Thank you all for your participation in the web services discussion at Midwest Educause. I hope you all had a good conference. As promised, here are notes summarizing our discussion.

We took a broad definition of web services and began by presenting our current well-supported web services. Most of the session attendees already have registration processes (registration/catalog/schedule) on the web. Most had admissions applications online. Fewer reported full accounts receivable with billing presentments and credit card payment.

In line with our missions, most shared that course management systems and library access are part of the current web service structure.

On the "hot" items, portfolios are happening now; many reported some state of a review to decision process. More than half of the attendees had a portal.

Communications support items, such as email, calendar, file sharing and collaborative work space, are popular current web service projects.

A few reported web services linked to alumni management and ability to process donations.

Commerce related sites and services are gaining some attention: software store, bookstore, travel service, ticket sales, camp reservations.

Organization is now important; many are looking at portals to organize, to pull all the services together and provide a single sign on.

In summary, we seemed to identify a path for development of web services:
First basic, repetitive data entry transaction systems, such as registration and applications (remove the in-person lines, provide 24 hour access) Basic student commerce systems: look about account balances, then on to accepting credit card payment, then maybe bill presentments to replace paper bill mailings. Note that these are repetitive transactions with many controls and fixed processes.

Next are communications, search and share: email, calendar, directories, libraries, reference chat, shared files. More complex commerce systems: donations, sale of goods, reservations

From there we've moved to non-repetitive, unstructured and creative materials that we are trying to make accessible anytime, any place: course management systems, portfolios, portals.

Our future: digital asset management, multi-media,
decentralized front ends. RSS, content syndication, XML.
Human-touch contacts on the web: advising, helpdesk, web cams.

We discussed hosting internally versus outsourced hosting, and the need to identify different decision and management points on those paths. Hosting worries included secure transfer, reliability, ownership, accessibility, and exit strategy.

As we considered our campus cultures, we thought these characteristics were important for consideration for web services:
- variety versus repetition
- purpose
- complexity
- training
- shared ownership
- hosting and contract management
- creativity and templates
- collaboration

The hurdles we shared:
- External understanding of why a service was a web service
- Faculty buy-in and the full range of faculty views
- New decision models for advisory boards
- New training and support models
- Decentralized environments
- Need for human interactions

Hope this is useful. Thank you very much for your interest and participation.

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