

Is Your Computer a Lean Green Machine?

On Earth Day in April, Chancellor Robert Khayat signed the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment (www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org) and launched the Ole Miss Green Campus Initiative.

“As a community, we are committed to being good stewards of the earth,” Khayat said in a press release at the time. “It is important that the educational experience of our students includes a keen awareness of the responsibility to protect, preserve, and enhance our world.”

According to John Schuster in the Office of Information Technology, UM faculty and staff can support the initiative right at their desks.

“One place to start is by turning off your computer if you’re done for the day or leaving the office for several hours,” Schuster states. “It’s also a good idea to check the power settings and adjust them if needed so an unused computer will soon go into standby or hibernation.”

Schuster says the oft-stated belief that turning off a computer uses more energy than leaving it on is a myth.

“The surge of power to boot up uses less energy than leaving the computer on for three minutes,” he explains.

Newer technologies tend to be more energy efficient, Schuster says, with LCD monitors using much less power than older CRT models. Newer operating systems usually have improved power settings, such as the hybrid sleep mode available in Windows Vista.

Schuster recommends taking energy efficiency into consideration when shopping for new equipment by looking for products with an Energy Star. See www.energystar.gov for more information.

Monitors and printers tend to use a lot of energy, so turning them off when not in use can maximize power savings.

“Turning a monitor off will save more power than closing 50 applications,” Schuster notes.

Other peripherals use less energy but plugging these devices into a power strip makes it easy to shut down with the flick of one switch.

“If you plug in a laser printer, though, make sure it doesn’t exceed the limitations of the power strip,” Schuster warns.

Many organizations, including universities like Ole Miss, are raising awareness about the importance of energy efficiency. Numerous Web sites address the issue, including ones that specifically promote green computing such as www.climatesaverscomputing.org.

Improving energy efficiency helps the environment but it can also save money. Ohio University, for example, estimates that turning off all campus computers at night saves \$225,000 a year (see www.facilities.ohiou.edu/greencp).

The pervasive use of technology means most faculty and staff must use electricity to do their work. But Schuster maintains that being mindful of how efficiently you are using power and paper at your desk can make a difference.

“You have to balance the needs of your work with ways to improve energy efficiency,” he advises, “but it can be done.”



Ten Ways to Go Green at Your Desk

1. Turn Off the Power

Turn your computer off when you leave your desk for several hours or at the end of the day. Your monitor uses a lot of power, so turn it off when not in use, even if your computer is still running.

2. Adjust Your Power Settings

Review your computer’s power settings and make any necessary adjustments. These are under Power Options in the Control Panel for Windows users and under Energy Saver in System Preferences for Mac users.

3. Use an LCD Monitor

LCDs are much more energy efficient than the older CRT monitors.

4. Adjust the Brightness

The brightest setting on a monitor consumes twice the power used by the dimmest setting.

5. Don’t Use a Screen Saver

Screen savers consume power and are unnecessary. Instead set your monitor to go blank or dim when not in use.

6. Turn Off Peripherals

When you don’t need your speakers, scanner, and other add-ons, turn them off.

7. Leave Your Printer Off

A printer draws a lot of power, so leave it off until you need it. Also make sure its power settings include a standby mode that consumes less energy when on.

8. Preview Before You Print

Select and print only the content you need. Omit unneeded pages from the printing job.

9. Print on Both Sides

Another way to reduce the amount of paper you use is to print multiple pages on a single sheet.

10. Don’t Print

Ask yourself if printing is necessary. Do you really need a hard copy or can you just read the e-mail, document, or Web page on screen?

For Jim Morrison, Technology Impacts Life at Work and Home

These days, Jim Morrison isn't quite sure what he would do without technology.

"My work with the Chancellor's Office involves a variety of projects," Morrison says. "Whether it's working with legislative affairs, developing a proposal for the Center for Manufacturing Excellence, or planning for the debate, technology really helps us improve efficiency."

As an Ole Miss graduate, Morrison was already familiar with the inner workings of the university when he joined the Chancellor's staff in September last year.

"I was very involved in student government at Ole Miss and interacted a lot with the administration," Morrison recalls. "That's when I found I really had a passion for higher education and wanted to work in this area."

After stints with Senator Thad Cochran and the Institutes of Higher Learning, Morrison left Mississippi to obtain a master's degree in higher education administration at Columbia University. He worked for Lehman Brothers in New York and then joined the Huron Consulting Group in Chicago.

"The Huron job was a unique opportunity because I spent about two and a half years doing financial and strategic consulting for universities across the country," Morrison notes. "But the consulting lifestyle is not a family lifestyle, so I was really happy to have this great opportunity to return to Ole Miss."

Morrison's experiences in the private sector impacted the way he views technology.

"In the corporate world, you have to learn technology to survive because you're offering cutting edge services or products," he states. "If you're not up to date on how to use certain technologies, you're going to fall behind."

Morrison believes there are some aspects of technology use in the corporate world that could be very beneficial if applied in higher education.

"One thing that stands out to me is the state policy limiting our utilization of BlackBerry or cell phone service," he comments. "In corporate America these devices are constantly used to share information real time no

Jim Morrison

matter where employees are located. You can be walking down the street and responding to your e-mail. There are best practices being used in other states that would mitigate the financial concerns some state leaders have about supporting this technology. Ultimately, the efficiencies far outweigh the risks."

Morrison cites online tools implemented to support the work of the debate steering committee and volunteer task force as examples of how technology can improve efficiency.

Debate Web Site Updated

The launch of a volunteer application form is just one of several recent updates to the university's debate Web site at <http://debate.olemiss.edu>.

There is new information on events and course offerings related to the debate, and a link to the excellent subject guide set up by the J.D. Williams Library.

A special section for the media includes a list of faculty experts and a link to the university's rate sheet for equipment and services.

Web banners, wallpapers, logos, and a screen saver are among the other resources available on the site.

Questions related to the debate may be sent to debate@olemiss.edu.

"These groups must share a lot of information, but we don't have time to meet every day," Morrison explains. "We needed a collaboration tool so we could interact and share documents online for review."

Morrison initially set up a site using Google Groups but the implementation of myOleMiss earlier this year included a collaboration tool that offered the same usability in a more secure environment.

"The volunteer task force has about 15 members, and we are actually using the collaboration tool to process the volunteer applications we're receiving," he says. "The use of this technology will save hundreds of hours and a lot of paper for us."

Morrison's enthusiastic use of technology extends beyond the workplace.

"My wife and I have a newborn, but our family doesn't live nearby and we want to keep them updated," he notes. "We've created a family blog, and we utilize Skype to have online conference calls using a Web cam. This technology allows us to connect and show our parents how their little grandbaby is growing up."

Creating Web sites is a hobby for Morrison.

"I think one of the most useful skill sets any young person can learn is how to develop a Web site," he comments. "No matter what you do in life, being proficient with this technology can be so beneficial."

Whether at work or home, Morrison finds the changing nature of technology challenges him to constantly think in new ways.

"I feel I personally cannot stand still with what I think is a sufficient comfort level with technology," he asserts. "I have to step outside the bubble and ask with any task or project how we can be more efficient by using technology. I think that's something we've always got to do as a university as well."

Blackboard Syncs with Facebook

From Penny Rice in the Faculty Technology Development Center

As you may have noticed, students flock to Facebook. Many use the popular social network daily to meet new people, keep up with friends, or check out that cute guy or girl from math class.

Unfortunately, time spent on Facebook is time away from studying, right? Not anymore.

With Blackboard Sync, a new application that delivers course updates from Blackboard, students can stay academically informed through Facebook. The application displays notifications in a student's Facebook account whenever new assignments, discussion board postings, course materials, or even grades are added to Blackboard.



Using Sync, students can easily find and connect with classmates on Facebook, giving them the opportunity to turn time online into social learning opportunities.

If you are a UM instructor or student, you can add Blackboard Sync to your Facebook account by logging in at <http://blackboard.olemiss.edu> and selecting Blackboard Sync in the Tools box under the My UM tab.

Blackboard Sync is part of Blackboard Beyond, a larger initiative that includes Scholar, a social bookmarking tool.

Social bookmarking allows users to save and categorize favorite Web sites and share them with a community. Scholar users can

Check the FTDC Calendar

Every year at this time, Penny Rice and her IT colleagues are busy scheduling two important fall events for the UM community. **Academic Technology Enhancement Week** usually occurs in September and offers sessions on a range of technology topics, including useful software applications. Due to the presidential debate scheduled for September 26, Technology Enhancement Week will not take place until October.

Also because of the debate, **TACIT** (<http://olemiss.edu/tacit>), the computer replacement program for faculty, will occur in October instead of its usual November timeframe.

Penny will post the dates for these events at www.olemiss.edu/ftdc as they become available.

apply meaningful topic tags as well as course and discipline specific tags to bookmarks, thus making it easy for instructors and students to locate valuable educational resources on the Web.

Instructors have the option of making their Scholar bookmarks available within the content areas of Blackboard courses they teach. UM users can access the Scholar service by logging into Blackboard and clicking the Scholar tab.

For more information on Sync and Scholar, visit <http://blackboard.com/communities/beyond>.

U R In: Waitlisting Notification Now by TM

Anne Purdon, a junior art major, wasn't anywhere near a computer when she learned she had been moved from a waitlist into a class she wanted to take.

"I received a text message that I had been moved into Art 311 while at work," Purdon recalls. "I rarely check my

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—Anne Purdon

e-mail at work, but I do check my cell phone throughout the day. So the text message option was a much more immediate way of notifying me."

Purdon had taken advantage of a new feature introduced this year in course registration. Waitlisting was first offered last

fall and allows students to be on a "standby" list for any slots that open up in a full course.

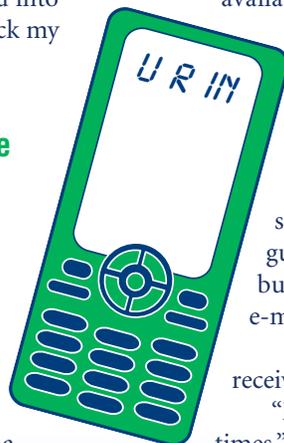
The number of waitlist slots for a class equals 10% of the available seats in the class (e.g., five waitlist slots for a class of 50 seats). In the registration interface, students can see their place on a waitlist.

"We implemented waitlisting so there would be more fairness in access to closed sections," explains Joe Norman in the Office of Information Technology. "Students on the waitlist are added to the course in the same order as they were added to the list. We don't guarantee students will be moved up from the waitlist, but if it happens, they are automatically notified by e-mail that they've been added to the course."

Beginning in the spring, students could also opt to receive waitlist notifications by text message as Purdon did.

"Most students don't have access to a computer at all times," she notes, "but they always have their cell phones with them. I feel this is a very effective way of reaching students with academic information."

See www.olemiss.edu/waitlist for more information.



MCSR Welcomes New Additions

The Mississippi Center for Supercomputing Research's new systems administrator Daksh Chauhan joins IT's Ken Rossetti and Suzette Henry in looking over "sequoia," a supercomputer recently acquired by MCSR.

"Sequoia is an SGI Altix XE cluster with 1.76 TeraFLOPS that is modestly sized by current standards," reports MCSR director David Roach. "Nevertheless, once it is up and running, it will be the most powerful system we have and its quad-core CPU architecture and InfiniBand node interconnect will allow us to apply new technologies to our most challenging research problems."

For more information, see www.mcsr.olemiss.edu.



CaringBridge: Real Life Meets Web 2.0

By M.K. Smith in the Office of Information Technology

While bad news has traditionally arrived in person or by phone, e-mail seems to be taking hold even in the delivery of such intense information. In recent months I've received several messages with sad news about friends or their family members.

Last November one such message brought the news that a long-time friend had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and was in the hospital recovering from surgery. The message included a Web address for a CaringBridge journal that had been set up in my ill friend's name.

CaringBridge, a nonprofit, free online service, began in 1997 when a woman named Sona Mehring had a friend with a life-threatening pregnancy. Mehring established a Web site to communicate updates about the patient, and eventually her premature daughter, Brigid, to family and friends. A guestbook on the site allowed these folks to post messages of support and ultimately sympathy when Brigid died.

It seemed obvious to Mehring there was a need for what she calls this "compassion technology," and a fund established in Brigid's memory allowed for expansion of the service. In the 11 years since, according to www.caringbridge.org, over 100,000 families in some 40 countries have established CaringBridge Web sites, with over half a billion visits from family and friends and the entry of more than 15 million guestbook messages.

CarePages (www.carepages.com), a similar service estab-

lished in 2000, features a home page ticker which indicates it, too, has facilitated the expression of many millions of messages to patients with pages on the site.

Both services give site authors the option of requiring visitors to login and offer visitors a subscription feature which generates e-mail notices when new journal entries are posted.

In visiting my friend's CaringBridge site, I have marveled at the open expressions of love and compassion in the guestbook. Among the posters have been friends with whom I lost touch over the years. Because messages can include the location and e-mail address of those posting guestbook messages, there is the opportunity to reconnect with these folks.

My friend's husband has been the primary author of journal entries on the site. He posts medical updates, funny stories, and reflections on the fear and frustration involved in their experience. He often expresses the tremendous gratitude they feel for the community that has gathered online to support them through this journey.

For many people, sites like CaringBridge and CarePages are a powerful first introduction to Web 2.0 technology. Web 2.0 refers to blogs, wikis, social networks, and other interactive applications that can be used to build communities and communicate information and ideas. Or, as in the case of my friend and many like her, to more fully share one of life's most intense experiences with those who love and support her.

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