

News from IT, January 31, 2006



Virus Threats Continue:

Late Breaking Alert:

A potentially devastating virus dubbed “The Kama Sutra Worm” (otherwise known as Nymex.E or W32.Blackmal.E) began spreading January 16th. This worm is poised to deliver a devastating blow to infected systems on February 3rd. When activated, the virus will try and delete all Word, Excel, PowerPoint and PDF files from an infected machine. The virus will then propagate itself through email AND as a network worm. Out of an abundance of caution, IT will distribute a removal tool to all desktops prior to February 3rd. We urge all our users to also make sure their home machines are also protected, and to run the removal tool, which is available at:

<http://securityresponse.symantec.com/avcenter/venc/data/w32.blackmal@mm.removal.tool.html>

In addition, the campus community should be prepared for possible residual effects, as the virus attempts to spread next week. It is likely to cause heavy email and network traffic, and there may be significant delays or even shutdowns to email services worldwide.

The past month has seen a flurry of patch activity at Microsoft, and of course, this means IT has been busy insuring the patches for these threats are delivered to campus PCs. At the start of the new year, Microsoft released a series of patches for a vulnerability in how Windows renders graphics in the Windows Metafile format - WMF. The vulnerability was discovered on December 27, an initial series of patches was released on January 5, with a follow-up released on January 10.

Many Microsoft patches require your computer to be restarted in order for the patch to be applied. When a Windows pop-up prompts you to restart your computer, please take a moment and do so. IT’s commitment to insuring a safe and secure computing environment, along with everyone’s cooperation, has resulted in

no major virus incursions on the campus in over 18 months!
Please help us help you by continuing to do your part!

For the sake of stability and performance, it's always a good idea to restart your computer at least once a week.

We would also like to encourage all Windows users to ensure their home computers are protected with current virus and spyware scanning software, and by visiting the Windows Update site to insure you have received all critical security patches for your Microsoft products.

Semester Break Is No Break for IT!: In case you were wondering what IT does when the Help line stops ringing, we submit to you the following projects performed over the holiday break:

Computer lab upgrades: Over 70 new computers were placed in student labs, with the old machines increasing capacity in other lab areas, or replacing older technology in residence hall labs and student work areas.

Fiber Optic splicing/recertification: Fiber Optic cabling between Memorial Hall and Alumni Hall was spliced and recertified during the last week of December – the lower losses of the respliced links should improve overall data rates and reduce network failures in outlying buildings.

Telecom power tests: On December 28, the campus phone system was successfully tested on battery power to insure a minimum of eight hours of emergency power is available.

With the cooperation of Buildings and Grounds, we have now supplied the phone switch and network head-end in Alumni Hall with generator power. This, combined with the generator backup in Memorial Hall, allows the campus network core to run indefinitely should the commercial power grid fail.

Wireless expands in Manser: By the time you read this, wireless access on the upper floor of Manser, including North Dining Hall, will be ready. The I.T. Network team continues to roll out wireless connectivity across campus, with coverage now extended throughout the North Hall library, and the Grant Science student lounge next on the list. Additional wireless access in outdoor green spaces will be readied when the weather improves. Visit <http://wireless.mansfield.edu> to learn where to find, and how to access, campus wireless hot spots.

Faculty to Faculty Messaging in Outlook and OWA, and other Outlook enhancements: Faculty can now send “Faculty-to-Faculty” broadcast messages from Outlook and OWA. This replaces the previous method that has been available through My.Mansfield. Faculty-to-Faculty broadcast messages may be sent by any faculty member, and any other users that previously had that authority through My.Mansfield. Campus Broadcast Alerts (for employees and students) have also moved away from my.Mansfield, and can be done through Outlook and OWA as well. Users that were authorized to send Campus Broadcast Alert messages before have the same authorization in Outlook and OWA.

Department calendars and distribution aliases began rolling out in earnest during the winter break. The department calendars may be accessed by the authorized users in your group through Outlook and OWA. Your department distribution alias has an option of keeping the address “Private”, meaning only the members of your group may send to it, or making public to either the campus Outlook/OWA users or the whole world. These aliases will appear in the global address book. If your department wishes to utilize group calendaring or distribution list features, please contact us through the helpline.

How to re-visit a “Daily Digest” Message: A faculty member recently asked IT how they might locate and review old Daily Digest messages. These messages are cataloged in the My.mansfield intranet site, accessible under “My.mansfield General Resources”, *Discussions and Forums*. When opening the Discussions and Forums page, Daily Digest messages are at the bottom of the first heading, *Campus Community Forums*. A search function is available to glean information by sender or keywords, and a search-by dates function for anywhere from the past two days to one year.

Student “Daily Digest” now available: Through My.Mansfield, all faculty and staff can now send a Daily Digest message to all students. In a manner similar to the posting of messages to faculty and staff using the “Daily Digest”, all messages posted are compiled and sent as a group once per day. To use this service, log in to your my.mansfield account, and select “*Campus Intranet Mail System*” under the green highlighted heading “*My.mansfield General Resources*”. This takes you to the Intranet Mail System screen, where you may select “*Daily Digest Message*”. The “Daily Digest” screen will pop up with a menu selection for the intended audience. This may be “Employees Only”, “Students Only”, or “Employees and Students”. Messages sent to the Daily Digest during normal business hours will appear in the appropriate mailboxes before 8:00 AM the next day.

Long Distance resale services to end: The changing technological landscape spells the end of an era for the campus community. Since 1987, the university has provided personal long distance resale services. This service will end with the close of this fiscal year. Resicom, holder of the university contract for resale services since 1999, has announced it is quitting the business. Cell phones have been responsible for about a 40% drop in long distance resale in each of the past five years; serving the small number of remaining land-line users has become unprofitable.

This change will affect all student, faculty and staff personal telephone accounts. After June 30, personal authorization codes will be discontinued, and it will be necessary to use a prepaid phone card or telephone company credit card to place personal long distance calls from campus.

When selecting a new service, be certain it can be reached by dialing a toll-free number; access to "0+" services are blocked, and it is against university policy to charge personal calls to campus telephones.