



# ITS News

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

## ITS Showcase Distance Learning Aids Workforce Training

In furtherance of its mission to promote and improve the health of the public through education, research, community service and leadership, the University's School of Public Health (SPH) recently added the Certificate in Public Health - Fundamentals and Principles (CPH-FP) to its cadre of program offerings. This 18 credit program, consisting of core courses from the Master of Public Health curriculum, has been designed to attract local, regional and national public health workers who are interested in receiving formal training in the field.

Joining the growing list of colleges and universities with similar programs, including the University of North Carolina, Emory University and the University of Minnesota, the School of Public Health's certificate appeals to a variety of audiences and incorporates convenience and expertise.

The CPH-FP is available in a traditional classroom setting as well as online. The distance learning version is offered through the asynchronous, SUNY Learning Network, which allows students to participate in their courses from anywhere with access to the internet. This modality makes it possible for those who cannot attend classes at the School's East Greenbush campus to participate in the program.

Drawing from its partnerships with entities such as the New York State Department of Health, Albany Medical College and Mary Imogene Bassett Hospital, the SPH gives students access to a host of highly qualified professionals and experts in the field of public health who also serve as faculty in the School's various departments. Students benefit from the expertise of many public health practitioners through the use of guest lectures and team-teaching, which is gaining popularity as a tool in online environments.

In keeping with its commitment to providing students with the tools they need to respond to emerging public health threats, the School of Public Health has enabled the participation and education of even more public health workers by making this valuable information available through distance learning.

## Growing IT Infrastructure Supports Emerging IT Commons

The campus is abuzz with the University's newest initiative aimed at preparing students for the "information-centric" society that awaits them. To ensure that UAlbany students are equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in a world infused with advanced technologies, the University has created Information Technology (IT) Commons. This campus-wide, collaborative effort is designed to incorporate IT-based courses into the University's curriculum – from the sciences to languages.

With the hiring of additional faculty and increased IT Commons course offerings on the horizon, the success of IT Commons depends on a strong IT infrastructure. A variety of ITS services are contributing directly to IT commons. Growth throughout the University's IT infrastructure and facilities is proving to be a benefit to students and faculty as ITS continues to provide them with the tools they need to incorporate technology into their teaching, learning and research experiences at UAlbany.

### IT Commons Catalog Search

Identifying courses with a heavy IT component became easier for students this semester with the introduction of the IT Commons Course Catalog, part of the University's web-based Schedule of Classes search. Students can now limit their search solely to IT Commons courses where they had more than one hundred courses, from over 15 departments and schools, to choose from during the spring term.

For more information on IT Commons, please visit [www.albany.edu/itc](http://www.albany.edu/itc) or contact Rachel Baum in the School of Information Science and Policy at [rbaum@uamail.albany.edu](mailto:rbaum@uamail.albany.edu).

### Software Licensing

ITS canvassing of software needs has resulted in the purchasing of several software products for faculty and student's teaching and learning needs across many disciplines. The University's site license with ESRI provides access to software that is commonly used in the areas of geography and planning including GIS, ArcView and BusinessMap. Also used at several SUNY campuses, these software packages are available for use by University students, faculty and staff. For more information on other software packages available, visit [www.albany.edu/its/software](http://www.albany.edu/its/software).

### Continued Facility Upgrades

Incorporating technology into classrooms across the University's three campuses continues to be a priority. In the summer of 2004, ITS installed three additional Smart Classrooms, each equipped with a touch screen controller, projector, document camera, PC with DVD, VCR, electronic screen and sound system; and three Technology Classrooms equipped with a projector, VCR, and PC with DVD. Over the winter intersession, 49 uptown, 15 downtown and 5 East Campus Registrar-scheduled classrooms, received 27" large screen DVD/VCR television units. These upgrades bring the total percentage of smart or technology classrooms on the uptown campus to 45%. For a full list of technology equipped classrooms throughout the University, please visit [www.albany.edu/its/teachtechnology](http://www.albany.edu/its/teachtechnology).

## File Sharing 101

One of the nicest things about computer storage is how simple it is to save. Electronic files are a great way to cut down on overflowing file cabinets; they don't take up space on your desk, and can be shared easily with co-workers. Even if the system goes down or a PC crashes, files saved on the network are backed up daily. But did you know that network space can fill up as easily as a file cabinet?

Like natural resources, electronic resources have their limitations—it is possible to run out of room. Anyone who has ever tried to save a document on a network drive and received a “no vacancy” message knows what a frustrating experience this can be. Thinking about what you save, and where you save it, can help protect valuable file space. ITS would like to take the opportunity to remind everyone about the proper etiquette of file sharing.

There are two kinds of network shares, and it is important to understand the difference between them. Departmental shares allow a specified group of people to access the same set of documents. Personal shares allow individuals to save on their own network drive where no one else can access their files.

Because network space is a valuable commodity, its primary use should be for mission-critical items. Documents residing on

departmental shares have to live on the network so multiple users can access them. All share members should exercise good conservation efforts. Files should be reviewed often to prevent saving multiple drafts of the same document.

Personal shares are trickier. Users have to decide whether a document warrants storage on the network and it is important to make storage-savvy choices. Try to confine your use of the network to those documents that are current and important to your work. Consider saving older documents elsewhere. Personal files of any kind—especially large files such as photos—should never be stored on the network.

How you store non-essential or personal items is a matter of personal preference. Your hard drive is one option, although if your PC crashes, you could lose your files. You may consider saving on a CD or disk. You can also use a jump drive, a tiny portable device that attaches to your key chain and plugs into a USB port. Here are a few tips on how to help conserve network resources:

- Use the shared drive to save your most important, mission-critical work items.
- Minimize saving duplicate documents. If you have files on a departmental share, try

to avoid saving your own copy on a personal share.

- Make an effort to keep your electronic files up to date. Set aside time at least once a month to perform routine file maintenance. Delete items you don't need any more, and burn outdated ones to a CD or move them to your hard drive.
- Save non-essential work or personal documents on a CD or your hard drive.
- Save electronic photos on a CD. Large files take up a lot of space on your hard drive, and storing them externally guards against loss in the event that your PC crashes.

Good file sharing etiquette is a lot like Campus Clean-Up Day. We're all familiar with the incredible results that occur on campus when everyone pitches in for a few hours to pick up trash, prune the bushes and plant flowers. Spending a little time to tidy up your electronic files and deciding where or whether to keep them can make a remarkable difference. Engaging in this task regularly keeps it from becoming overwhelming. And you never know—helping conserve network space just might help you stay organized.

## Spam Filtering Takes a Bite out of Junk Email

If you're like most email users, you've seen your share of spam. Don't despair! While junk email can't be eliminated, ITS has a new mail filtering service that allows users to manage unwanted messages. Early testers of the product report significant declines in unsolicited messages. The program became available to all users on February 15, 2005.

The mail filtering service works by tagging messages that appear to be part of an unsolicited, bulk mailing process. All suspicious emails go through a series of tests; how a message responds results in a spam score. Users can set rules on their mail program to filter out spam at a comfortable level.

How do you check a spam score? Headers are attached to messages with the scores

indicated numerically and graphically. The higher the score, the more likely the message is spam. Three types of messages will not have headers: messages receiving scores less than one; messages sent within the University network; and messages larger than 100 KB (as scanning large messages puts a great deal of stress on the mail system).

Filtering rules can operate on the server-side (they run whether you're email is open or not) or the client-side (they run only when your email is open); ITS recommends server-side rules. Advantages of selecting server-side rules include quicker start-up of email, and filtering works from any computer you use to access email. A comparison of server-side versus client-side rules is available on the ITS website.

Using the new mail filtering service is easy, especially if you already use rules to manage junk email. For more information, visit [http://www.albany.edu/its/accounts\\_email/spamfiltering](http://www.albany.edu/its/accounts_email/spamfiltering). Classes are available for Outlook/Exchange or Squirrel webmail users. To enroll, visit <http://web.albany.edu/its/training/modinfo.asp?modreq=C> to enroll.

ITS believes the mail filtering service will dramatically reduce the time that most users spend managing their email, and we welcome your comments at [CIO@albany.edu](mailto:CIO@albany.edu). If you need assistance, contact the ITS Helpdesk in LC 27 at 442-3700 or send email to [ihelp@albany.edu](mailto:ihelp@albany.edu).

## ITS Baby News

The fall of 2004 was a joyous time for the families of several of our staff members. ITS extends its warmest congratulations to these families on their new additions:

### Ean Christopher

Pam Lantzy of University Applications Development and Eric Lantzy are the proud parents of Ean Christopher, born on September 20, 2004.



### Tyler Allera

Tyler Allera Fung is the son of Odette Fung of Telecommunications and Dennis Fung of Client Support Services. He joined the Fung family on September 30, 2004



### Olivia Kay

Ron Thomas of Telecommunications and his wife Trish welcomed Olivia Kay Thomas, born on October 21, 2004.



## In the Spotlight

Many of you know University Applications Development secretary Kathy Vaccariello--she has been a member of the UAlbany community since 1984, and part of UAD since 1994. But you've never seen Kathy like this before: she recently made her big screen debut as an extra in Steven Spielberg's remake of War of the Worlds. The film, which stars Tom Cruise, is a modern retelling of H.G. Wells' 1898 novel about Martians invading the earth. It's the second time the book has been made

into a feature film, and Kathy's first time in a Hollywood production.

According to Kathy, acting the part of someone who fled home to escape Martians wasn't terribly difficult--long hours of filming outdoors, along with inclement weather, created conditions that helped the actors feel the part.

Looking back, Kathy says being part of a Hollywood feature film was an experience that she'll never forget. Many of the scenes will

have special effects added in after the shoot, and she's eager to see the finished product. We asked Kathy what motivated her to be part of a major motion picture. "How many chances do you get in your lifetime to run from aliens?" she asked. "It's a once in a lifetime opportunity."

**War of the Worlds premieres on June 29, 2005. Don't be surprised if you see a lot of ITS staff in the audience.**

## Welcome New Employees

ITS would like to welcome the following new staff members:

### University Applications Development

Anu Bagade-Dhruv, Lead Programmer Analyst

### Client Support Services

Robert Wachs, Lead Helpdesk Analyst  
Tim Wormwood, Helpdesk Analyst  
Matt McMillen, Helpdesk Analyst

### Telecommunications

Sherly Abraham, Telecommunications Administrator

## ITS Staff Profile

**"I enjoy the diversity of ITS. It allows me to get involved with a variety of different technologies and projects."**

ITS meets the needs of the user community with the help of its dedicated staff, many of whom work behind the scenes. This is where System Administrator Eric Torgersen, a member of the Systems Management and Operations group (SMO), spends much of his time. From the shadows of the Computing Services Center, Eric plays a key role in supporting the backbone of the IT infrastructure at UAlbany: its servers.

As a Unix System Administrator, Eric plays a number of roles. He is the Systems representative for the University's ALARM group which monitors internet security-related issues, evaluates information from a variety of sources and shares

its findings with technology coordinators across the campus. Eric is also the administrator of the University's Domain Naming Service (DNS), a vital component of the network infrastructure, and he is responsible for the maintenance of the server upon which the UAlbany website resides. If that were not enough, as one of the two administrators of the campus' WebCT servers, Eric works with the Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning (CETL) and other ITS units to support WebCT online courses. Additionally, as the administrator for the Lightweight Directory Access Protocol (LDAP) servers, he often works with other campus IT professionals, such as the

Library Systems staff, who wish to utilize LDAP to authenticate campus users to their services.

Eric is frequently sought out for his multi-faceted technical expertise to consult on existing and future projects.

Eric joined the University in 2000 after working in the private sector for several years. His efforts behind the scenes provide the UAlbany community with many of the services we have come to rely on.



Eric Torgersen

## WebBuilders Update

### ■ WebIT 2005 is underway

ITS is undertaking a complete redesign of its web site to improve its usefulness to our various constituencies. Design teams began the process in December and expect a rollout of the new site prior to the opening of the 2005-2006 academic year. Enhanced form processing and ease of finding assistance are anticipated. Your participation in the development process is welcomed as is the immediate input of faculty, staff and students: what would you like to see improved or added to the new ITS website? Drop an email to [cio@albany.edu](mailto:cio@albany.edu) or [webmaster@albany.edu](mailto:webmaster@albany.edu) to tell us of your interest in participating in the development of the new site.

### ■ New administrative directory launched

The very popular administrative directory located at <http://www.albany.edu/directory/> lists University offices, departments, and centers. Formerly containing only a link to contact information, the directory has been updated to provide links to the departmental

website and contact pages. Please check your office's listing for accuracy.

### ■ Maps updated

The map system, located at <http://www.albany.edu/maps/> has been updated to incorporate recent changes in the campus' layout. Simplified, yet still powerful, the maps are searchable and contain links to offices and departments by building.

### ■ Coming soon: automatic text translation for UAlbany websites

In an ongoing effort to make UAlbany websites universally accessible, the Office of Disabled Student Services and ITS are teaming up to provide software to allow for automatic, dynamic text conversion of official websites. Watch for future developments.

### ■ Training available for faculty and staff webbuilders

Short courses (1<sup>1/2</sup> to 2<sup>1/2</sup> hours) are available throughout the year. 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, and working with the University standard website templates. For further information and to register online, go to <http://www.albany.edu/its/training> then click on the link for ITS training.

### ■ 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](http://www.albany.edu) server, we are here to assist you. Make a consultation request at: <http://www.albany.edu/its/web/consultation.html>.

## 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:

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