New association for ePortfolio

Virginia Tech has joined the Association for Authentic, Experiential and Evidence-Based Learning (AAEEBL), a new organization dedicated to “establishing common understandings of varieties of ePortfolio uses and promoting technical standards developed by other organizations; creating an ePortfolio standard lexicon (with international variations), and defining a minimal feature set for various classes of ePortfolios.” Virginia Tech ePortfolio Initiatives with the university faculty will help shape the national conversation around the use of ePortfolios in higher education. For more on ePortfolio, see http://eportfolio.vt.edu/

SAMS

The Scheduling and Announcement of Maintenance Group brings together the units within Information Technology to ensure that scheduling of maintenance and deployment do not cause conflicts. Members review proposed dates resolve potential conflicts. Any conflicts that cannot be resolved must be escalated. Because of the nature of the group, each designated area must be represented so that services and functions anticipated in support of deployments are available, and planned or contingent outages are known in advance. The IT Critical Dates Calendar is a key tool—available from the IT website (www.it.vt.edu) under “For IT Employees.”

This group supplements other groups' activities with a focus on ensuring maintenance activities are properly coordinated, announced, and documented.


Ithaca—research computing

Ithaca is the latest Advanced Research Computing compute resource. It is an IBM iDataPlex 84 node system. Nodes are dual-socket quad-core with Intel Nehalem processors running at 2.26 GHz and have 24 GB of RAM. Ten of the nodes have 48 GB of memory. The system will be available this Fall and will allow users to run research computing applications that are supported on an Intel-based platform running Linux, including MPI based applications. The system will be available through the ARC queuing system.
CHAMPS

Enterprise GIS and the InnovationSpace have partnered with civil engineering to add features to the CHAMPS project.

Jesus de la Garza, Vecellio Professor of Construction Engineering and Management, directs the “Center for Highway Asset Management Program” to monitor the interstate highway system for the Virginia Department of Transportation. The project identifies issues within the highway system that need repair, including broken signs, blocked drainage culverts, debris and similar hazards. The latest addition to this project is the use of GPS-enabled cameras to create files that can be viewed in Google Maps and Google Earth. The file can be searched by section of interstate, type of asset, type of problem, and date of photo. De la Garza worked with Enterprise GIS and the InnovationSpace to add the images and location to files provided to VDOT.

VDWS

Read more about the benefits of Virtual Dedicated Windows Servers (VDWS) at http://www.computing.vt.edu/infrastructure_services/vdws/index.html. VDWS is a hosted service offered through the Microsoft Implementation Group in SETI. VDWS allows departments to use virtualization hosting services to consolidate physical hardware into virtual software applications.

Not surprisingly, the leading “Top 10 Issue” in the annual Educause survey for information technology is funding. Other articles in the recent Educause Review also focus on the fiscal crisis. Philip Goldstein advises (“Managing in a New Reality”) to revise processes to leverage technology, and to realign information technology with the core. Assumptions important to that realignment include an accelerating interest in hybrid and distance learning, along with intensified need for data and analytics. [www.educause.edu/EDUCAUSE+Review/ERVolume442009/EDUCAUSEReviewMagazineVolume44/174184]