



Communications in Higher Ed IT Organizations

Nuances, Challenges, and Successes
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Information Technology Services (ITS)
Penn State

What Do you Do, Anyway?

- Jim Leous - Team Leader, Emerging Technologies, ITS
- Karen Hackett - Communications Coordinator, ITS
- Our soon-to-be new reporting structure

A Common Perception... (or misconception)

“We don’t care. We don’t have to. We’re the Phone Company!”



Getting it Right

The 5 Ws*	The 5 Cs*
Who What Where When Why ...and their friend How	Content Context Clarity Credibility Consistency

**Communication as Leaders*, final report project from IT Leadership Program - Group V: Jim Leous, Penn State; Scott Mah, University of Washington; Bob Mayville, University of Wisconsin; David Morton, University of Washington; Roy Ruiz, The University of Texas; Bill Welch, Penn State. November 2006.

You've Got Spam!

<http://www.personal.psu.edu/jal7/ITLP/YouvegotSpam.mov>

The Audience(s)

- Enter nuances and challenges
- What does the user see/experience?
- What about those who support users?
- Let's consider Goldilocks and the Three Bears...

“E-mail is broken.”

“The DFS disk that is serving e-mail service experienced a platter crash caused by head number two.”

“ITS is currently experiencing a failure with the filesystem that supports Penn State’s primary e-mail service. At this time, the cause of the problem is unknown; however, staff are investigating the problem and hope to resolve the problem as soon as possible...”

Radical Transparency

- Shift from secrecy to transparency
- Coming clean with information
- Doing so early and often
- Using collaborative technologies to be transparent: wikis, blogs, del.icio.us, etc.

[« I'm tired](#) | [Main](#) | ["Emerging Telephony is actually the end of telephony."](#) »

ITANA, ITS-ITANA

Somewhat recently a new organization in higher education has been formed called [ITANA](#), IT Architects in Academia. You can get an idea of what they are all about by reviewing their web site.

In ITS at Penn State, we don't have people with the title of "architect" in our organization but we do have people who have "architect" all over parts of their job description. We've launched a new group and initiative in ITS to bring together some of these types of people in our own organization on a regular basis. The [launch memo](#) for ITS-ITANA should help paint the picture of what we're going to ask this group to do in its first year.

We have more people in ITS that think and "do" architecture than would make sense to try and pull together to be productive, so I trimmed the list of possible participants to what I thought was a good number to get started. One of the meta-issues we'll have to tackle in this first year is how to handle membership to keep the group fresh and vibrant. Also, if we have a good first year and learn how to make this work, we'll want to consider doing the same thing or something similar for IT at Penn State. But we're going to take a year to see how to make this idea work before trying to grow it.

Tags:

- [ITANA](#)

Posted by Kevin Morooney on August 9, 2007 5:03 AM | [Permalink](#)

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by cjh, 10.04.07 at 11:32 pm :: [CIC](#) : [Penn State](#) : [IT](#) :: [permalink](#) :: [rss](#)

I'm currently in Indianapolis for my first [CIC Techforum](#). I can safely say that Penn State is very well represented here. In the day and a half of the conference, there were seven different presentations and/or panels that included Penn Staters. Sitting in an audience, I overheard a remark from one person to another that, "Penn State really seems to have their stuff together." We actually seem to be well ahead of the Web 2.0 adoption curve than most other [CIC schools](#) evidenced by the fact that we have a [blogging pilot](#), several [community hubs](#), [digital commons](#) and are working on an enterprise wiki solution that integrates into our environment.

The most interesting session that I attended had to do with the omnipresent issue of outsourcing e-mail. Iowa, Indiana and Northwestern are all at various stages of the outsourcing process. I took down some notes from the three speakers. I was shocked at how much Indiana spends on spam/virus filtering software. They used Sophos Pure Message, which we looked at too, but decided it was too pricey. We accomplish the same thing with Sendmail+milter, sophie, amavisd and spam assassin. We use Sophos' virus libraries, but that costs us less than 25 cents/user/year... which I think is a pretty good deal. Anyway, here's what I copied down:

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Successes in ITS

- ITS Alerts System
<https://its.psu.edu/alerts/admin/>
- ITS News System
<https://its.psu.edu/alerts/admin/>
- Relationship with University Public Information Office: ITS TechNews
<http://its.psu.edu/news/>
- Better adoption/acceptance of collaborative technologies

Suggested Resources

- **Effective Communications in IT Projects**
<http://www.bcs.org/server.phpshow=ConWebDoc.3255>
- **The Long Tail blog - In Praise of Radical Transparency**
http://www.longtail.com/the_long_tail/2006/in_praise_or_ra.html
- **The See-Through CEO**
http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/15.04/wired40_ceo.html
- **Please Feed the Web**
http://www.personal.psu.edu/jal7/blogs/Main/2007/09/please_feed_the_web.html

Questions?/Comments!

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