Welcome to the first issue of the new Academic Technology Services newsletter! It’s been a busy year in academic technology at CC. In August, we upgraded the Mac lab with all new machines and we launched our new website and blog http://www.coloradocollege.edu/ats

In addition to our ongoing Tech Tuesday series, we also did a Fall Conference session on technology and the future of higher education, a workshop on the flipped classroom, a Winter Conference session on technology in the CC classroom, and a just-completed half-day workshop on common teaching challenges and how technology can help address them.

This spring, the Tech Tuesdays continue. We will also be offering short afternoon workshops on creating screencasts with Camtasia.

In addition to workshops, we have a number of major projects in the works. We are looking at possible successors to Prowl (see article on last page), setting up a technology playground for faculty and staff to learn about new technologies (see below), and creating a committee to talk about classroom technology issues. And, we continue to participate in the college’s strategic planning process.

For more information about what is going on in academic technology in your area, contact your department liaison. Not sure who that is? Visit the ATS website to find out, or call one of us and we will connect you with your liaison.

What’s New in Academic Technology at CC

Meet Matt Gottfried, GIS Technical Director

Learn at your own pace with Lynda.com

Using GIS to map an archaeological site

Screencasts for French Phonetics

Online academic community (a new Prowl)

The Technology Playground

In block 7, look for the Technology Playground to make its debut in the Keck Macintosh lab (inside the Language Resource Center) on the third floor of Armstrong Hall. The playground is a collection of various types of technologies that can be used in classes, including tablets like the Nexus and iPads, LiveScribe pens, document cameras, and more. All items are available for checkout for a week to two weeks. If you decide you would like to purchase a device for yourself or your department, your ATS liaison can work with you to make the purchase.

We hope to move the playground to a different academic building each block. If your department would be interested in hosting the playground next year, please contact Sarah Withee. Once the locations of the playground in the fall semester have been finalized, we will post a schedule on the ATS website at http://www.coloradocollege.edu/ats

ATS Staff

Chad Schonewill, Director, x6941

Emily Blakely, Instructional Technologist, x6738

Matt Gottfried, GIS Technical Director, x6130

Weston Taylor, Instructional Technologist for Students, x6159

Sarah Withee, Instructional Technologist, x6381
Meet Matt Gottfried—GIS Technical Director

Tell us a bit about your background

I was born and raised in Ohio. Go Buckeyes! Before coming to Colorado College in 2007, I worked as a conservationist with the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves within the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. I also worked as a Biological Technician within the Department of Fish and Wildlife in Florida. For a time, I was even in Minnesota doing environmental geotechnical drilling and sampling.

In 1999 I earned a BS in Field Biology and Environmental Studies from Ohio Northern University, but it was in 2003, when I received his MA in Geography and Land Use Planning from the University of Toledo, that it all came together. Here I found GIS to be my go-to tool for inquiry and analysis of the human-environment relationship. Just after receiving my masters, I was appointed as the Manager for the University of Toledo’s Center for Geographic Information Science and Applied Geographics (GISAG) Lab and an adjunct professor for a number of GIS and geography classes. I directly supported all graduate and undergraduate spatial research for the campus community. My experience in this role directly translated to the GIS efforts CC was building. When the CC position opened up, I knew it was where I wanted to be. For as long as I could remember, I had always wanted to settle in the West. Everything just fell into place.

What do you do at Colorado College and what you enjoy most about your job?

I teach, support and encourage spatial inquiry at CC. This includes GIS courses, independent study courses, and departmental course lab modules. I provide direct support for faculty and student collaborative research and publications. This is in addition to one-on-one student professional development in GIS and remote sensing disciplines.

I really enjoy working directly with students and faculty on their research. GIS can provide a unique way to explore real-world relationships and gives students an opportunity to participate in faculty research. Geography and its principles influence many aspects of education. I enjoy finding new ways GIS can influence and enhance students’ lives in the preparation for their life beyond CC.

What are some of your interests as they relate to your role at CC?

Maps, maps, maps. Maps can tell a story, keep you from getting lost, and help you find things you may not even have thought you were looking for. Information is all around us. Finding ways to manipulate this information spatially, to better understand the world, is truly a driving force. CC students who spend so much time in the outdoors, use maps all the time; GIS creates a common platform for students to investigate relationships in the world as well as to help plan block break trips.

What are some of your non-work interests?

My dog, Sparky, he’s a Chesapeake Bay retriever. The ukulele, I’m currently teaching myself how to play. My two motorcycles, I just entered an enduro race series this year.

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For more information about Lynda.com and other software resources ATS provides, visit the ATS website at http://www.coloradocollege.edu/ats and click on the Learning Resources tab, then the Software link.
Using GIS to Map an Archeological Site
Elizabeth Luttrell, Anthropology major

When I began working for the ATS department this year, I was surprised by the array of applications it could have to my anthropology major. My focus in anthropology is archaeology, which mostly uses GIS to map dig sites and analyze the spatial relationships between structures and artifacts. Fortunately for me, Professor Esteban Gomez recently conducted an archaeological survey in Costa Rica for a new dig site, which gave me a great opportunity to apply my new GIS skills to my major. Part of the surveying process consisted of Esteban and his students using a total station to record geographic information about the site. Total stations are used to measure the distance to a point from the location of the total station, which is situated at a known GPS coordinate, as well as to record the elevation of each point. We then convert the data from the total station into a series of GPS coordinates with corresponding elevations. This information is used to create a topographic map by essentially shading in the areas between the points in a process called “kriging,” which calculates the slope between the points based on their elevations and the amount of distance between them. Once the map has been created, we can insert the locations of the artifacts found thus far and determine the density of artifacts throughout the site. This information can then be used to determine appropriate areas to excavate during the next field season. As research continues in Costa Rica, we can use GIS to create a digital reconstruction of the site, analyze spatial relationships between important artifacts and structures, and much more. The range of uses for GIS is tremendous, one only needs to know that the technology is available, and that Matt has pretty much all of the answers.
Screencasts for French Phonetics

In spring 2012, Alistaire Tallent, a faculty member in the French, Italian and Arabic department, was awarded a grant from the Dean’s Office to create screencasts for her upper level French language and literature courses. In the French language course – FR304- an advanced language class, students needed to work on their pronunciation, and to do that, they needed to learn the basics of phonetics. So that class time could be spent practicing pronunciation rather than learning things like the International Phonetic Alphabet, Professor Tallent created screencasts for students to watch outside of class. She used the screencasts when she taught the course in block 3, and found that they worked very well. Students came to class with specific questions about the material they had seen, and class time could be spent on those questions and on specific practice rather than on introducing basic concepts.

Professor Tallent’s next project will be creating screencasts of lectures on historical background for her French literature course. The goal of this project is similar to the phonetics one - to move some of the basic introductory material to homework so time in class can be spent on higher-level topics.

One thing she notes for anyone considering a similar project – “Making the videos is far more time-consuming than you might expect.” She had originally figured she would be able to create screencasts for both classes in two weeks. Instead, it took her three weeks to create the screencasts for one class.

If you think creating screencasts might be useful for your class, contact your academic technology liaison, and they will be happy to help you get the necessary software and training to create your own screencasts, or help you find existing resources that could be used for your class.

Online Academic Community

This Spring, ATS is working with the Dean’s Office to put together a selection panel to choose “a new PROWL.”

The panel will include wide representation from across campus (primarily faculty, students, and academic staff), and you'll have a chance to be involved and give feedback even if you aren’t on the panel. These systems are normally called “learning management systems” (LMS) or “course management systems” (CMS), but we are going to refer to this one as our “online academic community” (OAC). When we look at possibilities this spring, we’re going to try to find a product that offers all the essential features of PROWL along with more community building / social networking features like microblogs, comments, profiles, etc. Our goal is to find the right OAC to encourage a thriving online community at Colorado College which is centered in our core academic mission.

Our plan is to have a final decision made by the end of Block 8, and to implement the new system alongside PROWL this summer and into next year – both systems will be available next year and we’ll help gradually transition from PROWL to the new OAC.

We are going to maintain a Google doc with the planned project timeline and other related information, and are happy to share it with you by request so that you can check in on how the project is progressing. If interested, just send a quick note to helpdesk@coloradocollege.edu with a subject line similar to “Share OAC doc” – if you want us to share it directly with a certain gmail address, include that as well.