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Computing consortium salutes innovative IT applications

Whitman College and Pacific Northwest National Laboratory honored

RICHLAND, Wash. — The NorthWest Academic Computing Consortium has selected Whitman College and Pacific Northwest National Laboratory to receive Hugi Excellence Awards for 2007. The annual awards recognize Northwest research and higher education institutions for innovative applications of information technology.

Whitman was honored for its implementation of the Collaboration and Learning Environment (online), a course management and collaborative learning tool. PNNL earned Hugi Awards for its outdoor campus safety camera system and cyber security awareness training.

“The practices submitted by Whitman College and Pacific Northwest National Laboratory are superb examples of the technological ingenuity thriving in our region,” said NWACC President Martin Ringle.

CLEo reigns

Known as CLEo, the online learning tool is Whitman’s adaptation of the Sakai Collaboration and Learning Environment. Chief Technology Officer Keiko Pitter, who directed the implementation team, noted that Whitman is the first college in the country to migrate successfully from a commercial vendor to the Sakai platform.

“It is an incredible honor to receive recognition for the hard work of everyone who has been involved with CLEo,” said Mike Osterman, WCTS middleware analyst. “A lot of the credit goes to the faculty who have invested their time and energy in guiding the process. The CLEo Pilot group, in particular, worked closely and candidly with Technology Services and took a chance on an unknown quantity in an open source learning system, actively using it in their courses.”



Lab safety, security improve

"At a time when the need for safety and security on campuses is at an all-time high, the campus camera has spread a safety umbrella over PNNL's entire main campus," said Safeguards and Security Director Cameron Andersen. The system also provides continuous wireless connectivity among buildings, as well as improved detection of unauthorized wireless access points that jeopardize network security.

The installation consists of 85 cameras, 14 emergency call stations and an advanced campus-wide outdoor wireless mesh network, plus a major upgrade of the laboratory's operations center. Located in Richland, Wash., PNNL is a Department of Energy Office of Science laboratory where 4,200 staff conduct research in energy, environment, fundamental science and national security. The main campus includes over 35 buildings and facilities spread over approximately one square mile.

PNNL took a multi-layered approach in creating a cyber security awareness training program that covers staff development, policy awareness and information protection. The result is an online annual training course, supported by postcards, posters and electronic communications, that PNNL Chief Information Officer Jerry Johnson said has had measurable impact. For example, response by PNNL staff to a phishing message generated by a recent security review team was less than 1%, compared to 15% or more that outside studies say is typical of other organizations.

About NWACC

Founded in 1987, the NWACC comprises more than 30 colleges, universities, research organizations and nonprofit groups in the Pacific Northwest. The aim of the consortium is to foster collaboration that supports the development and use of advanced technology in instruction, research and administration.

The Hugi Excellence Award is named in honor of Joanne Hugi, former associate vice president for information services at the University of Oregon. Hugi, who now serves as chair of the NWACC's board of directors, contributed substantially to initiatives in technology throughout the Pacific Northwest during her 35-year term at the school.

For more information about the Hugi Excellence Awards, visit:

<http://www.nwacc.org/programs/awards/awards.html>.

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