

## Ole Miss Podcasting Now Available

Ole Miss students soon may have more opportunities to learn outside the classroom with the introduction of a new application from the Office of Information Technology (IT).

Ole Miss Podcasting, at [podcast.olemiss.edu](http://podcast.olemiss.edu), is an online system for distributing and accessing podcasts created by university faculty and staff.

System developer Nathan Robbins says his team got a lot of help from an unlikely source.

"We visited Mississippi State's Office of Information Technology Services for a demonstration of the podcasting system they created for faculty and staff use," Robbins explains. "They were very happy to share programming code, recommendations on equipment, feedback on the success of different methods, and any other information that might be useful to us."

The visit to Starkville paid off for Robbins and his IT colleagues.

"I took the basic code they supplied and set up a server with it here," he says. "That got me started, and then I was able to develop a system that was tailored to meet the needs of the Ole Miss community."

A real strength of the system is its simplicity. Special technical training is not required, and the creation and publishing of podcast episodes can be accomplished with just a few mouse clicks.

The new system has piqued the interest of some UM faculty with podcast experience, including Tim Letzring, chair of the Department of Leadership and Counselor Education, who has augmented a school law course he teaches with podcasts.

"Since these students are not lawyers but future school administrators, my goal is to give them more time to listen to the terms and definitions," he explains.

Though Letzring has used Apple's GarageBand software to edit podcasts, he wasn't able to post them without technical assistance.

"This new process will allow me to upload each episode myself, hopefully eliminating some down time," Letzring comments. "It requires a real shift in concept that students can have access to lectures beyond class time. Some faculty may feel students will take advantage of this and not attend class, but I think you can use this technology

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Peter Cleary (left) and Nathan Robbins discuss Ole Miss Podcasting.

### How to Use [podcast.olemiss.edu](http://podcast.olemiss.edu)

#### Listeners

A searchable Listings page lets you find and select podcasts of interest.

There are three ways to access a podcast. You can view or listen to a single episode of a podcast right in your browser. Or you can subscribe using a podcatching program like iTunes or through an RSS feed reader. Either option will automatically load any new episodes of the podcast.

You can listen to downloaded podcasts offline on your computer, burn them to a CD, or load them on an iPod or other MP3 player.

#### Podcasters

Any faculty or staff member with a valid WebID and password can create and manage podcasts. The first step is to register your podcast through the Web site.

Planning ahead is important. One podcast can have many "episodes," or individual recordings. For instance, a podcast for a course will have separate episodes for each lecture or other teaching material that's posted. That way, when students subscribe to the course podcast, they will receive everything the instructor distributes automatically. So, you don't want to register a new podcast for each unique posting.

You will need to record the information you wish to podcast. This can be done using a multimedia lectern in a classroom set up for Ole Miss Podcasting or remotely using a recorder such as the Marantz PMD660 available for checkout from IT Multimedia ([www.olemiss.edu/itmedia](http://www.olemiss.edu/itmedia)).

Several computer programs are available for editing audio or video files if you wish to do so before publishing. Contact the Faculty Technology Development Center at 915-7918 or [ftdc@olemiss.edu](mailto:ftdc@olemiss.edu) for more information.

The Marantz PMD660 Digital Recorder



# Technology in Large Lectures a Win-Win Situation

By **Johnny W. Lott**, Director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

A basic question for faculty is how to harness the power of technology for more effective learning.

Let's consider one use of basic classroom technology in our large classes. In a very large class using Blackboard, a major issue is how do you lecture? How much information do you provide online when you want attendance at the class itself?

If entire lectures for large classes are placed online, a valid question is why should students come to class? If the class is nothing more than these lectures, a student can read and study at convenient times and not have to attend class at all.

What is wrong with this picture? If lectures are online, are faculty members irrelevant? Perhaps because of this possibility, many instructors tend to put nothing online about a given day's lectures.

To one interested in teaching and learning, this seems to miss taking advantage of a valuable resource. Many in academia have recognized that students frequently have trouble knowing the most important parts of a lecture

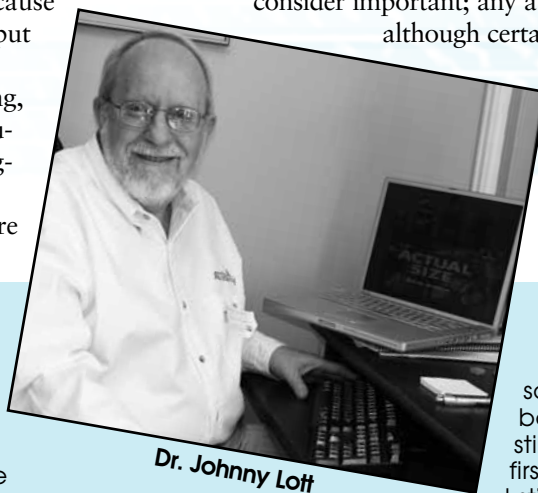
when they are busy taking notes. What can be done about it?

Suppose as a faculty member, you choose to put an outline of your lecture notes on Blackboard where students have ready access. Outlines should highlight important points you want students to know. If your outline were prepared ahead of the lecture and placed online, students could download and print the outline with space for notes to be taken in class.

If you are willing to take the extra time to put the outline online, it likely will benefit both you and the students in the long run. The outline forces you, as professor, to consider what is truly important on a given day; the student knows what you consider important; any absent student can have an outline,

although certainly not a complete one, of the class notes; and you know that the outline is not complete thus giving a student reason to be in class taking notes.

What can be better than a win-win situation in this technology world?



*Dr. Johnny Lott*

"I was taught BASIC in high school using a teletype to a major bank in Atlanta when the earth was still cooling," Dr. Lott says. "I got my first personal computer in 1981 or so. I still use a TI-92 for most calculator work even though I have newer models. I'm basically a Mac person who's trying to adapt to a PC world. I have two laptops, an office computer, and my own LCD projector that's traveled with me to China and back. I'm not really a geek but definitely interested in technology and its uses for learning and teaching."

## About the Author

Dr. Johnny Lott assumed his current position February 1. He came to Ole Miss after 32 years at the University of Montana, where he served as director of their Center for Teaching Excellence and professor and chair in the department of mathematical sciences. He's also been president of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM); director of the Systemic Initiative for Montana Mathematics and Science that developed an entire 9-12 mathematics curriculum heavily using technology; one of the developers of Figure This! ([www.figurethis.org](http://www.figurethis.org)); and a writer of Numb3rs activities for CBS, Texas Instruments, and NCTM.

## New Technology Used for Faculty Evaluations

On March 30, the Office of Information Technology (IT) enabled a new online process for conducting faculty evaluations.

This project is a joint effort between IT, the Provost's Office, Human Resources, and academic units. It makes use of new technology available from the Adobe and SAP corporations to create interactive PDF documents.

"The annual review of faculty members is something the University takes very seriously," comments Associate Provost Maurice Eftink. "The tool that has been developed mimics the old paper form and should be easy for chairs and deans to use."

When a chair retrieves an evaluation for a faculty member, the header information, including name, title, and employment date, is populated automatically by the system.

Certain fields appear depending on the characteristics of the person being evaluated, and these fields are enabled or disabled depending on who's viewing the form. For example, academic

chairs can enter data into the fields related to the evaluation of teaching, research, and service, while others can only view this information.

"This new process should work well in conjunction with the online faculty activity reports," notes Eftink. "Chairs can easily view faculty productivity on their computers while preparing the annual reviews. With all this information online, there is a built-in process for informing faculty about the reviews and an archiving strategy which eliminates the need to store paper."

The fact that users can complete the form offline and submit or upload it later is a major advantage of using interactive PDFs.

"This was our first experience with this technology," says Chief Information Officer Kathy Gates. "So far, the feedback from the academic community has been positive. We hope to use this technology in other areas such as online Honors, Croft, and Admissions applications and eventually E-forms."

# IM Can Deliver More than Messages

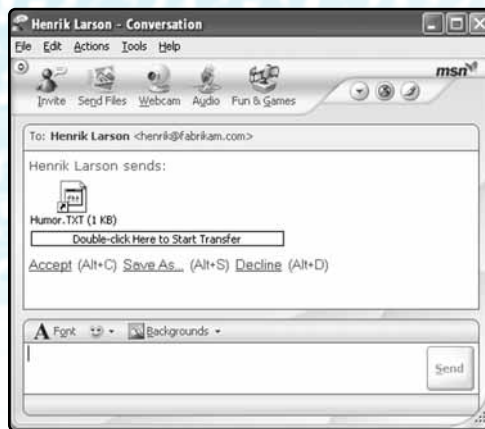
By **David Drewrey**, Campus Security Coordinator

Many computer users have become rather savvy when it comes to spam and virus threats related to e-mail. Most people understand not to open attachments or click on unknown links in suspicious messages. But there is another form of electronic communication which can be a conduit for viruses, spam, and unwanted software...Instant Messaging (IM).

As IM grows in popularity, users should note it has many of the same vulnerabilities as e-mail, including messages that are in "clear text" format. This means that, if intercepted, IM can be read by unintended viewers. This is also something to consider when it comes to your language and content.

Users should NEVER click on a link in an IM without verification from the sender, since the "message from" person could be infected with a virus and unaware the message was sent. If you click on the link or accept the transfer, you can become infected and the same or a similar message appearing to be from you will be sent to all your contacts.

Instant Messaging has also become a target for spam, or



**Friend or Foe?** An IM may appear to be from someone you know but actually was generated by a virus without that person's knowledge.

spim, as it is known (spam over instant messaging). Spim is perpetuated by "bots," or computer programs that run automatically like a robot.

Bots harvest IM screen names from the Internet and simulate human users by sending messages to these targets. The message usually contains a link to a Web site which the spimmer is trying to market or is using to "phish" for account or personal data or to exploit vulnerabilities from unpatched machines.

One way to guard against spim is to allow messages only from those on a specific list, such as buddies or contacts. When it comes to security, the bottom line on IM is to use the same common sense and caution as you do with e-mail.

## SPSS 15 Network License Acquired

By **Jason Hale** in the Mississippi Center for Supercomputing Research

Access to statistical computation is easier than ever thanks to a new network license activated in January by the Office of Information Technology.

The 110-concurrent user network license is for the SPSS 15 for Windows Base, Advanced, and Regression modules. It is valid for any university-owned computer.

When licensed individually, the academic list price for this software package is \$1,657.

In previous years, IT purchased licenses in bulk, reselling to university departments for \$350 a copy. Even with this discount, many departments struggled to provide the SPSS licenses needed for research and classroom instruction.

The new license provides much more breathing room for departments, as SPSS 15 now may be downloaded and installed by any UM employee for free.

A maximum of 110 users may be running SPSS at any one time across the four UM campuses (Oxford, DeSoto, Tupelo, and Jackson). SPSS still installs to your local hard drive, but each time you run the software, it reaches out over the network to check out a license from a server in the University's Data Center.

This checkout takes only a few seconds and then SPSS runs normally from your workstation. When you close SPSS, the license is checked back in and becomes available for use by another researcher.

Concurrent usage statistics compiled since February indicate that users haven't come close to tapping all 110 licenses at once.

SPSS 15 can be installed on UM-owned laptops and used with an off-campus Internet connection at your home, hotel, or conference center. You can even check out a "com-muter license" for a period of offline use by launching the

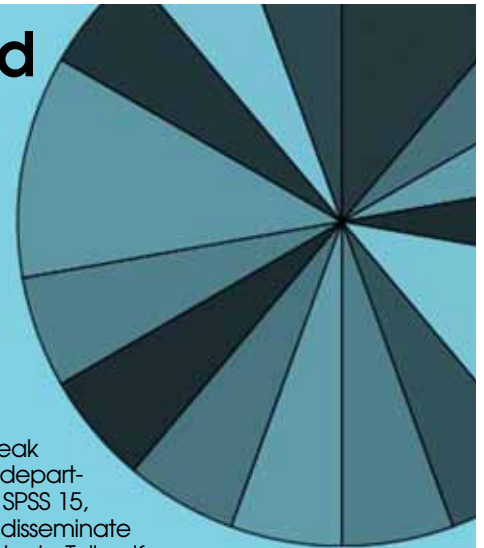
Commuter License tool from the Windows Start menu and following the directions.

If you plan to use SPSS 15 in class, please contact [assist@olemiss.edu](mailto:assist@olemiss.edu) so we can plan maintenance at times that will not interfere with peak usage. If a lab in your department is equipped with SPSS 15, let us know so we can disseminate that information to students. Tell us if you would like to be added to the [stat@listserv.olemiss.edu](mailto:stat@listserv.olemiss.edu) mailing list to stay informed of statistical software news on campus.

The SPSS 15 network license was made possible by a one-time allocation of funds from the Office of the Provost. Several departments and schools agreed to contribute funds over the next two years to cover maintenance costs, including Psychology, Political Science, Economics, Pharmacy Administration, Applied Sciences, Education, and Outreach.

The School of Business contributed significantly by trading in existing stand-alone licenses to increase the number of concurrent seats available in the network license.

Information, instructions, and the link to download the software can be found under the Tools tab in Online Services for faculty or university employees. E-mail [assist@olemiss.edu](mailto:assist@olemiss.edu) with any questions or for assistance with installation.



# Camp Offerings to Expand Next Fall



Lukman Bojuwon, an IT student consultant and senior in electrical engineering, coaches junior accounting major Kathryn Hubbard on Mathematica during a recent Math Camp session.

Positive feedback to Math Camp, held Wednesdays at 4:00 in Weir 107, is prompting the development of two new series for the fall. Stats Camp, Unix Camp, and Math Camp sessions will be offered twice each week to better accommodate the interests and schedules of participants.

For more information, visit [www.mcsr.olemiss.edu/mathcamp](http://www.mcsr.olemiss.edu/mathcamp).

## Podcasting *continued from front cover*

to make class time even more productive.”

Video as well as audio podcasts can be distributed with the system. The first “vodcast,” as video podcasts are often called, was posted by Barbara Dougherty, director of the Center for Educational Research and Evaluation.

“We are providing a catalog of tasks presented in a professional development institute for teachers last summer,” Dougherty explains. “Participants can access the episode that deals with the activity or topic they want to present in class.”

Dougherty stresses that podcasting video and not just audio has particular benefits and challenges.

“The format is helpful because teachers can see rather than just hear the way the manipulatives can be used,” she notes. “But we learned that it’s important to have high quality video and audio and that we have to compress the video in order to make it viable for podcasting.”

Shari Holt in the Department of English has seen several benefits from the use of video podcasts as part of distance learning courses she’s taught.

“Students have an archive of class meetings they can review to see ones they missed or in preparation for exams,” Holt says. “I’ve also found the video podcasts to be useful for self-evaluation and may incorporate some clips in my electronic teaching portfolio to provide a visual record of my pedagogical methods.”

Holt plans to utilize the new system for both her distance

learning and traditional courses.

“I will podcast videos I’ve made during visits to historical locations and settings related to course readings,” she says. “Posting even brief lectures and video clips for students to review provides supplemental material which we may not have time to cover in the classroom.”

Rich Buchholz in the Department of Biology is using the new system this semester as part of an assignment.

“The students have to do a 60 second podcast on mammal conservation,” Buchholz explains. “The topics they’ve chosen themselves range from controversy over the success of wolf reintroductions in Yellowstone to efforts to protect Indiana bat colonies by ‘gating’ their hibernation caves to prevent disturbance by humans.”

In addition to courses, the system can be used for distributing podcasts of events and campus announcements.

“We’re excited about the podcasting system because it will allow us to distribute some of our upcoming services like news summaries and weekly events podcasts,” comments Peter Cleary in the Office of Media and Public Relations.

Nathan Robbins looks forward to seeing the number and variety of Ole Miss podcasts grow.

“This is a very stable system, and some of its capabilities are usually found only in expensive commercial products,” notes Robbins. “We invite everyone to take a look at it and welcome any suggestions users might have.”

[www.olemiss.edu/technews](http://www.olemiss.edu/technews)

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