Subject: News from the CIO - Issue #22, March, 2022
Date: Wednesday, March 23, 2022 at 11:03:54 AM Eastern Daylight Time
From: Dave Baird

From: Dave Baird <dbaird@wesleyan.edu>
Date: Wednesday, March 23, 2022 at 10:24 AM
To: Dave Baird <dbaird@wesleyan.edu>
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Wesleyan University
Information Technology Services

Dear Colleagues:

In this issue, I bring you an update on our plans to replace PeopleSoft, a glimpse of the technology powering the "Living a Good Life" course web site, a story about storage, a window into how we use ServiceNow to track projects and onboard new employees, and a report on an external audit of our backup and recovery practices. Your friends in ITS have been busy...!

Transforming the Enterprise - from PeopleSoft to ??

In 2019, I gave a presentation to the Information Technology Committee on the need to make plans to replace PeopleSoft with a modern Enterprise Resource and Planning (ERP) system. PeopleSoft was implemented at Wesleyan in 2001... that's a lifetime ago in the technology world. So, during the last two years, we have completed value assessments with two viable vendors (Workday and Oracle) and an independent assessment of our institutional

needs and readiness (using the [Tambellini Group](#)). I will be sharing more information on our progress in the coming months, so please stay tuned...

Living a Good Life - in the Cloud

This winter, Wesleyan launched a three-part, online minicourse entitled [Living a Good Life](#) taught by Steven Horst, Stephen Angle, Jen D'Andrea, and Tushar Irani. Alyssa Marinaccio and her student worker, Brianna Mebane, worked with CPI and the instructors to create the [website for the course,](#) which is built on our [Domain of One's Own](#) instance, [WesCreates.](#) As the class is open to all alumni, parents, and friends of the University, when registration opened, more than 3000 people signed up! While this is amazing for the minicourse, it meant that the course website was taxed beyond its capacity. Alyssa quickly reached out to the good folks behind Domain of One's Own at [Reclaim Hosting,](#) who suggested we try their new platform, [Reclaim Cloud.](#) "Alyssa has been a huge asset helping us make an emergency shift from WesCreates to a cloud server that allowed us to accept the high level of site traffic we were generating," Jeffrey Goetz of CPI said. "Thanks to the quick support of the team at Reclaim, we migrated the site seamlessly, and had no further issues." For those interested in a more technical explanation of what the shift to Reclaim Cloud entailed, Jim Groom, the founder of Reclaim Hosting and all-around awesome partner, described the process in more detail [over on his blog](#).

Savvy Spending on Storage

With the move from Wesfiles to Office 365, Wesleyan has moved considerable amounts of data to the cloud. This has helped us to be more effective in managing the storage we maintain on campus. ITS regularly evaluates storage needs and refreshes our network attached storage on a planned schedule. Departments occasionally have unique storage needs that require collaboration to secure funding as well as technical expertise to design an appropriate solution.

In the past year, through a partnership with Academic Affairs, ITS addressed

two such specialized needs: one for the library and one for Astronomy. By combining the scheduled upgrade of our current storage hardware with the acquisition of additional disk space, ITS negotiated a solution that was far more cost-effective for Wesleyan than it would have been for these areas to pursue independently. The resulting solution ensures the storage is in our environmentally controlled data center and the hardware is managed by ITS staff, but the storage itself belongs to the departments and is not combined with other storage needs. Those who manage the storage for their areas do not have to worry about hardware support and maintenance and can focus on work central to their mission.

Disaster Recovery

Every year we work with external auditors to evaluate an aspect of our ITS operations to make sure that we are following accepted best practices. This year we are examining our disaster recovery (DR) processes for some of our critical systems. Having an outside group examine our processes helps ensure that we haven't overlooked any critical steps, and that our recovery processes will work as expected when needed. This is especially important for DR processes, as they absolutely need to work when we invoke them. An analogy for thinking about DR processes would be a fire extinguisher in your kitchen. Having one is a good idea, to be sure, but when the time comes, it is critically important that you know where it is, how to operate it, that it's the right type, and that it works! This audit will help us perform similar steps for our systems so that we can ensure that we will be able to recover your data in the event of a disaster.

Enterprise Systems Use of Service Now

Over the past few months, Enterprise Systems has changed the way they are using Service Now (SN) to enhance communication for both support Incidents and Projects. Support Incidents are fixed with limited or no programming/configuration change. Projects (a.k.a. Changes in Service Now) require significant programming/configuration changes and consequently more

time and scrutiny. Incidents or Projects that will be finished this fiscal year are highly prioritized. These priority lists are shared with HR/Benefits, Finance, Payroll, and Student Offices through bimonthly reports and Service Now dashboards. These dashboards keep the offices informed, and help us identify areas where priorities need to change. If you have any questions, please ask Steve Machuga.

Streamlining New Employee Onboarding

Many things happen behind the scenes when Wesleyan hires a new employee, from ordering a new computer and office equipment, to creating a Wes ID #, an email account, and providing account access to various other systems and services. All of these must happen in a small window of time, to be ready for the new employee's first day. With the increase in hiring this past year, it became apparent that we had opportunities to improve our processes. A collaborative team, consisting of staff in ITS, Human Resources, Academic Affairs, and Advancement put our heads together to work on an improved process. As a result of our work, we are developing and implementing a streamlined request and workflow built in our ServiceNow system. The request process allows for hiring managers to request the requirements for their new employee via one easy to navigate request portal. Once submitted, tasks will be created for all hardware, account provisioning, etc. The status of the request and all of the individual associated tasks will be tied to a ServiceNow request and will be transparent to the hiring manager through to completion, ensuring our new employees enjoy a smooth onboarding process.

Finally, as a reward for reading this far, here is your Random Seasonal (Irish) Lyric, from "Song for Ireland" by June and Phil Colclough:

"Talking all the day with true friends, who try to make you stay
Telling jokes and news, singing songs to pass the night away
Watched the Galway salmon run like silver, dancing, darting in the sun

Living on your western shore, saw summer sunsets, asked for more
I stood by your Atlantic sea and sang a song for Ireland"

Best wishes for a smooth finish to the spring semester. 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