

ITS Training Services

Training Report

Spring Break-Fest 2009

General Findings:

Spring Break-Fest 2009 was held March 9th-12th. Information included in this report is recorded from Public-Free workshops during this time period that were designated as part of this event.

A total of 16 training sessions on 15 unique topics were offered by 7 instructors (see Appendix A for instructor breakdown). Two of the instructors were guest instructors from other ITS units.

While the number of offerings is comparable to and even higher than the number of sessions offered in past years (2005-2007), unfortunately the number can't be compared to directly to Spring Break-Fest 2008. During 2008 an experimental strategy was applied to offer many regular semester topics in condensed versions at no charge. We found that using this strategy provided free training opportunities but also appeared to keep registrants away from regular semester full-length offerings. The current scheduling strategy focuses on topics that have a direct appeal for the target audience, therefore the number of offerings is more comparable to years reported prior to the experimental implementation.

There were 235 total registrations and 127 total attendees. Again, although not directly comparable to last year, these values are consistent with or higher than Spring Break periods reported in recent years. No registrants remained on waiting lists. The no show rate was 22% of the total registrations, which is an increase from past years, yet is somewhat consistent with the rate typically seen during Fests when all offerings are free. The intended student audience, who made up the majority of registrations, also comprised the bulk of the recorded no shows. Based on past no show rates from this audience who have variable schedules, this is to be expected to some degree. The cancellation rate was 23% of the total registrations, which is considerably lower than last year yet appears to indicate that registrants were choosing to be no shows rather than to cancel registration.

The average attendance per workshop was 8 participants, which is the same as last year and consistent with years past. The top three workshops by attendance were as follows: Penn State Thesis Template (2 offerings), PowerPoint 2007: Customizing a Presentation, and PowerPoint 2007: Enhancing and Packaging a Presentation (see Appendix B for attendance breakdown by offering). These findings are consistent with previous Fests as these topics continue to appeal to the intended audience.

Five sessions were offered both face-to-face and via Adobe Connect simultaneously. Four of the sessions had attendees with a total of 17 participants attending via Adobe Connect (13% of the overall attendance) and 12 attendees in the classroom. While only 6 attendees completed the Adobe Connect survey items, the overall feedback was positive. Respondents were mostly staff from University Park with one faculty member and one

undergraduate student reporting from the Harrisburg campus location. All respondents said that the session was “About the same as the face-to-face session” and ranked it as “Very Good” or “Good”. One respondent was a new user of Adobe Connect and felt they had “no interactivity”. Most respondents reported that they viewed the session alone while a few viewed the session with others present. The survey results were sent to Barb Smith to be compiled as part of an overall look at Adobe Connect usage and feedback across the University.

Students, both graduate and undergraduate, comprised 58% of the attendees. This is a significant increase in student attendance from last year and is consistent with past years. Staff made up 35% of attendees with faculty at 7%. These findings are indicative of offering the appropriate topics of interest for the intended audience during this Fest.

Attendees were mostly from the University Park location, with five attendees from the Harrisburg campus and one attendee from the Berks campus. These attendees participated in the session broadcast via Adobe Connect.

Overall, Spring Break-Fest 2009 was successful in garnering attendance by the intended audience. While there was a distinct change from last year, it appears that there was positive growth toward reaching students with these free sessions offered during the break in the academic semester.

Recommendations:

Refocusing on the target audience this year was very important in planning and scheduling sessions that garnered attendance from the intended group. Careful consideration of past success should continue to be done when planning for Fest offerings. The test strategy implemented last year helped a great deal in allowing for examination of what happens to attendance of a target audience when the type and number of offerings are much broader. Finding that the focus shifts away from the target and that registrants for regular semester full-length offerings may be affected was useful in moving forward with the way in which the academic break Fests are planned.

Aligning the popular topic offerings with training resources is also quite important. It would have been beneficial to be able to offer some other topics that we know meet the technology training needs of the group as well, such as EndNote, SPSS, and e-Portfolio, which Training Services does not offer on a regular, continuous basis. Unfortunately, during Spring Break some guest instructors are not available. It is important to maintain a relationship with other departments/units, such as the Library that instruct this training and to consider alternative timing for these sessions so that the audience may benefit from them even if they are not available during the Fest.

Registrations showed an increase following announcements that went out in an effort to promote workshops offerings to the intended audience. Although there was no paper flyer sent out this year, marketing announcements were delivered via the GSA list, the

Graduate School/Departments list, and the Student newswire. Announcements or links were also posted to the Training Services website, Graduate School website, the Technology Training Community, and the Teaching with Technology Community. Directed marketing via these channels should be continued for Fests that occur during breaks in the academic semester. Investigating additional avenues for target marketing to the colleges and departments may also helpful in letting more students know about our services, particularly the Fest offerings.

Overall, Spring Break-Fest 2009 was successful in garnering good attendance from the intended audience. This time period should continue to be utilized to provide free technology training opportunities to graduate student and others who may have increased availability during the break in the semester. Careful consideration of topics should continue to be done when scheduling these Fest offerings. Target marketing efforts should continue to be used to announce these sessions via as many channels as appropriate for the intended audience. Continuing to offer free workshops during this time period appears to be a good opportunity to expand the reach of our services to participants and promote interest in further training throughout the year.

Appendix A

The following table shows the number of Public-Free workshops offered by each instructor during Spring Break-Fest 2009. The number of hours of instruction is listed for each instructor.

Instructor Last Name	Number of Workshops	Hours of Instruction by Instructors
Aziz	1	3.0
Dahm	2	4.0
Heckel	6	10.0
Huntsinger	1	4.0
Klein	3	6.5
Layng	2	7.0
Salvaggio	1	3.0
Totals	16	37.5

Appendix B

The following table shows the number of attendees per each workshop offered during Spring Break-Fest 2009. The number of session reflected here is higher than the overall number of offerings listed earlier in this report as some sessions were presented simultaneously both face-to-face and via Adobe Connect. Attendance for both presentation mediums is shown here.

Overall Attendance	Workshop Title
22	Penn State Thesis Template (2 offerings)
14	PowerPoint 2007: Customizing a Presentation
13	PowerPoint 2007: Enhancing and Packaging a Presentation
12	Excel 2007: Charts and Graphics
12	Scientific Computing with Maple, MATLAB, Mathematica, and Comsol
11	Word 2007: Publishing Research & Longer Documents
7	Getting Started with Adobe Acrobat Connect Pro
6	Podcasting Overview (via Adobe Connect)
5	Podcasting Overview
5	Using Blogs in the Classroom (via Adobe Connect)
4	Getting Started with Blogs at Penn State
4	Using Blogs in the Classroom
3	Using Connect Pro in the Classroom (via Adobe Connect)

3	Using Web 2.0 Technologies in the Classroom (via Adobe Connect)
2	Using Web 2.0 Technologies in the Classroom
1	Using Connect Pro in the Classroom
1	Using Google Docs for Collaborative Creation
1	Using Penn State's Wikispaces in the Classroom
1	Using Studiocode to Tag and Analyze Video Recordings