

Subject: News from the CIO, December 2025
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To: Rachel Schnepfer

Wesleyan University Information Technology Services

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The "Tryptophan" Edition:



Dear Colleagues:

I hope everyone enjoyed a few well-deserved days full of food, family, and friends over Thanksgiving. Now, we press on to the end of the semester. But first, a few newsy items to consume from the world of IT... so please read on...!

In this newsletter:

- Got backups?
- The blurring line between browsers and AI
- IT and the role of Emotional Intelligence
- Accenture partners visit campus to test Workday Student
- Giving thanks for Stellar Staff
- Your random seasonal lyric

Let's get to it...

Got Backups? - The Importance of Backing Up Your Local Computer

In today's digital world, data loss can happen unexpectedly, whether due to hardware failure, accidental deletion, malware, theft, or even natural disasters. Cloud storage options mitigate this risk and provide redundancy. However, if you store any important data on your computer's local drive, regular backups ensure that critical files, documents, and projects remain safe and recoverable. Without a proper backup strategy, losing important information can lead to costly downtime, missed deadlines, and even permanent loss of irreplaceable data.

Fortunately, Wesleyan ITS provides reliable tools that make local disk backups simple and secure. [Microsoft OneDrive](#) can be configured to provide seamless automatic syncing of your computer's stored files and folders to the cloud while maintaining local copies. This ensures that your data is accessible across devices and protected against local failures. For enterprise-grade backup, [CrashPlan](#) provides continuous and encrypted backups of your entire system to a secure destination, making full system recovery fast and efficient.

By leveraging solutions like OneDrive for everyday file syncing and CrashPlan for comprehensive system backups, you create a layered defense against data loss. Regular backups are not just a best practice; they're essential for business continuity and peace of mind. If you'd like more information or assistance with configuring a computer back-up solution for your Wesleyan issued computer, please [Request IT Support](#).

AI and Browsers, and Learning How They Relate

AI is increasingly everywhere. And while we cannot always control where it is, sometimes we can, like with our Moodle. Rachel Schnepfer notes: "There are AI tools and functionalities available in Moodle, but I want to reassure everyone that none of them have been turned on in Wesleyan's Moodle. Moreover, if and when we ever do turn on AI tools in our Moodle, we would only do so after extensive consultation with faculty and Academic Affairs, including a communications campaign that would make the lead up to the Super Bowl seem paltry in comparison."

However, just because AI is not turned on natively in Moodle does not mean that students cannot use AI with Moodle through other means. The most obvious example is cutting and pasting content from an LLM like Gemini or ChatGPT into Moodle. But there are many others. For example, with [Apple Intelligence's Writing Tools](#), students can proofread and rewrite their own writing, or summarize the contents of a PDF uploaded into Moodle. Grammarly can be installed as a browser extension, providing real-time writing assistance in Moodle. If you have an AI browser, such as [ChatGPT's Atlas](#), it essentially wraps a website in a generative AI layer. All while on the website, you can ask ChatGPT to summarize the content on a page, including a PDF or Word file; to read a PDF posted to the Moodle and generate a Forum response to it; and to answer the questions from a Moodle Quiz. As all of these tools are outside Moodle and on individuals' computers, we're back to not being able to control where AI is, and we cannot block these tools from Moodle.

We appreciate that the AI landscape is changing so rapidly, and it can be both hard and daunting to keep up. Rachel Schnepfer, through [Success at Wes](#), offers many AI sessions, including a new topic this spring on AI browsers. The spring schedule is already live on Success at Wes. Faculty should keep their eyes peeled for offerings forthcoming from Rachael Barlow at the [CFCD](#) that will also cover these issues.

IT and the Role of Emotional Intelligence: Exploring Authentic Leadership at EDUCAUSE 2025

At this year's [EDUCAUSE Annual Conference](#), AVP Karen Warren joined colleagues Mark C.J. Davis, Jr. (Swarthmore College) and Susan Featherston (Vantage Technology Consulting Group) to present "The Many Faces of Emotional Intelligence". The session challenged a one-size-fits-all view of emotional intelligence and highlighted how values, identity, neurodivergence, and leadership style shape the way EI is expressed. Blending story-sharing with a panel format, the presenters encouraged attendees to rethink assumptions about what "high EQ" looks like and to embrace leadership that is grounded in authenticity. Participants walked away with strategies to identify their own EI strengths and support a wider range of emotional expression across their teams.

The session was very well attended and the three presenters will be publishing an article on the topic in a future edition of the [EDUCAUSE Review](#).

Accenture partners visit campus this week to test Workday Student

For three days this week, our implementation partners from Accenture will join staff from across campus for intense end-to-end testing of features and functionality built into Workday Student over the past 11 months. The departments involved are too numerous to mention but involve all aspects of the student experience from prospects to undergrads, and grads to alumni. This work is in preparation for the "mock semester" event to occur in February when the rest of us will be able to test drive the new system prior to going live in April with pre-registration for fall '26 courses! I am so grateful to everyone who is working so hard to improve our student experience through this project.

Giving thanks for stellar staff

As I finish this edition of "News from the CIO", it is late afternoon on the day before Thanksgiving. And so, it is a fine opportunity for me to say how thankful I am to work with an extremely talented and hardworking group in ITS and across the institution. This fall, two new folks joined the ITS team, Savita Shukla (Workday HR Analyst) and Chris Barrett (Workday Student Analyst). Each brings new capabilities and a fresh perspective on the best ways to serve our campus constituents and the mission overall. I am grateful for their efforts and expertise, as I am for everyone in ITS! On then, to the real reason many read this pseudo-regular publication...

Finally, as a reward for reading this far, here is your Random Seasonal Lyric...

One of Jamaica's most celebrated musicians, Jimmy Cliff (born James Chambers) was 25 when he wrote and released Many Rivers to Cross in 1969. [This version](#) had over 9 million views when I checked it last Wednesday. At the

time of his death this week, he was the only living reggae musician to hold the Order of Merit, the highest honor that can be granted by the Jamaican government for achievements in the arts and sciences. In 2010, he became the second Jamaican (after Bob Marley) to be inducted in to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

*Many rivers to cross
But I can't seem to find my way over
Wandering I've been lost
As I travel along the white cliffs of Dover
Many rivers to cross
And it's only my will that keeps me alive
I've been licked, washed up for years
And I merely survive because of my pride*

Until next time, please be in touch if you want more information on any of the above or if you have suggestions for future topics, and thanks for reading!

Dave Baird
VP for IT & CIO

