Message from the CIO

It’s “Back to School” again…I keep asking myself, where did the summer go? ☺ In this issue we have a checklist for you to use as you settle into the new semester. In addition we have provided information on upcoming educational opportunities and recent improvements in TechAnnounce. As a continuation of our educational Safe Computing Practices Campaign, we hosted the Identity Theft Roundtable on September 19th and have received positive feedback regarding the value of the event. We also encourage you to participate in Shred Day on September 28th to rid your office of unnecessary documents.

It’s that time of year again, Go Red Raiders!

Texas Tech University Gets Tough on Spam

During the spring semester, the TTU IT Division implemented a spam-reduction method for TechMail to address escalating amounts of unwanted and unsolicited junk email delivered to TTU email addresses. Based on feedback from the TTU community, our solution has been highly successful. Since implementing the change in late April, over 54 million messages have been classified as spam and refused for delivery. Of the approximate 850,000 TechMail messages delivered daily, roughly 650,000 messages are now filtered as spam and refused for delivery. Of the 54 million spam messages, approximately 135 incidents of legitimate e-mails have been rejected as junk e-mail. We have worked with customers to resolve these issues. TTU has already seen major benefits from this spam reduction. These benefits have freed up staff resources, allowed more efficient use of IT infrastructure and staffing resources, and reduced the load on mail processing servers. As a result, we have been able to increase allowable mail quotas to 100 MB and to require every TTU student to have a TTU email account.

The Process

In terms of the process details, the TTU IT Division has implemented a vendor-managed scoring solution. When a message arrives at TTU email servers, the message is scored based on the likelihood that the content is spam. Messages scored 0-2 continue to deliver to the recipient’s inbox; those scored 3-7 will deliver to the recipient’s junk email folder; and those scored 8 and 9 are refused and returned to the sender. Initially, messages scored 7 and higher were refused, but after feedback from the TTU community, the TTU IT Division elected to modify the criteria to reject messages scored 8 and higher.

The “White List”

If an academic or TTU business need requires that a sender’s messages should be exempt from the scoring process, IT Help Central has a process in place to process a “white list” request. It is important to note that as a state resource, we are required to abide by the Texas Administrative Code, TTU OP’s and Acceptable Use Guidelines. The Acceptable Use guidelines, http://www.depts.ttu.edu/infotech/security/docs/acceptable_use.php, focus on those services that require significant state resource commitment, which include email services.

If you have a question or would like assistance with a white list request, please contact IT Help Central at 806-742-HELP (4357).

Server Administration & Application Security Training

Thank you for all those that attended the Server Administration and Application Security Training on Thursday, August 9th. The ninety (90) attendees had an engaging and useful session. We are working to provide handouts for those that attended and plan to offer another session in the spring. We also extend special thanks to the School of Law for providing such a professional room for our training.

Back to School IT Checklist

As the University community gears up for the fall semester, we encourage you to be vigilant with your IT devices. For your convenience we have developed a short checklist to aid you.

☐ Install Symantec AntiVirus on your computer (free download available at: http://eraider.ttu.edu);
☐ Keep your operating system updated. Windows instructions can be found at: www.helpdesk.ttu.edu/directions/criticalupdate_win2KXP.php. Apple system updates can be found at http://www.depts.ttu.edu/helpcentral/directions/mac_update.php;
☐ Enable your firewall. (Windows XP - www.helpdesk.ttu.edu/directions/XP_firewall.php. Apple - go to “System Preferences,” click on “Sharing,” click the “Firewall” tab, and click the “Start” button);
☐ Turn on the spam filter feature on your email client. Instructions for configuring your spam filters can be found at: www.helpdesk.ttu.edu/info/antispam.php;
☐ Check your network connection on all wireless devices, such as handhelds and notebooks. Instructions for setting up/troubleshooting your wireless connection can be found at www.helpdesk.ttu.edu/general/wireless/index.php;
☐ Set a password hint for your eRaider password at http://eraider.ttu.edu
This will help if you ever need to reset your eRaider password;
☐ Set your screensaver to activate password protection;
☐ Archive or delete old data files that are no longer needed. Please consult TTU Operating Policy 10.10 for data/record retention requirements; and
☐ Physically destroy old media that are no longer needed (e.g., floppy diskettes, CD’s, USB drives, external drives, etc.).
TTU IT Division Events

Each semester, the TTU IT Division sponsors educational events and training opportunities. Events provide the University community with professional development opportunities for their IT staff, as well as educational sessions for faculty, staff, and students. The IT Division invites you to attend our fall 2007 events. Please watch TechAnnounce for event details throughout the semester.

• Shred Day
  Friday, Sept. 28, 2007; 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.; Mobile shred units will be on campus
• Dell Roadmap
• Dell Intelligent Classroom presentation
• Plagiarism Detection Roundtable
• Blogging and Personal Web Spaces Seminar
• Symantec Presentation
• Research Roundtable

We encourage you to visit out Safe Computing Practices Campaign website (http://safecomputing.ttu.edu) for additional event details and information regarding IT security and safe computing information.

Safe Computing Tips:
Top “Gotcha’s”

Our Desktop Consultants and Security Team have identified the top 9 mistakes that lead to IT security breaches. We strongly recommend that you avoid:

• Giving out personal information (SSN, Driver’s license number, credit card numbers, birth date, etc.) on web sites or in response to any email solicitation unless you have verified the authenticity of the business;
• Leaving your laptop or handheld device unattended;
• Opening email attachments unless it is a file you are expecting;
• Opening suspicious emails;
• Using peer-to-peer file sharing (i.e. LimeWire, BitTorrent, etc.);
• Forwarding chain letters and scam emails;
• Clicking on links in unsolicited emails;
• Sending personal information (SSN, Driver’s license number, credit card numbers, birth date, etc.) through email, even if you know the sender/recipient; and
• Leaving your system unlocked when you leave your office/study area/residence hall room.

For a Windows based machine you can lock the system by:

• Use Control, Alt, and Delete keys then click “Lock” or
• Use the Windows key and the letter “L.”

Apple users be sure to log off the machine.

The TTU IT Division presents...
TechAnnounce: the Next Generation

Based on a year of gathering input from the TTU community and reviewing our IT Helpdesk tickets, the IT Division has added new features to TechAnnounce. Our current student TechAnnounce and employee TechAnnounce will be replaced by a more sophisticated delivery method. The enhanced TechAnnounce delivers messages based on categories that each student, faculty, or staff member selects (opt in/out).

Based on three years of actual TechAnnounce submissions, the following major categories were created:

• Campus Events
  o Arts & Entertainment
  o Athletics
  o Lectures & Seminars
  o Orientation
• Fund Raiser
  o Departmental Events
  o Faculty/Staff Organization
  o Student Organization
• General Announcements
  o Academic
  o Departmental
  o Faculty/Staff Organization
  o Student Organization
• Intramurals/Outdoor Pursuit Center
• Property Inventory Exchange
  o Computing Equipment
  o Non Computing Equipment
• IT Announcements
• Research
• Student Employment Opportunities
• Training
  o Administration & Finance Information Systems Management
  o Quality Services & Professional Development
  o Small Business Development Center
  o Teaching, Learning, & Technology Center
  o TTU IT Training

In addition, the enhanced TechAnnounce will include the following features:

• More “friendly” design;
• Better navigation/menu structure; and
• Improved message editing and delivery.

To post an announcement or view the new application, please visit http://techannounce.ttu.edu. Thank you to all faculty, staff, and students that assisted us with extensive usability testing. For additional information and assistance please contact IT Help Central at 806-742-HELP (4357).

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TTU IT Division Events

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