



## Making the Switch -- Ensures Reliability and Security

If you've ever wondered why the network is taken down on Friday evenings – wonder no more – it's all so that the Office of Technology Services staff can ensure that the network is secure and reliable.

Every Friday evening OTS staffers Nathan Holmes, Jerome Johnson, Rob Comer, Shawn Shay, Debbie Limback and Lisa McCord work extra hours replacing switches that are five years old, as well as adding new switches.

“Some of the new switches that we are adding will allow us to have additional bandwidth (high speed links) and fault tolerant links,” explains Nathan Holmes, OTS network manager. “This also gives us added capability for our back-up site at 30th Street.”

Replacing the existing switches is all a part of the normal replacement cycle and keeping up with the fast pace of technology.

“Prior to the replacement, we had one set of switches that controlled the power, and another set that controlled the data network,” Holmes continues. “Now, one switch can control both the power and the network, making it all the more vital that we are proactive in replacing them before they fail at an inconvenient time.”

The new switches also enhance network security – as they make it more difficult to access passwords, while protecting the system from any malicious intent.



*OTS continually updates equipment to ensure that SJC's computer network is secure and reliable. Back row, left to right: Nathan Holmes, Rob Comer and Debbie Limback. Front row: Lisa McCord, Shelley Mulligan, Jerome Johnson and Shawn Shay.*

“As you can imagine, if we didn't take the necessary precautions, we all would pay dire consequences with our network security and access,” adds Shelley Mulligan, OTS assistant CIO.

Keeping customer service at the forefront, the network crew plans the system down times around the peak working hours of staff and faculty. “This is why our maintenance repairs and updates are done late on Friday evenings,” Mulligan continues. “For instance, we know that the administrative offices are usually closed

by 5 p.m. on Friday evenings, and the HHPC closes at 8 p.m., so we don't begin our maintenance tasks in the Educational Services building until after 5:30, and 8:30 p.m. at the HHPC.”

Mulligan and Holmes add that the maintenance processes would not be near as efficient without the help and coordination from Physical Plant staff Chris Harrelson and Ron Jantz, who provide all the electrical work for the data closets.

## Tech Tip

### Flickr -- Free online Photo Tool

Flickr ([www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)) is an application to share your photos publicly or privately. Located on the internet, Flickr helps organize photos by themes; sends picture updates to friends; drags photos to a map location to share where photos were taken; and specifies who you want to share your pictures with.

It also has possible uses for education, including:

- The capability to explain photos utilizing several notes
- Displaying current pictures for a class topic
- Displaying photos from different parts of the world by locating them on a map
- Photo journaling assignments
- A marketing tool (see <http://www.army.com/articles/item/2848> Army Reaches Out With You Tube, Flickr, Del.icio.us)

Check out these resources:

19-minute video tutorial using flickr: <http://k12online.wm.edu/usingflickr/usingflickr.html>

Flickr tutorial series: <http://www.indezine.com/mediamazine/2006/05/flickr-tutorials-series.html>

## Technology Fun Fair!

Check out the latest in technology gadgets, Tuesday, December 4, from 3 to 5 p.m., in the Henderson Fine Arts Center, room 9008. From the coolest in Xboxes to Gamboys to iPods to GPS technology, there's something for everyone! See you there!

## The Future of Technology



What does the future hold for higher education? If I could answer that question with 100 percent accuracy, then I could probably predict who will win the Super Bowl this year. The Patriots are looking good, but so are many other contenders.

Nonetheless, there are trends in higher education that make gazing into the future a little less precarious. Gary Marx, the author of *Sixteen Trends, Their Profound Impact on Our Future*, discusses a trend

that has major consequences for technology in higher education which is convergence and miniaturization...less is becoming more. In other words, technology will increase the speed of communication and the pace of advancement or decline.

Fueled by technology, the pace of change in the world today is relenting. Students and educators have instant access to information. Where it used to be a challenge to find research data, it is now a challenge to sort through gigabytes of data trying to determine what is factual. The classroom is already changing with distance learning – an essential component of curriculums with virtual reality not far behind. A good example is in this issue's story about assistive technology that aids students with learning disabilities.

Why is it important for higher education? Success in a global knowledge/information age depends on our ability to develop new generations of existing technologies. Colleges that utilize appropriate technology to help unleash the genius of students will move forward at a rapid pace.

When contemplating the future, I'm always brought back to the present by my favorite quote from Alan Kay, the architect of the modern windowing Graphical User Interface, who said, "The best way to predict the future is to create it."

Tim Warren

Vice President for Technology Services

### Ah-hah! So, that's how you do it!

**Valerie Wheeler, Technology Boot Camp cadet, shares a quick tip:**

Shortcuts help save repetitive steps. They provide an easier and quicker way of navigation and using computer software programs.

A shortcut I find helpful in Microsoft Excel is in regards to entering numbers across columns. For example, this would be helpful if you wanted to enter a sequence of numbers or labels without having to tab to each cell. Here's how: Highlight cells in which you wish to put information into (B3 through D8), type the first number, enter, then you cursor will automatically move to the next cell within the selected area.

Try it – it will save you several steps!

## Back to the Future

### *Making a Difference for Students with Learning Disabilities*

For students with learning disabilities, advancing their education can feel like an unreachable goal, however, assistive technology can make all the difference.

Sharon Brown, basic skills instructor, learned more about how to better help students and use these types of technologies already available at San Juan College when she attended a conference at Landmark College, in Putney, Vt. A private college that serves only students with learning and/or attention deficit disorders, Landmark is known for its research, professional development and advocacy initiatives to support students with learning disabilities.



Sharon Brown learned more about software to help those with learning disabilities.

Brown brought the information back to Jackie McFarland and Chainey Walker of the Advising Counseling Center, who often are the ones directing students to use one of three assistive software programs, which includes *Kurzweil*, *JAWS*, and *Dragon Naturally Speaking*.

*Kurzweil* is especially helpful for those who have attention disorders. The program provides audio from text sources.

Once reading material is scanned into *Kurzweil*, the student can listen to the scanned text. It also checks spelling as students type their work.

"Students have the capability to not only read their work aloud, but to also listen back to it," Brown explains. "This often helps students retain the material better."

*Kurzweil* improves students decoding and fluency abilities; strengthens their study skills, and increases independence. Landmark College showed that students who used *Kurzweil* attended better to their reading, had reduced distractibility, read faster with less stress and fatigue and for longer periods of time, and completed reading assignments in less time.

*JAWS* is a software program that helps students who struggle with vision. "The screen reader basically reads aloud everything that is on the screen to the student," Brown says.

*Dragon Naturally Speaking*, translates speech to text. Students speak into a microphone, and their voice is then converted to text. This program also has the capability of reading students' papers back to them.

"*Dragon* also increases independence, and helps students free up cognitive working space, eliminate handwriting and spelling problems, brainstorm ideas, and produce a large amount of writing."

In February, these and other assistive software programs will be showcased. For Microsoft's free online tutorials on accessibility, go to [microsoft.com/enable/products/office2003/tutorials.aspx](http://microsoft.com/enable/products/office2003/tutorials.aspx) or [microsoft.com/enable/training/windowsxp/default.aspx](http://microsoft.com/enable/training/windowsxp/default.aspx).

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