



News from the [West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission](#)

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NEWS RELEASE

WVROCKS expands online degree opportunities for adult students with new grant

Charleston, W.Va. – Armed with a new \$500,000 grant, the West Virginia Remote Online Collaborative Knowledge System (WVROCKS) is expanding opportunities for adult students in the state to earn Regents Bachelor of Arts (RBA) degrees online. The grant, which was awarded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Rural Utilities Service program, is funding video equipment that will allow WVROCKS to offer classes online that include synchronous learning beginning in fall 2016.

“This grant is another opportunity for us to expand WVROCKS, which offers nontraditional students an unencumbered path toward their degrees,” said Dr. Roxann Humbert, who oversees the portal. “We have awarded more than 5,000 hours of credit since piloting the portal four years ago. This growth is tremendous, and I believe it speaks to an increasing desire among adult students to complete their degrees – and a commitment by the state to equip more West Virginians with the postsecondary credentials today’s economy demands.”

WVROCKS, which is administered through the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission and the West Virginia Network (WVNET), has grown from 55 students and five courses to nearly 700 students enrolled in more than 40 different courses, all of which are offered in a compressed, eight-week format and taught by faculty from colleges and universities across the state.

Students have noted that the WVROCKS portal allows them to finish their RBA degrees while working and without travel, access classes at times convenient to their busy schedules, and complete their coursework and earn their degrees in an accelerated timeframe.

“Without the flexible opportunity WVROCKS online RBA Program offers, it would have been very difficult for me to obtain my bachelor’s degree. As a full-time employee, wife, grandmother and volunteer in my community it would have been difficult to carve into my routine attendance in a ‘bricks and mortar’ classroom,” said Fairmont State University student Holly Fluharty, who will graduate this May. “For more than 30 years, I have wanted to obtain my degree, and my husband and daughters have encouraged me, but it wasn’t until I learned about this program that I began to believe my dream was achievable.”

College and university partners include Bluefield State College, Concord University, Fairmont State University, Marshall University, and Shepherd University’s Martinsburg campus. Campus partners say WVROCKS gives them an opportunity to offer more courses remotely than would otherwise be possible. [Continued on Page Two...](#)

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"Concord University's RBA students benefit greatly from the WVROCKS online courses," said Dr. Kendra Boggess, Concord's President. "WVROCKS courses offer a wide variety of innovative, convenient and quality courses for the non-traditional student, designed by qualified faculty. Most RBA students work full time jobs or have families and cannot attend a traditional on-campus course. WVROCKS online courses allow students the freedom to access courses at a time more convenient to their lifestyle and schedule. Concord's RBA students have also indicated they are very happy to have the ability to choose courses they are interested in taking towards a four-year degree."

For more information about the RBA degree and WVROCKS, visit https://secure.cfw.com/Home/RBA_Today/RBA_Today.aspx.

The WVROCKS portal can be accessed at <https://ilearn-wvrocks.wvnet.edu/>.

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(Reprinted with permission from the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission)

REMEMBERING EMAIL INVENTOR AND INTERNET LEGEND — RAY TOMLINSON



The Internet community has lost one of its true innovators. Ray Tomlinson, best known as the inventor of sending email over a computer network and choosing the @ sign, passed away earlier this month.

While working for Bolt Beranek and Newman (which later became Raytheon BBN Technologies), the company that developed the first program for sending network email, Tomlinson chose the @ symbol — which was fairly obscure at the time — to differentiate local and global emails on a list. From there, it became the designation for address formats, which exploded as email went global as a communications medium.

In a 2012 interview with Wired, Tomlinson explained his choice:

"I looked at the keyboard, and I thought: 'What can I choose here that won't be confused with a username?'" Tomlinson remembers. *"If every person had an '@' sign in their name, it wouldn't work too well. But they didn't. They did use commas and slashes and brackets. Of the remaining three or four characters, the '@' sign made the most sense. It denoted where the user was ... at. Excuse my English."*

Tomlinson's invention has had a larger modern-day impact too, shaping social media services like Twitter and Facebook, where @ is universally synonymous with direct communication with an individual.

"A true technology pioneer, Ray was the man who brought us email in the early days of networked computers," his employer, Raytheon, said in a statement.

"His work changed the way the world communicates and yet, for all his accomplishments, he remained humble, kind and generous with his time and talents, He will be missed by one and all."

We agree with Gmail's official tweet — *"Thank you, Ray Tomlinson, for inventing email and putting the @ sign on the map."*

(Guest article by WVNET staff member Barbara Long)

FROM THE DIRECTOR



I am very pleased that WVNET's historic relationship with K12 in providing Internet access has been extended for another year, and potentially for another five years. WVNET has provided these services to K12, libraries, higher ed and all state agencies since the Internet first existed. In recent years, WVNET has added Internet2 services. I2 is primarily a high-speed research and education network which has access to all the supercomputers in the US.



Many people at WVNET contributed to this effort: Allen Daugherty, Andy Parker, Frank Seesink, Steven White, Randy Long, Donna Meadowcroft, Greg Kidder, Phil Snitz, Buffy Vehse, Bob Roberts, Mike Karolchik, Mary Stewart, Barbara Long and Booker Walton. Thank you to all of you for your outstanding work for our customers!

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Recently Ellucian, a national company which provides WVNET with software which helps students find the shortest and best path to a degree, did a nice article in their newsletter about WVNET and West Virginia. It involves a new piece of software which lets the students here also search which classes from other West Virginia colleges would count towards their degree. This helps them make a decision about summer school courses at other schools if they go home for the summer, or if the class isn't being offered at their school that semester.

Governor Tomblin has made this kind of transfer equivalency a priority. Dr. Corley Dennison at the HEPC is heading up the effort to implement this policy statewide. This will help all of our students to finish their degree sooner and keep their student loan debt lower. It benefits all of us and it takes care of our schools and our students. Thanks to Ellucian, the HEPC and Governor Tomblin for helping WVNET to help you!

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY And this month's winner is...



March makes us start to think about spring and warm thoughts of sunny days and flowers blooming. It also brings my personal favorite time of year, March Madness! Shouldn't the Thursday and Friday of the opening round of the NCAA be a national holiday? Well, maybe not here, as WVNET would still be here to support our customers. But I might have to keep one eye towards the games as well!

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

This month we would like to congratulate our winner, Michelle Liga, a Webmaster in the Preston County Schools System. Michelle called in with an issue pertaining to a teacher having access to a page and only that page specifically designed for her and her usage, within the context of a greater website. She talked to one of our resident WordPress website experts, Uriah Spolt, who worked with her to create a new user role with specific permissions for the page in question and then showed her how to resolve the issue herself next time.

Michelle was grateful for the assistance and expertise of Uriah, saying this of her experience, *"Uriah is great to work with and solved my problem quickly! While working on my problem he instructed me so I would be able to duplicate the resolution. Thank you for having someone like Uriah to help me with my problem. Very professional."*

Uriah was complimentary of working with Michelle as well, stating, *"When she has a problem it's always something interesting that takes some thought process to get figured out. She never asks the same question twice and keeps me on my toes as far as things that may go overlooked. She's such a fast learner that when we gave training in Preston County she actually helped instruct the course!"*

Michelle, we are pleased that you, as well as Preston County Schools, look to WVNET for your web services, and this is a great chance to remind everyone that the Department of Education pays for this service for every school and county that wants to use WVNET as its provider. We have a fantastic team of web development experts who are here to serve your needs.

As always, at the end of each month, we will draw a winner, contact them by email and then 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 Michelle, and thanks again to all our customers who continue to shape and improve WVNET. *(Guest article by Booker Walton, III, Customer Resource Specialist, pictured.)*

PUBLIC WI-FI — - WEIGH THE RISKS

Wi-Fi hotspots are wonderfully convenient, even for hackers; follow these tips to stay safe:

Free public Wi-Fi hotspots are terrific. They offer users quick and reliable Internet connections where cellular reception is spotty. Even in areas with strong cellular signals, users can connect their phones, tablets and laptops to public Wi-Fi hotspots in order to conserve data on their mobile plans and steer clear of those pesky data caps.



Of course, there is one problem with public Wi-Fi networks, and it's a big one: They're often operated with no security options, which means any data you send or receive while connected to these networks is vulnerable and can easily be stolen by hackers.

A timely reminder of the dangers of public Wi-Fi occurred last month, when a journalist from **USA Today**, Steven Petrow, recounted the story of how he was stopped by a fellow traveler after an American Airlines flight and told that he was one of many passengers who'd unwittingly revealed personal information by using the in-flight Wi-Fi. The hacker then proceeded to read to Petrow the contents of some of his personal emails.

In-flight Wi-Fi services like Gogo Wireless (the service Petrow used on his flight) are in many ways just like the public Wi-Fi available at any coffee shop, mall, hotel, or other location where access is granted through a "captive portal"—that login screen that pops up in a browser window requiring either payment or acknowledgement of terms of service before you can reach the Web. Since there's no password protection on the Wi-Fi connection, there's no privacy protection for the raw traffic that is carried on the Wi-Fi network's packets, and anyone listening in can intercept all of what gets passed through the wireless access point to and from the Internet.

So how do you protect your privacy and still stay connected to a public Wi-Fi? Here are tips to staying safe on public Wi-Fi:

- If you can get a VPN connection to work, use it.
It may sound technical, but it's possible to create your own private virtual network. Called a VPN, this routes your data through an encrypted private network, keeping your activity and data safe even when using public Wi-Fi. You can buy VPN services for laptops and mobile devices.
- Turn off file sharing.
File sharing can leave your computer vulnerable to hackers, so turn this option off before using public Wi-Fi.
- Turn on your firewall
Make sure your computer's firewall is turned on to stop hackers connecting to your computer.
- Keep up-to-date
Make sure your operating system, web browser and anti-virus programs are up-to-date with the latest versions but only download and install updates when on your home or work network.
- Avoid accessing sensitive information
By and large, public Wi-Fi networks should not be used for online banking and credit card accounts, or any other sensitive data for that matter. Your best bet is doing that from home, where hopefully your internet service provider delivered router is both password-and firewall-protected.
- Adopt 2FA
Use two-step authentication (2FA) for logging into your account as offered by Gmail, Twitter and Facebook.

This typically involves a code sent to your mobile phone that you need to enter to log into the account. That way, even if someone hacks your password, the extra security layer will prevent them from opening your accounts.

(Guest article by WVNET staff members Steven White, Randall Long and Barbara Long)

PROTECT YOUR PC FROM THE CYBER-FLU WITH THESE ANTIVIRUS SOFTWARE OPTIONS

How do you know if a file is safe to run and not infected by virus? Relying on the antivirus software installed on your computer is limited to one detection tool. Scanning a suspicious file with multiple antivirus software would offer a safer test. However, installing multiple antivirus software would cause huge performance issues on a PC. Another way to scan files with multiple virus scanners is to upload them to an online multi-engine antivirus scanner such as:



- <https://www.virustotal.com/>
- <https://www.metascan-online.com/>
- <http://www.virscan.org/>
- <http://viruscheckmate.com/en/>

(Guest article by WVNET staff member Randall Long)

WVNET STAFF MEMBER TONYE IYALLA PRAISED FOR HER WORK



Tonya Iyalla joined the fulltime ranks of the WVNET staff as a Software Support Analyst—DegreeWorks in December 2015, having previously served as an intern for a year. And, she’s already making headlines!

West Liberty University Chief Technology Officer James Clark recently praised Tonye’s efforts, saying *“Our initial faculty advisory training took place on our campus Wednesday, February 10. The training was a success due in large measure to Tonye Iyalla, one of your new staff members. Tonye was readily available to training specialist Jill Nixon, Records Officer in the Registrar’s Office, in preparing the training environment for the session. As a technical consultant to our team, Tonye has raised the bar on the expression ‘She delivered value and exceeded expectations!’ Thanks for assigning her to our project.”* (Guest article by WVNET staff member Fran Barnes.)

WVNET PARTICIPATES IN WVU COMM CARNIVAL EVENT



On Tuesday, March 8, WVNET participated in the Comm Carnival event at West Virginia University, with a lead from WVNET social media expert Moises Cardenas. This was a fun collection of games sponsored by the WVU Communications Department. We took this opportunity to connect with people in the department along with over 70 WVU students. Our activity was Virtual Reality, where students got to experience one of several stunning VR games or movies. Although virtual reality headsets have been around for a while, many people have not yet tried one. We enjoyed watching students react to VR as much as they liked learning about it.



WVNET is always anxious to reach out to students at WVU and other higher education institutions.

(Guest article by WVNET staff member Mike Karolchik.)





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WV STATEWIDE TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE 2016

Mark your calendar for the 12th annual WV Statewide Technology Conference 2016 which will be held at the Waterfront Place Hotel & Morgantown Event Center in Morgantown, West Virginia, on July 19-21. *Vendor registration is now open.* Attendee registration will open at the end of March. The opening keynote is Lego and, once again, non-degree graduate credit will be offered through Concord University. For more information, visit the conference website at wvstc.com



UNITED WAY OF MONONGALIA AND PRESTON COUNTIES ANNUAL REPORT 2015

United Way of Monongalia and Preston Counties has released its 2015 Annual Report. You may view the report at:

<http://files.ctctcdn.com/2e86dfa7001/5314c32b-b91f-4bfb-b00e-d8208dc1e383.pdf>

Because of continued generosity and extraordinary leadership by this year's campaign chair, United Way surpassed its campaign goal of \$1,540,000 (\$1,570,250 total) and was able to support 49 programs at 27 local health and human service agencies in Monongalia and Preston Counties — together with many other things. A new VolunteerMPC website was launched pairing volunteers in the community with opportunities to serve non-profits. There were numerous other accomplishments as indicated in this year's report. **What This Place Needs!** (this year's campaign slogan) was what it took, each of **US** working together committed to the common goal of **"LIVE UNITED."** (Guest article by WVNET staff member and UWMPC Employee Coordinator Fran Barnes.)

WVNET DIRECTOR CELEBRATES 40 YEARS



Dan and Kathy O'Hanlon recently celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary by traveling to Hawaii and Australia. While there, Dan also had the opportunity to visit Kangaroo Island in Australia to check out the unique bloodline of the Ligurian Bees. An avid beekeeper, *bee* certain he enjoyed every minute of it, as well as the private time with his very special wife, Dr. Kathy. **Happy 40th Dan and Kathy!!**