CIT Monthly News and Events
January 8, 2009

Happy New Year and welcome back, from CIT!

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Upcoming CIT events and workshops: January 2009

1/28/2009  Link Lunch – monthly CIT hosted lunch for faculty teaching in the Link
1/28/2009  Avoiding death by PowerPoint

To learn more or to register for any workshop, visit http://cit.duke.edu/events/calendar.do.

Faculty may request a custom workshop for their department on any instructional technology topic by emailing CIT.

CIT custom training offerings

Although CIT offers several scheduled workshops for faculty each semester, as well as a week-long series of workshops and discussions in early May, we realize that these sessions may not meet the needs of all faculty. Therefore, we have expanded our popular “Office Visit” program to include a broad range of instructional technology topics (previously the program focused on Blackboard or iPod training).

Office Visits are custom one-hour training sessions for 1 to 2 faculty, at a time convenient to the faculty member, in her/his office. Topics can range from Blackboard, to Web 2.0 tools, Google Earth, blogs and wikis, using PowerPoint effectively, working with students groups, assessment methods with technology, and many others. Duke faculty can request an Office Visit using our new online...
In addition to one-on-one help via Office Visits, Duke faculty can always request custom training for larger groups, either in their department or at our location. We can create a training session on many instructional technology and teaching topics, either repeating one of our scheduled workshops, or putting together something custom for you.

For example, if you and your colleagues would like to learn more about effective uses of PowerPoint as a teaching tool, we could schedule a hands-on workshop in our computer lab in Bostock Library. If you want an overview of new web-based tools and applications which might enhance your productivity, such as RSS feeds, Google Docs, wikis and others, we can arrange a demonstration and discussion for you. Perhaps you would like a detailed look at Blackboard’s assessment tools and gradebook – we would be happy to orient you to these, and help you think through best uses for your courses and programs. These and many other topics are possible – please contact us if you would like to discuss your ideas, or use the online form to request a session.

_**CIT support for faculty teaching in the Link in 2009**_

Just a few of the ways CIT will continue to work with Duke faculty teaching in the Link in the coming year:

1) **Link Lunch – monthly CIT hosted lunch for faculty teaching in the Link**

What teaching and learning activities work well in the Link spaces? What’s the best approach to using breakout spaces or whiteboards with your class? How do other faculty use the movable furniture in the Link? CIT will host a monthly lunch as an open forum for faculty teaching in the Link. Get together with other faculty for informal discussions about the Link.

For more information, or to register, please visit: [http://cit.duke.edu/events/event.do?eventid=1671&occurid=3281](http://cit.duke.edu/events/event.do?eventid=1671&occurid=3281)

2) **Flexible Learning Spaces Profiles**

Are you doing something innovative with the Link’s teaching spaces? CIT would like to profile you and your course (along with pictures and/or video of your class in action) on our website.

Here are two recent examples:

Caroline Bruzelius: *Rethinking Teaching in the Link (Part 1)*
Caroline Bruzelius: *Rethinking Teaching in the Link (Part 2)*

Faculty interested in working with CIT consultants to create a profile can email cit@duke.edu with ‘Flexible Learning Spaces Profiles’ in the subject heading.

3) **Consult with CIT at any time**

CIT staff are available to consult with Link faculty at any time, to help plan for effective use of Link classrooms. Thinking about group activities in your class and want some planning advice? Wondering how your room could be configured to encourage student interaction? Interested in taking full advantage of the technology available in the Link, but not sure where to start? We can help with these and many other questions. Just email cit@duke.edu.

_**Google releases Picasa beta for the Mac**_
Instructors wanting students to do some simple photo management and editing in classes or in their own work have sometimes turned to Picasa, an application from Google. However, the application has been Windows only, until now.

Google has released a beta of Picasa for the Mac, available at picasa.google.com/mac/ . It requires Mac OS X version 10.4 or later and an Intel based Macintosh is required.

A blog post at Wired has a quick review of the beta, finding it faster at loading and managing photos than iPhoto, which ships with the Mac. It’s only missing a few small features when compared with the Windows version, including geotagging. However, if you’re using an iPhone or other device that geotags photos, it will preserve the geotags for use at a later time in the application.

[blog post at Wired.com](http://www.wired.com)

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**Blackboard Exemplary Course Program**

Blackboard, Inc. sponsors a program every year “to help faculty use e-Learning technology more effectively by identifying and disseminating best practices for designing engaging online courses.” Blackboard’s 2009 **Exemplary Course Program** is now open and accepting submissions through 1/12/2009.

The Program web site includes a rubric describing the criteria for assessing exemplary online courses, the principles in which could be adjusted to apply to any course web site. In addition, a list of Exemplary Course winners from previous years on the site may provide ideas useful to other online faculty (note that NCSU was one of the 2008 winners for their course “Organization & Operation of Training & Development Programs”).

Have a quick look at the Program site – you might find something useful to help you expand the use of your Blackboard site or any course web site.

[ShareThis](http://www.blackboard.com)

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**Library Guides in your Bb sites**

If you use Blackboard, you will notice an addition to your sites’ course menus starting in Spring 2009. A “Library Guides” button in the menu will lead to a page of library resources, in many cases specific for the course’s disciplinary area. CIT staff partnered with reference librarians and subject specialists, who have provided the appropriate URLs and developed the library resources pages which are linked from the Bb sites. Librarians are also happy to work with faculty to create resource pages specific to any course; faculty should contact their [subject specialist librarians](http://www.blackboard.com) to arrange this. There is more information about this project on our [Blackboard support website](http://www.blackboard.com).

[ShareThis](http://www.blackboard.com)

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**“Flexible Learning Spaces” Fellows’ experiences posted**

During Fall 2008, five Duke faculty and one graduate student participated in the CIT’s **Flexible Learning Spaces” Fellowship** program, which focused on best teaching applications of the technology and space arrangements made possible by Duke’s new flexible teaching and learning space, [the Link](http://www.blackboard.com).
Profiles of each of the faculty are posted on the CIT website, and illustrate the various ways these faculty effectively used the Link features, including easy access to technology, wall-to-wall whiteboards, break-out (student group work) spaces, moveable furniture, and close-by technical and teaching support. If, after reading the Fellows’ experiences, you would like to try any of the approaches mentioned and would like to talk to CIT first, please contact us!

Teaching with a wiki

Gearing up for spring semester? Interested in trying something different? Instructors have been incorporating wikis into their courses to allow students to work collaboratively, and wikis are available through Blackboard at Duke. However, wikis can be used to organize the entire course.

Sandra Porter shares her experiences using a wiki (PBwiki) to teach bioinformatics in her blog, Discovering Biology in a Digital World. She describes how she set up her course, using her syllabus as the main page with links to her materials. She says she “used to try and use Blackboard for this, but pbwiki is so much easier to use.” For assessments, she used Google forms embedded into the course wiki.

Dr. Porter generously shares her lessons learned along the way. She described a problem caused by a web browser, and finally, she describes a better way to manage files and folders within her course. In addition, she answers readers’ questions in the comments. Read all 3 entries for a thoughtful introduction to using a wiki to organize a course. Dr. Porter currently develops instructional materials for 21st century biology at Geospiza Inc.

The adventurous proponent of open (notebook) science, Jean-Claude Bradley, has been teaching organic chemistry using a wiki for several years at Drexel University. Fittingly, his courses are open: browse Organic Chemistry 1 or Organic Chemistry 2 for ideas. He uses Wikispaces to host his wikis, and accompanies the courses with blog posts.

Wikis are wonderful tools for collaboration, which may be ideal for students to learn. However, as Dr. Porter details, wiki pages can have permissions set so that they are private within the class, or private between the instructor and the student. In addition, because the instructor can access the page history, changes can be monitored. Will a wiki fit your course?