

Essentials

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... in this issue ...

computer power use, pg. 2
ICON, pg. 1
instructor ID going, pg. 1
Matlab support, pg. 2
Picasa2, pg. 2

UI Moving to ICON, New Course Management

[Editor's note: this article is adapted from a 5/5/05/ article in the Daily Iowan.]

Instant messaging and more online storage space for files are among the features the UI will include in its new web-based course-management service, Iowa Courses Online (ICON), which will be unveiled at the end of May. ICON will replace WebCT and Blackboard course management systems, and should meet the need for a centralized system and better integration. Faculty who were surveyed about course management systems stressed a need for one system that was both easy to use and had several features.

ICON includes features similar to those currently available with WebCT and Blackboard. Students and faculty will be able to use an instant-messaging system to communicate. Users can set up a "buddy list" that will come up every time they log in. Students will also have "lockers" on their course web sites in which they can store files and turn in assignments.

The UI's colleges will be able to design their own look for their courses' web sites. Users will enter into the ICON system through the same web page, but once they log in, the interface will be specific to whichever college they are in.

All Engineering courses and faculty will be set up with ICON accounts beginning this fall. All courses will be shifted to the ICON system by the end of 2006 when WebCT and Blackboard are terminated.

Course accounts will be created each semester the course is taught, but the instructor must activate the account. Course accounts will be automatically populated with the enrolled students. At the end of the semester the course account is inactivated, though the instructor will be able to access the account for several semesters. If you have questions about using ICON, please contact Dan Kellogg, 335-5768, in SDC.

Instructor ID Going

Use your Hawk ID

Computers in general assignment classrooms — 1505, 2133, 2217, 2229, 3026, 3315, 3321, 3505, and 4030 SC and across campus — require users to sign on using either their Hawk ID and password, or the Instructor ID with no password. For security reasons, the Instructor ID without a password will be removed at the end of this spring semester (that is days from now). After that you must use your Hawk ID and password to login.

Using your Hawk ID to login to a classroom computer allows you to map a drive to your engineering home directory or to use Remote Desktop to have access to engineering software on your office computer. See the instructions for using the [classrooms](#) in the Seamans Center and [information on login procedures](#).

If you do not have a Hawk ID and need to instruct in a general assignment classroom, please call
continued on page 2...

continued from page 1...

the ITS Customer Information Desk, 384-0800; they can create a guest account. You may want a guest Hawk ID as there are security reasons not to use your Hawk ID and password on public computers.

More about Why

Logins without a password are not secure as they make the computer vulnerable to attack. In addition, accounts that have no password and are used by many people allow computers to be used for activities that violate the UI policy on acceptable use of computing resources without providing IT security staff the ability to identify the individuals involved.

Matlab HP-UX Support Retiring

The final Matlab product release to support HP-UX PA-RISC will occur by the end of 2005. The Mathworks does not plan to port Matlab to the HP-UX Itanium platform. We are working on making Linux available in the labs; when that occurs, we will support Matlab on Linux and retire the HP-UX version of Matlab.

Essentials is a publication of Computer Systems Support (CSS) in the College of Engineering at the University of Iowa. Essentials is published during the year whenever there is sufficient news to report to the user community. **Back issues and the current issue of this newsletter are on-line:**

<http://css.engineering.uiowa.edu/news/essentials>

Computer Power Use & Conservation

New Guidelines

In March CSS tested the power draw of the most common college-administered monitors and Windows computers. With consultation [Computer Power Utilization and Security Guidelines](#) were written and published. If you have not read those guidelines, please do.

Briefly the guidelines recommend that monitors be set to turn off (go into sleep mode) after 20 minutes of inactivity but that the CPU not be turned off or set to enter standby or hibernate mode. The main reason not to turn off the CPU is that CSS cannot apply OS (operating system) patches and updates if the computer is off. We try to install updated software and patches early Sunday morning, when most people are not using their computers, but with the increased attacks from the Internet we've had to patch more frequently and during the week. If you use Remote Desktop to login to your office computer from home, your office computer must be turned on. Also, our experience tells us that equipment lasts longer if it is not frequently turned off and back on.

Read the University suggestions about [energy conservation](#) on-line.

Picasa2, Find, Edit, Share Photos

What

Picasa2 is a fast and easy-to-use utility to find all your photos, organize and sort them, edit, and share them. Find it from **Start | All Programs | Utilities | Picasa2**. You'll find Help in the same location as well as within the program.

Picasa2 scans for photos on your hard drive; you can expand the search to other drives. Photos are displayed in the Picture Library. Once you select a photo to edit, you can crop it, fix red-eye, change the contrast and color, and adjust the fill light. Tuning includes changing highlights and shadows. Effects include making a photo warmer, grainier, changing the color to sepia or black and white or tinting to any color.

You can add captions to individual photos and labels that apply to groups of photos. Select photos to make a personal screen saver. To make a poster larger than your printer can print, Picasa2 divides a single photo into 4 full-page pictures you can tape together. You can upload pictures to on-line photo finishers. Share photos using Hello, a free service. And you can export photos to JPEG files.

All changes made using Picasa2 must be saved in a different file. Picasa2 does not change your original file.

Picasa2 is a free download from Google. Find it and [download](#) it.

—Diana Harris