

News from IT, February 2007



New Password Policy Debuts: IT's long-anticipated change to password policy debuted this week with the majority of users experiencing only minor inconvenience as interlinked systems updated user access information. This change was prompted by the need to integrate local passwords based on Microsoft's Active Directory with centralized systems maintained at SYTEC for PASSHE. This integration allows a single password to be used for systems using Active Directory regardless of whether the system is hosted here or downstate.

Accounts that are not based on Active Directory, such as your Novell userID, Datatel access, WebAdvisor or Blackboard, were not affected.

New rules also require that passwords be "expired" every 90 days. The last password cannot be reused and "strong passwords" must be utilized. Strong passwords require that three of the following must be present before a new password is accepted:

- Lower case letter(s) (a-z)
- UPPER CASE letter(s) (A-Z)
- Number(s) (0-9)
- Special characters such as \$!*%?

Users will be prompted via Email to change their passwords a few days prior to their expiration. Passwords can be reset at the following web location: <https://info.mansfield.edu/password> Once a password is expired, it will be necessary to request a change by calling the Help desk; this information will be forwarded via Email and in the *News* when we are closer to initial password expiration time.

Microsoft Vista and Office 2007 Testing

Begins: Microsoft's Premier Operating system, Vista, debuted on January 30. Significant enhancements include security features, impressive graphics and new speech recognition engines. A new user interface, significantly different from previous versions of Windows, may help productivity eventually but may hinder productivity during the roll-out. At the same time, Microsoft unveiled Office 2007, the first significant upgrade to the Office productivity suite in several years. It also sports a new user interface with redesigned menu system that hides or eliminates many of the seldom-used product features.

Virtually all of the university's personal computers will require, at minimum, a memory upgrade in order to run Vista. IT is currently evaluating desktop machines in order to begin the process of budgeting for the eventual replacement of Windows XP with Vista. Only machines purchased within the last two years will be candidates for upgrade, therefore, we see the Vista rollout as something that will, of necessity, be done over a span of time, as new machines are purchased and upgraded machines are passed down.

Many of our current applications will not run, or have not been tested, on Vista. Novell has yet to release a NetWare client. There is no new Vista-capable option for McAfee or SPSS as well. For these reasons there is no scheduled date for upgrading our XP-based systems as yet. Expect Office 2007 to arrive on your desktop by fall. Because of the new user interface, we encourage everyone to keep abreast of IT's training schedule for Office 2007 intro training prior to general deployment to the campus. We'll advise when that happens via Email and the *News*.

If you'd like to take a test drive on a computer running Vista and Office 2007, drop by the IT department, ground floor of Memorial Hall, during normal business hours.

Software requests now due: March 20, 2007 is the date to request from IT any new software installations needed for classroom instruction or lab use for fall 2007. Please remember: IT does NOT fund software requests, but we must be aware of your needs so we can schedule sufficient time to provide installation and support services and resolve any compatibility issues. Currently on our list of projects is the MS Office 2007 Suite and SPSS version 15. Please contact [Alex Miller](#) so we are aware of your intentions. You must follow-up your request for support with a current copy of the software you wish to use, let us know how the software is to be funded, and indicate whether this is intended for general campus distribution, classroom instruction or use in a departmental computing lab only. Thanks!