

# Networking 101

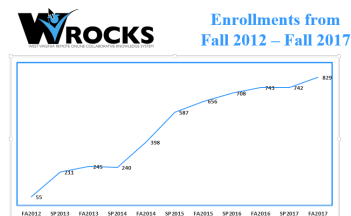
## West Virginia Network (WVNET)



**"Teamwork makes the dream work..."**

-John C. Maxwell


Enrollments in the West Virginia Remote Online Collaborative Knowledge System (WVROCKS) courses continue to grow. This fall over 800 students from five institutions enrolled in classes generating over \$200,000 in revenue for the participating institutions. In fact, since the pilot in Fall 2012, over 10,500 credit hours have been earned via the portal.



In an effort to make college more accessible to all West Virginians, the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (WVHEPC), with a tremendous amount of assistance from WVNET and others, developed the WVROCKS web portal. From the very beginning, WVROCKS success relied on these collaborative partnerships as well as the guidance and input of key leaders from all of the West Virginia higher education institutions who offer the Regents Bachelor of Arts Degree. This is where the teamwork to create a sustainable online program for adult learners begins.

WVROCKS was given a pledge of full support from WVNET by Director, Judge Dan O'Hanlon, who worked closely with the Statewide Director of e-Learning, Dr. Roxann Humbert to identify areas of need to expedite the process of building a sustainable portal. In April of 2012, Dr. Mary Stewart joined the team and the first session was launched in the Fall of 2012. The story that has yet to be told is about those who work behind the scenes at WVNET to make the program a success.

The convenience and flexibility of WVROCKS does contribute to impressive retention rates of a 93% attendance rate, a 92% completion rate, and an 84% pass rate, but those retention numbers would not be possible without the assistance of a team, or as some would say a village. In addition to the efforts of Dr.'s Humbert and Stewart, the RBA Coordinators at the participating schools, and the over 79 faculty members from institutions of higher education in the state who support the program's mission and goals, WVROCKS systems and processes touch every department at WVNET—Media Services, Systems, Network Operations Center, Applications, TelCom, and the Business Office.



**Retention and Pass Rate**

Average Attendance Rate	Average Completion Rate	Average Pass Rate
93%	92%	84%
Highest 98%	Highest 97%	Highest 90%

West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission

[WVROCKS continued on next page...](#)

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October 2017

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WVNET's 24/7 Help Desk fields countless calls to assist WVROCKS faculty, staff, and students. Those calls range in complexity from password resets, to broken content links, and other technical problems. Their commitment to customer service is reflected in the WVROCKS retention statistics. To improve response times and further facilitate resolution of problems, Justin Robinson of Media Services developed a web form and application that allows students to report problems from anywhere in the WVROCKS portal. Students complete the form, click submit, and their question is routed to the appropriate support personnel for resolution. This collaboration of efforts, tracked in WVNET's Oz Problem Tracking Software, designed by Media Services Manager, Mike Karolchik, further ensures customer satisfaction.



#### Growth Snapshot

- We've increased from:
  - 3-5 participating institutions
  - 5-48 courses offered a semester
  - 5-55 sections offered a semester
  - 55-829 enrollments per semester
  - 99-10827 overall credit hours awarded
- Our average:
  - attendance rate is 93%
  - completion rate is 92%
  - pass rate is 84%

West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission



WVNET's Blackboard Lead System Administrator Jonathan Lynch developed a custom "on demand" query to gather attendance and grade information for all courses at one time, which saved WVROCKS staff many hours of manual data extraction. He also developed a Student Success Dashboard plugin for Blackboard which compares student performance factors for all courses as well as other valuable retention data, thus eliminating the need to touch each course. Systems Programmer Bob Burton applies upgrades, patches, and troubleshoots tier 3 issues on the WVROCKS Portal. Burton's support provides an impressive portal "up time" of 99%. A stable online platform is essential to student success.

Because the WVROCKS instance of Blackboard is not integrated with people management software (Banner) at participating institutions, the portal must rely on the accuracy and timely transfer of student data from the WVROCKS Campus liaisons, which often leads to delays as the data is not accessible in real time. WVNET applications programmer Russell McCormack worked with Dr. Humbert, Dr. Stewart, and the participating institutions and their registrars to create a dashboard in Argos. The Banner/Argos interface was written by Delano Sweeney of Bluefield State College (one of WVROCKS participating institutions), and he made it available to other participating institutions for implementation. This dashboard enables WVROCKS staff to download real time data on demand, which further ensures the accuracy and secure transmission of new student data and enrollments, and adds to the ability to generate accurate grade reports, billing documents, and other important information. Scott Hofer in WVNET's Applications group manages the Blackboard database for WVROCKS.

Bob Roberts, WVNET's Human Resources Director, processes the paperwork for all WVROCKS adjunct faculty with assistance from Karen Saffron of Media Services. Saffron also manages the Memorandums of Understanding for faculty. She creates the WVROCKS billing documents for each school and works closely with Phil Snitz in the Business Department to ensure the accuracy of the documents. Phil also processes payroll for the WVROCKS faculty and staff.

WVROCKS is officially housed in WVNET's Media Services group, along with Distance Learning. The Media Services team's contributions to the success of the program are immeasurable. The very first WVROCKS logo was designed by Josh Friend, and the latest logo was designed by Chris Reed. Cory Morrison, Instructional Designer and certified Applying the Quality Matters Rubric specialist, supports many tier two Blackboard GUI issues for WVROCKS faculty and students. Cory also fields Help Desk tickets regarding changes in course content.

Barbara Long of WVNET's Applications group worked with Dr. Humbert to write a grant for the Rural Utilities Service as part of a larger initiative for distance learning through the United States Department of Agriculture. Funds from this substantial award were used to purchase video conferencing equipment for 12 institutions of higher education who offer the RBA program. Jason Chastain of WVNET's TelCom group worked tirelessly to install, configure, test, and troubleshoot those systems for all twelve sites.

Maxwell's quote that "Teamwork makes the dream work..." was only part of his message, the latter part of the quote "but a vision becomes a nightmare when the leader has a big dream and a bad team" is where the real message behind the lesson can be found. Fortunately for WVROCKS, our leaders had a big dream and a very good team, and that's why WV will ROCK On!

## FROM THE DIRECTOR



Dan O'Hanlon, Director

Things are picking up a little in West Virginia -- the infamous Road Bond passed and may help the budget a bit next year. Coal and gas revenues are up -- employment is up -- slowly but surely West Virginia seems to be recovering from the slump we've been in. It would be nice to feel that the Higher Ed cuts were over and that we could start a few new initiatives.

URCast is one of the bright shining lights for our future. It is something offered by WVNET to our K12 schools which helps overcome the Digital Divide. It allows WVNET to set up a URCast server inside of our schools. When a student or teacher logs into the school's Wi-Fi connection to the internet using their Microsoft365 email address, URCast knows what classes they are in. Their teachers have been able to put onto the URCast Server all the videos, articles, webpages, etc. that are needed by the students on that class. All of these documents will download automatically to the student's device, whatever that might be.

Now, when they get home, it no longer matters if they don't have affordable internet access at home because they already have all the downloaded materials for their class on their device. The most exciting part is that several schools are interested in a pilot project to see if they could test the students on the content of their URCast materials after they return to school from a "Snow Day." If the students pass the exams, it would prove that they actually had an Instructional Day rather than a Snow Day. If this is proven, perhaps the expensive "Snow Day" makeup days at the end of the year could finally be eliminated for all of our school systems.

Just one more innovative way that WVNET is trying to help our K12 customers to solve problems and do more with less. The even better news is that URCast is eRate eligible which means the Federal government will pay for about 75% of the already low cost for it.

## CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY WINNER

Each month, WVNET recognizes a customer who took the time to complete our *Customer Satisfaction Survey* to tell us how we are doing. We thank everyone who takes that extra time to give us advice, kudos, or criticisms that will help us improve our service.

This month we'd like to congratulate our winner, *Subhra Datta from Pierpont Community and Technical College*. Sue called our Network Operations Center with a request for help using the Column Organization Tool in Grade Center (Blackboard). Network Operator Tony Masi took the call, immediately created a ticket, made initial modifications to her Blackboard instance and assigned the ticket to Dr. Mary Stewart. Later that same night, Ms. Datta called the Network Operations Center and expressed her appreciation for Tony's efforts, "Thank you so very much for all your help and special thanks to Tony for taking so much time to fix my problem! I do appreciate it very much!! Thank you."

Tony Masi has been a valuable member of the Network Operations Center for several years and is appreciated just as much by his coworkers as our customers.

As always, at the end of every month, we will draw a winner, contact them by email, and send WVNET memorabilia in appreciation. Please complete our survey by looking within the incident email of any interaction that you have had with us. All comments are taken seriously and help to improve what we do on a daily basis.

Thank you, *Sue*, and thanks again to all of our customers who continue to shape and improve WVNET. We appreciate you!

(Guest article by WVNET staff member Fran Barnes)



## AOL SHUTTING DOWN AOL INSTANT MESSENGER

**The end of an era.** The chat app that brought texting to the masses will be shut down on December 15, 2017.

*"AIM tapped into new digital technologies and ignited a cultural shift, but the way in which we communicate with each other has profoundly changed,"* writes Michael Albers, Communications Products VP at Oath (the Verizon behemoth that consumed AOL).

AOL Instant Messenger was one of the first and most successful instant messengers and was popular from the late 1990s to mid-2000s in North America. AOL Instant Messenger was initially integrated into AOL Desktop and later also released as a stand-alone download by America Online (AOL) in May 1997 for Microsoft Windows. The software at one time had the largest share of the instant messaging market in the United States (with 52% of the total reported as of 2006). There are a few causes for AIM's loss of popularity. People began moving to other messaging software, using SMS text messaging and later social networking websites to communicate in real time. As of June 2011, one source reported AOL Instant Messenger market share had collapsed to 0.73%.

When the Internet was new territory that the masses were just beginning to explore, some of us will remember AIM as the app that showed us how to live online, for good or bad. Now there are those who share every news article, announce every relationship issue and connect with friends all via social media. AIM was there teaching us how to do this first. AOL sent notices to past and current users of the service, and posted a message on the AIM help page, explaining why it's shutting down the service: <https://help.aol.com/articles/aim-discontinued> (Guest article by WVNET Staff Members Steven White and Randall Long)

### Cory Morrison this month's recipient of "Moby Award..."

Instructional Designer Cory Morrison (pictured on left in photo) was presented with WVNET's Moby award at a recent staff meeting. The Moby is given by one WVNET employee to another for "doing a whale of a good job." Our Business Manager Phil Snitz (pictured on right in photo) made the presentation, explaining that during a time of several staff departures, Cory stepped in to take up the slack. And, Cory did so quite efficiently with his happy-go-lucky personality! Thanks for your expert assistance, Cory. We hope you enjoy your time in the Moby spotlight! (Guest article by WVNET Staff member Fran Barnes)



### On the road again...

WVNET takes advantage of opportunities to meet our partners in West Virginia Education at every turn. Attending conferences around the state is often a perfect way to do that. During the second week of October, we attended the West Virginia Community College Association Conference (WVCCA) at the New River Community and Technical College, Raleigh County campus, and the West Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind Conference in Romney, WV. At the WVCCA, we served as a sponsor, providing a web/mobile on-line conference guide in cooperation with conference director Lori Midkiff. We met with contacts and friends from CTC's throughout West Virginia and discussed their needs and how we might help them.

At the WVSDB conference, we presented training for an on-line ordering and inventory management system that WVNET developed for the WV Instructional Resource Center. The WVIRC obtains and distributes educational resources to deaf or blind students and their teachers throughout the state, usually at no cost. Most of these resources are returned at the end of a school year and then redistributed to other students, similar to the way a library operates, providing a huge savings to West Virginians with these disabilities. WVNET's application presents a streamlined process for finding, ordering and returning resources. In our presentation at the conference, teachers were very enthusiastic to have an on-line way to locate and obtain resources, replacing a paper-based system they have been using for many years. We at WVNET appreciate getting to meet you in person, and we hope to see you at a conference in the future.



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## ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SHOWCASE — Special Needs Tech Products

### Dancing Dots

Dancing Dots offers technology, resources and training for individuals who are blind or have low vision who want to read, write or record music. This company offers many assistive technology solutions, including music translators, Braille displays and screen readers. For more information, visit [dancingdots.com](http://dancingdots.com) or call 610-783-6692.

### Instrument Holders

A variety of instrument holding devices, music stands and grasping aids may assist an individual in experiencing playing their own music. For more information, visit [adaysworkmusiceducation.com](http://adaysworkmusiceducation.com) or call 352-861-0510.

### Dance and Move Beat Bow Wow (Switch Adapted)

This toy allows users to press a switch to play songs, lights and dancing. His head bobs, ears wiggle and tail moves back and forth. It has over 25 songs and phrases. For more information, visit [adaptivetechsolutions.com](http://adaptivetechsolutions.com) or call 918-637-7390.

### Music Therapy Programs...

*(As reported in the West Virginia Assistive Technology System WVATS Newsletter Spring 2017 issue)*



Did you know that the WVU Center for Excellence in Disabilities (CED) and the WVU School of Music are collaborating on a new Music Therapy Program at CED that is open to all ages?

The use of music by a board-certified music therapist helps a person achieve therapeutic goals related to physical, emotional, cognitive and social aspects of life. Music therapy interventions may include creating music, singing, playing instruments, listening to music, moving to music and motivating through music.

The program has assembled a team of music therapy professions who can tailor therapeutic goals and interventions on a case-by-case basis to address each client's strengths and needs. Music therapy goals target a variety of skills: fine and gross motor, behavioral, emotional, cognitive, academic, communication and social skills.

To learn more about the Music Therapy program at CED, visit: [ced.hsc.wvu.edu/music-therapy](http://ced.hsc.wvu.edu/music-therapy). You may also call CED at 888-829-9426 (v) or 800-518-1448 (tty), or email the program at [musictherapy@hsc.wvu.edu](mailto:musictherapy@hsc.wvu.edu).

Assistive technology can play a part in incorporating music into an individual's life. Switch-activated toys, iPad mounts, touch screen instruments, Braille music, microphone stands are all examples of assistive solutions to assist music access. For more information on assistive technology and music contact WVATS at 800-841-8436.

*(Guest article by WVNET staff member Fran Barnes)*