

UTS says, "Let's roll !"



FIU's WebCT Orientation Course

Teamwork Key to Creation of On-line Tutorial: UTS 1010

Quite a few of us have heard about WebCT courses and on-line learning, but if you haven't taken such a course or participated in writing one, what do you really know about this subject? That is pretty much where I found myself as I prepared to take UTS 1010, an on-line WebCT course developed collaboratively by UTS BayNET Computing and the Center for On-line Teaching (C.O.T.). To access the course, link to www.fiu.edu/idc/ and click on the Graduate icon 'FIU's WebCT Orientation Course.'

The intention of UTS 1010 was to make available a simple, on-line introduction to WebCT courses. Not only have the authors succeeded in meeting that goal, they have provided an excellent spin-off opportunity for all of us neophytes to find out what on-line learning is all about. By using WebCT as the course-authoring tool for UTS 1010, they have shown us how powerful and useful this technology can be. I'm not in the "course business," but now I'm ready to write one!

How did UTS 1010 originate?

Here's their own course creation story as related to us by UTS 1010 Team Leader Neville McDermott, and Team Members Elizabeth Nunez, Michael Smith, and Jerry Simon:

What is WebCT?

WebCT (World Wide Web Course Tools) provides instructors and students, our targeted population, with an organized, controlled, and secure environment for interactive higher learning via the Internet. Each user is required to log in via a username and password. It is a Web-based system that allows for the creation of distributed learning environments, providing for group discussion, document sharing, assessment / administration of a course, and monitoring student progress.

So, how does it work?

WebCT is Web-based, and as such requires no specialist software to be installed. Professors and students require only a Web browser on their computer (minimum requirement: *Netscape 4.7* or *Internet Explorer 5.5*, along with necessary plug-ins).

It allows the creation of online learning environments in three ways: (1) It provides options for course design (color schemes, page layout, templates, etc.), (2) It provides a set of communication and collaboration tools to facilitate learning (it also has its own internal mail system), and (3) It provides a set of administrative tools for the instructor to manage the course, monitor its use, and track student progress. WebCT can be used to create entire on-line courses,

"The sample WebCT course that you and your [BayNET] team created is probably the biggest achievement in student support that occurred during this recent academic year."

or simply to publish materials that supplement existing courses.

As with most software applications, WebCT has its own internal, context-specific Help function. However, like many such Help programs, WebCT's is generic, and index-based; it was written by programmers— not teachers or students who actually use the interface. As WebCT evolved here at FIU, many of us in UTS and iNET saw a real need for a user-centric, introductory, on-line tutorial for both students and teachers. [*iNET is FIU's initiative to assist all FIU students in acquiring basic computer literacy skills by supporting and encouraging faculty use of technology in the lower division classes— Ed.*]

Continued on Page 4

Chile Conference Highlights Research Potential of AMPATH Project

FIU administrators and researchers played a very prominent role in the first-ever AMPATH International Conference, which was held in Valdivia, Chile, April 10-12, 2002. The AmericasPATH (AMPATH) consortium was jointly formed in 2000 by FIU and Global Crossing, Ltd., an Internet communications company. Its objective is to connect high-speed research and educational networks in South and Central America, the Caribbean, and Mexico, with similar networks in the U.S. and worldwide.

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Grants & Acquisitions Office



AMPATH *continued*

The conference was convened to explore the benefits of utilizing the AMPATH advanced networking infrastructure in research and educational projects.

It was held in conjunction with the Chilean National Research Network's (Red Universitaria Nacional's) Second Annual International Meeting on Science, Culture and Education via Internet2. The conference was attended by participants from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, and the United States.

FIU Welcome and Introductions

According to Dr. John McGowan, FIU's Chief Information Officer, who gave the formal welcome and keynote address, "This [conference] is a direct outgrowth of a National Science Foundation workshop hosted by FIU last fall, that focused on identifying areas of scientific collaboration between FIU and the AMPATH service area. The possibilities for research and education collaboration between scientists in North, Central and South America, on the AMPATH network, are exciting and growing."

Julio Ibarra, AMPATH Principal Investigator, and now Director of the FIU UTS Grants & Acquisitions Office, followed the keynote address by discussing conference goals and objectives and the status of AMPATH activities; he also presented the AMPATH Users Group report. Heidi Alvarez, AMPATH Co-Principal Investigator, also of the FIU UTS Grants & Acquisitions Office, delivered an excellent overview of AMPATH and the International Research Community

FIU Researchers Report

The following FIU faculty members made brief conference presentations on their recent research activities, as assisted by AMPATH high-speed connectivity:

Dr. Surendra Saxena, Director of the Center for the Study of Matter at Extreme Conditions— Remote/virtual control of unique experimental equipment and facilities via high-speed networks: its use in study of materials at extreme conditions.

Dr. Naphtali Rishe, Director of the High Performance Database Research Center— TerraFly, a new Internet-based software product that makes it possible for users to "fly over" and view vast land areas using only an ordinary web browser.

Dr. Michael McClain, Assistant Professor, Environmental Studies— Collaborative networking in the Andean Amazon Rivers Analysis and Management Project.

For more information about the AMPATH Conference, its participants, and their presentations, please visit <http://www.ampath.fiu.edu/>.

Grant-in-aid Funds Experiment in Ultra-Portable Educational Technology

Dr. Mark Szuchman, Professor of Latin American History and Associate Dean for Faculty, Graduate Studies and Technology in the College of Arts and Sciences, taught an experimental graduate seminar in Latin American History (LAH) that he devised to take advantage of state-of-the-art technology to facilitate research and academic writing. This project was made possible by a FY 2001 grant-in-aid provided by VP and CIO Dr. John McGowan. This collaboration represents a joint effort between UTS and faculty, aimed at enhancing computer-based training and the delivery of content for advanced students in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

The LAH 5095 seminar at <http://www.fiu.edu/~szuchman/palmnotabene> employed Palm Pilots with keyboards, along with specialized academic desktop software: *Wordsmith*, *BookWhere*, and the *Nota Bene* suite of academic research and writing applications, including *Nota Bene*, *NB Ibidem*, and *NB Orbis*. Hardware was selected for its affordability, reliability, portability, freedom from infrastructural and training constraints, wireless ability, and feedback-reinforcement capability. Software was chosen for its

power, ubiquity, conceptualizing and organizing abilities, and bibliographic/stylistic capabilities.

Palm Pilots and *Wordsmith* software were used to take and digitize notes from assigned readings and sources; to refine notes during class discussions; and to share annotated reading experiences by beaming the seminar participants' notes to one another, and to their instructor. The specialized *BookWhere* and *Nota Bene* software, installed on students' desktop computers, was used to locate research materials; to index, organize, and refine notes; to keep track of required bibliographic references; and, finally, to produce research papers in the academic styles required for publishing in scholarly journals.

Buttressed by the students' very favorable comments, Dr. Szuchman's report on the project concludes that, "the Palm Pilot/Nota Bene Project ... was designed to be low-cost and free from complex supporting mechanisms ... and an experiment in the more intimate setting of modestly-sized or small classes. The results, I believe, have been extraordinarily positive." "... By incorporating such hardware and software in conjunction with desktop/notebook applications, our faculty and students will bring a new, more intimate and more immediately gratifying connection between technology, on one hand, and teaching, learning, and research, on the other."

FIU COMPUTER STORE LIQUIDATION SALE

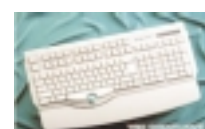
Items for sale:

PDA's and accessories
Computer Speakers, Mice, Keyboards
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Storage Media: Floppies, CD-R,
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Images from Gloria O'Connell's "Study of a Cordate Leaf"

Featured FIU Art Museum Exhibitor - Gloria O'Connell

Gloria Leigh O'Connell, longtime photographer for Instructional Photography and Graphics, was an exhibitor at the FIU Art Museum's MFA Exhibition, March 25 - April 7, 2002. This exhibition featured works of art by Master of Fine Arts (MFA) graduates. It represented the portfolio of these students' finest work and is a requirement for the attainment of a MFA degree.

Gloria's works consisted of color and black and white prints and digital print methods. Her prints explored states of decomposition in nature and preservation of nature with an open mind to the various methods and processes of photography. They communicated to the viewer Gloria's strong feelings about nature, which arise from her love of gardening.

Engineering "Outstanding Graduate Award" - Amir Noel

Amir Noel of the UTS Web Development Team was awarded an "Outstanding Graduate Award" at the Order of the Engineer ceremony held on April 30, 2002.

This award is given to graduates within different engineering majors who had an outstanding academic record and who were involved in extra-curricular activities.

At the closing of the ceremony, the Dean of the College of Engineering announced that award recipients may receive a full, tuition-paid graduate assistantship to complete their Master's or Doctoral programs.

Pardon Our Dust!

This month's issue of *UTS News* is being published as an on-line PDF file, which can be viewed and/or printed by those with Adobe PDF software. This is the first issue of our technology newsletter since March 1999 that has not been printed for distribution.

We are currently making plans to publish an on-line, web-oriented newsletter that will take complete advantage of hypertext linking and web graphics. The periodicity of this new web publication is under discussion, as is its compatibility with a newly designed UTS Web Site we expect to have ready by the end of 2002.



Please stay tuned! This PDF publication will have much the same "look and feel" of previous issues of *UTS News* and *IRM News*, and it will serve to inform you of significant UTS and FIU technology news events until the new web publication is ready to be launched.

*Robert Holley
Editor, UTS News*

UTS "Kickoff" a Great Success

On May 1, University Technology Services (UTS) sponsored a "Kickoff" event to celebrate formally its birth as FIU's new technology organization, and to educate students, faculty and staff members about its activities, services, and plans.

About 450 persons, including many members of the FIU Executive Committee, attended this catered, morning event in the GC Ballroom. The guest speaker, Provost Mark Rosenberg, said that, to meet its strategic goals and remain competitive, FIU will soon have to "accelerate." He expects wise use of technology, under the direction of UTS, to be key to the required "acceleration."

Vice President and Chief Information Officer Dr. John McGowan gave a presentation on the new UTS organization— its mission, leadership strategies and innovations, challenges, visions, and major projects. All of this was discussed in the context of trends in technology— both in higher education and the



Dr. McGowan answers "Kickoff" question

society as a whole. FIU's new technology organization must be a customer-centric support unit directed by the fundamental values and purposes of FIU. It will be very committed to delivering quality services in support of instruction, research, and administration.

Dr. Ivon Foster, Director of UTS Media & Technology Support, gave a

presentation on "best practices" in customer service and then related those to key leadership and organizational initiatives (the Customer Care Project) that UTS will undertake to improve its services. There was a lively question and answer session after the presentations.

To top off the event, there was an exciting door prize drawing for two VIIx Palm Personal Digital Assistants with keyboards. All guests received a UTS pen, and one surprise gift, which included either a stress ball, monitor cleaner, monitor mirror, or UTS mousepad.

We would like to thank Yogi Misir and Frank Castro of the UTS Marketing & Customer Relations Team as well as the UTS team members who assisted in the coordination of this event. We would also like to thank our business partners: Dell, Marketex Storage Systems, IBM, StrataSys, and e-TECHSERVICES, whose sponsorship helped to make this event a great success.

Tips & FAQs

Q. I have had a lot of trouble dialing in to the FIU network at certain times of the day. Is there anything I can do to be more successful in getting connected?

A. We have a limited number of modem ports (368) to serve the whole University, so there are times of the day when the available ports are exhausted. You can see the dial-up port usage vs time at <http://www.net.fiu.edu/Modempool.htm>, so maybe you can pick a convenient time of day that is less busy.

Also, if the primary dial-up number you normally use is busy, try a secondary dial-up number (305-468-1674 - Dade County;

954-229-2598 - Broward County). Some people are not aware that there are 46 modem ports available for use on each of these lines.

Q. I keep hearing about computer viruses that are using "defects" in MS- *Internet Explorer* software to do their "dirty work." Is there anything I can do to "fix" my *IE* software, or should I look for a new browser?

A. There are known defects in the various versions of *Internet Explorer*. As software is being created, it is not always possible to predict when a programming oversight might make it vulnerable to virus attacks, but when these vulnerabilities are found, there are

software "patches" that can and should be applied. This patching is not difficult to do. See, for example, our "Microsoft Internet Explorer Security Advisory" in the Security Advisories section of the UTS Support Center page at <http://www.fiu.edu/~utssc/>.

The security "patches" always lag behind the new virus schemes, so make sure you also have virus protection for your computer, and keep your virus "definitions" updated so you can detect the newest strains! Information about McAfee antivirus protection for FIU-based computers can be found at <http://www.fiu.edu/orgs/irm/OES/mcafee>.

UTS 1010 Tutorial *continued*

Our own WebCT tutorial, UTS 1010, is distinguished by its practical purpose and structure. It was developed based on feedback, comments, and requests from students who have taken courses using WebCT. Tied directly to common student concerns, it provides hands-on delivery. The tutorial presents text and graphics to guide students and teachers through several key features of this learning and teaching tool.

So, how did UTS 1010, our vision for the Student WebCT Orientation Tutorial, finally happen?

Encouraged to attend WebCT training classes, Jerry, Elizabeth and Michael completed the design course with excitement and a newfound appreciation for WebCT. We met with C.O.T.'s Sam McCool and informed him of our desire to develop a tutorial. "That's what I've been waiting to hear," he said. Sam and Neville consulted with Jeffrey Miller, Director of Distance Learning, who decided to help sponsor the project.

After several discussions, and the incorporation of Sam's expertise in using and instructing others in the use of WebCT, we refined the UTS 1010 plan. Thus began the process of changing, shaping, deleting, adding "bread crumbs," and working long hours. Sam was our consultant. During the project development, Sandy



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Editor: Robert Holley
utspubs@fiu.edu

McGowan arrived in C.O.T. We immediately enlisted her WebCT experience.

The C.O.T. consulting group strengthened and propelled us towards our February 2002 deadline. At our February review, our supervisor and co-sponsor, Dr. Ivon Foster, Director of UTS Media Technology and Support, indicated that we would roll out our creation in March with a presentation to the iNET Committee. The presentation was well received by the committee, and UTS 1010 was officially born.

Coupled with the UTS1010 WebCT Tutorial is an important

auxiliary web page, <http://www.fiu.edu/~uts1010>, which was later developed by Anthony Gorazcko and his Web Team. The primary purpose of this web page is to give UTS1010 students a tool to develop additional skills quickly for use inside of WebCT, and also to give critical information to use WebCT (for example, creating a *PowerPoint* presentation slide, creating an HTML file in *FrontPage*, file management, and the installation of plug-ins in order for WebCT to execute).

Looking back on it, the team members realized that there was considerably more to this project than just the product they created. CIO John McGowan's vision of teamwork played a big role. As Jerry Simon put it, "I know now that people with different views can bounce ideas off each other. It was a team concept started by our staff in creating the course, but then it was fine tuned by the experience of Sam and Sandy, who shared with us the things that the iNET Committee wanted to have incorporated."

This WebCT novice thinks that Sam McCool's praise for the creators of UTS 1010 is very appropriate: "The sample WebCT course that you and your [BayNET] team created is probably the biggest achievement in student support that occurred during this recent academic year."

Robert Holley
Editor, UTS News

What's Next ..

o LOOK FOR OUR NEXT ISSUE ON-LINE IN THE FALL SEMESTER

o PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR OWN FIU COMPUTING EXPERIENCES TO utspubs@fiu.edu FOR PUBLICATION

o WIRELESS COMPUTING AT FIU

o NEW INTUITY VOICE MAIL SYSTEM