

Using a Course Management System to Create a Training Course for Student Employees

Cindy Guerrazzi
University of Delaware
002A Smith Hall
Newark, DE 19716
302-831-3735
cindy@udel.edu

Kate Webster
University of Delaware
002A Smith Hall
Newark, DE 19716
302-831-1993
kate@udel.edu

ABSTRACT

The User Services unit of Information Technologies at the University of Delaware operates nine public computing facilities and employs about 150 students who work as assistants in these sites. The Smith Hall site is the home of the I/O Services Desk, a classroom, and a public computing site. The I/O services area is the drop-off location for test scoring and frequency scan jobs (bubble scan sheets), and the site assistants follow outlined procedures to submit these jobs for processing. In addition, a large printing operation is located in this area, and the site assistants act as printer operators for these devices. Because of the I/O services responsibilities, students who work in the Smith Hall site require additional training.

We are currently developing a training course for Smith site assistants using WebCT (course management software). In this training course, we will consolidate all training materials—all training materials will be accessible from one location. All training information previously communicated verbally will be documented, so that training for all students will be delivered consistently. We plan to add a quiz component to the training course to evaluate an assistant's understanding of the material. Also, in creating this course, we will have the opportunity to review and update our training to include a module that addresses customer service skills. This training will be mandatory, and we plan to entice new employees to complete the training quickly by offering a pay increase upon completion of the course.

After we use the training course for several months, we will evaluate other features of WebCT to determine whether their use would benefit us in the management of student employees.

We will present the modules of our student training course during our poster session and discuss the process of creating this course.

Categories and Subject Descriptors

K.61 [Computers and Education]: Project and people management - training

General Terms

Management, Computing Labs

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Keywords

Course management software, training, student employees

1. INTRODUCTION

WebCT is the course management software used at the University of Delaware. We are developing a WebCT training course for students who work in the Smith Hall computing site. Creating this course gives us the opportunity to review and update our training. One major benefit will be the consistent delivery of the materials as we move from the old training method to using the new online course. In the old way, we used a “one-on-one student training student” method where the trainer used a checklist of information in outline form and most of the details were communicated verbally.

2. COURSE WORK PREPARATION

In preparation for working in the WebCT environment, we (Cindy Guerrazzi and Kate Webster) both attended an introductory WebCT class. These classes are regularly offered to faculty on campus. We also met with an instructional designer to layout the basic structure of the training course and to further understand the mechanics of the course management software. The instructional designer worked with a web graphics designer to create a template for our course pages.

3. TRAINING DOCUMENTATION

We are adapting the old training checklist to the new online technology and have used it as the basis for our module topics and general outline. Because students will read this information on their own, we have had to document all the training information in detail. We also have to consider design issues as we present our information in the online format. A colleague commented that information has to be in “digestible snippets” when it is moved to the online format. You can't simply upload a hardcopy manual to the web and expect that your training information is complete. To try to make the material as interesting as possible and to address the different learning styles of the student employees, we are adding pictures, graphics, and video clips.

4. COURSE MODULES

The course is composed of six main modules which are outlined in the following list:

1. General Information
 - a. Time Sheet Information

- b. New Hire Paperwork
- c. Job Description
- d. Policies and Guidelines
- e. General Computing Information
- 2. Site Duties
 - a. Site Duties
 - b. Remote Site Duties
 - c. Filing Output
 - d. Helping Users
- 3. I/O Job Procedures
 - a. Job Processing Overview
 - i. Introduction
 - ii. Basic Process
 - iii. Courier Schedule
 - iv. Manual Log
 - v. Quick Reference
 - vi. Consulting Help
 - b. Job Processing Details
 - i. Test Scoring Jobs
 - ii. Frequency Scan Jobs
 - iii. Tape Jobs
- 4. Customer Service
 - a. Customer Service Overview

- 5. Need to Know
 - a. Emergency Situations
 - b. System “Trouble Calling” Procedures
 - c. Helping Users with Passwords and PINS
 - d. Site Management
 - e. FAQs
- 6. Printing
 - a. LAN Printing
 - b. Color Printing
 - c. UNIX Printing
 - d. Printer Maintenance

5. CONCLUSION

We plan to have the course completed by mid-August of this year, so that we can train new hires starting in the fall 03 semester. By the end of the spring 03 semester, we hope to have the majority of the information documented and available in the course. We will use a combination of new students employed for the summer and current students to evaluate the course and give us feedback. With quiz results, we will be able to assess how successful we are with this new training course. This information will be available online all the time, so students can continue to use it as a resource on an ongoing basis. Our goal is to achieve a smooth operation in the Smith I/O site where the student employees have access to the information they need to know when they need to know it.