In this Issue:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In this Issue</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New OWL (powered by Sakai)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the News</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Upgrade to the Corporate Calendar System</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping Hands Award</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Open Experience: IM Clients</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Team News</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poster Caption Contest Winners</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax Services</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice Conferencing Services</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Working Group</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Support Team and ITRC News</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Alternative Spring Break</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITS Information</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New OWL (powered by Sakai)

ITS Instructional Support Team <its-owl@uwo.ca>

Summer Distance, Summer Evening, and Summer Intersession courses have begun and the majority of these courses are being taught using the new OWL. The home page at [http://webct.uwo.ca/](http://webct.uwo.ca/) provides links to both the old OWL (WebCT) and the new OWL (powered by Sakai) to assist instructors and students. There is a link for students taking Distance Studies courses to information about the instructor of the course and the learning management system (WebCT or Sakai) in which course is being offered.

Training

Training in the new OWL has been running since early February and approximately 450+ instructors and administrative staff have attended. Information about training, including dates/times, and how to register, making plans to develop your course or project site in the new OWL, and documentation is available at: [http://webct.uwo.ca/owlflightplan/gettingstarted.html](http://webct.uwo.ca/owlflightplan/gettingstarted.html).

Training will continue throughout the summer.

Mobile Working Group and members of the Instructional Support team have been assisting instructors to migrate content and set up 300+ courses in the new OWL ready for May. Migration usually involves moving the content from the file manager in WebCT to the Resources tool in the new OWL. Quizzes are moved using Respondus, [http://www.uwo.ca/its/sitelicense/respondus/](http://www.uwo.ca/its/sitelicense/respondus/). Many instructors are finding that this is a good time to do some spring cleaning and are building their courses from scratch in the new OWL.

More information about the new OWL and the progress of the OWL Flight Plan can be found at [http://webct.uwo.ca/owlflightplan/](http://webct.uwo.ca/owlflightplan/). Please return regularly to this site to check the latest news.
About In Touch

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We welcome your comments, suggestions, and articles.

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FAX: 519 - 661 - 3486
Email: in.touch@uwo.ca
Web: http://www.uwo.ca/its/

Notices/Information

• Scheduled System Maintenance takes place during Sundays, 3am - 12noon; Thursdays, 12am - 7am
• ITS Services Document available at: http://www.uwo.ca/its/services.pdf

Need help, have a question?

• Call ITS Customer Support Centre: 519 - 661-3800 ext. 83800
• ASK ITS: http://askits.uwo.ca/
• Email using the web form: http://www.uwo.ca/its/helpdesk/question.html

In the News

Barb Sadler <bsadler@uwo.ca>

Brian Borowski, a staff member of the Network and Storage Operations (NOC) team, is featured in the June edition of the Reader’s Digest, (http://readersdigest.ca), in a very interesting article about his participation in a Western research project to gain new insight into how much information our senses can absorb.

Brian was recruited for the echolocation research project by Western professor Dr. Mel Goodale, the director of the Brain and Mind Institute at Western and project lead. The article, entitled Bat Man, was written by Alex Hutchinson.
Major Upgrade to the Corporate Calendar System
Andrew Filippi <westerncalendarupgrade@uwo.ca>

Western is embarking on an exciting new project to upgrade our corporate calendar system for the start of the 2012 fall term. Upon completion of this project we will be able to provide the University community with increased selection when choosing a calendar program. You will be able to access your Western calendar from almost any calDAV compliant calendar program. The primary benefit will come to anyone running a Mac. You will be able to configure your iCal to access your Western calendar.

This significant upgrade involves:
- Infrastructure changes, moving from a proprietary calendar protocol to what is emerging as the industry standard protocol for calendar systems – calDAV
- The migration of 65,000 calendars with the majority of usage coming from administrative units

As part of the calendar upgrade, the system will be unavailable for an extended period of time; for example, over a weekend, to facilitate the migration of data. To maximize the calendar availability, a decision has been made to move only 18 month's worth of historical calendar data. Access to historical calendar data which is not part of the migration will be made available for reference purposes only after the upgrade.

We are working on making the transition to the new environment as seamless as possible from both the customer and technical support perspective. However, existing programs such as Lightning, Notifylink and Outlook Connector (SJOC) will need to be upgraded and/or reconfigured to access the new calendar environment.

Additional communication and details will be made available as the project progresses. If you would like to discuss how this project might impact you or the areas you support please contact westerncalendarupgrade@uwo.ca.

Helping Hands Award
Merran Neville <mneville@uwo.ca>

In April, Heather Woods nominated Tracy Laughton and Ihsan Rehman for the Helping Hands award. They received this honour at the Spring Resource Operational Retreat.

In her nomination statement, Heather had this to say about Tracy and Ihsan:

Tracy Laughton and Ihsan Rehman, both from Information Technology Services, have been a major help to me with my cable databases. You can approach Tracy and Ihsan any time and receive a smile and a “how may I help you.” They’re never too busy with their own work commitments to lend a helping hand.

Congratulations, Tracy and Ihsan!

See http://www.uwo.ca/its/doc/newsletters/InTouch/hha.pdf for details about this award.

Ihsan Rehman and Tracy Laughton
Instant messaging can be a very effective communication tool. There are several popular IM services, and each one has its own proprietary client software. Fortunately, there are many open source clients that provide more freedom and extra features, making it unnecessary to limit yourself to the official software.

In addition to the ability to modify the software, in my experience, open source clients typically have two big advantages over their proprietary alternatives. The first is support for multiple IM services, which eliminates the need to run multiple clients. Although I'm mostly only active on the Jabber/XMPP service, I have contacts using Windows Live Messenger and AOL Instant Messenger, and I can communicate with all of them through the same application. The second advantage is support for encryption, either natively or through a plugin. I prefer to encrypt my messages, and it has been easy to do so in all the open source clients I have used.

My first experience with an open source IM client was with Adium on Mac OS X. To this day it remains my favourite IM client on any platform, with a fantastic feature set out of the box, and a very attractive interface. If you're on a Mac, I can't recommend this one enough.

Windows users can check out Pidgin for a similar feature set (they actually use the same library underneath). These days, I use Kopete, the default IM client on Kubuntu. It has a few rough spots, but it gets the job done for now. It will be replaced by a new application in the near future, which I'm hoping will fill in the gaps. Other GNU/Linux options include Pidgin and Empathy.

Regardless of your platform, there is probably an open source IM client out there that will make your life easier. To find out more about the ones I've mentioned, take a look at the links below.

http://www.adium.im
http://www.pidgin.im
http://kopete.kde.org
http://live.gnome.org/Empathy

Adium  Pidgin  Kopete  Empathy
I was speaking to a colleague recently and she commented on the fact that, in this the information age, we have been burdened with a need to recall multiple passwords, often accompanied by related details. For example, one might have a password for the bank, for Western, for a research computer one accesses; each with a URL, a login name and likely, password specific to that site, and so on.

Once, I was helping someone with a computer problem, and accidentally knocked the mouse pad off the desk. As I reached down to recover the mouse pad, I noticed a yellow sticky stuck to the bottom which read “PW3cRe7!” (not actually what was written, but you get the idea). Hmm, I thought, decent password, but how secure is the system if the password is practically written in an easy to find place? This raises the question, does this security control itself not pose its own security problem, especially if each site has some obtuse, hard-to-remember passwords? Clearly it does!

**Finding a solution**

I believe there are a couple of things to consider. From a security perspective, what is the problem with the yellow sticky note on the bottom of the mouse pad?

The problem is that the password itself is a security control currently not being kept securely, and a single factor control at that. The terminology of ‘single-factor’ and ‘dual-factor’ control is likely one most people are not aware of. Consider a hypothetical bank vault that we see in movies: can the bank vault typically be opened by the bank manager alone? Not generally. Most bank vaults are designed to have multi-factor controls so that the bank manager and at least one other person is required to open it. Likewise, most people have been to sites where they are required to log in, but they are also required to fill in a capcha code presented to them on-screen. This is another example where the second means of providing ‘identification’ is unique to the person seeing the screen.

Dual factor authentication is a security process in which the user provides two means of identification specific to themselves; sort of like two pieces of identification. A ‘factor’ is something or some information that is presumably unique to the person possessing it. A key issued to ONLY the bank manager is a ‘factor’, as is a password, or a capcha image which is time sensitive and limited to one use only. One factor could be forged or obtained by brute force, but the compromise of two unlikely. In our case of the yellow sticky note, that password was a ‘single-factor’ token, necessary for authentication essentially being made freely available to all (who bothered to look on the bottom of the mouse pad).

This article started by observing that generally we all have trouble with one-factor authentication, so why am I bothering to introduce two-factor authentication? Does that not simply increase the complexity of the problem we’re trying to manage? The capcha option is an example of how we are still only required to remember ‘one’ password but our brain is required to interpret the ‘capcha’ code. These codes are designed so that they are obfuscated with ‘noise’ to the point that, theoretically, machines or image recognition software, is unable to do what our eyes and brain can, namely read the text. Regardless, multi-factor authentication is much more secure than single factor authentication and not necessarily more difficult. Multi-factor authentication can use physical tokens, such as cards or other things. In general two-factor authentication is spoken of in terms of ‘something you know’ and ‘something you possess’.

Does that mean we should simply rule out multi-factor authentication everywhere? There is a time and purpose for multi-factor authentication and a time for single factor authentication. Back to our yellow sticky problem. What if we determine that the system using this password is actually best served by a single-factor? We still have a problem, so what is the solution? Not writing the password on a ‘yellow sticky’ is an option, but that doesn’t solve the problem of people tending towards not remembering passwords in the first place.

What if we had a system so that we didn’t need to remember the password, but we could reconstruct it on a use by use case? **That would help.**

Let’s suppose we have four passwords we must remember, each of which has to be at least 8 digits long both numeric and non-numeric - we need to remember one each for the bank, Western, our research computer and one for our blog hosted by a third party. Let’s also suppose we know enough to not use the same password at each place, and they are each relatively difficult (but secure) passwords. If we had a system so that some component of the password uniquely identified its use in a non-dictionary way we could devise a system as follows:

**Bank:** Bnk-s3cRe7!
**Blog:** Blg-s3cRe7!
**Western:** UWO-s3cRe7!
**Research:** Res-s3cRe7!

Such a system would help by reducing the number of things we needed to remember but still suffers from two problems. First, if one of our passwords is compromised, the rest aren’t necessarily. Yet, if there is an obvious system to constructing them, they could all be compromised, which is essentially no different than using one password everywhere. Second, not all systems allow the same features in a password such as
length or allowable characters. There is an other option, namely what if we could encrypt the sticky?

As it turns out this option exists in a freely available program called Password Safe found at sourceforge: http://passwordsafe.sourceforge.net/

Password Safe allows you to store information about your password security in one encrypted, reusable, transferable safe. Along with the actual password, you can store URL, username, and other relevant information.

Is it wise to put all of one’s eggs in a single basket? It is, if it will take the age of the universe to gain access to the basket - which is the case with Password Safe. A single password gives the user access to a unique asymmetric key pair (cryptography) that protects the safe’s contents, therefore one only need to remember a single password.

Be warned though, lose that single password and you lose access to the safe. From the safe, you are able to securely (and invisibly) use the password as needed with the residual risk being a copy is put into the cache. This risk is far less than having multiple passwords, easily forgotten, spattered about on yellow stickies as back-up.

**Poster Caption Contest Winners**

A very successful poster caption contest to promote on-line safety and computer eWellness awareness in the University community concluded on March 16, 2012. Details about the winning entries are provided at http://ewellness.uwo.ca/campaign/Winter2012/

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**Poster Caption Contest Winners**

Back row (left to right): Brian Dalrymple, Frank Van Sas, Henry Laparskas, William Handler

Front row (left to right): Samantha Munro, Samantha Marren, Amanda Mckee Laura Maxwell
Fax Services
Fax usage is decreasing in most areas and as we move voice services to VoIP and retire the SL-100, this is an opportunity to provide fax services in a new way. Considerations include enterprise vs. hosted solutions; Western’s E-commerce policies; cost, ease of use, and clients for all desktops.
We are issuing an RFP looking for enterprise and/or hosted solutions in May 2012 and anticipate a decision in early August 2012. Once a solution has been selected, we will prepare and communicate a deployment plan.

Voice Conferencing Services
Voice conferencing services provide a more cost effective way to provide real-time communications. The SL-100 Meet-Me-Conference service has provided very basic voice conferencing services. With the SL-100 retirement, we are looking to replace the Meet-Me-Conference service with one which is easier to use and provides self-registration facilities.
We are issuing an RFP looking for enterprise and/or hosted solutions. Considerations include ease of enterprise vs. hosted, cost, ease of use, and ease of billing. We anticipate a decision in mid-August, 2012. Once a solution has been selected, we will prepare and communicate a deployment plan.

Mobile Working Group
The Mobile Working group, a University wide working group broadly focused on mobile computing, is facilitated by ITS and composed of interested University community members.

The Mobile Working Group meets monthly to share updates and ideas/information. Subgroups focusing on Mobile Device Management, Digital Rights Management, Apple devices, and Android Devices are working to provide information and recommendations via the Kiwi wiki and at the monthly meetings. Deb Tieszer presented the first Mobile Working Group report to TUMS on March 29, 2012.

Western Libraries, the Faculty of Engineering, and recently LHSC have joined the working group. We welcome anyone who supports and/or is responsible for using mobile technology in learning or administration. If you are interested in participating, please contact Mona Brennan-Coles at mona@uwo.ca or extension 82510 (519-850-2510 from off-campus).

Communications among all Working Group and TUMS members are facilitated by:
• Kiwi at https://kiwi.uwo.ca/display/mobilewg/Home/ - read/write access for all TUMS and Mobile Working Group members
• Mailing Lists – mobile-wg@uwo.ca and tums@uwo.ca
• TUMS Meeting – report from Mobile Working Group - http://www.uwo.ca/its/tums/
The Instructional Support Team and the ITRC hosted a reception on Friday, April 27, 2012 for the faculty who participated in the January Pilot of the new OWL (powered by Sakai). Faculty joined with their ITRC support person to present their experiences during the pilot. Feedback was very positive and the recommendations are greatly appreciated and will be shared with and will benefit the University community. The photos demonstrate the bonds that developed over the course of the pilot.

Some of the faculty participated at the Teaching Support Centre Spring Perspectives on Teaching held on Monday, May 14, 2012. They were in a panel discussion sharing their experiences with building and teaching with the new learning management system. See http://www.uwo.ca/tsc/about/features/spring_perspectives_2012/ for details.

[Photos taken by Colby Gauld.]

Corey Meingarten, Law, Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood, ITRC, Mysty Clapton, support staff member for Law course Health Sci 4090B 002

Graham Smith, instructor Geography 4000B, Samantha Marren, ITRC

Tanja Coso, ITRC, Christine Guptil, instructor Music 3939B/Health Sci 3091B, Samantha Munro, ITRC
Jay Loftus, Schulich Medicine & Dentistry, Tyler Benning, ITRC, Deanna Grogan, ITS. Supporting Pharmacology 2060B

Kim Hoffman, ITS, Shaun Salisbury, instructor MME 3380B, Jim Dobravec, Engineering

Samantha Munro, ITRC, Eunice Gorman, instructor Thanatology 2231B, David Arromba, ITRC
My Alternative Spring Break (ASB)

Rob Atkinson <ratkinso@uwo.ca>

Editor’s Note: Rob Atkinson is a member of the Data Centre, Network and Storage Operations team in ITS.

My experience as a Volunteer Team Leader for Western’s Alternative Spring Break program (http://www.asb.uwo.ca/) was fantastic! I had the great fortune of working with another Western staff member to accompany twenty-five amazing Western students to the Dominican Republic, so that we could teach English in a public school setting. I co-facilitated daily reflection sessions with the Western students, while ensuring the safety and well being of the group. I was also involved in teaching English to the public school children. Initially, I wasn’t sure what to expect, but after meeting and working with the Western students for the first time, I knew I was going to have fun! They were engaged and energetic, and we travelled to the Dominican without issue.

After a long trip and a late night, we started our Orientation the next day by taking a walking trip around the town of Monti Christi, in the North West corner of the Dominican, only and hour from the Haitian border. The next day, we started teaching English at a local public school. In small teams of five, our group taught some very basic, introductory English to all the grades. Simple phrases such as “Hi, my name is...” and “How are you today?” were taught, so that they would have a foundation to build on.

Learning English in the Dominican is normally extremely expensive, so our free classes were well received. Working with the organization that set up this program, Outreach 360 (http://www.outreach360.org), we were part of a larger set of initiatives that is trying to bring a self-sustaining model of volunteer-based English learning and literature to one of the poorest areas of the Dominican. It was extremely rewarding and very educational working with both the Western and Monti Christi students. I really enjoyed working closely with both sets of students, and getting to know everyone involved with the project.

If you are interested in learning more about the Alternative Spring Break opportunity, please let me know. I’d be happy to share my experience.
ITS Information

Network Backup Service
For network backup and recovery service, please contact the ITS Legato Group:
Email: legato@uwo.ca
Web: http://www.uwo.ca/its/network/backup.html

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 Open Hours
Building hours and hours of opening for the various areas of ITS are listed on the web at the following location.
Web: http://www.uwo.ca/its/about-its/hours.html

ITS Vision
To be recognized as the preferred source of information technology services and solutions within the campus community and recognized as one of the leaders in the North American university community.

Commonly Used Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
<th>Ext.</th>
<th>Web</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ITS Customer Support Centre</td>
<td>519 - 661 - 3800</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.uwo.ca/its/helpdesk/question.html">http://www.uwo.ca/its/helpdesk/question.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice &amp; Data</td>
<td>519 - 661 - 3800</td>
<td>ext. 83800</td>
<td><a href="http://www.uwo.ca/its/telecom/tele-install.html">http://www.uwo.ca/its/telecom/tele-install.html</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Administration Office</td>
<td>519 - 661 - 2151</td>
<td>ext. 82151</td>
<td>FAX 519 - 661-3486 ext.83486</td>
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<tr>
<td>Computer Accounts Office</td>
<td>519 - 661 - 3800</td>
<td>ext. 83800</td>
<td><a href="mailto:acting@uwo.ca">acting@uwo.ca</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Computer &amp; Network Operators</td>
<td>519 - 661 - 3525</td>
<td>ext. 83525</td>
<td><a href="mailto:operator@uwo.ca">operator@uwo.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITRC</td>
<td>519 - 661 - 2111</td>
<td>ext. 85513</td>
<td><a href="mailto:itrc@uwo.ca">itrc@uwo.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITS Non-Credit Courses</td>
<td>519 - 661 - 2151</td>
<td>ext. 82151</td>
<td><a href="mailto:its-courses@uwo.ca">its-courses@uwo.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dial-in Line (all modem speeds)</td>
<td>519 - 661 - 2151</td>
<td>ext. 82151</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail Postmaster</td>
<td>519 - 661 - 3800</td>
<td>ext. 83800</td>
<td><a href="mailto:postmaster@uwo.ca">postmaster@uwo.ca</a></td>
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Facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ITS Support Centre</td>
<td>SSB 4100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITS Training Lab</td>
<td>SSB 4230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITRC</td>
<td>SSB 4320</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

General Purpose Labs:
NCB - 105, NCB - 105,
HSB - 13, 14, 16
SSC - 1000, 1012, 1032