June 10, 2011

 UIT S
 Factoids
 Did you know?

35
# software titles available through Site License in 2010

40,980
# downloads of free or discounted software from Site License in 2010

5,800
# courses hosted on learning management system in 2010

200,313
# seats hosted on learning management system in 2010

New Research Computing Data Center
Now Under Construction

Faster, cheaper, better. These three words could be the mantra for a major project taking shape in the basement of UA's Computer Center Building. In just about two months the space will be transformed into a state of the art computing and data center for Research Computing.

As most of us have become accustomed, scientific advancements constantly drive down the size and cost of technology while capabilities increase at a seemingly quantum rate. This phenomenon also allows the new data center to be equipped with new equipment that far surpasses the capabilities of the current research computers that are just four years old.

“We are getting twice as many processors that fit in half the space for the same budget as our last technology refresh four years ago,” says Dr. Michael Bruck, Assistant Director and head of the Research Computing Group.

However, installing a new research computer is not as simple as plugging in a new computer at home. Building a new data center is a major project.

“These powerful new computers consume massive amounts of electricity,” says Kathleen Bowles, Assistant Director, Operations Center. “And much of that power gets converted to heat which we must remove from the room.

Though it may not look very impressive now, soon this space will be home of state-of-the-art super computers used by researchers across UA. Photo by Lisa Stage
“It was really nice to have a relaxed opportunity to talk to people you don’t normally get to see—find out what they’re doing that relates to your work; find out what you’re doing that relates to their work.” - Catherine Zavala, UITS WaTT
If you ever wished you could use the UA Phonebook or Campus Map on your iPhone without squinting at the Arizona.edu website on a tiny screen—now you can.

The Arizona Mobile app is now available as a free download from the iTunes App Store, with Phonebook and Map, plus the course catalog, Athletics schedules, UANews, photos, videos, podcasts from iTunesU, and more. Click the “Mobile” button on the bottom of the arizona.edu main page, or go directly www.arizona.edu/apps to see the complete suite of components in the apps.

“Students are using smart phones for so many things already,” says Nick Adamakis, Director of Marketing for Student Affairs. “So it was obvious that UA should have mobile apps. The question was ‘which ones do we do first?’ and determining the best approach.”

“Eventually we want to be able to register, drop and add courses – basically anything you can do now or access from a desktop computer,” according to Student Affairs’ Adamakis. “The goal is to provide a suite of mobile applications, targeted at different mobile platforms, to enrich the academic and campus life of students, faculty, staff and alumni and provide connectivity to information required on a day-to-day basis.”

Student Affairs partnered with UITS to contract with Blackboard, a vendor who specializes in university mobile apps. Blackboard has developed similar apps for other universities, which greatly condensed the timeline for producing the UA’s suite of features. It also helped with submitting the app to iTunes, as Apple is familiar with their work. The iTunes app was the first completed Apple’s iPhone, iTouch and iPad. An Android version is next to be developed, and there are plans for a BlackBerry version.

From UITS, Business Analyst Lynette Chaudoin led the Arizona Mobile project, and teamed with Assistant Director of Applications Management Laurel Wadlund, Web Team Lead Mark Fischer, Senior Enterprise Systems Architect Gary Windham, and Applications Systems Analyst/Developer Principal Brett Bendickson to work out porting data from the University’s databases to mobile devices. The team also worked with Joseph Boudreaux from the Office of Instruction and Assessment on development, with Grant McCormick from Planning, Design, and Construction to get the data layers for the Campus Map, with Misha Harrison and the Student Affairs Marketing creative team to design the look and feel of the app, and with External Relations for news and events content.

“It’s all about getting the right people to the table to get things done,” says Adamakis. I don’t think we would have done this any differently, as there is a wealth of talent on this campus to work with. It’s been a fun and enriching project and a lot of folks deserve a lot of credit for going the extra mile to make it happen.”

Student Affairs and External Relations recently announced the availability of the apps to the student body, faculty and staff, alumni, and the community.

UITS is also getting the word out to new incoming students, with Chaudoin and student worker, Morgan Larson, demonstrating the new apps at Student Orientations through the summer.

To get Arizona Mobile for your iPhone, iPod Touch, or iPad, visit www.arizona.edu/apps and click the button for the iTunes App Store.
to keep the equipment cool.”

“We are running two six-inch copper pipes from the University's chilled water plant to bring cooling water into the room,” says Derek Masseth, Senior Director, Client and Infrastructure Services. “And at the price of copper these days, that’s a big part of the budget.”

Staff in the Computer Center building can expect a noisy summer as construction proceeds in the data center. Once the cooling pipes are installed, workers will begin drilling hangers in the ceiling to route electrical and network cables. “I’m afraid there’s just no way to avoid noise and vibration of drilling hundreds of holes,” says Bowles.

The project includes installation of large windows along two walls of the new data center. “It will be a huge recruiting tool for new faculty for whom research computing is critically important,” adds Bowles.

Research computers achieve massive computing power by using hundreds of individual processors that break up enormous computing projects into many smaller pieces. The data center will house three different computer systems: Shared Memory, with 768 processors; Distributed Memory with 2,112 processors; and High Throughput with 1,128 processors. In addition, a data storage unit with a 350 terabyte (TB) capacity will be installed.

The High Performance Computing systems are research resources intended for testing and running large codes, parallel-processing codes, visualization and scientific applications. These systems are limited to research applications.

In addition to UITS Research Computing equipment, the data center will house research computers belonging to colleges and departments across campus. “Our computers will only take up about 25% of the rack space,” says Masseth. “The rest of the room will be occupied by other users who want to centralize their computers in a facility that’s safe, secure and monitored 24/7.”

“We are setting up the campus-wide governance system to allocate who will move their systems into the facility and how its use will be shared,” says Dr. Bruck.

Once construction is completed, the new computer and storage equipment will be installed. Prior to being opened for use, software to control and synchronize the hardware will be set up and tested.

New Name, Same Great Service

by Kate Rehkopf

The internal group, formerly known as Frontline Services, now has a new name, UITS Client Services. You may have heard this new name in meetings or seen it on the slides in the all-hands meeting.

This is primarily an internal name used to help distinguish reporting lines and hierarchical boundaries; my title is Associate Director of Client Services. “Client Services” is not a name we’re marketing to campus. Campus constituents will seek out individually the 24/7 IT Support Center, Campus Switchboard, Classroom Technology Services (CTS), Office of Student Computing Resources (OSCR), Research Computing, Telecommunications Services, Workgroup and Network Consulting (WNC), or Workshop and Training Team (WaTT) based on their needs.

The purpose of the name change is to bring us in alignment with our service-focused objectives, which are client driven and to better reflect the work being done by those in the group. Changing the name to Client Services also reflects some standardization in naming structure to similar higher education institutions.

New Conference Rooms

Now that UITS-Room-337-Presentation Area is no longer a meeting room, a new conference room, UITS-Room-116, is available in its place. Access to the room is via CatCard swipe. The room is larger than UITS-Room-320, with a seating capacity of approximately 40 people. Also, former conference room 316 is the new home of Communications and Marketing. Room 122 has been converted to a small conference room in its place. In order to make the best use of our conference room spaces, please try to schedule meetings with small numbers of people in one of the smaller conference rooms whenever possible.