Benchmarks Online

CITC Home | Help Desk | Training | About Us | Publications | Our Mission

Volume 7 - Number 5 * May 2004

Columns

NetworkConnection

Link of the Month

IRC News

RSS Matters

www@unt.edu

Short Courses

Staff Activities

Don't forget our monthly Columns!

Campus Computing News

MyUNT Portal and EIS News

Summer Hours

Making Online Teaching and Learning Accessible

Choosing a Computer for Use at UNT

Computer-Based Training: it's baaaaack! [well, almost]

EViews 5.0 is Now Available

TODAY'S CARTOON

About Benchmarks

Search Archive

Subscribe to Benchmarks

UNIVERSITY of NORTH TEXAS

Network Connection | Link of the Month | IRC News | RSS Matters | www@unt.edu | Short Courses | Staff Activities

Computing and Information Technology Center Home | Help Desk | Training | About Us | Publications | Our Mission

Questions, comments and corrections for this site: lynch@unt.edu
Site was last updated or revised : February 12, 2007

UNT home page | Search UNT | UNT news | UNT events

Benchmarks Online, May 2004, Page 1.

Benchmarks Online

Subscribe to Benchmarks *Online*

Campus Computing News

MyUNT Portal and EIS News

By **Cathy Gonzalez**, EIS Training/Computing Administration Manager

Successful Registration Go-Live

The Student Administration (SA) Team achieved a milestone on April 30, 2004, with successful production use of all four SA modules within the EIS Learning Solutions environment at both HSC and UNT. As of May 4, 2004, almost 50 students have registered at the Health Science Center and some 200 students have registered at UNT. In addition, almost 48 students have paid for Fall 2004 using the Infinet self-service payment gateway that now includes credit card and eCheck payment options.

Dr. Joneel Harris, Vice President for Student Enrollment, said "We are extremely proud of the outstanding work the SA Team has accomplished in a very short amount of time and the way some team members responded to the challenges that were presented late Thursday evening and the morning of April 30th that threatened the final hours before the arrival of UNT's 200 Early Eagle transfer students. Teamwork is what it is all about and HSC and UNT have one fine team of functional, technical, and consultant winners!!!!"

Employee Self-Service Available

On April 30, 2004, Employee Self-Service became available through MyUNT Portal. The self-service functionality allows faculty and staff to access their Human Resource (HR) data maintained in EIS. Not all information can be viewed or updated using self service, therefore, some changes to information will continue to be made through the traditional channels for an extended period of time. Faculty and staff can now directly access their biographic and demographic data, paycheck data, and benefits data. Most data reflects information from September 2003 to the present with the exception of paychecks (from December 2003) and training enrollments (from May 2004). The data is available except for scheduled EIS maintenance times (posted on the MyUNT Portal log in page).

To access the Employee Self-Service features, log in through the University of North Texas portal at http://my.unt.edu.

Cousins, Not Clones

One of the questions I often hear is "What is the difference between the MyUNT Portal (http://my.unt.edu) and EIS (Enterprise Information System); aren't they

the same?" The answer is not always a simple one. Both are dependent on the software known as PeopleSoft. Both are accessible using Web browsers. They are cousins in this respect but are actually two different applications.

EIS is the new UNTS administrative system used primarily by faculty and staff. The legacy SIMS and HRMIS systems provided the functionality which is now being accessed in EIS. Actually, the complete transfer of this functionality will not be complete until the end of this calendar year. Both the legacy system and EIS are being used congruently to ensure a smooth transition from one system to the other.

MyUNT Portal is an application that sits on top of EIS and provides access to self-service functions supported by EIS for students, staff, and faculty. If you have an Internet service provider (ISP) at home, more than likely you use a portal view provided by your ISP to access the Internet. The portal concept allows a provider (in our instance, the University) to provide "one stop shopping" for access of your email, news items, weather, and other areas of interest. Portals also provide users with flexibility to personalize their portal view preferences. The MyUNT Portal allows the University to distribute information to students, staff, and faculty. A user now has a centralized point to access and review pertinent information in addition to performing allowable self-service tasks. Without the portal, a user would have to learn the specialized navigation and functionality required of users who have been trained to use the EIS administrative interface.

For students the distinction between MyUNT Portal and EIS is easy because they really have no knowledge of EIS. Every function they perform is done through the MyUNT Portal interface. For faculty and staff, however, the distinction is a bit more difficult.

Instructors and academic administrators will use MyUNT Portal to access self-service features related to working with students. They are actually accessing EIS functions using portal views similar to the student's portal view. The views contain information and menu items appropriate for the instructor's and administrator's role and security clearance. Instructors will enter grades for the first time using the portal view in December 2004. The exact interface with grades maintained in WebCT is yet to be determined; however, the goal is to programmatically pass the grades from WebCT to EIS.

Faculty and staff users access the Employee Self-Service using MyUNT Portal also. However, if these users need to perform administrative tasks (i.e. timekeeping, purchase and procurement, student records, etc.), they must log in using the EIS administrative interface. Eventually more of this functionality will be accessible through MyUNT Portal also.

MyUNT Portal Information and Help

- For assistance in logging in and personalizing your MyUNT page, contact the Computing & Information Technology Center's Helpdesk at 940-565-2324, via e-mail at helpdesk@unt.edu or http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk.

- For questions regarding your Human Resources information, contact the Human Resources Department at 940-565-2281 or Payroll Office at 940-565-2440 or visit the website at http://www.unt.edu/hr/eis/selfservice.htm.

EIS Information and Help

- For assistance in logging in and EIS security issues, contact the Computing & Information Technology Center's Helpdesk at 940-565-2324, via E-mail at helpdesk@unt.edu or http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk.

- **EIS Home** (main EIS Website) http://www.unt.edu/eis

- **EIS Technical and Project Support** (internal CITC specific site) http://www.unt.edu/eis/newsite

- **EIS Change Management Advisory Group** (training/documentation support) https://projectweb.cc.unt.edu/cm

- **EIS Developer Forum** (application development support only) https://projectweb.cc.unt.edu/EISDeveloper

- **EIS Project Management Group** (project status) https://projectweb.cc.unt.edu/pmg

Benchmarks Online

Summer Hours

By Claudia Lynch, Benchmarks Online Editor

Following are the hours for Computing Center-managed facilities for Summer I & II (May 31-August 6) and beyond. All staff offices will maintain their normal hours during this time. Additionally:

- **Print Services** will maintain their normal hours.

- The **Helpdesk** will be **open their normal hours**.

- The **ACS General Access Lab** (ISB 110):

  May 31 - August 6:
  Monday - Thursday: 9 am - 9:45 pm
  Friday & Saturday: 9 am - 7 pm
  Sunday: 1 pm - 9:45 pm

  Special Closings
  Sunday July 4: **Closed**

Hours for Other Campus Facilities

General Access Labs

- WILLIS:

  May 31 - August 6:
  Open 24hrs/day

- SLIS:

  May 31 - August 6:
  Monday - Thursday: 8 a.m. - 11 p.m.
  Friday & Saturday: 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.
  Sunday: Noon - 10 p.m.

  Exceptions/Special Closings
  Semester Break, August 7 - 15: **Closed**

  Monday, August 16 - Sunday, August 22: 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.

- MUSIC:

  May 31 - August 6:

Monday - Thursday: 8 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Friday: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sunday: 1 - 10 p.m.

Special Closings
Sunday July 4: **Closed**
Semester Break: August 7 - 29

- [SCS](#):

May 31 - August 6:
Monday - Thursday: 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.
Friday &.Saturday: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sunday: Noon - 10 p.m.

Special Closings
Semester Break: August 7 - 22

- [SOVA](#):

May 31 - August 6:
Monday-Thursday: 10 a.m. - 10 p.m.
Friday: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sunday: 1 p.m. - 10 p.m.

Exceptions/Special Closings
Saturday July 3, Sunday July 4: **Closed**

Semester Break: August 7 - 22: **Closed**

- [COE](#):

May 31 - August 6:
Monday-Thursday: 7 a.m. - Midnight
Friday: 7 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Saturday: Noon - 8 p.m.
Sunday: **Closed**

- [COBA](#):

May 31 - August 6:
Monday-Thursday: 8 a.m. - 11:50 p.m.
Friday-Saturday: 8 a.m. - 7:50 p.m.
Sunday: Noon - 11:50 p.m.

Exceptions:

Friday July 2: 8 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Saturday July 3, Sunday July 4: **Closed**

Friday, August 6: 8 a.m. 4 p.m.
Saturday August 7 - Sunday August 29: **Closed**

- **[CAS](#):**

  GAB 330:

  May 31 - August 6:

  Monday - Thursday: 8 a.m. - Midnight
  Friday: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
  Saturday: Noon - 8 p.m.
  Sunday: Noon - Midnight

  Special Closings
  Sunday July 4
  Semester Break: August 7 - 22

  GAB 550:

  May 31 - August 6:

  Monday - Thursday: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
  Friday: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
  Saturday: **Closed**
  Sunday: **Closed**

  Special Closings
  Sunday July 4
  Semester Break: August 7 - 22

  Terrill 220:

  May 31 - August 6:
  Monday - Thursday: 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.
  Friday: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
  Saturday: **Closed**
  Sunday: **Closed**

  Special Closings

  Semester Break: August 7 - 22

- **Wooten 120:**

  May 31 - August 6:

  Monday - Thursday: 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.
  Friday: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
  Saturday: **Closed**
  Sunday: **Closed**

Special Closings
Semester Break: August 7 - 22

- **UNT Dallas Campus- 155A**

  May 31 - August 6:
  Monday - Thursday: 8:30 a.m. -10 p.m.
   Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 6 p.m.
   Saturday: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
   Sunday: **Closed**

- **Engineering General Access Lab (englab@unt.edu, Research Park, B129, 891-6733)**

  May 31 - August 6:
  Monday - Thursday: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
  Friday: **Closed**
  Saturday: **Closed**
  Sunday: **Closed**

Benchmarks Online

Page One

Campus Computing News

Summer Hours

Making Online Teaching and Learning Accessible

Choosing a Computer for Use at UNT

Computer-Based Training: it's baaaaack! [well, almost]

EViews 5.0 is Now Available

Today's Cartoon

RSS Matters

The Network Connection

Link of the Month

WWW@UNT.EDU

Short Courses

IRC News

Staff Activities

Subscribe to Benchmarks Online

Untangling the WEB: Making Online Teaching and Learning Accessible - a review and discussion

By **Dr. Elizabeth Hinkle-Turner**, Student Computing Services Manager

I have been the manager of the adaptive technology lab (part of the Academic Computing Services General Access Lab) for over two years and during this time have encountered firsthand the successes and difficulties utilizing technology experienced by UNT community members with disabilities on this campus. The lab is associated closely with the outstanding staff of the Office of Disability Accommodation and with their advice and assistance, we have been able to greatly increase the amount and scope of accessible technologies for students. Because of my active role in adaptive technology on the UNT campus, it was with great interest that I attended the presentation by the PBS Adult Learning Service of *Untangling the Web*. This presentation was promoted extensively through GroupWise and other announcement venues and especially emphasized by the Center for Distributed Learning which sponsored the broadcast. I had attended or viewed through video streaming the other events in the PBS series and felt that I would gain some valuable information through this program also.

I was initially surprised and quite disappointed at the attendance for the event. Audience members included myself, one other CITC colleague, almost the entire staff of the Office of Disability Accommodation and a couple of professors. Fortunately, the program - while disappointingly not providing any concrete examples of how to create accessible online learning sites - *did* bring up a number of good ideas and 'points to ponder' and these can be reviewed via video streaming for those who missed the live presentation.

Universal Design

Audience materials for the presentation cited a number of useful and practical Web references regarding issues of online learning accessibility and several of these references are annotated and listed below. However, what I would like to focus on here are some progressive concepts that were discussed during the broadcast. A notion put forth by many in the area of disability accommodation and cited in the broadcast is the idea of *Universal Design*. Universal Design is an approach where all design of environments, objects, and tools makes them accessible to everyone regardless of age, capabilities, or situation. It is governed by the philosophy that all people, young and old, and in excellent or difficult conditions, should be served well. Universal Design benefits everyone.

To test the concept of Universal Design, think about access ramps and how they accommodate your life. How many times have you walked up an access ramp rather than the stairs? We may not be in wheelchairs but we all have days when we are tired or our knees hurt because of a strenuous workout in the SRC. That ramp sure is a welcome relief from the onerous stair steps! Additionally, how would we move equipment around campus via carts if we did not have ramps to accommodate us? Those required ramps for all buildings, initially put into place for persons in wheelchairs, now have become a virtual 'necessity' for most of us.

In a personal example, a few years ago I decided to put all of my teaching materials for my twentieth century music course online (a trend that is being established by most professors on this campus). My initial idea was to enable the students - none of whom were music majors - to review the class lecture notes ahead of time especially since many difficult names (yeah, YOU try to spell "Gyorgy Ligeti" if you've never heard of him!) and concepts ("modes of limited transpositions" - hunh? Does Madonna use those?) were discussed during the lectures. It soon became quite obvious that though I had the right idea about accommodating the students' lack of musical skills and experiences, I had completely missed the boat as far as practicality and accessibility were concerned! It only took a couple of complaints of 'we can't see the text from the computer projector from the back row of the auditorium!' for me to realize that my text was way too small. Also, after going to several General Access Lab Manager meetings where we were bemoaning the huge amounts of printing that students were doing for classes, I blushingly realized that my lovely online postings with their photographs, diagrams and other visual gee-gaws were hogging a whole lot of toner unnecessarily. The result was that I prepared large-text, detailed, and image-heavy classroom presentations and scaled-down, printer-and-lab-and-phone-modem (and ADA!) friendly versions for students' home use. Improving universally helped everyone in the class regardless of their circumstances.

John Slatin of the University of Texas in his essay The Imagination Gap makes some excellent points for consideration. First, he explains that "A Web resource that is effective and aesthetically rich for people with disabilities is likely to be effective and aesthetically rich for other people too. The reverse is not true, as attested by the current state of the Web..." He also states, "....practicing accessibility means closing the imagination gap that separates most people from people with disabilities." Slatin gives some excellent exercises for closing this gap. Some of these exercises include going without using a mouse for an entire week so one can become intimately familiar with all the keyboard strokes that need to be memorized by someone who cannot use such a convenient device, downloading a demo version of JAWS screen reading software and trying to navigate one's favorite Websites with eyes closed and using just this tool, and "typing" a paper using Dragon Naturally Speaking voice recognition software. In short what such exercises and tasks demonstrate is how clumsily and badly so many of our online tools and resources are designed and how much effort all of us regardless of our abilities must invest in navigating the world of the internet.

A clear case for Universal Design in architecture, equipment and materials placement, interior construction, and Web tools is easily made. What is NOT so easy is figuring out how to do this and also finding the time to do it. Slatin and others, however, rightly state that making universal design part of the initial conception and implementation of a project actually saves time and effort in the future. By making items accessible from 'the get-go', a whole variety of

anticipated and unanticipated issues are resolved from the outset (just as proper and thorough documentation of software obviates the need for users to waste their time and others' time asking and answering questions and making mistakes). There are several tools available for those who wish to creatively anticipate the online issues of their user base. UNT has a [Web accessibility policy](#) which clearly outlines the requirements of all university-related Website (presumably including WebCT courses and any online course notes). Additionally, [The University of Maryland University College Accessibility in Distance Education](#) is an extensive Website including advice and examples of how to specifically design course materials including Websites, PowerPoint slides, and Flash movies for maximum accessibility. Free test sites for the evaluation of the accessibility of online resources include Bobby ([www.cast.org/bobby](#)) and A-Prompt ([aprompt.snow.utoronto.ca](#)).

The concept of Universal Design is not a fad or some sort of newfangled idea; it has actually been around for quite some time. Most importantly, Universal Design is not simply 'accessibility" or "affirmative action" disguised under another name: it is an integration of universally usable technical elements into a project from the outset; making such a project better for everyone. Thinking in terms of universal design removes a great deal of the stigma and frustration that can be attached to adding accessible 'fixes' to an already-completed project in the future. I remember when the internet became a 'necessity' on all areas of campus during my days as a graduate student at the University of Illinois. What a terrible mess was caused while retro-fitting many of the old buildings with ThinNet wiring (we *are* talking A LONG time ago here!)! All sorts of repainting and asbestos abatement had to occur and I recall that several walls simply collapsed during the process! Everyone was amazed when the new Beckman engineering building was constructed with all the wiring built in and we could actually even plug our (really heavy and expensive) laptops right into the internet on the library tables in the Beckman Library!

This example also illustrates that it is simply impossible to anticipate all the needs of every soul when designing something be it a building, a chair, or an online course. In my area we are constantly finding electronic resources that are not accessible to persons with disabilities and quite frankly are difficult to navigate and negotiate by just about anyone! However, the ideal remains a worthy one for which to strive. Try taking some time to consider how 'adaptive' and 'accessible' design has benefited you and help to continue to expand its implementation in the future!

Resources for Universal Design

[http://media.unt.edu/cgi-bin/untangle.pl](#) - Web-streaming of *Untangling the Web: Making Online Teaching and Learning Accessible* provided by the University of North Texas Web Team. Program-related materials including many valuable Website links are also available for download at this site.

[http://www.udeducation.org](#) - Universal Design Education Online. Provides a thorough discussion and definition of Universal Design and gives help in teaching and learning Universal Design concepts.

http://www.umuc.edu/ade/ - University of Maryland University College Accessibility in Distance Education Website. Provides tutorials and examples on how to make online courses accessible to persons with disabilities.

http://currents.cwrl.utexas.edu/spring02/slatin.html - Slatin, John - "The Imagination Gap: Making Web-based Instructional Resources Accessible to Students and Colleagues with Disabilities", *Currents in Electronic Literacy*, Spring 2002.

http://www.unt.edu/policy/UNT_Policy/volume2/5_1.html - University of North Texas Web Accessibility Policy.

Benchmarks Online

Page One

 Campus
 Computing

Summer Hours

Making Online
Teaching and
 Learning
 Accessible

**Choosing a
Computer for
Use at UNT**

Computer-
Based Training:
 it's baaaaack!
 [well, almost]

EViews 5.0 is
 Now Available

 Today's Cartoon

 RSS Matters

 The Network
 Connection

 Link of the
 Month

 WWW@UNT.EDU

 Short Courses

 IRC News

 Staff Activities

Subscribe to
 Benchmarks
 Online

Choosing a Computer for Use at UNT

By Dr. Philip Baczewski, Associate Director of Academic Computing

Every semester I get mail from parents who are wondering what sort of computer they should purchase for their incoming freshman. Below is an example (real) of such an exchange. Perhaps it can help you in answering this question for yourself and/or others who might ask.

> Dr. Baczewski:
>
> My daughter, will be a freshman at UNT next year. I was
> wondering if there is an officially sanctioned computer system for UNT
> students. We are familiar with both Macs and PCs and probably will get
> her a notebook. My questions to you are:
>
> 1. Is there an official brand preference for the university?

The University does not specify a preference on computer brand or operating system for students.

> 2. If not,
> a) is there one brand that experience shows is easier to use/more
> compatible with campus networks?
> b) what do most students/faculty use?
> c) is there an "unofficial" brand preference?

I'll attempt to answer all three of these at once... As is true in the general computer population, most computers on the UNT campus are PCs running some version of Windows. However, we also support Macintosh and Linux systems and all operate equally well on our campus networks. The choice of computer may be influenced by the student's major. Visual Arts, Music, and Journalism all make heavy use of Macintosh computers in their curriculum and labs. You would have to look very hard to find a Macintosh in our College of Business. :)

So, if the your daughter's major is not one of the three I mentioned, and she is self sufficient in supporting Windows, I'd probably suggest a Windows PC as the default choice. On the other hand, I find that Macintosh systems are easier to use and support, generally have a longer useful life, are much less prone to security problems, and can still perform the same general tasks required for college courseware.

> 3. On the software side, is there more and/or better campus support for
> Windows or Macintosh applications and operating system?

We don't generally provide software for students, but Macs and PCs are

equally supported for institutional use in this regard.

> 4. Are there wireless networks on campus? If so, do they work better
> with PC or Mac notebooks?

Most of out major Academic buildings, our Union Building, and our Libraries support wireless access. Any standard 803.11b device can make an authenticated connection to our wireless network (see http://wireless.unt.edu/ for more info).

> I appreciate you taking the time to answer these questions for me.
>
> Thank you for your help,
>
> Soon to be UNT Parent

I hope I have helped. We do have relationships with some vendors for educational purchase of computers. See http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/purchase/ for more details.

Benchmarks Online

Computer-Based Training: it's baaaaack! [well, almost]

By Dr. Elizabeth Hinkle-Turner, Student Computing Services Manager

It seems like ages since I've given any updates on computer-based training at UNT (remember SmartForce? SkillSoft? KnowledgeNet? Microsoft?) but I am back with good news. All of those lovely courses in Adobe and Macromedia products and Web design, Oracle 9i, and Linux and UNIX are going to be launched within the next couple of weeks. The new SkillPort system is in place and the final step of loading all UNT enterprise accounts is the only one left. KnowledgeNet with its full suite of Microsoft Office training courses is also almost set - once again simply waiting on account loading. The active (or if I want to use PeopleSoft terminology: 'go live!') date will be announced via GroupWise and various campus listservs and other announcement venues. So keep your eyes open for these announcements.

First of all, those of you who use computer-based-training often may have wondered "What took you so long, Elizabeth? Were you just goofing off during the past few months?" Well.....ahem....no, I was actually learning three new CBT systems and setting up a new server and secure authentication environment. Actually the Microsoft training for faculty and staff available from Microsoft itself has been up and running since January and hopefully many of you are using it. To review my instructional article about that training, Click here. The old SmartForce and SkillSoft training was disabled simply because it would not run effectively on newer desktop systems. Additionally, I wanted to switch - for security and reliability reasons (can you say 'sasser worm'?) - from a Microsoft server-based product to a Linux server-based product. Finally, I wanted all computer-based-training to be accessible via EUID and enterprise services password so that my system would be similar to the way our new PeopleSoft system and the my.unt.edu site is set up.

All computer-based training is now accessed via a server running Debian GNU/Linux, Apache Web server 1.3 and Tomcat 4 java server. You connect to this training with your EUID and enterprise services password. In order to prepare everyone for that 'go live' date, I am going to go ahead here and provide the instructional tutorials for accessing the SkillPort training (the KnowledgeNet tutorial is in a separate article in June).

Getting Online with SkillPort

There is an ADA-compliant version of this article at this address. If you have problems finding that tutorial please email ehinkle@unt.edu

All computer-based training at UNT is now Web-based. There are no longer CDs available for this training because the newer technology is apparently not 'packageable' on CD-ROM. To access SkillPort go to https://cbt.acs.unt.edu/logon.htm **[available June 1]**:

You will then see this page once you are authenticated as a current UNT community member - press the Continue to SkillPort button to connect to the UNT SkillPort Website:

You will eventually be presented with your personal SkillPort homepage. The picture below shows the different sections of the site:

To view and select your course choices click on the Catalog button. You will see the course categories:

The following course topics and courses are found under these categories:

- Enterprise Database Solutions - all Oracle 9i courses
- Operating Systems and Server Technologies Solution Area - Linux Basic System Administration, Sun Solaris 9, UNIX Essentials
- Software Development Solution Area - Java 2 (Platform 1.2), Java 2 Programming (Platform 1.2), Java Enterprise Connectivity, Java Web Services
- Web Design Solution Area -
  - Adobe: GoLive5, Illustrator 9, Imageready 3, Photoshop 6, Photoshop 7
  - Macromedia: Coldfusion MX, DreamWeaver MX, Fireworks MX, Flash MX
  - Website Design Principles
  - Website Design Tools: Frontpage 2002, Paintshop Pro 7

Keep clicking on the linked courses to get to the chapter you want to study. You will be given a complete course description and the option to add it to your favorites, course plan, or to download the course (requires additional software installation on your computer - SkillPort will prompt you for this installation):

If you don't know what course to take, search the topic in which you are interested using the search engine found on the homepage:

Please note that the only account information that has been loaded into SkillPort is your Name. If you wish to add your email address or further customize your account, choose "Customize" at the top of the Webpage:

Finally, if you want to generate a report of your progress, click on My Report to get a complete listing of your work:

After you are finished taking the courses you wish, simply logout. SkillPort will 'remember' everything you have done. The logout exit screen looks like this:

This is simply a description of the basics of how to navigate the new system. Once I announce that the accounts are all loaded, refer back to this article to review these instructions on how to move around the SkillPort Website. Once you are in the Website, just find the courses you need, click on them so they can load and enjoy!

I will be posting more articles on advanced features and their use in the June issue of *Benchmarks*. In the meantime, all updates, tutorials, and other relevant links to computer-based-training at UNT can be found at http://www.unt.edu/cbt/ - the official computer-based-training Website. Any questions about the new CBT setup should be directed to me at ehinkle@unt.edu.

Computer-Based Training: it's baaaaack! [well, almost]

EViews 5.0 is Now Available

By **Dr. Elizabeth Hinkle-Turner**, Student Computing Services Manager

Quantitative Micro Software's EViews 5.0 is now available on the statistics server for installation. EViews must be metered and this metering has been set up using Zenworks. The simplest approach to installing EViews 5 is to simply copy our application object located at StatApps.Applications.ACS.Acad.UNT.

EViews has a 'interesting' (well, that's a polite way to put it!) registration system which doesn't seem to work very well! To get it to work, Nick Wagner - ACS Tech - actually had to write a command script to launch the application. Our pre-made application object runs that command script and also links EViews 5 to the license container for metering.

However, if you wish to make your own application object, use the following path for the executable: \\UNT\UNT\ACAD\ACS\GAUSS\STATAPPS\EViews5\EViews.cmd (the location of this is pictured below):
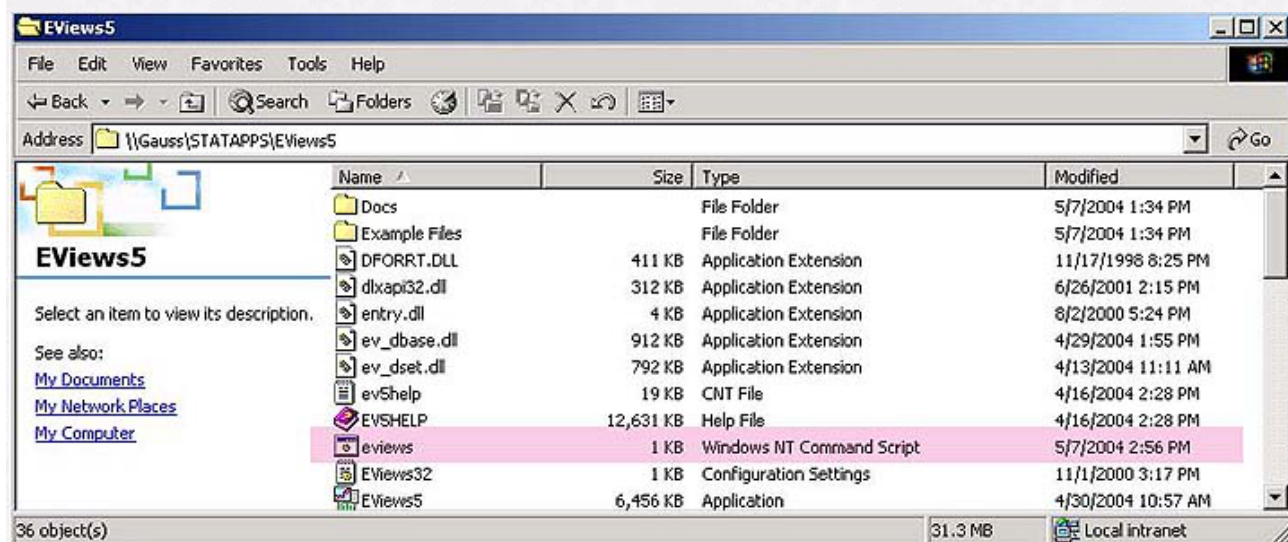
Be sure to link your application object to the license container for EViews which is the QMS+EViews+4_1 container located at Application Metering.ACS.Acad.UNT.

If you have any questions regarding the installation of EViews 5 please E-mail ehinkle@unt.edu. **Faculty and staff members who use EViews should contact their network managers to obtain a copy of this upgrade. Any questions regarding the *use* of EViews should be directed to Research and Statistical Support Services in the Computing and Information Technology Center.**

Benchmarks Online

Page One

Campus Computing News

Summer Hours

Making Online Teaching and Learning Accessible

Choosing a Computer for Use at UNT

Computer-Based Training: it's baaaaack! [well, almost]

EViews 5.0 is Now Available

Today's Cartoon

RSS Matters

The Network Connection

Link of the Month

WWW@UNT.EDU

Short Courses

IRC News

Staff Activities

Subscribe to Benchmarks Online

TODAY'S CARTOON

© 1996 by Randy Glasbergen.
E-mail: randyg@norwich.net

"Hello, Bob? It's your father again. I have another question about my new computer. Can I tape a movie from cable TV then fax it from my VCR to my CD-ROM then E-mail it to my brother's cellular phone so he can make a copy on his neighbor's camcorder?"

From "Today's Cartoon by Randy Glasbergen", posted with special permission. For many more cartoons, please visit www.glasbergen.com.

Benchmarks Online

Network Connection

By Dr. Philip Baczewski, Associate Director of Academic Computing

What Business Doesn't Get About Open Source and IT

Americans seem to have this silly attitude that if you don't buy it, it must not be worth anything. The RIAA have managed to convince us that downloading any music is stealing. And Linux is still viewed with suspicion in the bastions of American corporate IT, in spite of the fact that companies such as Oracle have adopted the platform for all of their new software development activity.

In commenting on an IT survey regarding use of Linux in the commercial world, Mary E. Tyler stated the following in a recent article on newsforge.com, an online Linux news source:

> Linux may be free, but using Linux is not. Free licenses are a factor, but not the whole picture for these companies. Experienced, certified Linux professionals are in short supply and cost 20-30% more than Windows admins with comparable levels of experience. One company said, in the essay portion of the survey, "We use Windows 2000 servers for our data applications and Linux for our Internet gateway. It is solid, reliable -- 100% -- but it is so expensive to get help for."

Other factors she mentions that the survey highlights are the fact that companies like to have someone to sue if things don't go well, and that they like to have someone else to blame if something breaks.

The Commoditization of the U.S. Economy

I think she's missed one fact about the American corporate psyche these days. Everything must be commoditized. That way you can buy just as much as you think you need just when you think you need it. If you have been laid off from an IT job in the last couple of years, you realize that you were just such a commodity, and if you are lucky you may be working as a contractor providing that same commodity to whoever happens to be providing the contract at this time, but without that nasty (to the corporation) fixed expense of silly extras like a retirement fund or medical insurance. Or, you may be considering a move to Bangalore (and I don't mean that town in Maine).

In some ways, the belief that commoditization saves money is actually a myth. This University spends hundreds of thousands of dollars on site licensed commercial software which provides us more copies than we need, because if we bought individual copies of just what we needed, it would cost us millions of dollars. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent on commercial software to run the business of the University, while some of the most sophisticated research on campus is accomplished using an operating system and software for which the licensed use is free. And, as shoppers at those super stores know, it's

not less expensive to buy only what you need. It's much cheaper by the unit to buy a year's supply of toilet paper all at once.

Commoditization does avoid being locked into an ongoing expense, but there's a price to pay. This brings us back to the issue of those "experienced, certified Linux professionals." I've managed a number of projects that have developed strategic systems that run on Linux, but I've never hired a certified Linux professional. I'm not sure that such a person exists, but it will be just a matter of time before someone figures out that they can charge people money to provide just such a certification. There are plenty of Microsoft certified software "engineers" out there in the world, and if you see them they are now usually holding signs which say, "will point and click for food."

Rather than hiring certified Linux professionals, I had good success hiring intelligent, motivated people with good problem solving skills and the ability to acquire knowledge on their own. Some have been computer science majors, but others have been music majors. It may be easier to find these types hanging around a university, but they have to go somewhere when their degree is finished. With an investment in people, full time staff members, it has been possible to develop software using open source programming tools and operating systems or to implement systems using open source programs developed for a specific task.

This work requires a loyal work force, which in turn requires an organization to be loyal to their work force. This requires treating people like an important resource rather than an expendable commodity. It also requires the understanding and acceptance that if something goes wrong, there's no one else to blame or sue.

Open Source at UNT

A number of years ago, UNT ACS implemented a commercial product to provide a Web client interface for student E-mail. That software worked the way the company that sold it thought it should work, but we found it to be restrictive, unreliable, and not flexible enough for our needs. By implementing an open source alternative we were able to provide a much more stable and reliable platform for Web E-mail at the cost of one staff member's time and dedication.

Redhat recently announced cessation of free support for their popular Linux distribution. Rather than pay a fee for support, a number of projects have switched to the Debian distribution. What do you do if Microsoft decides to stop supporting a version of Windows? You have no choice but to pay them again for a newer version. Open source software provides a flexibility not possible when using commercially licensed software.

This University has a number of successful and strategic systems that have either been developed using or are running on open source software. These include a student E-mail system which has scaled from 20,000 to 40,000 users without additional cost other than storage. It includes practically the entire University Web presence. It includes fundamental support systems for authentication and identification. Just imagine how productive U.S. corporations could be if they were willing to make such an investment in a loyal workforce.

Benchmarks Online

Navigation

- **Page One**
- **Campus Computing News**
- **Summer Hours**
- **Making Online Teaching and Learning Accessible**
- **Choosing a Computer for Use at UNT**
- **Computer-Based Training: it's baaaaack! [well, almost]**
- **EViews 5.0 is Now Available**
- **Today's Cartoon**
- **RSS Matters**
- **The Network Connection**
- **Link of the Month**
- **WWW@UNT.EDU**
- **Short Courses**
- **IRC News**
- **Staff Activities**
- **Subscribe to Benchmarks Online**

Link of the Month

Each month we highlight an Internet, USENET Special Interest Group (SIG), or similar mailing list(s) or Website(s).

Your UNT

Part of the implementation of the Enterprise Information System (EIS) here at UNT has been the creation of portals designed to reflect the status of the individual who is using the system. As was stated in the recent *Benchmarks Online* article, "Follow the Yellow Brick - Implementing EIS":

> The Portal makes possible one of the EIS features that the campus community is most excited about, the requirement of a single login ID and password for each user. The Portal also facilitates the self-service features available for students and employees. Learning Solutions and Financials contain specific modules that can be accessed by users depending on the security level the user has been granted.

The Human Resources Department recently sent out an announcement of the availability of MyUNT, that included the following information. With it, you should be able to access and use MyUNT successfully.

What Do I Need to Access MyUNT?

1) The website address - http://my.unt.edu .

2) Your EUID - every employee [and student] has an EUID (Enterprise User ID) assigned to them. If you are uncertain as to what your EUID is, click the What's My EUID link on the MyUNT login page. If you have not previously activated your EUID, click the Activate My EUID (new users) link on the MyUNT login page.

3) Your Password associated with your EUID - If you have forgotten or never set up a password for your EUID, click the Need Help With Your Password link on the MyUNT login page.

Who Do I Contact For Help?

1) For assistance in logging in and personalizing your MyUNT page, contact the Computing & Information Technology Center's Helpdesk at 940-565-2324, via e-mail at helpdesk@unt.edu or http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk .

2) For questions regarding your Human Resources information, contact the Human Resources Department at 940-565-2281 or Payroll Office at 940-565-2440 or visit our website at http://www.unt.edu/hr/eis/selfservice.htm .

Benchmarks Online

IRC News

Minutes provided by Sue Ellen Richey, Recording Secretary

April 20, 2004

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT: PHILIP TURNER, Chair, ELIZABETH HINKLE-TURNER, CHRISTY CRUTSINGER, LOU ANN BRADLEY, JON NELSON, KATHY SWIGGER, JIM CURRY, JONEEL HARRIS, KENN MOFFITT, ROBERT NIMOCKS, PAUL HONS (for JUDITH ADKISON), ERUM SHAIKH, GINGER BOONE (for CHUCK FULLER) **NON-VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:** RICHARD HARRIS, JOE ADAMO, MAURICE LEATHERBURY, PATRICK PLUSCHT, COY HOGGARD, SUE ELLEN RICHEY (Recording Secretary) **MEMBERS ABSENT:** MAX KAZEMZADEH, BRUCE HUNTER, RAMU MUTHIAH, DON GROSE, ABRAHAM JOHN, CENGIZ CAPAN, DONNA ASHER, DOUG MAINS, ARMIN MIKLER, BOBBY CARTER, JOHN PRICE

The minutes of the March 9, 2004, meeting were approved as distributed.

The Chair proposed the merging of the Instruction Planning Group with the Distributed Learning Team in view of Jenny Jopling's resignation. The IPG had not been charged with any new projects for quite some time, and its interests and the interests of the Distributed Learning Team are somewhat parallel, so it seemed a logical merger. This proposal will be voted on at the May meeting.

Communications Planning Group, EIS Project

Lou Ann Bradley reported for the Communications Planning Group that at their recent meeting they were given an update on the LEARN network and also discussed everything that is going on regarding communications on campus, particularly wireless. They also discussed the Network Connections Policy that is being brought before the Board of Regents for approval at their next meeting. Lou Ann pointed out that this committee does not have a particular charge at this time.

Joneel added that there are now two out of four student administration modules in production at UNT and all four are operational at HSC. HSC has been registering students, with 14 students successfully registered so far. They have turned up a few problems with security where a student is also an employee, as well as a firewall issue where students coming in from outside have gotten past LDAP Logon screen and into the portal where they experienced problems at certain application pages, and they are working on the problem.

Joneel announced that the Student Records and Student Finance Modules will go live on April 30th at UNT. She also recognized Kenn Moffitt for his work with the EIS project technical folks in getting the portal up before the Financial Aid GoLive. She said that new students who have been accepted for the Fall semester have been sent their EUIDs and PINs

so they can access their admission and financial aid status information on the web. It is expected that continuing students will be sent formation about accessing the portal by the end of May.

In addition, Joneel said they are preparing for testing using Mercury Interactive do some EIS load-testing in the latter part of May and early June.

They have been working with Elizabeth Hinkle-Turner on issues related to some students having ID cards with EMPL IDs and others with Social Security numbers. Admittedly this will create some confusion, but they are working on solutions.

Joneel stated that she would be sending out an official notice of a business practice change soon, to let academic units know that the processing of departmental scholarships will be handled by the Student Financial Aid and Scholarship Office for Fall of 2004 rather than by the Student Accounting and University Cashiering Service office, as it has been.

EIS Planning Group

Joneel Harris reported for the EIS Planning Group that the pilot project for the Finance Application, E-Procurement System, has gone very well. She said that making the account balances viewable has been more difficult. She stated that the timekeepers are still struggling in the larger departments, but efforts are being made to alleviate the struggle.

Regarding Contributor Relations, Joneel stated that this has become a renewed priority for HSC due to some staffing changes that have occurred. Amy McNabb has been chosen to be the new Product Head for UNT's Contributor Relations, and they hope to make more progress now.

Standards & Policy Planning Group

Kenn Moffitt reported for the Standards & Policy Planning Group that they are still working on their charges.

Research Planning Group

Maurice Leatherbury reported for the Research Planning Group that he has been working with faculty members to propose the addition of a staff member to support research needs in Academic Computing. Dr. Chestnut in Research & Technology Transfer has agreed to fund half of a position, with CITC funding the other half, and the position request is being reviewed by the budget committee.

Student Computing Planning Group

Elizabeth Hinkle-Turner reported for the Student Computing Planning Group that she has the results of the Student Survey and is preparing a report for the different areas. She remarked that the general feelings expressed by students who completed the survey were positive.

Richard Harris interjected a comment to let Elizabeth know that he had received a compliment from the Student Government Association for Elizabeth's assistance in helping to get the SGA election publicized on the General Access Lab computer desktops.

Distributed Learning Team

Patrick Pluscht reported for the Distributed Learning Team that they met on Thursday to discuss the WebCT –Vista conversion. They have hired a five-member team to help with the migration and conversion in an attempt to make it easier for faculty to migrate their courseware to the new version. WebCT Vista 3.0 was made available last Thursday and Austin Laird will be setting it up in a test environment for faculty by May 31st with an eye toward having it up and running for Summer II or Fall of 2004. All courses will be converted by Spring of 2005. Patrick noted that CITC has a CSMI position posted, which will be for the purpose of helping with the support of WebCT Vista.

Patrick announced that the Texas Distance Learning Association's Annual Conference was held on March 29 – April 1 in Galveston and was attended by 686 persons. For the second time, Patrick received an award for Individual Commitment. In addition, UNT e-Campus is now 70% populated for courses through May-mester, Summer I, II and Fall. They continue to work at getting it to 100%. The e-Campus group plans to have a representative at the UNT Services Fair and in attendance at all of the Freshman Orientation sessions. He offered e-Campus T-shirts and Sunglasses clips to IRC members today as they leave the meeting.

Dr. Turner added that there will be an Ice Cream Social for faculty who have entered their information in E-campus, in ISB 201 on April 28th.

Patrick Pluscht also announced the showing of a PBS satellite down-link program on ADA Compliance dealing with accessibility issues and course development on Thursday, April 22, from 1:30-3:00 p.m. in Chilton Hall, Room 245.

Paul Hons reported that faculty were having some problems using Web Dev on Vista. Maurice Leatherbury said he would look into that and follow up with Paul.

Graduate Student Council

Erum Shaikh stated that the Graduate Student Council has a concern about general access labs being so full towards the end of each semester that graduate students could not get in to do their research. Dr. Turner replied that there is a Graduate Student lab, for exclusive use by graduate students, in ISB 203. She also asked if it would be possible to offer Microsoft Office XP at the Campus Agreement price for TAs and TFs. Maurice Leatherbury replied that the cost to add a student component to the agreement would be prohibitive.

Electronic Theses and Dissertation Processing

Elizabeth Hinkle-Turner announced that Academic Computing Services will be taking over the processing and serving of electronic theses and dissertations by putting the documents on-line and making them accessible as students wish. In connection with that, Elizabeth is developing a short course geared to graduate students on how to digitize documents and how to make pdf files, for digital storage.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

---

* For a list of IRC Regular and Ex-officio Members click here.

IRC Meeting Schedule

The [IRC](#) generally meets on the third Tuesday of each month, from 2-4 p.m., in the Administration Building Board Room. From time to time there are planned exceptions to this schedule. All meetings of the IRC, its program groups, and other committees, are open to all faculty, staff, and students.

Benchmarks Online

Research and Statistical Support
University of North Texas

RSS Matters

Link to the last RSS article here: Delivering Results to the End User: Two Stata 8.0 Examples, Part I - Ed.

Using R with Excel - A (D)COM Server for the Windows Platform (Part I)

By Dr. Rich Herrington, Research and Statistical Support Services Manager

This month we demonstrate how to download and install a COM server used to connect a client application (e.g. Microsoft Excel) with R. R is the GNU S statistical system "R", for the Microsoft Windows platform. The following is an excerpt from the R Website http://www.r-project.org/:

> *R is a language and environment for statistical computing and graphics. It is a GNU project which is similar to the S language and environment which was developed at Bell Laboratories (formerly AT&T, now Lucent Technologies) by John Chambers and colleagues. R can be considered as a different implementation of S. There are some important differences, but much code written for S runs unaltered under R. R provides a wide variety of statistical (linear and nonlinear modeling, classical statistical tests, time-series analysis, classification, clustering, ...) and graphical techniques, and is highly extensible. The S language is often the vehicle of choice for research in statistical methodology, and R provides an Open Source route to participation in that activity. One of R's strengths is the ease with which well-designed publication-quality plots can be produced, including mathematical symbols and formulae where needed. Great care has been taken over the defaults for the minor design choices in graphics, but the user retains full control. R is available as Free Software under the terms of the Free Software Foundation's GNU General Public License in source code form. It compiles and runs out of the box on a wide variety of UNIX platforms and similar systems (including FreeBSD and Linux). It also compiles and runs on Windows 9x/NT/2000 and MacOS [from Introduction].*

An R-D(COM) Server for R

R-(D)COM is a programming interface to COM and DCOM (ex ActiveX; Microsoft distributed object interface) to access the R calculation engine. As such, it runs only under the Windows environment. The R-(D)COM server can be used to build a R GUI client using tools like Microsoft C++, Microsoft Visual Basic, or Microsoft Excel. Currently, a R-Excel addin is provided, as well as some examples to use Visual Basic as a front-end. Some of the features of the R-(D)COM server are:

- data-transfer both from **R** to the client-application and vice versa, currently supporting scalars (Booleans, integers, doubles and strings) and arrays of these.

- "console" device (Active X control) for local/remote **R** server output.

- graphics device (Active X control) for local/remote **R** graphics output

- multiple local/remote server applications ("**R** processes") accessible by single client

- multiple local/remote clients per **R** server process

- Add-In for Microsoft Excel to use **R** as the computational backend

Downloading and Installing R-D(COM)

R-D(COM) can be downloaded from the main org Website:

http://www.cran.r-project.org/.

 The link for this download is:

 http://cran.r-project.org/contrib/extra/dcom/RSrv12r.exe

Installation allows you to choose between various default types of installation.

- If you want to develop client applications, you should choose a "Development installation". This will install binaries for running local and remote servers, test and sample applications, including source code. An installation of **R** is required on this machine, too (See June 2003 *Benchmarks Online* for downloading and installing R). When deploying your own client application to some machine, you have to install **R** (D)COM Server on this machine, too.

- If running **R** locally on this machine, choose "Local Server Installation". This will install binaries for the local COM servers and a simple test application used for testing the basic functionality of **R** and the **R** (D)COM Server installation. A local installation of **R** is required, too. This machine can be used for running client applications using a local **R** server and for providing **R** server objects for remote clients, too.

- For running a client application locally and accessing **R** objects installed on a remote server, choose "Remote Server Files" as your setup option.

This will set up necessary binaries for accessing an installation of **R** and **R** (D)COM server on a remote machine. **R** is not required on this machine. **Please consult your network administrator for potential security risks that are created when giving remote access to D(COM) servers.** For our demonstration purposes, remote access is not given.
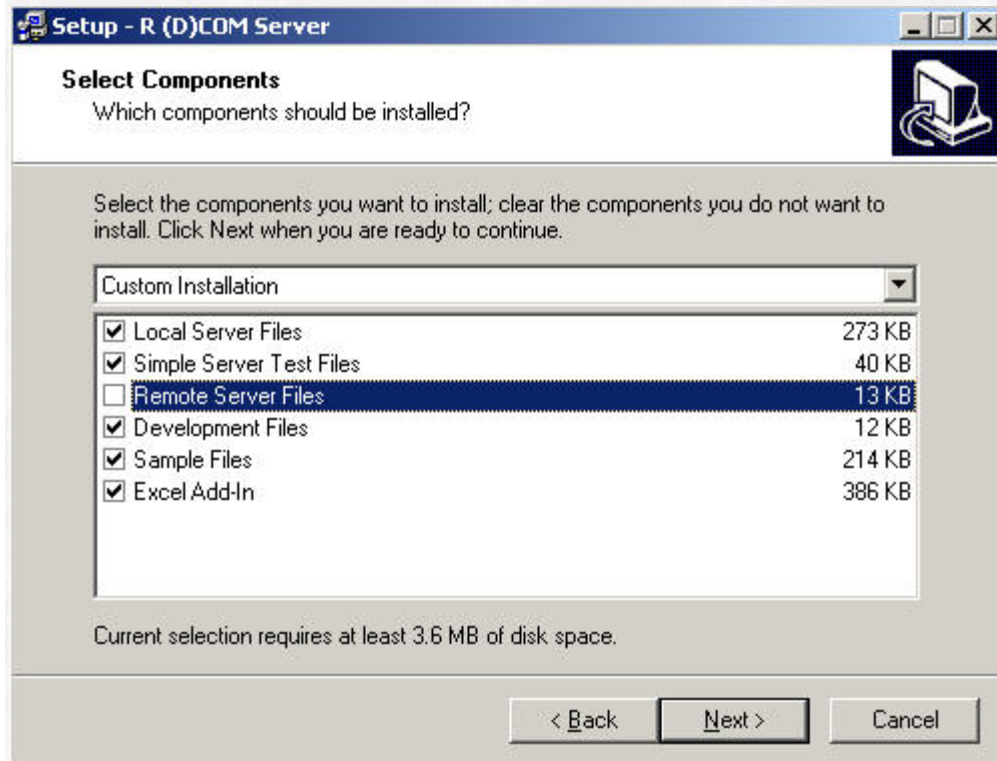
Select `Basic Test` from the **R** (D)COM Server program group in the start menu and press "Start".

```
StatConnector Test                                    _ □ X

      Start                    Clear

Loading StatConnector Server... Done                        ▲
Initializing R...Done

Server information:
  Name:       COM Statistics Interpreter Interface
  Description: Connector beetween a client application (e.g. a spread-sheet) and an interp
  Copyright:  (C) 1999-2003, Thomas Baier
  License:    GNU Library General Public License version 2 or greater
  Version:    1.2

Connector information:
  Name:       R
  Description: A Computer Language for Statistical Data Analysis
  Copyright:  (C) R Development Core Team
  License:    GNU General Public License version 2 or greater
  Version:    1.9.0

Interpreter information:
  Name:       R Statistics Interpreter Connector
  Description: Implements abstract connector interface to R
  Copyright:  (C) 1999-2001, Thomas Baier
  License:    GNU General Public License version 2 or greater
  Version:    1.0

Testing Evaluate
  creating variable... Done
Testing SetSymbol
  setting integer i1... Done
  setting double r1... Done
  setting string s1... Done
  setting integer array i3... Done
  setting double array r3... Done
  setting string array s3...   setting integer array i5... Done
  setting double array r5... Done
  setting string array s5... Done
Testing GetSymbol
  getting integer i1... Done (4)                            ▼
◄                                                           ►
```

RExcel - Using R from within Excel

The Excel addin `RExcel.xla` allows to use **R** from within Excel. The package additionally contains some Excel workbooks demonstrating different techniques for using **R** in Excel. There are at least three different ways of using **R** from within Excel:

Scratchpad mode

Writing **R** Code directly in an Excel worksheet and transferring scalar, vector, and matrix variables between **R** and Excel

Macro mode

Writing macros using VBA and the macros supplied by `RExcel.xla`, attaching the macros to menu items or toolbar items

Worksheet functions

R can be called directly in functions in worksheet cells

Scratchpad Mode

The RExcel menu within Excel contains the following items:

R Start

> Starts an **R** process to be accessed from Excel in the background

Close R

> When this process is running, "R Start" changes to "Close R"

Run Code

> Selecting a range (only one column wide) in Excel containing valid **R** code and then choosing this menu item executes the selected code

Get

> Gets the value of an **R** variable into the active Excel cell

Put

> Puts the values of the selected Excel range into an **R** variable

Copy Code

> Puts the content of the selected range on the Windows clipboard, assuming that it is **R** code, and wraps the code in VBA procedure calls to make it ready for inclusion in VBA macros

Debug R

> Switches to debug mode: all the calls to **R** will be displayed in a popup window before they are executed

Options

> Allows to change some aspects of the layout of the RExcel menu structure

RExcel Help

> Displays help file

R Help

Displays the **R** help file

"Get" and "Put" interactively prompt for the name of the **R** variable. The type of the **R** variable (numeric or string) is selected from a submenu. The value if the **R** variable only may be a numeric or string scalar, vector, or matrix.

When the **R** process is running, the context menu for cells (accessed by right clicking on a cell or selecting a range and then right clicking) contains the menu items "Run R", "Get R Var", and "Put R Var" which perform the same functions as the corresponding menu items in the "RExcel" menu.

Some ways of using these techniques are illustrated in the example file `RDemoDev.xls`, available as `"Excel 01 - R Server Connection Demo"` in the (D)COM Server menu in Windows Start menu.

An Example Using the Scratchpad Mode

In the following example, the scratchpad mode is demonstrated. Start R from the main menu bar in Excel:
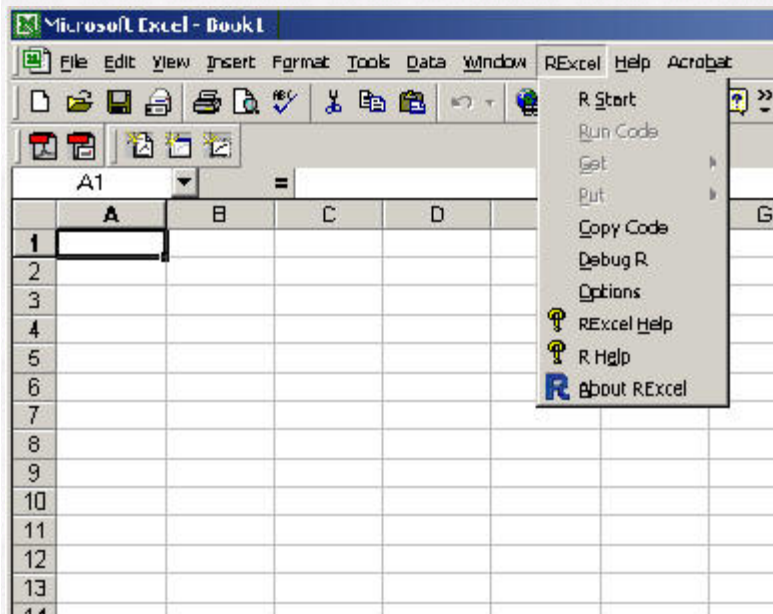
Then, in a cell (or group of cells), using the R language, assign 10 random numbers to the object "x" ("x<-rnorm(10)"). Highlight the cell (or group of cells) containing the R code, then right mouse click on the highlighted cell(s) and select "Run R":
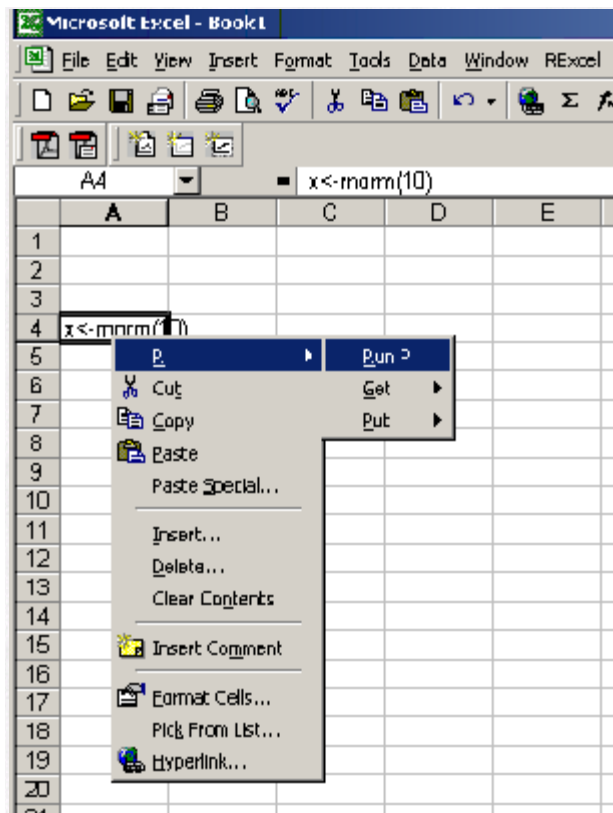
Next, right mouse click a cell, then select "R - Get - Num":
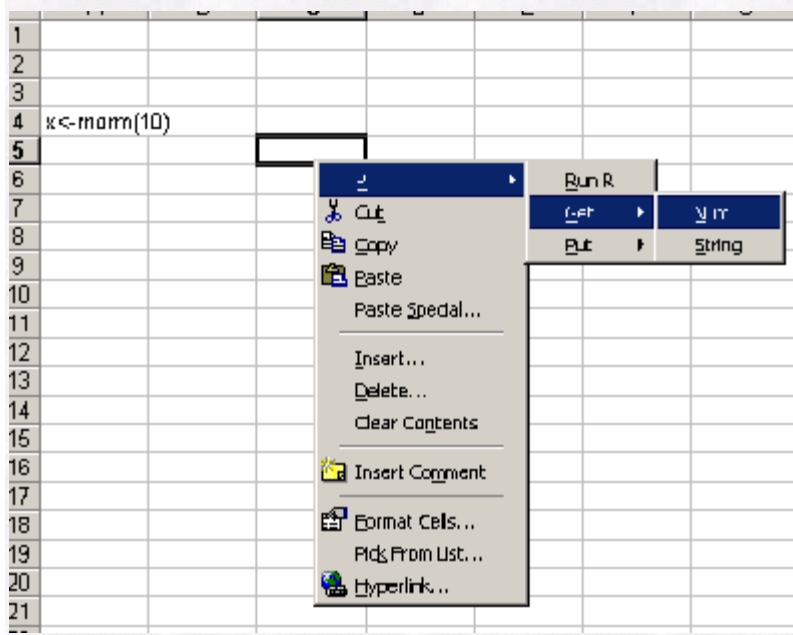
Then, retrieve the object by typing the name of the assigned object at the prompt (in this case, object "x"):

Get array from R

Array name in R

OK

Cancel

x

The vector of numbers will be produced:

	A	B	C	D
1				
2				
3				
4	x<-rnorm(10)			
5			0.790299	
6			0.919973	
7			-0.56956	
8			-0.39116	
9			0.046529	
10			-0.72273	
11			0.056386	
12			-1.16489	
13			0.856485	
14			-1.21922	
15				
16				
17				

In the following example, two vectors are assigned to "x" and "y", and the sum of the vectors is assigned to "z". The object "z" is retrieved and the following vector is produced:

x<-c(1,2,3)		[
y<-c(1,2,3)		
z<-x+y		
		2
		4
		6

Combining the R and Microsoft Excel software together in this way, brings a large degree of statistical functionality to Excel. R draws upon thousands of functions and has the capability of handling matrix algebra (See the list of packages and functions in the R help).

Next Time

Next time we will demonstrate the "Macro Mode" and "Worksheet Functions" facilities of the R-(D)COM server.

Resources

http://cran.r-project.org/
        CRAN - the major site for R and associated software/documentation.

http://cran.r-project.org/contrib/extra/dcom/
> Download location on CRAN for the R COM server. This is the last officially released version.

http://sunsite.univie.ac.at/rcom/
> The home of the R COM server and clients. You can find latest snapshots and additional documentation there.

http://mailman.csd.univie.ac.at/mailman/listinfo/rcom-l
> The mailing list for all R COM services. Discusses all topics related to the R COM servers and the R COM client package. See this page for information about the list, subscription etc. See the R FAQ for information about general mailing lists concerning R.

Benchmarks Online

WWW@UNT.EDU

What's New in Central Web Support?

By Shannon Eric Peevey, UNT Central Web Support

To say that this is an exciting time in Central Web Support, is an understatement. We are in a position to solidify our installations, and are bringing some new technologies on line.

First, we now have a new Windows 2003 server, named steppe.unt.edu, in beta. This will complete our current list of supported technologies, which includes, ColdFusion, PHP, Java, and, now, ASP.NET. This server is open to those Web developers that would like to develop in ASP, and who are not afraid of encountering a few glitches, as they help me to understand how to support this new technology. We will not add Microsoft Access back to our list of supported database applications, but you will be free to use them if you desire. We will assume that your Web should have a database backend, and, therefore, will continue to create a MySQL, PostgreSQL, or MS SQL Server database for your ASP.NET Web. So far, this server has been exciting. Microsoft, in an attempt to become more secure, has made things much more complicated than they need to be, but IIS 6 seems to be a good step-up in their Web service capabilities. At this time, I do not understand the way that they try to integrate WebDAV into the server, (I am open to anyone that can help me get this configured), so we only support Frontpage Server Extensions, (ie Frontpage clients, and Web Folders). I hope that will change in the future. We hope that you will help us bring steppe.unt.edu out of beta soon.

Finally, we have moved the Web2 and database servers over to use LDAP authentication. This has been a long time in coming, and is made possible through some helper applications that allow us to synch passwords across our many technologies. The transition seems to have been smooth, and I think that Web developers will appreciate the fact that they do not need to remember one more password for... which application? ;)

We hope to hear from you, and thank you for helping us to make our services the best that they can be!

Benchmarks **Online**

Short Courses

By [Claudia Lynch](), *Benchmarks Online* Editor

The Summer Short Courses will be starting in June. Surf over to the [Short Courses]() page to see the course schedule and information about registration.

Customized Short Courses

Faculty members can request customized short courses from ACS, geared to their class needs. Other groups can request special courses also. Contact ACS for more information (ISB 119, 565-4068, [lynch@unt.edu]()).

Especially for Faculty and Staff Members

In addition to the [ACS Short Courses](), which are available to students, faculty and staff, staff and faculty members can take courses offered through the [Human Resources]()Department, the [Center for Distributed Learning](), and the UNT Libraries' [Multimedia Development Lab](). Additionally, the Center for Continuing Education and Conference Management offers a variety of [courses]() to both UNT and the general community, usually for a small fee.

GroupWise Training

Information about GroupWise training can be found at the GroupWise course [site]().

If would like to have a Basic GroupWise seminar for your area, please contact Jason Gutierrez, Network Computing Services, [jasong@unt.edu]().

GroupWise SPAM class: A class on using GroupWise to Combat Unsolicited Email (a.k.a SPAM) was offered on March 25th, 2004. If you were unable to participate in this class, it will be offered again. Until then, the class materials are available online in PDF format (Acrobat) at [http://ncs.unt.edu/gw/basicgroupwise/downloads/PDF/Dealing_with_SPAM.pdf]().

Center for Distributed Learning

The Center for Distributed Learning offers courses especially for Faculty Members. A list of topics and further information can be found at [http://www.unt.edu/cdl/training_events/index.htm]()

The center also offers a "Brown Bag" series which meets for lunch the first Thursday of each month at Noon in Chilton 245. The purpose of this group is to

bring faculty members together to share their experiences with distributed learning. One demonstration will be made at each meeting by a faculty member with experience in distributed learning. More information on these activities can be found at the Center for Distributed Learning Website.

Technical Training

Technical Training for campus network managers is available, from time to time, through the Network Computing Services (NCS) division of the Computing and Information Technology Center. Check the NCS site to see if and when they are offering any training.

UNT Mini-Courses

There are a variety of courses offered, for a fee, to UNT faculty, staff and students as well as the general public. For additional information surf over to http://www.pware.com/index.cfm?clientid=2694a

Alternate Forms of Training

Many of the General Access Labs around campus have tutorials installed on their computers. For example, the College of Education has Macromedia Tutorials for DreamWeaver 4.0, Flash 5.0 and Fireworks 4.0.

The Training Web site has all sorts of information about alternate forms of training. Computer Based Training (CBT) is one of the alternatives offered.

For further information on the future of CBT at UNT as well as the Microsoft e-learning library, see "Computer-Based Training: it's baaaaack! [well, almost]" in this issue of *Benchmarks Online*.

Benchmarks Online

Staff Activities

Transitions

No longer working in the Computing and Information Technology Center:

- **Randall Shope**, Programmer Analyst on the UNIX Services team.

- **Todd Atchison**, Clerical Assistant, Computing Center Administration (part-time).

Changes:

The **WebCT** group which had been a part of Central Web Support, now reports directly to the Executive Director of Information Technology and Academic Computing. **Austin Laird** heads up the group, which is in the process of moving out to the Research Park.

Awards, Recognition, Publications, etc.

New Babies

Congratulations to **Jason Gutierrez,** Network Computing Services, and his wife Peggy on the birth of their daughter Victoria Catherine on April 23.

Congratulations to **Austin Laird**, WebCT, and his wife Ramona on the birth of their son, Archer Lewis on April 29.

Retirees

According to the May 7 issue of *Inhouse*, sixty-eight employees with almost 1,500 years of combined service to UNT, retired during the 2003-04 academic year. Retirees from the Computing Center/Computing and Information Technology Center listed by *Inhouse* are as follows:

- Randall Franek, Computing Center, 1978-2003

- George Williams, Computing Center, 1973-2004

Benchmarks Online

Page One

Campus Computing News

Summer Hours

Making Online Teaching and Learning Accessible

Choosing a Computer for Use at UNT

Computer-Based Training: it's baaaaack! [well, almost]

EViews 5.0 is Now Available

Today's Cartoon

RSS Matters

The Network Connection

Link of the Month

WWW@UNT.EDU

Short Courses

IRC News

Staff Activities

Subscribe to Benchmarks Online

Don't Forget Our Monthly Columns!

By Claudia Lynch, *Benchmarks Online* Editor

In addition to our feature articles, *Benchmarks Online* publishes monthly columns that are focused on specific aspects of computing here at UNT (and beyond, in some cases). Check out what is waiting for you this month:

- **RSS Matters** - "RSS Matters" is the monthly column written by the Research and Statistical Support Group in Academic Computing Services. Their articles focus on topics of a statistical and/or research methods nature. **This month's article is by Dr. Rich Herrington and is titled "Using R with Excel - A (D)COM Server for the Windows Platform (Part I)"**

- **The Network Connection** - "The Network Connection" may well be the longest running column in computer publishing history. Certainly in University of North Texas computer publishing history.

  This month's column is titled "What Business Doesn't Get About Open Source and IT." Read the article and find out!

- **Link of the Month** - As it says on the top of the "Link of the Month" page, "each month we highlight an Internet, USENET Special Interest Group (SIG), or similar mailing list(s) or Website(s)." Lately we have been confining ourselves to featuring UNT specific sites. **This month we focus on the UNT portal, MyUNT.**

- **WWW@UNT.EDU** - "WWW@UNT.EDU" is a monthly column written by the Central Web Support Group in Academic Computing Services. The topics usually focus, in some way, on World-Wide-Web-related issues. **This month's topic is "What's New in Central Web Support?" Details inside ...**

- **Short Courses** - Every semester, Academic Computing Services (ACS) offers short courses on computer-related topics, many of them having to do with statistical research. This column keeps you up-to-date on what is being offered and when as well as other training opportunities. **This month, read all about the courses coming up in June.**

- **IRC News** - As their Webpage says, "the IRC is an advisory and oversight body created to foster communication and cooperation between and among UNT information resources providers and users." We publish the minutes of the IRC meetings each month, when they are available. This month you can read the April IRC minutes.

Don't Forget Our Monthly Columns!

Staff Activities - This column focuses on new employees, people who are no longer employed at the Computing and Information Technology Center, awards and recognitions and other items of interest featured here.