UW Technology: A view of what we want to see and be

It's about discovery. We see a community of teachers, learners, researchers, clinicians, administrators --all coming together with IT professionals throughout UW in order to find better ways to use technology in the pursuit of discovery and service.

In UW Technology we see a family of organizations dedicated to progress through partnership --technologists and IS/IM professionals passionate about UW's discovery mission, committed to working together in new ways to embrace the amazing and rapidly changing technology landscape, while also providing excellent core services. Our greatest passion is to help our partners connect with the right technologies, services, and people in order to advance their discoveries. We exist to help people across the UW leverage the full power of information systems and technology.

The UW Technology organizations are committed to merging our unique combination of intellectual capital, creativity, connectedness and long-term perspective on technology in higher education with the expertise of our partners to help solve their toughest problems, capture their greatest opportunities, and do groundbreaking work that advances the world-class stature of the University of Washington.

Our vision is to partner with the UW community in creating and acquiring technology solutions that enable the University of Washington to enrich lives through teaching, research, and public service.

Our mission is to:
- Support discovery and learning that advance the mission of the UW and its standing as one of the world's great research institutions.
- Build partnerships that enable extraordinary achievements by UW students, faculty, staff, and clinicians.
- Improve synergy and productivity through technology innovations and collaborations with the UW community.
- Deliver the worldwide capabilities needed by our global university.
- Foster innovation that transforms learning, research, and health care.
- Showcase technology that inspires others by illustrating what is possible.

Our approach is based on:
- Commitment to customers, Integrity, Excellence, Innovation, Collegiality
- Embracing change; listening and learning from the community
- Appreciating that different constituencies have different needs
- Shared/community governance that gets things done
- Pervasive leadership & empowerment to get the right things done
- Improving effectiveness (sometimes at the expense of efficiency)
- Agility and flexibility (sometimes at the expense of excellence)
- Accountability and transparency
- Clear roles & responsibilities
- Clear decision and prioritization processes
- Balancing competing goals, e.g. agility & collaboration

Learn, Discover, Change the World... through Partnership

Living Change   (And why we need to embrace more of it now)

In 2004, UW Computing & Communications began a journey (arguably unending) of re-invention. A major element was the strategic planning process which included hundreds of interviews with campus stakeholders, and led to the Critical Success Factors we've all been working on. Another element in our transformation has been the "IT Leaders Program" which has strengthened many of our staff, in keeping with the UW's "leadership, community, and values" initiative, and has also influenced UW's executives to even more fully embrace leadership competence as a fundamental part of UW's mission. There has also been a campus-wide IS Futures study, culminating in the creation of the Office of Information Management (OIM). Most recently we have seen progress toward a UW strategy initiative (ala CSF#2) and a "meta strategy" to define service directions via community governance and grass-roots Special Interest Groups.

OIM is well underway, with a new charter, org structure, and roadmap process for improving UW's information management and administrative systems. Now it is time to focus on the IT elements of the picture, specifically the primary central IT operating units: LST/Catalyst, Technology Services, Network Systems, and Streaming Media, Video, and TV Technologies.

For two decades, C&C contributed considerable value to the university, playing a crucial role in making it successful and competitive. If we want to continue to add value, remain relevant, and effectively support the university's goals, we must continue to evolve the way we do business. We must also continue to become increasingly customer driven and engage the university community in a more collaborative fashion.

We all understand that "times change", especially in technology, and we understand the necessity of adapting to new situations. Our new name, UW Technology, merely symbolizes the deeper cultural changes needed. The rise of mobility, social networking, self-service web apps, etc (see last page), all represent huge forces that will fundamentally alter the role of IT organizations. Along with these technology drivers, we are also seeing a confluence of dramatic forces due to changes in the university, the culmination of which place enormous demands on the flexibility and adaptability of our organization. We must embrace change like never before, and do so urgently.

The key local forces comprising our internal (institutional) change drivers, including our leadership's vision for UW's future, new teaching/learning opportunities, and the necessity of partnership, are described in the next section.

Leadership Perspective

- We have new leadership with a new vision for UW. For example, our President and Provost have made it a priority to strengthen UW's already great tradition of interdisciplinary research, via international partnerships and virtual organizations working on urgent world problems from global health to global warming.

- This leadership is willing to take risks and make changes in order to position UW for even greater success in the future. They seek an IT organizational structure that is neither highly centralized nor decentralized; rather, one that is highly collaborative, with shared/community governance. This more federated approach differs significantly from UW IT in the 90's.

Technology Opportunities

- Technology brings new possibilities in teaching and research. Students are able to access research archives and real-time data that was never before accessible. This has led to a revolution in inter-disciplinary and inter-institutional research and teaching --one that relies on global access to advanced technologies such as visualization, remote sensing, and the ability to store and analyze huge data sets.

Partnership and Collaboration

- What people need from us going forward is different. Since we have successfully carried out our previous assignment (delivery of high-quality core services), the university now needs us to focus on departmental and individual IT needs, looking for opportunities to increase synergy with departmental efforts and increase the effectiveness of individual knowledge workers and research groups, upon whom the future of UW ultimately rests.

- Our colleagues in the UW community are ever more knowledgeable about IT. Faculty and students often acquire their own IT products and services, bringing their own applications, mashups, and mobile work styles to their tasks. (Examples include Facebook and Skype.) They want IT staff to better understand what they need to accomplish in their research, teaching, and learning; to leverage IT expertise in evaluating and deploying technology; to learn about and support their innovations; and sometimes to stay out of their way.

In the past, our mission was to provide high-quality and efficient core IT services for the UW. Today, our primary goal must be to help our partners, the faculty, students, clinicians, and staff of UW, become more effective. This will require deep changes in our culture and our approaches. It will also mean re-prioritizing some of our work in order to respond quickly to new needs. If we are successful in becoming a "learning organization" capable of rapid adaptation, we will continue to be an enormously valuable resource to the UW. We are off to a good start, but there is much to be done!

External Change Drivers: Technology & Market Trends

In addition to the changes in our local UW environment, external technology forces shaping our context continue to move ahead at a relentless pace, including:

The commoditization of IT. As the cost and ease-of-use of technology improves, it is used more pervasively and more creatively. It becomes easier to adapt to individual needs, and people can create their own content and distribution channels, such as blogs, podcasts and web "mashups" (which combine data from multiple sources). With the advent of "Software as a Service" and web platform services, one no longer even needs their own computers to offer advanced IT services, much less use them.

The rise of disintermediation. With pervasive technology use and adaptation, IT is no longer the sole province of IT organizations, and users have become impatient with "middlemen" --who are often perceived as impediments to getting things done. They would rather go to a web page directly than have to ask someone else to find or do something. Any individual can enjoy advanced web-based applications (e.g. Windows Live, Google Apps, BaseCamp) without asking permission from an IT group. Now add technologies such as web 2.0, and you also have a cottage industry of application development that does not require the traditional application development intermediaries.

Social networking technology, exemplified by YouTube, MySpace, and Flickr, turns the traditional information market upside down, with consumers becoming the content-creators. People use it to reach out to each other, leverage each other, and create context and content that is greater than any individual.

Pervasive global mobility. People want any-time, any-where, any-device access to everything. Mobile technologies are not just phones; they also include presence management and location-aware applications; they connect people to their content and services wherever they are.

Massive data management issues. Whether its a growing digital photo or video collection, remote sensing data from around the world and beyond, or continuous terabyte data flows from high-energy physics experiments, there is no getting around the information explosion, and we are quickly exceeding the capability of traditional data management approaches.

Market confusion. Standards lag innovation, and corporations usually prefer a proprietary monopoly over standards-based cross-platform interoperability. At the same time, open source is a force to be reckoned with. Result: a very chaotic IT marketplace, likely to remain that way for some time to come.

Security, regulation, and compliance concerns. Security threats to the university community are growing and rapidly changing.   These, and corollary regulations will require constant vigilance and commitment.

SUMMARY

The UW Environment is Changing

- We have new leadership with a new vision for UW
- Leadership is willing to take risks
- IT is enabling new academic options
- IT needs have changed
- IT's priesthood is over

There are Powerful New Market Trends/Technology Drivers

- Commoditization
- Disintermediation
- Social networking
- Mobility
- Massive datasets
- Proprietary silos; market chaos
- Compliance, security

We are Responding with a New Perspective

- Our committment: **It's all about discovery...** *and community!*
- Our approach: **"Progress through partnership"**
- Our passion: **help colleagues fully leverage the power of technology**

Learn, Discover, Change the World... through Partnership