Mobile Dawg offers cutting edge technology

Mobile Dawg, the Southern Illinois University tablet initiative, is on its way to becoming a reality. SIU is planning on greeting incoming 2013 – 2014 freshmen with their own new Dell Latitude 10 tablet, pre-loaded with full licenses of Windows 8, Office 2013 and Office 365. While these tools may be bought at your favorite local or online geek shop, the special differentiators for SIU students at the Carbondale campus are the Mobile Dawg applications.

The Mobile Dawg suite consists of integration with SIU events, calendars, campus maps, news readers, people finders, dining menus, course information, SalukiNet and much more (see photo above). Sure, much of this information is available on desktops through different campus websites, but this information will be available on the student’s own, wireless-enabled tablet, providing them with virtually everything they need in one small device, wherever they are on campus, in one application. Also available through Mobile Dawg is access to e-textbooks, clicker functionality, Desire 2 Learn, Banner and locally developed applications (written by some of the campus’ brightest student developers). One application provides integration with the Morris Library system, One Search, for access to the library resources from your wireless desk (journals, research, articles, books, games and DVDs). Another provides integration with Laundry View, the campus laundry machine status minder: find a washing machine near you! Down the road, our hope is to integrate on our wireless-enabled campus location based applications that provide virtual reality views of where you are. As always, we’re looking for feedback on new and innovative ways we can add features to Mobile Dawg, so we’ve included a “Submit an App” app. Simple and intuitive in design, it lets students and users tell us what they want to see in a tablet application.

Thanks to funding from Dell, Microsoft and Intel, and some great determination from a very dedicated local team consisting of Project Manager Kris Guye, LAN Administrator Rob Craig, Systems Support by Jerry Richards and his team of magicians and developers Janet Douglas and students William Welling and Jake Bock, we are on track for a late July completion of a first pass on the application.

Additionally, Dell developers will be augmenting our local efforts. When the incoming freshmen show up at Carbondale in August, they will have an incredibly unique experience, care of Southern Illinois University and Mobile Dawg!
In the past year, since implementing a monthly buy of computer equipment from Dell, SIU’s Information Technology Department has saved more than $400,000. Dell orders should be turned in by the 15th of the month to Linda Vineyard (lkvine@siu.edu or 453-5384).

IT’s Network Engineering recent purchases from several projects had a list price of $2.1 million. The discounted price was $799,409, for a savings of $1.3 million.

In regards to the Mobile Dawg project of supplying first-year students with tablets, Dell gives SIU a discount of more than $150 per tablet. Multiplied by nearly 3,000 tablets, the savings are estimated to be $450,000.

Coming Soon: Microsoft Outlook Training

With the migration of faculty and staff e-mail from Google to an on-campus Microsoft Exchange 2013 solution, the Department of Information Technology will be offering classroom training sessions starting in mid-July and running through the fall semester.

The 1.5-hour training sessions will provide the basics of Outlook 2013 email and calendaring, with face-to-face explanations, hands-on activities and a time for questions and answers. Future classes are being planned to include Microsoft Lync functionality related to web conferencing and phone integration.

Want to know more? The specific class schedule and registration process is being finalized, with the initial campus organizations receiving preference for the mid-July classes. Other departments will receive their target dates for training and conversion as the roll-out continues. Stay tuned for more information.