Technology Services at Virginia State University

November 2011

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Coming Soon:   The new VSU Website

Upon his arrival, one of President Keith T. Miller’s priorities was designing a new VSU web site. The VSU Technology Services Management Team was supportive of this initiative and immediately began the groundwork to accomplish this task through support and funding provided by the Title III Office. In July 2011, Technology Services and University Relations Departments began working collaboratively with Digital Wave, a strategic web and architect design company, to design the new VSU web site. During the initial meeting, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and friends were invited to discuss their vision for a new website. Branding and imaging were major concerns to most attendees. In the initial design phase, Digital Wave is capturing our slogan “Building A Better World.” as a marketing strategy. The new website will be easy to navigate, have featured photo stories and events, as well as sections on “New to VSU” and “Stay Connected” for social networking.

Kindal Williams, a senior Management Information Systems major and Technology Services intern, attended the initial design meeting with the VSU staff members, “Students would like to see a web site that is new and exciting, as well as, on the cutting-edge of technology.” said Williams. Other students who attended a later session expressed a desire to focus on a new web site that is easy to navigate, have a news and events section, and updated content. As a wrap-up to the initial design phase, the Web Strategists will incorporate all our feedback and redesign a proposed web site for another review with the VSU community. The new VSU Web site will be launched in April 2012.

Making Things Happen for the Students!

Technology Services is working diligently to modernize the VSU campus. Wireless Fidelity Network “Wi-Fi” is just one of many projects in the works to move the University forward. The Technology Services Team has completed Phase I of the Wi-Fi Project in Singleton Hall, Gateway Dining Event Center, Hunter McDaniel, Wilder building, M.T. Carter, Johnston Memorial Library, and Owen Hall. During the summer, wireless was installed in all residence halls. “The students love it” says Dr. Laverne Briggs of VSU Residence Services. The excitement among the students is evident. Three students Julius Haynie, Reggie Carter, and Tamara Calixte took the initiative to help other students set-up their wireless access in Moore Hall. Nakeya Peterson-Johnston also spent time helping students setup their Wi-Fi in Eggleston Hall.

Hubie Harris, VSU CIO, says he expects the entire campus will be running on a modernized network infrastructure by April 2012. “The new infrastructure will be fault tolerant due to built in redundancy, providing high-availability through fail-over capability which is built into the network architecture” says Harris. With this new technology, students will be able to freely collaborate and communicate where they live and where they learn.

IT PROJECTS
On The Horizon

- Blackboard Mobile
- DegreeWorks
- Travel & Expense
- Hobson
In July, Nakeya Johnston-Peterson, a Technology Service Intern and senior Accounting major, was charged with the ice-breaker for the departmental teaming session. She was only given the theme "Collaboration and Communication" for the Advance. Nakeya quickly solicited the help of two Technology Services Interns, Cierra Wilson and Kindal Williams. Both are senior Management Information System majors. They regularly scheduled meetings to gather data, prepare the presentation, and build the tower. Using her research skills, Nakeya found many relevant topics and projects on the internet. She came across the "Marshmallow Project" on TED TV. In the show, Tom Wujec presents a simple team building exercise involving 20 dry spaghetti, 20 marshmallows, a yard of string, and scotch tape. Each team of four members had to build the tallest free-standing structure in ten minutes or less using the ingredients. Although this project is simple, it is challenging because team members have to collaborate and communicate very quickly. Nakeya, Cierra, and Kindal were able to get the teams to quickly collaborate and communicate in building the tower. “Putting this activity together gave us the opportunity to carry out a specific task. It was challenging, but the end result was a success,” said Cierra. The challenge fostered creativity, teamwork, and knowledge. Nakeya described her assignment as exciting and fun, but it was also a learning experience. She was able to learn different strategies for communicating and collaborating. Five teams participated. The winning team was the King's Court. Team members were Corey King, Connie Sullivan, Cedric Dorsey, Terrell Jones, and Steven Dill. The team used all of their ingredients and created a 24 inch high free-standing structure. In the end, Nakeya, Cierra, and Kindal were applauded by the Technology Services staff members for their hard work and team building exercise. It was a success!

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**A Message From the IT Team**

**STRATEGIC PLAN SURVEY**

Virginia State University is in the process of updating and focusing initiatives and priorities for its long-range strategic plan. The University has retained the services and assistance of MGT of America, a higher education planning firm to guide that effort.

A critical component of this planning process is direct input from a variety of VSU constituents, including faculty, staff, students and alumni. Please take a few minutes to respond to a series of questions about current issues, concerns, obstacles and opportunities that VSU may face now or in the future.

You will not be identified based on information provided on the survey, and your responses will be summarized in aggregate with others for reporting purposes. No one from VSU will see your individual responses, so please be as forthcoming as possible.

The survey is available at [http://surveys.mgtamer.com/](http://surveys.mgtamer.com/). Respondents should enter “VSU” when prompted to enter a survey number.
Hubie Harris, VSU Associate Vice President for Technology services and Chief Information Officer

"I came to help VSU become a Digital Campus. We are lagging behind and because of this we are playing ‘catch-up’ with technology. We have to quickly close the gap in order to remain competitive."

Hubie Harris

Ms. Cierra Wilson, a Senior Management Information Systems student and IT intern, interviewed Mr. Harris on his vision for a Digital Campus.

Cierra: What is your vision for the digital campus?

Hubie: There has always been what’s called the digital divide. Part of the digital campus is about closing that digital gap, so that we enable students to be comfortable with using computers to transact business anytime, anywhere.

Cierra: Obviously you are trying to create convenience for students. As an example, if I was unable to attend class. How could technology help me?

Hubie: With a digital campus, you should be able to pick up your smart phone and participate in your class anytime, anywhere, on any device.

Cierra: Great, this would be a life saver! It would cut down on catch up meetings with the professor and borrowing notes from classmate. What are other benefits of having a digital campus?

Hubie: We are able to provide services when our stakeholders [students] want to conduct business. Technology is there to improve customer service. We do this by using technology to better serve our customers.

Cierra: Can you give me an example?

Hubie: Suppose, you wanted to pay tuition. You’re running late, and it is 4:30 p.m. The Cashier’s office closes at 5 p.m. With a digital campus, you could pay the tuition bill at 4:00 a.m., 10:00 p.m., or even in the middle of the day. It’s about providing key services to our students anytime, anywhere.
What is Phishing?

Phishing is a scam which attempts to entice email recipients into clicking on a link that takes them to a bogus website. The website may prompt the recipient to provide personal information such as social security number, bank account number or credit card number, and/or it may download malicious software onto the recipient’s computer. Both the link and website may appear authentic, however they are not legitimate.

How does it Work?

Have you received an email, an instant message, or another communication that just did not seem right, even though the communication appeared to be from a reputable organization? This communication could very well be a phishing scam. It's important to note that in the past, phishing scams were often more easily detectable because of misspellings, typographical errors and blatantly bad grammar. However, they are increasingly more difficult to detect because they often appear so legitimate.

Phishing scams try to "bait" the recipient in a number of ways: the malicious email could include notice of an account cancellation, a request to verify/update personal information, a notice of a purchase that you did not make, or just about anything else that would get you to respond to the communication. The types of messages used in phishing are expanding almost every day, so it is important to be cautious of any communications you receive.

If the email communication, with its enticing subject line, is the "bait," what is the hook? The hook is getting you, the user, to take some action that enables the phisher to obtain information or otherwise gain access. You may be "tricked" into visiting a website, which appears to be a legitimate organization's website. Once at that site, you may be asked to enter personal information. Another method of attack may be to get you to open an attachment in an email, upon which malicious code, such as a Trojan horse will be installed onto your computer. Other variations include a telephone call, in which the phisher will ask you to provide personal information. Once the phisher has "hooked" you, they may use the information to open accounts in your name, access your bank account or make purchases using your credit card.

How do I Know it is a Phishing Scam?

If you receive an email appearing to be from a legitimate business, requesting you submit personal information, it is most likely a scam. Legitimate businesses do not send emails requesting personal information. Use an Internet search engine to research the subject line of a suspicious email to determine if that subject line is a known phishing scam.

What Can I Do?

Be cautious about all communications you receive. Think before you click. If it appears to be a phishing communication, do not respond. Delete it. Do not click on any links listed in the email message and do not open any attachments contained in suspicious email.