Educause award


Guest Access Management System

The Guest Access Management System (GAMS) moved into production at the end of July. GAMS allows university application services to create and manage guest accounts. While GAMS is an infrastructure that can be used for multiple purposes, the initial use will enable students to invite a parent or other trusted person to view their financial aid information. The process permits efficient creation of new guests accounts, self-management by the guests of password changes, and automated deprovisioning. Third-party e-mail addresses form the basis of identifying the guests.

The first application to use GAMS will be a financial aid application. It will increase the trust that information about a student is disclosed only to individuals who have been authorized by the student. The ability for a student to delegate viewing of financial aid information will be available to students with the fall semester. In conjunction with the “entitlements” project, GAMS and the financial aid project permit (a) the application to permit use of guest access, and (b) an individual student to assign privileges to view personal information on a fine-grained basis.

National LambdaRail

National LambdaRail and Darkstrand, Inc. have formed a strategic business alliance to create a sustainable path to the future that provides NLR members with the research infrastructure needed. National LambdaRail supports experimental and production networks that make possible advances in networking research and next-generation applications. NLR and Darkstrand both focus on the goal of advancing global education and research development through networking technology. (See www.nlr.net).
Scheduling Coordination Group

The new Scheduling Coordination Group, including representation from all Information Technology areas, reviews proposed dates for deployments and maintenance, and resolves conflicts. The coordination group will verify that provisions are being made for communicating deployments and maintenance to the appropriate university user communities. William Dougherty convenes the group consisting of:

Enterprise Systems
Facilities
Learning Technologies
NI&S—Network Engineering
NI&S—Switch Engineering
NI&S—Systems Support
NI&S—Customer Service
Research Computing
Secure Enterprise Technology Initiatives
Information Technology Security Office

Move-In IT assistance

VT—I.T. & You is an Information Technology event that provides students and their parents the opportunity to learn about the services offered IT; learn to navigate the IT websites; set up wireless connections; get assistance with installing software; get answers to technical questions; and pick up software bundles. The event is held August 20 through 24 on Torgersen Bridge.

Get Connected (GC) teams work in the residence halls during move-in, assisting students in getting the university's Internet software—VTnet—installed and to get their computers connected to the Virginia Tech network. Get Connected staff members also provide assistance at VT—I.T. and You. GC is available through the first week of classes in the evenings. GC hires about 60 students each fall to work with the teams. See www.computing.vt.edu/help_and_tutorials/get_connected/index.html

Web 3D 2008

The Web 3D 2008 Symposium was held August 9-10 in Los Angeles. This year marks year 13 of the international symposium on 3D Web technology. Nicholas Polys (Research Computing, Visualization) is the general co-chair. More information on the program can be found at www.web3d.org/conferences/web3d2008/program/index.html.

Enterprise GIS unit

Enterprise GIS Research and Development Administration is a new unit in response to increasing demand for GIS data and storage resources university-wide. The GIS unit reports within the Strategic Partnership Initiatives area managed by Brenda van Gelder. It will provide access to centralized GIS datasets and a base map for campus, and technical support assistance to administrative and academic departments for research and facilities needs. The unit may expand its services to municipal and state organizations in the future. Enterprise GIS coordinates component functions from throughout Information Technology to perform the following tasks:

- Manage application administration of core enterprise GIS components, such as the ArcSDE middleware, ArcGIS Server web services and web applications
- Ensure interoperability between the server applications and user applications
- Integrate emerging server-side GIS technologies (including open-source alternatives to the core products, Google Maps applications, and others)
- Offer value-added application development services to internal IT units, academic departments, and external agencies as appropriate
- Provide or obtain referrals for training in the use of Enterprise GIS technologies
- Serve as the IT unit’s central point for GIS issues and requests

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