

Miami TechTalk

Issue Number 27

February 24, 2009

Voice over IP Project Continues Roll Out

With over 1900 phones replaced as of February 20, the VoIP project continues to roll out Miami's new phone service at an average of 300 phones each week. By the end of June over 5000 new Cisco VoIP phones will be placed in Oxford, Hamilton, Middletown and the Voice of America Learning Center.

Since the deployment is stretched across six months, the project team wanted to ensure that faculty and staff have information when they need it. To address that need, a web site was created and is regularly updated.

The site, www.muohio.edu/voip, is packed with information, both general and specific. You can look up when your department is scheduled to move in the Schedules section, access a range of "how to" tips in the Training and Documentation section or ask a question to be added to the FAQs – and much more. Also watch the eReport for news and stories about the telephone transition.

One feature that has generated many questions is voice mail. If you have voice mail on your line, you will find differences in how the new service works. By default, voice mail messages will now appear in your Exchange e-mail inbox. Each voice mail will be from "Unity Messaging System" and titled "Voice Message from xxx" – with the "xxx" identifying the caller if they are from within Miami.

You may choose to listen to the message on your computer or on your phone. Be aware that if you delete a message from either your phone or your computer, it is deleted from both. More details on using the new voice mail service, including a list of How To Tips, are posted to the Training section of the web site.

Many faculty and staff already on the new system remark on the clarity of the voice signal and the functions offered in the basic service package, including conference calling and caller ID. Most report that the transition has been easy, and the project team is reviewing all feedback to ensure continued improvement.

If you have any questions about VoIP services or deployment, check the project web site: www.muohio.edu/voip. For support questions, if you already have a new VoIP phone, contact the IT Services Support Desk at ITHelp@muohio.edu or 513-529-7900.



Student Technology Fee Call for Proposals – Proposals Due 2/27/2009

A pool of funds from the Student Technology Fee is available to stimulate the development of innovative student-focused technology projects on the Oxford campus. A total of \$525,000 is available and any student, faculty or staff member may apply for funding.

A call for proposals was issued earlier this semester and the deadline is fast approaching – proposals are due **Friday, February 27, 2009**. Faculty, staff and students who have proposals that comply with the [Guidelines for Expenditures](#) at <http://www.units.muohio.edu/mcs/techfee/Documents/Guidelines%20for%20Expenditures.pdf> are encouraged to submit them.

The funds will be awarded through a competitive process that is governed by a review team comprised of students, faculty and staff members from across the campus.

A small sampling of the 30 funded proposals from last year include:

- **BuildingGreen** - Software for architecture students used for research on sustainable products and practices.
- **Diversity Awareness through Digital Media** - Providing diversity exposure to students through digital media such as podcasts and online videos.
- **Digital Media Equipment** - Equipment for students in Journalism and Mass Communication to use in gathering audio-visual content for use in a wide variety of classes involving online media components.

If you would like assistance in developing your proposal or have any questions about the process, please contact either the Senior Director of Academic Technology Services, Carolyn Gard (Carolyn.Gard@muohio.edu or 9-2714) or the Student Co-Chair of the Student Technology Advisory Committee, Hunter Olson (olsonhd@muohio.edu or 404-245-8161). For more information about the Student Tech Fee competitive funding process, including the proposal form, please visit www.muohio.edu/techfee.

Get Blackboard Course Site Updates on Facebook

Are you a frequent Facebook user? If so, you may be interested to know that you can now view some of your Blackboard information in Facebook via a Blackboard Sync application that IT Services recently installed. Available information includes grades, assignment notices, course announcements, etc. Many of these items in Facebook provide links back into Blackboard in order to interact with those items. In addition, the application allows users to find and communicate with other classmates who use Facebook.

Creating the link between Blackboard and Facebook is easy. Simply visit [myMiami](#) at <http://mymiami.muohio.edu> and log in. You'll see a Blackboard Sync module in the left column of your "My Tab" page. In the Blackboard Sync box, click the "Click Here" link and you'll be prompted for your Facebook username and password. This enables the connection between Facebook and Blackboard. Once that connection is made, you'll be passed over to Facebook and can explore what Blackboard Sync offers. Make sure to check out all the tabs!

You'll likely want to edit your Application Settings to bookmark Blackboard Sync so it appears under Applications on your home page.

If you have questions, please contact the IT Services Support Desk at 513-529-7900 or ithelp@muohio.edu.



REMINDER: Miami's Dial-up Internet Service Slated for Retirement 6/30/2009

As announced in summer, 2008, Miami's dial-in Internet service will be removed on July 1, 2009, due to very low usage, availability of low-cost and free alternatives, and University budget constraints.

Those wishing to continue use of dial-up service may wish to find another provider. Prices generally start at \$10 a month and up, dependent upon the vendor and services provided, with a few Internet Service Providers (ISPs) offering zero cost for a very small number of connection hours.

Those who have availability of high-speed services (cable and DSL) may wish to take this opportunity to review costs and advantages of moving to that option.

For those who don't know of companies providing service in their residential area, check with friends/neighbors for referrals and references. Existing customers are usually the best source of information on how well a service works.

For more information and links to online ISP listings, please see "Selecting an Internet Service Provider" in IT Help at <http://www.muohio.edu/ithelp/solution040824716142256>.



IT Services Technology Workshops Remaining for Spring 2009

Looking to enhance your skills in Microsoft Office 2007, Adobe Contribute, or the university-provided survey tools (Prezza Checkbox Web or Snap Surveys)? IT Services has a number of workshops scheduled for the remainder of the spring that may be of interest. To view workshops/sessions available, visit TRAIN at www.muohio.edu/TRAIN, click "View Learning Opportunities", then "Topics" and select from the following:

- Microsoft Office
- Web Editing
- Survey Tool Training

If a session of interest is full, please still register so that you are added to the alternate list. Spaces may become available and, if there are a large number of alternates, additional session(s) of that workshop may be added.

Additionally, you may request a workshop for a department or student group of 8 or more of any of the IT Services workshops from the groups listed above, please call 529-5530 or e-mail LIS@muohio.edu. Additionally, Office 2008 workshops similar to the Office 2007 workshops may be requested for groups of 4 or more. Every effort will be made to accommodate requests as resources allow.

Also, visit the IT Services Training page at www.muohio.edu/training for information about the various training options available throughout the Miami University community.

IT Services Seeking Feedback on E-mail/Calendaring

All faculty, staff and students are invited to participate in a brief, anonymous survey designed to gather information about use of and satisfaction with Miami's muConnect/Exchange e-mail and calendaring system.



Use the following link to begin:

<http://survey.muohio.edu/checkbox/muec.aspx>

New FileMaker Pro Users Group

*Patti Gregg, Coordinator, Technology Support
School of Fine Arts*



To foster sharing our collective knowledge of FileMaker Pro, Miami is forming a FileMaker Pro users group. If you are a FileMaker Pro user and would like to share your knowledge and learn from your colleagues, please join the FileMaker Pro users group LISTSERV list!

- Join via e-mail: MUFMPUG-subscribe-request@listserv.muohio.edu
- Join via the web (requires you to log in with your Miami e-mail address and LISTSERV password and to confirm your request via e-mail): <http://listserv.muohio.edu/archives/mufmpug.html>

Beyond sharing information via this LISTSERV list:

FileMaker has indicated they will send FileMaker staff to Miami to conduct training and seminars several times a year.

We may hold monthly brown-bag sessions to discuss our database efforts.

The options are limitless and dependent on your interest. Please join the LISTSERV list to help share the FileMaker Pro users group and receive announcements of planned FileMaker Pro activities. If you have any suggestions or comments, please send them to me directly at: greggp@muohio.edu.

Teaching with Blackboard: Weekly Blackboard Tips Now Available via E-mail



Advanced Learning Technologies (ALT) has created a new LISTSERV list called "Blackboard Tip of the Week (BBTIPS)" to share tips with interested Blackboard instructors and organization leaders. While the first tip was distributed to the BbInstructors and BbOrgLeaders lists in order to announce the BBTIPS list, future tips will **not** be distributed to those lists.

ALT hopes to provide a tip each week that will help you with your Blackboard experience. These tips will be based, in part, on the most frequently received support questions during the previous week. Additional tips will be sent out as needed. The list archive will be available to subscribers in order to look back at prior tips.

To subscribe to BBTIPS, please visit the following link and click the "Join or leave the list (or change settings)": <http://listserv.muohio.edu/archives/BBTIPS.html>.

For questions or suggestions on BBTIPS, please contact Advanced Learning Technologies at alt@muohio.edu.

How Green is Green? Saving Money and the Environment from Your Office

At the end of the day you make sure the coffee maker and computer speakers are turned off, you shut down your computer and printer, and then off your lights when you leave the office. You've done your part to help the environment and save the University some money, right?



The answer is "Sort of".

Most electronic devices continue to draw power even when they're turned off. The energy used by devices that are turned off is their Standby Power Consumption, and it's estimated that over 10 percent of the electricity consumed in developed countries goes to feed devices that aren't in use.

As an example, consider the kinds of devices that might be in use in a typical Miami office. Things like cell phone chargers, radios, desktop computers, printers, speakers, coffee makers, even surge protectors and power strips consume electricity when they're plugged in even if they're turned off. The typical standby power consumption for these devices is about 10 Watts per person.

While this seems like a small amount, consider that these devices are drawing power the entire 119 hours each week that we're not in our offices and that there are over 5000 employees at Miami. Over the course of a year, this amounts to more than 330,000 kW-h of electricity used for absolutely nothing! With electricity costing Miami \$0.081/kW-h this means that we're wasting over \$27,000 and causing the release of about two tons of greenhouse gases each year.

So what can each of us do to chip away this waste? The easiest thing is, where practical, to completely unplug these devices at the end of the day. A few things to be conscious of when doing so:

- If your computer is set to back up overnight using the Tivoli backup service, you may need to manually initiate a backup during the day.
- If you share devices (like printers) with others, please make sure to discuss practices for unplugging before doing so.
- Please check with your local technology support provider if you have any questions.

For the future, you can also be deliberate in purchasing office appliances that have a low standby consumption. This is presently difficult because few manufacturers provide this information, but as green awareness increases it should be easier to do in the future. IT Services will be incorporating this evaluation criteria into our purchasing practices and recommendations as it becomes more feasible.

And don't forget that you can reduce your home energy consumption by doing the same thing. Since you likely have more devices at home than in your office, you can probably see some significant savings by pulling the plug when you can.

The Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory has a website dedicated to providing information on standby power consumption (<http://standby.lbl.gov/standby.html>) including tips on reducing this wasted energy consumption as well as data on how much power various types of devices consume.

Excel Tip for Faculty: Using an Excel Formula to Drop the Lowest Grade



Many faculty members use Excel to track grades. For the most part, using Excel as a grade book is rather straightforward; but things can get a bit more complicated once you start dropping the lowest scores for each student.

Figure 1 below is an example of a simple grade book. For this discussion, we need to calculate the final grade as an average of the two remaining exam scores after dropping each student's two lowest exam scores. Leslie missed the first exam and has received a 0. Of course, this is the lowest grade and should be dropped. However, we will also need to drop one of her 80s. Brad's situation is much more straightforward. We will need to drop his grades for exam 2 and exam 4. Randy has a "tie" for his two lowest grades. We need to drop exam 1 and exam 4. In this example, we will calculate Randy's grade.

Figure 1

1	A	B	C	D	E	F
2	Student	Exam1	Exam2	Exam3	Exam4	Final Grade
3	Randy	80	95	90	80	?
4	Brad	100	90	100	70	?
5	Leslie	0	80	80	80	?

To calculate Randy's grade while also dropping his two lowest scores, we will use this formula.

=(SUM(B3:E3)-SMALL(B3:E3,1)-SMALL(B3:E3,2))/(COUNT(B3:E3)-2)

Let's break this formula for Randy's grade down.

1. Add cells B3 through E3.
SUM(B3:E3)
2. Subtract the lowest value in cells B3 through E3.
SMALL(B3:E3,1) - identifies the lowest score to subtract (80)
3. Subtract the second lowest value in cells B3 through E3
SMALL(B3:E3,2) - identifies the second lowest score to subtract (also 80)
4. Divide the result by the count of cells B3 through E3 minus 2
/(COUNT(B3:E3)-2)

Result: 92.5

This function can be adapted as needed. For instance, if you only want to drop the lowest score, you can simply remove the second instance of the SMALL function and subtract 1 from the COUNT.

=(SUM(B3:E3)-SMALL(B3:E3,1))/(COUNT(B3:E3)-1)

Excel Tip for Faculty: Using an Excel Formula to Drop the Lowest Grade (continued)

Resources for Excel Help

Beyond the Excel help function and a Google search, there are many resources available to assist with Excel.

- Miami's online self-paced training services (SkillPort and VTC), available via www.muohio.edu/training, have a number of Excel 2007 courses
- There are several instructor-led Excel 2007 workshops remaining for Spring 2009, for schedules and to register see Microsoft Office 2007 in TRAIN at www.muohio.edu/TRAIN
- Excel e-books are available in Safari Books Online at <http://www.lib.muohio.edu/etexts/redirect/42> (you can search for Excel 2007 or perform a more specific search for a particular Excel topic)
- The IT Services Support Desk (513-529-7900 or ithelp@muohio.edu) can assist with specific questions/problems

Web-based Training Provider Evaluation Underway – Feedback Welcome

IT Services provides a number of web-based training offerings to faculty, staff, and students in order to support software/IT and personal/business skill development. Current offerings – available at www.muohio.edu/training - include SkillPort and VTC (available to all faculty, staff, and students) and Lynda.com (available on a departmental opt-in basis for those departments that wish to purchase licenses).

To ensure that the best content is provided at the lowest cost, IT Services will be issuing an RFP to web-based training vendors this spring to re-evaluate vendor options. If you have feedback on the current offerings (things you particularly value or things you think are missing) or if you would like to provide input on evaluation criteria or vendors to include in the RFP distribution, please e-mail the project manager, Leslie Smith, at smithlc2@muohio.edu.

Beware of Any Email Requesting Your Username and Password



If you receive an e-mail message that asks for your user name and password for an account, or other personal information, **do not respond and delete the**

message immediately.

These messages are examples of phishing, a spam technique used to gain access to personal accounts in attempts to steal sensitive data. To the right is a snippet of a recent e-mail sent to some university e-mail accounts pretending to be from the user's e-mail account provider and asking for account information in order to keep the account in service. **Don't fall for e-mails like this!**

Messages like these should be immediately deleted. Do not click on any links in the message or go to the web address listed in the e-mail. Never supply passwords, banking information, Social Security Numbers or other sensitive information by clicking a link in an e-mail. Treat any e-mail that asks for sensitive information as a phishing scam. **Remember that IT Services staff will never ask for your password!**

If you have questions about suspicious e-mail messages, please contact the IT Services Support Desk at ithelp@muohio.edu or call 513-529-7900.

RECENT PHISHING E-MAIL

From: WEBMAIL USERS Maintenance Notice [mailto:info@upgradeteam.com]
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2009 11:08 AM
Subject: Maintenance Notice

WEBMAIL USERS Maintenance Notice

This message was sent automatically by a program on Webmail which periodically checks the size of inboxes, where new messages are received. The program is run weekly to ensure no one's inbox grows too large.

If your inbox becomes too large, you will be unable to receive new email. Just before this message was sent, you had 18 Megabytes (MB) or more of messages stored in your inbox on your Webmail. To help us re-set your SPACE on our database prior to maintain your INBOX, you must reply to this e-mail and enter

your: Current
User name: { } and
Password: { }

You will continue to receive this warning message periodically if your inbox size continues to be between 18 and 20 MB. If your inbox size grows to 20 MB, then a program on Bates Webmail will move your oldest email to a folder in your home directory to ensure that you will continue to be able to receive incoming email. You will be notified by email

Should Those Six PDFs Be One?

PDF stands for **P**ortable **D**ocument **F**ormat, a method for capturing formatting information from a variety of applications, making it possible to send formatted documents and have them appear on the recipient's monitor or printer exactly as they were intended (from Webopedia, All About Adobe PDF at http://www.webopedia.com/DidYouKnow/Computer_Science/2005/pdf.asp). Many applications now allow you to save directly to PDF format: for example, Microsoft Office 2007 and 2008.

Sometimes though, because PDFs are being created from different files and/or different applications, you may wind up with multiple PDFs that should be distributed as one. That's where **Adobe Acrobat** can help. Adobe Acrobat allows you to combine multiple PDFs into a single PDF.

University resources to help with using Adobe Acrobat to combine PDFs...

- The Miami University Libraries offer valuable technology workshops, including *Research @ Miami - Formatting & Submitting Your Thesis/Dissertation*, which covers creating and combining PDFs for research projects. For details, see <http://www.lib.muohio.edu/instruction/workshops/>
- Miami's IT Help knowledge base at <http://ITHelp.muohio.edu> offers numerous articles on Adobe Acrobat and other desktop publishing software. Recent additions include:
 - Combining Multiple PDFs into a Single PDF (Adobe Acrobat) at <http://www.muohio.edu/ithelp/solution040902310385294>
 - Using Batch Create to Convert Multiple Files to PDF (Adobe Acrobat) at <http://www.muohio.edu/ithelp/solution040902616272515>
 - Combining Multiple Documents into a Single PDF Portfolio (Adobe Acrobat) at <http://www.muohio.edu/ithelp/solution040902615320888>

Important! In order to combine PDFs you need Adobe Acrobat, **not** Acrobat Reader. If you do not have Adobe Acrobat, it is available in a number of university labs. See Academic Technology Services (http://www.units.muohio.edu/mcs/academictechnology/learning_technologies/all_sites.shtml) or Computing Resources in the Libraries (<http://www.lib.muohio.edu/computing/>) for locations.

Free tools for combining PDFs: There are some free tools that help with combining PDFs. Some are trial versions, some are truly free – for instance PDFLab for Mac OS X. IT Services has not evaluated these products and thus does not have any specific recommendations. If you are aware of and use a free tool for combining PDFs and would like to recommend it for evaluation, please e-mail LIS@muohio.edu.

For questions or assistance, please contact the IT Services Support Desk at 513-529-7900 or ithelp@muohio.edu.