ITD plays major role in captioning

For Justin Reed, former production manager of MTSU’s Tucker Theatre, the challenge was to solve one problem without creating new ones.

Starting several years ago, Reed and the theatre department began working with James Copeland, ITD assistant director of Classroom A/V technology, and the M3 Technology Group to provide captioning of performances and programs for deaf or hard of hearing audience members.

Funding was available from student Technology Access Fees, and the University had embarked upon an effort to improve accessibility services.

See Tucker Captioning, page 9

Multi-factor Authentication to be mandatory

After a voluntary sign-up period, Multi-factor Authentication service will become mandatory for MTSU employees in October.

All students must sign up by February 2019.

Earlier this year, MTSU started the cyber-security program for systems using single sign-on (SSO) services that requires a second factor of authentication in addition to a password.

If hackers compromise your password, they would still need a second factor, like your phone, to complete an authentication request.

MTSU systems requiring employees to enter their Pipeline/FSA user name @ mtsu.edu use SSO services.

Phishing attacks, malware, and social engineering constantly target the University population with the intent of stealing users’ credentials to gain unauthorized access to MTSU systems. Before October, multi-factor authentication is available to all users as an opt-in service. Employees should log in with their MTSU Pipeline/FSA user name@ mtsu.edu (e.g., jdoe@mtsu.edu).

If you have any questions, contact the ITD Help Desk at 615-898-5345 or help@mtsu.edu.

• FAQ website: mtsu.edu/security/mfa-faq.php
• MFA instructions: mtsu.edu/security/mfa-instructions.php
• MFA opt-in website: https://webservices.mtsu.edu/EnableMFA
Marie and Lynda hit the MTSU campus about the same time two years ago. For film buff Marie Elliott, you could say it was “the beginning of a beautiful friendship,” to quote the classic line.

Since then, as the result of their collaborative efforts, the number of online course offerings and enrollment in the Department of Media Arts is on fast-forward.

Elliott, associate professor and program coordinator of Video and Film Production, said MTSU’s decision to offer Lynda.com video tutorial program to students, faculty, and staff in the fall of 2016—just as she was beginning to teach here—has taken the program next level. “This fall I am fully online—I am teaching four online classes,” Elliott said. And each one features Lynda.com courses to some extent.

“We’re one of the only places that is really utilizing Lynda.com and being able to do this. It is really something . . . And the students really like it,” Elliott said. “I’ve said this a million times to people: ‘Our students often come to us and want to know exactly what to do.’ And we can tell them what to do. But once they leave here, the technology changes so rapidly, they’re going to have to figure this stuff out on their own.”

“So they can go to Lynda.”

Elliott’s online courses are the reasons why the video-editing software Premiere Pro is the top Lynda.com tutorial course topic heading into MTSU’s 2018-19 academic year. “Premiere Pro CC 2017 Essential Training: The Basics” and “Premiere Pro Guru: Organizing Assets” were the No. 1 and 2 most popular courses among University users, according to a report from August.

“When I came here they asked me to take a look at the curriculum because I was new and had fresh eyes. So I started looking at things and told my department head ‘you have a few classes you could move online,’” Elliott said.

“I said ‘Because this is such a better program—that’s why I came here—as things blow up you’re going to have to start offering more things online!’”

Media Arts Chair Billy Pittard—who happens to be a former employee of Lynda.com—gave the green light. Elliott has created online versions of Films and Filmmakers, Networks Then and Now, and Post-Production I, and now she’s working on Screenwriting.

For the Films and Filmmakers course, she assigns Lynda.com tutorial videos as supplemental material, such as panel discussions from cinematography conferences to supplement the textbook.

But in Post-Production I, it is part of the official curriculum. Students view assigned Lynda tutorials and send Elliott a copy of their completion certificate for grading points.

“(Post-Production I) 1080 relies totally on Lynda.com videos,” she said.

With its self-guided, hands-on lessons, Lynda.com lends itself perfectly to online classes like Post-Production I.

“It is basic editing, it is everything that’s in this book online,” she said, holding the Post-Production I textbook. “It is highly technical stuff . . . Some of them come in with no experience, some of them have done it in high school. This forces them to troubleshoot better; it forces them to learn the computer better.”

“And when they watch the Lynda.com videos, it’s way more digestible. It’s way more user-friendly,” she added.

Having Lynda as a student resource gives MTSU an advantage over similar programs and it is starting to show.

“We have matriculated probably 100 students through the (Post-Production) 1080 class since piloting it online in spring,” she said. “This spring there were two sections and this summer I taught two sections—all online.”

Lynda.com helping video editing classes “blow up” at MTSU
After spring debut, online evals continuing with new shorter form

The first use of online faculty evaluations was this past spring went well, and a new shortened questionnaire should make the process even smoother, said ITD Systems Analyst 2 Curt Curry.

After a pilot program was completed last fall by several departments, the University gave the green light to phase in the program at the end of the Spring 2018 semester.

Most students began using online evaluations through Campus Lab rather than the fill-in-the-bubbles paper form. Only a handful of faculty members who are in the tenure process continued to be evaluated using paper forms, he said.

While the responses were collected online, the results were processed using a database Curry developed. But this year the results will be processed through Campus Labs.

Curry has been in charge of the process for 20 years. He said that in recent years he sent out about 90,000 paper forms per semester to departments to be distributed to students. Then he received back approximately 60,000 completed forms to run through a scanning machine to pull the data.

University officials expected that nearly 70 percent participation rate to drop under the online system at first, and it did, but expect it to increase as the word gets out, he said.

That’s projected now that the revised questionnaire has dropped from 40 questions to 10.

“If you got out and tell them there is a 40-question survey we’d like for you to fill out, they might say ‘I’m not going to do it,’” Curry said. “But just 10 quick questions, they can get out their phone and do that.”

Curry said it often took two to three weeks for him and a student worker to simply prepare the completed forms to be run through the scanning machine. Then it would take up to two hours to scan a box of 5,000 paper surveys.

And he would work with the data online to process it and distribute to departments. Curry said he will continue to maintain the database he used in order for department chairs to access responses from previous years.

While paper evaluations were done by students while they were in class, the online evaluation link is being sent out by the student MTMail program. That makes it important for students to monitor this email account throughout the year.

A revision to the MTSU policy on Student Conduct this past spring included this reminder: "Students have the responsibility to regularly check their University-issued email accounts and to ensure that the local address on file with MTSU is current."

In that case it was because official notices about alleged University rules violations are sent by "snail mail" and through the student's MTMail account.

However, students should regularly check their University email account because it is where all official correspondence with the University takes place, including the online evals.

“It’s really to the faculty’s benefit to get bigger numbers, so hopefully the faculty will encourage their students,” Curry said.

Professor Charlie H. Apigian, former chair of the Information Systems and Analytics department, agrees and says it benefits the students as well.

“When we started the process for implementing an online student evaluation system, our main objective was to give students a voice in the most efficient manner that we can provide,” Apigian said.

“One of the best aspects of an online system is students can provide comments if faculty include custom questions. As you can imagine, comments directly from students can provide valuable feedback that can be instantly used in the classroom.”

That happened with one of his classes, he said.

"For example, comments from the spring semester for one of my classes offered insight on how students used my online videos. For this semester, I am making changes, based on these suggestions," Apigian said.

“Online evaluations are only as valuable as the responses that are collected. So it is extremely important for students to not only fill out the surveys, but take them seriously. As educators, we do value the opinion and feedback from our students.”

Charlie H. Apigian, professor of Information Systems & Analytics
Access Success by Bill Burgess

Back to Basics: Adding Alternative Text for photos, graphics

Many access concerns can be fixed with simple practices.

Probably the most basic is adding alternative text to images within your document creation application. When creating alternative text, make sure to write a description that would suffice if you were to substitute the text description for everyone that views your document.

**In Word 2016**

1. Right-click (Ctrl + click on Mac) on the image
2. Choose Format Picture from right-click menu
3. Click the Size and Properties icon
4. Add a description to the Description field, rather than the Title field

**In D2L Daylight**

1. Place the cursor where you want to insert an image and click the Insert image icon from the toolbar. The Add a File window will open.
2. Browse to the image location either on your computer or in your course offering files. Navigate to where the image is, select the image file, and click the Open button.
3. Click the Add button.
4. The Provide Alternate Text window will open. Type in descriptive text for the image. Warning: Only click “This image is decorative” if the image adds no value to the reading experience.

**In Acrobat Pro**

1. Add the Accessibility tools to your right-side toolbar
2. Choose Set Alternate Text from within the Accessibility tools
3. Enter appropriate alt text for the selected image, and then use the arrows to progress through all images in the document. Warning: Only click “Decorative figure” if the image adds no value to the reading experience.

Bill Burgess is ITD's instructional accessibility specialist. He can be reached at ext. 8445 or William.Burgess@mtsu.edu.
Staff Profile: Jimmy Williams

Williams and wife alternated educational accomplishments

Jimmy Williams and his wife, Kelly, took an alternating approach to their educations. That eventually led them both to MTSU four years ago, with Jimmy working for ITD as an academic/instructional technology specialist and Kelly as a faculty member teaching accounting.

The son of an Army drill sergeant, Williams moved a lot while growing up. "Memphis is where the majority of my family is, but we lived in Germany, El Paso, Virginia, and Colorado. We lived all over," he said.

Williams graduated high school in Bartlett, Tennessee, near Memphis, and after getting married embarked on the education plan with his new bride. "The plan was for my wife and I to alternate degrees," Williams said. "So she completed her bachelor’s degree right after we met, then I went and got my two-year degree and said 'I'm going to go out and see what I can do.'"

With that two-year degree from Southwest Community College in Unix and Linux systems administration, Williams worked mainly in industrial scale electrical systems for stores and restaurants. He began to gravitate toward working in a tech shop on hardware, software, and operating systems while Kelly earned her master’s degree. "I decided after a while that if I was really going to make a career out of computers I needed to go out and get my four-year degree," he said.

So when it was his turn again, he earned a B.S. in IT Management from Christian Brothers in Memphis. Then the couple moved to Ole Miss in Oxford, Mississippi, for Kelly to earn her Ph.D in accounting, and it was there that Jimmy Williams began working in IT systems administration in Southaven, Mississippi, on a satellite campus.

"I started running all the IT for (the Ole Miss satellite campus)—all of the networking, all of the workstations, all of the projectors, everything classroom-related I would handle," Williams said.

He found that he really enjoyed it and began gravitating toward accessibility issues. "I met someone with Student Disability Services who asked if I'd be interested in a job on campus doing accessibility technology," he said. "It was the first experience I had working with students and see how much it helped students to gain access to these materials that they didn't have before . . . and I really liked that aspect.

"I guess it was that 'aha' moment that teachers say they love when they see kids get it."

So when the time came to find a University where she could teach accounting, he also was looking for an IT job. That is what led them to MTSU in 2014.

Williams' job focus with ITD has changed somewhat over the years. Early on he focused more on accessibility issues along with his primary responsibility—Desire2Learn (D2L)/ePortfolio training. While D2L has moved to the forefront, he continues to help out with accessibility workshops and assisting faculty members provide accessible materials. "I tell them realistically, 80 percent of accessibility comes down to just being able to access materials," he said.

Working to empower those with physical or mental challenges was something Williams was drawn to early on in his career.

His first IT job was as an intern with St. Jude’s Children’s Hospital and Ole Miss.

"St. Jude has an admirable goal. They didn't hide the patients away from the employees. . . . Everyone went to the same cafeteria, so all of the patients and their families were there and you could tell who was still in active treatment. It really put everything in perspective," he said.

The Williamses have a son, Bryce. In his free time Williams enjoys fishing and shooting sports, and the family recently returned from a vacation in Cancun, Mexico.
ITD Staff News

Foster receives Extron certifications

ITD Desktop/Classroom Specialist Justin Foster recently earned two new certifications.

Foster is now certified as an Extron Control Professional and Extron AV Associate.

The programs prepare participants to successfully deploy and maintain customized A/V control systems that are built using Extron Pro Series control products and Extron Global Configurator Professional software.

The certification process involved a combination of online and instruction-led courses, as well as a proctored exam. Extron offers over 5,000 audiovisual products through 40 offices worldwide.


Smith, Burgess attend OLC conference with focus on classroom media

ITD’s Kourtney Smith and Bill Burgess attended the Online Learning Consortium (OLC) conference held in Nashville at the Gaylord Opryland Resort in April.

“The OLC conference was a great experience that blended instructional design and academia in creative ways through technology and media,” said Smith, a learning multimedia developer.

“Coming from the private sector, I’m still new to pedagogy and different instructional design concepts, but the conference gave me practical and creative ways to incorporate media into the classroom,” she said.

Smith said some sessions helped establish the basics of good design practices, while others helped her to “think outside the box through storytelling, gamification, and tailored-made media.”

“I walked away with design and app resources for current projects, as well as inspiration for future virtual reality endeavors,” Smith said.

Burgess, an instructional accessibility specialist, said the conference hosts speakers and vendors that focus on higher education’s online learning programs.

“In fact, MTSU Online received an award from OLC in 2017 for outstanding quality through an assessment by which all online learning programs in the country are measured,” Burgess said.

The OLC presented the University with its Exemplary Endorsement plaque recognizing MTSU Online for “outstanding quality” of its online educational programs, according to reports.

“I enjoyed the variety of sessions at the OLC conference. I learned about everything from proper gamification to interweaving podcasting to online courses to increase student engagement,” Burgess said. "The hot topics this year seemed to be virtual reality, managed proctoring for online courses, and video discussion boards, which encourage deeper relationships.”

Peden joins ITD as app developer

John Peden joined ITD in June as Mobile Application Developer 2.

Peden, of Murfreesboro, is a graduate of Zion Christian Academy and earned a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science with minor in Mathematics from MTSU, graduating in May.

Peden was a student iOS developer and team lead for the MTSU Mobile App team.

“I manage a team of student developers and develop the apps and backend for the apps,” Peden said.

Peden and his wife Rebecca attend City Hope Church, where he plays piano and guitar.

He also enjoys photography.
Semler ready for unplugged back-to-nature retirement

After an instructional tech career that spanned from film projectors to PowerPoint presentations, Duane Semler planned an unplugged retirement.

“It has changed so much in the 30 years I’ve been in the field, it’s almost impossible to keep up with, but I’ve done the best I could,” said Semler, who retired in August after 11 years with MTSU as manager of classroom support.

“I’ve really enjoyed this job over the years. It’s been very challenging and a lot of hard work, but I enjoy hard work.”

Eleven years is a theme in Semler’s career, having worked in similar roles at Berea College in Kentucky and Dayton College in Ohio for the same periods of time.

Semler loves the outdoors, particularly the West. Born in Iowa, he graduated from Iowa State University with a degree in Forestry before earning a master’s in Communications Media at Northern Iowa University.

That degree focused on such technology as overhead, 8mm and 16mm projectors, reel-to-reel video, and cassettes.

His first job was at Sinte Gleska University on a Sioux Indian reservation in South Dakota. Semler said he enjoyed that time with his new wife Diane.

Their daughter Amanda was born during a blizzard that dumped 20 inches of snow.

They enjoyed American Indian culture, watching a “sun dance,” visiting a sweat lodge, and viewing the sacred pipe of the Sioux Nation.

After that he worked a short time at Lake Michigan Community College, and it was during that time their son Keith was born.

Semler came to MTSU in 2007 and has worked in classroom support out of the Business and Aerospace Building. In that role he has responded to work orders and emergency calls in every building and room at the University.

See Semler on page 10
Email sigs can help others find you

With people moving all over campus lately, here is a tip to make sure people can reach you.

That is by using an email signature or making sure that your current signature is up-to-date with job title, department, location, phone number, and email.

This information will make it easier for fellow staff members, professors, and students to find and contact you.

To create one, open Outlook on your computer and click on new email.

Once the new email opens you should see an option called Signature as shown below. Click on that option.

Then click on Signatures. You should only see Signature unless you previously created one, and then you will see it too and can simply update it.

Once you click on Signature this will pop up.

From here it is pretty straightforward to create your signature. You will first click on New and it will pop up a box asking you to enter a name you want to call it. Then you can change the font style and size and even add active web or email links.

Once you finish entering it you will need to click on Save. Then where you see New messages: click the dropdown box next to it and select the name of the email signature you created. This will ensure that all of the new emails you create will include it.

Telecommunication part of relocation

Moving to a new location on campus? Remember to email telecom@mtsu.edu before you start packing!

A Telecommunication Services technician will be happy to assist reconnecting your phone in your new location, as well as ensure your phone connects properly to the network to eliminate potential issues in the future. Also, it provides an opportunity for Telecommunication Services to update your location record for E911.

In your email, be sure to include the following:

- Name
- Campus telephone number
- New location, with building and room number
- Date of move

As a reminder, Telecommunication Services requests a two-week notice on work order requests. Should you have additional questions, feel free to contact Telecommunication Services at x2991.

Remember, after your move is complete, you must update your campus location on PipelineMT so that the online directory is populated with the most current information.

Test Daylight’s new quiz-building tool

MTSU moved to the new look of Desire2Learn called Daylight this summer.

D2L features/tools work as they always have, but the interface will now be mobile-friendly and respond to the size of the screen on the device it is being displayed.

It’s a great change for those who are on the go. When using phones and tablets, there is now a much-improved experience.

One improvement that faculty will notice is the “modernizing and streamlining” of the quiz-building feature on D2L. This improvement focuses mainly on a redesign of the top four question types (multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and written response), and sections and question pools (which replaced random sections).

Quick question adding and previewing are a part of this streamlined workflow.

Instructors will see the “opt-in” for the new quiz experience when they begin to add a new question or random section within the quiz and question library tool. This “opt-in” will be removed after December. Test it out this semester when you have a few extra minutes!

For details visit: https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/It-s-time-to-try-out-the-new-Quizzing-Experience
But in the world of performing arts it wasn't as simple as putting up a giant screen over the stage. There were aesthetic concerns, he said.

“We really didn’t know how it was going to work. In the traditional sense in theatres, they use LED light bars with running text. We did a lot of research and... for me aesthetically, that just did not look good. It was just not attractive.”

“It’s kind of distracting for the rest of the audience.”

The goal was to have something in place by this past spring, when the theatre department was to present a production that featured a large amount of sign language along with spoken lines.

Several options were considered, including handing out iPads with scrolling captioning service; rolling out large-screen TVs on either side of the stage; or just placing large screens above or to the sides of the stage.

“On the sides of the stage we felt like for the user of the system, that would be challenging for them to watch the show and watch the words,” Reed said. “So we kind of threw all the traditional things out the window and said, ‘Let’s think from the ground up with modern technology—what are the opportunities that we have?’”

In consultation with Copeland, Lance Alexis, University director of ADA Compliance, and theatre department staff, Reed’s solution was to use old-fashioned teleprompter technology on two large screens mounted low on the handrails just across the aisle from two sections of seats designated for that purpose.

“Newscasters have been using it for decades. It was staring us right in the face—‘Oh wow, why don’t we just use teleprompters?’” Reed said. “A prompter system is all script-based. Well, we’re theatre—we’re 100 percent script-based:”

The project began in January 2017 and was finished this past January, just in time for the February presentation. It also has been used for Joseph and the Technicolor Dream Coat and several University events including the Fall Faculty Meeting.

“As part of our ongoing goal to provide a diverse group of artistic opportunities for our students, we chose a show called A Taste of Sunrise in which all the actors sign throughout the show and the lead character of the show was deaf,” Reed said.

“So we knew two years ago when we selected that show we would have this need and a large audience of (deaf or hard of hearing) patrons.”

Mounting teleprompters low to the ground in front of certain seats allows deaf or hard of hearing audience members and family and friends to sit together and watch the performance on stage, just across the top of the scrolling words on the screen. Meanwhile, most of the rest of the audience cannot see the screen, and performers also don’t use it.

It also created the opportunities for student members of the production team to learn new adaptive technology. A student is in charge of preparing and operating the teleprompter and attends all rehearsals to become familiar with the lines and pace of the production.

“In theatre we teach using non-traditional methods to accomplish goals,” Reed said. “That learning environment allows us to be on the cutting edge of new ideas when necessary... creative ideas about how to accomplish a goal.”

MTSU Theatre major Parker Chase is accustomed to finding her place in productions, whether on stage or behind the scenes. This year the senior learned a brand new role—operating Tucker Theatre’s new captioning system.

Chase works for the theatre’s event staff and when the system was installed, she took on the task of learning how to prepare text for presentation and operate the scrolling feature. ITD worked with Tucker staff to develop and implement the system as part of the University’s ongoing commitment to accessibility.

In addition, Chase, from Memphis, Tennessee, was part of the inaugural use of the captioning system in February as a performer in A Taste of Sunrise. Chase learned American Sign Language to translate performances onstage, and the captioning helped all audience members follow along.

“I was one of the translators for the main character,” she said. “I benefit from it in both ways—technical and performance. It’s pretty cool. I really, really enjoy it.”

“The most beneficial thing I’ve noticed, as far as students from last semester to now, is we now know this technology exists. And we didn’t really consider the audiences that needed that kind of technology, opening access to them during our shows. So it’s definitely been an eye-opener.”

In August she operated the captioning system for the first time during the Fall Faculty Meeting. That involved receiving, loading, and preparing the text of the presenters—including the State of the University speech by MTSU President Sidney A. McPhee.

“This will definitely go on my resume,” Chase said.
He also is certified as a C and C++ programmer. “I’ve worked in programming a lot of different systems... and tying various systems together,” Redmon said. “It’s changed a lot—I wish I knew then what I know now. It’s continued to be interesting.”

He and his wife Sarah will celebrate their 40th anniversary in December. They have three sons—Daniel, Chris and David—and three granddaughters and two grandsons. Family figures largely into his retirement plans. “We love to vacation with our kids and the grandkids in various places,” Redmon said. He and Sarah visited Glacier National Park in Montana after his retirement.

His goal is to travel to all the national parks, and he and Sarah will continue working toward that goal as they head to Acadia National Park in Maine this fall.

**Semler, continued from page 7**

“We take care of the entire campus, including the classrooms off campus at the airport and horse farm. We’ve worked in every classroom on campus,” he said. “There were fewer classrooms when I started, but of course that has sort of exploded over the years.”

“I’ve just sort of adapted to a totally different classroom than what I initially was working in,” Semler said.

“The people at MTSU—that is what has really made the experience rewarding over the years,” he said. “I’ve worked with administrators, faculty, staff, students and been in a lot of classrooms... you know there are a lot of good people on this campus.”

Semler said he and Diane feel that call to the Western outdoors again in his retirement. They plan to volunteer at some national parks, which would allow them to live there. “Room and board is provided,” he said, joking that he probably won’t do a lot of work “related to technology.”

“We just really love nature... To be honest, I’ve seen enough technology,” he said.