

Technology in Teaching REVIEW

A Monthly Newsletter - December 2011

CofC's Google Apps...Now Available for Faculty and Staff

by Mendi Benigni

I.T. is pleased to announce the availability of Google Apps for College faculty and staff. To request your account, login to MyCharleston and select the **Request Your Google Apps Account** channel on the **Faculty or Employee** tab. Click the link to request your account and follow the instructions.

Google Apps include popular features like Calendar, Photos, Documents, Groups, Sites, Reader, and more. **Please note that**

Google Apps for faculty and staff does not include Gmail. Gmail is only available for students. Also, at this time Google+ is not yet available to Google Apps users, but Google is working hard to bring the features of Google+ to Apps users in the future.

Logging In

Once you have created your account, you can login at <https://accounts.google.com/>. Your login name is your full College email address (e.g. smithersw@cofc.edu). Your

password by default is the same password you use to login to MyCharleston.

Need Help?

Problem reports and questions should be directed to the Helpdesk at helpdesk@cofc.edu or 843.953.3375. If you need help learning to use the Google Apps in your teaching then contact your Instructional Technologist.

More information is at <http://it.cofc.edu/accounts-email/google-apps/>

Wolfram | Alpha

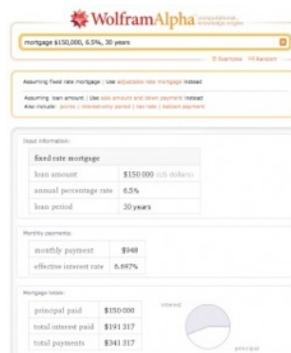
by Bryan Luce

WolframAlpha is an incredibly useful and powerful computational search engine. While that sounds awfully technical, the practical side is finding and calculating data-centric information. To put it yet another way, WolframAlpha lets you look up numbers about stuff.

But rather than talk about it, here are a few examples from the WolframAlpha website (also available as an iPhone or iPad app):

Like it's older sibling Mathematica, WolframAlpha can calculate just about anything.

It calculates in the "real world", like this home mortgage example:



Of course, it offers current data from a wide variety of scientific sources. Ever wondered the real-time orbit of the International Space Station or if that Oreo Cookie is really a good idea at snack time ...?

These few examples are just the tip of the iceberg. See many many more examples at <http://www.wolframalpha.com/examples/?src=input>



OAKS Tip: PowerPoint Presentations and OAKS

by Mendi Benigni

Giving your students your PowerPoint (PPT) presentations is a great way to keep them engaged during the lecture, assist them in note taking and help them study and putting them in OAKS gives your students easy access. PowerPoint presentations however, can be large making them difficult for students to download, cumbersome for mobile devices and drive space hogs on OAKS. Here are a few tips to help you decrease your file size footprint and make life easier on your students.

Convert your PowerPoints into PDFs

This method is wonderful for presentations that do NOT include embedded animations, audio or video files. If you are on a Mac or are on a Windows machine using PowerPoint 2007 or 2010 you can easily convert your PPT to a PDF. Your best option is to save the presentation in *Handout mode* with three slides to a page.

This allows the students to take notes during the lecture and have a great study guide later on. If, however, your presentation primarily consists of images then you may want to save it as a PDF with full slide view. **TIP:**

Converting a PPT to a PDF will not carry over any live web links. I recommend that you type out the web address (URL) in the presentation so that when it is converted the students can see the entire address.

Office 2007 and 2010 (Windows)

- In PowerPoint, choose to save as PDF/XPS (note in 2007 you may have to download the PDF add-in (see full instructions for more information).
- In the next window be sure to optimize for the “Minimum size.”



- Click “Options” then next to Publish Options choose either “Slides” for full slides or “Handouts” with Slides per Page set to “3”
- Now click OK to save the PDF to your computer

Full instructions for saving PPTs as PDFs can be found online at <http://goo.gl/JyH6u> (2007) and at <http://goo.gl/wawuI> (2010)

Office 2008 and 2011 (Mac)

- In PowerPoint, choose File > Print.
- In the window choose either “Slides” or “Handouts” next to Print What.
- In the lower left corner choose PDF > Save as PDF or just Save as PDF.
- Select the location on your computer to save the file.

Full instructions for saving PPTs as PDFs can be found online at <http://goo.gl/ZGyVk> for Mac.

Shrinking a PDF file size

Occasionally when you create a PDF it can still be a very large file size, usually because it is graphics heavy. If you are lucky enough to have the full version of Adobe Acrobat (not just Acrobat Reader) then you can optimize or shrink this file size even further.

- Open the large PDF in Adobe Acrobat Standard or Adobe Acrobat Professional.
- From the Advanced menu choose PDF Optimizer
- Choose Images from the PDF Optimizer window and change all of your images to 75 pixels (it normally is set to 150 pixels). This is called Downsampling.
- Click Save and save the file under a different name. That way if you aren't happy with the new output you can still revert back to your original PDF file.

Streaming and Recording Guest Speakers

by Zach Hartje

A method that is often used in teaching, that helps enhance material covered in lectures, is to bring a guest speaker into the classroom. Guest speakers are typically experts in their field and can convey current and realistic information and knowledge about a subject that is not typically found in a textbook. It also allows students to see how the theories learned in the classroom transition into the workplace and gives them the opportunity to ask questions to someone in the industry.

Until somewhat recently, guest speakers had to physically come to campus to speak to a class. Physically bringing someone to campus can have its limitations and could potentially lead to logistical nightmares. It may be hard to invite and coordinate with someone from across the county or overseas and the price of travel and hospitality can add up quickly. Because of this you may find that you are only able to work with folks who are local.

With the emergence of the web and online video calling software inviting a guest speaker has never been easier. There are a number of free applications that can be used to conduct an online video call; the most commonly used is Skype. At minimum, all you need to conduct this is a computer and a webcam with a built in microphone. Because of its simplicity more and more video calls are being used to allow guests to speak to classes. In fact, I was involved in two just last week. One class had a guest speaker from India while the other class involved two different speakers, one in Atlanta, GA and the other in New York City.

The call to India was very simple to set up. Simply install Skype, plug in the webcam/microphone and “dial” the guest speaker.

As long as the guest’s internet connection is stable you should have a seamless experience. The second example was a little more involved to setup and conduct but I wanted to walk through the steps on the chance that someone else would like to try this in their course. The task at hand was to run a conference-style video call with callers from three different locations which could be presented to a classroom. With permission from the speakers, they also wanted the call streamed online live as well as recorded so folks not in attendance would have access.

Scenario:

- *Caller 1* - Students in Wachovia Auditorium, classroom at CofC.
- *Caller 2* - Steve Koonin, President of Turner Entertainment Networks , Atlanta, GA.
- *Caller 3* - Dave Morgan, President and CEO of Litton Entertainment as well as the instructor for the course, New York City.

Video calling software:

The video calling software that was used in this instance was Polycom Telepresence m100. This was used because it is compatible with Polycom video conferencing appliances that the folks at Turner Broadcasting already had and wanted to use. You could just as easily run this with Skype, WebEx, and other video calling software.

Streaming and recording software:

Ustream and Livestream are two very good, free, web based applications that can be used to stream a webcam or your desktop. Both have very similar functionality but from a preference standpoint I chose to use Livestream and their downloadable application called Procaster, which allows you to stream as well as record your desktop or webcam at the same time.

Limitations:

There are a number of different quality options to choose from when streaming through Procaster. I found that when trying this on a Windows machine I had to drop the quality down to the lowest option (mobile devices) because the combination of programs was using up too much memory. This in turn produced pixilated stream. Unfortunately, increasing the memory (RAM) on the computer didn’t seem to help much. I had much better success with this when running from a MAC. I was able to stream and record at a normal or higher quality.

Conclusion:

If you would like to invite a guest speaker to your class, but physically bringing them to campus won’t work, I would highly suggest trying a video call. We are seeing this method used more and more here on campus so I believe the outcomes are satisfying to Faculty and Students.

The video calling portion of this is a piece of cake. If you’d like to try and stream it to the web and/or record, I would highly suggest testing thoroughly. TLT has webcams for checkout and your Instructional Technologist can always lend a hand.

FTI Follow-up Roundtable

In November, TLT hosted a follow-up 'roundtable' discussion to our Summer Faculty Technology Institute.

In the session participants discussed how they've integrated the tools and tips from the FTI into their instruction. They also shared some of the other innovative techniques and best practices for using technology in the classroom. You can view a video of the session online at <http://goo.gl/cXymT>



A special thanks goes to:

David Desplace (Mgmt & Entrepreneurship)

Brumby Mcleod (Hosp & Tourism)

Jen Welsh (History)

Stephanie Dellis (Biology)

Lynn Cherry (Communication)

OAKS - Getting Ready for Next Semester

It's that time of year when you begin getting ready for the next semester. Just a reminder that you don't have to reinvent the wheel when it comes to your OAKS classes. You can copy all of the content, quizzes, assignments, etc. from you current or old classes to your new class. It's fast and easy and will save you tons of time. Full instructions can be found online at goo.gl/Bgf1l

How to copy from one OAKS course to another (Be sure to start in the empty or new course).

- Begin in your new OAKS class (the one that does NOT already contain the content you want).
- Click the **Edit Course** link from the upper navigation.
- Choose **Import / Export / Copy Components** from the right side of the window.
- Select **Copy Components from Another Org Unit** then click **Next**.
- From the dropdown list, under Existing Offering, select the course with the material you wish to copy (ex. the Spring course).
- If you wish to copy the entire course, check the box next to **Select All Components**.
- Click **Next**.
- Continue to click **Next** until you get through all the prompts.
- When finished click **Done**.

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