

Mobile Technology and Big Data at Temple

By Cindy Leavitt, Vice President for Computer Services and Chief Information Officer

I am excited to be at Temple and have been warmly received by everyone that I have met since arriving at the beginning of August. When I met with the Faculty Senate Representatives, we talked about the trends that are changing the way we need to approach technology at the university. Two key topics that we covered in the discussion were mobile technology and big data.

Mobility is an obvious trend and there is an expectation of ubiquitous wireless access for the many devices that students, faculty, and staff bring to campus every day. At Temple, we are seeing this growth of devices on our network. Five years ago, 16% of students living on campus did not have a device. Today, every student has at least one device and the 5200 students that moved onto campus wirelessly connected 13,489 devices in their rooms. The challenge we face is how to shift from a wired campus to a fully wireless one. The recharge model that Computer Services has used for years to pay for the network is based on a charge per hardwired device. This model is being challenged as the number of wireless devices grows and the need for hardwired computers and phones declines.

For faculty, there are opportunities to leverage mobile devices for teaching and research. Services like [Poll Everywhere](#) use texting and smartphone apps for interactive surveys replacing the need for clickers and giving greater flexibility in the type of responses that can be gathered in class. Mobile apps are also enhancing the capability to broaden the reach and scope of research as well. In March 2015, Apple released [Research Kit](#), an open mobile development framework with informed consent and surveys that tie into the health information that is being gathered on every Apple phone. Researchers have used this framework to launch large scale research projects and attract thousands of subjects.

The tsunami of data continues to permeate everything that we do. The ability to analyze data is becoming a foundational skill that is required across all disciplines. The increase in computing power and algorithms to analyze vast amounts of unstructured data are opening new avenues of discovery. More and more research opportunities are tied directly to data analysis. Big data is being talked about a lot and there are pockets of faculty and staff around the university who are working in this area. The need to leverage that expertise and the need for interdisciplinary research teams are growing to support this interest.

We also have the opportunity to use the more traditional data to make better decisions. Ensuring that we have the ability to store, manage, share, and protect the growing amounts of data is critical in supporting the research, teaching, and administrative missions of the university.

I look forward to continuing this conversation and further exploring these important opportunities with you. If we can pool our resources and knowledge, we will be well positioned to meet these challenges.

Please feel free to email me your thoughts on these topics at cindy.leavitt@temple.edu.



Cindy Leavitt

