio in the "heart" of the mannequin sends live data to a laptop for students to monitor. The cameras will be used to record the clinical measures taken by the nursing students for later review.
- **Mark Griffin, Cheryl Helget, Jeff Mayo, John McCabe,** and **Ryan Frederick** have been installing scripts for a new backup system from Avamar. It uses a new kind of technology called data deduplication. If, for example, the same document occurred in fifty persons' mailboxes, the document would be stored once (and not all fifty times). This is just a crude example because the system is more fine-grained than that. The goal of data deduplication is to reduce the amount of disk space needed. Because our disk storage demands are increasing by 30% or so per year, this kind of system should help reduce costs.
- The **PC Support staff** have taken on some new responsibilities; this summer, they began supporting the Mediated Classrooms and Apple equipment. They have worked hard to install new software images on the machines in all of the Mediated Classrooms. In some cases old machines have been replaced.
- Many of you (hopefully) have completed a security quiz on Blackboard. **Cheryl Helget** did most of the work on that project, which has been designed to increase security awareness. We hope you found the quiz informative and useful.
- **Derek Johnson** and **Jordan Munsch** are working with **James Cech** and **Kevin Burd** on the Rarick Hall rewiring project. When it is finished, Rarick Hall will have Cat6 wiring which should substantially increase the bandwidth for the data network. Cat6 has shown its worth by unblocking a network bottleneck in the Provost's Office. The wireless network in Rarick will also be upgraded to the high speed 802.11n wireless access points.
 - **Travis Taggart** and **Jackie Ruder** have worked with **Chris Crawford** and **Joey Linn** to refine the grade entry application to include screens for entering incomplete grades. They will meet with the Academy of Academic Leadership to decide when it will be deployed.
- **Jordan Munsch** worked with Nex-Tech before and during the issuing of new phones for those using the cellular phones furnished by them. He and **Mark Griffin** also worked with the Touchdown application for Lotus Notes.
- In addition to her duties as Tiger Info supervisor, **Michelle Schyler** has recently taken on some new responsibilities for overseeing the Media Equipment Checkout area. In addition, she continues to work with the contracts for the new campus cell phones and the phone contracts with Nex-Tech.
- **Jeff Mayo** has installed the newest version of VMWare (vSphere4) and vMotion on more powerful servers so that they can host a variety of virtual machines. The combination of new hardware and new versions of VMWare make the virtual machines much more efficient than they used to be. In the past we sometimes found limitations with the virtual machine environment and had to move applications to new physical servers. Now it is possible to run many if not most applications on virtual machines. The vMotion option in VMWare allows whatever is running on a virtual machine on one physical server to be moved to another physical server without any downtime. The vMotion option is a real boon for disaster recovery, too. The fact that we use the SAN for storage for VMWare also makes portability easier.
- **Ryan Frederick** configured and installed the latest version of our Central Authentication System. This is the system used for logging into to TigerTracks, Blackboard, and the Scatcat e-mail system.

I hope you have found something of interest to you in this list.

Have a great holiday break!

New Technician Joins PC Support



Jeff Bitikofer was recently hired as the newest PC Support technician at the CTC.

Besides repairing laptops and desktops for the staff and faculty at FHSU, he enjoys supporting the lights and sound at musicals, plays, and concerts.

Before joining the PC Support team, Jeff worked at the Beach/Schmidt Performing Arts Center and at Hays High School. He is a Fort Hays State University graduate and enjoys meeting new people at his new job.

Software Center Introduces New Products

Don't Wait!!!

Take advantage of these great discounts available on FHSU's Software Center:

Adobe:

Acrobat 9 and Creative Suite (CS5) packages

Microsoft:

Microsoft Office - Mail Order and Download options:

Office 2010 for Windows, Office 2011 for Mac, and more...

Windows 7 – Mail Order and Download options:

Upgrade to Windows 7 and enjoy a PC that works the way you want it to.

Virtualization Software:

Run multiple operating systems using one computer with Parallels and VMware, starting at just \$39.99!

Student Backup (with Laptop Locator):

Get a full year of increased laptop security and file protection for less than \$40!

New Faculty and Staff: If you are new to FHSU this year and are unable to access the Software Center, please contact the CTC HelpDesk at helpdesk@fhsu.edu for assistance.

For complete information about FHSU's online Software Center, your eligibility, products, and prices, visit the **Software Center**.

Tips for Basic Computer Maintenance and Care

Basic Computer Maintenance

Following a simple **computer maintenance** routine can help keep your computer running smoothly.

Restart Regularly – Restarting your computer occasionally and shutting down your computer when it isn't being used can extend the performance of your computer's hardware and the life of your battery. You'll also save energy and extend your battery life by not having to recharge your battery as often. Restarting provides an opportunity for your system to free up memory (RAM) that is not being used efficiently and refreshes your Internet connection. If your computer begins responding slowly or your Internet connection is slow, restarting your computer is a good first step for attempting to resolve the problem.

Delete Browser History/Clear Cache – Deleting browser history, clearing the cache, and emptying the Recycle bin is a quick way to get rid of excess data, freeing up your hard drive.

Maintain Current Virus Protection Software – Viruses are a frequent cause for many computer problems, therefore maintaining current virus software is essential in computer maintenance. For links to free virus protection programs and basic steps for removing a virus from your computer, see our **Virus Information** page.

Run Operating System Updates – Windows Updates and Macintosh Software Updates provide the opportunity to avoid problems and improve performance by obtaining necessary system enhancements and fixes for known problems.

Run Disk Cleanup/Disk Defragmenter Regularly (Windows) – Disk Cleanup is a utility that can remove unused and duplicate files from your computer. Disk Defragmenter consolidates the data saved on your computer to make better use of available free space. Using both of these tools will maintain the integrity of the data stored on your computer and help your computer run more efficiently.

Our **Computer Maintenance** page and our related article on Tips for Achieving a Stress-Free Online Experience provide additional steps you can take to clean up your computer and keep it running efficiently.

Care Tips

For most of us, computers have become a vital tool for everyday living. Having one that works well and is continuously reliable is very important. These basic care tips will help you keep your computer running at its best.

Back up Your Files - Even if you take all possible precautions, unfortunately there is no guarantee you will never lose your computer files; so one copy just isn't enough. Back up all of your important files using a second hard drive or a flash drive.

Take it Inside! Don't leave your computer in a car when it is cold or hot outside. Extreme temperatures can cause permanent damage to your computer. This is also true for cell phones and other electronic devices.

Don't Eat or Drink Near Your Computer - Dropping crumbs or other debris inside your computer can cause it not to function properly and a spilled drink can quickly ruin your keyboard or laptop.

Use a Surge Protector - Power surges and spikes can damage a computer or battery beyond repair. A surge protector prevents excess power from entering your devices. However, don't expect a surge protector to stop lightning. Unplug your devices during a lightning storm.

Use Secure Passwords - Avoid trouble with lost, stolen, or compromised data by creating strong, secure passwords. A good plan to follow is to use passwords that are at least 7 characters long, not easy to guess (even by someone who knows you well), contain at least one capital letter, one lower case letter, a number, and a special character or symbol. It is also recommended to use a unique password for each system. For example, your TigerTracks, personal computer, Facebook, E-mail (such as MSN or Yahoo), and other passwords should be different. For more information, see our **Password Security** page.

Visit our **Care Tips** page for additional steps to take to extend the life of your computer.

Know Your HelpDesk Staff!

The Fort Hays State University Computing and Telecommunications Center (CTC) HelpDesk has welcomed quite a few new members to our support team this year. Six new employees have joined us since the beginning of the summer. This brings our numbers to seven student consultants, one student supervisor (**Riley Schmidt**, Spearville Senior), and one full-time supervisor (**Nancy Cunningham**).

As a dedicated team of professionals, the CTC HelpDesk (located in Tomanek Hall 113) strives to provide Tier One technical assistance "above and beyond" the expectations of the FHSU community.

Here are some brief introductions to the new faces at the CTC HelpDesk:

Brian Humphrey is a senior this year and is majoring in Business Marketing. He has been working at the HelpDesk since June 2010. Brian is a graduate of Booker T. Washington High School in Tulsa, OK. What Brian most likes about the HelpDesk is working with his coworkers and just being part of a team. When he's got free time, Brian enjoys playing sports, listening to music, and being artistic. (**Editor's note:** Brian designed the new look for our newsletter, introduced in this issue!)

Jason DeArmond is a senior here at FHSU and has been working at the HelpDesk since July 2010. Jason enjoys getting the chance to help people with their computer problems. He is a graduate of Augusta High School and is majoring in Informatics with an emphasis in Information Assurance. In his free time, Jason enjoys both listening to and playing jazz music. He is also a serviceman in the National Guard.

Dustin Key is also a senior at Fort Hays and joined the CTC HelpDesk staff in July. During his employment here, he hopes to put some of what he learned in classes to practical use. Dustin graduated from Wakefield High School and is majoring in Informatics with an emphasis in Networking. When not trying to fix computer problems, he enjoys watching movies, playing Wii with his roommate, and lounging around his apartment.

Marcus Schmidt is a sophomore and began working at the HelpDesk in August 2010. He graduated from Spearville High School and is majoring in Informatics with an emphasis in Computer Networking. When asked why he enjoys working at the CTC HelpDesk, he said that he "likes working with computers." Marcus enjoys bowling, playing video games, and being an active member of his church.

Victoria Koehn is a junior this year and has also been working at the HelpDesk since August. She is majoring in Computer Science with an emphasis in Mathematics. Victoria attended Kapaun Mount Carmel Catholic High School in Wichita, Ks. She likes working at the HelpDesk because it has allowed her to apply and also increase her computer knowledge. Her interests include playing soccer, scrapbooking, and riding horses.

Kurtis (Kurt) Hass is a freshman here at FHSU and is the newest member of our team. He is majoring in Computer Science and has proven to be a very quick learner since joining the HelpDesk in September 2010. Kurt is a graduate of Ellsworth High School. The best part about working at the HelpDesk, according to Kurt?? The great people he works with and the opportunity to become acquainted with the various systems at FHSU. Kurt enjoys playing games when he's not busy at work or school.



How to Achieve a Stress-Free Online Experience

To help students experience stress-free online sessions while using Blackboard, TigerTracks, Scatcat Webmail, and other FHSU systems, the CTC HelpDesk recommends following these suggestions to enhance system functionality, compatibility, and efficiency:

Use the Right Browser:

Not having the right browser can adversely affect your experience while taking Blackboard tests and using other online tools. Presently, we recommend using the most current versions of the following browsers: **Mozilla FireFox 3.6**, **Safari 4**, and **Internet Explorer 8**. While these browsers all work well for general use, we find that **FireFox** provides the best overall results in most applications.

Updating your browsers when new versions become available is equally as important. To check the version, simply open the browser and click Help and then choose About.

Keep your Java Up to Date

Java is a programming language originally developed by Sun Microsystems. It is used to control various functions in online applications and Web pages.

A corrupted or outdated Java installation can cripple a student's online experience; for example, Respondus Lockdown browser may not function and tools within Blackboard such as test and quizzes, discussion boards, and assignment submissions, may not work at all.

Avoiding problems with Java is easy, simply go to **www.java.com** and use the **version checker** from time to time. For more information about resolving Java issues, see **How to Install or Update Java**.

Maintain a Clean Computer

It is, perhaps, most important to maintain a clean computer. This means uninstalling or disabling useless applications, expired trial versions of programs, and toolbars that may

inhibit system performance; maintaining an up to date virus protection program and performing system scans regularly; and downloading and installing system updates as well as application updates. When installing updates and new programs, we recommend unchecking any "special offers" to install free toolbars or optional software.

For detailed information about how to perform many of these tasks, see the related **Computer Maintenance** article in this newsletter and our **Basic Routine Maintenance for Your Computer** Web page. As always, feel free to **contact us** at the CTC HelpDesk for assistance.

By following the suggestions listed above, students should encounter fewer difficulties and experience a smoother overall online session.



What's New in Media Equipment Checkout

The faculty/staff **Media Equipment Checkout (MEC) service** is a part of the CTC. This operation was recently placed under the direction of **Michelle Schlyer**, who also supervises the Tiger Info Call Center.

The goal of Media Equipment Checkout is to maintain an inventory of equipment to supplement the FHSU learning environment. This equipment is available to FHSU faculty and staff on a first come, first serve basis to meet their short-term checkout needs. Schlyer works with the CTC PC Support group to ensure equipment inventory is up to date.

Student employees **Chase Schippers**, Hays senior; **Dustin Hutchison**, Hays senior, and **Drew Scheer**, Colwich freshman are ready to assist walk-in customers, take telephone requests, and assist with pick-up and delivery of checkout items on campus.

Office hours for Media Equipment Checkout are 8am to 5pm Monday-Friday; they are located in Tomanek Hall, Room 113 (inside the CTC HelpDesk).

Here are answers to some Frequently Asked Questions about the MEC service:

What equipment does the checkout service currently provide?

- Laptops, projectors, and screens are the most popular items, but a variety of sound and video equipment and miscellaneous computer accessories are also available.

Will any new equipment be provided in the near future?

- MEC is exploring the possibility of adding NetBooks to their inventory since they are more compact and easy to carry.

Who can check out items from Media Equipment Checkout?

- All faculty and staff members with a valid FHSU ID may use items from MEC. Students in need of equipment loans are encouraged to visit The Learning Commons in Forsyth Library.

What improvements have been made to Media Equipment Checkout?

- A new policy in place, effective August 2010, is that items are available for checkout for one week, with a maximum of one week renewal. This allows the inventory to be more complete. If someone needs a semi-permanent solution, they should visit with PC Support about options to purchase equipment.
- Each piece of equipment is now labeled with its title, basic operating instructions, phone numbers to call for assistance on hardware and software issues, and a copy of the MEC agreement.

How do I request an item from MEC?

- All walk-in and telephone requests are accompanied by a form that requires a signature agreeing to a liability policy. This holds people accountable for replacements if something is lost or damaged, and will cut down on items being misplaced or lost. MEC is working toward a web-based solution with CTC HelpDesk staff to be in place in the near future.

Do I need to check out equipment for use in the Memorial Union?

- The Memorial Union hosts many events in which participants request technology assistance and devices. As a result of the 2007 renovation, most rental spaces in the Memorial Union now have projectors and screens. The Reservation Office will let participants know what equipment is already available; if additional equipment is needed, participants would need to request items from Media Equipment Checkout.



Focus on Tiger Info!

The Tiger Info Call Center, located in the CTC HelpDesk office, is home to supervisor Michelle Schlyer and a team of dedicated student operators. They provide general information to both prospective and current on-campus and Virtual College students, faculty, staff, and other members of the FHSU community. In addition, they provide front-line support for using TigerTracks and TigerEnroll, applying for admission, and other student processes. Since the end of last year Tiger Info has added several new members to their family. Let's get to know them!

Sophia Schippers is new to FHSU this year and has been working at Tiger Info since June 2010. She graduated from Thomas More Prep-Marian High School here in Hays, KS and is still undecided on her major. Her favorite part of working at Tiger Info: being able to do her homework when the phones are not ringing and working with such a close group of people. Sophia enjoys summertime, being outside when the weather's nice, and walking/running. Something fun that you probably didn't know about Sophia is that she has crooked pinkies!

Jason Mayers is a sophomore this year and has also been working at Tiger Info since June 2010. He is currently pursuing a double major in Finance and Marketing. Jason is a

graduate of Thomas More Prep-Marian High School as well. He says the best part of working at Tiger Info is, "The whole crew. It is a great work environment." When he's not busy assisting customers, Jason enjoys playing sports, hanging out with friends and family, going to the gym, and eating. He also discovered that his specialty meal to make is Frito Chili Pie... Sounds delicious!

Madison LeRock is a freshman here at FHSU and is majoring in Speech Pathology. She started at Tiger Info in August, and when asked what she likes the most about it she said, "The best part of my job is helping people with their problems and working with my awesome coworkers." When she's not helping people at Tiger Info, she likes to hang out with friends and family, watch sports, go to the lake, and go shopping. She also said that she'll buy pretty much anything with a peace sign on it.

Andrew (Drew) Scheer is another freshman on the CTC team. Drew is employed at Media Equipment Checkout, a partner with the CTC HelpDesk and Tiger Info. Drew started working at Media Equipment Checkout just this year and says that the best part is "being able to get some homework done in between customer issues." Drew is a graduate of Andale High School and is majoring in Biology. He loves playing sports, playing Xbox, and dancing at The Rose.



New Features in Blackboard 9.1



Submitted by Grace Zhou, Integrated Learning Technologies Specialist, CTELT

Faculty and students can benefit from numerous advantages with the new updates in Blackboard 9.1.

Mash-Ups. One of these advantages is teachers can now post third party files onto a course (a.k.a mash-ups). One popular mash-up feature is the ability to embed YouTube videos. This allows the student to gain more knowledge and information besides just reading text.

Grade Center Enhancements. The grade center also has many new features. In tests, the teacher can focus on one certain question in an assignment or test and see how the students fared with that particular question. This can help lead to easier and quicker grading for the instructor.

New Course Storage Features. Course style storage has improvements as well. Instructors can actually put one file up and use it in numerous areas throughout a course site to help better educate the students.

Wikis. Another new feature introduced in Blackboard 9.1 is the Wiki. Wikis allow groups of students to work collaboratively to create a multimedia project in one online space.

Hiding Old Courses. Here is a quick tip for students on how to hide unneeded course links (for example, courses from a previous semester):

In Blackboard 9.1, you can now hide course(s) you do not want to see from your view. On the "My Courses" module on the Blackboard home page, there is a wheel icon that allows you to manage your course list.



To hide course(s) from a previous semester, de-select the course name(s) in the "Personalize: My Courses" page.

For additional tips, FAQ, and other helpful information about Blackboard, see the web pages listed below, sponsored by The Center for Teaching Excellence and Learning Technologies (CTELT) and the CTC HelpDesk. CTELT provides academic technology support for faculty and staff.

Blackboard Frequently Asked Questions (CTC Help-Desk Site)

Blackboard Tutorials for Students (CTELT Site)

Blackboard Help (CTELT Site)

Blackboard Technology Tools and Resources for Faculty (Tech Support Site)

Blackboard

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**, complete our **survey**, or use our **secure comments form** to give us your suggestions. Thank you in advance for your feedback - we look forward to hearing from you!

Holiday Hours at the HelpDesk

Finals Week:

M-Tu-W:	Dec. 13 - 15	8:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.
Th-Fri:	Dec. 16 - 17	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Sat-Sun:	Dec. 18 - 19	CLOSED

Winter/Holiday Break:

Weekends	CLOSED
Dec. 20 - 23	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Dec. 24 - Jan. 2	CLOSED
Mon-Fri: Jan. 3 - 7	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Mon-Tu: Jan. 10 - 11	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

For hours information, please see **CTC HelpDesk Hours**. All hours are Central Time and are subject to change due to semester breaks or changes in demand.

For assistance after hours, send e-mail to helpdesk@fhsu.edu or you may **contact Tiger Info** seven days a week.



**FORT HAYS STATE
UNIVERSITY**

Forward thinking. World ready.

CTC HelpDesk News is a semi-annual newsletter published by the Fort Hays State University Computing and Telecommunications Center HelpDesk. Nancy Cunningham and Michelle Schlyer, Editors



Other HelpDesk Headlines

To view other CTC HelpDesk newsletters, see the **Headlines** section of our website.



**Merry
Christmas and
Happy New
Year from the
CTC HelpDesk!**