

Service Steps

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Director's Comment

Dear IT Staff,

Amidst the hustle and bustle of starting both a new year and several large-scale projects, I would like to take the opportunity to briefly discuss and outline several of our goals for calendar year 2014.

Information technology continues to progress, unabatedly, with a bewildering array of new products and services. While it is exciting to contemplate the possibilities, our organization must be cautious. It is all too easy to become obsessed with a particular product or service and to diverge from the important goals that keep us on a path of incremental improvement. Like a football coach, my focus is always on the next play. To that end, here is a partial list of goals I've compiled for 2014.

- **Storage:** Systems can't function without adequate storage. Storage and computing systems must be both compatible and of a similar vintage to ensure optimal performance. The server should never be waiting for data or be too saturated to keep up with the storage system. Our goal is to implement a new IBM storage system on or before August 1, 2014. The current system was

acquired in 2009 and is now 90 percent encumbered.

- **Video Conferencing:** In a geographically disbursed institution, video conferencing is an imperative for effective collaboration amongst various academic and administrative units. We have looked at a variety of solutions and will soon recommend a specific solution that will be cost effective and comparatively easy to use. Video conferencing is different than Skype and generally refers to communication between three or more individuals in two or more locations.
- **End Point Management:** End points are devices (e.g., desktops, laptops, notebooks) that connect to our data communications network. The number and variety of end points has grown substantially over the years and managing them is a full-time job. Consequently, we are looking at Dell KACE, a software systems management and deployment appliance. With KACE we could push updates to end points worldwide and be able to identify all peripherals, such as printers, that are attached to an end point device.

"People with goals succeed because they know where they're going." - Earl Nightingale

Service Steps is a bi-monthly newsletter from the Information Technology Division.

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- **Virtualization:** Our Windows server environment has been fully virtualized where applicable. We are now engaged in a project to virtualize our UNIX (AIX) environment, which consists of several IBM pSeries servers that run Colleague, Tivoli Storage Management (TSM), and the Siri library system, among others. Virtualization creates a more fail-safe computing environment, makes server provisioning much easier, and creates a smaller footprint by consuming less power via fewer physical servers.
- **Media Services:** Multimedia Services will be moving to building 139 this March. Our goal is to fully integrate them into our IT workflow, streamline services and service delivery, and create a highly collaborative environment where all IT assets can be leveraged to better serve the media needs of Central Texas College.
- **Security:** Our security goals for 2014 will focus on end point management. This is to ensure that that all end points have the latest software updates and that the appropriate controls are in place to prevent and detect activities that pose a threat to our data assets. This will be done in cooperation with the SMART Security subcommittee and will address issues such as admin rights, generic logons, and mobile access, among others.
- **Development:** Filling the two vacant

Programmer/Analyst positions has been an ongoing goal. Even though the development backlog is carefully managed, the demand for new Colleague functionality continues to grow. Filling these positions would increase productivity and allow the college to respond to new opportunities for growth. This will become increasingly significant as the educational marketplace becomes more competitive.

- **Student Email:** CTC has expressed an interest in giving students their own school email accounts. A way to accomplish this was presented to several of our executive officers and other interested staff on February 19, 2014. We were given the green light to proceed with a target implementation date of August 1, 2014. We have selected Google as our provider, but authentication will occur locally via a separate Active Directory domain.

These goals represent our ongoing efforts to support the students, faculty, and staff of Central Texas College. As you can see, the IT Division is expected to have a very productive and eventful calendar year. Again, I would like to thank you all for your ongoing efforts as we progress through 2014.

~ Bruce Kendall

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Hobson's Online Application – The Hobson's Online application for students was soft launched late January. More options will be added at a later date. The change to an online application will reduce the need for paper applications and the need for Admissions staff to manually enter student information into Colleague.

SoftDocs Training – Cliff Gains, Michael Trevino, Barbara Riffel-Darter, James Atchley, Jeanette Kendrick, and Kirk Meaux attended a training session for SoftDocs during the first week of February. They were given a brief overview of the entire process that will be implemented in stages across campus.

Performance Reviews – Performance evaluations are being conducted all throughout February. Forms and instructions can be found on the CTC website. Evaluations are due by March 17. Supervisors can receive training for writing evaluations from HR February 13 and February 25.

Password Self-Service Replacement – The IT Customer Service Department is currently considering Dell's Password Manager as a replacement for our current Password Self-Service software, which is no longer being supported by the vendor. Dell's Password Manager offers both the current functions we already use and several

additional options as well. Carla Littlefield will be meeting with a Dell representative March 4, 2014, to discuss the product further.

Security Audit – The IT Division will be hiring an outside firm to conduct our bi-annual security audit before the end of April. The results will be used to improve both IT and CTC security practices.

Excellence Conference – The 2014 Excellence Conference will be held this upcoming March. Michael Hunter will be giving a presentation on security in the workplace and will be sharing some basic tips on how users can better secure their computer and information.

Sophos Update – Michael Hunter is currently monitoring and updating Sophos, our security software, on all campus desktops. This is to ensure that the software has received all available updates and is currently set to the correct management settings.

Multimedia Services – The Multimedia Department will be moving into building 139 next month. This includes the total transition of equipment and staff. A series of new online forms are currently being developed for multimedia equipment and services.

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New CTC Website – The new CTC website went live February 15. IT Division content can be accessed through the new site. If you have IT Division content that needs to be added, deleted, or replaced, please contact Breanna Sherbert.