# WorkWisely

mw The Workplace

## Andile Swartbooi on digital evolution at NWU

- How to create Microsoft Forms
- Managing access to recording in Teams
- Teams telephony is on its way!

SCAN ME

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## Academic and Office Solutions (IT: AOS)

Andiswa Msi

Adelle Lotter

Sebastian Mosidi

Geraldine Gerhardi

# NWU's Ascent to Digital Innovation.

*At North West University (NWU), we prioritise a digital transformation that synergises with the human touch. We underscore the significant role of human engagement in AI and automation.*

*Andile Swartbooi*

**A**nd what's our foundation? An inventive Digital Business Strategy (DBS) that steers our path toward digital progression.

The DBS details our plan to adopt technologies from the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), such as Cloud computing, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Intelligent Automation (IA), Blockchain, and the Internet of Things. We aim to boost NWU's teaching and research, while also making learning and knowledge exchange exciting for students.

In June 2023, the NWU Council took a significant step by officially endorsing the DBS as the university's primary blueprint for digital evolution. It aims to achieve six main business goals using 4IR technologies:

- Increase operational efficiency.
- Enhance the experience for stakeholders.
- Transform the business model.
- Create new revenue sources.
- Foster agility and innovation.
- Boost digital skills and narrow the digital gap within NWU.

The DBS Office coordinates the execution of this strategy, assisted by the DBS Core Team. This team includes members from both the Faculty and Support departments. Andile Swartbooi, our digital strategy head, ensures our strategies are implemented seamlessly. He leverages his extensive experience from prior roles in universities and businesses, specialising in IT governance, risk, and business engagement. We sat down with him to delve into his approach to executing the digital strategy.

### What are your initial steps to ensure the strategy is properly implemented?

Apart from steering key digital transformation initiatives such as HR and Student Information System renewal, the DBS Office is collaborating with NWU IT to provide our stakeholders with innovative toolsets such as Microsoft PowerPlatform and PowerBI, 'which simplifies software development with little or no coding. Guidelines on how to optimally utilise these technologies are currently being refined.

The DBS Office acknowledges AI's significant influence on Higher Education. As a result, we're launching an Agility Hub to explore and determine the best AI and IA applications for NWU. To accelerate this initiative, we've teamed up with leading industry experts who offer extensive knowledge, technical skills, and resources in this regard.

### What was the senior executive's intention when they brought you in?

The NWU senior leadership was visionary in that they realised early the importance of digitalisation, especially in this dynamic digital world. One of the key things that they had in mind when they brought me in, was that they don't want to go with the hype. In simpler terms, they don't want to adopt technology just for the sake of it.

### What was the vision behind establishing a DBS Core Team?

We established a DBS Core Team to ensure everyone felt central to the transformation process. Instead of calling it a forum or committee, we emphasised its pivotal role. We approached heads of departments, faculty deans, and directors, asking them to nominate individuals passionate about change. People who could both grasp the leadership vision and relate to the broader NWU community. These nominated individuals have become essential liaisons for me, acting as a direct line to each department. They provide quick feedback on pressing issues. They play a critical role in change management, ensuring that the face of the DBS isn't just mine, but also represents familiar figures from their environments.

### How do you ensure that AI adoption doesn't lead to job losses at NWU?

It's natural for people to have reservations, especially with reports suggesting some jobs might become obsolete. This concern often affects those at the entry level the most. However, it's essential to understand that AI and Intelligent Automation impact all job levels. Rather than viewing it as a threat, consider it as an opportunity to enhance and streamline your work processes. Think of AI as a tool that can potentially help achieve a better work-life balance.

Our guiding principle is the "human in the loop" concept. We say, even with automation, there's always a role for humans, working alongside or complementing automated systems. At one of the conferences I attended, a speaker noted that while some jobs might phase out, countless new roles will emerge.

### What's on the horison for the university's digital transformation?

We're currently in the midst of a significant overhaul of our systems. New student information and HR systems are being implemented, and we're also reassessing our management processes to be a lot more agile.

**Hobbies:** Maskandi and jazz. Enjoys listening to artists such as Mfaz Omnyama, Phuzekhemisi, Ringo, and Nathi on his playlist. This is how Andile stays grounded.

**Books:** "Good to Great" by Jim Collins. He highly recommends this book. ▥

*Susan Wolff*

*Edward Jantjie*

# Meet The Tech Titans of NWU!

*We are thrilled to introduce you to our Users of the Month who play pivotal roles in keeping NWU technologically advanced. Let's hear from Edward, Susan, as they share their experiences.*

**Q: Which project in IT stood out that empowered the users?**

**Eddie:** "For me, it would be two. The first one is Microsoft Teams training, which started last year. We had intensive training, particularly for the Mafikeng campus. We have seen a need from our lectures and staff members. They make use Microsoft Teams for teaching and learning. As a result, I felt that this is one area that really stood out for me. At one point we had around 40, 50, even 60 participants in a session. Which is not easy to do with the traditional face to face training. The second project is the Microsoft 365 awareness campaign that began in June 2023. It was an IT driven campaign on all three campuses."

**Q: Did users know about Microsoft services?**

**Eddie:** "Most users know about MS services available in our environment. They probably have seen them once or twice, but they wouldn't know what they were for or how to use them. Moreover, the majority of users who join MS Teams meetings do not participate much e.g using gestures, chat and transcription among others. It became evident that our users need to know how to interact in the environment and take advantage of all features. This concern was addressed quite well, and our users at the moment are more comfortable having online meetings."

**Q: Is training users something that you will continue doing?**

**Eddie:** "We have done a lot of training. We will continue to provide once-off training should the need arise. Should Microsoft come up with huge updates or new tools, we will do another round of mass training. Once a user becomes comfortable with the use of a service, we often offer training when it is required. We do not wish to overwhelm them."

**Q: What about new employees? Do you train them?**

Eddie: "Yes, we do. However, nowadays Microsoft is a widely used product. We do an introduction but find that 80% of new employees already know how to use the Microsoft 365 Apps."

**User of the Month: Susan Wolff**
**Occupation:** Head of Staff Support Services

**Q: How did the users benefit from the migration to Microsoft?**

**Susan:** Users are experiencing improved collaboration and with tools like Microsoft Teams and OneDrive, employees can easily share documents and collaborate on projects in real time, regardless of where they are. This also supports the work-from-home strategy at the NWU. At the beginning of the year, we were still flooded with requests from users. But in the long run we have everything standardised and users have been trained. Users will definitely benefit and as everyone becomes more accustomed to the MS 365 environment, productivity will become better.

**Q: Was there a previous concern with regards to what you've mentioned, and did the changes now make it better?**

**Susan:** Yes, definitely. I think previously users were not properly informed about all the products that were available and how it linked to each other. Now, after the focused awareness campaign that we had, they are.

Susan adds, "We stay up to date with the changes and strive to deliver a service to our users and build trust relationships with them. It's important for us to have a good relationship with our users so they can feel comfortable engaging with us whenever they have problems."

# Restrict Access to Recordings in Microsoft Teams

*Did you know you can easily limit who accesses recordings in Microsoft Teams?*
*At NWU, your safety and security are paramount.*

**W**e aim to prevent your meeting recordings from reaching unauthorised individuals. If you're curious about controlling access to your Teams recordings, here's a simple guide to help you:

**Control Access to Meeting Recordings With These Simple Steps:**
- Schedule your meeting from within a Team rather than through Outlook. For the best practice, consider scheduling it in the General channel of the Team or any other public channel.
- Modify the access permissions for the recordings folder to grant access exclusively to Team owners. This procedure involves two straightforward steps:
a. Create a 'Recordings' folder within the Team or Channel where you're scheduling the meeting. If a 'Recordings' folder already exists, you can skip this step.
b. Restrict access to the 'Recordings' folder for all groups except the Team or Channel owners."

**Use these steps to control Access to Recordings in Teams:**
Begin by creating a 'Recordings' folder within your desired Team or Channel.
- Note: If the 'Recordings' folder already exists, you can proceed directly to step 2.
- In your selected Team or Channel, initiate a brief recording, lasting only a few seconds. This action will automatically generate the 'Recordings' folder within the Team or Channel.

**Restrict Access to the 'Recordings' Folder.**
To restrict access to the 'Recordings' folder, follow these steps:
- Right-click on the 'Recordings' folder.
From the list of options that appears, select 'Manage access. Ⓦ

# How to Create Microsoft Forms and Effective Usage

*Ever wondered how to create a form for your survey, quiz, or poll? If you are an NWU staff or student, you can now use Microsoft Forms for any of those three. To help you get started, we've put together this short article to guide you.*

Ever wondered how to create a form for your survey, quiz, or poll? If you are an NWU staff or student, you can now use Microsoft Forms for any of those three. To help you get started, we've put together this short article to guide you.

All you need is a Microsoft account – something every NWU employee or student should already have. From there, access Microsoft Forms through its website or the Microsoft 365 suite. Here's how simple it is to create a Microsoft Form:
- Log into the Microsoft Office 365 platform.
- See the "New Form" button on the homepage. Click it. This is your gateway to creating both surveys and quizzes for students or your department.

This brings us to the following question:

### Who can use the Microsoft Forms?
Well, every NWU staff and student!

### Crafting Your First Form:
Access Microsoft Forms using your Microsoft 365 credentials.,
- Once in, select "New Form".
- Title your form and maybe jot down a description. Pro tip: Titles can be up to 90 characters, and descriptions, a generous 1,000.
- Click "Add new" for a fresh question.
- Decide the type: Choice, Text, Rating, Date, or explore more options like Ranking, Likert, File upload, or Net Promoter Score®. Group your questions using "Section".
- You can bold, italicise, underline, adjust font colour/size, or even add numbering and bullets.

### Which Browsers Play Nicely With Microsoft Forms?
Microsoft Forms is compatible with a range of browsers: Microsoft Edge, the latest versions of Chrome, Firefox, Chrome on Android, and Safari on iOS.

**To wrap it up:** The good news is, that your survey or quiz will be accessible to anyone. Even if the individual is neither an NWU staff member nor a student and lacks a Microsoft Account. That person can swiftly adjust settings to participate. Responses will be sent back to you anonymously. But if you're curious about who's giving feedback, just ask them to enter their names into your form. Lekker folks! ▯

# Bye pesky telephones, hello Teams Telephony!

*We are excited to introduce you to the next big thing in technology – Teams Telephony. Our mission is to keep you on the cutting edge of innovation, and make your life simpler and more efficient.*

### What is Teams Telephony?
Teams Telephony refers to the integration of Microsoft Teams, a collaboration and communication platform, with traditional telephony services. This integration allows our staff members to make and receive phone calls within the Teams application, essentially turning Teams into a unified communication hub that includes voice calling along with its existing chat, video conferencing, and collaboration features.

### Why is it useful to NWU?
Teams Telephony is particularly useful for NWU, since as an institution of higher learning we want to streamline our communication tools, reduce costs associated with traditional phone systems, and provide our students and staff members with a unified platform for all their communication needs. It's worth noting that the features and capabilities of Teams Telephony may vary depending on the subscription plan and licensing options chosen by an organisation.

### Enjoy mobile-first experiences
Teams Telephony makes the process of making or taking calls easy for you. We want to empower all NWU staff members, regardless of whether they work remotely, in-office, or hybrid work environments with the flexibility of Teams Phone and devices that fit the way you work. ▯

# Meet Our Competition Winner

**Congratulations to Mr. Lefa Tonkuru, the winner of our "Win a Gizzu competition".**

Also available on video ▶️

*Jim Mamphoke*

The competition aims to highlight the positive impact of Microsoft applications on the work lives of University staff and students.

By hosting the "Microsoft Applications Video Challenge" the University IT Department aims to inspire staff members to explore possibilities of Microsoft applications while demonstrating the positive influence these tools can have on their work life within the university context.

The competition provides an opportunity for staff members to showcase their innovative approaches, and create engaging videos that captivate the university staff and students community like television presenters.

# Streamlining Training Service Delivery

**Do you know about NWU's Training Service Delivery?**

I you're not familiar with it, no worries. We've created this article to bring you up to speed. We caught up with Jim Mamphoke, our Acting Director of Service Delivery, who ensures you have a strong understanding of the functionality of all your applications.

**Q: How do you plan to address training needs, given the decentralised approach of each campus?**

A: ith regard to training at the moment, with the period that I've been in office, I haven't had time to consolidate the comprehensive plan. However, as each campus does its own needs analysis there is a training taking place. We are going to have a session where we will have to align whatever we deliver. We have already received the request from people in relation to the training for new staff. That would include having a video that will be uploaded so that staff members can just click on the link.

**Q: In terms of training, do we periodically review and update it to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness?**

A: e regularly update our training, and the feedback we receive from our customers plays a crucial role in guiding us towards the necessary adjustments and improvements.

**Q: How will we introduce our training programme to the users? Will it resemble an awareness programme?**

A: The awareness programmes conducted by the OS team were effective. They educated and made the staff and students aware. Such programmes, when implemented, resonate well with users. We should learn from successful approaches and enhance them. So, yes, it will be something along those lines. Collaborating with your team has been highly beneficial for us. ▯

# The Ever-Advancing IT Landscape: Your Mind's Secret Weapon

*In the heart of academia, we are all embarking on an extraordinary journey – a journey filled with excitement, anticipation, and, yes, a touch of apprehension.*

*Andiswa Msi – Director IT Academic & Office Solutions*

This remarkable voyage is none other than our collective embrace of new technologies. This voyage holds the promise of innovation and progress but may also seem like navigating uncharted waters. Yet, for North West University, an institution committed to excellence both within South Africa and on the global stage, this technological evolution is not just a choice; it's a compelling necessity. Let us embark on this journey together, exploring the intricacies of adaptation, the remarkable transformations, and the compelling need to keep pace in our ever-evolving technological landscape.

## The Fear of Change: A Natural Reaction

When change knocks on our doors, it's natural to be wary. The uncertainty it brings, the potential for initial hiccups, and the learning curve can be intimidating. However, consider this: growth often emerges from the very discomfort we may feel. By challenging ourselves and our institution to adapt, we open doors to new horizons, greater efficiencies, and enriched experiences for our students and colleagues alike.

## Benefits of Innovation and Digitalisation

The advantages of wholeheartedly embracing innovation and digitalisation in academia are vast. These technological leaps offer the potential to revolutionise learning experiences. Imagine interactive online platforms, virtual classrooms, and a treasure trove of digital resources, all poised to make education more dynamic and accessible. Moreover, these innovations can automate and streamline administrative tasks, freeing up valuable time and resources for strategic initiatives and improving service delivery. Beyond our institution's walls, staying at the forefront of technology trends fortifies our global competitiveness. It not only attracts the brightest talents but also nurtures fruitful collaborations with international partners, solidifying North West University's standing as a beacon in higher education.

## The Unpredictable Nature of Technological Trends

We cannot deny the unpredictability that comes with technological trends—a mix of excitement and perhaps a pinch of anxiety. The rapid pace of change might seem daunting, and the future may appear uncertain. But here's the essence: change is woven into the fabric of our existence, and our ability to adapt is our most precious asset.

As we stride forward together, let's remember that we are not solitary travellers but a united community. We can effectively overcome the challenges by offering support to one another as we navigate this transformative journey. Embracing innovation and digitalisation will not just position North West University as a pioneer but also as a positive contributor to the global academic landscape. The message is clear: while change might bring discomfort, it is the spark for our growth and success. Through the power of innovation and digitalisation, we have the opportunity to elevate our institution to unprecedented heights, providing our students with unparalleled learning experiences. Together, we stand, learn, and shape the future—an endeavour that benefits our university and the broader realm of academia and, ultimately, the world. ▥