Innovation Space—Twitter poetry contest

The VT Twitter Poetry Competition celebrates the diversity and inclusive excellence at Virginia Tech, in support of the university’s “Principles of Community.” The InnovationSpace collaborated with the College of Architecture and Urban Studies (CAUS) to provide the technology solutions for the contest. Innovation Space provided the contest organizers with a Twitter site, and the directions for logging in and creating the tweets. If students needed help in posting their tweets, the Innovation Space staff was available to help. Additionally, the InnovationSpace partnered with the CAUS to promote the contest. The competition site is http://twitter.com/VTPoetry. Prizes will be announced at the Principles of Community Reception where winners will recite their poems. The contest is sponsored by the College of Architecture and Urban Studies Diversity Committee, the Taskforce on Race and the Institution—Undergraduate Subcommittee, and InnovationSpace.

Google competition

Virginia Tech and the Town of Blacksburg have applied for Google’s fiber to the home project. IT’s involvement includes staff and work from BEV, eCorridors, VGIS, and CNS. A video showcasing Blacksburg and Virginia Tech as a "global showcase for technology innovation" can be viewed at www.youtube.com/user/eCorridors—then, "future forward blacksburg". Congressman Rick Boucher has a video statement of support (www.youtube.com/watch?v=CpFxfxiHUSI).

Google will choose one or more communities to deploy fiber to the home as quickly as possible. The Official Google Blog notes that more than 1100 communities applied, with a map of where those communities are located. See http://googleblog.blogspot.com/2010/03/next-steps-for-our-experimental-fiber.html.

State budget/furlough day

It was announced at University Council on March 29 that the university would use internal budgeting to find the money to cover the one remaining furlough day mandated by the state. As a result, no Virginia Tech employees will face a furlough day for budgetary reasons this year.

DCSS—Mark your calendars—Thursday, April 22, 8 am until noon, Owens.
IT Leadership Development program

Participants in the IT Leadership Development program have completed their work for the year. The program consists of three onsite sessions with executive coaching, assessments of communications and work styles, leadership ethics, change management and effective communications. Participants are Marc DeBonis, Shelli Fowler, Brian Jones, Greg Kroll, Ken McCreery, Mike Moyer, Peter Sforza, and Eddie Watson. More on the program is available at www.uopd.vt.edu/uod_vt.edu/IT_Leadership/Index.html.

Training and networking opportunities

The course, “Sans 560-Network Penetration Testing and Ethical Hacking” will take place on the Virginia Tech campus during May 17-22. For more information please visit www.cpe.vt.edu/isect/index.html or contact marchany@vt.edu.

Higher Education Data Warehousing Conference 2010, Albany, NY, April 18-20, 2010. The conference includes two days of educational sessions for $325. A special pre-conference training session entitled “Business Intelligence Roadmap: The Complete Project Lifecycle for Decision-Support Applications” will be held April 18 for an additional fee of $500. Conference registration and program information is available at www.hedw.org.

IT Connection

The 2010 edition of the IT Connection, a spring publication of Information Technology at Virginia Tech, is available at www.it.vt.edu/publications/pdf/ITConnection_2010.pdf. Featured topics include an update on Scholar, a write-up on recent and coming improvements in network connectivity in Virginia, and a behind-the-scenes look at the technology involved in VT Alerts. The publication is designed for all university employees.

Winter break resolution

The resolution on winter break closing went to University Council for adoption on March 29 and now goes to the board of visitors. The closing is expected to result in significant savings for the university. The closing is to last from December 26 through New Year’s Day, with the first closing to occur at the end of 2011. During the break, Facilities will optimize energy cost savings. Departments with critical operations that could be negatively affected must identify such locations in advance of the closing. Essential services may be exempted from the closing. The resolution will amend the holiday policy, noting that AP faculty and classified and university staff personnel must use annual or other appropriate leave to cover the days not worked, or be placed on leave-without-pay status. Newly hired staff will receive 4 days of family personal leave, rather than the current 2 days if hired in second half of the year.

Educause issued a statement on the FCC’s plan, “Connecting America: The National Broadband Plan.” The plan endorses Unified Community Anchor Network (UCAN) that uses the community anchor institution model established by nonprofit network organizations and recommended by EDUCAUSE, Internet2, National LambdaRail, and others.. [See “Latest news” at www.educause.edu.]

UCAN provides high-speed broadband connectivity to anchor community institutions such as colleges and schools, libraries, and hospitals.

Anticipated benefits to higher education include enhancing and extending networking capabilities, including one gigabit-per-second connectivity to anchor institutions; and extending high-speed nationwide connectivity to more than 100,000 qualified institutions that lack it today.