

THE 2012 IT REFERENCE GUIDE



Essentials

Whether you're new to Virginia Tech or just reviewing your computing and communications needs, the list below points to some essential services and tasks.

If you're new, see "Transitioning" on www.computing.vt.edu.

- Understand your responsibilities for acceptable use (www.policies.vt.edu/acceptableuse.php).

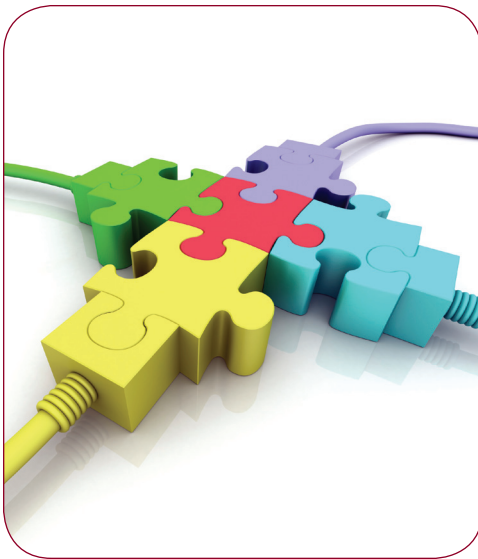
Acceptable use of information technology is ethical, reflects academic honesty, and shows restraint in the consumption of shared resources. It demonstrates respect for intellectual property, ownership of data, system security mechanisms, and individuals' rights to privacy and to freedom from intimidation and harassment.

- Your PID is your online username and your key to many university online services. See www.my.vt.edu. Set your account recovery options, in case you forget the password, and set your VT Google password.
- Be sure your computer has appropriate security settings. Consult your departmental technical support staff, or download the VTNet 2012 software package (www.vtnet.vt.edu). If you use Windows, consider VT WSUS to automatically install locally tested updates (Search for "VT WSUS" on www.computing.vt.edu).
- Access your VT Google Apps email at <http://start.google.vt.edu>. You can also choose to create an Exchange account. Visit AD Admin (<https://adadmin.w2k.vt.edu>) to sign up.
- Set your preferences for VT Alerts (www.alerts.vt.edu).
- Verify your emergency contacts (From www.my.vt.edu, select the "Personal Info" tab).
- For computing and communications information, see www.computing.vt.edu.
- For help, ask at www.4help.vt.edu or 540-231-4357, or contact your departmental support staff.

What's new

BlueRidge is the newest supercomputer at Virginia Tech, replacing the aging System X. BlueRidge was installed over the summer and will be ready for research programs this fall.

VT Google Apps replaces VT Mail, the mail system used by students and many faculty and staff members. (Individuals using Exchange may continue with it, but still need to establish an account in the new VT Google Apps system). "Core applications" are covered by a contract between the university and Google and offer protections for confidentiality that the commercial Google service does not. Virginia Tech personnel may use additional, extended applications, but need to recognize that these are without the protection of the contract.



Unified Communications, the multiyear effort to upgrade the university network and to replace the voice communications system, will roll out new services to nearly half the university in the coming year. Watch for ongoing updates at www.nis.vt.edu/uc.

www.computing.vt.edu, your listing about Information Technology services, has a new look and organization. Use the left-side menu, the A-Z index, or the search tool to find information about communications and computing services.

lynda.it.vt.edu provides more than 1,400 training videos on a broad range of subjects, including business skills, photography, design, music and video, home computing, animation, and Web design and development. The service is available on computers and on mobile devices.

InCommon is an identity federation that permits individuals to use their login credentials (e.g., PID and password) at their home institution while using a service from another organization. Search for "InCommon" on www.computing.vt.edu.

You may create a **network password**, different from your PID password, to access the university's wireless network. Go to my.vt.edu.

Security and IDs

Data protection

Personally identifying information (PII)—Social Security numbers, credit/debit card numbers, bank account numbers, passport numbers, and driver’s license numbers—is attractive to identity thieves. Use Identity Finder (www.security.vt.edu) to find PII. Remove or encrypt PII on desktops, laptops, and portable storage media. Remember to care for the data on smart mobile devices. The IT Security Office offers additional tools to manage sensitive information securely.

Other sensitive data—research data and intellectual property, medical records, student records, detailed personnel records, and many other types—can be attractive to thieves and must be carefully protected. If you suspect an unauthorized exposure of personal information, report it immediately by calling 540-231-HELP (540-231-4357).

Key resources

- www.security.vt.edu
- www.antivirus.vt.edu
- VT Windows Software Update Service—Check Services A-Z for VT WSUS on www.computing.vt.edu.

Key actions

- Install security updates to your systems and applications.
- Secure your passwords.
- Don’t share your passwords, don’t leave them exposed for someone to see.
- Use different passwords for non-university systems.
- Change your passwords when required or more often, and anytime you suspect an exposure.
- Beware scams and phishing—Virginia Tech will never request your password by email.

eCommunications and Network access

Key resources

In the eCommunications section of www.computing.vt.edu

- VT Google Apps Mail
- Exchange
- Instant messaging
- TelePresence

In the Network access section of www.computing.vt.edu

- Wireless campus network

From www.cns.vt.edu, "Services"

- Cellular
- DHCP/wired access
- VPN
- Voice communications

Key actions

- Establish your VT Google Apps password at <https://my.vt.edu/accounts/myaccounts>.
- Follow Unified Communications at www.nis.vt.edu/uc.

Email changes

Virginia Tech has partnered with Google to offer email and collaboration services through the Google Apps for Education program. The university's new email service, VT Google Apps, continues with voluntary transition that started this past summer, and will soon move to required transition when the older system is retired.

Individuals using Exchange/Outlook may continue to do so but must provision a VT Google account. See <http://going.google.vt.edu>.

Unified Communications is

Virginia Tech's multiyear program to connect the university community via new and emerging communications technologies. Unified Communications will allow the integration of real-time communications services, including telephony, instant messaging, chat, and desktop video conferencing with asynchronous communications, such as email, voicemail, and fax. Follow the progress of the program on the Unified Communications website, www.nis.vt.edu/uc.

Email retention

Information Technology at Virginia Tech provides central email services to the university community. These services allow individuals to keep mail up to a stated capacity.

Information Technology safeguards university operations by backing-up email that is left on these systems. Back-ups are kept for a limited period of time, sufficient to restore current email should there be a system failure.

Individual employees using the centrally provided email systems—or any departmentally provided email system—are responsible for:

- (a) identifying which emails that you wrote may constitute an official “university record”—a documentation of official university transactions,
- (b) retaining those official records for the appropriate length of time (*for example, three years for departmental correspondence*), and
- (c) destroying those records after the appropriate retention period, following the procedures established by Records Management Services to obtain a Certificate of Records Destruction (www.rms.vt.edu).

Records Management Services can assist with information about how to define a university record, and what the retention periods are. Contact RMS at 231-0224 or recmgmt@vt.edu.



Instructional support

Key resources

- Scholar—<https://scholar.vt.edu>
- Faculty Development Institute—www.fdi.vt.edu
- Graduate Education Development Institute—www.gedi.vt.edu
- Video/Broadcast Services—www.vbs.vt.edu
- Digital Imaging—www.emd.vt.edu/

Key actions

- Visit InnovationSpace—1140 Torgersen Hall and www.is.vt.edu
- Learn through online tutorials at <http://lynda.lt.vt.edu>
- Learn more about assistive technologies—call 540/231-3461

Students' email addresses

Since last year, new students' email addresses have been withheld from VT PeopleSearch. While students may change this option and elect to display their email address in the public directory, changing the initial setting results in fewer student email addresses being public. To find student email addresses for university business purposes, consult the Knowledge Base, <http://answers.vt.edu/kb/entry/3702/>.

Research computing and research tools

Key resources

- High performance computing and visualization—www.arc.vt.edu
- Geographic information service and resources—www.gis.vt.edu
- Discovery Commons repository—<https://dcr.emd.vt.edu>

Key actions

- Look for research topics at Faculty Development workshops—www.fdi.vt.edu.
- Contact Network Infrastructure and Services if you need specialized research network resources (NIS.PR@vt.edu).
- Explore the TelePresence videoconferencing opportunities—check the A-Z index on www.computing.vt.edu.

New high performance computing options

BlueRidge, a 5,000-core 20-TB cluster, will be available in the fall, joining HokieSpeed, a 200-node GPGPU system, and HokieOne, a 500-core shared memory machine. These additions round out the suite of high-performance computers available to university researchers, including Athena, a 1,300-core system with GPUs and a large RAM memory footprint, and Ithaca, an IBM iDataPlex system supporting commercial software packages, such as MATLAB.

Software and hardware

Key resources

- Information Technology Acquisitions—www.ita.vt.edu

Key actions

- Participate in the Faculty Development Institute—www.fdi.vt.edu, or the ACC Banner machines for hardware refreshes. See www.computing.vt.edu, “Software and Hardware.”
- Learn more about assistive technologies—call [540-231-3461](tel:540-231-3461).

“Cloud computing” refers to services provided commercially and available for widespread use. Services range from small handy tools to enterprise-wide functions.

What university information should—and should not—be “in the cloud.” If you are contemplating using a cloud or other vendor-supplied computing service, ask yourself the following questions:

- Does Virginia Tech have an approved contract with this provider? Legal and policy issues will have been negotiated in the contract process. Contracts specify the conditions required to protect university data, including sensitive information such as data covered by FERPA, HIPAA, Social Security breach laws, or intellectual property.
- Is the cloud service reliable enough to meet your needs? Reliability includes both “up” times for the service, and the ability to retrieve and remove information when needed.
- What is your responsibility for records management of the data that may be put into the cloud? “University records” document the transaction of university business. A strong contract protects both confidentiality and the ability to retrieve information.

University data—personal info and records; Banner/Warehouse

Key resources

- Standard reports—www.computing.vt.edu/content/banner-reporting-tools-0
- Custom reports—www.iwa.vt.edu
- Listing of data stewards—www.it.vt.edu/publications/pdf/AdministrativeDataManagementStandard2012June11.pdf

Key actions

- Request and review Banner access—www.ims.vt.edu/information/bannerauthorization.html
- Manage your own information—My VT (www.my.vt.edu) and VT Alerts (www.alerts.vt.edu)

Affiliations are automated statements of individuals' relationships with the university. They are used through CAS logins and other login services to authorize access to online resources and information. Among the many types are these:

Salaried employees—[vt-employee-state](#)

Wage employees—[vt-employee-wage](#)

Enrolled students—[vt-student-enrolled](#)

Alumni—[vt-alum](#)

Retirees—[vt-employee-retiree](#)

Check your own in My VT's "Personal Profile" section.

Affiliations will continue to evolve as the university changes and enters new relationships.



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