Accessibility Initiatives Help Everyone Succeed

Last year, WSU Spokane ITS, in collaboration with Student Affairs and other campus departments, began a joint effort to assess the physical, technical, curricular, co-curricular, and other potential campus barriers as they relate to people with disabilities. This team, led by our campus Accessible IT Coordinators, Karla Ealy-Marroquin, from the ITS Education Technology team, and Natalie Grosser, Technical Coordinator from Student Affairs, has been reviewing campus information technology accessibility and mitigating compliance measures for Policy 188.

Policy 188 is a multi-inclusive set of guidelines for state agencies, institutions, and universities. Several key guidelines are included in this policy to ensure every disabled individual who accesses and uses information and data has equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of services, programs, or activities provided by state institutions. WSU began the compliance process by addressing three key items within this policy.

The first effort was to designate one or more information technology accessibility coordinators. ITS collaborated with Student Affairs to designate two Accessible IT Coordinators, one from ITS and one from Student Affairs, to assist with alternate text requests, assist with accessible technology requests, lead accessibility team meetings, coordinate initiatives to meet Policy 188 guidelines, and train the campus community to create accessible documents.

The next task was to create a webpage that contains accessibility information and contact information for the coordinators. This webpage can be found at https://access.wsu.edu/. The third key item is to post a list of the software used on campus, which includes special needs accessibility software. Additionally, webpages will be created to include tips for web accessibility and to help campus departments and colleges ensure their webpages, documents, presentations, and more are accessible.

Moving forward, the campus accessibility coordinators will work collaboratively with ITS and other departments and colleges on campus to ensure technological resources are provisioned to promote an inclusive learning and working environment at WSU Spokane. WSU Spokane ITS respects all faculty, staff, students, and other members of the WSU Spokane family and hopes that new developments in accessibility awareness and technology will help strengthen this campus even more. After all, in the words of Debra Ruh, “Accessibility allows us to tap into everyone’s potential.”
Audiovisual Advancements

The Audiovisual team transitioned old equipment and upgraded videoconferencing equipment in SAC 503A during the first week of April. This conference room will now have better video quality that will be on par with other newly improved rooms on campus. Additionally, SAC 241 and SAC 245 were upgraded to digital HD videoconferencing hardware.

Equipment in SEWC 106 is currently being upgraded with software-based videoconferencing technology, making it the first software-based videoconferencing classroom on campus. The transition from hardware-based videoconferencing in the classroom provides excellent audiovisual quality equal to more expensive solutions, but is a much more economical solution. The SEWC 106 project produced an estimated savings of $30,000 dollars over a traditional videoconferencing classroom.

These changes will allow high quality conferencing for our students and administrators at a very low cost.

University-Wide KnowledgeBase

Over the last 6 months, representatives from the Pullman, Spokane, Vancouver, and Tri-Cities campus Information Technology Services support teams collaborated in the creation of a University-wide one-stop resource for our customers’ IT questions. This centralized repository, known as the WSU KnowledgeBase, contains timely information to aid customers in daily business processes critical to supporting student success across the University.

Users will notice the convenience and high availability of this resource. Each campus will have their own sub-site of information. Visit the links below to find current articles related to a variety of University services including (most notably) relevant articles for the Office 365 (O365) email migration currently in progress. You can also find campus-specific information based on the link you select.

https://kb.wsu.edu
https://kb.wsu.edu/spokane
https://kb.wsu.edu/vancouver
https://kb.wsu.edu/tricities

Desktop Videoconferencing Now Widely Available

In light of WSU’s new investments, such as Skype for Business and Pexip, ITS is announcing the retirement of the RealPresence Desktop. This initiative will save limited resources and streamline our videoconferencing infrastructure into a cohesive system that is comprehensible. Skype for Business will be integrated into Polycom conference rooms across campus with full videoconferencing and phone bridge capabilities. Pexip will supplement this effort by easily connecting to virtual meeting spaces from your own desktop or laptop computer, even those outside the WSU Spokane network, allowing users to hold conferences with local hospitals and other external partners.
When possible, create your own Skype for Business meeting. Creating a Skype for Business meeting only takes a click in Outlook—it’s that easy. If you’re a Mac user, always launch your meeting from within the Skype for Business app.

Skype for Business is a University-wide service which means you can chat with anyone inside the institution—just search for them using their email address from within the Skype for Business app.

Skype for Business is a great way to conference with non-university partners. Just send them a Skype for Business meeting invite and they can join using the web-app from anywhere with internet service.

You can create groups within Skype for Business that allow you to message multiple people at once. Group Chat is a great way to communicate within your team and you can instantly turn that chat into a video chat with the click of a button.
If you’re planning on having a meeting in a conference room that will include Skype for Business, be sure to invite the room to your meeting for easy in-room connecting. Contact the TSC to learn how.

It’s always best to mute yourself when you are not speaking during a meeting. If you’re the host, Skype for Business allows you to mute your audience or individual users if needed.

Skype for Business allows you to present from your computer. It also allows you to give control over to another participant. This is a great way to collaborate on documents and conduct group presentations.

When using Skype for Business as a phone bridge, it’s best to launch the meeting from your computer if you’re the leader. This ensures that your meeting launches correctly.

Questions? Contact the Technical Support Center at (509) 358-7748 or spok.it.help@wsu.edu.
Going Green in 2017? Virtual Desktop Infrastructure May be the Solution for You

Core infrastructure for Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) was finalized and rolled out for campus-wide use in early April, with more and more early adopters subscribing to this service every day.

VDI is among the newest trends gaining momentum in the technology community, granting users the freedom to access their desktops from anywhere via a web-browser. Benefits include reduced equipment cost, data protection, and reduced energy consumption. VDI units are small devices that sit behind the user’s monitor, replacing the standard desktop computer. Standard computers can cost from $1,200 to $1,400 and only have a 3 to 5-year lifecycle. The cost for VDI is a $100 annual connection fee and a one-time purchase cost for the VDI device, which typically ranges around $350-$450. As infrastructure is upgraded, users will experience the upgrades and performance benefits without having to purchase additional hardware.

Would you like to know more or place your order for VDI? Inquire at our Technical Support Center by calling 358-7748, emailing spok.it.help@wsu.edu or visiting the TSC in SAC 309.

New Trend of Wi-Fi Calling is Eliminating Dead-Zones

More and more cell phone carriers are adding Wi-Fi calling to the list of services they offer. Currently AT&T, T-Mobile, Sprint, and Verizon offer Wi-Fi calling, with more carriers following suit.

As this service becomes more popular, making phone calls in the basements of buildings and other dead-zones will be easier than ever across our campus.

Pounce Upgrade/Migration Brings Improvements to Functionality and User Interface

In 2016, WSU Spokane ITS released Pounce, a cloud storage system customized for the unique needs of the WSU Spokane community. This semester, Pounce is receiving a whole platform upgrade and soon, a full migration—making it an even better solution. This platform upgrade will grant users even more control over documents for sharing, editing, and access. The user interface is also improved through modernization, increased speed, and adjustments to the graphic interface. Changes are scheduled to be finished by the end of Spring semester.

Save the date!

Ed Tech Summer Workshop
August 8th + 9th = Knowledge
9AM - 12PM

For more information: [https://spokane.wsu.edu/its/education-technology/training-schedule/](https://spokane.wsu.edu/its/education-technology/training-schedule/)
Questions? Contact the Technical Support Center at: spok.it.help@wsu.edu or 358-7748

Coming soon...

Keep an eye out for the upcoming Tech Expo in the fall. Organizations and departments across campus and businesses outside of WSU Spokane will be there to answer questions, lead workshops, and more.
Academic Center Network Upgrade

During April, the first three floors of the Spokane Academic Center received a major network upgrade, connecting it to the core in the SEWC building and relieving it of the old architecture. This development enhances the experience of end users by delivering accelerated speeds, improved access control, and faster login times. It also adds more access points for ITS support and to accommodate future University expansion.

Did you know?

WSU Spokane and WSU Pullman are becoming even more connected. Jason Minton and Dan Laughlin, from the ITS Network Engineering team, have been working collaboratively with Richard Eisenman, a Network & Security Architect from the Pullman campus, to provide a private, encrypted, secure link that will eventually span between the two campuses. This connection will have the ability to handle the transmission of large data sets between Pullman and Spokane and be a powerful resource for researchers.

Did you know ITS has a Print Shop?

Printing services are available for campus students, faculty, and staff, including large-format posters for scientific presentations and promoting campus events.

For pricing information and submitting a service request, visit https://spokane.wsu.edu/its/printing-services-request/ or contact Bonnie Cooper at bonnie.cooper@wsu.edu or 324-7228.

Network Team Performs Upgrades to Remote Sites

Network infrastructure improvements have been deployed in Yakima for the College of Nursing. The ITS Network team recently installed new networking hardware on the second floor that will upgrade their technology to the same standards as the WSU Spokane campus. In addition, the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) moved to a new circuit, increasing internet speeds from 20 mbps to 100 mbps. By upgrading remote sites such as Yakima Nursing and the SBDC, these sites are joining a common platform that will allow our ITS team to better support them and minimize potential downtime.

Coming soon...

3D printing capabilities will soon be available at WSU Spokane. ITS has purchased the Robo R2 Smart 3D printer (pictured below) which can print over thirty different material types at class-leading speeds. The Robo R2 is expected to arrive in June and will benefit faculty and researchers across the campus. Further details, including printing costs, will be announced soon.

Need help with technology? Contact our Technical Support Center at spok.it.help@wsu.edu or 358-7748. For AV or classroom technology support, contact our Classroom Support Services team at 368-6770. Visit our website at spokane.wsu.edu/services/IT.