Belete helps faculty, staff with tech know-how to cope with COVID

A student of Philosophy, Natnael “Nathan” Belete has developed a personal one when helping clients of the IT Help Desk who are struggling with technological complications or confusion:

Make sure they know he is on their side, not the machine’s.

“We get a lot of frustrated teachers coming in,” said Belete, who has been a student assistant in the Help Desk office for 3½ years. “When a person comes in and they are really mad that their email is not working, I say, ‘Yeah, that’s not acceptable. I’m going to get on that.’ They become a lot more open to me if I do that.”

Born in Ethiopia, Belete moved to the U.S. at age 9, growing up in Antioch. Belete is on track to graduate in May with a degree in Information Systems and a minor in Philosophy.

“Right now, I would be labeled as a super senior,” he said. “I was supposed to graduate in December. I initially started out with a double major in Computer Science and Philosophy, but I
Whether you will be back in class or learning online—or a little of both—the following tools available to all MTSU students can help you stay organized in the coming months.

**OneNote**
A commonly overlooked tool provided to MTSU students, staff, and faculty is OneNote. OneNote is a powerful note-taking and organizational tool that lets users open notebooks about different subjects. You can open as many as you want, and those notebooks can be further divided into subsections and even sections of those sections. Think of it as a multi-section spiral notebook or binder.

Users can type directly into the sections of the notebook, copy and paste from other sources, write directly into sections (if you have a device allowing for handwritten input), sketch, insert pictures, and even record voice notes.

OneNote has a virtual version and does download with the rest of the Office Suite when the essential core of Word, PowerPoint, and Excel is installed. If you save OneNote into your OneDrive, the notes will be available in the virtual environment and the downloaded version once you log in to the notebook. Integration with accessing the portal page and clicking on All Apps to see the full array of what the Microsoft 365 account has to offer.

**Microsoft Lists**
Buried in the grid of All Apps is a gem of a program called Microsoft Lists. Lists allows you to create detailed multi-step to-do-lists and keep track of what is important.

As part of your portal page, Lists can be created with built-in templates or be custom built. Excel spreadsheets can be imported, and it has integration with Microsoft Teams.

Once created, the template of a list can be reused and modified to meet diverse needs. Look for Microsoft Lists by accessing the portal page and clicking on All Apps to see the full array of what the Microsoft 365 account has to offer.

**People**
Staying organized is sometimes as much about managing others as managing yourself. You can get your Microsoft accounts contacts list in order by using People.

Access People by logging into your MTSU portal and clicking on All Apps. If you save OneNote into your OneDrive, the notes will be available in the virtual environment and the downloaded version once you log in to the notebook. Integration with accessing the portal page and clicking on All Apps to see the full array of what the Microsoft 365 account has to offer.

OneDrive allows you to have the files anywhere you have internet access, and if you download the product to your computer you will have those notes even if you are offline.

OneNote is easily accessible at [https://portal.office.com](https://portal.office.com).

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ended up changing my Computer Science major to Information Systems."

He said the computer science courses were more on the “theoretical side,” while he is more interested in hands-on programming and website creation—something he has been doing since he was a child.

“By the time I got to college I had already been making apps, making websites and servers,” he said. “So I was already familiar with it. . . . After a few years I found out that Computer Science focused on the theoretical part of programming. So I switched to Information Systems, where it is more hands-on, and found out it fit me a lot better.”

Having worked on the Help Desk through the Information Technology Division’s Student Technology Assistant (STA) program since his sophomore year, he said the work became busier than ever about a year ago when the COVID-19 crisis hit. The Help Desk crew began to focus on assisting students and faculty in learning new approaches and technology involved in distance learning.

“Most of our calls were about Zoom, how to set up a Zoom meeting, or sharing screens,” he said.

From a student perspective, he said the coronavirus has proven to have positive and negative effects.

“There’s definitely a bad side to it. I think for a lot of freshman and younger students, the social life died off completely,” he said. “My best friends now, my freshman and sophomore years are when I really got to know them. Having the college life where you go to classes and go to social events really did help me. So many students don’t have that right now.”

Belete said he knows distance learning has been a challenge for students in some types of courses.

“I did see a lot of my friends who are in chemistry, biology, things like that take a big hit because they have to go to labs and their major is really focused around physically touching things like microscopes, experiments,” he said.

But with his loaded schedule, Zoom classes actually became a blessing.

“I might be an outlier case, but for me Zoom really did help me a lot, because most of the time I am working, making a new app or doing some kind of project. So having it on Zoom made it easier to stay home, go to class, and do my programs and apps. It gives me a lot more time and I'm saving some money on gas,” he said.

The most rewarding part of his Help Desk work has been “teachers coming back and saying, ‘Thank you, you were really helpful,’” he said.

His career plans are to work on “full stack development,” dealing with both the back end of development and front end of user experience.

Belete has other interests, including playing piano, and has found his philosophy studies to be very rewarding.

“I have become a spiritual person. . . . just looking within and becoming philosophical. And I have a lot of friends in college who are the same and we have philosophical debates,” Belete said.

But he said his favorite pastime is also what he has worked on and studied most of his life now.

“I don’t want to say I’m boring, but I’m a very goal-oriented person. So 99 percent of the time my hobby is working on an app, or a website, or a service for someone,” he said. “Building my portfolio is my hobby. . . . I always have my computer with me.

“Sometimes people say, ‘Can you just give it a rest?’ But this is what brings me happiness, this is joy to me. I don’t see it like I have to do this. I want to be able to create things.”
New password reset process can help you avoid loss of valuable information

A computer programmer made news recently when he said he could lose about $260 million worth of bitcoins because he couldn't remember his password.

Stefan Thomas said there’s “no chance” he’ll ever recoup his lost fortune, describing it as a “painful memory.”

“It’s not like I barely don’t remember it,” Thomas told NBC’s “Today” show. “It’s there’s no chance of remembering something that complicated from 10 years ago.”

Thomas lost the password for his IronKey hard drive, which controls access to a digital wallet with 7,002 bitcoins. The hard drive gives users 10 guesses to remember their password before the content is lost forever. As of January, Thomas had used eight attempts and come up empty every time.

“I tried to pick a very secure one because I was very concerned about losing those coins,” Thomas added in the interview. “I’d just like lay in bed and come up with a new way to recover it and it wouldn't work, and I would try another way and it wouldn’t work either.”

We can all identify with the challenges of remembering passwords. MTSU students don’t have to worry about permanently losing access to files, emails, and other valuable academic resources thanks to Self-Service Password Reset (SSPR). Found within the Microsoft Office 365 space, SSPR allows MTSU students to conveniently make changes to their domain password without the assistance of technical support staff.

The system is used when you want to change your domain MTSU ID password, forget your domain password and need to reset it, or need to unlock your MTSU account.

You must first register your information in Office 365 in order to use SSPR. This information can consist of a mobile phone number, alternate email address, and security questions. You will only have to set this up one time. Once it is set up, you are free to change your password using the “Forgot my password” or “Can't access your account” links.

This means that in addition to using a recovery email address to verify your identity prior to resetting your password, you will have the option to verify your identity using:

- security questions
- a phone number to receive a call or text message
- a code generated by the Microsoft Authenticator app if you configured it for use with multi-factor authentication.

Read more about Self-Service Password Reset in the online FAQ at www.mtsu.edu/security/sspr-faq.php. Use mtsu.edu/changepw to set or reset your password.

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

Use new BlueID online to avoid standing in line

The BlueID office is open in Room 112 of the Student Services and Admission Center, but you can save a trip and skip the lines.

BlueID Online is your one-stop destination for digital MTSU ID Card management. Visit mtsu.edu/BlueID for details.

Upload your own ID photo and then receive your card in the mail or pick it up in person. Or simply request a replacement. You can manage your BlueID account. Just log in and:

- get up-to-the-minute balances for Raider Funds, MT Dining (Flex Dollars), and meal plans
- view card transaction history in real time
- disable your card at any time if it’s lost
- enable low balance alerts via email or text for Raider Funds and Flex Dollars

You also have the option to obtain a Virtual BlueID for your mobile device.

Student Technology Handbook available online

A digital version of the 2020–21 Technology Handbook for students is available on the ITD website.

Go to mtsu.edu/itd and look in Publications section for the handbook for students link.
If you are living on campus or within driving distance, remember that MTSU's computer labs are still open for business. Because of COVID-19, social distancing practices and capacity limits are implemented across campus. Visit mtsu.edu/itd/labs.php to check lab schedules and requirements for use.

The four main University computer labs are:

- **University Adaptive Technology Center (ATC)**, Walker Library Room 174 (near circulation desk). 615-904-8550 or adatech@mtsu.edu, https://mtsu.edu/dac/atc.php
- **University Computer Lab—BAS**. Business and Aerospace Building, Room S137. 615-898-5515. https://mtsu.edu/businesslab/
- **University Computer Lab—KOM**. Kirksey Old Main, Rooms 350/351/360. 615-898-2397. https://mtsu.edu/csc/
- **University Computer Lab at James E. Walker Library**. Electronic Information Center (first floor) on the right. 615-898-2772. https://library.mtsu.edu/technology/computers

Many departments also have labs for classes, research, and general use. Labs also are provided for students who live in certain residence halls and Womack Lane Apartments.

Printing should always be reserved for academic purposes only and not used for personal gain, i.e., advertising flyers, etc. Such non-academic printing should be performed at Blue Print Solutions in the Student Union Building.

Chris Magliacano, manager of the ATC, said “in-person numbers are very low for extended use of computers.

“Most students are requesting and receiving my services remotely by their preference. It’s not too surprising considering I work in disability and many of my usual clients are immunocompromised and avoiding public spaces unless needed,” Magliacano said.

Those clients who are coming in are either picking up completed materials such as Braille documents that can be printed there, dropping off materials/books for conversion, or receiving tech support with disability-related software or equipment.

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**Find Campus Life on this new webpage**

In an effort to recapture some campus life lost to COVID-19 restrictions, the MTSU division of Student Affairs has streamlined the process of finding some fun events—whether real or digital.

Students can now be directed to a single website and social campaign called MTSU Campus Life— mtsu.edu/campuslife/.

There, students will be able to see online and in-person events, involvement opportunities, places to eat and gather on campus, and options for recreation.

Links to important students services will also be featured on this single mobile-friendly website.

These events also can be found on:

- Facebook at facebook.com/mtsucampuslife
- And Instagram at instagram.com/mtsucampuslife/

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**Don't get hooked by new phishing scam targeting MTSU staff and student emails**

A recent IRS news release warned of an impersonation email scam that primarily targets students and staff members of universities.

The emails display the IRS logo and use various subject lines such as "Tax Refund Payment" or "Recalculation of your tax refund payment" and ask the recipient to click a link and submit a form to claim a refund.

The phishing website requests that taxpayers provide personal information including Social Security number, date of birth, driver’s license number and even electronic filing PIN.

The IRS will never contact taxpayers about their tax documents or refunds through email or text messages. Therefore, you should never click on any links, respond to any emails or text messages, or share your personal information if asked.

If you receive this or any suspicious emails, forward them to abuse@mtsu.edu and then delete them.