Information Technology Student Advisory Committee (ITSAC)

Annual Report

2010-2011

Contents

I.   Introduction

The Information Technology Student Advisory Committee (ITSAC) serves as an advisory committee for Information Technology (IT) on campus on matters dealing with IT programs and services for students.

Following on the changes last year whereby ITSAC introduced having a Chair and a Vice-chair, each serving a two year commitment to ITSAC, this year's Chair was sitting on the committee for the 2nd year in a row (since serving as the Vice-Chair for last year).

At the beginning of the year, the ITSAC committee spent some time reviewing what they felt was working well, what wasn't, etc. in terms of IT services and programs across campus. As a result, several guest speakers were invited to attend the meeting to discuss the topics proposed.

Other guest speakers attended the meeting to discuss new programs or services, to solicit feedback on changes to existing services or to solicit feedback on proposed services.

Both WebAdvisor and the Library student survey were not discussed this year. The committee felt that there were no new issues to review regarding WebAdvisor this year.   Next year's Chair should ensure that these topics are shared and discussed with next year's committee.

A couple of changes were made this year, based on last year's recommendations:

> - Some of the ITSAC meetings were conducted using Adobe Connect in order to allow any remote attendee's to attend the meeting. Our Guelph-Humber representatives were able to participate remotely.

> - The ITSAC website, accessible at http://www.uoguelph.ca/ccs/about-ccs/committees/student-advisory-itsac previously, is now easily accessible at http://uoguelph.ca/itsac. It is still felt that links to the ITSAC website are a bit 'buried' on the CCS website.

Overall, ITSAC had a very successful year and discussed a wide variety of topics. The resulting report outlines feedback and recommendations based on the committee work.

II.   Membership

IT Student Advisory Committee: Membership Information – 2010-2011

Ann Cesar
Analyst, Computing and Communications Services (CCS) -Chair

Randy Oldham
Library ITS

Angela Spenceley
Analyst, Computing and Communications Services (CCS)- Vice-Chair

Dhiren Audich
Central Student Association (CSA)

Shireen Noble
Student Senate Caucus (SSC)

Chad Chabot
College of Physical & Engineering Science Student Council (CPESSC)

Chris McKay
College of Bioligical Science Student Council (CBSSC)

Thomas Lobsiger
Students Federation of the Ontario Agricultural College (SFOAC)

Lauren Ramsay
College of Social and Applied Human Sciences – Student Alliance (CSAHS-SA)

Shwetha Chandrashekhar
College of Management and Economics (CME)

No Rep
Interhall Council

Kamil Podleszanski
College of Arts Student Union (CASU)

Anson Wu
Centre for Students with Disabilites (CSD)

Alex Laffole
Sean Fraser
Grad Student Association (GSA)

Matt Kornya
Central Veterinary Students' Association

Daniel Simpson
Christian Mangar
Guelph-Humber Student Association

Matt Kornya
CCS – Help Centre and IT Help Desk

Rotating representation
ITSIG

III.   Gryph Mail

Gryph Mail was a topic of discussion at 2 meetings this year.

Saveena Patara, an analyst in Computing and Communications Services (CCS), attended to review the features and functions of Gryph Mail which students may not have been aware of. Saveena indicated that many students are using Gryph Mail, but not all of the features. There are ~54000 active accounts in Gryph Mail.   Saveena presented an overview of the features, especially the ones that are not well understood or promoted. Saveena indicated that her team was going to be doing a survey to students and the results of the survey would help to understand student usage and would be shared. Saveena also wanted to know if the students thought that a *Forum* feature would be useful and adopted. Generally everyone felt that this would be useful, but along the lines of an IT Forum.

Brent Harp, another analyst in CCS attended a separate ITSAC meeting to talk primarily about the new Zimlet that was going to be available through Gryph Mail, which would provide a News event column. He indicated that Zimlets could be used to create 'add-ons' to Gryph Mail. The News column will have events that you have in your own calendar and also show events from other calendars (e.g. ones that have been shared with you). Brent indicated that there will also be public calendars that will be available to students based on their role, the department/college they are associated with, etc.

Recommendations:

1. Create more awareness around the additional features of Gryph Mail (besides email) to students, to increase uptake. There is currently an information gap in this area.   Multiple methods should be used.
    o   Methods could include, sending them an email (weekly tips), using a video posted on the CCS website, doing a face to face review at Orientation week, using StartOnline, making use of Meeting for Majors, and any other academic community groups. Contacting the Centre for New Students would make sense to assist. Perhaps post a Gryph Mail introduction and FAQ on StartOnline site to capture new students early on in their stay with us.

2. Consider sharing the results of the Gryph Mail survey with next years ITSAC committee.
3. Ensure Gryph Mail is compatible with all Smartphones. Students indicated that it is not very compatible with iphones. Ensure users are aware of mail.uoguelph.ca/m the mobile compatible website for mobile devices.
4. Consider integrating Gryph Mail with other systems, such as integrating the Briefcase with other online tools that are being used.
5. Allow students who are heavy users of the Gryph Mail Calendar to synch their calendar with their Smartphones.

6. Students would really like to have an email reminder about calendar appointments and not only pop-up reminders.
7. Recommend that a wizard might be developed on first use of Gryph Mail (perhaps using the Zimlet development option) that would take users on a tour and help them configure Gryph Mail to make sure they are aware of the features on first use, set preferences, etc.
8. There was a recommendation that an online SFTP storage space for students be made available. It was felt that the Briefcase offered through Gryph Mail was a bit cumbersome to upload/download. An SFTP feature would be very easy and would allow users to have a folder on their desktop which synchronizes with the one online. Like a 'dropbox'.

IV.   IT Security

While IT Security was not a main topic of discussion this year, it did come up as part of various other discussions through out the year. Most of the information was around how to communicate important security information to students- this ranged from using secure wireless (and the risks of not using it), changing passwords, phishing attempts, etc.

Based on these discussions a few recommendations came forward:

Recommendations:

1. Continue to convey IT security messages clearly to students using all avenues possible.
2. Educate users on importance of changing their password.
3. Educate users on the risks of logging in at non-secure (http vs. https) websites and why connecting using secure wifi is important. One suggestion was to inform users about the Firefox plug-in that enforces https: access.
4. Guide users to information on the CIO IT Security site with important phishing and SPAM warnings (i.e. make this information more visible to students).

V.   Student Government and Student Groups/Clubs

Student Government and Student groups are struggling with updating their websites. Users are also struggling with updating personal/club websites.

Recommendations:

5. Ensure student groups and clubs are aware of web development options and solutions providing by CCS (see later note). Perhaps find a method for advertising this information.

VI.   University of Guelph website and web presence (Facebook, Twitter, You Tube, etc.)

ITSAC representatives indicated that the University website was a topic that they wanted to hear about. All the online web tools are easy to get to and these are effective links. The site is accessible and navigation is good. They felt it would be useful to hear of any future plans or development and an update on the website.   Stuart Robertson, University of Guelph Web Manager, attended one of our ITSAC meetings to discuss the University website and other ways that the University of Guelph has a 'web presence'.   Stuart indicated that there are about 260 websites that are part of the University of Guelph website. Stuart is responsible for the main University of Guelph home page and also helping users find those hundreds of other websites that are part of the University of Guelph. He tries to ensure that standards are followed across all sites by liaising with other groups, to ensure consistency, etc. There is an official graphics standard guide for the university website. He also wants to ensure that when users make new sites that they are accessible, etc.

The atGuelph online newspaper is accessible from the University of Guelph website. This is the main campus newspaper. The University of Guelph is also on Facebook, with ~4000 'friends'. Mostly content from atGuelph is shared here and there is pretty good engagement. Generally students like to be 'Friends' with Gryph but not always 'Friends' with U of G. The University of Guelph has a Twitter account – uoguelph with ~4000 followers. This twitter account sends out information, but will not tweet back to followers. The University of Guelph has a Youtube channel. Content and screen comments are monitored.

Stuart is always looking for feedback and encourages users to share new ideas they have for the website.

Recommendations:

1. Adobe .pdfs that are posted on the website are not always friendly and accessible using screen readers. Ensure that guidelines for .pdf creation are easily available to those adding content to University of Guelph associated websites.
2. The Cannon and the University of Guelph both have campus 'news' widgets. There is currently no synchronization; perhaps it would make sense to synchronize these 2 news widgets.
3. While the University of Guelph events calendar can be output as an RSS feed, it would be useful to be able to export the calendar data.
4. The university should consider creating a University of Guelph 'App' for Smartphone use. This was just an idea, the students felt it would be neat, and there was no major brainstorming around what it could include.
5. Consider providing a method/widget on the main university website for users to find out about important IT application or service outages (such as wireless outages, WebAdvisor outages, internet, email, etc.).

VII. Wireless, ResNet and Network Access Control (NAC)

This was a broad topic. We focused on the impact of Wireless and Network Access Control (NAC) on the first year students, and feedback regarding ResNet and residence issues for first year students.

 Leo Song, an Analyst and Team Lead on the Computing and Communication Services (CCS) Network and Security Team presented to ITSAC on the current state of **Wireless Access** on campus, the future expansion of Wireless, and the major Security concerns around the use of Wireless Access.

One of the challenges with any network is handling the volume of SPAM. University of Guelph has hardware spam filters, and 97% of all email traffic is SPAM.

Wireless coverage is being expanded on campus gradually. At the moment all academic buildings have wireless coverage, however there are dead spots in some areas. The University Centre does not currently have full wireless coverage, but the plan is to expand full coverage by the end of the summer 2011.

A pilot will be run in residence starting with the Johnson Hall residence to provide wireless coverage. This pilot will start in the Fall 2011. Johnson Hall is one of the easier buildings to do the cabling necessary for wireless coverage. Some residences will be very difficult to provide wireless due to the amount of concrete is the structures that tend to block signals. Leo was not sure if this extending of wireless service would impact on student fees.

Leo explained the different types of wireless access:

1. U of G Secure – all traffic is encrypted from the laptop to the wireless router.
2. UofG WiFi – this is wireless access that is not secured. On this network, login to sites like Facebook could be susceptible to id and password hacking with tools such as FireSheep when logging in using this wireless option.
3. Eduroam – This is a wireless network available to users of a different University who visit another campus. The visitor login is done with the credentials they would use at their home campus.

Generally students felt that wireless access does not work that well in Mackinnon Building, and causes some access issues.

ResNet service has been good this year, but as always there was a request for wireless in more residences. Some of the other issues with respect to residence and first year students are:

1. Wifi tends to be slower than what the student is used to from home.

2.   Many new students have no idea there is not wireless in their rooms, so do not bring a network cable with them. They also generally do not know they are supposed to plug into the back of the phone for wired access.
3.   Residence assistants (RA's), should be educated so they can help with access.
4.   Phones in residence come with a default voice mail password that is not initially known. Could this default be posted on the phone?
5.   Lack of extension cords or power bars are also an issue.

Another element of wireless security that was explained is the **NAC compliance.** In order for a laptop to connect to the Secure Wireless network, the laptop must be NAC compliant, which means the laptop must have the latest Antivirus update, and have the latest OS patches. Macintosh does not require NAC compliance currently. The best and most secure setup is to be NAC compliant AND connect to the Secure Wireless Network.

The NAC agent is reported as working somewhat better than last year, however, it still seems to log a user off after 6:00 pm. One of the most significant concerns is many versions of antivirus are not NAC compliant, or recognized by NAC. This is a significant issue in that it forces a user to go with the insecure wireless option, even if they prefer the secure option. It was reported that even using McAfee, if a client has a more advanced version of the client pattern file than the server on campus, access is denied.

It was evident that most students are not aware of the implications of connecting to the secure vs. insecure wireless network. There was considerable discussion around the following points.

1. To qualify as NAC compliant can be difficult as many versions of software other than McAfee are actually ahead of the definitions we use, and the result is not compliant. CCS is looking to implement a different model of updates to address this issue.
2. There was discussion around how to best get this important message out to students, and not just first year students. It was suggested to give the information to the RA's, connect up with the on-start program, and look at providing the information on the Course Link Page for students to read while waiting for the application to load. A Print media campaign was suggested, as well as perhaps the SSO page.

Leo noted all these suggestions and will look at various methods to communicate the importance of wireless security.

Recommendations:

1. Produce simpler instructions for using NAC and ensure process to authenticate and verify using NAC is more simple/seamless.
2. Ensure that new versions of anti-virus are supported by NAC as soon as updates are available.
3. Create awareness around differences, from a user perspective, of using secure vs. insecure wireless include associated risks, etc. Perhaps add information to Single Sign-On page.

4. Provide an automated method of reporting to Networking when students are not able to connect to wireless? i.e. due to overload on access points, etc.
5. Students realize the challenges with providing wifi in some residence rooms (e.g. South), however wifi is important for group work in residence, so ensure that there is opportunity for group work in residence using wireless (shared quiet spaces?)

VIII. Web Development

Quin Shirk-Luckett, an Analyst from Computing and Communications Services (CCS) and Kent Hoeg a Manager in CCS each presented on different tools students could use for Web Development.

Quinn presented an overview of a free Web tool that may be of interest to student groups - *Igloo*. URL for the site is http://www.igloosoftware.com/. Using this software a user can create a website, capable of more than just business content. A person can currently upload photos, and in the future you will be able to upload video. There are document management features which allow you to track changes in documents and lock files while being edited to prevent simultaneous editing. There is also a Wiki option that could be useful for student groups. This software is not supported by CCS. The company is Canadian, and any data is stored in Canada, but it would be off campus.

Kent reviewed the option of using the CCS supported *Drupal solution* for Student Association Websites. The offering by CCS around this is designed for groups of larger than 25, and those that require strong branding around the U of Guelph image. The Drupal software is an open source platform. There is a great deal of flexibility in how the Websites could be managed. For those who want it they can have total control of the website, or allow CCS to manage the site entirely.

Kent's recommendations were:

Try Igloo first because it is free. If Igloo does not meet your needs, explore a Drupal site.

The fee associated with the Drupal Website is $300.00. This fee includes 1 hour of training on how to use or update the site. You also have access to a Community site with an active web forum, and training and support for the product. Manuals for Drupal are also posted for reference.

In the event of transitioning the Web site support to another responsible user, there would be a $75 fee for another training session.

There is a general need for assistance on campus with web development for student groups. Clubs are having difficulty maintaining and updating personal or clubs sites. There is a lack of continuity in terms of who is managing the site, and the turnover means every few years a new person with a different skill set becomes responsible.

It was evident that most students were not aware of the various options for Web site construction. Most association reps have inherited a site in varying states and constructed using older technologies like FrontPage or older versions of Dreamweaver.

There was considerable discussion around the following points. Branding is a major concern for some groups. Groups like the OVC would not likely embrace an Igloo implementation as they would either lose the uoguelph.ca url or even if there was a re-direct there would be an issue with the data nor residing on campus. There would be effort in migrating from the current setup to either of these options, which would tax the reps who are already busy.

Although it was perceived more favourably, pricing was a major barrier for many groups to use the hosted solution.

The feedback was that if the hosted solution was not free, then it would be easier to pitch a smaller yearly recurring fee than a one time $300.00 to already stretched budgets. There was also a suggestion to consider allowing for SLEF grants to cover these costs.

Recommendations:
1. Consider requesting the fees for student association web sites be covered via SLEF (Student Life Enhancement Fund) grants, or some other form of grant.
2. Assist student groups in creating branded common look/feel sites. Currently no mandate to keep web sites current or adhering to any standards.
3. Disseminate information and options for web development more effectively.

IX.   D2L/Courselink

(Please note that TSS and OOL have subsequently merged since this document was drafted and are now identified as COLES. This document reflects the alignment of individuals to the previous organizational structure.)

Kyle Mackie from Teaching Support Services (TSS) presented an overview of Courselink, our courseware software at the University, also known as D2L, and gave a sneak peek at the new upcoming Mobile app for D2L.

Kyle leads the team that supports Courselink and D2L, with a focus on Learning Technology and Course Innovation. In broad terms Distance education is handled by the Office of Open Learning – OOL. Face to face learning is supported by Teaching Support Services – TSS. Both groups use D2L as a learning and course delivery platform, so there are many similarities. Currently plans are underway to merge these two groups into one entity by September 2011.

There has been a steady growth of the number of course offered via D2L and the number of Courses that have Course sites. The number is currently 1050. Approximately 60% of all course offered at U of G have a course site and D2L course.

Future of Courselink/D2L

A version upgrade to version 9.1 was being planned. The production target date for this is May 3 2011. There will be significant changes in terms of Single Sign-On (SSO) and navigation, so there is still much to map out in all this.

In terms of enhancements, the most critical will be:

- A large number of new features and enhancements to existing features.
- API's to allow different ways to take information out of the Learning System or to feed information into the learning system.
- Tools to allow Profs to accelerate the building of sites and pages, and manage the course.
- D2L to GO – a mobile framework will be introduced – Version 2 of the mobile platform which will allow you to view d2l on an iPhone for instance. In the version after this upgrade UoG will be able to Brand the mobile content.

Student feedback on D2L included some frustration that not all Professors use the tool in the same fashion or to the full extent. In particular the use of discussion forums is not consistent, with some profs making heavy use of this while other's do not use it at all. Part of this was seen as a resource issue, with some Prof's delegating the forums to Teaching Assistants, and the fact some prefer to keep the discussions within the class framework to ensure all students get the same message.

E-Portfolio – this is another User Tool Kyle talked about at some length.

This is a User Based Tool to allow the user to collect all kinds of different "artefacts' about themselves and the years they are at UoG. This includes course works, extra-curricular activity, Committee work etc. in a way that builds a portfolio or CV of accomplishments at university. You can use this portfolio to show case your ability. The tool is more about drawing a picture of your experience. You can also produce a web site from this.

The e-Portfolio tool was seen as interesting to Students, but only worth the effort to build the profile, if it was portable, and you could use it beyond your UoG school years. The next version of the product will be portable. Students will be able to download the entire portfolio as html and take it with you to upload into many other applications.

Recommendations:

1. While not mandating the use of all aspects of Courselink/D2L, offer training to Professors whose see the value in using the discussion board aspect of it. Market the learning and collaboration opportunity using this tool.
2. Upgrade to the latest version of the e-Portfolio tool to allow for portability.
3. Courselink videos should include transcripts, and there should be guidelines set for creation with accessibility in mind.

X.   Accessibility

Throughout the ITSAC sessions, we touched on accessibility as it related to the topic at hand. There seemed to be common themes that surfaced as seen in the recommendations,

Recommendations:

1. Additional training for IT support staff at both the IT help desk, and the phone support to be sensitive to accessibility considerations.
2. Try to ensure that .pdf files posted online are compatible with screen readers.
3. Clubs and Student Organizations should be offered accessibility training.
4. If and when there is a University of Guelph website redesign, it should be designed to allow for increased font for visually impaired.
5. Courselink videos should include transcripts, and there should be guidelines set for creation with accessibility in mind.

XI.   CCS Software Distribution

Tom Crabtree, an Analyst from CCS, talked about the new model of Software Distribution Site (SDS) and the migration to an online SaaS (software as a service) system, that was underway.

Software is obtained by Staff/Faculty/Students from a Central location. Significant license cost savings are negotiated and made available through the University. Some software is even available at no cost, and example being MacAfee Antivirus

The new site will be 'University of Guelph branded', and will offer the same and additional software at reduced or no cost. Some of the products include Statistical Software as well as MAC software versions, and even products such as VMware.

Students seemed unaware of the full extent of software that could be obtained on the SDS. There is a need to create awareness around this service. Most students use it only for MacAfee which is free, but are unaware of the great deals they can get on other software they will need.

There were some questions around licenses and expiry of these licenses. License terms vary depending on the software. Most are for a yearly term, and would be valid after leaving campus for the remainder of the term of the license.

Questions:

1. Will Screen readers be included – Zoom text and Kurzweil are being migrated. Some software is not due to low volume, and the costs associated with maintaining. We are not able to offer all software in this service. Focus is on the most used titles.

2. Where is real media – The real media requested is shipped from the vendors. Can download software with your Central ID login.
3. Do licenses expire once you leave the university?
4. How would someone request software that is not on the Distribution site – send an email to the e-academy = support@e-academy.com

The general consensus was this is a good service, but we need to create awareness. Most students have only used it for McAfee.

Recommendations:

1. Create a plan to increase awareness of the benefits of using the Software Distribution Service for software purchases that would normally need to be made from a retail outlet.
2. Advertise this service, especially the top/widely used products (perhaps include in Featured Software/Services of new service catalogue).

XII.   Other Tools – LimeSurvey

Peter McCaskell from CCS presented an overview of Limesurvey. LimeSurvey is a free-to-use software tool to create, deploy and administer surveys.

This tool and this service are supported by the Data Resource Center (DRC). Students can get assistance in producing surveys constructed in a manner to get the most from the responses, as well as assistance in exporting the response data to stats programs like SPSS, or even MS Excel.

Uses of LimeSurvey at Guelph include, but are not limited to:

- Elections – on-line voting
- Surveys to provide feedback after an event
- Conference Registrations
- Assessments

The two keys to remember with this product and service are:
 1. There is no charge for this.
2. The service is fully supported, so you can get assistance in using this tool.

There was considerable discussion around how to use this tool in the context of the Student groups, including student elections. Some students admitted they have been involved in elections via a show of hands, and they thought it would be much better to be able to vote online.

One concern raised was around security, and Peter explained there are public and private survey formats. For a private survey to a limited group of known individuals, the product uses a concept of a "token table", which will ensure the respondent is the person they are supposed to be. A private survey is secure using the email addresses of the members of the group and matching that once they go to the survey.

The other security aspect is that the data is all stored on campus, so there is no data being sent anywhere else. Some comments from students also indicated that the tool was not user friendly or intuitive.

Recommendations:

1. Create awareness around the availability and benefits of using our CCS provided survey tool service (LimeSurvey) for students.

XIII. Social Media

Kyle Mackie from TSS also presented on the topic of Social Media. The main message was to make sure you are an active curator of your image online. There are a multitude of social media sites including:

Facebook
Twitter
LinkedIn – Facebook for adults
Delicious – bookmarking tool
MySpace

Kyle demonstrated with his online profile and brought home the message to separate your personal profiles from your professional profile and image for future employers etc.

Blogging is seen as a method of advertising your professional worth and image. Kyle also recommended people consider purchasing and owning the domain of their name. i.e.: purchase yourname.ca. Several students have already done this.

Kyle recommended a book on social media by Nick Bilton "I live in the future and here is how it works". We could have had a much longer discussion on this topic, however time prevented us from fully exploring the topic and discussion around it.

Recommendations:

1. Educate students on the importance of paying attention to your online image, privacy, etc. especially as you move from being a new student to graduating.   (i.e. Facebook to Linked In)
2. We recommend a full session next year on Social Media to fully explore the impact and possibilities for students in support of teaching and learning.

XIV. Single Sign on

Zdenek Nejedly, an Analyst in Computing and Communications Services (CCS) was our guest at this meeting and presented an overview of the Single Sign-On (SSO) architecture.

Single Sign On or SSO was a project started roughly three years ago. There are a number of partners whose applications are part of the SSO framework. SSO enables a user to login at one place and navigate between different applications without having to re-authenticate.

A major project is currently underway to migrate the SSO service from SUN to Oracle Access Manager. This will not include any changes to the user interface, or any change with respect to the process flow, but the underlying platform and software will change.

After the migration is complete, the focus will shift to integrating SSO with other services. One of the integration issues to overcome is the LDAP requirement for 8 character passwords, which may necessitate changes to the downstream application.

An advantage of using SSO is Increased Security and a more seamless user experience.

Students had some feedback regarding the timeouts used to expire the token and the need to re-authenticate. For instance, if a user is logged in to a Library application, after twenty minutes they need to re-authenticate, but they must get out of the application and start right from the beginning. This can be a problem in that you need to find where you were in the application.

Zdenek was not aware of this, and the issue is with the downstream application and the timeouts applied to an inactive session. A service that is part of SSO should adjust timeouts to match the 1 hour timeout for SSO. Zdenek noted this feedback.

There was another question regarding SSO outside of the University to external applications, or other University applications. This is what Federated Access is all about, beyond the bounds of our institution. Federative Access is fully supported by CCS and the number of federation partners is expected to increase.

Recommendations:

1. Review the timeout synchronization for all applications that are part of Single Sign-On (SSO) to ensure a more seamless user experience.
2. Continue to roll-out applications to reduce the need to re-authenticate to various applications.

XV.   Computing and Communications Services (CCS) IT Support

Ryan Brejak, acting CCS Help Centre Supervisor, attended one of our meetings and presented the support model used by CCS Help Services. He explained the location of the CCS Help Centre, call/email centre (ext. 58888 or 58888help@uoguelph.ca) in Animal Science as well as the more visible walk-in CCS Help Desk in the library.

Everyone on the committee indicated that they had interacted with CCS Help Services at some point. Main support issues for students are the NAC (Network Access Agent) for wireless and anti-virus issues. ResNet is a common topic in the early Fall. Students call in with move-in and network access issues in residence. There are also ResNet help desks in the residences during move-in weekend.

Other frequent request of the CCS Help Centre include

- Account issues/creation and password resets
- Name Changes
- Wireless troubleshooting
- Anti-Virus issues at IT Help Desk
- General questions about Gryph Mail, etc.

CCS Help Services uses FootPrints software to log and track support issues. Most students were aware that a system was being used to log issues. Communication through the issue tracking system (FootPrints) could be improved. Some students explained that they would receive an email notice but weren't always sure if it meant there issue was resolved or not and what the solution was. They also indicated that they aren't sure when they should expect a response, for example- 1 days, 2 days?

Recommendations:

1. More IT Support in the main residences throughout the year, vs. only during move-in weekend.
2. Ensure issue tracking system notification messages are clear and indicate if the issue was resolved, what the resolution was, and how long to wait before expecting a response, if there will be delays due to business, etc.
3. Students would appreciate a Forum for IT Support or public knowledge base that they could search for solutions (this meeting took place before the FootPrints knowledge base was launched).

XVI.   Student IT Communications

Cort Egan of the Office of the CIO was our guest and presented an overview of the way Student IT Communications are handled and the challenges of finding effective methods of communication.

Cort explained that there is always a balance between communicating *'need to know'* information and *'good to know '* information.

Cort explained the Innovation Fund established to promote creative ways students can use calendaring. $300.00 grants are offered to students with ideas on how to use and promote Gryph calendaring. While there are many ways to handle communication with students, Cort has found Mass Email to be the most effective, and tends to reach more people. The school of marketing was engaged last year to come up with some new methods.

Communicating with *New* Students is an additional challenge, as they are not usually using email until they are already established on campus, to a degree. Liaising with Start-Online, and Orientation week staff would be helpful. Printing flyers to hand out during Orientation week, or somehow getting the IT information to Parents was deemed the best approach.

A suggestion was made to use residence Voice Mail, however this mode of communication is currently reserved for emergency notifications.

Recommendations:

1. Use Facebook and Twitter feeds to communicate IT messages.
2. Have a greater IT presence on the main University of Guelph website , e.g.-Have CCS Service Updates as a ticker on Main page (note- this recommendation was also made to Stuart Robertson-see section XI.
3. Ask students to do videos for the you-tube channel to demonstrate IT solutions.
4. Communicate as much as possible using StartOnline.ca with New Students (see also Network and Security section). There was a suggestion to perhaps start a forum topic for IT and CCS could oversee this.
5. Put together a communications plan geared for first year students prior to arrival on campus to prepare them for the University technical environment
   a. Topics include:
      i. Mcafee and NAC
      ii. secure wireless, phishing, password protection, etc.
      iii. 'wired only' in most residences
      iv. plugging into the back of the phone in residence for wired connection
      v. bringing a network cable to residence
      vi. post default password for voice mail in residence
      vii. Educate Residence Assistants so they can assist or ensure they have material that they can hand out.
      viii. U of G being more of a 'Rogers' campus
      ix. Ensuring students are aware of issues when buying a MAC- some course software may not work on them.
      x. Ensuring students are aware of IT security issues.
6. Print Student Computing flyers to hand out during Orientation week.

XVII. Other Student Computing recommendations/comments

- Cell phone signal is sporadic in some areas- especially South residence.
- Virtual Desktops- suggestion to stay away from a thin client system. Current CPES system is very slow- speed, latency.
- Many students have Smartphones and we need to be more aware of this- testing apps, services, ensure online documentation available, etc.
- MAC support continues to be requested, in addition to making a MAC anti-virus option available via CCS Software distribution.

XVIII. How Can We Make ITSAC Even Better?

While it is the role of the ITSAC Chairs to encourage students to volunteer their time, effort and investment in ITSAC, this can be challenging when the committee representatives consist of Student Government representatives that already have very busy schedules.   A change to the meeting times this year was made (earlier on a Friday afternoon) to try and solicit better attendance; however, while attendance at meetings improved, even more participation would be ideal.

The Student Government representatives participating on the committee, are a group of very 'engaged' students at the university, and might sometimes bring a perspective to the committee that may not necessarily represent the 'average' student. We always encourage the committee members to share feedback that represents their constituents.

It seems that many of the same topics/issues that were raised in the year prior, were raised again. Often the representatives 'sign-on' to the committee based on being interested in IT (Information Technology). This year we had several representatives who may not have been as interested as in other years in the topic of 'IT'. This presents a different challenge; engagement and generation of discussion. While it is great to have a participant that may be more representative of the average student, interest and engagement (generating discussion) on the topic, can be a challenge.

Based on some discussion between this years committee Chairs and the participants, the following ideas were shared and should be discussed with next year's committee members. Perhaps some of these fall outside of the mandate of the committee, but some should be considered during the annual review of the ITSAC Terms of Reference.

Recommendations for changes to consider with ITSAC going forward (some of these recommendations were carried forward from the previous ITSAC report).

- Ensure that the ITSAC report is used to prompt real change. While it is expected that the report be sent to those interested and relevant parties, there is no formal process for doing so. The report has been sent to ISC (Information Services Committee) in the past, but this should be formalized. Perhaps this process should be documented somewhere in the terms of reference?
- It may be useful for someone to do a look back across reports to see the areas where concerns have been previously raised, to ensure they are being adequately addressed going forward (and not just being raised year to year).
- Look at inviting other regional campus participants to connect remotely to the meetings. Use Adobe Connect to facilitate this.
- Bring together past Chairs from ITSAC and discuss, as a group, the challenges and successes of ITSAC, and perhaps present some strategies for improvement or change.
- It is really great to hear student's perspectives on these topics at the meeting. Perhaps to ensure there is better participation at the meetings so that a suitable conclusion can be made, we could ask the student committee members bring a friend to meetings if they like?

- Perhaps ITSAC could host something like an *Open Forum*, welcoming students to show up and share feedback and insights about their IT needs and concerns. i.e. are there other ways that ITSAC can solicit IT feedback and ideas from students?
- Send a survey to the student committee members at the beginning of the year to help determine the topics for discussion for the year.
- Determine methods for getting the students more engaged at ITSAC meetings.
- Review the timing for the ITSAC final report- usually the report is sent out in the summer, when preparations for the Fall semester communications have already begun, i.e. is the timing off? Or can recommendations/feedback be sent immediately to those relevant parties, throughout the year.
- Meet with student group presidents and leaders to emphasize the importance of ITSAC, solicit their feedback around its value, and help to ensure that all member groups send a representative to ITSAC meetings.

XIX.   Thanks! to our Guests and Committee Members

We would like to send out a special thanks to the Guests who attended our meetings this year and presented on various topics. We appreciate your time and the valuable information that you shared with the committee.

XX.   IT Bytes - General IT Issues

At the end of every ITSAC meeting, committee members had the opportunity to bring up any IT issues or questions that they would like to discuss or get an explanation or answer to. If the issue cannot be answered immediately it is the responsibility of the Chairs to take the issue to members of CCS or the University community that should be able to provide info or an answer.   Questions were taken forward to the appropriate areas as they were raised.

XXI. Conclusion:

Overall ITSAC had a successful year. We met ~once per month throughout the year to review IT applications and services at the University of Guelph. ITSAC members have been very committed to providing input and feedback to the various topics. At times the committee struggled with attendance and engagement issues, but we are very appreciative of those who actively engaged and participated in the committee and look forward to the continued success of ITSAC in future years.

The ITSAC Chairs would like to extend a thank-you to everyone who gave up a Friday evening to attend ITSAC. You contributions are very important to the continued success of ITSAC.