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Information Technology at NYU



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ITS and Global: Achievements and Opportunities

By Ben Maddox

NYU's Global Academic and Research Centers offer many of the same information technology services that are available on NYU's Washington Square campus. Although services vary somewhat by location, they generally include NYUHome, student computing labs, state of the art classrooms, staff and faculty desktop computing, Internet access, NYU Libraries research services, video conferencing capabilities and telephone/voicemail services.

Each semester, students complete and submit evaluations of their experience at our Centers ranging from curriculum to residence halls. One of the most consistent areas of praise is IT services such as NYUHome and well equipped student labs that are available to the students. We set a high standard of IT Services at Washington Square, and it's great to see us endeavor to extend those services to students, faculty and staff abroad.

Eric Canny, Associate Director of Study Abroad Student Services

Over the course of the last 40 years, NYU has established Academic Centers in Madrid (1958); Paris (1969); Florence (1995); Buenos Aires (1998, now suspended); Prague (1998); and London (1998). As of Spring 2003, we offer over 180 courses in 40 different fields of study to the more than 900 students studying at our sites abroad.

One of the most challenging aspects of developing the Centers was constructing robust and secure communications and networks to link the International sites back to NYU's Washington Square campus. ITS supported the sites early on, playing a key role in getting the various networks and systems up and running in Florence, London, Paris, and Prague. This infrastructure has stood the test of time and keeps students, staff and faculty in close contact around the world.

ITS Global Services

ITS Telecommunications provides Nextel Global Phones to our Washington Square staff which allows for 24 hour support of the network connecting students, faculty, and staff abroad to the Washington Square student support systems. More than once, the technology has allowed us to communicate instantly important information to individuals abroad.

Mark Messina, Study Abroad Student Services Coordinator

Students arriving to spend the semester abroad at one of NYU's international sites can expect to experience many of

the same IT-supported continuous services that are available at Washington Square. Academic computing resources, NYUHome, and NYU-supported network and telecommunications systems with password-protected voicemail are just a few of the services extended to students at the different sites.

At NYU in Prague, student computers are managed using software profiles and user security approaches that are virtually identical to the ones used at Washington Square. On-site Internet access is available at all NYU international sites for student, staff, and faculty use. Faculty and students can also register online to bring their own laptops for use at the London, Paris, and Prague Centers and, in Florence, at Villa Ulivi (the residential Center). NYU in Madrid offers wireless network registration. Prague, London, and Florence run their own mail exchange and file management servers for staff use. In addition, faculty and staff members have the option of activating an NYUHome account.

Initiatives and Opportunities

Collaboration

One of the areas of opportunity ahead is to accurately identify the needs of the sites abroad. The drive to develop a system to identify these needs and understand what tools can be effectively provided parallels the increase in expectations and in the tools available to the NYU Community. This endeavor involves collaboration across all units of ITS, exploring such questions as: What technology tools and support in place at NYU Washington Square could further the mission and management of the global sites? Is it feasible to stretch across the ocean and provide them? Are we already stretching to provide support at certain sites that would be helpful to all?

Infrastructure

In the next generation of ITS initiatives at the sites abroad, we look toward improving existing services with updated equipment from student and staff computing and servers to IP video conferencing capabilities.

Services

Connecting the community of NYU Washington Square to the faculty, students and staff abroad through the continuity and availability of ITS services is a top-tier goal. This year, NYU Blackboard--an ITS-managed course support tool that is currently used by thousands of students and faculty at Washington Square--is being tested for use by faculty at NYU's Global Academic and Research Centers. Approximately 180 courses are offered each semester at our sites abroad, none of which currently use NYU Blackboard. Extending such services to the sites will help us achieve congruity between courses offered both at Washington Square and at the international sites. This parallelism will facilitate information sharing and community building between the two.

Training and Support

As global initiatives such as Blackboard course support systems, Brio software, financial management software and IP conferencing move forward, the consideration of support systems and training presents new challenges and opportunities.

Summary

John F. Gates, Executive Director of NYU Global Operations, had this to say about the importance of ITS services to NYU's Global Centers:

Information technology is a central feature in the design, implementation and management of NYU's global academic and research centers. Sound, state-of-the-art communications systems permit NYU to be a collective community the world over. IT is the mechanism by which students and faculty speak, tasks are administered, thoughts are conveyed, boundaries are crossed, growth is nurtured, and possibilities are realized. It is a centrifugal force that connects us to one another and to the universe of ideas, indeed, to the sine qua non of the 21st Century learning community.

Additional Information

A detailed list of services currently available at the sites can be found at <http://www.nyu.edu/its/global.html>.

See also:

- Main Global Website: <http://www.nyu.edu/global/>
- NYU in Florence, Italy: <http://www.nyu.edu/global/florence/>
- NYU in London, England: <http://www.nyu.edu/global/london/>
- NYU in Madrid, Spain: <http://www.nyu.edu/fas/dept/spanish/nyuinmadrid/>
- NYU in Paris, France: <http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/french/NBase.html>
- NYU in Prague, Czech Republic: <http://www.nyu.edu/global/prague/>

- NYU International Exchange: <http://www.nyu.edu/global/exchange/>
 - NYU Study Abroad: <http://www.nyu.edu/studyabroad/undergraduate/>
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Author Biography

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