

ITconnections

Information technology applications at the University of Oregon

WINTER 2008



Psychology professor Marjorie Taylor (center) and student researchers Alison Shawber (foreground) and Elif Cakir react to a video image in Taylor's Imagination Lab. See "What's Cooking in the Imagination Lab?" on page 10.

THE INTERACTIVE CLASSROOM

Second Life in Psych Research

Marjorie Taylor, Psychology

Instructional Multimedia

Catherine Wiebe, French

'Economist's View' Blog

Mark Thoma, Economics

IT@UO

Meet Helen Chu

IS Collaboration Center Update

IS-EMU Lab Update

Tech Resources

COLUMNS

CIO's Message

.edu Tech Roundup

Taking Risks...



A message from our CIO

I'm not sure if we're creatures of habit or just plain lazy, but once we find a teaching style that seems to work we tend to repeat the same pattern from term to term. This isn't to say that we don't update our course content; involvement in research always provides new illustrations and examples. But the "hard part" of *how* we teach doesn't change for many, sometimes in their entire career.

Each past issue of IT Connections has shown examples of faculty who dared to try new approaches to teaching that made use of information technology

resources. This issue highlights faculty who are real risk takers, often incorporating IT resources that may or may not have value in the teaching/learning process. Blogs, SMART Boards, multimedia resources, and virtual worlds have the potential to engage our students in new and exciting ways. They also may not help us achieve educational objectives and be seen as a waste of time and resources.

What I admire about the faculty who are trying out these approaches is not that they are using IT resources, but that they are seeking new ways to connect with students who have very different learning styles than students of the past. Today's students are always connected to the Internet, and blogs provide a method for connecting to faculty and fellow students. They work in teams, and SMART Boards provide an excellent way to collaborate. They are visual learners, so multimedia tools are effective. And they are often familiar with virtual worlds such as Second Life, making them comfortable using such tools as educational environments.

Of course there are many who are doubtful that investing in IT resources to support these activities will amount to much. In my early days of teaching, similar concerns were expressed about the role of microcomputers and the Internet. My answer for those who doubt the role of IT today is the same as in the past: it all depends on who is teaching. Faculty featured in this issue of IT Connections, as others at the University of Oregon, are thinking deeply about how students learn. In so doing they are constantly making adjustments in how they use resources and engage students with course material. Their end goal is not using technology, but being effective as teachers and creating an environment where their students can learn and excel.

In this edition of IT Connections we also welcome our new Director of Academic Information Services, Helen Chu. Helen brings many skills and talents to this newly created position at the university, but perhaps the most impressive is that she is an innovator in her own use of IT resources in teaching and research. Beginning at UCLA, Helen has built a career as both a teacher and facilitator with IT resources. At the University of Oregon she will manage the Academic Information Services unit within Information Services and work closely with schools and other academic units in supporting the academic mission of the university. We are excited that Helen has joined us and look forward to *taking risks* with information technology under her guidance with the ultimate goal of enriching the academic experience of our faculty and students.

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Meet Helen Chu

Our new director of academic information services brings expertise, new perspective to the job

On the day of our interview, Helen Chu had been in Eugene only three weeks and on the job only three days, but already our new director of academic information services was feeling very much at home. "I'm excited to be here. It feels like a good place to be for a very long time," she said.

This is a serious compliment considering that Chu, who comes to us from sunny San Luis Obispo, first arrived on campus during a violent rain and wind storm of historic proportions.

Chu brings with her an impressive array of skills in academic information technology development and administrative computing acquired over the past decade. Most recently, she was director of library information technology at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, where she spearheaded the creation of the Learning Commons, launched new online search services, and developed an Internet2 faculty research and development lab.

Prior to her tenure at Cal Poly, she served as associate director of web development and strategy at Columbia University in New York, where she developed an integrated web and print presence and helped launch online events scheduling, content management systems, a course bulletin editor, ticket tracking, and online advising for faculty and students. Chu earned her M.A. in French at UCLA, where she taught French and worked with faculty as an instructional technologist.

Along with her academic technology savvy, Chu has valuable experience in working with a variety of people to meet the technology needs of large institutions. Developing collaborative relationships between diverse groups of stakeholders is one of her



specialties, and she looks forward to facilitating collaborative IT efforts at the University of Oregon. "There's a really great opportunity for collaboration here," she says, "Everyone is so dedicated. They all have their hearts in the right place and really want to help students and faculty succeed."

In fact, it was the UO staff's creativity, dedication, and commitment to excellence she perceived on her early visits here that ultimately lured her away from a good job, sunny climate, and "a really great childcare situation" in San Luis Obispo.

Chu is also looking forward to being a part of the Information Services division itself. "Information Services is both in the front lines and in the back room, and it's central to UO operations. It's a huge privilege and responsibility to be a part of that," she says.

Chu anticipates that being a newcomer will enable her to contribute a fresh perspective to our operations. Since beginning her new job on December 3, she's embarked on an intensive learning and listening tour of campus departments and administrative units, talking with tech support personnel and administrators and getting acquainted with her fellow directors and her Academic Information Services team.

Chu is eager to gather perspectives and ideas from everyone, and she is also looking forward to working with faculty and students to address their current technology needs and desires.

Not surprisingly, Chu's calendar has been rapidly filling up since she arrived in December, but feel free to contact her to arrange a meeting or email a comment if you want to share feedback on academic technology issues. Chu's email address is helenc@uoregon.edu.

The Interactive Classroom: Mark Thoma

Thoma's 'Economist's View' blog enriches the curriculum—and attracts the best minds in the business

Joyce Winslow
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When Mark Thoma first launched his economics blog in the spring of 2005, he envisioned having a few stimulating exchanges with perhaps ten of his peers. To his dismay, in a matter of weeks he was getting emails from leading economists all over the world, being quoted in the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal*, and engaging in public discussions with such heavyweights as *Washington Post* columnist Robert Samuelson, Harvard's Greg Mankiw, UC Berkeley's Brad DeLong, and Princeton's Paul Krugman.

Today Thoma's blog, *Economist's View* (<http://economistsview.typepad.com/economistsview/>), attracts more than 10,000 daily visitors worldwide and is rated one of the top five economics blogs by blog tracker Technorati. Other rating agencies place *Economist's View* consistently in the top ten blogs in its class internationally. And leading economists who have engaged Thoma in online debates—a process that often attracts the comments of many others in their field—say it's "like being in a seminar room with some of the smartest people on the planet." (See "Blog!" by Bruce Bartlett, *National Review Online*, April 17, 2007.)

Despite his sudden celebrity, Thoma remains modest, almost self-effacing—a down-to-earth professor dedicated to creating a stimulating intellectual forum and eager to share the wealth of ideas with his students.

Early on, Thoma saw the value his blog could have for students who wanted to expand their knowledge of economic theory and issues of the day. In addition to discussions with leading economists, *Economist's View* offers a comprehensive digest of major daily economic news and commentary culled from a variety of media sources.

Another plus for students: Thoma regularly records and posts videos of class lectures on his website, making it easier for students to review material or catch up on lectures they may have missed. For the viewer, it's very much like being in the front row of the class.

Thoma posts these videos in a variety of formats so that they can be viewed directly with standard media players such as QuickTime, RealPlayer, or Windows Media Player. Students can also download videos onto their iPods, laptops, or whatever networked device is most convenient. Google videos and downloaded videos can be paused and replayed at will, allowing students to review selected material. Thoma also posts study aids such as practice



Economics professor Mark Thoma demonstrates how he uses his iPhone to keep up with his blog while traveling.

questions for exams and interactive quizzes that allow students to test their comprehension of the material.

Since introducing his blog to his classes, Thoma has noted a definite improvement in students' grades. "I think the blog really made a big difference," he says. "The daily blog especially has made a difference in the way I interact with my class." Thoma now begins each class with a discussion of a blog posting that relates to the current economy. "We discuss what it means and how it relates to the current material we are studying. I think that's the favorite part of class for a lot of students. It has also forced me to be much more current on world economic events...Students really like to have the material relate to actual world events, so this has been very helpful on that score."

Another unexpected bonus for Thoma: fewer email queries from students. "It's really cut down on my email," he says happily.

Thoma notes that the actual mechanics of setting up a blog and posting multimedia material was not difficult in and of itself, but maintaining it has been extremely time consuming. In two and half years, he has not missed a single day of posting. In addition to his video podcasts (each of which takes nearly six hours to process and upload), Thoma posts four to five items daily that reflect news and commentary from major media sources and respected economists—much of it gleaned from RSS feeds from the 140 economics blogs to which he subscribes.

Thoma hopes that for many, his blog has become a trusted source of information, "serving as a sort of filter that weeds out the trash and presents articles of quality." Maintaining that quality and keeping that trust takes dedication and hours and hours of work.

Has blogging taken over his life? When confronted by this question, Thoma looks a bit rueful and admits that time spent on blog research and posting has taken a toll on his garden. An obvious plant lover, Thoma uses a photo of his patio in bloom as a

screen saver, and his office window overflows with succulents—all looking remarkably healthy. "But succulents don't require much care," he laughs.

Overall, Thoma feels his investment in *Economist's View* has been well worth the effort, and many of his students wholeheartedly agree. Below, some of the students enrolled in Thoma's upper-division Monetary Policy and Evolution of Economic Ideas courses share their reactions to the blog and talk about how it benefitted them personally.

Course blogs: the student perspective...



Matthew Sturdivan

Economics 493: Evolution of Economic Ideas
Senior majoring in economics

I log on almost every day to check for updates and new material to study.

The great thing about Mark's blog is that he posts videos of every class lecture, which can be very useful when I'm studying for a test. Mark also posts information on all of the economists that we learn about that isn't offered in the textbook, which provides good background information.

I wouldn't be surprised if more professors followed Mark's lead because I think it decreases the need to have office hours and resolves the issue of missing class, even though there is no true substitute for actually going to class.

In a time when the major media outlets seem stale and rehearsed, it is good to have another place to find more alternative economic news that provides refreshed views on many issues. Although I disagree with some of the information that is posted on Mark's blog, it is better for students to keep questioning their views and refining them instead of allowing themselves to settle on ideas that just don't work.

Brennan Pothetes

Economics 493: Evolution of Economic Ideas
Junior majoring in economics, regular blog contributor

Typically, I log onto Mark's blog at least once a day, sometimes more depending on my schedule. Academically the blog is useful for me when writing essays or researching various case studies.

Every time I read the blog it shifts my world perspective because it covers such a large, diverse array of issues while allowing me to engage in the topics with other people. My writing and debate skills in the field of economics have greatly improved over my time using the blog...Mark's blog serves as a new medium for individuals that want to fully integrate their academic knowledge with current events in the field.

Mark's blog is something I came upon early as an economics major, and it has helped me make a link between the real world and the academic one."



Course blogs: the student perspective...



Jeremy Adams
Economics 470: Monetary Policy
Senior majoring in economics

I log on to Mark's blog at least three times a week.

For me, the videos are the most useful feature of the blog. I like to have them for reference. Mark doesn't teach directly from the book, so I rely on these as study aids. He does post links and current events that help make the course material more relevant in context.

I really enjoy the blogs. There are a lot of articles and I'm not able to view them all. Overall, the videos are a must for this course and the blogs are fun and help my education.

This is the first course I've taken that includes a blog. It's nice to see UO professors being published in a forum like this. I think it adds to the prestige of the university.

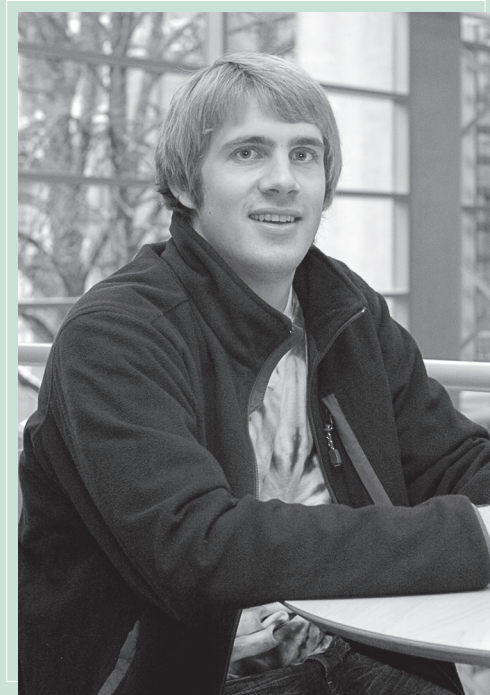
William Countner

Economics 470: Monetary Policy
Senior majoring in economics

I log on to Mark's blog almost every day.

The most useful tool I have found is the video lectures and Mark's postings of past exams and review questions. I was going through the study guide and had some questions and pulled up the lecture from that subject and it cleared it right up. I also use the video lecture when my notes get confusing, or my handwriting became so terrible I had no idea what I had written. It has been very helpful for that.

I've really enjoyed reading opinions on the issues that affect our economy, and you can see it in real context. Overall, it's just a cool experience to have Mark as a teacher and be able to use his blog.



IS Collaboration Center Update

Students and staff find uses for new SMART Boards



Students try out the Collaboration Center's interactive whiteboard. The center also features a new height-adjustable, rear-projection SMART Board and a large plasma TV with SMART overlay.

Vickie Nelson

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"Awesome!" and "Cool!" are the two most frequent responses to the new SMART Boards located in Information Services Collaboration Center, 175 McKenzie Hall.

Although the three boards, all from SMART Technologies, each have different features, they all project a large, colorful image of a computer's screen and give users the ability to write over applications and websites, move images, navigate, and perform other mouse functions with a finger or a stylus.

UO staff who attended a summer training session on the center's first purchase, a 61-inch SMART whiteboard with an overhead projector, responded enthusiastically to the presentation, and at least two departments later purchased boards for their own departments.

This fall staff added two new boards to the room: a 65-inch Panasonic plasma TV with a SMART overlay and a height-adjustable, rear-projection board that sits on wheels for easy relocation within the room.

Students and staff quickly came up with a variety of uses for the boards. Students have practiced a group presentation and worked on problem sets,

while faculty have held meetings and an international conference call enhanced by WebEX web conferencing. Students have also used the boards to visit Second Life and explore some of the educational resources included in the software suite.

The three boards are connected to computers loaded with Microsoft Office and other popular software, but users are welcome to bring their own laptops and connect them to the boards. (An alternative to bringing your laptop is to bring your files on a flash drive.)

Note that if you plan to bring your own laptop, you'll need to install some software. You can save time by downloading it from smarttech.com before you come to the Collaboration Center or you can use disks containing the software that we have here in the center.

In addition to being a showroom for the SMART Boards—and eventually other new technology—the Collaboration Center offers flexible space and comfortable furniture that users are free to rearrange for solo or group use. Wheeled partitions make the room easily reconfigurable into large or small areas.

Come try the boards anytime Monday-Friday, 9:30 A.M.-5:00 P.M.—or by appointment. Please note that if you want to use a particular board for a meeting or presentation at a specific time or if you need some training, it's best to schedule ahead of time by calling 346-4406.

The French Connection: Catherine Wiebe

Wiebe's use of multimedia gives her students "a window into France"

Joyce Winslow
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Catherine Wiebe's students are lucky. Wiebe's French courses are almost like getting a trip to Paris—and when her students actually do set foot on French soil, they will be well prepared.

"Thanks to technology, my students and I may now know more about France than my French family!" laughs Wiebe, a Parisian native whose relatives still live in the City of Light.



Catherine Wiebe engages her students in a discussion about the day's lesson, which is based on video clips from French television news.

Wiebe's secret for engaging students, to give them, as she says, "a window into France," is her creative use of multimedia.

Wiebe currently oversees curriculum development for French courses taught to more than 250 students each term, but her dedication to enriching the curriculum is not new. It began more than twenty years ago, when she was still a graduate teaching fellow at the UO. Even in those early days of technological innovation, Wiebe availed herself of whatever new teaching tools came down the pike, taking full advantage of the tech support offered by the Knight Library's New Media Center (now known as the Center for Educational Technologies).

In 2006, Wiebe received a grant from the Instructional Technology Resident Fellowship Program to create a multimedia component for her French courses. Her goal was to enrich the curriculum by immersing students in French idioms, diction, and culture. Incorporating radio, video, and photos was her way "of engaging students and bringing the language to life." She knew that offering diverse media options would also give students lots of interesting ways to develop their language skills interactively outside the classroom.

Wiebe's grant and additional monies from the Romance Languages department helped fund essential upgrades to her computer equipment, including a DVD burner, DVD player/recorder, and backup storage drive. She also purchased Apple's iLife suite to streamline the management of her photos, videos, music, and web pages.

Her early experiments with multimedia lesson-building software were an arduous trial-and-error process that

required her to master video editing, Photoshop, and web design techniques. She spent weeks trying—and then rejecting—various approaches before she finally found one that worked. Along the way, she had invaluable assistance from Yamada Language Center Director Jeff Magoto. "He gave me endless support and encouragement, and whenever I have a technical question, he has the answer," she says.

Although she ultimately had to scuttle all her work with the new course-building software, there was, as she says, "a silver lining." These early struggles laid the foundation for greatly enriching her Blackboard site in a way that incorporated all the multimedia resources she'd originally intended, and she really sharpened her skills. "I can now capture French TV segments, edit photos and MP3 files, and make them available to students in no time!" she exclaims with evident satisfaction.

The reward for her labors is a multifaceted Blackboard site with a rich set of resources that engage and instruct her students in diverse ways. Video clips from French television news (www.TV5.org), amusing skits illustrating French idioms such as "chanter comme un casseroles" ("to sing like a saucepan," meaning to sing out of tune), an audio collection of French songs, French recipes that formed the basis of a cook-and-tell session, and Powerpoint presentations ranging from grammar lessons to cultural discovery—these are only some of the components that Wiebe employs to bring French language and culture to life.

On the day we visited Wiebe's French 201 class, the lesson theme was the influence of the media. To illustrate ways of exploring French media, Wiebe opened

a rich French website and clicked through some of the links. Then she showed several video clips from TV5 and asked students to answer a short series of questions about what they'd just viewed. Serendipitously, these news clips were particularly relevant to a previous class discussion and reinforced the textbook information. As a follow-up, students were asked to visit the website on their own time and write a one-page report on two video clips of their choosing. The lesson not only gave students a sense of current events, but also put the day's vocabulary lesson into context.

Wiebe has frequently used video clips of student oral presentations in her teaching. For these assignments, students work in pairs to produce a video of an original French language skit which Wiebe then posts on Blackboard. Another project required students to listen to audio clips of French songs about Paris and then write a similar song, in French, about Eugene.

A discussion of France is hardly complete without mentioning food. In one of her classes, students could open links to French recipe sites Wiebe had posted on Blackboard and cook something for extra credit, taking a few minutes to talk about their experiences in class. Wiebe notes that this assignment produced some perks: "Students usually brought me a sample—which was a good way to have free lunch!"

Wiebe's students are not the only ones who benefit from her tireless quest to enrich the curriculum. The Yamada Language Center posts some of Wiebe's class clips on its Virtual Language Lab site, and Wiebe has made numerous DVDs of her video documentaries and French TV clips widely available to her colleagues. Her vast clip collections of French news, profiles, music videos, and short documentaries are also shared with all second-year French students and GTFs on a central Blackboard site.

What's next on Wiebe's agenda? She may venture into podcasting. "I'd like to create and post a collection of narrated, animated mini grammar lessons for students of all levels," she says.



Students work in pairs on the day's vocabulary lesson before participating in a class discussion of video material.



Wiebe and her students discuss a news clip from French television station TV5 (projected on the screen behind her). As the year progresses, she plans to use these clips increasingly as catalysts for discussion, testing students' comprehension and giving them a chance to exercise their vocabulary.

Scene from a "News Hour" presentation about Belgium entirely produced by two of Wiebe's students. For this assignment, students were asked to write and produce a French language skit on a topic of their choosing. Wiebe then posted the results on Blackboard so everyone in the class could peruse them at their convenience. This technique allowed students to learn at their own pace and saved valuable class time for analysis and discussion.



What's Cooking in the Imagination Lab?

Marjorie Taylor tests out Second Life in her graduate seminar on imagination

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Psychology professor Marjorie Taylor looks a bit worried as she describes her plan to attempt a meeting of her graduate seminar in Second Life. She admits some misgivings that her bold experiment may not work. "It could be a disaster!" she exclaims, wincing at the thought.

So why is she taking the risk?

At this moment she is probably wondering this herself, having only just learned about Second Life (SL) software and its possible educational applications while attending a professional seminar last summer. At the time it seemed like an ideal addition to her fall graduate seminar on imagination, and possibly another way of expanding her research into the creative process.

What better way to explore the realm of imagination than in a virtual world where people create their own alter egos (known as "avatars" in Second Life)?

Taylor has already done extensive research on imagination in children and has written a book on the subject (*Imaginary Companions and the Children Who Create Them*. New York, Oxford University Press, 1999). She is currently exploring a phenomenon reported by many adult fiction writers in which their characters take on a life of their own. Taylor calls this "the illusion of independent agency," and she has been documenting its occurrence for a new book.

When her seminar first met last fall, Taylor gave students the assignment of creating Second Life avatars and familiarizing themselves with the program. They were asked to keep a journal of their experiences in Second Life, and to think about ways the software might be useful in psychological research.



Students' avatars gather in front of the Chilbo Town Hall to have their photo taken before teleporting to other regions in Second Life. *IT Connections* reporters Winnie Joubert—a.k.a. Joyce Winslow (center)—and nikki42 writer—a.k.a. Vickie Nelson (right front)—tagged along to observe. This "snapshot" was taken by student Laura Akers (a.k.a. Liriel Weatherwax).

"I'm really interested in the emotional content of fantasy material...the fact that we can love something that's imaginary, or become afraid of something that's not real," Taylor explains. "I'm also trying to understand companionship in Second Life—not romantic companionship, just everyday companionship and the development of identity—the dynamics of how that works." Her hope was that her class's voyage of discovery would yield some important clues.

Initially, some students were a bit put off by the learning curve. For those with little or no gaming experience, becoming adept at moving their cyber-personas and mastering the art of flying, chatting, gesturing—and even taking snapshots—in Second Life was a challenge. To help them along, Taylor invited Second Life expert Jonathon Richter, a researcher with the UO's Center for Advanced Technology in Education (CATE), to demonstrate some navigation techniques to her class. Richter is part of a CATE team that recently received a grant to research the educational possibilities of Second Life, and his enthusiasm inspired the class to refine their skills.

The culmination of their labors came on November 14, when the class met in cyberspace for the first time.



Grad students Alison Shawber (foreground) and Jenna Quillen demonstrate their data-gathering process in the Imagination Lab. Shawber takes notes while watching a live video of the activity in the child's interview room, where Quillen is setting out toys for the children who will subsequently talk with researchers about their pretend play.

As it happened, Taylor need not have worried about the outcome, because her seminar in Second Life turned out to be a great success. *IT Connections* reporter Vickie Nelson and I can attest to that, because we took a crash course in Second Life, hastily created our avatars, and joined Taylor's class on the big day.

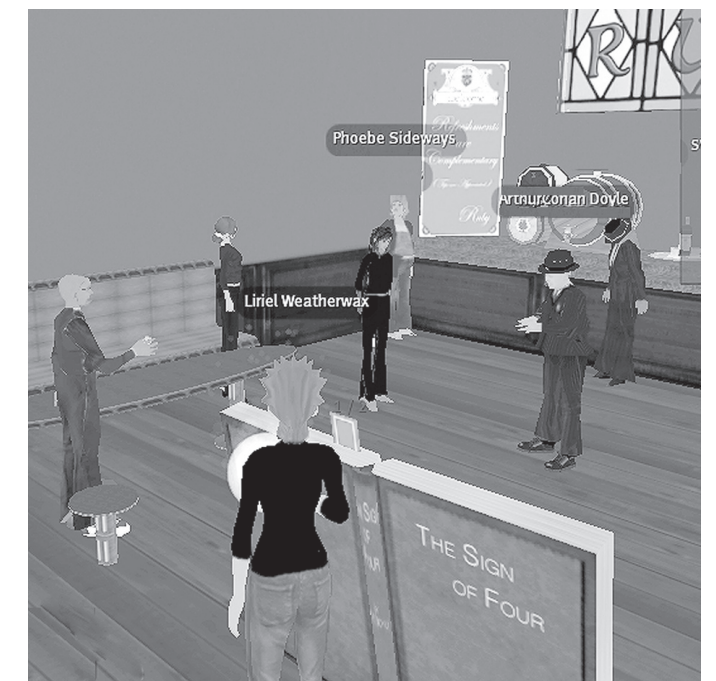
Rather than gather her students in one place for a traditional classroom-style discussion, Taylor opted to organize a Second Life "field trip" for the class. Working from their laptops and workstations at home or on campus, everyone logged onto Second Life at the appointed hour to meet in Chilbo Town Hall. After assembling in the courtyard to pose for a class photo, the group teleported to several other novel Second Life locales, including St. Basil's Cathedral, where they visited Lenin's Tomb, and Roma, where they took a litter ride to the Theater of Dionysius and explored the marketplace. Throughout, the group engaged in lively instant messaging exchanges, and the more nimble among us experimented with antics ranging from parachuting to piano playing.

For the grand finale, everyone repaired to "Ruby's," where retired teacher and Second Life enthusiast Tom Layton, in the guise of his SL avatar Sir ArthurConan Doyle, offered the group refreshment and relaxation. (Ruby's is an integral part of the G.U.I.L.D. Academy in New Babbage, a SL research and teacher training facility where Layton serves as a team leader in online learning ventures.)

From the standpoint of our reporting team, going on an SL field trip was remarkably similar to a real-life experience. The mood was one of excitement and anticipation, and the students, seeing

each other's avatars for the first time, were amused and surprised by the contrast between their classmates' real-life personas and their SL characters.

A frequent complaint we heard about students' initial solo SL experiences was that they seemed "random and aimless," "lonely," or "isolated." Once Second Life explorations were given the social context of the class field trip, however, it made all the differ-



Scene from Ruby's, where the class convened after their travels. Their host, Sir ArthurConan Doyle (a.k.a. Tom Layton) is on the right wearing a bowler hat. Snapshot by Laura Akers (Liriel Weatherwax).

Imagination Lab, continued...

ence in terms of connecting emotionally to the virtual world. “The class field trip was definitely bonding. I saw another, more relaxed side of my classmates. People were funnier, more outrageous,” observed Alison Shawber, a third-year Ph.D. candidate and GTF in Taylor’s Imagination Lab. Her classmate John Meyers, a first-year masters degree candidate focusing on social psychology, said that prior to the field trip, he hadn’t spoken to his classmates outside of class, “but in Second Life I was more inclined to chit chat...I enjoyed the companionship of traveling together.”

Aside from the opportunity to explore the dynamics of social interaction, identity, and companionship, another feature of Second Life that fascinates Taylor is the opportunity it gives participants to use their own creativity and imagination. “I want to involve students in the creative process themselves, not just scholarly research,” she says. Taylor, who takes a very hands-on approach to research herself, even went so far as to try writing a screenplay, a process she found very helpful in understanding the creative process.

Although Second Life was perhaps the most unusual component of Taylor’s seminar, it comprised only about 20 percent of the course. “The field trip was used as a vehicle to connect back to our study of the human capacity to become absorbed in fictional social worlds,” she explains. Other facets of the course included the evolution of foresight, mental time travel, creative cognition, personality correlates of fantasy proneness, the functions of mind wandering, the distinction between fantasy and reality and the development of imagination in children.

For one of their final projects, students were asked to reflect on how virtual realities (“sims”) such as Second Life might be used in psychological research. Alison Shawber, whose research focuses on the relationship between children’s sociability and their pretend play, was intrigued by what Second Life might reveal about adults. “Second Life is an adult form of child’s play. It would be interesting to investigate adult imagination and role play, to find out what it

is about Second Life that engages them—why would adults do that?” she mused. Her classmate Laura Akers, who is studying personality and individual differences for her Ph.D., concluded that “SL is a world for extraverts who are visually oriented (but not too picky about visual quality) and for eager prim¹ artists.” She thought further investigation into the lure of virtual reality “may also have interesting psychological aspects and shed some light on basic issues of imagination and imaginativeness.” John Meyers saw real research potential in Second Life. “I can definitely see its potential in various areas of psychological research—especially in my field (self representations).” He was also intrigued by the potential of Second Life for studying how people’s avatars/fictional personas might influence changes in their behavior, both in the virtual world and in the real world.

Taylor is understandably relieved that her class experiment was successful. “I was flying by the seat of my pants! Luckily, a lot of things just worked out,” says Taylor. She also gives a great deal of credit to the advice and support of experienced Second Life educators Tom Layton and Jonathon Richter. “They were very inspiring—and very, very helpful,” she says gratefully.

Buoyed by the success of her trial run, Taylor plans to use Second Life again in her spring term Imagination course. This will present new challenges, as the spring class is roughly five times the size of her fall seminar. Several graduate students from the fall seminar, including Laura Akers and Jef Petersen, will assist Marjorie with the spring course. Petersen, a theater arts major with a strong interest in interdisciplinary work in the fields of theater and psychology, has proposed another bold experiment: producing a theater piece in Second Life.

Taylor and her research team are fastening their seat belts. It should be another wild ride into the realm of imagination.

¹ “primitive parts,” the building blocks of Second Life that are used to create the virtual world

Some Second Life Resources...

- Second Life Home Page: <http://secondlife.com/>
- Getting Started with Second Life: <http://sleducation.wikispaces.com/getting-started/>
- UO Community Second Life Wiki (SLDucks): <http://slducks.wikispaces.com/>
- The SaLamander Project (UO project to create a comprehensive database of Second Life 3D learning materials): <http://www.eduisland.net/salamanderwiki/>
- UO Teacher Effectiveness Program (TEP) Second Life Workshops: <http://tep.uoregon.edu/workshops/events/year07-08/winter/secondlife.html>
- University of Cincinnati Second Life wiki: <http://homepages.uc.edu/secondlife/>
- SimTeach (institutions and organizations in SL): http://www.simteach.com/wiki/index.php?title=Institutions_and_Organizations_in_SL

IS-EMU Lab Installs New Technologies

This term a new collaboration technology space is being added to the Information Services EMU lab (IS-EMU) in 22 EMU. The new space will feature comfortable new furniture that can be easily rearranged as needed, and new SMART Board technologies for interactive group presentations and learning. For more information about using the new technologies, contact Sam Crow (scrow@uoregon.edu).



EMU Lab manager Sam Crow (right) and student assistants Paul Strong (center) and Jhomer Recometa (left) set up a Symposium interactive pen display for the lab’s new collaboration room in 22 EMU. A rear-projection SMART Board is in the background.

IT Policy Task Force Report Now Online

Andrew Bonamici and Jon Miyake gave a brief overview of the Information Technology Policy Task Force final report at the December 3 deptcomp meeting. The task force was appointed in fall 2006 to review standard categories of IT-related policy and procedure as identified by EDUCAUSE and other organizations. After a year of intensive study, it has made recommendations that affect a broad range of university issues, including data security, records management, and web policies.

You can find the task force’s complete report and appendices at <http://www.uoregon.edu/~bonamici/itpolicy/>. Note that access to this site is restricted to the UO network while the documents are under review. Send questions or comments to Andrew Bonamici (bonamici@uoregon.edu), Jon Miyake (miyake@uoregon.edu), or Don Harris (cio@uoregon.edu).

Tech Training at a Glance

UO Human Resources

- RAA Web-based Software Program Training:
<http://hr.uoregon.edu/training/raa.html>
- New Horizons Training:
Software applications training. UO departments may purchase vouchers for training faculty and other staff.
<http://hr.uoregon.edu/training/upcoming.php>
- Classified Staff Training & Development Advisory Committee:
Professional mentoring groups in Excel, FileMaker Pro, WebMechanics
http://www.uoregon.edu/~cstdac/training_mentoring.shtml

Workshops on Demand

Customized technology workshops for UO students, faculty, and staff

<http://libweb.uoregon.edu/cet/workshops/>

Teacher Effectiveness Program (TEP)

Seminars, workshops, and presentations on diverse teaching effectiveness issues, including new ways of using technology in the classroom. Fall term offerings include introductions to ePortfolios and Second Life.

General information:

<http://tep.uoregon.edu/workshops/teachwithtech/teachwithtech.html>

Current workshop schedule:

<http://tep.uoregon.edu/workshops/events/events.html>

Information Services Collaboration Center (175 McKenzie)

Computing-related books, CDs, training videos, SMART Boardstt

<http://is.uoregon.edu/docsrn/>

346-4406

Hone Your Skills with Tools from IS Collaboration Center

Do you need to develop your MS Office skills or become more proficient with InDesign? Head for Information Services Collaboration Center, 175 McKenzie Hall, and check out the resources.

In addition to a good selection of books on a wide variety of computing topics, the Collaboration Center stocks an assortment of recorded workshops on VHS tape, CD-ROM, and DVD. Sets usually include modules for beginner, intermediate, and advanced users and cover Microsoft Office products and various multimedia and web development topics such as Dreamweaver, Flash, and HTML. Students, faculty, and staff can borrow the workshops for a one-week period and renew them twice.

The Collaboration Center is open 9:30 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. Monday to Friday. Call 346-4406 or check out our website at <http://is.uoregon.edu/docsrn/> for more information.

professional opportunities

EDUCAUSE WESTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE 2008

“One Size Doesn’t Fit All: Finding Practical and Innovative Solutions for Your Campus”
March 31-April 2, 2008
InterContinental Mark Hopkins, San Francisco
<http://www.educause.edu/wrc08/>

NWACC GRANTS 2008

Proposals due February 22, 2008

For guidelines see
<http://www.nwacc.org/programs/grants/guidelines08.html>

Note: To submit a proposal, you must have a valid eligibility code. These may be obtained from Beth Sprague (bsprague@uoregon.edu).

edu Tech Roundup

Vickie Nelson

MIT Develops Lecture Browser Search Engine for Recorded Lectures

Students at MIT who want to review a specific part of a professor’s lecture can now do so using Lecture Browser, a search engine based on speech-recognition software. Developed by MIT’s Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, Lecture Browser provides a way for students to search for key words within a category. At this point MIT has 200 recorded lectures available for searching. Try the search engine at <http://web.sls.csail.mit.edu/lectures/>.

Pitzer College Offers Course on YouTube

Last fall Alexandra Juhasz, professor of media studies at Claremont, California’s Pitzer College, taught what may be the first college course on and about YouTube. Students who took her Media 135 class, Learning from YouTube, did attend real-world classes, which were posted to YouTube, but were also asked to produce, post, and comment on YouTube videos by others in the class. Not surprisingly, the class found that YouTube, which Juhasz calls “postmodern TV,” appears to be a better place for entertainment than education at this point. Read more at http://www.pbs.org/teachers/learning.now/2007/09/youtube_101_yes_its_a_real_cla_1.html.

National Museum of African American History Opens Online

Although no ground will be broken until 2012, the Smithsonian Institution opened the National Museum of African American History in October. Don’t look for the museum on the National Mall though—until December 2015, it’s only on the web. “Let Your Motto Be Resistance,” the inaugural exhibit, runs through March 2, 2008, and features portraits from the collection of the National Portrait Gallery. The museum also includes oral history, music, and other exhibits. This online opening is the first time a major museum has opened virtually. Visit the museum at <http://www.nmaahc.si.edu/>.

UW-Bothell Professor Uses Wikipedia to Evaluate Papers

Martha Groom, an associate professor at the University of Washington at Bothell, had two of her classes test their writing and research skills with the Wikipedia community. Final research papers on topics related to globalization and sustainable development were evaluated by Groom and revised by the students before being submitted to Wikipedia. One paper was rejected, and four others were later removed because they duplicated information in articles already on Wikipedia. Groom believes that knowing their work would have a wide audience encouraged students to hone their skills and produce some of the best papers she had received from students. Read the *Chronicle* article at <http://chronicle.com/wiredcampus/category/Educause-2007/>.

Tacoma Community College Students Practice Nursing Skills in Second Life

Tacoma Community College nursing students are sharpening their skills on patients in Second Life. When nursing instructor John Miller’s avatar showed up at a Second Life emergency room reporting chest pains, student nurses at remote locations used their avatars to assess his condition and take his medical history. When Miller’s avatar went into cardiac arrest, the student avatars performed CPR and defibrillation. Although the Second Life environment may be a better place to practice taking medical histories than to practice inserting an IV, Miller says practicing any skill in Second Life works better than simply hearing about it in a lecture. Read the *Tacoma Tribune* story at <http://www.thenewtribune.com/news/local/story/213087.html>.

Brandeis International Business School Takes Gaming Seriously

Brandeis International Business School is partnering with IBM to test “Innov8,” an interactive video game, which developers call a “serious game.” Like others in their generation, today’s MBA students grew up playing video games. Innov8 was designed to exploit the students’ skills and interests in gaming and to help develop skills in both business and IT. Brandeis will test Innov8 in a course called “Technology Strategy,” which focuses on business processes in technology firms and the management of knowledge across complex global companies. Consultants at The Apply Group predict that between 100 and 135 of the Global Fortune 500 will start using games for instructional applications within the next five years. Read More: <http://campustechnology.com/articles/52805/>.

Information Services Guide

UO Website

<http://www.uoregon.edu/>

IT Website

<http://it.uoregon.edu/>

Campus Modem Number

(541) 225-2200

Microcomputer Services

(151 McKenzie Hall)

<http://micro.uoregon.edu/>

(541) 346-4412

microhelp@lists.uoregon.edu

- Mac OS & Windows help
- Help with damaged disks, files
- Help with Duck ID
- Help with Internet connections, file transfers
- Antivirus & antispyware

Information Services

Collaboration Center

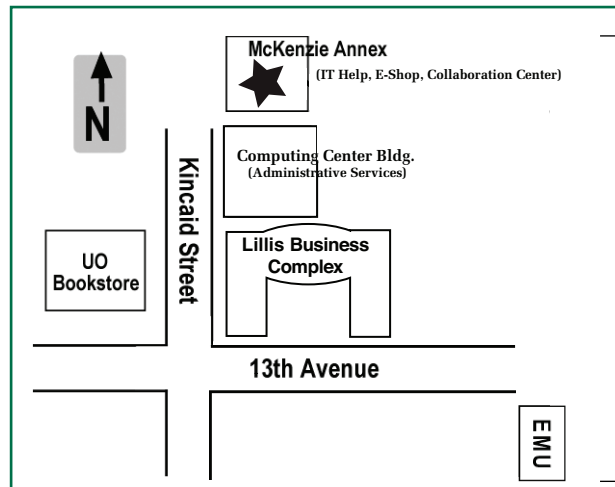
(175 McKenzie Hall)

<http://is.uoregon.edu/docsrn/>

(541) 346-4406

docsrn@uoregon.edu

SMART Board and other interactive technologies, computing-related books, CDs, and training videos



Help Desk Hours (151 McKenzie)

Mon - Fri 9:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.

McKenzie Building Hours

Mon - Thu 7:30 A.M. - 11:30 P.M.

Friday 7:30 A.M. - 7:30 P.M.

Saturday 9 A.M. - 9:30 P.M.

Sunday 9 A.M. - 9:30 P.M.

Computing Center Building Hours

Mon - Fri 8:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.

Note: These are *building* access hours; hours for individual facilities may vary.

Electronics Shop

(151 McKenzie Hall)

http://is.uoregon.edu/e_shop/

(541) 346-3548

hardwarehelp@uoregon.edu

Computer hardware repair, upgrades

Network Services

<http://ns.uoregon.edu/>

(541) 346-4395

nethelp@ns.uoregon.edu

Central data communication and network services

Telecommunications Services

<http://telecom.uoregon.edu/>

(541) 346-3198

Local and long distance phone service for UO campus

Administrative Services

<http://ccadmin.uoregon.edu/>

(541) 346-1725

Programming support for campus administrative computing



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

OFFICE OF THE VP FOR INFORMATION SERVICES AND CIO

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