CIT Monthly
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News and Events
March 4, 2009

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Upcoming CIT events and workshops: March 2009

3/4/2009  Blackboard Advisory Group Meeting
3/17/2009  Teaching IDEAS: Mentoring Undergraduates in Research in and Beyond the Classroom
3/17/2009  Using digital storytelling with your students
3/18/2009  Too Much Information! (How to Manage it Online)
3/27/2009  Link Lunch – monthly CIT hosted lunch for faculty teaching in the Link

Save the date! The Center for Instructional Technology Showcase will feature faculty presentations and demonstrations on Friday April 24, 2009 in Perkins/Bostock Library and the Link. Register now!

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.

ShareThis

Display student work in Perkins library

Have your students produced work you’d like to show...
Have your students produced work you'd like to show the world? Display it on the Student Wall in Perkins Library. The Student Wall, on the first floor of Perkins Library, is available for exhibits of work created by students for classes, research or internships and for displays by student organizations related to their projects. Displays will highlight civic engagement, social issues, and experiences closely related to formal coursework.

Students are responsible for producing professional looking materials in whatever size and format that is appropriate to their exhibit as long as it fits on this wall. The materials must be suitable for hanging in this space either backed with a solid material (such as foam core) or placed in frames. Students will be responsible for mounting and taking down the exhibits with help from the library exhibits coordinator. Material will be displayed for a minimum of 3 weeks.

For more information or to schedule a display, contact the exhibits coordinator, Meg Brown.

Students produce videos at Duke’s Marine Laboratory

Students in Marine Invertebrate Zoology have created short videos about published research articles. The videos can be seen in on the course YouTube Channel; catch some of the students’ enthusiasm for invertebrates while they explain published research in marine invertebrate zoology. This course is taught at the Duke University Marine Laboratory by Cindy Van Dover; Andrew Thaler is the teaching assistant.

Students share top billing with invertebrates like squid and dwarf worms, and provide a window into life at the marine station. Here’s the video about my favorite animal.
Use CIT’s lab for project development

CIT’s Instructional Technology Lab in 024 Bostock Library is available for faculty or academic staff to work on technology projects for Duke classes. The lab contains 3 video capturing/editing stations (2 Mac, 1 PC), an audio capturing/editing station, slide and flatbed scanners and more. The lab is open and staffed 12 – 5 pm Monday – Friday, but appointments are available at other times as well.

Some of the things you can do in our lab:

- scan images from prints, slides or negatives,
- scan text using optical character recognition,
- convert paper documents to electronic form,
- capture and edit audio or video,
- record a short screen movie,
- prepare materials for distribution from Duke’s streaming servers,
- get basic instruction in the use of Duke Digital Initiative equipment,
- produce CDs and DVDs of audio and video material that can be used for delivery of course materials, projection in a classroom or backup purposes.

If you are interested in using the lab for developing course materials, please make a reservation or just drop in. If you need more information, call 660-5806 or send a quick email.

Bb Tip: Students share files within Blackboard

Peer collaborative learning enhances the value of student–to–student interaction and results in various advantageous learning outcomes. Instructors can use the Blackboard’s built–in collaboration tools to allow students to access each others’ files within Blackboard for peer review and feedback.

Instructors can choose tools for students to share files in a number of ways:

- through the Discussion Board,
- via Group File Exchange,
- using the Blackboard Blog and Wiki Tool.

See more from the Duke Knowledge Base.

To explore and discover additional Blackboard features, see the Blackboard support website. If you would like more extensive help for Blackboard, request an office visit and we will come to you.

Catalogue of Digitized Medieval Manuscripts and social bookmarking

The Chronicle of Higher Ed has a blog post highlighting the Catalogue of Digitized Medieval Manuscripts, an online database that links to digitized materials in various collections.

While many libraries and institutions are digitizing parts of their collections, it's not always easy to find material in a specific subject area. These “aggregator” sites may become more common as
scholars with common interests share links to materials.

Students in a class could put together something like this as part of activities centering around research in a course, using social bookmarking tools like Google Reader or delicious.

**Open source tools for teaching, research and learning**

I’ve just returned from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation’s Research in Information Technology retreat at which project leaders are sharing information about open source projects in higher education and in arts groups and museums (http://rit.mellon.org/2009–rit-sc-program–retreat). Open source tools (i.e., no purchase or license fees) may be of increasing interest in the current economic environment. I wonder whether these specific tools might be of interest to faculty and students at Duke. Several products might be good extensions to the Duke Digital Initiative because of their emphasis on producing, managing and analyzing multimedia resources. Other projects or tools could be extensions of the library’s work, as the library becomes not only a source of content, but a source of consultation on working with that content in new ways to further research.

**Sophie** – http://www.sophieproject.org/

Sophie is a multimedia authoring tool: “software for writing and reading rich media documents in a networked environment.” People who have used it, including high school students, describe Sophie as very easy to use. Sophie is currently being rewritten in Java, and with emphasis on collaboration tools. The project’s website provides illustrations of how Sophie is being used. For example, Sol Gaitan of the Dalton School in New York developed a multimedia book for her AP Spanish students so that they could explore the direct influence of particular flamenco music styles on Lorca’s poetry. Gaitan presents both the songs and the poems they inspired, and annotates the poems from pages 11 to 43; with the students expected to follow her lead by annotating the poems in the remainder of the book. Take a look: http://www.sophieproject.org/demobooks

**VUE** – http://vue.tufts.edu/

VUE provides a flexible visual environment for structuring, presenting, and sharing digital information. VUE lets you look for relationships across images, define relationships, compare images, etc. As such, it is a research tool as well as a presentation tool. The VUE website has a short video (http://vue.tufts.edu/screencast/QT_hiRes.cfm) that gives an overview of its functions and how it can be used.

**Zotero** – http://www.zotero.org/

Zotera is free, easy–to–use Firefox extensions to help you collect, manage, and cite your research sources. Some of us are familiar with Zotero as a citation management tool. The developers as well as other project leaders at the RIT meeting see Zotero as having additional functionality through its connections with other tools. For example, the planned redesign of the Sakai course management system may have ways for instructors to upload lists of their publications, and then, via Zotero, find other scholars with whom they might want to connect.

**eComma** – http://ecomma.cwrl.utexas.edu/e392k/

The eCommentary Machine web application (“eComma”) will enable groups of students, scholars, or general readers to build collaborative commentaries on a text and to search, display, and share those commentaries online.

**Sakai 3** – http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/confluence/display/DOC/Sakai+3.0

A completely re–architected version of Sakai is planned for summer of 2010. This version will move away from the cookie–cutter view of course sites and instead connect with 3rd party tools (such as WordPress) and utilize gadgets and widgets that allow a site to look more like a Google personal homepage. The idea is to reflect the look and feel of tools that are already popular. You can see a demo of creating a Sakai 3 site here: http://www.sakaiproject.org/portal/site/sakai-home/page/89473b2c–31dd–4261–9823–c31a79e55532
Participants at the RIT meeting also talked about people “curating their own arts experiences,” a reflection of growing expectation for web 2.0 type functionality. As an example, someone mentioned Sonic Living, ([http://sonicliving.com/](http://sonicliving.com/)) which is not an open source product, but is a relevant example. It scans your hard drive, looks at your iTunes and then suggests live music in your area that matches the interests it found. It also lets you know what concerts your friends are attending. The arts and museum community is looking for ways to get information about their organizations, performances, etc. into the workflows people already have rather than expecting them to come to a website to find information about upcoming events.

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**Getting Personal (part 2): Michael Wesch and the ‘Just in Time’ personal web**

NOTE: This post is part 2 in a series addressing concepts found in the 2009 Horizon Report. Part 1 can be found here.

Michael Wesch, a professor of Cultural Anthropology at Kansas State University gained some internet fame a few years back by publishing a video on YouTube called “Web2.0…The Machine is Us/ing Us.” Since then, Wesch has been adding an impressive set of Web2.0 tools to his courses, using them both for producing and sharing content with his students. In other words, Wesch uses tools developed for the social and/or personal (blogs, YouTube, etc) as instructional technologies.

The screenshot below shows Wesch’s Netvibes page for his course “Mediated Cultures: Digital Ethnography.” Netvibes, much like iGoogle or Pageflakes, is a service that allows users to bring together various elements of their online existence onto one page. Some would also call this an 'aggregator' or a 'portal.' In Wesch’s Netvibes page, he’s created a virtual dashboard that provides the following info on one page:

- recent updates to his students blogs (1)
- recent updates to the course’s wiki page (2) created using WetPaint
- a Google Calendar (3) shows the class and assignment schedule
- all recently bookmarked links to websites and/or articles by the course (4) using a tool called Diigo
Looking at Wesch’s site might seem overwhelming at first – but it works on some simple concepts including a variation of a teaching concept called Just in Time Teaching (JiTT). “Just–in–Time Teaching” asks the question: “How can the web, a new tool, help students take more responsibility for their learning under mindful expert supervision?” (Novak & Middendorf, 2004).

Here’s how the basic idea could work using a Blackboard assignment. A faculty member notices students haven’t been keeping up with the reading, and on top of that, notices that the students who have been reading aren’t comprehending certain key points. A JiTT solution may be to create a two or three question assignment in Blackboard to be completed the night before class. The questions aren’t difficult, and don’t require more than 200 words each to answer. Before class the following day, the faculty member quickly glances over the answers. Now our faculty member has a) a better idea of how many students have actually done the reading, and more importantly, b) a much better idea about what the students are and are not comprehending, making it much easier to focus lecture and class time on the problem areas, or avoid re–teaching concepts that the students already appear to have mastered.

In many ways, Wesch is applying these same concepts to his course – only technology has advanced to the point where its not even necessary to wait until students all submit answers to an assignment. Look at the screenshot of Wesch’s Netvibes page again. With one glance, Wesch knows that his students have been uploading their assignments to their blogs (‘Trailer 2’), knows that some of his students were having some difficulty with audio (see the comments section), has an idea of how many students have accessed the wiki and are working in groups, and can also get a general idea of how much research his students are doing, and what they’re finding interesting (via the Diigo ‘tagged links’ box #4).

Now, let’s take this one step further. At a presentation Wesch gave at ELI 2009, Wesch mentioned that he was also interested in removing distractions from his course. A semester or two ago, he had been using Facebook in his course – but now finds Facebook to be a gateway for distraction. No problem – Wesch just changes the tools and moves on. This is a crucial point to consider, and something we (instructional technologists) deeply believe, but sometimes forget to make clear: it’s not about the tools, it’s about your content. Or, put even more plainly: it’s not the tools, it’s your class.

Course planning can be frustrating – especially given the broad range of technologies now available. Wesch’s successes demonstrate that we don’t have to always put technology first – and in fact, we shouldn’t. Consider what you want to do with your course, what you want your students to achieve, and then plan from there. Is there a new technology that you think might work? There’s a good chance that it’s simple enough to implement. The key here is to not get too attached or ‘hung up’ on a certain technology, but to instead be prepared for changes. If we understand that our content and the collaborative/community aspects of working with a group of students is what’s ultimately important, we can better adjust to use any combination of technologies we choose.