



ITSAC ANNUAL REPORT

2017/2018 Academic Year

UNIVERSITY
of GUELPH

COMPUTING AND
COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

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ITSAC Overview

The Information Technology Student Advisory Committee (ITSAC) offers a forum for students and campus IT staff to discuss campus IT services, including reviewing IT-related services used by students and assessing and recommending changes to services.

Guest speakers at each meeting provide overviews of various IT services pertinent to students as well as an opportunity to provide feedback and recommendations.

This report provides an overview of the committee, a summary of the topics discussed, and recommendations.



ITSAC 2017/18: Staff Representation

- Chair: Matt Kurylo
- Vice-chair: Jon Spenceley
- CCS staff:
 - Jyll Weinberg-Martin
 - Sarah Weadick-Snider
- Other departments
 - Randy Oldham, Library



ITSAC 2017/18: Student Representation





CCS Communications

- Presented by Jyll Weinberg-Martin
- Gave overview of current marketing strategy and communication methods – social media, email, posters, digital signage
- What can CCS do to better communicate with students?

CCS Communications: Student Feedback

- While CCS publishes a large amount of marketing materials and warning emails around phishing scams, these are not always noticed
- Students have email overload
- Social media is a powerful tool, but messaging can still get lost in the shuffle
- Discussed the possibility of having a CCS Ambassador program - targeting first-year classes, and help students share news with students
- Students also encouraged us to look at having more booths during big campus events, and especially during O-Week



IT Security Roadshow

- Presented by Stephen Willem
- Discussed reasons for offering the event, incentives for students like free pizza and swag, and the importance of National Cybersecurity Awareness Month
- Do students find the event useful, and what can we do to encourage participation?

IT Security Roadshow: Student Feedback

- Students are easily lured by free pizza – this is universal!
- The roadshow format helps put faces to names for CCS and the student body, which is important
- CCS ran a quiz at our booth which was very well received
- Having greeters to hand out the ‘passports’ that students needed to get stamped in order to receive pizza was a great way to bring people in
- Card holders and branded lanyards were excellent giveaways as students use these regularly for their student cards
- 450 people turned in their completed ‘passports’ for pizza, which is an excellent turn-out

IT Security Roadshow: Student Feedback

- North campus and OVC often get missed – all OVC students have lunch at the same time every day, so this may be useful as a promotional channel
- Consider having the roadshow in multiple places – not all students pass through the UC
- Having gluten-free or vegan options may be useful, as pizza would not appeal to these students
- Other ideas from students:
 - Have an online quiz or checklist that students can use to enter into a draw
 - Short presentations on new security technologies like Apple FaceID, etc.
 - Have a sign-up sheet for a security mailing list, as not all students use social media



Library Renovations and New IT Projects

- Presented by Randy Oldham and MJ D'Elia
- Gave a high-level overview of changes to the Digital Learning Commons, and the large renovations occurring at the library
- Interested in feedback from students on what was coming, and what they were excited about

Library Renovations and New IT Projects: Student Feedback

- Students were especially interested in more information about the Scholar's Studio and Digital Media Studios
- ARES course reserve had been problematic in the past for late add/drop students
 - Randy indicated that they are changing the setup to rebuild the list nightly, which should increase the efficiency of adding students
- When students have trouble accessing a resource, who should they contact?
 - Randy reinforced creating a ticket, and offered his contact info to anyone who has issues getting a response
 - Reinforced that access to resources for students is top priority for library staff
 - Encouraged students to use the “Chat with Us” box, as this also connects directly with staff



Web Hosting

- Presented by Craig Hyatt
- With the demise of personal web hosting, many student groups have turned to off-campus solutions for hosting their websites
- Interested in learning which solutions student groups are using, how they are finding these systems, and getting any feedback on University website properties

Web Hosting: Student Feedback

- Student groups are now using Facebook, GryphLife, Wix, Wordpress, and other systems for building their websites, however these do not offer as many customizations or branding options as U of G-hosted sites
- Since sites like Wix and Weebly do not use U of G branding, they are exempt from AODA requirements, but student groups are encouraged to fulfill these requirements anyway in order to stay accessible for all
- Can be expensive, and cause business continuity problems as domain names are registered to individuals
 - Craig suggested not buying a domain name, and instead using the free domain available with the web hosting platform

Web Hosting: Student Feedback

- Interhall Council used Northern Village, which is a local vendor that helps keep their site AODA compliant – inexpensive and they highly recommended it
- Central Veterinary Student Association (CVSA) wants to use GryphLife as it is free for them to use, but it is not AODA compliant – they are working on
- Shannon Thibodeau, Manager of GryphLife, was suggested as a future speaker



Office 365

- Presented by Kent Hoeg
- Gave an overview of Office 365, account migration, and new tools coming from Microsoft around collaboration like Skype for Business and Teams
- Are students using collaboration tools? And if so, what would get them to use Teams or Skype for Business?

Office 365: Student Feedback

- Facebook Messenger is a common tool for communicating between students
 - Teams could replace it – currently students just share a OneDrive link for big files, and Teams stores data in Canada so more secure
- Students who were also TAs suggested that Teams could be useful for communicating not only with students, but among TAs as well

Office 365: Student Feedback

- OpenEd is looking into connecting CourseLink and A/V software to Office products – students were very interested in this
- For giving updates to students outside of ITSAC, visiting student council meetings would be an effective method of communicating directly with student groups
- Some questions around add-ons – Kent explained that these were turned off by default for security reasons, but students and groups can request them



Course Evaluations

- Presented by Sarah Weadick-Snider
- Course Eval refresh is a joint project between CCS and the Provost's office
- Current technology is reaching end of life, looking to refresh and modernize the system
- What is the dream system for course evaluations, from a student perspective?

Course Evaluations: Student Feedback

Note: Only half of the attendees at the first meeting (in Fall term) had filled out course evaluations, so we had this discussion again in the winter term to gain more feedback. The following reflects feedback both meetings.

- Many courses have multiple TAs and knowing who you are evaluating is difficult sometimes – including a picture, or lab section would be helpful
- Many Biology courses have two instructors, and by the midterm students have not met second instructor yet, but at end of term it's hard to remember first professor and specific details

Course Evaluations: Student Feedback

- Timing is difficult during exams as students are more focused on exams – increase in timing window would be beneficial
- Scantron options offer little room for feedback, and handwriting can be identified
- In-class evaluations – even if digital – are preferable as it gives students dedicated time to do them rather than trying to fit it into schedule of studying
- Number of questions not a big sticking point – especially for online as once students start it they will likely finish it

Course Evaluations: Student Feedback

- Evaluations can be inconsistent as online evaluations have different questions than on-paper evaluations – standardizing this would be helpful to level the playing field
- The Course Evaluation email that goes out to students was identified as being a bit long, and students pointed out that shorter emails tend to lead to faster reaction times



IT Help Center

- Presented by Jill Hogg and Rajbir Deol
- Gave an overview of the Help Center staff, services offered, how we handle support issues, and escalation paths
- Looking for feedback on student awareness of services, and major IT issues faced on campus during the past semester

IT Help Centre: Student Feedback

- Many students were not aware that Office 365 downloadable software is now installed via their email account – good feedback on communicating changes (Office 365 was formerly downloaded from Software Distribution site)
- Students may not be aware that their account is deleted and discontinued after they graduate – need to communicate this when students start using their accounts, and reinforce it whenever possible (especially OneDrive)

IT Help Centre: Student Feedback

- Having their account compromised isn't fun, but students praised Help Center for how easy it was to have it unlocked, and communication to them about the issue
- Asked about Alumni email, as students would find this valuable if offered
- Jill's overview of Software Distribution, and software that students could access for free or purchase was very helpful



Networking and WiFi

- Presented by Tom Herr and Dennis Xu
- Discussed major campus WiFi initiative, changes to hardware, what is done now, and what will be done over the coming semesters
- Looking for feedback from students on residence WiFi, WiFi in buildings, and campus internet as a whole

Networking and WiFi: Student Feedback

- What about OVC WiFi? Changes are coming slowly, and renovated buildings already have new WiFi access points
- Tom pointed students to the CCS project page, which shows timelines for all 53 buildings
- Encouraged students to create tickets when issues happen – we don't know about them unless they tell us

Networking and WiFi: Student Feedback

- Students asked about illegal downloading – discouraged them from doing this, as we do know, and really don't want to get them in trouble unless we have to
- Also mentioned – if WiFi is slow, check for Apple updates – when these come out, can be ~1,000 devices on campus all trying to download it at once!
- Overall students were very happy with WiFi on campus buildings, and said that coverage was excellent



Emergency Notification System

- Presented by Jennifer Lobo and David Lee
- Announced the new ENS system to students, explained how and why it would be used, and different interaction points that students can turn to for emergency or non-emergency news
- Interested in feedback on what students thought of this new communication tool

Emergency Notification System: Student Feedback

- Big question around what type of emergency would be 'worthy' of this kind of system – i.e., the escaped snake on campus from last year?
 - Confirmed that there are a number of ways it could be used, but still evaluating severity and frequency of use against fear of being ignored
- If used by groups other than Police Services, would it show? Yes – e.g., if Student Housing Services used it to relay information about residence, it would come from SHS
- Concerns about adding students during exams, as messaging about downloading app would likely get missed – suggestion to add everyone in September when everything is new and relevant

Emergency Notification System: Student Feedback

- Social media would be an excellent promotional tool, and many departments have had success with SnapChat as long as the messaging is fun and relevant
- Dave suggested an ad about someone being alone on campus because they didn't get the notification that a snow day happened – this was very well liked - humour works!
- What about visitors to campus? For example, conference delegates? Dave explained that the application developed by the EMS company was geofenced, and could be downloaded by anyone – as long as a user is in the campus 'zone' they would get notifications of major emergencies

Emergency Notification System: Student Feedback

- Also planning on having signage and other on-campus areas to display emergency messaging.
- Students said text messaging was best way of reaching them in an emergency. Email is effective, but can be missed (echoes previous statements about events and SPAM issues).
- Randy also offered suggestions on promo, including Campus Communicators group for staff – they tend to know everyone, and are great about passing new initiatives and technologies on to their communities.

Key Takeaways from ITSAC 2017/18

- Communicating directly with users at meetings is useful:
 - Jon attended a CVSA meeting in F17 and got valuable face-to-face feedback on O365
 - Meeting with Admins group from staff to get similar feedback in W18
- Email is not enough – students are inundated with email, and don't see critical details around security or product updates
- Social media – like Instagram and SnapChat – is very effective
- Texting is the easiest way of getting in touch with students during an emergency –this was noted during the ENS discussion
- ITSAC is still very relevant for student groups as evolving technology on campus presents new opportunities and new challenges



ITSAC Retrospective


- Membership declined slightly over last year – difficult to get some groups to contribute members
- Booking speakers wasn't always easy – started organizing them later in the year, and vacations got in the way
- Pizza and snacks were still well received – unanimous feedback!
- One student said that ITSAC was the only meeting they attended that actually gave relevant, timely information

2018/19 ITSAC Planning

- Finalize ITSAC Vice-Chair position before end of summer, and begin soliciting speakers
- Booking dates for meetings earlier means speakers have more time to prepare, and easier to work around vacation time – may also get a nicer meeting room!
- Students suggested additional speakers on a range of topics: WebAdvisor, GryphLife, OpenEd, StatusPage.io, and any new technology impacting campus (e.g., they appreciated being notified about the ENS system)

2018/19 ITSAC Planning

- Work with student groups earlier to lock in who will be representing members at ITSAC – difficult for groups like CSA that have a lot of committees vying for a small number of people's time – we already have our CVSC person for 2018/19!
- Timing was agreed as being good – Friday afternoon is generally clear for most students, and if not, they can find someone within their team to be there



**Have some suggestions
on how to make ITSAC
better, or want to get
feedback from students
on your project?**

Contact Jon Spenceley, ITSAC chair
2018/2019 at spencelj@uoguelph.ca!