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Playing in NUIT's Virtual Collaboration Sandbox

June 2006

Have you heard about Collaboration technology yet? Prepare for a better way to communicate, integrate, and collaborate with others throughout the Northwestern community.

NUIT has been working with a group of key technology leaders on campus to explore the possibility of a new common communication and collaboration suite of products to be implemented for all Northwestern faculty, staff, and students. Functionality will include enterprise level e-mail, calendaring, file sharing, instant messaging, Web conferencing, discussion forums, and full mobility features for handheld devices.

The Virtual Sandbox

NUIT created a sandbox (virtual test environment) to explore the feasibility of two industry leaders (Microsoft and Oracle) in our campus network environment. Through weeks of evaluation, it was found that both products, Microsoft Exchange and the Oracle Collaboration Suite, would foster collaboration and increase functionality and mobility for users.

While both systems have many advantages, the decentralized nature of our University environment, as well as the broad range of work stations and operating systems (Windows, Macintosh, Linux), better aligns with Oracle’s standards-based platform.

The group summarized their findings and a recommendation for adopting one of these two systems has been made to the University. If implemented, this strategic initiative will result in much-improved opportunities for communication and collaboration across the University.

Look for an official announcement by NUIT in the near future about real-time collaboration and communication services as things develop.
The VoIP Buzz: A Progress Report
June 2006

The NU Network Soon to Take on Voice Traffic
Every big project needs a big timeline, be it rebuilding the Dan Ryan or constructing Chicago's new Trump Tower. Northwestern’s VoIP project is no exception.

Though it will take years to complete the vision of the converged communications plan, the first phases are well under way and off to a good start. And just like road construction, a lot of work upfront now will yield great returns in the years to come.

This summer, Chicago campus users will be the first who can switch from plain old telephone service (POTS) to an Internet protocol (IP)-enabled service that operates via the NU Network. To make the switch, a freeze on phone changes will occur.

"The user won't notice a difference when these switches happen, but from an infrastructure standpoint, changing over to IP-enabled service is a major milestone," said David Carr, NUIT's director of Telecommunications and Network Services. "In the next phase, SIP-enabling, users will notice the difference because they'll be able to use the services of a typical VoIP phone, like being able to make calls from a computer."

SIP stands for session initiated protocol, an industry-standard protocol that integrates the delivery of voice, audio and videoconferencing, call forwarding, and secure instant messaging over the NU Network. Laying this kind of infrastructure is the next logical step for the University's aging phone system, allowing for new forms of productivity and greater efficiency.

The converged communications team anticipates that the advanced features of SIP will be available to all Northwestern users as we move forward.

Once Chicago phones are running on the NU Network, it will be Evanston's turn to switch over to IP-enabled service, scheduled for late 2006 through early 2007.

For more information, NUIT's converged communications Web site provides additional information about this multi-year conversion plan for SIP and VoIP.
Are You a Meeting Maker Expert Yet?

June 2006

It can take some time to get used to anything that is new, and software is no exception. Perhaps by now you are a pro with Meeting Maker v8.5.3, but if you are still getting used to it, try these tips and tricks:

See your most up-to-date calendar from off campus
When using Meeting Maker from off campus, make sure to log in using VPN. This creates a secure connection and allows you to see your most up-to-date appointments. Or, use the Meeting Maker Web client at https://meetingmaker.northwestern.edu/mmwebclient/.

Can't print certain days? Resets your changes?
The Meeting Maker vendor released a fix for many of the common bugs in the program, including printing problems, change resets, regular crashing, and frequent timeouts. If you experience any of these issues, download the latest Meeting Maker at http://www.it.northwestern.edu/software/staff/dept/meetingmaker/.

Where to go for help
Meeting Maker Help is built right into the program and provides an extensive list of topics and step-by-step instructions. The Web-based interface of the help tool enables easy searching, and is quick to find in the Help Menu under Contents.

Change the colors and format
Still not used to the new Meeting Maker look and feel? You can change it to look just like the old version—or any other color format. Change to Classic View by selecting Menu / Edit / View Options / Classic View. Try changing calendar colors and activity colors by simply selecting the activity, then the Label menu. You can also adjust the calendar background colors by going to Edit / Preferences / Color.

Change calendar sizes
If you need more space for your calendar, minimize the side task bar, proposal windows, or any other open item. Simply place your cursor over the border of the item, and click and drag to resize.

Use Autopick to select a convenient time
When you are proposing a meeting, the Autopick function suggests a time when everyone is available. After you entered the guests, select the Autopick button on the bottom right of the Add Guests dialogue box to jump to a convenient time.

Make a Group for teams that meet frequently
With Meeting Maker it is easy to quickly invite a team that regularly gets together. Avoid re-entering names for every event—just create a Group instead. Go to Edit / Favorites / New Group. Name your Group and add users to it. The entire list's availability is shown when you select that Group for a meeting.
Add common invitees to Favorites
For quicker inviting, add your common invitees to your Favorites list. Search for the guest and click Add to Favorites. To view your Favorites, select it from the drop-down menu on the Add Guests dialogue box.

Show a proxy calendar and your calendar side-by-side
It's easy to compare your schedule with another user's, especially when they give you proxy access. Just go to Proxy / Show in Calendar. Remember, Proxy access means another user granted you detailed access to their calendar.

For additional help
For more information, tips, and tricks, go to the Meeting Maker Web site, or the Meeting Maker page of the NUIT Web site. For technical support, contact the NUIT Support Center at 847-491-HELP (4357) or consultant@northwestern.edu.
Sign-on at Northwestern Now as Easy as Using Your Passport

June 2006

A passport validates your identity and gives you freedom to travel without needing to prove who you are. In much the same way, NU Online Passport gives you the freedom to move between authenticated University systems without needing to identify yourself each time. Log in once, and you are on your way.

Online Passport is the University's new Web Single Sign-On (SSO) service. Just as its name implies, signing on once gives you access to a number of Web-based University systems and services. Once SSO verifies your identity, you can access any NU networked resources you're authorized to use.

NU Online Passport is being implemented in phases. Currently, one login lets you:

- Check your NetID status
- Change or check your password
- Set a Q&A for password recovery
- Set privacy options in the online directory

Look for other University services to be added in the future, including the Human Resources Information System, Student Enterprise System, Electronic Time Entry System, and Blackboard Course Management System.

Web Single Sign-On has great benefits. Besides being convenient, it helps you spend work time more effectively, as you don't need to log into multiple systems, or remember more than one password. With fewer passwords and logins, it's less likely that the NU Network will be compromised. There may even be fewer support requests for help with forgotten passwords.

How does NU Online Passport work?

Let's say you arrive at your office, sit down to check your e-mail, and see a reminder that your password will expire soon. You click the Web link in the e-mail message to access the "Set New NetID Password" page. What comes up instead is the NU Online Passport login page.

When you log into NU Online Passport, the SSO system checks your identity in the University's central directory database and automatically returns you to the "Set New NetID Password" page. Until you close your Web browser, you can visit as many Web-based University systems and services as you like without logging in again.
Don't leave your Passport alone
Logging into NU Online Passport and walking away is almost as risky as setting your travel passport down in a crowded place. Be sure not to leave your computer unattended if you're logged in, or anyone can gain access to University systems. Before you walk away from an Online Passport session, log out or lock your computer.

For your convenience, you can stay logged in for up to 12 hours, but you'll be logged out automatically if your session is inactive for two hours.

About those cookies…
NU Online Passport sets a cookie in your Web browser when you're authenticated and saves the northwestern.edu domain in your computer. The cookie retains your information only as long as you are logged in. This allows Online Passport to grant you access to other University-authenticated Web sites without repeated logins. Exiting your browser and ending your session will delete the cookie. (But you will get a new cookie for your next session.)

We hope you'll take some time to become familiar with NU Online Passport. It will make your "travels" around the University's Web sites faster and easier.
Classrooms Get Smart This Summer

June 2006

High-resolution images, a huge screen, and movie-quality sound—this may describe your fantasy for a home entertainment center, and it also describes many "smart" lecture rooms on campus. By this fall, faculty and students will enjoy another three lecture rooms with upgraded communication, collaboration, and computing technologies. In addition, four classrooms will be upgraded for laptop support.

"The response to smart classrooms has been very positive," said Bob Taylor, Director of NUIT's Academic Technologies. "So we're on an accelerated schedule to make this technology available in as many places as we can."

Stemming from a major initiative with the Provost's Classroom Committee, technology improvements will be completed in large lecture rooms including Harris 107, Fisk 217, and Parkes 214. Enhancements for each room include a bright projector, a large screen, microphones, speakers, a mobile podium, and a touch-panel control.

"Flexibility is very important," said Taylor. "Lecturers can switch to annotate on a computer desktop or show a DVD clip with just the touch of a button."

In addition, four classrooms will be enhanced to support laptops: Kresge 3420, Parkes 213, Fisk 114, and Tech L221. These improvements will bring the total number of Registrar-controlled Smart Classrooms to 59, and there are plans to have over 100 on campus in the next three years.

But it's not enough to just have the technology on campus, it's also important to make sure that it is easily used. This is the guiding principle behind the 7-ROOM Smart Classroom support team, easy-to-understand touch panel design, and accessible faculty training.

To find more information about Smart Classrooms, schedule a training session, or obtain reservation information, please visit the Smart Classroom Web site at http://www.at.northwestern.edu/ctg/classrooms/.
Collaboratory Project Offers Young Students "Virtually" Unlimited Possibilities
June 2006

Combine the imagination of over 300 Illinois grade school students with innovative projects such as "A Day in My School's Neighborhood" or "Nature Niches in My School's Backyard." Then provide collaborative documents online where those students can create, express themselves, and share with their peers.

The result? A successful recipe for creative learning, made possible by NUIT's Collaboratory Project and a $100,000 federal grant for the Improvement of Education distributed through the Illinois State Board of Education. Thanks to the grant, the Collaboratory was able to continue its role in the two-year-old Illinois Virtual School (IVS) project.

A Head Start with Technology
This year, 315 students and 20 teachers from three Chicago schools—the Edison Regional Gifted Center, Orozoco Community Academy, and F.W. Reilly School—participated through the Chicago Public Schools Office of eLearning.

"The IVS is preparing students to understand cutting-edge technology— electronic discussions, creating, sharing, and reviewing multimedia documents," said Sue Sherman-Martinez, curriculum coordinator for Reilly School. "This type of technology is used in many high school distance learning classes and in most college classes."

This year's IVS projects offered third, fourth, and fifth grade Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies students a chance to exercise their creativity with projects such as "Exploring Picture Books and their Authors," "Nature Niches in My School's Backyard," "Poet's Corner," and "A Day in My School's Neighborhood." Working with guidelines and overviews developed by their teachers, the students wrote essays, posted digital photos, learned to use survey tools, and used discussion boards to exchange comments and questions with peers at other participating schools.

"The Collaboratory is a good way to get to know what other kids our age are doing," said fifth-grader Yuriana. "It's also a good way to be confident about what you write, because kids get to read your writing and tell you what they think."

Another young participant, Marilou, agreed. "It's a great Web site for kids to learn about what's going on in their community. Kids can express how they feel and at the same time be learning about something new."

Earlier this year, Bonnie Thurber, coordinator of programs and professional development for the Collaboratory Project, led workshops and organized monthly meetings for teachers to help them use online tools effectively. When the school year ends, teachers will begin developing next year's projects on their own.
"Everyone really enjoyed working with the Collaboratory," Thurber said. "This was an especially motivated group."

The Collaboratory Project is a Northwestern University initiative that provides project consulting, training, and technical advice to K-12 teachers and their students who are interested in using the Collaboratory to advance education. The Collaboratory is an easy-to-use, Web-based collaborative learning environment that teachers use to develop project-based activities aligned to Illinois Learning Standards.
Security Awareness: Stay Secure … All Summer Long

June 2006

The "lazy days of summer" prompt us to make vacation plans, but remember that cyber criminals never take a break. Follow these summer security essentials to keep your computer and your information secure when you are away from campus.

Keep Your Passwords Secure
Internet cafés around the world make it possible to check your e-mail and get on the NU Network. But when you use these computers, remember that password secrecy is essential. Do not save any of your passwords on Web browsers, and reject the prompts to save your login information to sites of any kind, especially when you access the NU Network. Be sure to completely close and quit a browser when you're done. Also, consider that a machine in an Internet café may have spyware or key logging software installed, so avoid accessing banking accounts or other sensitive sites. Changing your password more frequently can also provide an enhanced level of protection.

Stay Virus-Free From Off Campus
Arriving on campus in the fall, you downloaded antivirus software to your computer and got LiveUpdates from on-campus servers. When you're away for the summer, you may not regularly access the NU Network to get the required LiveUpdates. Continuing to access the Web without the updates places your computer at risk of infection from literally hundreds of viruses and other types of malware. You can easily minimize your risk by making sure your computer gets off-campus antivirus updates. All it takes is a quick download of Symantec/Norton AntiVirus. Find the LiveUpdate Switch Tool on the Symantec Reference Page on the NUIT Web site.

Make a Backup
Before you take your computer on your summer travels, prepare for the unexpected. A theft or computer accident can quickly rob you of important computer files and data. Make it a practice to back up your information to an external hard drive, server space, Web-based storage, CDs, DVDs, or flash drive, and keep the backups separate and away from your PC. If you absolutely must travel with data that is considered sensitive, consider using some form of encryption. Some USB "thumb" drives store in excess of 1 gigabyte of data and include built-in encryption methodologies. These simple steps can easily protect you from unexpected and potentially embarrassing computer data losses.

Stay Secure with Software Updates
If you travel with your laptop this summer, it can be convenient to ignore software update reminders, but it can also be dangerous. Your computer is vulnerable to attack if you put off installing patches and updates. If you haven't already set your updates to run automatically, instructions can be found on the NUIT Web site to keep you both safe and free of reminders. All of these tips require your attention and diligence to keep your computer and your personal data secure. As always, You Are the Key to Information Security. Have a safe, secure and memorable summer!
What's New & Changing at Northwestern  
June 2006  

RSS Delivers the Latest from NUIT  
Are you into RSS (Really Simple Syndication) yet? It's one of the newest and easiest ways to keep track of news and information online, including the most recent NUIT announcements. RSS-enabled sites publish "news feeds," listings of headlines, links, and article summaries on Web sites. Currently, the NUIT news feed features our "What's New & Changing with Technology @ NU?" section, and current links to eCommunicator articles.

Use an RSS-compatible browser or a special program called an aggregator, or feed reader, to subscribe to whatever news feeds interest you. There are literally hundreds available, including many right here on campus.

How is RSS different from Web browsing?  
With RSS, you don't need to bookmark Web sites or remind yourself to check back for updated information. RSS lets you focus on topics and sites that you're interested in, and keeps track of content as it's updated.

If you're new to RSS, try it now and see how easy it is! Open an RSS-capable Web browser such as Internet Explorer 7.x, Firefox, Safari. At the top of the navigation toolbar, near the URL field, you will see the RSS icon displayed. Click the icon to add a live bookmark (the newsfeed) to your menu bar. To view a list of articles, click the "NUIT RSS" icon in your browser, then select a headline from the pull-down menu to view the entire article.

Use "Wildcard" Addresses with EDS for Enhanced E-mail Filtering  
Even if you're opted-in to the E-mail Defense System (EDS) and use filters in your e-mail software, some junk mail can still sneak into your inbox. Or perhaps EDS is blocking messages you want to receive. Either way, there's an easy way to help filter your mail.

EDS now allows you to use the asterisk as a wildcard character in e-mail addresses on your Blocked Senders and Approved Senders lists. For instance, if you repeatedly receive junk e-mail from the domain mailjunk.com, add **@mailjunk.com to your list of Blocked Senders and EDS will block all messages originating from that domain. You can use wildcards the same way on your Approved Senders list to ensure that e-mail from a specified domain gets through.

To add wildcard addresses to your lists, log into EDS, select Approved Senders or Blocked Senders, then select Add Sender to specify the address.
Explore a World of Knowledge on the Gartner Research Site
Intrigued by topics such as "Communication Innovations," "What Matters Now in IT," or "Preparing for the Government of Tomorrow?" You can find those, and hundreds more, on the Gartner Research site. NUIT and the University Library have partnered to give the University community direct, immediate access to Gartner’s industry-wide research and news analysis at no charge. Gartner, Inc. is a leading consulting firm that provides expertise and advice to 45,000 information technology clients worldwide.

To access the site from NUIT’s home page, select Gartner Research under Educational Resources, then log in with your NetID and password, or visit the University Library Web site. Please direct questions to the University Library Information Commons at 847-491-7658 or or ic@northwestern.edu.

Goodbye WINS, Hello DNS
Does your school or department have desktop computers, servers, or other networked equipment configured for WINS (Windows Internet Naming Service)? If so, keep in mind that NUIT’s central WINS service will be retired March 1, 2007. Networked devices configured for WINS should be reconfigured for DNS (Domain Name Service).

Why is WINS being retired?
Microsoft developed WINS to support Windows 98 and Windows NT name resolution, but has since ceased development and is supporting WINS as legacy technology. NUIT no longer supports Windows 98 and Windows NT operating systems. In addition, DNS is a preferable and more widely used alternative. Easy to follow DNS configuration instructions are available. Please check with your local support staff if you need assistance.

HRIS Upgrade—More Than a New Look
The recent HRIS upgrade (Human Resources Information System) has done much more than improve the look of the Human Resources Self Service and eRecruit sites. Both sites are now easier to use and quicker to search. The upgrade was essential to maintaining the Human Resources database, and allows Northwestern to take advantage of the latest technology and technical support available for the system. Congratulations to HRIS, NUIT Management Systems, and NUIT Computing Services, all of whom played a major role in this project.

NUIT Supports Firefox
NUIT is now supporting version 1.x and higher of the Firefox Web browser. The decision to support Firefox (also known as Mozilla Firefox) reflects increasing usage of the software among NU faculty, staff, and students, as well as the number of Firefox-compatible University resources including the E-mail Defense System, the Meeting Maker Web client, RSS, and Human Resources Information System (HRIS) self-service functions. For more information about Firefox, visit What’s New & Changing with Technology @ NU. Please direct questions to the NUIT Support Center at 847-491-HELP (4357) or consultant@northwestern.edu.

Eudora Distribution Ends in September
Are you a Eudora user? Mark September 1 on your calendar. After that date, NUIT will no longer purchase or distribute any future versions of Eudora, though we will continue to support current versions. NUIT recommends looking into alternative clients such as Outlook, Outlook Express, Entourage, or Apple Mail.
In the Queue
June 2006

University Business Portal:
Think of it as a "virtual campus." Currently under development by NUIT Management Systems, a Web-based University Business Portal will provide a central point from which you can access a variety of administrative and academic services. The portal will provide easier and more direct access for Web-enabled services, and deliver self-service features directly to you. Completion of a pilot version is targeted for the end of summer.

Active Directory and Web Access Management:
In conjunction with NU Online Passport, NUIT is developing an authentication system that will let you access University Web sites based on individual attributes (e.g. employment or enrollment status, department, curriculum). This system, being developed by NUIT Information Systems Architecture in partnership with other NUIT units, will provide a foundation for development of the University Business Portal. It will result in time savings for everyday administrative functions, and will increase security by using identity attributes to permit or limit user access to applications and networks.

CONDUITS Upgrade:
Following a recent upgrade to CONDUITS Online, the system is now compatible with both Windows and Macintosh operating systems, and a new function allows departmental contacts to capture billing reports that they can schedule to run on a specified date. CONDUITS Online (Customer Oriented Network Delivering University Information Technology Services) is NUIT’s Web-based system for accessing, viewing, tracking and generating billing reports for NUIT services.

Customer Request System:
Soon, you'll be able to find whatever kind of help you need from NUIT—all in one place. The Web-based Customer Request System, a first step towards development of a University-wide help desk, will incorporate two main functions: Support Request, an easy-to-navigate, "one-stop shop" where faculty, staff, and students can get information and submit online requests for NUIT support; and Change Request, to be used by pre-authorized technical support staff responsible for initiating, managing, and tracking system request activities associated with services managed by the NUIT Datacenter. Stay tuned for details.
UNITS Reps: Register for UNITS Forum 2006

June 2006

UNITS Reps—mark your calendar for Thursday, June 8, for the UNITS Forum 2006. The event is a chance to meet with colleagues and discuss upcoming initiatives. The agenda includes briefings about NUIT's current projects, and lunchtime roundtables for more in-depth discussions.

UNITS Forum 2006 will run from 9:15 a.m. – 3 p.m. at the Norris University Center on the Evanston campus. Lunch will be provided and registration is requested.

The agenda includes:

• Voice over IP Update and SIP Deployment
• Status of Collaboration Services (e-mail, calendaring, IM, and more)
• ITCS Restructuring and Current Service Offerings
• Identity Management Update and Single Sign-on
• Incident Response Protocol Overview and Information Security Update

Roundtable discussions include:

• University Information Technology Strategic Plan and Policies – Patricia Todus, Associate Vice President and Deputy Chief Information Officer
• Identity Management – Tom Board, Director of Information Systems Architecture, NUIT
• Information Security – David Kovarik, Director of Information and Systems Security/Compliance, NUIT
• Networking / VoIP – Tim Ward, Associate Director of Telecommunications and Network Services, NUIT
• Collaboration Services – Gary Greenberg, Executive Director for Teaching and Research Initiatives, NUIT
• Datacenter Services – Dana Nielsen, Director of Computing Services, NUIT
• Desktop Support and Technology Support Services – Wendy Woodward, Director of Technology Support Services, NUIT
• Administrative Systems and Office of Systems Consulting – Betty Brugger, Director of Management Systems, NUIT
• Teaching and Research Support (including videoconferencing, Webcasting, and course management software) – Bob Taylor, Director of Academic Technologies, NUIT

We look forward to your participation.