Saluki Tech News

MobileDawg's Growing Success

The MobileDawg Tablet Initiative at Southern Illinois University Carbondale has grown from a small prototype designed to enhance learning, to facilitate classroom participation and to reduce education costs, to a large initiative that has successfully provided SIU freshmen with the latest technology. Through this initiative, each SIU freshmen receives a Dell Venue 11 Pro tablet, complete with keyboard, and Microsoft Pro software at no additional costs to the student or family.

MobileDawg began in the spring 2013 semester with a pilot distribution of 300 tablets. This fall, SIU distributed approximately 3,200 tablets—more than 2,900 to the incoming freshman class—with the rest going to faculty to support this growing technology initiative.

According to Kris Guye, Information Technology project manager, "SIU is the first public research university to provide tablets to an entire freshman class. We are committed to excellence in learning, and the tablet initiative is meant to support that commitment."

The goal is to eventually saturate the entire student body with a common technology device. By ensuring that all students have the same technology tool, the university will have created a universal foundation for various SIU technology-based learning initiatives. The tablets also provide students with a tool to access classroom content and keep touch with campus life.

The initiative has not only grown in numbers, but in efficiency. Over the past two years, the SIU MobileDawg Team has streamlined the process of getting the tablets ready. The team had just three weeks to prepare the tablets between the time they were delivered to campus and the beginning of fall semester. This task is not as simple as handing each student a computer. Preparing the tablets requires huge pallets of new tablets to be unwrapped, loaded with specific SIU information, security coded, cleaned, charged and re-packaged.

This fall the team met a goal of preparing 220 a day. With several years of experience and a well-trained team of student and staff, the MobileDawg Team exceeded this goal and averaged more than 400 tablets each day.

Distribution to new students posed an equally daunting challenge. In less than four days, the MobileDawg Team moved all 2,900 tablets to the Student Center, set up a massive check-in, distribution, technology triage and training event to distribute the tablets to new freshmen as they arrived for Saluki Startup.

The MobileDawg Tablet Initiative certainly benefits students, but has also benefitted SIU in its recruitment efforts. The expectation is the tablet initiative will have the same effect on retention rates. "Last year's freshmen class was the biggest in years and this year's freshmen class is bigger than last. Next year, and in all subsequent years, we plan on distributing to an even larger freshman class, as well as to transfer students," Guye said.

In next month's newsletter, we will focus on results of the MobileDawg Initiative with statistics from student surveys.

--Amber Waterson

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY NOTES

New Information Security Website

A new website from Information Security, a unit of the Office of Information Technology, will assist in promoting security awareness across campus as well as serving as a "one-stop-shop" for information security best practices.

Website highlights include:

- Security best practices for passwords and passphrases.
- Securing your computer.
- Protecting yourself against phishing and social engineering.
- Mobile device protection.
- Tips and tools.

A Twitter feed @SIU_InfoSec provides the latest in security news, trends and announcements.

The Information Security team's goal is to equip faculty, staff and students with the tools and basic knowledge to protect yourself and the university by bringing the latest information on security awareness and tips for protection against common threats including viruses, malware and phishing.

We recommend faculty, staff and students bookmark secureIT.siu.edu for easy reference. The website will provide the latest in information security at SIU and in the industry. For more information, email the information security team.

What Is Encryption?

You may hear people use the term "encryption" and how you should use it to protect yourself and your information. However, the concept of encryption can seem confusing. In addition, encryption cannot protect you from everything; it has its limitations. In the article link, find out what encryption is, why you should use it and how to implement it properly. To read more go to: http://www. securingthehuman.org/newsletters/ ouch/issues/OUCH-201408_en.pdf.

Payroll Time Entry Training

Administrative Information Systems (AIS) is offering time entry training for department timekeepers. The formalized

training AIS developed will assist each department in ensuring accuracy and timely payroll processing.

Corliss Thies, AIS education specialist, hopes training for the entire campus will be completed by the end of the year. AIS highly recommends the training for new employees assigned time entry responsibilities; sessions are also open to employees who manage time entry now but who never received formal training. In addition to a one-hour session, a primer and reference material are available online.

Space is limited, but AIS encourages departments to send at least two people to the training session. This overlap will increase a department's ability to process payroll and minimize the impact if a department's timekeeper is temporarily out or takes another position.

Time entry training sessions for November are:

November 4 at 10 a.m. -- Bi-weekly civil service time entry training.
November 12 at 10 a.m. -- Student time entry training.

Space is limited, and pre-registration is required. Participants must have assigned timekeeper responsibilities to enroll. More program information and pre-registration for any of the sessions is available at http://oit.siu.edu/ais/ training/training-form.php.