

IT Report

Infrastructure Improvements

A major improvement to the server environment occurred this month. The main office server for Carbondale, which also acts as the offsite backup and recover site for the SHARE servers, got a major upgrade this month. A Dell server was purchased to replace the aging server that was currently in place. The existing server was a repurposed server from the pre-merger systems. It has served us well, however it recently started getting critical errors and crashing, leaving many critical services unavailable, like the new delivery iPad project as well as others.

The new server will host:

- In-office critical services for the Carbondale office
- Critical workstation access for IT staff to manage all aspects of IHLS and SHARE environments
- Delivery iPad application services
- Primary development platform for new software
- Offsite backup for the SHARE server environment currently housed on the University of Illinois campus.
- Plenty of room for expansion and future development

Microsoft Teams

Microsoft recently released a new application in their Office 365 suite called “Teams”. Office 365 is provided free of charge for our organization as we are a qualified not-for-profit by Microsoft.

Teams is a chat-based program that allows groups of people within our organization to start conversations online and organize them appropriately. Teams is purely a way to communicate more efficiently. Files can be shared, documents can be edited in realtime and changes can be discussed as well as the ability for each person on a team to choose how important a particular conversation is to them and how quickly they are notified of updates. Many people can reply to a conversation and their responses are kept in order and together with the original post.

Teams is available as an application for the PC and Mac, as well as a web based application, and mobile phones.

Some of our teams already being used are:

- Situation Room
 - When there is a problem of any kind, this is the Teams room where it can be posted quickly. Many people are subscribed to this room and will be notified when something is posted. This is currently used primarily for technology issues, and it could easily be expanded for weather or safety use as well.
- Communications Team
 - The IHLS Communications team uses their room to proofread documents, emails, and other items before they go out on social media, email lists, and print.

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- Operations
- IT Discussion
- Cataloging
- And many more coming soon!

Teams also has traditional instant messaging built into the application, so in time it will replace our *Skype for Business* program completely. Teams is a major leap forward for Office 365, and once again proves that we selected the right platform to hang our hat on going forward.

IHLS has been rolling out Teams slowly here at first. We have trainings for managers planed in July and we continue to send out tips and tricks for its use. The IT staff is excited to promote how this can simplify communications and make ad-hoc groups easier to create for instant communications.