INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
STRATEGIC PLAN

Textile Computer Operations’ strategy to support the College of Textiles from 2011-2016

DOCUMENT HISTORY

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The Textiles Computer Operations group (TCO) was started informally in the late 80’s and early 90’s. It was initially comprised of a director and several support staff. The college also maintained a separate group of staff that produced the distance education materials for off-campus programs. With the advent of the internet and the world-wide-web, the college added positions to the distance education group. Over time the group combined and kept the name Textile Computer Operations. The Dean of the College decided that information technology was a strategic part of the mission of the college and created an Assistant Dean position to oversee all areas of information technology for the college.

TCO now has staff members for traditional help desk support roles, distance education, web services, and instructional development. The team now consists of six staff members that serve the faculty, staff and students of the College of Textiles.

The College of Textiles has long been known for being on the cutting edge of research and technology. Staying on the cutting edge is always a challenge and will be met with vigor by the textile computer operations group.

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION**

**Vision**

Be a model for the use of information technology to the educational community

**Mission**

Lead the College of Textiles in the effective use of cutting edge information technology to promote education, research and service to our state and beyond

**Guiding Principles**

Support with integrity

Honesty

Customer focused

Research the cutting edge

Implement sustainable processes

Look for economies of scale by leveraging central IT or cloud based services while focusing attention to local needs with support staff.
CUSTOMERS

There are constant and changing customers for the TCO group. The college usually maintains about 160 faculty and staff along with 1100 undergraduate and graduate students. There are also adjunct faculty, visiting scholars, post-docs, and bi-weekly employees that vary in numbers from year to year.

In addition, the college serves many customers in the county, state, nation and world. TCO reaches far beyond the borders of the four buildings of the textile complex. Customers are served in Europe, Asia, and many other countries through distance education and extension activities.

With the limited staff of the group some boundaries have to be drawn in the type of support given to all constituencies so that the service has integrity and excellence.

The customers will also have a direct involvement in the direction of the TCO group. A college information technology committee will have representatives from each department and student representation. This committee will discuss strategies and tactics of the TCO group and present recommendations to the Dean when appropriate.

PEOPLE

The College of Textiles is committed to hiring and retaining a talented, personable, and diverse team of information technology professionals. Every effort will be made to maintain a fair, equitable, energetic work environment for the TCO staff and part-time helpers. Each individual will be assessed at least twice a year in accordance with university regulations for SPA employees to make sure their job duties and responsibilities are aligned with what the college needs are for that fiscal year. Adjustments will also be made when necessary for large or specialized projects. All job duties will also be cross-trained where possible to allow for efficient and quick responses to all customer calls. Any specialized duties will be backed up by other university departments or by contractors when necessary.

FINANCIAL

The TCO group is given a portion of the state appropriated budget received by the office of the dean. Staff members are paid from this operating budget, research overheads, distance education, and the education and technology fee (ETF). The group also has an established service center account which allows work to be done for federal grants and industry research projects. The service center will need to increase revenues over the next five years as the information technology needs continue to increase while the state appropriated
budget decreases. The main areas that generate revenue for the service center are web services, instructional design, animation and video services. Keeping these positions will be paramount to earning additional funds in the coming years.

The TCO management will work actively with college administration to make sure that large research projects include information technology as a key component and include allocations for data retention, support and services rendered.

TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

Desktop Support

Desktop support is focused on faculty, staff, graduate students, and specialty undergraduate teaching labs. Although 97% of the undergraduate students own a laptop and bring it to campus, many of the specialty applications are not available for personal student use because of licensing restrictions and support limitations. The number of desktop computers in the building has been over 800 ever since 2006. Tacitly increasing the number of desktop computers in addition to mobile devices (laptops, phones, etc.) is not scalable. TCO will look to ways to manage computing device increases by:

• Finding ways to manage desktop inventory more efficiently
• Working with vendors to change licensing models or delivery mechanisms to allow student devices to access needed programs
• Utilize computing device management software for inventory, application deployment, and remote management
• Research best practices on computer purchasing, redistribution and surplus

Mobile Support

The next five years will bring an increase in mobile devices including phones, tablets and possibly other technologies that haven’t yet entered the market. Regardless of the technology, faculty, staff and especially students are going to want the ability to get to their course work, email and applications away from the physical confines of the college. Mobile devices have traditionally presented problems because of their limited screen size. TCO will work closely with campus entities to develop and support new ways for students to get to their course materials, files, grades and class schedules.
TCO will search for innovative ways for support staff to be exposed to the latest technologies so that scalable mobile solutions can be implemented.

**Remote Access**

The faculty and staff have had the ability to get their work files remotely through VPN and remote desktop for some time. Getting access to the files from mobile devices will be a priority. A process for synchronizing the files for offline usage will also need to be developed and secured. All mechanisms will need to account for security and backup.

Faculty, staff and students will want the ability to access the same applications remotely as they do when they are physically present in the college. Emerging technologies in virtualized desktops and cloud based applications look promising to fulfill this need. Regardless of technology, the need will increase with traditional customers and will be critical for distance customers. Students who take courses that require specialized software will want access to the same software packages. A concerted effort will be made with vendors of remote technologies and the specialty software vendors to make this possible.

**Video Conferencing**

The college will continue to invest in ways for faculty to participate in meetings, research collaborations, and conferences via video and web conference capabilities. In addition, students will need to meet with potential employers, graduate committee team members, and collaborators with audio, video and presentation content.

**BUSINESS CONTINUITY AND DISASTER RECOVERY**

The college already has a documented business continuity plan on file with the university that includes an information technology component. This plan outlines the server infrastructure, contact information and contingency plans.

The plan recognizes the need for files and applications to be highly available to faculty, staff and students. These plans will coincide with the college’s BCP plans to make sure critical business can continue in the event of planned or unplanned disruption events.
SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS

Textile Computer Operations will seek to hold service level agreements with any entity that it provides service to, or receives service from.

These agreements will lay out mutually agreed upon expectations so that misunderstandings are kept to a minimum.

The agreements may be altered over time if both parties agree that the changes made out of necessity or deemed beneficial.

DATA CLASSIFICATION AND RETENTION

All data that is under the stewardship of TCO administrators will be classified according to university defined definitions. These classifications will determine how the data is accessed and stored.

Access control will be assessed and documented so that it is consistent with its intended purpose. Technologies will be employed to make sure the standards are met for security and compliance.

Data storage and specifically retention will be addressed based on the classification of data. If data requires long term retention, TCO will make a plan for the data sets even if the university doesn’t provide such a mechanism.