MONTGOMERY COLLEGE
Learning Technologies Committee

MINUTES
Thursday, April 8, 2010


Members Absent: Mike Mills, Krista Leitch Walker, Brian Baker

Guests: Mike Russell, Sharon Kauffman, Kim Brown, Kim Emery, Phong Banh, Marc Bolea

Welcome

Kathy Michaelian welcomed the group and asked everyone to introduce themselves for the benefit of Mike Russell, the new VP/CIO. The agenda was accepted and the minutes approved.

Technology Preview

Phong Banh/Marc Bolea/Kim Emery

Members of the MC Web Team, Phong Banh, Marc Bolea and Kim Emery, presented an overview of the Course Management System (CMS), Ektron. They demonstrated the process of creating a webpage and how a content manager would edit a page. Content managers without HTML skills can create and edit content using this application.

There are Microsoft Word-like buttons to make the job more familiar, but there’s also the option to use code if a user prefers to. Standard templates are provided but templates can be customized to department needs upon request. Creating forms is easy, and the information can be exported into an Excel spreadsheet. You can easily add drop-down boxes and radio buttons.

Question: Is there a function to ensure that information is 508 compliant? There’s a button you can push (508 checker) that will let you know if something’s missing. It won’t stop you from publishing; it will warn a user that there is something that is not compliant.

Question: Are staff being trained to do the web editing work? When content managers receive a message that it’s time to redesign their department Web sites, they need to sign up for training, if they haven’t done so already.

This would be a good system to use for the next technology survey that the LTC would like the faculty to fill out. A link to the webpage can be sent directly to the faculty. You can make some boxes mandatory to fill out.
There’s a discussion forum where comments can be posted. This is a great forum for many conversations to take place. There’s a photo gallery option as well. There is no code knowledge required.

Web 2.0: Podcast builder offers a place to store audio and video files. In the blog folder, posts are archived. RSS feeds are also an option.

Upgrades: There are a lot of features that have not been rolled out yet – Page Builder, for example. Most of what content managers are using now are templates with pre-determined page layouts. The next generation will enable the content managers to create more complex layouts for their content. It makes building web pages much easier and adds functionality without being limited by a template. With PageBuilder, adding things to the site are as easy as dragging and dropping. Widgets can be added as well.

Why CMS? Updates can display in multiple places; separation of design and content; security; analytics. On the old web site, everyone had their own design; some even used different MC logos. In the new site, we want to make sure that users always know they are on the MC website; the pages needed to be branded. Inside MC on line is the same product. In the future, old content can be expired. For future re-designs, only 20-30 files will have to be updated in order to update the entire website.

Linda Zanin noted that the Health Sciences Department has a blog and lots of images on their site and they are thrilled with the result. It is a great product and is very easy to use.

Design: The advantage of the CMS is to maintain a consistent look and feel using external style sheets as well as templates. Standards and accessibility can be enforced through the CMS. Updating the logo will allow it to be updated throughout the site.

Templates: There is a standard template for secondary pages. The content managers maintain the center portion of the pages. Departments have their own templates. It allows users to brand their own sites. They are working on a new Department template.

**Question:** Can Content managers change the navigation or just content. The content manager can change both.

The Web Team encourages planning and attempts to integrate the different branches of the same department on all of the campuses into one site, as well as maintaining college continuity.

**Question:** Can faculty still link to their own personal websites? Yes, they can. In the future there may be a template for those faculty who do not have their own sites, while preserving the right of other faculty members who would like to create their own pages.

Security: Pages can be secured allowing access by only certain individuals. There is a separate project in the works using Sharepoint to secure our intranet. Many of the same techniques will be used. In years past, people have been able to hack into our site. The new site has plenty of security; it’s not foolproof, but close to it. Sites can be secured.
Process: You can have multiple content managers editing the same site. It keeps a history of who has published what. All of the files are stored on line. Content managers can update pages from home using VPN.

Process to get started: Request an account; attend training; input content; go live. The CMS Resource page can be found by clicking on the following link: [http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/cmsresources](http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/cmsresources). This is a good link to share with anyone involved in the web updating process.

CPOD is sharing the training with IT and it is offered every other week. They also offer an open lab where people can bring their content and get help.

**Question**: Can a student have access to build a website? Typically faculty or staff members maintain content, but get student input.

**Promethean Board Update**

Doug Griffith presented an update on the Promethean Board project (the interactive white board system). The vendor offered to let us use their program (try and buy) for all three campuses. The vendor is willing to come in at this point and includes training for all three campuses. The funding component was about $13,000/$14,000 for three boards and a projector. IT would provide the corresponding computer(s). There would also need to be a way to secure the system. Doug thinks it would be a good summer implementation. It would be at least a day for installation, and then a second day for testing. Anytime we do installations on a campus we need to look at the schedule for those particular rooms. They would probably want to do the installation within a short timeframe. Training will be provided by the vendor. There are some good on-line resources for training. FCC will be using smart boards in their new building. The Promethean boards are a little more interactive than smart boards. The Education Department is very interested and the boards will be placed in rooms where these classes will be taught. We need to make sure the boards are being connected with the right people. If the group consensus is to move forward, we have time to communicate the availability of these boards. Campus reps need to spread the word; we want the widest amount of use and opinion we can get.

Ben Turek said that political science classes are constantly doing polling assignments and those classes would find these boards very useful.

This try and buy program has a discount attached to it. If we decide to buy, it wouldn’t matter if bought one or all three. The real costs of the Promethean Boards need to be compared to the cost of the smart instructor workstations.

**Question**: Can the LTC make the decision? Vicki would like Mike Russell to review for approval. It does not have to go through the AAC; the LTC can make a recommendation to him.

Does the LTC have any concerns about piloting this summer? None were raised.
Next Steps: Vicki will take the project to Mike Russell for review.

LMS Update

We are currently using WebCT. The Distance Learning (DL) Advisory Group had the faculty determine what they wanted. The DL Advisory Group looked at all the different systems available. Two vendors came in: Blackboard and Desire to Learn. Sandboxes were provided by both vendors. Feedback was received that Blackboard was the way to go. The committee brought it through the AAC and it will go to the ETSC on April 21. Once approved, we will move into it after an 18 month migration period following implementation.

A project plan will be developed once procurement is arranged.

Mike Russell asked if there is a budget identified for this project. This will be a significant migration and the training needs to be realistic. There are no good conversions from Web CT to Vista. Mike Mills and Distance Learning will be handling the training aspects of the next implementation.

Ruth has asked Procurement whether this will be an acceptable sole-source or if it will have to go out for an RFP. The discussion at the ETSC will have to be a high –level overview until the funding issues are determined.

Next Steps: Funding for this project needs to be finalized, together with approval from Mike Russell and further discussion with the ETSC.

LTC Funding proposal from LeRoy Froom

Ed Riggs described the request to the LTC group. The instructor wants to create course handouts as well as “textbook chapters” digitally, and students will be encouraged to have a reader to follow along. The idea is for the students to ultimately save money on textbooks. What he’s requesting is a Kindle-like device. Some companies will give free devices for testing purposes. There was a similar request earlier this year from Enrollment Management, but their project had a security component that the Kindle could not accommodate. That request was handled through other means.

Question: How are books and information obtained? They will be downloaded. Students will have the option to use it or not.

Linda Zanin reported that the faculty in Health Sciences were each given an iTouch through a grant last year and they have had outstanding results. They are looking to upgrade to iPads because their audio and visual requirements are so huge. Health Sciences is using this technology now.

Ed Palasynski mentioned that not all publishers are reducing prices on online textbooks. WDCE was talking about this technology at their last meeting. It is the trend – some schools are going
to offer students iPads. Other companies will be introducing their own products. Students with disabilities will need special features.

Kathy asked the LTC to take a vote for support and all approved. Vicki added that IT has already done a quick review through the IT managers to see if there are any red flags and there were none for this proposal. Vicki will discuss the request with Mike Russell, and Ed Riggs will negotiate with his Apple representative for possible free demo units.

The use of technology for consumers is not only for portable devices; it’s for desktop devices. There’s a new company called Pano that is a small network box.

Next Steps: Vicki will take this request to Mike Russell with the LTC’s approval. Clare Delaney will follow-up with Ed Palasynski about the possibility of presenting Pano as a technology preview in FY11.

Annual Evaluation

Vicki Duggan

Vicki passed out an evaluation form. This process has been used with the other governance groups and good feedback was received and found to be helpful. The evaluation will be sent to the LTC members electronically. Vicki asked if there were any suggestions to change the survey and none were received. The feedback will be reviewed and discussed at the next meeting.

Next Steps: Clare Delaney will send out the evaluation to the LTC members and will compile the results for discussion at the May LTC meeting.

Next Meeting

All

- The May meeting will be held on May 6, at Germantown, GB 108B.
- The Technology Preview is Jing. Linda Zanin will be our presenter.
- LTC survey results will be discussed.
- Ruth Gill asked if anyone had any feedback on Connect Yard; no one did. Vicki will reach out to Howard CC @ Connect Yard.
- Think about Technology Previews for the coming year.
- Please invite others to join future LTC meetings.