SGA, ITD team up to promote tech

The Information Technology Division strives to live up to its name by providing the instructional tech that students need to succeed.

But this summer ITD leadership teamed up with some experts for help with the "information" part.

ITD and the MTSU Student Government Association have begun a partnership to better inform students of resources they have at their fingertips. So far, several short instructional videos narrated by students have been published by SGA on its social media sites.

SGA President Jada K. Powell and Communications Director Zoe Spikner took the lead in planning, producing, and promoting the TikTok, Twitter, and Instagram videos.

"Students have a lot of resources to succeed on campus; however, the issue is that students are unaware of these resources," said Powell, of Memphis, a senior majoring in Aerospace with a minor in Business Administration and a concentration in Aviation Management.

"SGA wanted to make sure that students were aware of the Microsoft Office 365 subscription that all enrolled students are See SGA, ITD, page 5

ITD staff and student workers go to dorms to provide help in navigating Wi-Fi access

With the fall semester at MTSU comes football, new classes, cooler weather, and questions about attempting to connect some devices to the Wi-Fi network.

This year ITD took proactive steps to help students navigate this process by sending workers to dorms the week before the start of the semester.

To keep individuals and the network safe, ITD uses an assessment process for computers that connect to Wi-Fi. When Windows computers attempt network access, they are prompted to download the NAC agent, which works like a watchdog to make certain a computer meets a minimum security profile.

After the agent is installed, it scans your computer and if it is safe, it will let you onto the network. If the computer fails to meet the minimum security, your computer will go into remediation and a pop-up will tell you to install antivirus software or update your version of Windows.

Apple computer owners and those running the Linux operating system are not asked to download the agent and are held to a different standard.

Andrew Pauly, a junior earning a double major in Audio Production

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MTSU students returned from fall break to find a major upgrade of DegreeWorks from version 5.0.0 to 5.0.6.2.

"Judging by the version number, you may think this is a minor update—It is not," said Joe Trimble, systems analyst 2 in ITD Administrative Information System Services, who has been leading the work.

"This is a major upgrade of our system, which hasn't seen any significant changes in more than three years."

DegreeWorks is a comprehensive set of web-based academic advising, degree audit, and transfer articulation tools to enhance advising, better inform students about degree planning, and reduce time to degree.

This system helps academic advisors provide real time advice and counsel to students and helps create interactive scenarios for degree completion.

The upgrade started on Oct. 7, with the newly upgraded DegreeWorks brought back online on Oct. 10.

University Registrar Tyler Henson has produced a video that demonstrates the new version of DegreeWorks:

https://www.mtsu.edu/degreeworks/resources.php

The website also includes a section of FAQs and a resource guide on using DegreeWorks.

The work involved three major upgrade packages, two service packs, and a database upgrade, Trimble said.

"We're also migrating system servers from Redhat Enterprise Linux version 6 to version 7. This upgrade will deliver improved functionality and stability for our students and advisors," he said.

The biggest improvement for users is the new Responsive Dashboard that presents information in "visual cards" and adapts itself based on the information in the card and the size of the display screen, so it is equally useful on a smart phone, tablet, laptop, or desktop computer.

The Responsive Dashboard provides a clean, mobile-friendly interface for students and advisors that is WCAG 2.0 AA compatible for accessibility compliance. Other major changes include:

- Enhanced “what-if” functionality for students and advisors to assist in degree shopping.
- Improved print function that generates a clean, beautiful PDF formatted document that can be printed or saved on the user’s device.
- Ability to extract and display the preferred name (if one exists in Banner) for both students and advisors.
- Several technical updates that will make DegreeWorks more reliable and easier to maintain, including improved configuration tools and an upgraded server and database infrastructure.

While the main DegreeWorks links in PipelineMT will go to the Responsive Dashboard, faculty and staff will have access to the “Classic Dashboard” for a few more months if someone prefers to look at the previous version of DegreeWorks.

"If you have any questions about your degree audit and information in it, please contact your academic advisor for assistance," Henson said in an email to students.

"DegreeWorks does not substitute for an official transcript and does not provide official verification of degree completion."
MS Teams app available to all MT students, so now is good time to check it out

You may have seen it or heard about it, but now it's ready for you to try: All MTSU students are licensed for Microsoft Teams.

For those unfamiliar, Microsoft Teams is the chat-based workspace in Microsoft 365 that makes it easy to have conversations, host meetings, share files and collaborate on documents, and get work done with teams across the organization.

Teams lets you work in a natural, conversational way — with everything you need in one place — available anytime, on any device.

Want to give it a try?

- Go to https://portal.office.com/myapps
- Log in using your MTSU email address and password.
- Search through all the apps available to find the Teams icon for downloading.

There are several learning and support resources available to help you get started:

- Microsoft Teams Middle Tennessee State University
- Microsoft Teams Help & Learning
- Microsoft Teams Video Training

There are also numerous sessions through LinkedIn Learning. If you are not familiar LinkedIn Learning, click here for more information on how to log in with your MTSU credentials. Once logged in to LinkedIn Learning, search for MS Teams tutorials.

The Teams mobile app also allows you to use it on your iOS or Android device.

ITD equipment loan program is still available

ITD has a limited number of Chromebooks, Wi-Fi hotspots, and laptop computers available for students to check out on a first-come, first-served basis for use during a semester.

To make a request to borrow equipment, go to the webpage mtsu.edu/itd/equipment-request/.

For more information contact the Help Desk at 615-898-5345 or help@mtsu.edu.

Student Technology Assistant (STA) program offered

The Student Technology Assistant (STA) program is designed to give students an opportunity to earn and learn.

STAs provide front-line assistance to computer lab and Help Desk users on a wide range of computing-related issues, with an emphasis on customer service.

The STA program utilizes Microsoft Office Specialist and LinkedIn Learning resources in three levels of training: Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced.

For more info or to start the application process, visit mtsu.edu/sta.
Student touts simplicity of OneNote app for creating and finding notes

As a full-time student who is on multiple committees within and outside the Student Government Association, I have found OneNote has saved me a lot of time creating notes and finding them when I need them. OneNote and OneDrive are similar to each other but OneNote is like a simpler version of OneDrive. If you would like to try it for note-taking in clubs, classes, or other activities, following are directions on how to set it up.

Unlike OneDrive where you can have files within files within files, with OneNote you do not need to make files.

In OneNote you create what is called a Notebook for anything you need all you need to do is click the purple button that says "+ New Notebook" and it allows you to name the notebook.

In the notebook, it allows you to add sections, which are also color code, and within the sections you can add pages.

I first used OneNote in middle school for English, but I did not use it in high school since they gave note outlines or it was online for students to view. It was not until this year at MTSU that I started to use it again because I started to lose track of all my Word documents for classes.

I remembered how easy and useful it was using OneNote. OneNote made it a lot easier for me to work on things for SGA since you organize your work as you go, not just when you have a time free.

And you also don't have to figure out what is what and create files upon files and move things around.

J.P. Van Der Heyden is a sophomore majoring in Psychology and minoring in German who serves in the Student Government Association Senate, Student Government Association Marketing committee, and the Power of One committee.
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and Public Relations, was one of several student workers who took part. A Help Desk worker since 2021, Pauly was stationed in the lobby of Corlew Hall to help students get connected as they moved in.

“I lived on campus for two years. So there were a lot of general questions I was able to answer,” Pauly said. “From what contact I had with students in Corlew, they seemed to be pretty appreciative of us being there.”

ITD’s decision to provide the on-site assistance during move-in began during the fall semester last year, when it received a large number of calls seeking help with the Wi-Fi assessment process.

ITD officials met with the Housing Department to determine what buildings could have the highest impact if ITD workers were on-site there from Aug. 15-19. They selected Smith, Cummins, Corlew and Greek Row.

The goal was to have a presence in each of those dorms during the week of move in. Those involved said the biggest response came the Saturday before the start of the semester.

New improved Wi-Fi network

ITD is starting to upgrade campus Wi-Fi with a new network called “BLUEWIFI” that offers a simplified security assessment process.

For now it is limited to MTSU’s newest building. Starting Oct. 12, the new School of Concrete and Construction Management (SCCM) Building became the first location utilizing BLUEWIFI to connect to the internet.

Instructions for connecting to it can be found using the following links:

- Windows
- MacOS
- Android/iOS

Signage in the SCCM building has QR codes that allow quick access to instructions using your mobile device. The schedule for implementing BLUEWIFI in the remainder of campus buildings will be announced soon.

It is simple to get connected. If you have questions or need any assistance, contact the ITD Help Desk at help@mtsu.edu or (615) 898-5345.

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privileged to obtain for free.”

The Microsoft Office 365 suite of apps with OneDrive, Teams, Word, Excel, and more, was the subject of some videos, while another was designed to help students through the assessment process of the campus Wi-Fi network. LinkedIn Learning and Desire2Learn (D2L) were the focus of others.

SGA recruited students to be narrators and worked with ITD staff in writing scripts and producing the videos, which are 1 to 1 ½ minutes long. Spikner, a junior Marketing major also from Memphis, agrees that the main issue is not a lack of tech resources, but awareness.

“My main goal as communications director is to reduce the number of times students use the excuse ‘I didn’t know’ when it comes to resources and events around campus,” Spikner said. “I want to make information easy and digestible through short videos and infographics.”

Powell has been involved with SGA at MTSU since her freshman year in fall 2019 and has maintained a strong focus on communication using social media.

“Students are on social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter more than they are walking around campus. It is best that we meet students where they are,” Powell said.

Powell said the past two years of distance or hybrid learning due to COVID-19 increased the importance of tech in higher education.

“With the current rapid advancement of technology within higher education and careers, it is imperative that students are aware of how to utilize technology to benefit them,” Powell said. “My plans are to be a manager of an airport or airline. Technology plays a huge role in aviation.”

Spikner plans to own a marketing firm that specializes in branding for small businesses.

“Technology is important as a graphic designer like file saving and storage optimization. I am learning more and more about how to use technology effectively when running my business as a freelancer currently,” Spikner said.

View some of the videos by searching MTSU SGA on TikTok.