

**Information Resources Council  
Minutes of April 22, 2005**

**Attendees:** Mary-Beth O'Brien, Cindy Evans, John Sanders, Phylise Banner, David Grover (student), Steve Dinyer, Crystal Moore, Jeff Segrave, Roy Meyers, Patrick O'Rourke, Bob Jones, Kim Marsella, Mike West, Tom Lewis, Jim Burton, Deanne Palmer, Shirley Smith, Peter Stake, Kate Leavitt, Bill Fox, Judy Redder, Ruth Copans, David Hamilton, Susan Zappen, Joanne Devine, Justin Sipher, Tom O'Connell, Ann Henderson, Beth Du Pont, Kelly Dempsey-Little, and Andy Ashton.

**Business:**

No business items discussed

**Topic:**

Who is using digital video in courses, in what ways? Do we have sufficient resources? If not, where are we falling short? How valuable is it as a technology for learning? What are its advantages and disadvantages? Should the college be investing more resources in it?

**Discussion Notes:**

I'm very excited to say out of a total of 31 attendees, we had 14 faculty members present at this IRC meeting, at 8:30 on a Friday morning. This attendance reflects the growing interest in digital video technologies across campus. A very lively conversation ensued. I apologize in advance for the length of these "minutes". There were a few individuals who were not able to attend, and I promised them detailed notes. Skim at will... (Also, thank you to Ann Henderson for her contributions to these minutes.)

The group discussed the organic evolution of digital technology use on campus and the varied issues that have arisen from this:

- Streaming Media Issues - UWW is delivering short video clips in nearly every class; in some cases entire movies are included in class syllabi, as well as student created films. UWW is currently struggling to get a videotape of a recent Pinsky interview delivered online to their students.
- File storage and server capacity
- Student access difficulties – bandwidth issues when accessing videos from on or off campus
- Lack of standardization – some departments have files stored as links from web sites, others use Web CT, while others use CD's, DVD's, or other media
- Staff Time and expertise
- Training of students and faculty
- Need user friendly interfaces

A conversation ensued about the current streaming server, and why it is underutilized. The streaming server was implemented nearly 4 years ago as a research and development project. There was not a great deal of faculty interest in it at the time, and priorities within CITS changed. The streaming server is operational, but not user friendly. Interest

has snowballed over the past year, streaming technology has changed, and CITS is planning to take a closer look at the need this summer and plan for future streaming of content.

In regards to student production of digital projects, the following topics and concerns arose: More students are creating movies. What service demands have become necessary? Ex: CITS personnel perform specific classes on lighting, videography, and digital editing applications such as iMovie. In the Media Services lab, “student demands have mushroomed exponentially” according to Steve Dinyer who works there evenings Monday through Friday. He proposed that when students are given the choice between writing a paper for a class or producing a video, students see the video as being more fun. In some ways it’s viewed as easier. But when things don’t work smoothly, it can be very difficult, time intensive, and call for a great deal of instructional support.

Jim Burton expressed that the digital storage demands have “blown us out of the water”. With the current affordability of digital recording technologies and the general ease of use, with each incoming class the demands of storage, support and services will continue to grow exponentially.

Justin Sipher requested that the group identify areas where we can predict needs, both current and future; with information, CITS can begin to develop a plan to accommodate those requests. The group proceeded to identify the following areas of concern:

- Student production of videos – Exponential growth in student use of video for class assignments; this necessarily involves:
  - Training
  - Equipment purchase
  - Laboratory space
  - Staff support
  - Server storage
  - Processing capacity
  - Backup
  - Archival resources and policies
  - Assessment plans (e-portfolios) will increase demand even more
  - Student storage and loaner hard drives – The option for students to purchase their own hard drive is now more viable and might free up fiscal resources for other uses. Some faculty currently require students to purchase storage devices and others are heading in that direction.
  - Larger storage issue – Raw footage files versus final product; if students purchase their own drives, they can use those for editing and backup of their raw files and the College would need to store only final products.
- Archiving of significant institutional events (lectures, Commencement, special events, performances, etc.)
  - Archival concerns
  - Cataloguing has been haphazard at best; need better approach

- Changes in technology and media require constant monitoring – Ex: Will we be able to access what we currently have stored on VHS 10 years from now? Do we need to migrate these events to a newer media?
  - Need to consider replacement costs
  - Storage and Backup considerations
- Growth in use of Course Management and inclusion of video – Continually increasing requests from faculty to deliver video content via WebCT. Disk space issues and content delivery and streaming concerns.
- First Year Seminars will pose new challenges
- Planning time and fiscal responsibility: The demand is already here.
  - The fiscal pressures are real and will only increase over time; what are we willing to give up to accommodate this demand?
  - We need to be planning instead of chasing.
  - Need to identify campus standards for video creation/storage – or at least a set of recommendations based on the type of production requirements.
  - Need to factor in audience, delivery method, resolution requirements, and audio needs => Different sets of recommendations would be useful.
  - Suggestion to lease equipment rather than buy, given the rapid change in the industry.
  - Digital content delivery to classrooms – Is our infrastructure built to handle it?
  - To what extent does the college want to get involved in the supporting of digital technologies in instruction?
- Media Studies Minor: This program is focused on the study of various media within a liberal arts context. It is not a program designed to provide technical courses, and it will not compete with any of our current production or more technically oriented courses. The emphasis is on Liberal Arts and not technical preparation. Skidmore can't compete with these programs and is not interested in doing so. This does not mean that students are not interested in and asking for these courses => articulations with other external programs (NYU, Westminster University in London; etc.); We want to provide students with access to opportunities even if we cannot provide them internally. How does this impact services provided/offered on campus when they return from digitally intensive educational experiences?
- Faculty Instruction and Evaluation of Digital Video projects –
  - One faculty member asked, “How do we teach video production?”
  - It's inexpensive for students to do; for the college as a whole there are numerous expenses involved.
  - When students are given the option to do a final paper or video, how are they being taught to create the video? How do faculty evaluate these projects? How do they weight production vs. content?

- In Foreign Languages, some projects are language specific activities, without a great deal of concern for a polished final project. Others in Foreign Languages take a more intensive approach with storyboards, scripting, lighting and sound sessions. Media Services and Academic Technologies personnel are requested to teach iMovie, iPhoto, lighting and sound classes.
- Aside from being made as course assignments, students are also choosing to do these projects on their own for classes, personal interest, and club activities.
- Another growing issue is the use of digital video in the classroom. This requires faculty and CITS personnel time to prepare the video for delivery, find somewhere to store it, and determine an effective means of delivery. This can be a very time consuming process.
- Impact on Media Services and Academic Technologies – training, equipment maintenance, evening support for student work, faculty development
  - A serious concern is the end of semester crunch. Media Services is bursting at it seams and there is not enough support staff available in the evening to assist with training students and providing technical support. (Media Services employs two fulltime staff members 3 nights per week, however these two individuals are also responsible for setups for presentations, events, classes, and often club events.) We have tried numerous approaches to get students in earlier, but it seems this is a growing demand CITS is experiencing difficulty meeting.
  - Training is a critical issue – if faculty cannot provide the instruction in classes (either by teaching the skills on their own or having someone from CITS come to their class to teach), then Media Services ends up providing the training in a de facto manner.
  - Faculty need assistance in learning how to evaluate the differences between content and how it is presented.
  - Faculty need assistance in developing evaluation rubrics.
  - The loaner pool of digital video equipment grows each year, but the demand continues on the rise.

It became apparent at the closing of the meeting that there are numerous issues at play. IRC will break this discussion into subtopics and plan on providing further opportunities for discussion in the coming fall. Justin acknowledged the need for CITS to spend time over the summer developing a strategy for the streaming of digital media, and then to report back to IRC/the community.