Message From the CIO
The TTU Information Technology Division extends our warm holiday wishes to the TTU community. While we all enjoy this festive time of year, many Internet criminals spend the time targeting servers and systems for malicious purposes. To help you avoid being a victim, we offer suggestions for preparing your system for the holiday break. For those thinking of a computer gift purchase or ringing in the new year with a new system, we have recommendations for buying the right computer. We have purchased and installed a new high performance computing cluster, **Grendel, ranked 289 on the Top 500 Supercomputers in the World!** 2008 has been a productive year for TTU IT as well as Texas Tech University. We appreciate all of our partnerships and collaborations with the TTU community – we wish you a safe and relaxing holiday break.

Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, Seasons Greetings, and Happy New Year!

-Sam Segran
Associate Vice President for IT and Chief Information Officer
Buying the Right Computer
One of the most common problems that people face when purchasing a new computer is selecting from a confusing list of technology options! Stressed by technical jargon, limited time, and sales associates, customers often end up with a “Cadillac” system when all they needed was a dependable model. In order to reduce this confusion and assist the university community in buying the right computer, the TTU IT Division partners with Dell Computer Corporation and TTU Procurement Services to provide computer bundles for departmental and personal purchases. By leveraging the University’s buying power, special pricing bundles are created for desktops, laptops, handheld devices, and projectors.

For those who may wish to configure their own systems, the TTU IT Division offers a list of recommended hardware configurations for use at Texas Tech University. These configurations balance cost and performance, and may be used as a point of reference when configuring a new system. You can also use the recommendations to evaluate your current computer system, based on your future business needs. These configurations may be found at http://www.itcentral.ttu.edu/configurations.php.

Each TTU college is encouraged to configure specific bundles to meet the unique needs of your students, faculty, and staff. For colleges with required laptop programs, technology professionals in your area can specify an exact configuration. Currently, special bundles are in place for Engineering, Architecture, and the Law School. For additional information about configuring bundles for your college, contact Scott Hall at IT Help Central (806)742-5756 or scott.hall@ttu.edu.

For your department’s convenience, online purchase orders can be pre-populated through the Purchasing Department’s web site. Equipment can be delivered to the location of your choice, such as your department or Central Warehouse. Purchases made through this website count as Historically Under-utilized Business (HUB) credit. For Texas Tech departmental purchases, visit http://techbuy.ttu.edu.

To view all bundles, please visit http://www.itcentral.ttu.edu/recommend.php. For further assistance, please call (806)742-HELP (4357).

High Performance Computing Center Introduces a New Computing Cluster
The TTU Office of the CIO announces the opening of a new high performance computing facility to support TTU researchers who need advanced computing resources. Working with the Office for Research Services and Facility, Planning, and Construction, the TTU Office of the CIO has substantively expanded capability for the TTU Information Technology Division’s High Performance Computing. Our new facility will be home to “Grendel”, our newly acquired high performance computing cluster.

Contributions by: Katherine Austin, Ph.D., Darrell Bateman, Logan Beaty, Shannon Cepica, Scott Hall, Danny Mar, Dayton Perrin, Ric Ramon, Alan Sill, Ph.D., Philip Smith, Ph.D., Britta Tye, Nicole Weatherly, and Allen Young.

Safe Computing Practices Committee: Sam Segran, Katherine Austin, Ph.D., Darrell Bateman, Pulin Bhatt, Shannon Cepica, Scott Hall, Mark Holwerda, Michael Horton, Danny Mar, Alvin Mills, Yung Ng, Mike Simmons, J Stackup, Britta Tye, John Vandygriff, Allen Young, and assistance from IT Division leadership and staff.

Grendel is made up of 1,680 Dell processor cores capable of an aggregate processing speed of 20 teraflops, placing it at number 289 on the Top 500 Supercomputers in the world! www.Top500.org maintains the official list of the 500 most powerful computer systems being used today. Rankings are based on verified Linpack performance benchmark results. The list includes computer systems across the world from national research laboratories, universities, and the private sector. Grendel represents a four-to-six fold increase compared to the current cluster. Interested researchers should contact the HPCC at (806)742-4350. A web version of the Grendel assembly video is at http://www.hpcc.ttu.edu/asil/grendelassembly/.

The High Performance Computing Center (HPCC) supports research and teaching at Texas Tech University by providing resources and expertise for supercomputing, grid computing, and cyber-infrastructure. The new HPCC facility at the Experimental Science Building (ESB) will expand the overall processing power available to Texas Tech University researchers, greatly accelerating current research projects in High Energy Physics, Molecular Dynamics, Computational Chemistry, Fluid Flow Modeling. With on-site support staff and room for additional computing capacity, the ESB HPCC facility is poised to open up new opportunities for research and teaching. The Texas Tech University HPCC helps enable some of these research opportunities here on the South Plains. From here, it’s possible.

Safe Computing Tips: Preparing Your System for the Holiday Break
Enjoy your holiday break knowing you have safeguarded your computer systems. We strongly recommend the following tips to protect your system while we are away on holiday break:

- Update your Operating System (OS) and all software packages to the most current version (visit https://eraider.ttu.edu for software updates).
- Update Symantec AntiVirus and run a comprehensive system check on your system.
- Password protect all computers and handheld devices.
- Ensure laptops or any mobile devices are secure by locking them in a cabinet or secure location.
- Do not leave computer equipment in unattended vehicles.
- Occasionally check your email when you are away from the office for an extended period, so that you will not miss important alerts and messages.
- Set up junk mail filtering on your email inbox.
- Configure each system for automatic OS and virus updates. If you leave your system on, automatic updates will continue in your absence and if you turn your system off, updates will occur when you power the system on upon your return.

For specific technical instructions, please visit http://www.itcentral.ttu.edu.

If you have questions or need additional assistance with any of the above recommendations please contact IT Help Central at (806)742-HELP (4357).