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University Relations

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Contact

Melissa Weber, Director of Communications  
Phone: 320-589-6414, [weberm@morris.umn.edu](mailto:weberm@morris.umn.edu)

Jenna Ray, Editor/Writer  
Phone: 320-589-6068, [jrray@morris.umn.edu](mailto:jrray@morris.umn.edu)

**Pam Gades, instructional technology specialist, shows the way to enhanced teaching, research, learning, and collaborating through new and emerging technologies**

*Summary: A series of hands-on technology workshops will benefit the entire campus community.*

(October 2, 2011)-Pam Gades, instructional technology specialist in [Instructional and Media Technologies](#), is working to provide greater options for how we teach, learn, and communicate. Originally in Computing Services, Gades transferred to Media Services in 2009. The merger of Instructional Technologies and Media Services gave her the means to focus on teaching and learning technologies versus general support, enabling her to better respond to the digital demands of today's users. "We need to be ready to integrate these devices into our academic environment," she says.

Engaging the University community in new technologies is a gradual process accomplished through a series of workshops planned jointly by Morris's instructional technology partners, including Briggs Library, Computing Services, and Online Learning, and managed by Gades.

Beginning in spring 2011 with informational seminars to "tickle their interest," her strategy for ensuring a good turnout naturally used the allure of technology, featuring an iPod as a door prize. Workshop topics are being finalized, but several, such as EndNote, UMConnect using Google applications, video production, library databases, and mobile technologies, have been identified.

With the phase out of Blackboard Vista, Gades will step up her promotion of Moodle. Moodle is a web-based course management system offering substantial functionality, including organizational components such as syllabi, required readings, and web links, and also modules for online discussions, chats, assignment submissions, and gradebook. "On the ground," says Gades, "how to use it is the instructor's choice, but it supports the University's mission of cutting down on paper." Many current UMM courses have an online presence and, at a minimum, faculty are using Moodle for syllabi, assignments, and reading lists.

Coupled with Morris's capability for producing video lectures, faculty have embraced the technology. Barry McQuarrie, associate professor of mathematics, incorporated a video prologue and introduction to each topic in his online precalculus course. Gades notes the importance of such visuals in online courses in helping students relate to their instructors whom they might otherwise never see. He also utilizes discussion forums and a tool for drawing out mathematical problems in real time, mimicking a classroom whiteboard.

Arne Kildegaard, professor of economics and management, employs the "virtual whiteboard," videos, and PowerPoint in his economics course. Dennis Stewart, associate professor of psychology, created both audio only and video versions of lectures in his psychology course so that students could download them to their handheld devices in their preferred format. Seung-Ho Joo, professor of political science, made his office a recording studio for videos of his lectures that students could listen to on their iPod or view on computer. Marynel Ryan Van Zee, associate professor of history, actively involves her students in online class presentations.

Media Mill, residing in the College of Liberal Arts on the Twin Cities campus, supports this academic creativity and “can be used to enhance a face-to-face (onground) course with supplemental lectures, study guides, exam reviews, or to integrate course lectures in an online course,” explains Gades. Camtasia Relay is employed as a quick and easy solution, or Camtasia Studio for a comprehensive result. Camtasia Studio is a full editor with advanced features for pan and zoom, audio editing, and text call-outs, among other features. Gades edits, saves, and uploads the videos to Media Mill from which students can access them through Moodle. Tracking usage patterns helps her determine what users find useful or tend to bypass.

Moodle workshops for both new users and those upgrading to 2.0 are forthcoming, but anyone can get a head start learning about the system at the University of Minnesota [Technology Learning Resources](#) site. Login is required.

Gades also reserves time to investigate new technologies, including applications and hardware, and maintains a [blog](#) for sharing tips and reviews. As an instructional technology specialist, she has seen social networking sites like Twitter morph into professional development tools. Consulting Twitter “saves searching blogs for useful information,” she says, “because users post links, and we can follow each other.”

A Morris native, Gades began her career as a bookkeeper/secretary in a computer store in the Twin Cities. By the second day, the owner had her building circuit boards. Discovering an aptitude for technology, she taught herself programming. After accepting a position at Morris, she took classes here, earning an undergraduate degree in business economics and a master of liberal studies with emphasis in educational technology in 2001.

She loves to keep updated and continuously learns on the job, she says. It is “just the perfect job because I can work with students, faculty, and staff and get to play with all these toys.”

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