

27 March 2009

## **Information Technology Customer Exchange**

**Attendance:** Luis Cifuentes, Ping Chang, Cindie Powell, Ken Bowman, Katerina Petronotis, Norm Guinasso, Tony Filippi, Jim Rosser

### **Minutes**

**Dean's welcome:** Dr. Kjerfve welcomed the group, discussed the meeting's purpose, reviewed historical aspects of IT support, and challenged the group to help improve IT service delivery.

**Introductions:** (self explanatory).

**Presentation – Geosciences IT:** Jim Rosser reviewed current IT challenges and opportunities in academia; discussed current IT initiatives, such as web communications, the data center, security, web help desk, change management, instructional technology (classroom upgrades, Centra, etc.), and GeoNET services; and highlighted additional goals.

Ken Bowman highlighted the importance of encouraging faculty and staff to use the new ticketing system (Web Help Desk - <https://geoswhd.tamu.edu/helpdesk/WebObjects/Helpdesk>). He said it took about a year for his department to fully adopt the use of a ticketing system. Jim said his IT staff members are being rated on how well they use the system (incentive through annual appraisals).

Several people expressed interest in the web collaboration tool, Centra (sample links below):

<http://webconference.tamus.edu/main/GEOS/>

<http://webconference.tamus.edu/main/GEOS/atmo/>

<http://webconference.tamus.edu/main/GEOS/gepl/>

**Open Discussion:** The following items were discussed by the group:

**1. IT staffing levels and line of demarcation for research and common IT support.**

Ken Bowman kicked off the discussion with a question regarding workloads and staffing levels. He would like to know where the line of demarcation is drawn (if there is one) regarding IT support for research and other IT services; who pays? Ken said the IT staff who support ATMO (Chris and Neil) are unable to keep pace with the current work load, which includes research and common IT issues and new requirements. He cited an example of a Mac Mini that he purchased in early fall which Chris/Neil are just now setting up. Ken has hired one student worker and may hire another to help tackle the load, but would like the group to determine if more staff are needed. Ping Chang expressed a similar concern for OCNG. He said Mark and George are unable to keep up with their work load and believes some of the backlog can be attributed to Mark's time working on the College's servers. Tony Filippi is seeing a similar trend in GEOG.

Action: Jim Rosser and Luis Cifuentes discuss with the Dean.

**2. College Wiki requirement.** Luis Cifuentes suggest the group invite Dr. John Leggett to discuss the Texas Digital Library service. Luis believes this service may satisfy the College's wiki requirement.

Action: Jim Rosser; schedule Dr. Leggett.

**3. Video Streaming.** Cindie Powell and Katerina Petronotis shared details regarding accessibility requirements for video and audio streaming of seminars and other events. The state of Texas and Texas A&M University require written scripts for each video stream produced to support the hearing impaired. This requirement would likely stifle any web streaming initiative because of administrative overhead.

Action: None required for now.

**4. IT Budget.** Ken Bowman and Norm Guinasso expressed interest in examining the College's IT budget. They would like to know what's funded to determine what technology they do or do not need to purchase with dept/center funds. Jim recommends department heads and center directors discuss the IT budget with the Dean and Janice.

Action: Jim Rosser and Luis Cifuentes discuss with the Dean. Department heads and center directors request info from the Dean.

5. **College IT Service Desk and ticketing system.** Ken Bowman would like to see some management reports from the ticketing system in the near future, after the reports are developed. He would also like to better understand how the service desk will support its customers.

Action: Jim Rosser will work with the IT team to setup and validate management reports, including: mean time between failures; IT staff work load; incidents by customer, etc. Set agenda item to discuss incident management process.

6. **New Requirement – Internal Accounting System.** Ken Bowman suggested the College look at the possibility of setting up an internal accounting/book keeping system to manage college and department level transactions not already covered by the University's system. Most departments use several spreadsheets to manage financial data. This approach is a bit cumbersome.

Action: Jim Rosser will add to the requirement list and investigate. If validated and prioritized by the group, Steve Tran will begin looking for a solution.

7. **TAMU Supercomputing.** Ping Chang suggested that the College IT staff establish a closer relationship with the CIS supercomputing staff and participate in planning sessions.

Action: Jim Rosser coordinate with Spyridon Vellas, CIS.

8. **Centralized storage and mobile services.** Norm Guinasso would like to have the data center house a 3-4U RAID to support offsite replication of GERG data. He is also interested in using the new GeoNET mobile device services. Tony also asked about making use of storage services. Ping suggested we ensure faculty members know who to contact and how to submit requirements for centralized storage.

Action: Jim Rosser will coordinate with Paul Stine to support GERG's replication requirement, and establish procedures for requesting IT services.

**Data Center Tour.** The meeting concluded with a tour of the data center for those interested in seeing it. Attendees included Ping Chang, Norm Guinasso, Tony Filippi, and Jim Rosser