TECH NEWS

San Bernardino Community College District
Technology and Educational Support Service

In this newsletter:

TECHNOLOGY AND EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES

As part of the TESS Technology Strategic Plan, we identified several projects that will enhance the stability and reliability of the services that we provide. These projects include developing a Disaster Recovery Plan, Business Continuity Plan and a Cloud Migration Plan. These plans will ensure that the district has redundant servers and network resources to provide service in the event of an emergency or major outage. The pandemic enabled us to speed up the timeline in some of these areas.

At the beginning of the pandemic we needed a solution to allow students to access the computer labs remotely. We were able to leverage several solutions from Amazon Web Services (AWS) to provide the students with the remote access that they needed. The first solution from AWS that we deployed is called WorkSpaces. This solution provides a virtual Windows 10 desktop computer that can be accessed by students and faculty remotely. The same software that is installed in the physical computer labs on campus can also be installed on these virtual WorkSpaces in AWS. The second solution that we deployed from AWS was call AppStream 2.0. This solution allows you to stream individual software applications from the cloud without the need to deploy a full desktop computer.

As we continue to develop our Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Plan, we are going to look for additional services provided by AWS. Some of these services will allow us to move from physical servers on campus to virtual servers in an Amazon Virtual Private Cloud (VPC).

Many of the other projects that we are working on are covered in more detail throughout this Newsletter. We hope that you find this information useful and we look forward to hearing your feedback.

– Luke Bixler, Chief Technology Officer

ADMINISTRATIVE APPLICATIONS AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

Informatica:

The admin apps team has been busy transitioning our data integrations from a home built tool to an enterprise vendor tool called Informatica. This tool allows SBCCD to integrate our data from various sources such as our student information system, the HR system and our fiscal ERP to various outside vendors such as banks, research institutions and service vendors. This tool provides a graphical user interface that allows non-programmers to create integrations using flat file comma separated values (CSV.) Whereas before, the homegrown tool, although very well built, mainly relied on a single person to create these integrations causing undue burden and single point of failure. This new tool which is also very robust, allows a wider range of non-programming team members to create data integrations with vendors that require our data.

Automatic Cross Listing of Canvas Courses

Usually at the start of terms, the help desk would receive hundreds of help desk tickets requesting courses to be cross listed in Canvas for various reasons such as easier management and communication. The Distance Education team at District would work very hard to get to all these requests but inevitably, there would be delays due to the sheer workload and other responsibilities. Starting in the spring of 2021, the classes that are cross listed within Colleague will now be automatically cross listed in Canvas as well. This will reduce the workload on the DE

team as well as create efficiencies for faculty because they will no longer have to submit tickets to have their courses cross listed. For the faculty who do not wish for their courses to be cross listed in Canvas, they can submit a ticket to the help desk where that request can be addressed.

OpenCCCApply SPAM APPLICATIONS

There has lately been an increase in false applications submitted by spam operators with the goal of getting free access to various services that having a .edu email address enables a student to have. Some examples of services are free Google drive with unlimited space, free Microsoft Office 365 services and also Adobe services amongst others. To combat this, we have disabled certain services that students get access to until they have registered for a course. We also limited communications via the students school-issued email address to people within the SBCCD network until they have registered for a class. Some of the latest steps taken to combat the spam is filtering out applications that come from outside of the United States however the Admissions office has the ability to whitelist any application they feel is legitimate. Another filtering step is to automatically scan the address and see if it is valid. A&R can also whitelist applications they feel should be let through and processed.

CRAFTON HILLS TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

Technology Services is working to replace faculty and staff computers up for replacement on the 5-year cycle. Those that are up for replacement will be replaced with laptops and a docking station to provide flexibility and mobility to our faculty and staff.

CHC will be using Amazon AppStream to provide students with access to software products needed during remote instruction. Students will be able to access the needed application through web links provided. This is available to all students on any computer and operating system (Windows, Chromebooks, Mac, etc).

CHC Technology Services is continuing to provide support to our faculty, staff and students remotely as we continue to work remotely. Students can check out hotspots and Chromebooks from the Library. Faculty and staff can check out laptops, monitors, hotspots, wireless mice and headsets from Technology Services. Please contact Melissa Oshman at moshman@craftonhills.edu for scheduling.

Printshop

The print shop has been working on the SBVC foundation booklet. We are printing over 1,000 of these booklets. We have also been working with Michael Nguyen, in Emergency Planning and Safety, to make Covid-19 posters available on our Print Shop Pro website. Deborah has been working on designs and printing options with him. We are also working on designing and printing 1,000 SBVC student registration packets.

TESS TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

TESS is exploring IP address geo-blocking on externally accessible services. This will help prevent any unwanted access to our systems from countries outside the United States. Once we have implanted geo-blocking any access to our system from outside of the US will not be allowed. To provide access to our students, staff and faculty who are traveling outside of the US we will need to put in exceptions to allow access. The process for these exceptions are currently being developed.

TESS is updating our current Firewalls to the latest hardware. Support for the current hardware will be ending in 2022. The new hardware contains more ports for access to high speed networks up to 40 gigabits per second. The new SPU NP6 network processor will provide us greater performance and security when accessing the internet, sending and receiving e-mail, VPN access and load balancing.

TESS will be migrating our external Domain Name Services to Amazon's Route 53 service. This service exists in Amazons highly available and scalable cloud. This service will help us for future moves of other IT services to Amazon's cloud. Having our IT services in Amazon's cloud will make us more available and keep our students and faculty teaching and learning during local network outages.

ALTERNATE TEXT PRODUCTION CENTER

The ATPC grant serves the needs of students with print disabilities throughout the California Community College system by providing electronic and braille textbooks at no cost. We currently house over 36,000 textbooks that are available to all 115 colleges and serve approximately 10,000 requests per year. this year we are seeing a drop in these numbers due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

This fiscal year we have processed 4878 new accessible electronic textbook requests for students across the state. Of these books, 123 were transcribed into braille. We have continued to participate in the Accessibility Standards Workgroup (ASWG) in conjunction with the California Community College Chancellor's Office to develop a statewide accessibility standard.
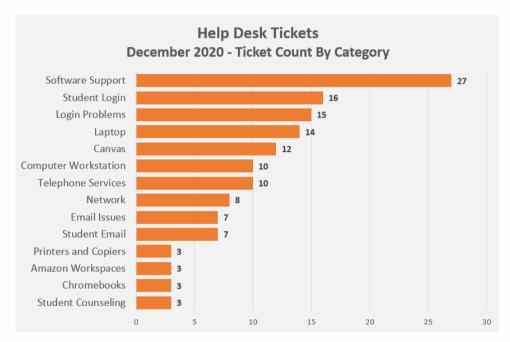
VALLEY TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

Amazon AppStream for Students - SBVC Campus Technology Services has provided virtual workstations to students across the campus. In Fall 2020 we used Amazon WorkSpaces. The service worked but it required too much interaction with instructors and students to get deployed. With AppStream the service is available to all students at SBVC. They go to the AppStream web page (https://www.valleycollege.edu/about-sbvc/offices/campus-technology-services/appstream.php) and choose the AppStream they wish to use. The login is their student email credentials. Students can use their Chromebook or other personal computing device to access the AppStream. It provides them a Windows virtual computer via the browser on their preferred device.
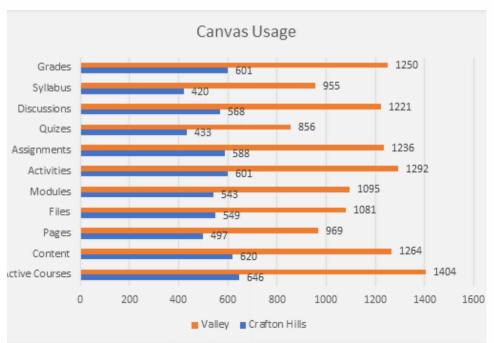
Migration of Department Shares to Cloud – Conversations have begun with Microsoft to move all Department shares to SharePoint Cloud Services. This will allow users to get access to Department shares without being connected to the VPN. The migration should be completed by the end of the Spring semester. Once complete we can decommission the on campus shares and all data will be backed up to the cloud.

Migration of Fulltime Employee Desktops to Laptops and Docking Stations – Laptops, dual 24" screens, docking stations, keyboards, and mice have been purchased for all fulltime employees desks. Laptops have already been issued to most fulltime employees. We will be migrating all data stored on the users desktop to OneDrive as part of this process. Employees will be contacted and an appointment scheduled before we remove their desktops. Once Covid-19 restrictions are lifted employees will be able to bring in their laptops and be up in running immediately. This also allows for employees to quickly mobilize if needed in the future.

HELP DESK AND CANVAS DASHBOARDS

The first chart below shows the type of Help Desk tickets that are received by volume. Over the past 30 days the Service Desk received 138 tickets excluding project requests. The second chart below shows the activity on Canvas. There has been a steady increase in the overall usage of Canvas by both colleges.

Help Desk Tickets
December 2020 - Ticket Count By Category

Category	Count
Software Support	27
Student Login	16
Login Problems	15
Laptop	14
Canvas	12
Computer Workstation	10
Telephone Services	10
Network	8
Email Issues	7
Student Email	7
Printers and Copiers	3
Amazon Workspaces	3
Chromebooks	3
Student Counseling	3

Canvas Usage

	Crafton Hills	Valley
Grades	601	1250
Syllabus	420	955
Discussions	568	1221
Quizes	433	856
Assignments	588	1236
Activities	601	1292
Modules	543	1095
Files	549	1081
Pages	497	969
Content	620	1264
Active Courses	646	1404

■ Valley ■ Crafton Hills

ORACLE UPDATE

District Support Services and ideaMetrics, our Oracle consultant, are working through examining the latest upgrade (21A) Oracle Support installed in our TEST system on February 5th. Our system functionality test will be a comprehensive test of all modules and functionality SBCCD utilizes. The improvements will be available to everyone on Monday, February 22nd. Any changes that will affect district users, be it functionality or display, will be communicated at the end of the testing phase.

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