Research & Teaching Tools, November 2006

Homewood Faculty eNews digests summarize some of the resources available to Homewood faculty from the Center for Educational Resources, the Sheridan Libraries, and IT@JH.

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UNIVERSITY

Research and Teaching Tools
A Homewood Faculty e-Newsletter

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Is more spam getting through to your email account? IT@JH is exploring a new filter to address the problem.

I Making the Most of WebCT

WebCT has been used by various academic departments at Johns Hopkins for over five years. The system allows instructors to set up their own Web sites to provide information for any or all classes they teach. It is a resource that can provide a minimal course presence – e.g., syllabus, assignment schedule, grades – or a rich set of resources, such as eReserves, image databases, problem sets, or animations and simulations. WebCT

also provides a variety of options for course activities not available during face-to-face teaching – for example, faculty can extend class dialogue via online discussion boards as well as allow students to check their understanding of course concepts by developing online quizzes and assessments. Through WebCT, instructors can also post supplementary Web links and resources to support whatever topics are being studied, thus providing students with complete options to extend their understanding of class content. Also, because WebCT requires a Johns Hopkins login, faculty and students are assured that resources are copyright protected within a secure environment.

To help faculty take full advantage of this resource, the Center for Educational Resources (CER), located in the Garrett room of the MSE library, offers an online WebCT tutorial program through its website: http://www.cer.jhu.edu/webct. New users can request a brief orientation to WebCT entitled, *"WebCT One: Learning the Landscape."* This introductory tutorial highlights key features and functionalities. The second online WebCT tutorial, *"WebCT Two: Building Your Own Course,"* consists of self-paced, modular lessons that allow you to concentrate on only those WebCT functionalities that are relevant to your interests. Experienced users and those already familiar with the basics of the program, may start at this step. After these two sections have been completed, instructors can add as much or as little content to the course web page as they choose.

If you are not interested in the online tutorial approach to learning WebCT, the CER offers in-person, face-to-face small group training or one-on-one consultations with a WebCT trainer. Through the CER, WebCT training and support are always available.

Additional resources include a Hopkins WebCT Faculty User Group through which instructors are connected to the knowledge and experiences of other faculty who use WebCT, FAQs that contain tips for more effective use, and a Mid-Atlantic Regional WebCT Users Group, which sponsors meetings, presentations, and discussions about the program.

If you are interested in WebCT training, or would like to request a course site, click here to get to the CER website, where you will find additional information about WebCT support and trouble-shooting. You may also choose to join the Johns Hopkins WebCT mailing list where administrators update faculty about version changes, new features, and training opportunities. Click here to subscribe.

For more information, including the fastest way to request a one-on-one consultation, contact Amy Zimmerman at amyz@jhu.edu; tel: 410.516.5340.

II   iTunes U – Core Concept and an Example of Peer Practice

iTunes U, an offshoot of the popular iTunes music purchase and download site, is a free online distribution initiative that enables institutions of higher education to distribute content in either a publicly viewable or password-protected format (or both). The service allows users to access media files such as podcasts, interviews, lectures, videos, and music for use on PC and Mac computers or through iPod MP3 players. Publicly accessible content is accessible 24x7.

Examples of publicly available content distributed by other universities include news feeds, lectures, special events, and sports activities. The initial publicly accessible "instance" of Hopkins on iTunes U will be managed jointly by the offices of News & Information and Alumni Relations.

Faculty can post password-protected course content (viewable through JHED logins) to supplement face to face instruction. The main advantage of posting content through the system is its wide use by students who wish to have mobile access to information and entertainment resources. For more information on how to make some or all of your course content accessible through the iTunes U distribution system, contact Brian Cole (bcole@jhu.edu; tel: 410.516.5418).

iTunes U is being used to distribute content by a number of peer universities, such as Stanford, UC Berkley, and Duke. A glance at Duke University's iPod initiative (through which iPods are subsidized for students and faculty who incorporate podcasts as part of their courses, from art history to computer science to language study) suggests some possible uses at JHU.

Duke began its Duke Digital Initiative (DDI) by issuing iPods several years ago to all incoming freshmen. Today, iPods are more actively used than ever, but students must pay part of their cost. Students and faculty purchase video iPods for $99 (normal retail $400), through a program that subsidizes their purchase from the bookstore. Duke courses that use iPods have expanded dramatically: in 2004-05 there were 10 courses and 250 students; this fall, there are 82 courses with 1,400 students enrolled. The digital technology initiative has been expanded to include other technologies as well, including use of tablet PCs, handheld computers, collaborative learning tools, and digital recording for the distribution of classroom lectures via RSS feeds. iPods continue to be the most faculty-requested instructional technology at Duke.

In addition to its iPod initiative with Apple, Duke has developed an active collaboration with businesses. For example, they have partnered with the creators of "Lectopia" to implement a product that captures lectures digitally and makes them available over the internet shortly after class. They also integrate digital audio content created and published by Public Radio International as part of their podcasting activity. Duke is integrating blogs and wikis into its course management system. For those who wish to explore the details of the DDI, including information about projects and iTunes U, visit their website at http://www.duke.edu/ddi.

Some of these resources are in use at Hopkins; others are being explored. If you are interested in learning more about any of these technologies or piloting them in your courses, please contact Candice Dalrymple the Center for Educational Resources (cdalrymple@jhu.edu; tel: 410.516.8848).

III Auto-podcasting at JHU

On the Homewood campus, an "auto" podcasting pilot is now live and easy to use. This technology allows faculty to activate a wireless microphone at the start of class, click a podcasting icon on their podium's computer, and record their lectures. Instructors may select the 50 minute, 90 minute, or 120 minute option to correspond to their needed class length. When the recording has concluded, content is automatically compressed and uploaded (by IT@JH software) as an MP3 file to the University's Podcasting server – <podcasting.jhu.edu> – where it is immediately stored and sorted. The class lectures are automatically synchronized through links to the Registrar's course location records, so instructors do not have to interact with tech staff to determine where to file each individual podcast.

Student access to the podcasts is transparent and dependable. To retrieve a podcast, students need only to go to the server, where they will find the podcasts sorted by department, class, date and time. Students can download the podcasts to a laptop or any brand MP3 player (not just an iPod) to review whenever they need. They may listen to the podcast from the website or they may choose to copy the shortcut of the RSS feed and download it to iTunes U. Through JHU Podcasting, students can "subscribe" to all the podcasts of designated courses; they do not have to search for particular lectures or download them one by one.

Currently, the podcast capability exists through the podium computers in six of the largest classrooms on the Homewood campus—Hodson 110, 210, 311, Mudd 26, and Mergenthaler 111. For those who do not teach in these rooms, it is still possible to use podcasting. To make any new room podcast-capable, the following is required: a wireless microphone to enable the faculty member to move around during lecture without compromising audio quality and a PC or laptop that is assigned by the staff at IT@JH to that particular room (so server can recognize the point of origination and integrate the audio files into the appropriate locations on the server). A lecture of 50 minutes creates a file approximately 50 mgs in size; audio files are recorded at 160 kbps. Currently the lectures are not password protected, but the staff at IT@JH would investigate that capability if faculty members request it.

IV   Eisenhower Express at Hopkins

Eisenhower Express is just one of the services now offered to faculty and graduate students to enhance research. With Express, you simply submit a request through our new website. The Express staff will find the article, scan it, and email you when it's ready. The e-mail will link you to the site where the article will be waiting in PDF format, usually within 24 hours. Our Interlibrary Staff will handle requests for items such as books and journals that are not owned by the JHU library. When you submit your request, our staff will find other libraries that own the material and request it on your

behalf. In the case of articles, we can electronically deliver them.

To simplify this process, our system now makes it easier for you to submit requests and have them delivered.

With our latest system, you can:

- Create an account and submit personal information (name, address, contact information, etc.) when you make your first request. You no longer have to input this information each time.
- Login at any time and see the status of your request(s). You will learn if ILL the staff have received your request, and you will be able to track its progress.
- Login to receive and view your articles in PDF format. The articles will remain available for 30 days or until you delete them from your account.
- Request renewal of books obtained via Interlibrary Loan at any time through a click of a button through your account. You no longer need to contact ILL staff to request a renewal.
- Submit requests more efficiently from the database in which you are searching, by clicking FIND IT G . Our new software improves our contact with other libraries which, in some cases, will help speed up delivery.

To get started and to learn more, please visit http://ils.library.jhu.edu/

V   Turnitin at Hopkins

Turnitin is an Internet-based resource now available to Homewood faculty, instructors, and TAs, which facilitates quick and easy identification of plagiarism in submitted work. If a student's paper appears to have unoriginal content, Turnitin will check the text against a variety of databases of content. These databases include millions of student papers already submitted to Turnitin, more than 4.5 billion pages of the publicly accessible internet pages (updated by 40 million pages daily), the article collections of the ProQuest commercial databases, ABI/Inform, Business Dateline, periodical abstracts, and tens of thousands of electronic books, including the Gutenburg Collection of Literary Classics.

Once a paper is submitted though the web, Turnitin will issue an "originality report" on the content. These reports contain similarity indexes and direct source comparison windows that will link to any text found in Turnitin's database system. Faculty then analyze the report and decide if the paper constitutes plagiarism. If the text is found to be unoriginal, it appears underlined, color-coded and linked to its original source. This system saves time and is more efficient when compared to a search engine, which requires copying and pasting text and sifting through hundreds of web pages. Turnitin can also be integrated with WebCT to collaborate with any instructor's class website.

This program works not only as an identifier of plagiarized work, but also as a deterrent to students. If students know that faculty use Turnitin, the lure of copying and pasting information without citation is discouraged. It can also be used as a teaching tool to help motivate students to use proper research and citation techniques.

The Center for Educational Resources (CER) will offer training for faculty on how to properly use this tool and how to interpret its results. In addition, both the MSE Library and CER will offer materials to instructors to help students learn how to correctly cite works to avoid improper matches in the system.

To find our more information about this program, learn how to obtain your account, and explore how Turnitin can be used as part of Hopkins' academic integrity environment; check-out the Turnitin section of the CER website at http://www.cer.jhu.edu/turnitin/

VI   New Anti-Spam Filter In Test Phase
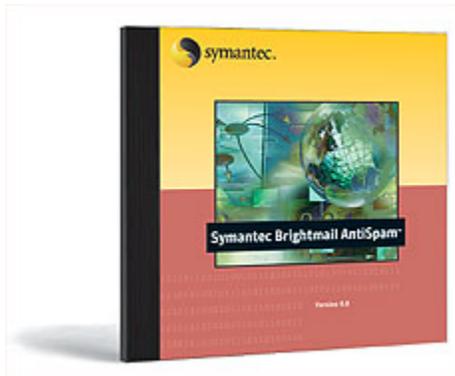
Because an increasing amount of spam has been slipping through our current *Symantec Brightmail AntiSpam Filter* – especially image-embedded spam – IT@JH is testing a new, supplementary spam filter that better detects spam embedded in image files and checks email that has passed the *Brightmail* filter. The new filter can also evaluate characteristics like the reputation of the sending IP address. At this stage, suspicious messages will not be quarantined, because the rate of false positives is not known. Instead, suspicious messages will be delivered to the recipient's inbox with the tag, [JH-SUSP SPAM]. If and when it turns out that the new anti-spam product alleviates the embedded spam problem and correctly distinguishes spam from legitimate messages, the spam messages it identifies will be quarantined for those who opt into the spam quarantine service.

During this evaluation period, please use the following email addresses to report messages that were either not detected or incorrectly tagged. The messages must be forwarded as an attachment.

* Report underdetected spam to: spam@access.ironport.com
* Report false-positives to: ham@access.ironport.com

Unfortunately for Mac users, neither *Mail* nor *Eudora* permits forwarding an email message as an attachment.