

Technology Special Interest Group
Strategic Planning Committee

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Many themes present themselves when the campus is asked to discuss the future of technology: communication, mobility, environmental concerns, service coordination, improved automation, and alignment with business/educational processes/goals. Communication is by far the broadest theme, expressing great hopes and desires for reengineering processes of consultation, decision-making, and training.

In the future, Plattsburgh State will have an open and vigorous process for researching new technologies and discussing their applications in support of campus goals and objectives. The foundation of this process will be strong and broad-based needs assessment efforts. The process will recruit stakeholder input rather than simply asking for it. It will also keep stakeholders informed and engaged at regular intervals. Particular focus will be given to ensuring that student views are represented.

In addition to solution-based or goal-based discussions of technology, the campus will attend to the social, ethical, and cultural issues concerning how technology transforms the campus. No small part of this will include attention to security, privacy, and personal safety issues. The process for adopting new technologies, or changing delivery methods of existing ones, will include a review that accounts for such organizational changes. This process will also include an assessment of how selection impacts goals of openness and adaptability.

Outcomes assessment and business/educational process alignment assessment will also be part of the process of introducing or changing technology on campus. The campus will be able to answer questions about how specific technological elements move the campus forward or support mission, goals, and objectives. As part of this alignment, the campus will regularly assess the allocation of technology resources to ensure that appropriate resources are in place to support both the educational and business operations of the campus.

These processes will be complemented and supported by an environment that encourages open communication and leverages technology to support it. The campus will train staff in the proper ways to use technology to communicate. It will have tested and agreed upon best practices that will allow users to make informed choices about the best way to communicate their messages, receive feedback, and promote discussion. It will also use technology to manage the process of official communication to ensure that one can be reasonably sure important messages arrive at their destination. This will afford decision-makers and planners a means of soliciting input that is reliable and that will prevent lagging due to lack of feedback.

Training will have a very strong role in all of this. While "how-to" courses will still have their place, training will also be concerned with larger issues of technology use. The campus will be significantly focused on aligning training with business/educational goals, while also helping to ask broader questions about what the uses of technology mean to our community. Courses will seek to move attendees from usage to "thinking" with technology. Crucial to this, will be leadership that values training to the degree that it is coordinated across campus and available and accessible to all constituent groups – faculty, staff, and students.

The campus will value mobility as much as it does communication and training. In fact, mobile infrastructure will be an important enabler of communication, training, and other processes. Wireless access, both in terms of phone service and computer networks, will be a given. The campus will have a means of tailoring the delivery of messages, data, and information to individual choices: cell phone, computer, PDA, etc. To do this, it will need to have a convenient way for users to select the delivery method and most importantly, content that makes them care about being "connected" to the campus.

Mobile storage plays an important role as well. No matter where our community members are in the world, they will be able to use a variety of devices to retrieve and store data and access services. Well-designed and supported server systems and authentication/authorization systems will ensure that their access is reliable and secure. Careful attention to the integration of devices is necessary to bring this vision about.

The campus understands that mobility is more than a question of geography – it is also a question of time. The campus will have staff and systems in place to support access and service after the traditional 8-4:30, Monday-Friday business hours. The concept also extends to on-campus facilities. One will not have to find a wireless signal – all buildings will be covered. One will also not need to carry a notebook or PDA with them everywhere – each building will have a complement of open access computers for quick access. One will also not have to go looking for a smart classroom – all classrooms will be “smart.”

As both a component of the mobile environment and a direction unto itself, the Web will play an increasingly important role in the campus’ future. Many business applications, including asset management, bill payment, and funds transfer, will be regularly conducted via a Web interface. Many, perhaps all, official forms will be available over the web. Official documents, reports, and other content will be easy to access and easy to post on the web. Servers and software that drive the Web will ensure that content is automatically and transparently formatted such that it can be accessed by a variety of devices: phones, PDA, etc.

The mobile environment also requires that the campus adapt its technology funding and distribution models. Desktop distribution and lifecycle maintenance will continue, but with options for the use of mobile devices: notebook, palmtops, tablet PCs, PDAs, and phones. The campus will have a process that assesses the needs of the individual, aligns them with institutional goals and objectives, and selects the connectivity solution that will be the best fit.

It will also be sure to take good care of its network as nothing will move without strong support for this backbone. As with other elements, this central feature will also accommodate a variety of devices, and remain open and adaptable to new uses.

As the campus grows in technology use, it will be mindful of the environmental consequences of such growth. It will also make it a priority to use various technologies to keep Plattsburgh as “green” as possible. As with other technologies, the campus will have an ongoing process for researching and selecting technologies that manage energy better, make more efficient use of it, and reduce waste. Energy management system upgrades will be in place. Research into alternative energy resources and renewable energy possibilities will continue to be a regular part of operations. The campus will recognize that having the most environmentally friendly systems as possible (HVAC, heat, light, waste processing, recycling) is a significant strategic advantage.

Finally, the campus will not be an island in its strategic use of technology. It will regularly assess its success in forging strategic alliances with local business and community groups. Examples currently exist with the current broadband initiative that the campus is part of and at other campuses, such as Morrisville’s alliance with Nextel. Such alliances will extend the reach of the campus, establish it as a leader in technology, and return dividends of improved service to our students and other campus community members.