

Technically Speaking

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myNorthwest Groups

by Dustin Singleton

Lately, Northwest Missouri State University has made a lot of buzz about the new web portal, myNorthwest. Students are able to access many cool features with this new tool. myNorthwest is most commonly known for reducing the number of passwords a student must remember, but also offers much more than that. One feature students might not be familiar with is the Groups application. The Groups tool is very useful, allowing students to keep in contact with people in the same organization or group. Also, photos and upcoming events can be shared using the Groups tool.

To access the Groups tool after logging in to myNorthwest, click on "Groups" in the top-right corner of the page. A new window will open containing three different tabs: *My Groups*, *Groups In-*

dex and *Request Group*. Under the *My Groups* tab is a list of groups that the current user is registered to (if any). Under the *Groups Index* tab is a list of all groups available on myNorthwest. The third tab is useful for groups or organizations on campus who want to create a group on myNorthwest portal.

Often students want to join a certain group already registered in myNorthwest. To join a group, go to *Groups Index* and find the desired group. Click the Join Group button. After requesting to join, the moderator of the group will receive a notification and will make a decision whether or not to accept the request.

Students already registered to a group can look under the *My Groups* tab to find a link with the name of that group. By clicking on a specific group's link, the user can view that organization's myNorthwest area. The group page contains a navigation bar on the left that helps in many useful tasks. The email link allows group members to send a message to everyone in the group. Also, from the left navigation bar, the user can view posted pictures, chat live with other members, view uploaded files by moderators, check out the organization's posted calendar and much more! The Groups tool is a great resource and puts easy communication at your fingertips.

"The Groups tool is very useful, allowing students to keep in contact with people in the same organization or group."

Shopping With Google

Always looking for that special deal, but not wanting to leave your comfortable office chair? With Google Shopping, consumers can find large arrays of items in specific price ranges. Shoppers can go a step further with even more specified searches using *Advanced Product Search*. Search for items that contain a certain keyword or combination of words. Shoppers can even search by UPC or model number, which is the most universal way to identify or locate a specific item.

Google Product Search is a new beta program offered by Google

that uses Google's powerful search engine spiders that inspect and infiltrate websites for their valuable data. Because Google is the largest and most powerful search engine in the world, consumers know they are getting consistent up-to-date product prices and comparisons, which then allows them to act on the limited window deals. With Google searching the entire internet, those once hard to find deals are becoming more and more known making it easier to save money. Go to Google Product Search at www.google.com and click on the *Shopping* link.

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Sat	11 am-4:45 pm
Sun	1 pm-11:45 pm

Questions?
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The many types of storage devices available today can overwhelm any normal human being. This article contains information that can be very helpful when choosing an external storage device.

USB Flash Drives

USB flash drives have come a long way. Previously, an average user needed just a few megabytes storage, which is no longer the case. With lower prices and up to 64 GB capacity, flash drives are the best solution for a portable storage device. USB flash drives are compact and easy-to-use devices that slip into your pocket or hang on a lanyard. Flash drives can hold important documents, thousands of digital photos, vid-

eos and songs. Just plug the drive into the USB port on a notebook and a new drive will be accessible with no installation required! Depending upon the amount of storage needed, the cost of a flash drive ranges from just a few bucks to about \$100.

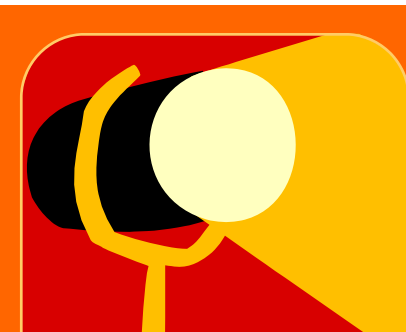
CD/DVD/Blu-Ray Burners

A traditional CD-R (recordable CD) can hold up to 800MB of information. CD media remains the most widely compatible, which is why it continues to thrive. However, DVD (Digital Versatile Disc) is a better storage medium. A single layer DVD (DVD 5) has a capacity of 4.4 GB, with a double-sided DVD having a capacity of 8 GB. A 4.4 GB DVD will store as much music as seven CD's (9 hours of music) and is the equivalent of

3,400 floppy discs. If DVDs are not large enough, Blu-ray discs hold a whopping 25 GB on one layer or 50GB on dual layers, which is enough storage for nine hours of HD movies, 23 hours of standard definition content or 72 CDs on a single disc! A Multi-format CD/DVD/Blu-Ray internal burner can be bought for approximately \$250.

External Hard Drives

External hard drives are cheap considering the amount of storage offered, but typically are not the most convenient. A hard drive with capacity of 1000 GB (1 TB) costs around \$175. A more portable 160 GB drive costs around \$75. External drives are affordable, simple and can fulfill backup needs.



PERT SPOTLIGHT Cody Melton

Cody Melton is a junior and will be considered a senior in the spring 2009 trimester. He holds 2 employment positions at Northwest Missouri State University. He is the Franken Hall PERT and a Client Computing Computer Lab Consultant. As a Consultant, he works both at the Computer Help Desk and in the Owens Library labs.

Cody is involved with a few campus organizations including Association of Computing Machinery (ACM) and Toast Masters.

In his spare time, Cody attempts to work out and enjoys playing games such as Halo with his friends. He also enjoys music and going to see a movie on the weekends.

Cody lives in Franken Hall and if you are in the nearby area and need some help, stop by and ask him!



Who Wants A Cookie?

by Eric Mackey

What Is A Cookie?

No, not the delicious treat. Cookies are also known as Web cookies, tracking cookies or HTTP cookies. The purpose of a Web cookie is not commonly known, but the effects are still often seen by internet users. Cookies are bits of text information that are sent to a user's web browser, such as Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox, to collect user data and send it back to the web server or website. An everyday example of this is when a website remembers username and password information, which is possible because of tracking cookies. Some uses for cookies are easily recognizable; however, many other applications of cookies are taken advantage of by web servers to make web browsing a little more... personal.

The Cookie Monsters

When the Online Privacy Protection Act was passed in 2004, Google made a change to their privacy policy which allowed them to keep the cookies of all users that access their services. The official reason for these cookies is to remem-

ber users' online "preferences", but critics are skeptical of this type of information gathering. Google-watch.org mentions that their cookies do not expire until the year 2038 and stresses that Google is allowed to give information collected to third parties. The policy can be good or bad, but what this could mean is future advertising will be directed specifically at you. If you have a YouTube account, targeted content can be seen in the "Videos Suggested For

You" section of their front page. Facebook also uses cookie information for advertising and survey purposes.

Stumble Upon

Stumble Upon is a tool that allows users to rate websites with the "I like it" button, while the software memorizes via cookies what kinds of websites were enjoyed. After rating several websites, the user can click the integrated "Stumble" button, which will take them to a random website that meets the interests saved from rating previous sites. Stumble Upon will not share user information with third parties. To download the program, go to www.stumbleupon.com.

"Cookies are bits of text information that are sent to a user's web browser to collect user data and send it back to the web server or website."

Studying is as Easy as eReading by Josh Boerma

Computer Tips

4 Tips You Should Know

1 Quickly put your HP laptop to sleep by pressing the Function key + F3.

2 To toggle through programs quickly, hit the Tab button while pressing the Alt button.

3 Press Shift+Delete to bypass the Recycle Bin and permanently delete an item.

4 To rename a selected file, press the F2 key instead of right-clicking!

Fun Links

WebMD.com

Not feeling so hot? Visit WebMD to get a better idea of how to treat your symptoms. Also, read the latest on health and fitness!

Photobucket.com

Upload your photos and videos to host on the Web, organize and share. All at no cost!

Craigslist.com

Your online local marketplace! Buy and sell items locally for absolutely free!

Where would Northwest Missouri State University be without becoming the Electronic Campus 21 years ago? Northwest is considered the largest technical university in the state of Missouri and the school is very proud! Lately Northwest has been discussing taking the next technological step. President Dean Hubbard has made the decision to test run the Sony eReader for undergraduate students as early as the Spring 2009 trimester. A Sony eReader is an electronic tablet that students will use in place of using a textbook for each class.

According to Sony, Northwest will become the first institution in the United States to start up an electronic textbook program.

Both Northwest and Sony believe that electronic textbooks are the future and many other universities will soon rely on products like the Sony eReader. After hearing the idea, many teachers and students are very excited for the new technology to arrive on campus, but several professors and staff members are still questioning the idea. Since Northwest will be the first institution to use the Sony eReader, some people are not convinced the project will be a complete success.

The Sony eReader is one of a kind. If Northwest goes through with the plan, students may not have to worry about lugging heavy, book-filled backpacks to class any-

more. Instead, students will only need to bring their eReader and note-taking supplies.

The Sony eReader is a tool designed for easy use. The user can simply download a digital copy of a textbook straight to the eReader from the Internet. All that is needed is the included USB cord and the university supplied notebook. Certain books can be found online and can then be downloaded on to the eReader. The Sony eReader not only supports downloading textbooks, but also PDF files, Microsoft Word files, JPEG files and mp3 files.

To learn more about the new Sony eReader, visit www.sonymstyle.com.

Not Your Average "Pidgin" by James Sorensen

The spelling of the name only shows how far from average Pidgin really is. Pidgin Instant Messenger is open source software which, in terms of the user, means that it is free for anyone to use and edit. Pidgin is very similar to Trillian, another instant messenger system; both allow users to access many different messengers within one application (MSN, AOL, Yahoo, ICQ, etc).

Pidgin is not an all-inclusive messenger and most often users find it to be more of a project than a simple messenger system. Since its release in 1999, Pidgin has taken great steps toward stability and diversity. Because Pidgin is open source, many users have access to its development. Pidgin is sort of like a community jigsaw puzzle; everyone on the web has access to its development (source code) and is encouraged to

post plug-in files to help in the customization and advancement of the program. In most cases if Pidgin does not support a service, that specific service can be found on sourceforge.net and can simply be added as a plug-in. If the service does not exist, users are encouraged to create their own plug-ins for others to view and edit.

To help facilitate Pidgin's development and other open source projects, programmers have created sourceforge.net. The service creates an environment for people to share ideas and host their projects for anyone to download and customize. For more information about Pidgin Instant Messenger and other fascinating new software, check out www.pidgin.im and sourceforge.net.

