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January 2025

Lifecycle Refresh of the Data Center Network

Network & Telecommunications

The Enterprise Technology Data Center and Networking teams have substantially completed a lifecycle refresh of the data center network. The project involved the replacement of all data center routers and switches. The team coordinated with over 50 campus units to move their equipment to the new network and ensure services were not impacted. The new network design increases bandwidth within the data center and between the data center and the network core. New higher-speed connection options for hosted equipment are also available. The data center network was nearing the end of support and needed to be life cycled. In addition to mitigating risk, the move to more modern hardware allowed for increases in performance and scalability.

Centralization of the RedCap Tool for Research Community

IT Infrastructure & Services

The Enterprise Technology IT Infrastructure & Services Team Centralized the RedCap tool for Research Community. The Enterprise Technology - Campus Solutions rollout of the centralized secure data collection and management system, RedCap is currently in the pre-operational phase. The internal customers and Campus Solutions will be trialing the configurations during this phase to ensure the customer experience is similar to the existing. We are also engaging in 3rd party verification of HIPPA Compliance during this phase prior to transitioning into the operationalization for this new service. This will consolidate 3 different instances into a centrally supported platform in Enterprise Technology - Campus Solutions, increasing the reliability and security of these tools. The Central RedCap Service is cloud based and will reduce the usage of on-premise resources today.

Financial Aid Applications Loaded for the 2025-2026 Academic Year

Academic Information Systems

The Enterprise Technology Academic Information Systems team has loaded the financial aid applications for the 2025-2026 academic year. This month the Financial Aid IT team within Enterprise Platforms partnered with the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid to load ISIRs (financial aid application records) into the university's Student Financial Aid (SFA) system, setting the stage for an on-time release of 2025-2026 financial aid offers to students later this spring. After the severe difficulties students experienced in the 2024-2025 financial aid year, with delays in the release of the revised FAFSA by the US Department of Education and the implementation of the university's new SFA system, the 2025-2026 financial aid year is getting off to a much smoother and more timely start. Now that these financial aid applications have been loaded into the SFA system, work is moving forward rapidly to configure and release 2025-2026 financial aid offers to students on schedule later this spring. Loading financial aid applications is the first step in the process of providing critical financial aid to our students. By working collaboratively with our partners in the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid to configure and test the loading of these applications, we are helping to provide financial support that makes it possible for many of our students to attend UT.

Announcing the IID in Microsoft 365 Project

IT Infrastructure & Services

The Enterprise Technology IT Infrastructure & Services team will be announcing the IID in Microsoft 365 project. Over the course of the spring semester, Collaborative Platform Services will engage with groups across campus to pilot bringing support for the Institutional Identifier (IID) to Microsoft 365. This identity (<EID>@eid.utexas.edu) is in broad use by other University-provided services and its adoption in Microsoft 365 will permit smoother integration between them. The project team will reach out to prospective pilot participants in the coming weeks, with a goal of full project completion by summer 2025.

Phase One of Equifax I-9 Pilot Project Launches

Enterprise Business Information Technology Solutions

Enterprise Business Information Technology Solutions team will launch phase one of Equifax I-9 Pilot Project on February 3, 2025. To enhance business processes and improve the campus onboarding experience, Enterprise Technology, in collaboration with Human Resources, the College of Engineering, and the College of Liberal Arts, is launching the first phase of a three-phase pilot program. This initiative aims to reduce I-9 processing times and improve data quality. Phase One will establish the foundation for transitioning I-9 processing from Workday to the I-9 Management module on the Equifax platform. Future phases will introduce new integrations between Workday and Equifax, reducing processing times at the CSU level and minimizing the need for manual intervention and oversight at the Central HR administration level. Projected benefits will be evaluated at the end of the pilot program before the full-scale campus release and include:

1. Cost Savings: Direct reduction in operational cost by ~10%. The pilot will help determine actual savings and potential recovery methods (as needed).
2. Compliance: Access to expertise and up-to-date knowledge on I-9 regulations, expenses, and reducing the risk of fines.
3. Efficiency: Streamlined processes and faster verification times. Equifax offers a centralized process with access to in-person and virtual completion options.
4. Scalability: Ability to handle varying volumes of new hires without additional overhead.
5. Focus on Other Core Activities: Allows HR and management to focus on strategic initiatives.

The launch of Phase One marks the culmination of six months of collaboration and campus engagement among campus business leaders, Central HR administrators, and Enterprise Technology. This phase exemplifies the value of strong relationships and engagement needed to address business process inefficiencies and improve campus experiences.

Proactive Outreach Identifies AI Opportunities with Copilot

IT Infrastructure & Services

The Enterprise Technology IT Infrastructure & Services team conducted proactive outreach efforts. The project team conducted proactive outreach efforts with the help of our vendor partners I2E and Microsoft, which included interviews with campus stakeholders, and colleagues within ET to gauge interest in AI and identify potential projects that could be enhanced with the usage of Copilot. The initiation of adoption planning and training for a Microsoft-first environment within ET marks a critical step towards creating a more seamless transition to AI integrations with Copilot. This collaboration fosters a culture of innovation and ensures that our approach is aligned with the business needs of campus. As we plan out the Copilot adoption project, the I2E interviews will increase our ability to deliver tailored training and engagement solutions that meet the specific needs of our campus community at UT, ensuring that our AI initiatives are both effective and widely embraced. The UT.AI program's accomplishments are highly dependent upon high quality collaboration with our campus colleagues and the broader members of the UT Community. This month's accomplishments highlight our investment and commitment to fostering transformative learning culture at UT. This new culture of learning will introduce the campus to modern workplace tools which will simplify processes and enhance our ability to work with agility and speed in meeting the demands of the future.

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Self-Service Tutor Testing Expands to 32 Faculty & Staff

IT Infrastructure & Services

The Enterprise Technology IT Infrastructure & Services team initiated a self-service tutor creation in Sage that is being tested by 16 new faculty and staff, bringing the testing group total up to 32. With the Sage self-service config form, faculty can create and train their own tutors. This is accomplished by adding domain specific documents to an existing large language model (LLM) which trains the LLM to be more accurate on any given tutor topic selected by the faculty member. The final milestone will be to deliver the config form functionality in a conversational user interface (CUI). The CUI will enable a tutor to be created and trained by way of chatting with the Sage generative AI tutor interface. The Sage self-service form enables faculty to create and build tutors completely on topics of their choosing. Prior to this feature being available, the Sage support team had to create and build the tutors on their behalf which the faculty members would review. The development of the Sage application will be open for all faculty and students to use in beta on March 24th, 2025. The engagement with AWS started in July of 2024 with the cloud vendor setting up the back-end functionality. UT Austin started coding the front-end application in October of 2024. This means that the development of phase I of this impactful application will be available to all of campus in just nine months of concentrated development. This is a short amount of time for an application that could be used by all faculty and students. Something to be excited about! Link Here

Building a Digital Accessibility Policy at the University of Texas

Enterprise Learning Technology

The Enterprise Learning Technology team is Building a Digital Accessibility Policy at the University of Texas. As the Digital Accessibility Center expands to meet the needs of UT's expansive digital landscape, a governing policy is essential for establishing and enforcing standards. The Digital Accessibility Policy will govern all digital content, applications, and platforms to ensure accessibility for everyone, including individuals with disabilities. This policy promotes a culture that proactively incorporates accessibility and ensures compliance with federal requirements. It will enhance accessibility for over 70,000 students, faculty, and staff, reduce legal risks, and improve user experience. The DAC has begun collaborating with the ADA Coordinators to form a committee involving stakeholders to build and refine the policy. This effort is further supported by the DAC's involvement in the BAITLC Accessibility Subcommittee, which will provide recommendations on training and resources, evaluate current tools, and assess the system for monitoring and evaluation. Link Here