Video/Broadcast Services (VBS) provides interactive video conferencing, video production, and streaming media to support class offerings. VBS operates distance learning classrooms throughout the state, and has piloted video-conferenced classes with Wake Forest and Boise State. Instructor training and technical assistance is available for videoconferencing equipment, as well as design tips on educational materials. VBS facilities are used for meetings, presentations, interviews, and other videoconferencing. VBS also offers a live and on-demand streaming media servers that support classes, projects, and special events.

VBS provides full service connectivity, monitoring, and diagnostic support for the Commonwealth-wide interactive video conferencing network and network terminal locations using ATM, ISDN and IP protocols and state-of-the-art equipment.

Services include video bridging, connecting multiple two-way interactive audio-video conferencing endpoints at speeds of up to 1152 kbps, and conversion for different endpoint speeds and compression or protocols. VBS supports the addition of new endpoints by establishing technical and scheduling contacts and pre-testing. Problem resolution is available through the newly consolidated Customer Service Center (formerly, the VTOC and 4help).

VBS can design, develop, coordinate, and produce multimedia programming for analog or digital media, streaming or downloadable computer files, video conference networks, and direct satellite broadcast.

High quality graphic and animation creation are available in the full service post production editing and compositing facilities.

The main office is located in 288 Whittemore. The staff includes: In Whittemore Hall: Mark Harden, Director; Patsy Galliher, Nancy Gibson, Sam Tressel, Joe Schottman, Ruthanne Everham, Taikara Peek, Dave Mattox, Doug Whorley, Jeff Dalton, Kevin Cook, and Andrew Tweedt; in the Video Network Operation Center: Larry Morris and Ludwig Gantner; in the Northern Virginia Center: Jim Murphy and Dan Gieckel; and in the Hampton Roads Center: Sean Killion.
ACCS of Virginia

The Association of Collegiate Computing Services (ACCS) of Virginia supports the sharing of information among technology professionals in Virginia’s colleges and universities. ACCS’s goal is to share interests in information technology among both public and private colleges. The annual workshop will be held April 13 to 15 in Richmond, Virginia. Entitled “The Cutting Edge of Technology: Running with Scissors,” the workshop includes keynote speakers, interactive panel discussions led by CIOs, opportunities to network with peers, and vendor displays. Pre-workshop sessions focus on customer service quality, network security issues, digital music software, network registration, and migration to Macs.

Mike Naff serves on the Board of Directors and is the current chair of the organization.

More on the conference can be found at http://accs.virginia.edu/workshop.html

Pervasive Computing

Bill Plymale’s article on pervasive computing appeared in the January/February Educause Review. Growing awareness of pervasive computing concepts facilitate new ways of thinking about event notification, identity management, instructional technologies, and related projects, and will provide opportunities for new projects and partnerships.

Benefits to universities of pervasive computing include:

- Improved capabilities for communications, coordination, collaboration, and knowledge exchange
- Removal of time and space constraints for accessing information
- Enhanced decision-making abilities based on receiving and processing up-to-date organizational and environmental data
- Expanded user awareness of the environment through resource and service discovery.

Library System Selected

Virginia Tech has selected Innovative Interfaces Incorporated (III) for its future library system, following a competitive proposal process. The library committee that selected the product was assisted by several groups and individuals within IT to develop the technology infrastructure requirements in the RFP as it relates to the network, storage, and our enterprise systems. In addition, Information Technology Acquisition assisted in the procurement process. The new system will be phased in over the next 18 months. This summer will see the online public access catalog and circulation modules, with acquisitions and other functional modules in the fall and after. One anticipated benefit of the new system is better access to search of full text online resources. This is one example of the integration and research support that are anticipated to be benefits of the new system.

Microsoft Risk Assessment

For two weeks in March, Microsoft is completing a Risk Assessment on Exchange and the Active Directory, as part of a service the company offers to selected customers. The goal is to help the university manage risk, using a methodology that identifies the elements and layers of applications in our complex enterprise environment. Specifically, the assessment focuses on infrastructure, applications, operations, and people. The Microsoft team is working with the relevant units within IT to identify critical elements, and evaluate the implementation of defense in-depth strategies, making recommendations to further mitigate risk. The results will include a baseline risk assessment and a comparison with other Microsoft customers and with customers specific to higher education. For more information, contact Greg Kroll (usdgk@vt.edu).