



ITS News

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

ITS Showcase

UAlbany's Electronic Studios Wed Music and Technology

For nearly forty years, the University at Albany has provided students with the unique opportunity to explore music using technology through the Electronic Music and Media Program. In the past called "Music Technology," this program offers an extensive curriculum of studies, open to music majors, minors and other interested students, providing education and hands-on work in electroacoustic music composition, live electronic performance, sound design, multimedia arts and computer-supported musical skills.

The program utilizes four professional labs, equipped with an array of computer hardware and software that can be used for sound editing, field recording, composition, interactive programming and live performance. The program's main lab or "Smart Classroom" and two student work labs are located in the Performing Arts Center. Sound from the fully-equipped workstations can be patched into the main sound system for class sessions.

The Studio's Director and Assistant Professor of Music, Bob Gluck, provides students with a bird's eye view of how technology and music can work together with his current work, *Layered Histories*. Created with digital artist Cynthia Beth Rubin, the interactive installation includes performance and design of acoustical instruments that have been electronically expanded with sensors and computers. This work joins digitally manipulated and layered video images and music, taking visitors on an audio-visual journey of their own making. Professor Gluck will be joined, starting this semester, with one of the first new IT Commons faculty members, Assistant Professor of Art and Music, Yvette Mattern, who will teach sound design, recording and video.

For more information on the Electronic Music and Media Program and its labs please visit <http://www.albany.edu/music/electronicmusic>.

New IT Unit Supports Faculty Research

Last spring, the Office of the CIO and the Division for Research announced the formation of a Research IT (RIT) group to support UAlbany's growing research enterprise. The new unit fills an important gap in the University's infrastructure, balancing sophisticated technology expertise with institutional knowledge about other research activities across the campus. To support these activities, the University acquired a high-performance Linux cluster from IBM. This new system, along with dedicated professional staff, position the University at Albany to make great strides in furthering our strong research agenda.

The mission of RIT is to develop core services in support of research, including high-performance computing for grant seeking and funded researchers. The group's initial focus is supporting researchers in Life Sciences, along with a limited number of other funded projects. But the long-term goal is support across all schools and colleges. The full range of activities will include an assessment of research needs and consultation to faculty during the grant development process.

RIT is headed by Director Brian Macherone, formerly of CAS Computing. This September, Brian was joined by two senior programmers: Anne Shelton, serving as system analyst and Eric Warnke as system administrator. This small but dedicated team plays an integral role in a number of exciting research projects which are drawing national attention within their disciplines. "A group dedicated to supporting the University's research IT needs is a



timely complement to UAlbany's trajectory of increasingly prolific research," says Macherone.

RIT is prepared to provide consultation and assistance at every stage of grant discovery and development in the following ways:

Pre-grant Development: The group will provide initial consulting and conduct an impact assessment; computational resources may be used for discovery purposes.

Existing facilities and infrastructure will be compared with anticipated needs. RIT can also coordinate with colleagues at other institutions.

Facilities setup and configuration: RIT will support facilities setup and configuration of IT resources. They can provide assistance in software acquisition, licensing, porting, integration, and provide information to conserve assets. Researchers can request support in configuration, system setup, integration and testing for computational equipment.

Production Environment: Researchers can avail themselves of RIT's full systems management, ongoing software consulting, porting, and integration and collaboration services. The group can provide continuous human resource management and regular IT reassessments, making appropriate service adjustments as required.

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End of grant-Decommissioning: Planning for potential reassignment of human resources is an important element. So is the evaluation of sun-setting systems, hardware and software; resources should be reapplied whenever feasible.

Post-grant support evaluation: This is an important final step, particularly during early stages of RIT's development. The unit will want to know what worked well and what they can do to improve.

RIT currently supports UAlbany faculty who are attracting national attention within their respective fields:

Dr. Alexander Shekhtman of the Chemistry Department is engaged in structural understanding of inter and intrabiomolecular interactions leading to cellular signal transduction—a mechanism by which cells communicate with one another. Dysfunction of cellular signal transduction is a leading cause of cancers and autoimmune diseases. Using sophisticated technology, Shekhtman's group is involved in research which can control, and in some favorable cases, stop the spread of

disease. Research IT supports in-house Linux workstations for data processing and network storage. The IBM cluster is used to run structure calculation programs, and in some cases, molecular modeling. RIT also uses the IBM cluster to run biomolecular simulations for Shekhtman's group.

Dr. Rabi Musah, also of the Chemistry Department, is hard at work on her own research. Along with an international cast of young chemists, Musah is developing alternative strategies to treat human immunodeficiency virus type 1 (HIV-1) pathogenesis and infection. Musah's group focuses on different proteins than those commonly found in most drugs used to fight HIV. Their discoveries may eventually serve as lead drug compounds in the fight against HIV. RIT supports Musah's use of molecular modeling programs. Their integrated IT environment consists of Linux workstations and windows desktops accessing network-based resources for sharing huge databases coupled with access to the IBM high performance computational cluster.

Dr. Timothy Gage, who holds joint appointments in Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the School of Public Health and in Anthropology, examines the determinants of infant mortality. Conventional approaches to studying this phenomenon have several limitations, and Gage's group has developed models of defined mixtures of logistic regression which overcome conventional drawbacks. These models use extremely large databases; model estimation can take a month or more on the fastest processor computers that are currently available. Gage and his colleagues hope the new high performance computational and file-sharing technology provided by RIT will allow them to greatly improve the productivity of their important research.

By working closely with faculty, the future of RIT looks extremely promising. Developing these services will strengthen UAlbany's competitiveness in grant proposals, assist in forming partnerships with other academic institutions and agencies, and continue to attract world-class faculty and students to our campus.

Computing Community is Armed with ALARM

Computing security is an important and ever-growing area of concern for many users. As a result, the Internet hosts numerous websites providing alerts and notices to users at large. The downside to this practice is that there are more on-line resources than can be explored on a regular basis. Fortunately for the UAlbany community, ITS has taken a proactive step by creating a behind-the-scenes security measure: the ALARM Group.

The primary function of the University's ALert And Resource Monitoring (ALARM) Group is to monitor security-related resources, evaluate the information available, and share important findings with ITS staff and technology coordinators across the campus. ALARM is comprised of a representative from the

following ITS departments: Client Support Services (Marty Manjak), Systems Maintenance and Operations (Eric Torgersen), and Telecommunications (Trevor Corbett). The means of distribution for alerts and memos from ALARM is via email. Information generally fits into two categories: alerts (sent to technical coordinators for information or further distribution) and memos (sent to University Administration when a campus-wide countermeasure is suggested and requires approval). On some occasions, alerts may be passed on to the user community. But most of ALARM's work takes place behind the scenes. Only those members of the UA community who deal with computing security issues on a regular basis are usually aware of most of ALARM's work.

ALert And Resource Monitoring Group

It is important to note that ALARM is not a cure-all for security breaches, nor is it intended to supplant any security measures already in place. Technology coordinators, as well as the entire UAlbany user community should always take precautions against unwanted intrusions. It is, however, one more way that ITS personnel are working to help ensure a safer computing environment. And all users should check the ITS homepage at <http://albany.edu/its> for important information and updates on alerts.

Information Security is Everyone's Responsibility—Including Yours!

Growing awareness of information security issues have become a standard feature of using the Internet. On the nuisance end of the spectrum reside rogue emails and unwanted pop-up boxes. On the malicious end, machines may contract dangerous viruses or worms which can stop your work for extended periods of time. While most of us have experience with interruptions ranging from inconvenience to full-blown disaster, how much responsibility do we assume for our role in attracting unwanted intrusions? Should we all be accountable for securing the networks on which we depend?

Information security is everyone's responsibility. Just because you can report a burglary to law enforcement authorities doesn't mean you should avoid precautionary measures, such as locking your home or car against unwanted intruders. Information security works the same way, so we must all exercise common sense when it comes to protecting our PCs. The open environment of colleges and universities makes them unusually susceptible to intrusions and attacks, but security doesn't have to come at the expense of academic integrity. Risks are mitigated when all users are well-informed and willing to do their part.

Hackers and intruders are usually looking for two types of data: personally identifiable

information and computing power. Personal information includes anything from demographics to credit card information. The University and the federal government mandate precautionary measures to guard against illegally obtaining personally identifiable information. Power poses a different kind of problem. Hackers are often not interested in personal files or databases, but the computational power of the machine itself. Even as files on a compromised machine remain untouched, intruders may use that PC to launch attacks on other systems. When a compromised machine at UAlbany is detected, ITS has to remove that machine from the network, leaving the user without access until the system has been secured. And a few compromised machines can disable the entire network, leaving all users without access until security can be restored.

Despite the security measures built into the ITS infrastructure, we cannot stress enough the importance of all users joining our safety efforts. Fortunately, it is easy for you to do your part. First, get in the habit of visiting the ITS web site at <http://www.albany.edu/its> for news and alerts pertaining to important security matters. Second, commit to protecting your PC by following these six simple steps:

1. Use complex passwords on all accounts, and don't ever share them! Passwords should be at least 8 characters long, contain

- at least one number and one special character or punctuation mark from the following list: ! @ # \$ % * () _ + - = [] \ ; : < > ? , . /
2. Install all recommended security patches;
3. Use anti-virus software all the time—the University provides it free of charge;
4. Don't open email or email attachments from unknown or unreliable sources;
5. Turn off your PC when you aren't using it;
6. Resolve to follow these steps all the time, and check yourself periodically to make sure you're still following all of these recommendations.

In the coming months, you can expect to see more initiatives designed to heighten security awareness across campus. At the writing of this newsletter, a search is underway for an Information Security Officer (ISO). The new ISO will be charged, among other things, with ensuring compliance for government mandates, better educating the user community about security issues, and implementing policies and procedures pertaining to information security. By providing our readers with this information, ITS has taken another step in making sure you have all of the tools necessary to help us to sustain a safe and secure computing community.

The federal government requires institutions that store confidential information to meet specific security standards. FERPA, HIPAA, and Gramm-Leach-Bliley (or GLB) are associated with maintaining personal information in a secure environment. The University at Albany is compliant with all these federal mandates. The following explanations outline the rights and protections guaranteed by each requirement.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law protecting the privacy of student education records. It provides certain rights to parents pertaining to their minor children's educational records, but those rights transfer to the student when s/he turns 18. It specifies the rights of student and parental access to records, as well as regulates the conditions under which an educational institution can release student information. The general rule of the thumb is that, absent written permission from the student, a school can only release "directory" information. For more information on FERPA, visit <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>.

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) mandates the protection of individuals' health records while allowing the flow of health information necessary to promote high quality health care. The rule balances important uses of health care information with the privacy of people seeking care and healing. For more information on HIPAA, visit <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa/>.

The Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (GLB) provides protection to consumers' personal financial information. It governs the collection and disclosure of this data by financial institutions and companies who receive personal financial information. It also provides safeguard stating how institutions are required to design, implement and maintain protections to consumer information. For more information on GLB, visit <http://www.ftc.gov/privacy/glbact/>.

WebBuilders Update

Computer Application Workshops available for faculty and staff web-builders

Short courses (1.5 to 2.5 hours) are available throughout the year to assist campus web-builders with a variety of web building issues. Web design classes are offered to help UAlbany community members create new websites and maintain existing ones. Upcoming classes include instruction in using Dreamweaver and Frontpage. For further information and to register online, go to <http://web.albany.edu/its/training>

Web server upgrades this summer

This summer both the hardware and software for the main University web were upgraded. Our web pages are now served by the Apache web server. UNIX symbolic links are no longer supported as a result of this upgrade. If you need assistance with alternatives, contact the University Webmaster at webmaster@albany.edu. The Apache server will now allow users to use server side includes, shtml.

Did you get a new webmaster?

If you need to change the owner of your web site to a different web builder, or if you wish to add or remove access for someone to your web site, please fill out the Website Administration form online at: http://www.albany.edu/its/web/request_admin.html

Planning to build a new web site and need disk space?

Please see our web space guidelines at: http://www.albany.edu/its/web/space_guide.html for instructions. Faculty should consult with CETL about their web needs. Administrative offices, research centers, and academic departments and programs may request web space directly from Web Support & Services. Please use the form at: http://www.albany.edu/its/web/request_space.html

Requesting links to your web page

Have links added from the administrative directory, the University site index, lists of centers and departments and other pages. If you have changed your site address and would like to tell us to update your links, or want a new site linked, make a request using the online form at:

<http://www.albany.edu/its/web/sitelink.html>

A faculty/staff individual page can be linked to your directory listing, see:

<http://www.albany.edu/whois/webpage.html>

Student organizations can be linked through the Office of Student Activities.

Updating the faculty/staff directory information

The online faculty/staff directory, <http://www.albany.edu/whois/> is kept up to date via a feed from the Human Resources System. Most information is kept in the Human Resources database and managed by the Office of Human Resources. Certain changes to your directory listing including address, email, and phone number should be self-reported using MyUAlbany, personal portfolio. Go to <http://www.albany.edu/myualbany/> to make those changes.

Requesting Help

The ITS helpdesk can help you with many web related questions. They are your first stop for help. Contact them at (518) 442-3700. Walk-in to LC-27 or send them your questions using the form at: <http://www.albany.edu/its/help/help-request.html>

If you have more complicated questions or need help getting started with our www.albany.edu server, we are here to assist you. Make a consultation request at: <http://www.albany.edu/its/web/consultation.html>

See <http://www.albany.edu/its/web/forms.html> for a list of forms to request services

Did You Know...

There are over 200 computers available for public use in University's libraries and nearly 300 PCs in the five major computer user rooms located in LC 3 and 4, the Science Library, Draper Hall and the School of Public Health. These PC and Mac terminals give students, faculty and staff high speed access to the internet, library catalogs, WebMail and other services at UAlbany.

During recent upgrades more than 12,000 computer jacks were installed to give the UAlbany community access to the campus' high speed network. An additional 7,500 jacks support RESNet, the University's Residential Network service for students living in the residence halls.

There are nearly 600 miles of cable fiber connecting the University's computer network. If laid out from end to end, that's enough cable to reach from UAlbany to the University of Michigan's Ann Arbor campus.

ITS Staff Profile

Bry-Ann Yates and Sheldon Goddard provide frontline desktop support at the School of Public Health's East Campus. Bry-Ann, a Senior Programmer/Analyst, joined the University in 2002 after working in IT in the private sector. Sheldon, a Lead Programmer Analyst, professionally joined ITS after earning a degree in Information Science & Policy at UAlbany. Although they are the only full time ITS staff members physically located on the East Campus, they enjoy the challenge and can count on the resources of the entire ITS team for back up and support.



Sheldon Goddard

Bry-Ann and Sheldon each spend a few hours a week on the main campus working on ITS projects, but the majority of their time is spent together on the East Greenbush campus. As a team, they have come to rely on each other's expertise and feedback. Together they provide the SPH community with the service and support they need.

Bry-Ann and Sheldon offer more than desktop support to faculty and staff. They also support two student computer labs, the satellite used by the Office of Continuing Education to broadcast its Third Thursday Breakfast Broadcast (T2B2), the Picture Tel video conferencing unit, the School's smart classroom and other smart equipment available for research and study.

The IT infrastructure of the School of Public Health continues to expand with plans to construct two new computer labs, along with the Gen*NY*sis Center for Excellence in Cancer Genomics. Bry-Ann and Sheldon are looking forward to continuing to further ITS' mission of supporting the University's teaching, research and service objectives on the East Campus.



Bry-Ann Yates

Welcome...

Laurie Enright



Please welcome Laurie Enright, Client Support Services' new Associate Director for Desktop Support. Her responsibilities include planning for desktop needs on campus, developing relations with the user client base, and implementing scalable solutions to business problems. She also leads the Desktop Services Group, who are dispersed across all three campuses.

Enright has joined UAlbany most recently from the State University at Buffalo and has held positions in both the public and private sectors. With over a decade of technical expertise, she is enjoying her new role as an integral part of the ITS team. "There's a lot going on across the campus," says Enright, "and I'm looking forward to the opportunity to help folks at UAlbany achieve their goals".

ITS also welcomes Ellen Nilson to Client Support Services, and Justin Azoff and Keith Sprague to Telecommunications.

Lynn Mayer



Please join ITS in welcoming Lynn Mayer to Client Support Services, where she has accepted the new position of HelpDesk Coordinator. A member of the UAlbany community for over a decade, Mayer brings her previous experience as Director of the SUNY Learning Network Helpdesk, the Technical Resources Manager at the Center for Computing & Disability, and an adjunct professor teaching online and on-campus courses for the School of Education.

Mayer's diverse experience in technology and education will serve her well in this challenging new role. Her position requires her to develop enhanced relationships within ITS groups and key partners across campus, manage and oversee the help desk ticket system, develop service level agreements, and supervise and train staff.

"ITS is committed to coordinating support services to better serve our customers," Mayer says. "Our goal is for customers to have a single point of contact to reach the appropriate support staff who will help them resolve their problem quickly."

CIO Named Best of New York

In June 2004, Chief Information Officer (CIO) Christine E. Haile received the "Best of New York" award for Demonstrated Leadership in Management of Information Technology. "She was the unanimous choice," said Paul Taylor, Chief Strategy Officer of the Center for Digital Government, which sponsors the awards program.

The University community--and ITS in particular--recognized Haile's value when she joined UAlbany in 2001 as its first CIO. Since her arrival, the campus has seen many improvements: the development of Research IT and the acquisition of high performance clusters; more smart spaces across the campus, and; the successful implementation of the PeopleSoft student information system and accompanying MyUAlbany portal, to name a few. While the user community is familiar with many of Haile's IT improvements across campus, there may be less familiarity with her

long and distinguished career within the SUNY system.

A seasoned veteran in higher education administration, Haile has worked for the State University of New York for over 25 years. Prior to joining UAlbany, Haile served in SUNY's System Administration office, most recently as Associate Vice Chancellor and Provost for Technology Services. Her many accomplishments with System Administration include the development and growth of the SUNY Learning Network, which received the 2001 Educause Award for Systemic Progress in Teaching and Learning. Haile serves as the University representative for numerous state and national organizations: she has been involved in a number of technology initiatives, is currently the Vice Chair of the SUNY Council of CIOs and serves on the board of NYSERNet. Nationally, she is a member of Educause and for the past four years, has



served as a proposal reviewer for the National Science Foundation's IT grants programs.

"The work that Chris has done to improve and extend the information technology services on campus has been impressive," says Sue Faerman, Dean of Undergraduate Studies. "She has shown great leadership in moving forward on a number of initiatives that improve services for both faculty and students. It has been great to work with her on developing ideas to enhance instructional technologies on this campus."

ITS News

ITS News is published by the Office of the CIO to provide the UAlbany community with news about information technology services available on campus, the different ways technology is being used at the University, and illustrate how ITS can assist with your technology needs.

We would like to thank the following for their contribution to this issue:

Pete Connolly • Trevor Corbett • Don Gallerie • Roger Gifford • Robert Gluck • Brian Macherone • Patricia McAuliff • Tom Neiss



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