Enhancements

WebCT 4 offers greater functionality including new tools and enhancements to many of the existing WebCT tools.

• The user interface has been simplified for both designer/instructors and students.

• Several new tools facilitate active learning, self-reflection, and group projects, including course-based blogs, journals and peer-rated discussions.

• A new feature, when instructor-enabled, allows students to contribute favourite websites and multimedia examples in course areas.

• The new Roster tool allows students to create personal profiles, promoting interaction and participation.

• Version 4 also includes new tools that enhance student assessments.

- Grading forms make it easy to provide grading rubrics to students.
- New functionality within the quiz tool allows instructors to customize instructions for each quiz.
- The improved My Grades tool allows instructors to augment basic grade reporting with comments and performance statistics.


Process

Courses offered through Distance Studies this summer will pilot the WebCT 4 environment. Migration of these courses will be completed in time for the start of the summer term in May. Over the summer, all existing WebCT 3 courses will be migrated to the new version 4 environment. As of September 2007, all courses will be offered in WebCT 4.

What do I need to do?

• Participate in WebCT 4 training sessions before heading away for the summer. A variety of training

... continued on page 3
Scheduled System Maintenance
Sundays
6:00am - 12:00 noon

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ITS Mission
We are committed to
delivering the best information
technology services and solutions
in support of the teaching and
research missions of the University.

ITS Vision
To be recognized as the
preferred source of information
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within the campus community
and recognized as one of the
leaders in the North American
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ITS Services 2006-2007
http://www.uwo.ca/its/services.pdf

Need help, have a question?
Call the ITS Support Centre
661-3800 or ext.83800
options will be available starting in April and continuing throughout the summer. To check the offerings, use the Instructor Training link under Instructor Resources at http://webct.uwo.ca/

- Check your Western email over the summer. Instructors will be notified via Western email as course/sections are migrated. We will also contact you via Western email if questions arise during the migration process.

How to contact us

If you have questions or concerns about any of these changes; or if you want to provide direction for the migration of your course/sections please contact us by email at webct-admin@uwo.ca

[Editor’s note: Information taken from notes of the interview conducted with Denis by Barb Sadler and Nancy Wellard. The photo above was taken during a recent tour of ITS by Dr. Longstaffe.]

Denis Regnier is a computer pioneer. His introduction to computers was serendipitous and in some ways typical of how others got into the field in the “early days”. Once in, he was bitten and blossomed in the environment.

Denis hails from Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. In 1961, he came east with another Air Cadet and together they went to Centralia to try to become pilots. When he was driven back to London to catch the train home, (the pilot adventure didn’t work out) he checked in to the Richmond Hotel instead, got a job at Steinbergs stocking store shelves, and stayed.

After several short term jobs, he got a chance at London Life in 1962. He passed the aptitude test and was offered the choice of a position either in Data Processing or the Mortgage Department. He chose the Data Processing job and two weeks later found himself working in a Machine room the size of the Grad Club which housed one computer - a UNIVAC 2. It had a CPU you could walk into, 6,000 tubes, 300 lights, 150 switches and all code was entered in binary. He made the grand salary of $2,400/year.

Denis loved the work and stayed for five and a half years, during which time he worked his way up from operator to senior operator. The shifts were twelve hours - three days on, four days off. At that time, London Life had four shifts of sixteen people in each; all were male and the oldest operator was 21. And there was plenty of free time for social activities. Work certainly didn’t get in the way.

In the short time he was at Steinbergs, he met his future wife Julie whose aunt worked at the bakery beside the store. They were married in April 1964; that’s 43 years ago this year.

Denis came to Western in 1968 after he was offered the position of Operations Supervisor by Peggy Smith. Bill Denton was the Director of Systems and Data Processing. There were plenty of opportunities in Data Processing at that time and this lead to high staff turnover; in fact, Western was known as a training ground for London Life. Computing was very expensive and experienced people were hard to find and keep. For example, 11MB of disk cost $50,000.

Denis’ tenure as Operations Supervisor was under directors Bill Denton, Bruce Hartwick, Glen Harris, Bill Enright, Norm Middaugh, Andy
Bjerring, and Mike Bauer. In 1972, he was involved with designing and building the machine room in the Stevenson-Lawson Building. You could say he knew the whole shebang inside out, top to bottom.

In September 1985, the Academic Computing Centre expanded to include Telecommunications, and the Administrative computing, operations, data entry, and system support staff from Stevenson-Lawson. The new department was named Computing and Communications Services (CCS). Denis became the Operations Supervisor for both Administrative and Academic Operations. Greg Harness, who had been the Operations Supervisor for the Academic Computing Centre, became the Manager of the new Campus Computer Store and Denis took over both operations teams. Not much time for social activities anymore.

There were new challenges with the merging of the operations teams. Firstly, there was the hardware; six mainframe computers - Cyber 825, Cyber 835, DEC1091, IBM 4341, IBM 4381, VAX 8600. The culture between the two groups was different which was reflected in the different approaches to how they operated. For example, there were approximately 10,000 tapes stored which contained data collected by PhD. students and no one wanted to throw them away. Denis decided they needed to be pruned and this was done over the next three years.

The new operations team had four operators per shift. There were lots of batch and print operations. In some years, 25 million pages have been printed. So much for saving the forests. Staff often had to work overtime to compensate for systems crashing or hanging and putting things behind schedule. Denis remembers working seven days a week at times like this. Upgrades and maintenance contributed as well to the extra hours.

In mid 1993, CCS and the Department of Administrative Systems (DAS) combined to form the Division of Information Technology Services (ITS).

One of the most satisfying experiences for Denis has been implementing change and seeing new ways of doing things; a very good thing considering that change is the state of affairs. He is surprised at the growth of Ethernet and how it has dominated the market. Looking back, he thinks other technologies seemed much more logical and robust at the time.

Denis anticipates a continuing escalation of technology with a rapid increase in evolution, so much so that he suspects that the same amount of change he has seen in his 45 years will probably occur in the next fifteen years.

In retirement, Denis looks forward to projects around the house and he needs some time to think about what he would like to do next. He has found Western to be a great work environment which has provided him with some unique opportunities.

We will miss Denis hugely and while we recognize that the time has come for him to retire we’re not quite sure how we will manage without him. He has left his mark and has proved a great friend and colleague to those who have had the privilege of working with him.

We convey our thanks and appreciation and wish Denis a long and happy retirement.

Denis’ Retirement Party will be held at Windermere Manor on Monday, 30 April, 2007.
Editor’s Note: We are pleased to introduce James McCloskey, the new Central Information Security Officer (CISO) for Western. James joined the ITS team on March 1, 2007.

I am looking forward to working with the campus community to continuously improve the already strong Information Security foundation in place across the University and its affiliates.

In the weeks and months to come, keep an eye out for ongoing changes and additions to the http://security.uwo.ca website. In the meantime, you may want to check the website and review several recently-posted documents that relate to the security of portable devices and data, and the secure disposal of systems and data.

If you have an Information Security issue, concern, question, or comment, please do not hesitate to contact me by email, or by phone at 519-661-2111 ext.81091.

Stay tuned for more … and in the meantime, keep computing safely!

The Power of Collaboration

The University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University are pleased to host CANHEIT 2007, the fifth annual Canadian Higher Education and Information Technology conference, May 27-30, organized by the University of Waterloo on the campus of Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario.

The annual CANHEIT conference brings together senior administrators, managers, and staff who are responsible for the management and evolution of their campus information systems, learning systems, and computing systems and network infrastructures.

Details of the conference are provided on the conference web site at https://fortuna.uwaterloo.ca/canheit/index.php
Instructional Technology Resource Centre News

Merran Neville <mneville@uwo.ca>

Once again, ITRC students have made a great “showing” at the 2007 Western Film Festival held March 16 and 17. The ITRC entries included Nick Haffie-Emslie’s short film, Skinema; Sam Chow’s music video, Ghotel + Right Angles (starring ITRC student consultant Angie Vandenbogaard), and Shannon Everett’s claymation comedy Amber Helps the World.

The two-hour Festival program of student shorts from Western and Fanshawe College presented the sixteen films that reached the finals. ITRC Award Winners were:

• First Prize ($500) and People’s Choice ($100) for Skinema by Nick Haffie-Emslie
• Judges’ Award ($100) for Amber Helps the World by Shannon Everett

Congratulations!

The web site for the Festival is located at http://www.wufs.net/festival/home.htm
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