



IT PROS **IT UPDATE**

August 2024 Newsletter | Technology Services

Copilot for Microsoft 365

The Copilot for Microsoft 365 Summer Pilot is in full swing. Recent demo sessions showcased the AI tool's capabilities and practical use cases. A mid-pilot survey revealed Copilot is most used with Word and Outlook and a desire for more information using Copilot with Excel. The first pilot ends on August 31 and a final report is in progress. [Learn more about Copilot for Microsoft 365](#) . Copilot for M365 is currently available for all campus members to purchase in Texas A&M's [software store](#) . The licenses are \$360 per year.

New & Noteworthy



New Branded Templates and Brand Guide Updates

The Division of Marketing of Communications (MarCom) recently released a new [brand guide](#) for Texas A&M University. Updates include a new color scheme and updated fonts. Technology Services revamped its [brand guide](#) to comply with the new standards. You can find updated [PowerPoint and Google presentation templates](#) in our digital toolbox. Please use our presentation templates for all presentations. The Product Management and Communications team will begin making design changes to our websites and marketing materials to comply with the new brand standards over the coming months. MarCom also released [Aggie UX](#) , a new design system and framework to help quickly create accessible, brand compliant websites.

Technology Services Assists Texas A&M Veterinary Emergency Team at Operation Border Health Preparedness

Technology Services supported the Veterinary Emergency Team (VET) during the Operation Border Health Preparedness event last month. This is the largest disaster preparedness event in Texas, treating 950 dogs and cats. The integration of mobile internet solutions facilitated seamless operations, enabling high-quality care. Highlighting the collaboration's success, Mitch Wittneben, Assistant VP for Academic Operations, praised the teamwork, while Dr. John R. August, Carl B. King Dean of Veterinary Medicine, and Dr. Deb Zoran, VET Director, expressed gratitude for Technology Services' vital support in enhancing their operational efficiency and community service. [Learn more on our website](#) .

PagerDuty Application

PagerDuty is a risk management application that will serve as the primary incident monitoring and alert system for Technology Services. PagerDuty will provide opportunities to optimize our incident response workflows, reduce response and resolution metrics, enhance collaboration among team members, provide a proactive approach to incident repair, and provide a scalable solution for our growing service health monitoring needs. Additionally, PagerDuty will allow for transparency to discover trending data with service health resource availability, identify risks and lack of redundancy, and allow for greater visibility to our stakeholders of the overall health of all IT services.

Five pilot critical services are being onboarded during this phase - Authentication, Canvas LMS, Howdy Portal Applications, Network Services, and Enterprise Networking. Authentication is nearly completed and Canvas and Howdy are being onboarded over the summer. Additionally, we have onboarded the on-call personnel for four primary enterprise level response teams. Infrastructure System Operations, IT Security Operations, Enterprise Networking, and Network Services. Using PagerDuty to contact these on-call responders is live and has already shown, through a few incidents, an improvement in response time and communication. Feedback from these response teams have been very positive with comments on the ease of using the PagerDuty mobile application and the benefits of a group managed schedule and customizable user set contacting methods. We look forward to introducing automated alerting and event escalation as we continue to onboard our critical services.

This project continues to be in progress. The PagerDuty team is working with the vendor on developing and improving integration connections with our communication (MS Teams) and ITSM tools (TeamDynamix).

Contact pagerduty@tamu.edu for any questions or [access the PagerDuty Sharepoint website](#).

Project Progress



VoIP Phone Service Upgrade

The [VoIP phone service upgrade project](#) reached a significant landmark with the retirement of the Broadsoft platform and the integrated Centrex voicemail service in July, a month earlier than planned. Much appreciation goes to our student workers for their data-gathering contributions! The next big task is upgrading the remaining Centrex phone lines. Planning is in progress, and building work will resume in September 2024. 76% of the project is completed with 8,931 lines upgraded or disconnected.

TeamDynamix Achieves Large Milestones, Survey Feedback Positive

Almost 65% of support email addresses are now being routed through TeamDynamix. Since July 29, over 5,000 tickets have come through the system. Surveys are sent to each customer after their tickets are resolved. Since July 29, 88% of respondents rated their experience as “satisfied” or “very satisfied” and 92% rated the speed of response time as “satisfied” or “very satisfied”. Keep up the great work! If you have not joined the [TDX Teams channel](#) , please join to receive real-time updates on new features and collaborate with our community. *The volume of tickets will increase substantially as we near the start of the semester, and it is critical that every team monitors their queues.*

TechHub: Enhancing Technology Services at Texas A&M

TechHub is pleased to announce that we are nearing the completion of onboarding the University to the TechHub program! This extensive process has involved holding over 100 meetings and engaging with 600 individuals. Recently, TechHub processed an order for the College of Arts & Sciences for 52 all-in-one systems and saved \$40k on the purchase. Once the purchase was approved, it only took two days to fulfill the order. The enthusiasm and participation from the University community have been incredible, and we are excited about the positive impact this will have. We appreciate your continued support and look forward to welcoming even more members into our growing TechHub community. For an example of TechHub's impact, visit u.tamu.edu/TechHubSavings .

Google Storage Changes

The [Google Workspace Sustainability Project](#) _ continues through the fall as the team develops tools for overall storage management workflows and supporting processes, including annual Shared Drive verification. Visit the [project website](#) for more details on upcoming Shared Drive management.

Windows Device Management Unification Project and Admin By Request

The Windows Unified Device Management initiative kicked off with several dedicated task force teams, each focused on key areas like Role Based Access Control (RBAC), communications, escalation, patching, testing, governance, training, and documentation. These teams submitted plans to the project team last week. The Unified Endpoint Management (UEM) team is now defining roles and preparing settings and configurations. The team will then work to obtain approval to begin execution where they will secure target devices for testing and process verification.

The Admin by Request (AbR) proof-of-concept launched July 22 with a dynamic communication meeting involving all business IT leaders. The team swiftly made the AbR product available and testers are actively providing feedback through surveys and the Teams channel. By the end of July, 261 instances of AbR were detected on devices. This collaborative effort is paving the way for enhanced IT management and user experience.

Aggie Virtual Desktop

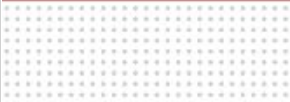
Technology Services is consolidating the Virtual Open Access Labs (VOAL) and College of Engineering (COE) virtual desktop infrastructures (VDI) under a new web portal, VMware Workspace ONE and branding the unified offering as Aggie Virtual Desktop. This consolidation is in line with the larger organizational goals of unifying services and making processes more efficient.

Benefits of Aggie Virtual Desktop include a single platform for access and login, ease of management, Microsoft Entra ID authentication, and better service reliability. Workspace ONE is expected to launch to customers in the Fall of 2024. If you have any questions about the project, please contact karasek@tamu.edu.

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