



UNC  
SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT

School of Government  
**IT Division Report**  
2009–2010

# School of Government IT Division Report 2009–2010



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## Building Foundations and Expanding Support

The 2009–2010 fiscal year was dedicated to building foundations, expanding our instructional support, and assessing services. We completed a large technology infrastructure review, evaluating all aspects of our networking architecture, which resulted in several initiatives designed to take better advantage of the free enterprise-level hosting services offered by campus ITS. These changes will provide better service and position us to be prepared for information security risk management (see *Rebuilding Infrastructure*, p. 4).

In response to state budget cuts affecting our clients, the School's faculty and teaching professionals have sought innovative ways to distribute content. The IT Division has played an important role in helping them develop alternative options for client learning experiences. We have expanded our use of webinars, developed groundbreaking learning modules, and created collaborative blog spaces for our faculty (see *Supporting Innovation in Instruction*, p. 5).

We also conducted an internal business process analysis of our services to better understand our activities, their relationship to other operational units, and whether they can support and sustain development and growth (see *Analyzing our Services and Processes*, p. 7). We hope this work will improve efficiency and quality of service provided to you.

As we integrate our services with both internal operational units and with campus ITS, we will continue this evaluative process to ensure we are not only providing the best service possible but that we are also mitigating risks and ensuring continuity of service. We continue to strive to maintain stewardship in technology through teamwork, collaboration, and a commitment to the School's mission.

If you have any questions about the technology or the services we can provide, please feel free to contact me or anyone on the IT Division team. We look forward to working with you in the coming year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Georgia Allen'.

Georgia Allen

## 2010 IT Division Team

The IT Division is divided into three functional areas:

**Networking and Technical Support (NTS) Services:** The NTS group is responsible for maintenance upgrades and for the security of the hardware and software that carry data within and outside the School. Support includes managing data ports and wireless access points, providing backup and recovery data, maintaining application servers, and coordinating the messaging environments. This area also includes Helpdesk and A/V Services, which provide technology support for desktop/laptop computers, computer labs, classrooms, and off-site programs.



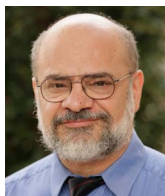
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**Applications Development:** The Applications Development group develops and maintains the School's online presence, including web development in the area of course design, the School's website, custom application development, and website analysis. They also provide business systems support for accounts receivable, publications, registration, room reservations, and financial reporting.



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**Instructional Support:** The Instructional Support group provides instructional design and production services for webinars, online modules, informational and community blogs, training programs, and other teaching and learning technologies used at the School.



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## Rebuilding Infrastructure

With several of the School's internal servers coming up for replacement and new services offered by campus Information Technology Services (ITS) at no charge, the Networking and Technical Support staff spent the past year evaluating our infrastructure and looking for ways to take advantage of these opportunities. This evaluation resulted in several new initiatives; the first was migrating the School's e-mail and calendaring environment (Exchange) from our own systems to the central campus systems, which had already been completed in June 2009. The second was moving all of our file storage to ITS servers, which was completed in August 2010. Moving our access control systems (Active Directory) was the third and final initiative, which was completed in December 2010. These moves allowed us to decommission several servers and saved the School more than \$23K in replacement costs this year.

Each of these changes allowed the IT Division to move critical operational services to enterprise-class systems we otherwise could not afford. We are also able to take advantage of campus technical support staff for these systems, adding redundancy to our services. During these changes, we applied security and controls for sensitive data needs, and we have better positioned ourselves to implement recommended campus information security policies.

In conjunction with these evaluations, we have implemented an inventory control system and conducted a detailed review of the hardware and software available at the School. We now have lifecycle and license reports that guide our budget decisions throughout the year. This information helped us create standard systems, which will improve our responsiveness to hardware and software deployment by giving us a baseline model(s) from which all systems can be modified.

Each of these projects required collaboration and communication across multiple divisions and campus units, as well as your continued support while we made system changes. The result is a solid infrastructure that will allow us to focus our efforts on the evolving and unique technology needs of the School. As campus ITS changes or our needs change, the IT Division will continue to monitor and implement solutions that provide technology-related services as efficiently as possible.

## Supporting Innovation in Instruction

This year the Applications Development and Instructional Support teams have participated in several new delivery models for the School. These approaches have involved not only the traditional client group support, but they have incorporated the School's faculty and teaching professionals and the use of internal multidisciplinary team.

## Website Development

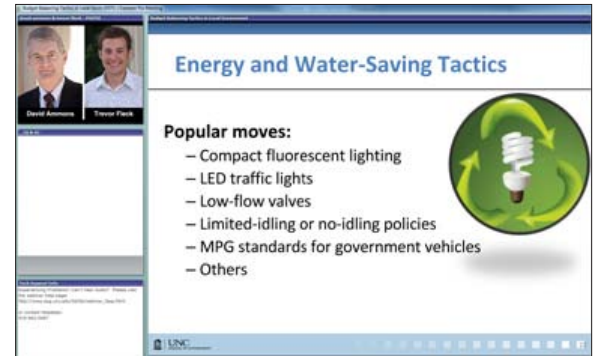
Websites are becoming an increasingly important way for clients to access our content and courses, and we continue to work with faculty to identify new approaches and improvements that can better meet client needs. For example, the Local Government Finance group requested a user-friendly website to reflect their new curriculum. Working with a multidisciplinary team that included staff from the Marketing and Communications Division, the Applications Development group created a site (<http://www.sog.unc.edu/programs/lgfinance/index.php>) that organizes the group's course offerings in a way that enables clients to quickly see and understand all available resources offered in this area.



We also worked with the Strategic Public Leadership committee as they developed a new strategic planning model for local government clients. We helped them create a new resource site (<http://www.sog.unc.edu/programs/strategicleadership/>) that included an interactive graphic representing this new model. Working with our education law faculty and the Publications Division, the Applications Development group created a resource site to house Clearinghouse summaries previously published in *School Law Bulletin*. The Clearinghouse digests, going back to 1998, were imported into a searchable, online database, creating a valuable resource for our clients.

## Webinars

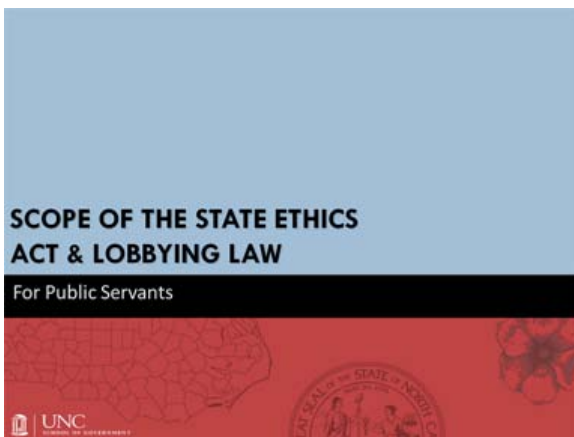
This year the School's use of webinars increased significantly, with more than 20 webinars that reached more than 6,000 participants. Some were subject- or client-specific, while others represented a new approach to delivering more general content, such as the Training in Tough Times series developed to address challenges confronted by public officials during tough economic times. These webinars, which were developed and delivered collaboratively in a short time frame, reached clients who, because of distance, do not regularly attend School of Government courses. By bringing together subject matter experts, webinars allowed participants to access valuable and timely information through both real-time online and on-demand services.



Webinars were done in different formats to reach a diverse audience. Two webinars in particular used a variation of panel formats for the presentation. The Tax Foreclosures Fundamentals webinar featured a panel of subject matter experts who shared their thoughts about the topic, and they took questions from participants, making it an interactive experience. The Alternatives in Service Delivery webinar featured SOG faculty members interviewing community members about the topic and took questions from participants. By featuring select community members in a live setting through webinars, there is even greater outreach provided to those who are unable to travel but who are still interested in the subject matter.

## E-Learning Modules

E-Learning modules are self-paced, online instructional materials used by clients on their own computers in their offices or homes. This year the IT Division completed a two-set series of online training modules commissioned by the Legislative Ethics Committee (LEC) and State Ethics Commission (SEC), and we produced seven in-house modules for our faculty and their specific client groups.



The State Ethics modules were designed to meet the two-hour education requirement for individuals covered by the State Government Ethic and Lobbying Acts. They included specialized modules for public officials and legislative employees. These modules were the result of collaboration with subject-matter experts from the LEC and SEC, faculty member Norma Houston, and the instructional design team within the IT Division.

The in-house modules were the culmination of the E- Learning Pilot Project and resulted in learning opportunities such as North Carolina Local Government 101, Open Meetings Laws, Local Government Contracts, and Better Negotiation and Problem Solving. These modules can be used in combination with other courses or as stand-alone learning experiences for our clients.

## Blogs

Blogs allow faculty to actively disseminate timely and valuable information regarding new and recurring issues affecting several of our client groups. In addition to providing information about a broad range of issues, blogs also provide an interactive space for client groups to comment on posts and to subscribe to delivery of new articles. This year the IT Division worked with faculty to create several new blogs, and we added a multi-author template, which allows faculty to collaborate in publishing content in a shared space. These multi-author blogs, including Coates Canons and the Community and Economic Development blog, have attracted more than 2,000 subscribers and will become an even more important resource as public officials face increased travel and budget restrictions.



It is important that the IT Division provide our subject-matter experts with choices in their instructional delivery models, and we hope these examples highlight the many instructional services and tools available at the School. We will continue to review and assess our services, working with instructors to identify and add new eLearning options to better serve our clients.

## Analyzing Our Services and Processes

As the workload of the IT Division has increased and we have implemented new services, we have identified the need to review and document our business practices and to make changes where needed. This evaluative effort was designed to improve communication within the division and with faculty and staff who use our services. We developed an analysis template we call the Service Process Analysis (SPA), which is designed to answer these questions:

- What is this service?
- Why should I use it?
- Are there options and what are they?
- What does it cost?
- What is involved in doing this and how do I get started?

This framework was applied to all work done within the IT Division and resulted in the development of workflow processes and internal marketing guides such as those for webinars, which streamlined the process and provided a greater understanding of the webinar format.



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## Survey Results

Thank you to all of the respondents of the 2010 IT Division survey. Your responses have helped us identify areas for improvement and will inform our support strategy for the next year.

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Extremely Poor	Not Applicable	Total Responses
A/V Support	29	2	0	0	0	5	36
Helpdesk	21	9	2	2	0	0	34
E-mail/Calendar	14	9	6	0	0	5	34
Website Updates and Support	9	11	3	2	1	10	36
NetSuite	6	5	3	0	0	22	36
Teaching and Learning with Technology	5	12	3	3	0	12	35
Initial Response Time	18	10	3	4	0	0	35
Final Resolution Time	16	12	5	2	0	0	35
IT Division Overall	18	12	4	0	0	1	35

Category	Responses	Percent
Faculty	14	40%
EPA Professional	8	23%
Staff	13	37%
Total	35	100%

## Contact the Information Technology Division

To request assistance with an IT project or to learn more about how the IT Division can help you, contact Georgia Allen at [allen@sog.unc.edu](mailto:allen@sog.unc.edu), or visit [www.sog.unc.edu/itd](http://www.sog.unc.edu/itd).