

IN THIS ISSUE...

INFORMATION SERVICES

Profile:

Michelle Fisher



Academic

Administrative

Network/Phone

Tech Updates:

Skype



TECH NOTES

Winter 2011

Training Events:

Online Course Design



Tech Tips:

Improved Email!



Profile of Program:

Second Life



Tech Trivia:

Win a Prize!



Information Services:

Contact Information





Profile: Michelle Fisher

Michelle Fisher is the Coordinator of Online/Distance Learning in the College of Education at West Chester University.

Q. (Mary Bachman, Intern, Information Services): Can you tell me a little bit about what you do here at the University?

A. I am the coordinator of online and distance learning in the College of Education. The College of Education is getting ready to offer an online M.Ed. in Special Education and an online graduate certificate in Universal Design for Learning and Assistive Technology. I work with the faculty who will be teaching the online version of these courses - to design this online version and assist with course development.



Some of the technical features of these online courses will include streaming videos, web conferencing, discussion boards, PowerPoint with audio, simulations, and podcasts. My main goal is to make a course that will be a good fit for the students, the professor, and the content. I have also been helping College of Education faculty with the transition from Blackboard to D2L and working with faculty who are teaching Hybrid courses (a combination of online and face-to-face).

Q. What experience do you have, prior to working at West Chester?

A. I have been designing and developing online courses for ten years, both in higher education and the corporate sector. I went to Millersville University for my Bachelor of Science degree in Earth Science Education.

Profile:

Michelle Fisher (continued)



After graduating, I got a job at Lehigh University as a coordinator in the Office of International Education - designing and maintaining office web pages and databases. While there, I enrolled in Lehigh's graduate program in Education Technology, with an emphasis in Instructional Design (ID) and Development. After graduation, I moved to California where I worked at California State University - Fresno for seven years as their lead Instructional Designer. During this time, I also designed and developed a cohort-based online training program (eScholars) for the faculty who were teaching online courses. After working as an Instructional Designer for six years, I enrolled in a graduate certificate program in eLearning Design and Development online at the University of Colorado in Denver. Denver has a strong ID program so I was interested to see how their courses were designed online. In September 2008, I moved back to the east coast to be closer to friends and family and got a job as an Instructional Designer at a local eLearning design company.

Q. What got you so interested in working with online and distance learning?

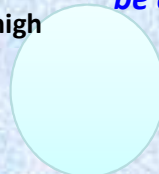
A. While at Lehigh's graduate program, I took a pilot online course that was not designed very well. The course tried to replicate what was going on in the classroom as closely as possible, but that doesn't always work well online. You can't take a face-to-face lecture, record it, put a link on an LMS (Learning Management System), and consider that online learning. It's extremely passive and also a very isolating experience for the student. I knew that online courses had to be designed and taught differently to be effective. The course at Lehigh really taught me what an online course

should not look like. I ended up focusing my coursework on Instructional Design and Development as a result of this course. The distance learning courses that I took at the University of Colorado at Denver were very well designed and gave me a great, new perspective.

Q. What current/upcoming projects are you working on?

A. I am currently working on six new online courses for the College of Education; they should be available by the summer 2011 session. Three of these courses are designed for students working towards their Master's in Special Education and three are towards the graduate certification in Universal Design for Learning and Assistive Technology. I am working one-on-one with a lot of the faculty now. It is important that we start early because there is a lot of work that goes into constructing each of these courses. Designing and building the course is only the first step. Conducting usability tests after each course is built but before it is offered is also critical so that we can fix any problems before the course is offered to students. The students taking the course are also asked to give feedback throughout the semester so that the course can be adjusted if needed. I am also working on some online courses for the 3E Institute that is offered during the summer at West Chester and an online alumni mentoring project for teacher education alumni.

Michelle Fisher works with the College of Education and can be contacted at (610) 430-4972 or mfisher2@wcupa.edu.





Tech Updates



What's all the hype???



Skype is a free software application that allows users to make voice calls over the internet. Calls to other users within the Skype service are free! Skype has also become popular for its file transfer and video conferencing capabilities.

Registered users of Skype are identified by a unique Skype Name and are listed in a directory. Skype allows these registered users to communicate through both instant messaging and voice chat.

Skype runs on a number of platforms, including mobile phones.

For information visit the [Skype website](http://www.skype.com).



Training Events

Basics of Online Course Design	The "Basic of Online Course Design" is an hour long session that will focus on 7 best practices faculty members should consider as they begin to create online and hybrid courses. The training will cover how to incorporate these practices into their current D2L courses.
D2L: Live Classroom	This workshop fully covers all of the features of Wimba Live Classroom. This application enables instructors to hold live, online classes, office hours, guest lectures, webcasts, or meetings from a distance. Wimba Live Classroom allows text chat, audio, video, application sharing, file sharing, content display, collaboration, and instructors have the option of recording the session.
Word Essentials 2010	The Word Essentials course provides instruction for all of the basic functions of Microsoft Word. The course navigates through each tab on the Microsoft Word Ribbon, and explores the various functions and actions that are possible within these tabs. It does not cover every single button on the toolbar, but it provides an excellent foundation for basic proficiency in Microsoft Word.
Charts and Graphs in Excel 2010	In this session you will learn the basics of chart design as well as learn about the new features in 2010.
SMART Board Training	Have you been to a classroom and wondered how to use the new Smart Board? This session will review the basics of Smart technology and how to incorporate it into your classroom.

[Click here](#) to see the current schedule of training sessions being offered, this schedule is updated the last week of every month.

Email with questions or requests for 1/1 training: satregistration@wcupa.edu

Tech Tips



ENHANCEMENT TO THE WCU E-MAIL SYSTEM

During the winter break the campus e-mail system was upgraded to Microsoft Exchange 2010. The purpose of the upgrade was to migrate from our older generation and higher cost email storage system to a lower cost system with improved email storage. This new system increased the e-mail storage size for faculty, staff and students.

- **E-mail storage size for faculty/staff increased by almost 7 fold from 300MB to 2GB**
- **E-mail storage size for students increased by almost 20 fold from 100MB to 2GB**

You will also notice that with this upgrade came a sleeker and improved interface to Webmail. [Click here](#) to read about the new Webmail interface.



For those with Mobile devices, you will need to resynchronize or reestablish your connection to the new e-mail system using the following server address:

<https://outlook.wcupa.edu/>

For those using Apple Mail, you will need to change your internal and external mail server to the following:

<https://outlook.wcupa.edu/>

Tech Tips



BE SMART ABOUT PASSWORDS

- Always use strong passwords that are at least eight characters long and a combination of lower and upper case letters, numbers and symbols. Don't use the same password repeatedly and make it a point to change your passwords frequently. If you have trouble remembering passwords, consider using a pass-phrase. A pass-phrase might be something like "I eat pizza 4 lunch."
- Use different passwords for all user accounts.
- Change passwords immediately if they may have been compromised.
- Don't leave passwords where others can find them.



Coming Soon!

We will be implementing an upgrade to Sophos Antivirus in March 2011.



Profile of Program: Second Life



Larysa Nadolny is an Assistant Professor of Professional and Secondary Education at West Chester University, with special expertise in the use of technology in education, including emerging technologies with potential to impact student success.



(George Banks, Coordinator of Online Distance Education, Information Services): What is Technology Beyond Borders (TBB)?

Technology Beyond Borders is a grant to support innovative projects using technology at West Chester University. I collaborated with Dr. Robert Fletcher from the English Department and the 3E Institute to create a virtual teaching and learning space for our students.

How did you become involved with the project?

I heard about the grant through university wide notification and interest from other faculty.

What is the duration/timeline of the project?

The majority of the grant work was completed in the fall semester 2010. We have created a wonderful space that has been used in several courses.

Who is working with you to roll-out and maintain the variety of aspects of this project?

Academic Computing has been instrumental to the project. They helped us work through the purchasing of the virtual space as well as ongoing support.

Profile of Program: Second Life



What originally brought about the idea of using Second Life at WCU?

I've been using virtual world in my teaching for several years. As a teacher of future educators, I see the trend towards more virtual and augmented reality in education. Although not mainstream, virtual worlds are used in K-12 education across the nation, as well as in higher education. Having a space of our own is also important. With ownership and control, we can allow students to build and create in a safe environment.

How have you integrated Second Life into your classes?

In my undergraduate educational technology course, I use it as an example for the future of online teaching and simulations. I take them into outer space (NASA), let them experience a Tsunami (NOAA), take them back to medieval times, and more. In the spring, I plan on using the space to collaborate with other universities in my graduate course.

In what ways could Second Life be utilized in other classes and by the campus community?

Just like any other technology, an instructor must ask why it is better than other teaching methods. Virtual worlds like Second Life have some clear advantages for learning. Distance education courses can become more interactive with "face-to-face" discussion abilities using a microphone. It is also excellent for experiencing things that are too big or too dangerous to be practical in the classroom. Students can also go back or forward in time.

What are the benefits of the project as it relates to the progression of technology at WCU?

With the funds provided by the TBB grant, we have created an online campus - complete with teaching areas, faculty offices, and project space. By completing this hard work up front, the space will be ready for other faculty to use. The future of technology in education is a blending of different types of applications; including mobile devices, serious games, virtual worlds, and augmented reality. By leading the way with pilot programs, our university can have best practices in place for wide spread implementation.

What are your hopes for the future of this project?

I hope that other faculty begin to use the space as an excellent online tool, especially for collaboration.

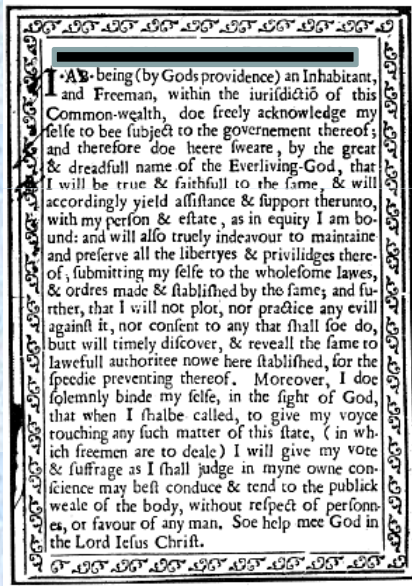


Tech Trivia:

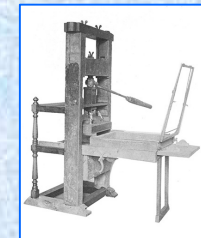
Sponsored by the Student Services Inc (SSI)



The winner will be chosen at random from those submitting all correct answers to Dr. Fabrey at jfabrey@wcupa.edu within 24 hours of the appearance of this issue of Tech Notes. Prize awarded by SSI.



1. Some of us know that the prefixes milli, micro, and nano mean very small sizes: thousandths, millionths, and billionths. What are the next two prefixes, for trillionths and quadrillionths?
2. Believe it or not, a Pulitzer-prize winning book was written about a “super minicomputer”. Give the author, title, and year of the prize.
3. We have come a long way from the first printing press in colonial America printing its first document to the laser printer used now to print this newsletter. What was the title of this first document (see the picture at the left) and in what city and year was it printed?



Answers to the [Tech Notes Fall 2010](#) contest: 1. The first computer "bug" (a moth in the Harvard Mark II computer) appeared at 3:45PM on September 9, 1945; 2. An American astronaut and an American colonial cryptography expert share the same name: James Lovell 3. The first official transatlantic telegraph message was sent from Queen Victoria President James Buchanan on August 16, 1858 – the first 7 words were: ***the Queen desires to congratulate the President***

We had a winner: George Drake!

Contact Information



Back to Cover

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Student Help Desk	x3350	20	Anderson
Telephone Repair wcupa.edu/infoservices/commservices	x3535	002 Basement, 121 Allegheny Hall	
Desire2Learn (D2L) wcupa.edu/d2l	x3065	20A	Anderson
ResNet Central wcupa.edu/infoservices/resnet	x2660	003 Ground Floor, Brandywine Hall	
Software Application Training satregistration@wcupa.edu	x3397	24	Anderson
Web Services wcupa.edu/infoservices/webinfo	x0043	3	Anderson

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