



IT@VT visits Penn State

During the week of September 6th, several Information Technology staff members visited Penn State to exchange information and ideas about several topics within information technology:

Find information

- answers.vt.edu
- computing.vt.edu
- [CNS FAQs](#)
- [Online Course Support](#)
- [Element K](#)
- security.vt.edu
- antivirus.vt.edu
- [Annual Report](#)

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Security and Privacy | Content Management and Digital Asset Management |
| Teaching and Learning | Strategic Issues |
| Administrative Systems | Communications and Public Relations |
| Outreach | Human Resources |
| Campus Infrastructure and Networking | Licensing |
| High Performance Computing | Hospital Model and IT Organizational Issues |
| Help Desk | Services and Operations |
| Disaster Recovery | |

Seek out an attendee if you'd like to know how Penn State handles one or more of these issues!

Assistive Technologies (A.T.)

Assistive Technologies conducts research, education, and provides leadership in the use of technologies to empower people with disabilities for a lifetime of learning, teaching, work and independence. Assistive Technologies—the A.T. Lab and Special Services—offers expertise in the use of assistive technologies for all individuals, particularly to persons with disabilities at Virginia Tech and in the Commonwealth. A.T. staff members are William Holbach and Hal Brackett.

The A.T. Lab is dedicated to multidisciplinary research, development of new assistive technologies, and better uses of existing technologies. Besides web accessibility initiatives, research includes working with Electrical and Computer Engineering's e-Textile Laboratory on wearable computers (e-textiles) for a range of assistive technologies. E-textiles hold promise for environmental awareness and control, health monitoring, and pervasive computing for living environments. Another function of the Lab is to raise awareness about disabilities, research results, and the benefits of assistive technologies for all individuals through education, professional workshops, consulting, and outreach. The Torgersen Hall A.T. Lab is maintained as a multi-functional facility—a model classroom, conference/demonstration facility, and accessible distance-learning center.

Special Services in Newman Library maintains assistive technologies to include computers, software, and equipment adaptations, such as display magnification, color filtering, synthetic speech, voice recognition, and adjustable ergonomic equipment. Training is provided to individuals who are referred by Services for Students with Disabilities or the ADA Coordinator (Personnel Services). Special Services also provides leadership for accommodations based on assistive technologies to university computing facilities, classrooms, laboratories, and the university libraries. Departments may contact Assistive Technologies for consulting services on accessibility, assistive technologies, and disability service issues related to A.T. (assist@vt.edu; 540-231-3461).

In this issue

- IT at VT visits PSU 1
- Assistive Technologies 1
- My VT: New Portal paradigm 2
- Getting Rural Virginia Connected 2
- ESRI Award 2

My VT: New Portal paradigm

Volume 1, Issue 6

Previously, the portal was Virginia Tech's first open source, uPortal implementation. The new version implements the latest uPortal upgrade, with additional local enhancements focused on performance, stability, and usability.

New Look: more attractive; easier navigation.

User Layouts: an aggregated, rather than a single, layout. For example, a staff member taking classes will see both staff and student channels.

Simpler Interface for Changing Content: faster and easier.

Customizable Home Tab: only the announcements and "What's New" channels cannot be removed.

Customizable Shared Column: Channels in the left column are displayed on every tab—the ideal spot for information you always want available.

Simplified Settings: It's easier to modify My VT settings using the Settings tab (far right

tab), with links to PID password change and e-mail settings.

My VT Toolbar: The upper right toolbar links to WebMail and Filebox, in addition to Help and Log Off.

Fewer New Windows: Services integrated with My VT open in the same window. The Log Off button will log you out of all services you accessed through My VT.

Reworked Channel Content: For easier use.

Weather Channel: For any US ZIP Code.

Simplified Bookmarks Channel: For easier management.

New Channels: hokiesports.com, BBC News, and CNET News.com.

Information Technology at Virginia Tech

Vice President for Information
Technology
Earving Blythe
1700 Kraft Drive, Mailstop
0169

Phone: 540-231-4227
Website: www.it.vt.edu

Getting Rural Virginia Connected

The Blacksburg Electronic Village (BEV) is completing a project funded by the US Department of Commerce through a [Technology Opportunities Program](#) grant that is providing "electronic villages" in several Virginia communities and examining how residents of those counties use the web for social and civic interactions and for economic development. The project leverages information technology in providing tools and training to community residents, improving their ability to take part in the decision making process within their communities. The project is a partnership with [Virginia Cooperative Extension](#).

The types of assistance that participating [counties](#) receive include:

- Developing and deploying community network services, including web sites, directories, calendars, web hosting, virtual business incubator, and technology assessment;
- Recruitment and training of citizen technology leadership teams;
- A comprehensive technology assessment and master plan for the county; and
- Technical support for the community's web sites, including a transition year beyond the close of the grant.

For more information see the project webpage at <http://top.bev.net>.

ITA is presented with award from ESRI

Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) conferred its Special Achievement in GIS Award to Virginia Tech at its 24th annual International User Conference, August 9, in San Diego. Information Technology Acquisitions (ITA) was named for its efforts, along with the Virginia Geospatial Extension Program and the Center for Geospatial Information Technology. Kathy Williams (ITA) was instrumental in adding the community colleges to the statewide higher education contract.

Under the contract, colleges and universities can purchase the educational software necessary to teach geographic information systems (GIS) at a variety of levels. The statewide contracts puts the GIS software within the budgetary reach of many more institutions, expanding the teaching, learning, and research capabilities of higher ed in Virginia. [<http://gis.esri.com/uc2004/sag/list/index.cfm?fa=detail&SID=52>]

Techsupport: Fall DCSS will be held October 21 at Owens Banquet Hall. To reserve a slot, e-mail SusanBG@vt.edu.