

## RESEARCH SUPPORT

### COMPUTER LABORATORY

**Knut Boehmer**

During my second year as the Oriental Institute's IT Support Specialist, most things have become more familiar. With a lot of new faces coming to the building, and some old ones leaving, it had its share of new challenges and experiences as well, which I enjoyed. Looking back though, I am confident that the IT infrastructure and the digital offers the Oriental Institute provides today have significantly improved and that we are heading in a good direction.

#### ***Oriental Institute IT Inventory***

The OI inventory list has been continually extended, allowing a glimpse into the number of computers that the Oriental Institute uses; while quite a few older models were discarded the inventory currently contains around 220 active devices in the building.

#### ***Recycling Pickups***

As planned, the recycling pickups have continued. In fact, the demand was so great that the intervals had to be moved from the planned semi-annual schedule to a quarter schedule, resulting in four vans full of discarded electronics picked up over the last year.

#### ***Direct Support***

The change away from a ticketing system and towards a more personal support was a success — the overall majority of issues that arose were solved within twenty-four hours, with only a handful persisted for more than seventy-two hours. Feedback and approval of the "direct support" were very positive, so that this system will continue for the next year.

#### ***Purchase Process***

The Oriental Institute's reaction to the offer of managing IT- and technology-related purchases was also very positive, with one purchase about every two days on average with little to no complaints on the changed workflow. As such, the service offer will remain.

#### ***AV / Hybrid Classes***

One of the biggest changes of the past year has been in the OI video recording capabilities. Starting with Foy Scalf's online course in 2016, the process has been optimized, streamlined, and made more versatile. A solution was found to enhance the upgraded classroom AV's recording capabilities, as well the creation of a mobile setup that can be moved throughout the building, allowing recordings of classes inside offices or brown bag lunches in the La Salle Banks room. During the last year, a total of eighty-five class recordings have been created and made accessible to online participants and students.

Going forward, the majority of the Oriental Institute's adult education courses will be offered as hybrid courses, allowing participants from all over the world to participate. Also,

the hardware will be improved to increase quality of the recordings, as well as offer new opportunities like live streams or interactions with the classroom.

### ***Oral History Project***

Connected to the hybrid courses, a modification of the mobile recording setup was used to support the Museum and Research Archive's Oral History Project. Two hour-long interviews, one with Professor Robert Biggs, the other with the former OI Museum Archivist John Larson, were recorded and published to the Oriental Institute's YouTube channel, each one allowing invaluable insights and experiences of a lifetime of working within the building.

### ***"The Suq" POS System***

The search for a reliable partner for the Oriental Institute's Museum Shop (The Suq) was concluded in autumn of 2016. Working with the service provider "Lightspeed," the shop computer was replaced by an iPad, allowing for a more streamlined purchase process and, simultaneously, keeping a cloud-based inventory accessible from multiple devices at all times.

### ***University of Chicago IT Leadership Council***

As of June 2017, I am proud to represent the Oriental Institute with a seat in the newly founded University of Chicago IT Leadership Council. The goal of this council is to have a voice in top-level decisions that are made in the field of IT across campus, as well as allowing networking with other departments and IT teams. This also allows for efficiency and services provided to be improved for all members of the Oriental Institute.

The above points highlight only a few of the tasks that I have worked on since October 2016; for additional details please contact me directly.

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