

eCommunicator

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Converged Communication Progress Report

March 2007

This quarter, upgrades to campus telephone infrastructure moved Northwestern closer to enabling converged communications across both campuses. Progress includes wiring and switch changes in many campus buildings, as well as system testing for the Northwestern switch upgrade.

In the coming months, more telephone calls that originate from the Evanston campus will be transmitted via the NU Network instead of the aging switched phone network. Look for more information about the Evanston switch upgrade in the coming weeks, as NUIT will provide additional information to the community before the transition.

This phase is just one step in the multi-year, phased program for the implementation of converged communications on the Chicago and Evanston campuses.

The converged communications project brings together key communications services delivered over a single network. Converged communications is made possible through Session Initiation Protocol (SIP), an industry-standard protocol which enables the delivery of services over Internet Protocol (IP) networks, such as the NU Network. SIP-enabling the campus infrastructure will allow for new services, greater mobility, and new ways of communicating.

For more information, go to the NUIT Web site to learn more about the multi-year [converged communications initiative](#).

Wireless Without VPN: Upgrade to the Northwestern Network

March 2007

If you are a campus wireless user, did you know that you can get more convenient and secure access every time you connect?

Wireless access without a VPN login is available from the upgraded "Northwestern" wireless network for a quick, automatic connection. It is easy to move your connection from "nuwlan" to "Northwestern" — just follow the instructions on the NUIT Web site: [set up wireless for Windows](#), or [set up wireless for Mac](#).

It is essential that all users upgrade to "Northwestern," as soon as possible. This July, the "nuwlan" connection you may be using will no longer appear as an available network. If your computer is unable to connect to "Northwestern" due to hardware limitations, you will still be able to configure a connection to "nuwlan".

To connect to "Northwestern," your laptop must comply with the network's updated technical standards, 802.1X and WPA2. These standards provide more efficient security for network connections, data, and access control. If you cannot connect with the instructions provided, contact your laptop vendor to check compatibility with 802.1X/WPA2.

If you have questions about configuring your laptop, contact the NUIT Support Center at 847-491-**HELP** (4357) or consultant@northwestern.edu.

The NUPortal to Improve Navigating at Northwestern

March 2007

All of your favorite University services will soon be available with just one click of your mouse when you use the new Web business portal, called The NUPortal, from NUIT.

Available this summer, this secure, user-friendly site will supplement the University home page by providing personalized, easy access to role-based NetID services.

"The NUPortal is the result of more than two years of strategic planning. The purpose is to integrate University Web-based systems essential to academic, research, and administrative work at Northwestern, into a personalized, single point of access," said Betty Brugger, Director of NUIT Management Systems. "It is designed to help faculty, staff, and students use University services more effectively and work more efficiently."

Everything you need — all in one place

If you already use a public Web portal, such as Google or MyYahoo, you will find The NUPortal familiar and easy to use. Similar to these services, The NUPortal will be customizable, tailored to your own interests and roles at the University.

The NUPortal provides areas with available applications specific to your role, such as "faculty", "staff", "student", or "researcher". Users will also have a personal area for the applications used most often.

These areas will be pre-populated with relevant portlets of information and applications. Services planned for the launch include Plan-it-Purple, Depot, Library Search and News, as well as an Emergency News Feed for breaking campus news. Initially, portlets and services will be limited, but will continue to expand to include more and more services.

How it all began

NUIT's ServicePoint project team began collaborative planning, project management, and early development on The NUPortal in 2006. To assess the needs of the community and gather feedback, the team made numerous presentations to University groups around campus. The Office of Web Communications was engaged to design the user interface and help conduct usability studies with faculty, staff, and students. Combined with additional research and community feedback, specific requirements for The NUPortal were identified and a launch date is set for July 2007.

The ServicePoint team continues to work with online service providers from across the University. Plans are being developed to include services from Caesar (Student Enterprise System), the Human Resources Information Systems (HRIS), WebMail, and the Course Management System in the next year.

Partnering with Project Café

The team is also working to bring the University's new financial management system to the The NUPortal. With the portal, users will be able to customize their view of the new tools developed by Project Café so that they can work quickly and efficiently with the tools they need.

"Deploying the business portal and integrating it with our existing enterprise systems is a challenging, but exciting task," said Harry Samuels, project manager for the portal. "The NUPortal will provide a framework that helps the University manage and deliver their most highly-accessed online services."

Look for more information on the launch of The NUPortal in the coming weeks.

Data Security at Northwestern

March 2007

If you became aware of a computer security violation in your area, would you know what do?

Any time you suspect or know of a circumstance in which sensitive information is released beyond the sphere of University control, it is considered a security incident. Support staff is available to investigate these incidents and understand the extent of the security exposure. If you ever have a reasonable suspicion of a security incident, immediately contact your management, local technical support staff, and NUIT's Network Operations Center at 847-467-NNOC (6662).

Not only is it easy to report a potential problem, it is also your responsibility as a member of the Northwestern community. It is essential that the University's information assets remain protected for many reasons, including:

- Personal information — Protecting your personally identifiable information keeps it private and out of the hands of identity thieves.
- Constituents — Proper handling of personally identifiable information helps the University comply with federal and state regulations, minimize the risk presented by identity theft, and avoid possible criminal and civil action and penalties.
- Network performance — Keeping your computer secure helps to protect the network and keep it secure and stable.
- Northwestern's reputation — Protecting sensitive data from unauthorized access helps ensure compliance with privacy regulations, avoids adverse publicity, and bolsters the reputation of the University.

Help keep Northwestern information resources safe by following these guidelines, also available from the [security section](#) of the NUIT Web site:

Secure your computers

1. Start Now — A PC must be secured before connecting to the Internet. An unprotected computer can be taken over in minutes, and often without your awareness. Follow these steps to help ensure your system is secure.
2. Secure Passwords — Strong, effective passphrases/passwords are simple and important defenses. Make it complex and keep it to yourself. Find more information about passwords from the [security section](#) of the NUIT Web site.
3. Protective Programs — Viruses, spyware, and other malware can cause computer malfunction or allow hackers to steal data. Use Symantec

- AntiVirus and Spybot - Search & Destroy, both free for download from NUIT from the [security section](#) of the NUIT Web site.
4. Secure Settings — Security flaws can exist in any operating system or software, and must be fixed with small programs called patches. Set your computer to update automatically.
 5. Smart Habits — Be a skeptical computer user. Be wary of downloads and attachments, and lock or turn off your computer when not in use. If you suspect an incident, report it to NUIT's Network Operations Center at 847-467-NNOC (6662). More about smart habits is available from the security section of the NUIT Web site.

Secure your working environment

For full instructions and tips, go to the security section of the NUIT Web site.

1. Protected Data — Treat all sensitive data as a valuable asset to minimize the chance that it is released: don't use Social Security Numbers as identifiers, inventory where sensitive data resides, and encrypt private data sent across the network.
2. Careful Disposal — Properly dispose sensitive data and computer hardware when it is no longer needed. Find out more about University disposal resources.
3. Safe Connections — Avoid unapproved wireless networks and public computers for accessing private data. Find out more about using safe connections.
4. Be Prepared — In the event of a disaster or a security incident, do you know what to do? Report all security incidents to your management, local support staff, or NUIT at 847-467-NNOC (6662) or security@northwestern.edu.

Remember, you are the key to information security!

More information about information security at Northwestern is available on the [security section](#) of the NUIT Web site.

Faculty and Students Find Success When Clicking

March 2007

Northwestern classrooms are increasingly technology-enabled — high-tech videoconferencing, Smart Classrooms, and now, clickers.

Clickers, or the [Student Response System](#) (SRS), is an integrated hardware and software system that allows instructors to pose questions and gather students' responses during a lecture. Gaining popularity at Northwestern since testing began two years ago, the system often takes the "clicker" name because of the remote control device used to answer posed questions.

"The students learn more, even recognize their difficulties, when engaged with this system," said Martina Bode, Mathematics senior lecturer. Bode is also an SRS pilot team member and evaluator.

Use of the system by faculty such as Bode has steadily increased since the initial launch last fall quarter.

"Students overwhelmingly enjoy using this system," said Mary Schuller, managing coordinator of the SRS.

The system allows students to have fun with learning in a lecture setting, and allows faculty to reap the benefits as well. Bode recently polled participating students about use of the clickers, and ninety percent said the system increases instructor awareness of difficulties. In addition, seventy-six percent of students said the SRS helps them understand what is expected in class, and eighty percent said that discussing SRS questions helps them better understand subject matter.

Clickers can also be used for fun in the classroom — Bode suggests using the devices as icebreakers in large groups, creating teams to debate questions and eventually agree on an answer to select.

SRS recently released a Mac software kit for non PC-based instructors, and a few Smart Classrooms are already equipped with the appropriate software.

Faculty interested in piloting SRS are encouraged to contact NUIT's [Academic Technologies](#) for a kit, which are available for up to three weeks per session.

Windows Vista has Landed — Now What?

Winter 2007

After delays in taking off, Windows Vista™ has finally landed, but NUIT recommends you wait to get on board. Delay upgrading until at least early fall because of several known incompatibilities with University systems.

It is essential to research the following questions before upgrading for University or personal use, and speak with your technical support staff in your area:

Are you compatible?

In testing Vista, NUIT and campus technology leaders have found incompatibilities with key software and peripherals, so early adoption of Windows Vista — at the office and at home — is not recommended. NUIT recommends purchase only after Service Pack 1 is released.

In addition to printers and handheld devices that may not work, software with currently known Vista incompatibilities include MeetingMaker Connector for Outlook, Intellisync for MeetingMaker, Cisco VPN, SAS, and SAV Client Security. Testing of Vista continues and NUIT will provide a detailed list of incompatibilities as soon as possible. NUIT anticipates that these issues will be rectified and fully compatible in the future.

Before purchasing a new operating system, it is important to research your system and its compatibility with Vista, as most systems are not compatible. A detailed list of system requirements is available on the [Microsoft Web site](#).

If you're in the market for a new personal system, it's in your best interest to hold out on Vista for now. You should look into purchasing Windows XP Service Pack 2 with the option to upgrade to Vista Service Pack 1 in the future.

What edition is right for you?

Knowing whether or not a new Vista system is compatible with your current machine is only half the battle of upgrading to Vista. Before moving on, you'll need to understand which edition best suits your needs. Take a closer look at [Vista's varying editions](#): Windows Vista Ultimate, Windows Vista Home Premium, Windows Vista Home Basic, Windows Vista Business, and Windows Vista Enterprise.

What about security?

Microsoft claims Windows Vista is one of the safest operating systems available. They've created a new technology, the User Account Control, which provides a method of separating standard user privileges and tasks from those that require administrator access.

Some users complain about the restrictions of the new security settings. Some of these features can be turned off or on, depending on the user. As with any new user or system, it will take time to personalize settings to your comfort.

The bottom line? Windows Vista is more than an upgrade, and the drawbacks of the system currently outweigh the benefits for most users, especially for University use.

NUIT will provide more information about Vista in the coming weeks, and [Microsoft's Vista Web site](#) is a good resource for further details.

Northwestern Partners with Google for Student E-mail and Other Services

March 2007

In response to student feedback, Northwestern University is partnering with Google to provide e-mail and other services to students beginning this spring.

The idea for the service began when students from the Associated Student Government and the Graduate Student Association requested such a partnership during collaborative meetings with NUIT. NUIT announced Feb. 27 that Google Apps for Education will soon be available to students through "@u.northwestern.edu".

@u.northwestern.edu, powered by Google Apps for Education, will provide advanced and easy-to-use tools such as searchable, two gigabyte e-mail services, a large integrated address book space, robust security features, integrated calendaring, instant messaging, online document collaboration, and online support.

"Northwestern University is one of the first research universities to forge this type of innovative relationship with a premier technology partner such as Google," says Mort Rahimi, Northwestern's vice president for information technology and chief technology officer. "We now lead our peer institutions in offering students integrated communication and collaboration technology services while efficiently managing University resources."

Working closely with student groups, Student Affairs, Alumni Relations and Development, and many others, NUIT sought to ensure that the partnership met the needs of students and the University.

"We are giving students more services than they had before, such as mailboxes that are 50 times larger, and functionality that we don't provide today," says Director of Technology Support Services Wendy Woodward. "A leading-edge company like Google is a great partner because they listen to customers and develop products that are innovative and relevant to today's user."

Student groups requested outsourced e-mail services because many students have an e-mail account outside of the University and a large percentage forward their Northwestern mail to an outside account. Of that group, a majority already forwards their mail to Gmail.

The new @u.northwestern.edu service allows the University to add value to an important student service.

Students who participate will experience user-friendly functionalities and interfaces similar to those found in public Google services. Advertisements will not be displayed on the e-mail interface for students.

By the end of spring quarter 2007, NUIT's goal is to facilitate the opting-in of current Northwestern students to the new @u.northwestern.edu service. Graduating students could then choose to continue to use their new @u.northwestern.edu service as an alumnus of Northwestern University.

NUIT will provide additional details about these services and opt-in procedures in the coming weeks. Student communications will include information on the [NUIT Web site](#).

Get Software: Easier Ordering, Better Customer Service

March 2007

Northwestern's academic software discounts are now even easier to obtain — faculty and staff can now place institutional orders with a CUFS number or P-card through Software House International (SHI) for Microsoft, Adobe, and Symantec titles.

Check out the [software section](#) of the NUIT Web site, select the title you are looking for, and proceed to the appropriate ordering site for purchase. Within SHI, you'll notice improved streamlined account maintenance, online software downloads, and an improved customer service experience.

Personal software purchases are processed by e-academy.

This service delivery change was made in response to your feedback, as well as unavoidable changes to the former vendor's service model. NUIT has been actively working to improve the University's purchasing process for Microsoft and Adobe software and welcomes your feedback to questions@software.northwestern.edu.

If you have questions about software support, contact the NUIT Support Center at 847-491-**HELP** (4357).

Security Awareness: Keeping Your Personal Financial Information Secure

March 2007

Springtime will soon be upon us, potentially marred only by the Chicago Cubs losing their opener and the looming April 15 filing deadline for income taxes. There's not much you can do about the Cubs — or the filing deadline for that matter — but keeping your personal financial data private and secure is under your direct control.

Preparing your own return

Your personal financial records can be the target of identity thieves who will go to great lengths to obtain your information. Dumpster diving, that is retrieving paperwork from the trash, continues to be a fairly effective and lucrative practice. Your tax forms, work papers, billing statements, and receipts contain your social security number, personal financial information, and credit card numbers.

For the data you retain electronically, do you use encryption to protect it? Are you disposing of previous years' tax returns with a shredder? How about that old PC you used to prepare earlier tax returns, the one with the personal financial software that holds your personal data from years past? Did you donate it to a local charity and take the deduction? Did you wipe out the disk so that your personal financial can't be retrieved? If not, you could be the person whose name appears in the news as having their personal data exposed.

You can also avoid possible malware by getting your personal financial software from a reputable source, and consider electronic filing for faster processing and refunds. The Internal Revenue Service offers [advice on electronic filing](#) on their Web site. You should also take caution to not automatically reply to e-mail invitations to prepare or file your tax return. Instead, always verify that the Web site is legitimate and manually key the URL into the address bar of your browser.

Using a tax preparer

If you've decided that income tax preparation is too troublesome and you're looking to delegate the task, be sure to find someone reputable and trustworthy. Dispensers of financial advice such as a local bank can be a good source of referral but it is always a good practice to "trust but verify".

During the preparation process, you will make available much of your personal financial information, including social security numbers and date of birth, so asking for references is appropriate. Also, ask your tax preparer to

return all copies of documents to you. Be sure that you keep them in a safe place, and shred old tax returns when they're no longer needed.

*As always, **You're the Key** to keeping your financial data secure!*

What's New & Changing @ Northwestern

March 2007

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NU Blog Now Available

NU Blog, a new service from NUIT Academic Technologies, was designed with collaboration and extension in mind. Exclusively available through Northwestern's Course Management System, [NU Blog](#) offers faculty and students a more convenient way to share their reflections within a class environment.

At least 15 courses have been fostering communication and discussion through the NU Blog since its Winter quarter launch, and some faculty are using the service as a participation tool. Early adopters of the NU Blog include the School of Continuing Studies and Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences.

Academic Technologies is currently working on adding a course blog feature where users can collaboratively converse in a central blog, rather than through their individual blogs. Faculty interested in using this service can sign up through [Academic Technologies](#) or attend the upcoming [NU Blog Workshop](#).

For more information, visit the [NU Blog](#) page in the news section of the NUIT Web site.

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Virtual Store Changing

The next time you visit the Virtual Store Web pages, you'll notice it has a new name and look. The newly re-named [Purchasing Resources](#) pages are managed by University Services but will still offer similar services. University Services recently updated their Web pages to include the ability to purchase

computing and networking equipment, products, and services, formerly found on the Virtual Store Web pages. The service can still be accessed from the same convenient link on the NUIT home page, now identified as Purchasing Resources rather than Virtual Store.

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CONDUITS Online Improves for You

CONDUITS Online users recently received an upgrade of service for viewing, tracking, and ordering voice and voicemail services. The new [Subscriber Service Model](#) now tracks voice and voicemail service ownership at the departmental level, rather than the employee level. The upgrade streamlines the work process, allowing for optimal work effectiveness and improved customer service.

For more information, visit the [CONDUITS page](#) in the news section of the NUIT Web site.

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New Policy for Hosting Online Services Adopted

Northwestern University recently adopted a policy that improves the security of University data, addressing authentication, security, and a notice of the right to refuse services and block implementation for online services.

Specifically, the policy states, "all online services to the University community must be reviewed and approved by the Vice President for Information Technology under the Policy for Information Technology Acquisition, Development and Deployment."

To read the full policy, visit the [policies and guidelines](#) section of the NUIT Web site.

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New WebMail: Coming Soon

A more stabilized WebMail will be available for the Northwestern community on Thursday, March 29. Though most of the look and feel of WebMail will be

familiar, users will experience slight aesthetic changes including an added top navigation bar and collapsible menus.

NUIT has made efforts to minimize the impact of the new WebMail on the Northwestern community. Key system and functionality improvements will be addressed in the future with a major e-mail system overhaul, timing yet to be determined.

To make the transition more convenient and ensure enough time to get familiar with the slightly different interface, we invite you to attend an upcoming NUIT Tech Talk. These workshops feature previews and demonstrations of the new WebMail. If you are unable to attend a Tech Talk, video of a previous session will be available on the [Tech Talk archives page](#) on the NUIT Web site. Register now for the [Evanston Tech Talk](#) or the [Chicago Tech Talk](#).

For more information, visit [New WebMail: Coming Soon](#) in the news section of the NUIT Web site.

Upcoming NUIT Events

NUIT Tech Talk Series

The NUIT Tech Talk series is a chance for you to improve your knowledge about new technology and technology-related issues that impact the academic and work environment of the University. Upcoming Tech Talks include:

- **March 7 – Protecting Privacy: Safe Disposal of Computers and Information**

Computers become obsolete. Private and confidential information often does not. Don't let your information fall into the wrong hands! Learn:

- How to properly prepare old computers, PDAs, other devices for disposal so the information on them cannot be retrieved
- How to properly dispose of confidential information in other formats (paper, CD, disk, etc.)
- How to protect your personal information online

[Register now](#) for this Tech Talk.

- **April 11 – Spring Cleaning: Keep Your Computer in Great Shape**

All tools need regular maintenance to keep them working their best, and computers are no exception. Your machine can continue to run quickly and safely with an easy-to-complete spring cleaning, no matter what the season. Learn:

- What aspects of your computer need regular upkeep
- Recommended steps and scheduling of user maintenance
- Suggested programs to run and updates to install

[Register now](#) for this Tech Talk.

- **May 23 – Stay Connected & Secure All Summer Long**

Is your computer set for the summer? Make sure to keep your computer safe and yourself connected to Northwestern when you are off-campus. In this Tech Talk, learn about:

- Best practices for safe computing while traveling
- Connecting to Northwestern from off-campus

[Register now](#) for this Tech Talk.

2EAST: New Technology Series

In partnership with the University Library, these presentations are specifically intended for faculty who want to take advantage of the teaching and research capabilities of emerging technologies. Upcoming events include:

- **March 6 – Improving Bibliographic Access to 18th Century Books**

This presentation reports on a project at Northwestern University Library to add subject descriptions to online records for the Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO), a searchable full-text facsimile database of over 132,000 18th-century works in all disciplines. Gary Strawn will describe how the project was conducted, harvesting subject information from library records across the country and applying them to records from the British Library that had lacked descriptor information. Jeff Garrett will then assess the benefits of this enhancement by using a representative early modern European research topic: a search for contemporary material on the East India Company (1600-1873).

[Register now for this presentation.](#)

- **March 14 – NU Blog**

NU Blog is a newly developed blog tool that supports class-based student and instructor blogging. NU Blog integrates with your Course Management System course site and allows for a variety of publishing and privacy options. Please join Timothy King, Academic Technologies, for a demonstration of the NU Blog tool.

[Register now for this presentation.](#)

- **April 3 – New Technologies for Videoconferencing at NU**

Please join us for a live demonstration of videoconferencing technology and learn how selected NU faculty are using it to support their teaching and research. Mike Curtis and Larry Amiot from Academic Technologies will provide an overview of video conference services

currently available on campus, as well as an overview of data sharing options.

[Register now for this presentation.](#)

- **April 10 – Second Life - Virtual Worlds in Education**

The New Media Consortium, a consortia of University media centers, which Northwestern is a member, has created a campus in the virtual world of Second Life. Find out more about virtual worlds, their applications in education, and current projects.

[Register now for this presentation.](#)

- **April 24 – Zotero: an Emerging Research Tool**

Zotero is a new Web-based research tool, developed with support from the Mellon Foundation, that allows you to easily organize notes, manage citations, and store files, images, and Web pages as you visit research sites on the Web. As an open-source, free extension to the Firefox browser, Zotero has been attracting the attention of scholars and developers alike since its first release a few months ago. Please join Bob Taylor, Academic Technologies, for an introduction to Zotero and a look at some of the features that are being considered for future releases of this research tool.

[Register now for this presentation.](#)

- **May 8 – Triple Threat**

Planning your course with the Triple Threat Course Management System, Digital Media Services, and Electronic Reserve. This session, led by Patrick Murphy, Dan Zellner, and James Altman, will provide information concerning services available for your course preparation.

[Register now for this presentation.](#)

Third Thursday Club Meetings

Third Thursday Club is an opportunity to share technology-related issues and solutions unique to your campus environment. Meetings are held simultaneously on both campuses at 9:30 a.m. on the third Thursday of every month. Look for more information regarding topics and locations on the [NUIT Calendar](#).

- March 15
- April 19
- May 17