Faculty Users of SmartSite  
October 7, 2011, 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Attendees
- Thomas Amsler (Academic Technology Services, programmer)
- Antonella Bassi (Languages & Literatures)
- Dave Burger (Plant Sciences)
- Steve Faith (Academic Technology Services, faculty support)
- Andy Jones (Academic Technology Services, University Writing Program)
- Paul Salitsky (Biological Sciences)
- Fernando Socorro (Academic Technology Services, faculty support)
- Mary Stewart (Academic Technology Services, graduate student researcher)
- Ken Verosub (Geology)
- Brenda Rinard (University Writing Program)

Introduction by Andy Jones, Academic Associate Director of Academic Technology Services
- Andy Jones serves in an advisory capacity for Academic Technology Services  
- The goal of this meeting is to support faculty use of SmartSite
- The meetings will be faculty-centered, aiming to will hear faculty concerns so we can note and address them, start initiatives, and explore innovative ways faculty can use SmartSite.
- Because SmartSite isn’t just a UC Davis product (it is powered by Sakai), it can take time to make adjustments.
  o Our goal is to address faculty concerns, and that may mean looking at tools at other universities, or we finding answers from RSmart
- Graduate Student Researcher, Mary Stewart, may also research concerns brought up in these meetings and report findings at subsequent meetings.
- At these meetings, Thomas Amsler is also present to help with specific programming questions, and Fernando Socorro and Steve Faith are present to help with other questions about how to use SmartSite.
- Steve took photos; Bill Buchanan at IET will write an article on our group.

The Wheel
- ATS will soon launch a blog that discusses the issues raised in these meetings, as well as new tools and unusual uses of tools.
- Resources available at ATS and UCD will also be mentioned in the blog, with the intent to humanize those resources.
- We will give a further update next month.

SmartSite Updates over the summer
- Try to hold off on major updates until the fewest number of classes are meeting, and we post announcements prior to updates. Some updates come from RSmart (new iterations/versions of Sakai), and some come from our team.
- This summer, we launched an updated Gradebook 2 (in June and August).
  o We improved how you upload grades, import grades from excel, etc.
- We also made grading more efficient for large (700-800) classes.
- There’s also a new tool to edit the grade scale – as you change different things in the grade scale, it shows you how that will alter the frequency graph in the class (helps you get a more bell-shaped curve).
- There were also Student View improvements (instructor can release statistical graphs so students can see how they rank with respect to their peers). This was something that my UCD did better than SmartSite, so we wanted to bring back that functionality.

**CCFIT Educational Technology Subcommittee**
- This faculty-chaired committee is another way to have your concerns heard.
- The group looks at various technologies (like clickers), and at the infrastructures of our classrooms (i.e., projectors).
  - If there’s some part of a classroom that isn’t functioning, that’s something you can bring up with CCFIT EdTech subcommittee (or to one of us here at ATS).

**Clickers**
- A new version of the Personal Response System (AKA clickers) is now available.
- We have a couple of users trying this out and the results look good.
- The medical center has switched to completely web-based system, with positive results.
- A group in the housing department has recently bought iClickers – Fernando is going to investigate and will report back.
- Another school was sued because their clicker system was not allowing students with disabilities to interact in class, and we want to be proactive.
- We also want to look at the pedagogical uses of clickers – how can we engage larger classes?
- If there’s interest, we may have the clicker group come present their findings.

- Poll-Everyone. Could this be a replacement for Clickers?
  - Concerns since this requires students to have a cell phone with text messaging capability (and there is also the question of text limits on plans).
    - UCD has a computer ownership expectation (if students can’t afford it the cost is worked into their financial aid package), but we cannot have the same expectation for phones.
  - Students could buy a used clicker from the bookstore (approx. $50 new)

**Questions/Concerns**
- It’s the little things that are frustrating. For example, in Gradebook, if you have more than 25 students, a dialog box pops up and it’s not clear how to close it.
  - To close the box, press “enter.”
  - This is confusing because most users look for the “x” to close it.
Thomas says this is helpful; this is something we can work on from a programming perspective.

Thomas further explains:
- We took a web 2.0 approach to Gradebook 2, which means it feels more like a desktop application. Lots of people are caught off guard because you don’t make the transfer between desktop application to what you can do in the browser (ex: you can right click on things).

- When you go in under “Tools” for the site, how do you add your own tool?
  - Go to “Site Editor”
  - Click “Edit Tools”
    - This list has all of the possible things you could add to your site.
  - Click “Web Content” – this will let you create a tool in the left navigation that links to something outside of SS, or something within SS.

- Can you rename the existing tools?
  - Yes, go to “Site Editor” and then to “Page Order”
  - You will see all of the tools that you have currently active.
    - (You can add a tool to your site here by clicking “Add page(s) to your site”.)
  - Next to each tool, there are three icons:
    - Pencil/paper – this will let you change the title of the tool.
    - Light bulb – this makes the tool invisible to students but visible to you as instructor.
    - Ex – deletes the tool

- When you are sending mail, can you set it to include yourself every time? Do I always have to go to “roles” and have it “send me a copy”?
  - You do have to go into “Roles” and select who you want to send the emails to. And you have to click “send me a copy” at the bottom of the email.
  - Another option is to use “Email Archive”
    - This gives you a single email address—within this email address is all student emails and the instructor email.
    - You can also store emails that you send – click “Add to Email Archive.”
      - Note: This stores the email within SS, not in your email. Email archive will send it to your email and you can save it that way; alternatively, you can select “save a copy” from mailtool and then save it from your email.

- How can I send a message to the class? When I send Announcements, the students don’t get it.
  - When you create an announcement, it gets put in two places automatically – on the homepage of your SS, and on the homepage of the student’s SS.
This will not automatically send an email – you have to click “High – All Participants” in the “Email Notification” dropdown box.

You can “Specify Dates” and that is the day that the email goes out and the announcement gets posted.

You don’t have to specify dates – it will just go out immediately. But this is useful for things like reminders about tests.

Reminder – this kind of help from Steve and Fernando is available to you. They have office hours. You can find the office hours/meeting times on SS – this is on the homepage in the “message of the day.”

- Normally you can meet one-on-one with one of the trainers, if others are there at the same time then you might have the opportunity to learn in a group.
- You can also email trainers@smartsite.ucdavis.edu and schedule a time to meet with the trainers.

**Boosting Participation**

- Please let people know that we are meeting once a month, that this is faculty-centric, and that you will get your questions answered.
- Should we be inviting the technical support staff of your department to these meetings?
- We really want to focus on needs of faculty so Andy’s hesitant to send a blanket invitation. However, if you think someone in your department would benefit from attending the meeting, please let us know or invite him/her.

Some colleagues in Dr. Bassi’s department would like to be here but didn’t know about it; other attendees mentioned they did not receive the email. Current methods of communication include:

- Piece in tech news
- Blurb on SS homepage
- Email reminders
- We will continue to explore better ways to reach out to faculty.
  - Perhaps we could use Adobe Connect?

**How to use SmartSite to link wiki comments to shared video**

- Video is a useful tool, but it’s hard to know what a student will do after she views a video.
- Steve was working with another colleague who wanted to let students comment on a video and collaborate with each other, and he found a way to create a basic web page and embed a YouTube video at the top and embed an ether pad on the bottom.
  - Has the function of the Wiki without having to send the students to a wiki. You can have a real time chat about a video that the class is watching together or asynchronously.
- What if you have a Windows movie?
  - There’s a button for “insert/edit movie” at the top of the text box in the “Create HTML” tool. This plays flash, windows, avi, and quick time.
(Please note that you need to load the video onto SmartSite (in Resources) before you can link.

- Steve walked the group through this process; he is currently typing up a step-by-step “how-to”; when it is complete we will deliver it to you.