MISSION OF TECHNOLOGY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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What is the mission of information technology for an higher education institution? From my experience, the overall mission of Information Services can be broken down into two basic goals: delivering price for performance and the advancement of the strategic agenda of the institution.

Price for performance is a concept we use to define value for the basic utility; the core infrastructure that runs our institution and allows everyone to do their job. The reason we do not use a return on investment (ROI) approach is because we cannot connect a revenue stream to these 'run-the-institution' services. For example, moving our email to the cloud may be seen by some institutions as transformational but it is really more about gaining a competitive price-for-performance for an essential enterprise service that does not have a particular revenue stream.

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To elaborate on this example, I propose the question: what is the ROI for a firewall? Personally, I do not have a clue. However, from the perspective of price for performance, the value of a firewall becomes clear.

The performance we expect from a firewall deals with certain levels of throughput with specific levels of protection on certain types of traffic. When we procure a firewall that delivers these features at a competitive price, we have effectively delivered value.

In the IT price-for-performance value ratio, performance is represented by some aspect of enterprise performance, such as the availability of a business function during designated business hours. The price is Information Services’ cost for supporting that level of performance. From this perspective of technology as a utility, there are really only two states of value: on or off (i.e. the service provided is either available or it is not). This means Information Services contributes value when everyone stops talking about it, because no one calls the electric company if the lights are on and the bill looks reasonable.

The second goal is the advancement of the strategic agenda of the institution. In other words, the agenda for change at scale. When it comes to the advancement of CWU’s strategic agenda, Information Services has a significant advantage: in today’s interconnected world, nothing changes at scale anywhere unless information technology is in the picture. You certainly can make big changes (that does not involve scale) without using technology; for example, we can hire a new executive or change institutional reporting structures. However, if it involves students, facilities, or classes - and it is happening at scale - information technology is in the picture.

This means that when we look at the portfolio of initiatives that Information Services is supporting, we are literally looking at the sum of change – at scale – for Central Washington University. In other words, Information Services’ project remit is not just a to-do list, it is a forecast about what is going to change, when it is going to change, and how much it will cost to make the change.

That is our strategic contribution.
TECH FOCUS: CAPS+ AND WHY YOU SHOULD USE IT.

Over the years, CWU students have had different ways of figuring out their degree and course path: pen and paper and thick course catalogs gave way to online catalogs and an advisor’s help, but there was still a little bit of a disconnect.

It’s shown that when students are given autonomy over their schedules, they take agency in scheduling and are able to save time for advisors. And with such a rapidly growing institution, the Information Services department recognized a gap to be filled – while their CAPS system was helpful, it wasn’t the tool that could cover everything in the degree planning process. Enter CAPS+, a useful tool developed in-house by Central Washington University Information Services and launched this fall to help students effectively plan their schedules – whether it be for the next quarter, or their entire 4-year degree plan.

The sleek format integrates seamlessly with MyCWU, allowing students to input intended majors and minors, and to effectively plan for their degree path. By clicking through CAPS+, they can then enter the classes they plan on taking. After making sure that this plan fulfills basic graduation requirements, CAPS+ gives the student a roadmap to their intended degree path.

The student is then able to effectively take this computer-generated schedule describing to them the order they should take classes, when certain courses are offered and other important information, to their advisor and have a straightforward path to graduation. CAPS+ is a fantastic tool for any student to use – whether they’re a freshman trying to figure out which degree path to set out on, or if they’re looking to add a minor later in their time at Central.

CAPS+ renders your planned major and minor and gives you all course requirements. These requirements are taken from Central’s #1 ranked Craft Brewing program.
BOUILLON NEIGHBORHOOD

To kick off our series on the recently formed "one stop shop" Boullion neighborhood, Information Services wants to elaborate the story of the distinctive south-campus building. Upon opening, it's design won a 1961 Honor Award through Washington State chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

Boullion was opened in 1961 as the library building. The library then outgrew Boullion and was moved across campus into the newly constructed Library Building (to be renamed the James L. Brooks Library).

Boullion went on to host a variety of departments, including communication and mathematics - and information services is thrilled to welcome it's new neighbors in the Boullion neighborhood.

TIPS & TRICKS

If you're trying to jump start an internship, or are planning on graduating and looking for career opportunities, students can access the Wildcat Career Network through myCWU.

All CWU students have access to Office 365, ensuring they are able to take their work (whether it be a Powerpoint or a paper) with them wherever there is internet access.
STUDENT CORNER: TECH SAVVY GIFTS FOR EVERYONE ON YOUR WISH LIST

Shopping season is right around the corner - once Black Friday hits, holiday shoppers are out for the races, trying to scoop up whatever deals they can get into their baskets - whether it be online or in person.

Recent developments on the front of technological innovation have made for gifts to become varied and technologically thrilling. Here are a few recommendations for putting a modern spin on the gifts you give this holiday season:

A BUSY PARENT:
Gift parents who are always on the move with an online subscription box to something they love - whether it be just for the month of December or the whole year. Some especially fun boxes include things like Scentbird, where subscribers are able to sample various designer fragrances; Book of The Month, where subscribers receive a hardcover book every month; Graze, a box for snack foods, or Stitchfix, a clothing box.

YOUNGER SIBLING:
If they're a middle or high school student, there's not a better gift for the technologically-inclined than a streaming subscription they don't have to pay for - whether it's Netflix, Spotify, X-Box Live or Hulu. Just make sure to remove your credit card info from the subscription service after the gift has run its course - we don't want you paying for their Youtube Red subscription until they're college-aged.

TECH-SAVVY GRANDPARENT:
Some grandparents just get the technology thing - they adopted the iPad early and are always posting about their online games on Facebook. Most grandparents shy from bought gifts from grandchildren, but would absolutely love an online photo album of what you've been doing at Central - keep it PG, of course, but use iMovie or Windows Movie Maker to put together a collage of your college life and set it to music. It's a thoughtful gift for the ramen diet budget.

A SIGNIFICANT OTHER:
If there's a restaurant your significant other particularly likes, try to find tutorials online that'll help you recreate their favorite dish - right here in Ellensburg. Youtube is a great resource for this. Pull up some Netflix and have a dinner and a movie, from the comfort of your couch.
CWU students in 2017 can be thankful for the availability of the internet to help them get their homework done.

The image above is from a November edition of the CWU newspaper, showing students in front of Bouillon Hall (which used to be the library!) before Thanksgiving break.

While a lot has changed, it shows the dedication Central students had, and continue to have, in furthering their educational pursuits! Even if it was a little more difficult to get materials for research 53 years ago...

UPCOMING EVENTS!

12/1 LAST DAY OF FALL CLASSES 12/4 STUDY DAY

12/5-12/8 FINALS WEEK
OUR MISSION:

The mission of Information Services is to provide the information systems and services necessary for all departments to achieve their objectives and the objectives of the university, and to establish an information environment that embraces sustainability, stewardship and provides a comprehensive vision for the future.

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CWU.EDU/ITS