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Campus Computing News

Using GroupWise* to manage "BULK:" mail

By **Jason Gutierrez**, Network Computing Services, GroupWise Support Team

Earlier this year UNT's Network Computing Services (a division of the Computing and Information Technology Center, CITC) implemented a Spam filter that tags email as "BULK:" based on certain criteria. This junk mail filter, SpamAssassin, has had a tremendous impact on determining which individual message could be unsolicited junk mail. For instance, SpamAssassin scanned over 1/2 million email messages during the first week of the semester and identified 52% of those as spam. SpamAssassin then marked each message in the subject line as "BULK:" followed by the messages original subject line.

Now that messages are marked as "BULK:", a GroupWise rule can be created to automatically delete these messages or move them into another folder to be viewed later. The instructions for creating a "BULK:" email rule can be found on the NCS website at http://ncs.unt.edu/rules/spam_rule.html.

Learn more about GroupWise now

If you are interested in knowing more about creating rules and becoming more productive with GroupWise, I encourage you to sign up for the next GroupWise class being held on the 21st or the 23rd of this month in the Eagle Student Services Center room 152. To sign up please call Melanie Betterson in Human Resources at x4246 and let her know which day you would like to sign up for. For more information on what will be covered in this class, consult our website at http://ncs.unt.edu/gw/basicgroupwise/description/index.html#basicC2

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* For EagleMail users, see "Protecting Your EagleMail Account from Spam."

Randy Cassingham's "Spam Primmer" can give you lots more information about Spam and ways to combat it (maybe).

Finally, for a little levity, you can sing along with Monty Python and the "Spam Song."

Benchmarks Online

Checkin 4.0: Additional Features

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

The UNT General Access Computer Labs have now been using the Checkin 4.0 application throughout the summer and into the fall. Since its deployment a variety of extra features have been added to the core application for flexibility and convenience. One of the most useful for the UNT student community has been the addition of a website for viewing usage and available resources in each of the labs. This can allow students to make the best choice of a computing facility to use in terms of length of wait and machines available. To get to this "window on the labs", students can go to http://checkinstats.acs.unt.edu or find this page by clicking **Current Lab Occupancy** on the main General Access Computer Labs web page. Students choose the lab they want to check from a pull down menu.

This feature is also useful for other university community members who wish to see lab activity. I personally have it going on one of my office machines all the time so I can monitor the comings and goings of my lab throughout the day.

isb110 Current Population Page

Station Groups

Pentiums

pn1	pn2 00:22:16	pn3 01:35:07	pn 4	pn5 00:12:35	pn6 00:19:15	pn7 00:19:08	pn8 00:03:42	pn9
pn10	pn11 01:02:24	pn12	pn13 00:28:33	pn14 00:40:20	pn15	pn16 01:36:29	pn17	pn18 00:24:48
pn19 00:24:43								

A "student's-eye" view of the ACS/Adaptive Lab on a Monday afternoon.

Macs

mac 1	mac2	mac3	mac 4

Adapt Machines

pn20	pn21 04:32:09

Willis134 Current Population Page

Station Groups

WkStations

PC01 00:12:19	PC02 00:37:23	Pc03 00:21:16	PC04 00:11:53	Pc05 00:25:06	PC06 00:27:22	Pc07 01:50:16	PC08 00:17:30	Pc09 00:05:32
PC10 00:11:46	PC11 00:41:02	PC12 00:27:38	PC13 00:24:14	PC14 00:24:01	PC15 00:00:36	PC16 00:32:52	PC17 00:06:09	PC18 00:14:26
PC19 00:16:20	PC20 00:16:13	PC21 00:07:17	PC22 00:46:21	PC23 00:10:34	PC24 00:40:45	PC25 01:07:48	PC26 00:10:51	PC27 00:40:41
PC28 00:19:15	PC29 00:15:57	PC30 01:56:52	PC31 01:56:42	PC32 00:58:11	PC33 01:56:15	PC34 01:41:27	PC35 00:19:25	PC36 00:08:33
PC37 00:14:39	PCS38 00:35:02	PCS39 00:14:47	PC40					

Wow - this lab looks really busy! Better look elsewhere for a machine today!

Peripheral Groups

There is a "hair-color" coding system on this page as well to help students to understand how traffic is controlled in the lab. Current lab guidelines state that after two hours, a student may be required to log off of a machine if long lines and waiting lists mean that others need a turn. This prevents abuse of lab resources (students spending hours surfing

the net while someone else waits to type a paper) during busy times. Green hair means that the current occupant has just gotten to a machine; the hair turns yellow after one hour; and bright pink when the two-hour limit has been reached. This color-coding system was primarily put into place to help the lab employees easily see when it may be time to bump hoggish patrons off of a machine. However, it is also useful for a lab manager such as myself; if I see lots of pink hair and a long waiting list for my lab machines, I know that it is then time to go gently remind my employees that they should clear out some of the customers so others have a chance to do their work! Additionally, red X's over a machine icon means that the machine is down for repairs.

The "hair" color code and the X's indicate the status of each machine.

Another additional feature of particular importance to lab administrators is the extensive statistic features now available via an easy-to-use web interface. From a table of contents page, a lab administrator can choose from a variety of searches.
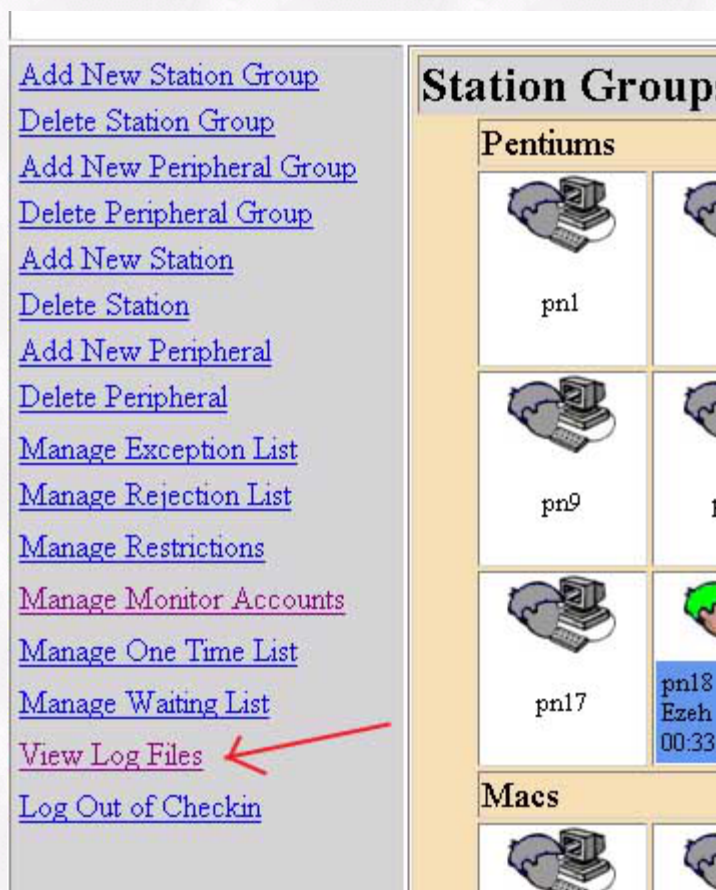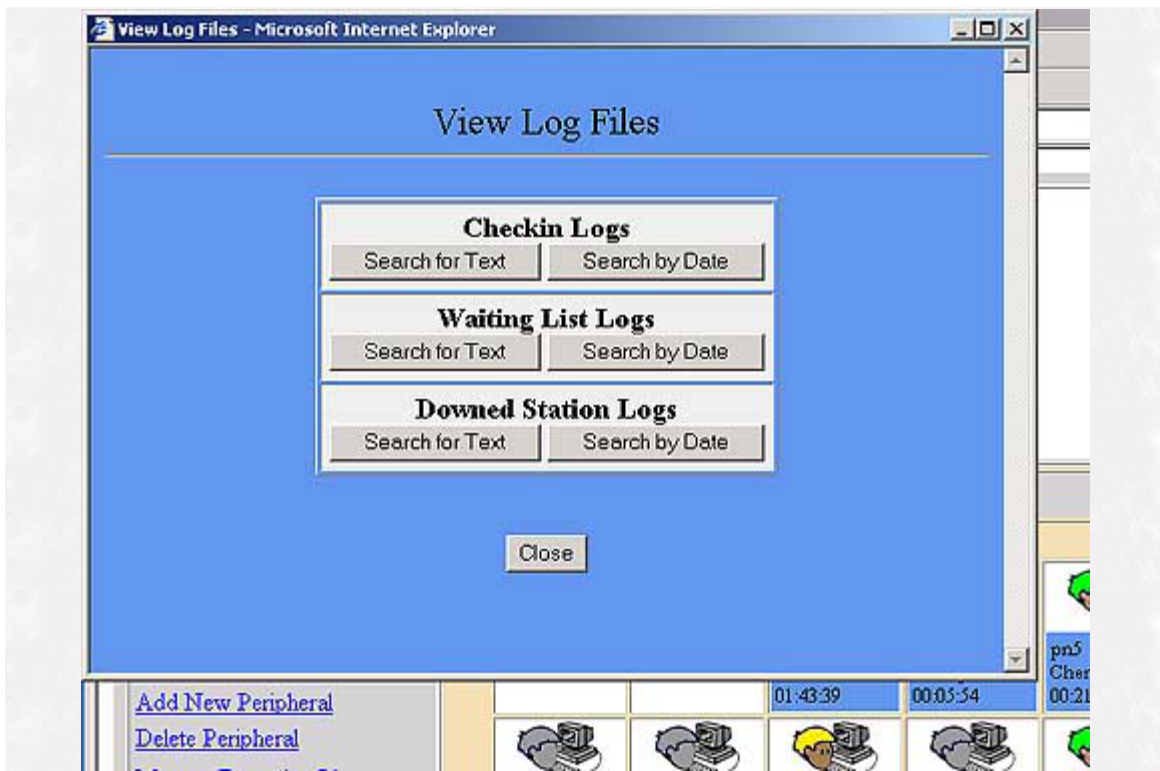
After putting in the proper search criteria the logfiles appear. They can then be saved as a text file by the lab administrator. The text file format is a flexible one that can be used to generate a variety of statistical reports including spreadsheets and graphs.
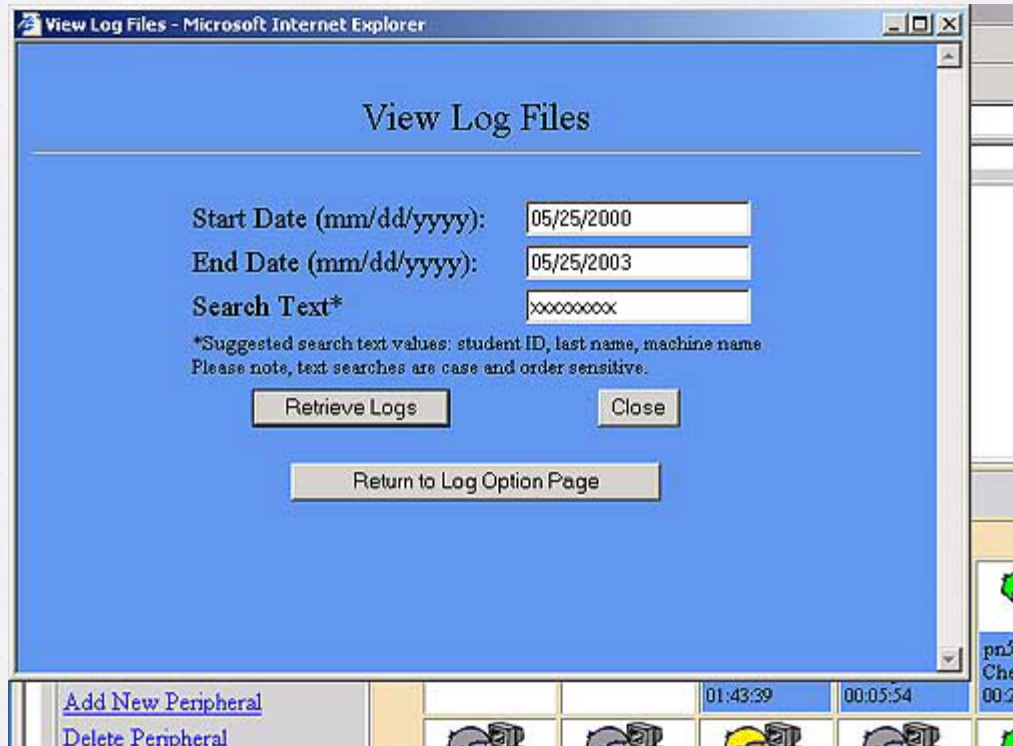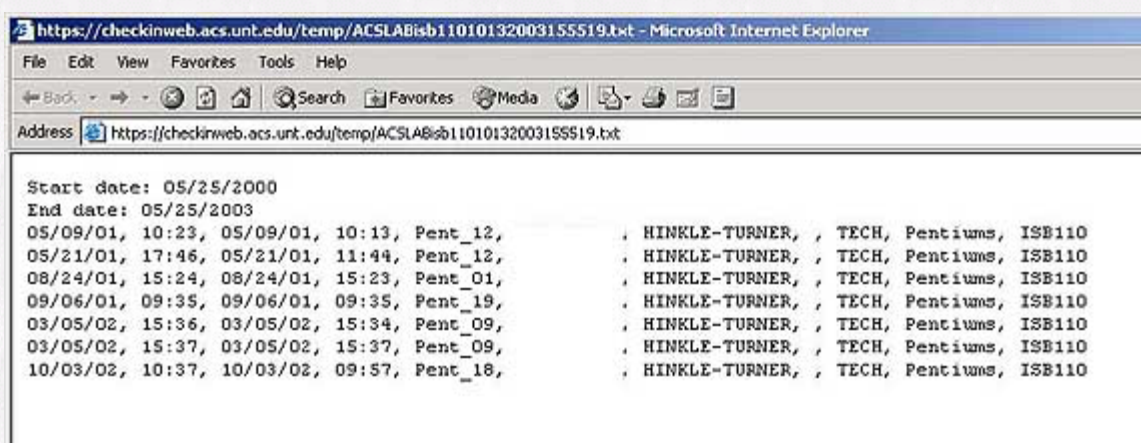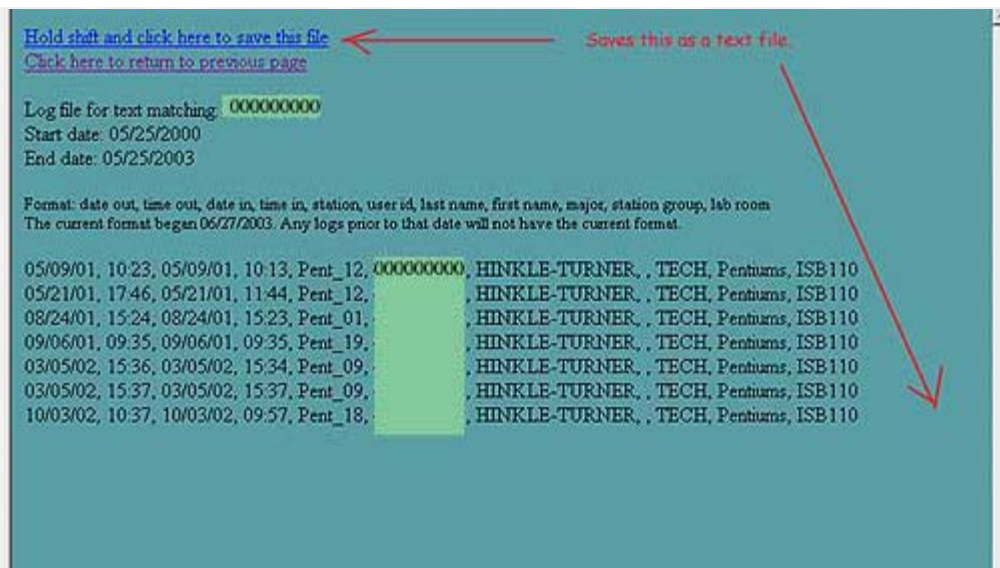
This feature is also useful when tracking a particular student, a problem machine, or for the gathering of waiting list statistics for the determination of the feasibility of lab expansion.

Happily, Checkin 4.0 is now at the stage where we are finishing up this "wish list" of features. I will describe more next month including our almost-completed cool statistics graphing feature! This will be our first outside module "plugin" for the core application. For more information about Checkin 4.0, you can email me at ehinkle@unt.edu.

Benchmarks Online

Account Management System E-mail Preferences Page Enhanced

By Claudia Lynch, *Benchmarks Online* **Editor**

According to Travis Brown, Network Computing Services, the E-mail preferences page of the Account Management System has been modified to better serve those who use that system. After logging-in, you are now able to:

- Specify a preferred E-mail address

- Activate an EagleMail account (for faculty/staff)

- Modify, disable, or set up forwarding for an EagleMail account

- Request an E-mail alias (both students and faculty/staff)

- Modify the destination for existing aliases

- Associate E-mail addresses with their IDManagement account (to add available selections for preferred and alias)

Within the next few weeks they are planning to send E-mail to all users regarding the account they selected as 'preferred,' prompting those to change it where necessary. You don't have to wait for the mail, though, you can visit the Account Management Page now and check out the preferences that are listed for you, changing them if you wish.

Benchmarks Online

Maintaining Your RedHat Linux System with Autorpm

By **Duane Gustavus**, UNIX Research Analyst

Autorpm is a program developed to help you with the maintenance of your RedHat Linux system. The program is written in perl, and the rpm includes a cron script which will execute it each night. The program will connect to one of a pool of sites, and check each installed rpm against the latest available version at the pool site. If the pool contains a newer version of the rpm, the program will download it, and optionally install it, sending email to detail what actions it took. You can find out more from the nice folks who wrote it at autorpm.org.

How do I install it?

The first step is to download and install the rpm for autorpm. You can find it at autorpm.org or most rpm collection sites, or, if you are on the UNT campus network, download it from my server (tbyte.acs.unt.edu) found in the RPMS directory. Once on your system, as root run the command

rpm -Uvh autorpm-3.2.3-2-noarch.rpm

(you may need to use a different set of release numbers). This will install the executable in /usr/sbin/autorpm and make an /etc/autorpm.d directory where the configuration files are saved.

How do I use it?

The rpm install also placed a cron job in the /etc/cron.daily directory which will go out and find both updates to software you currently have installed on the system, and new rpms you might want to install. If you do nothing else, the cron job will go each night and make lists of any new rpms or update rpms you might want to install. Important to note, these updates are not automatically installed on the system; they are just noted and mail sent to the Report address (root by default) telling how many rpms are awaiting installation. To install them, you must run the command autorpm as root to get an interactive prompt. From this prompt, you can enter the ls command to list any rpms waiting to be installed, and install or remove them as you wish ("install updates" will install all the update rpms; "install new" all the new; install openssh all the updated rpms that begin with openssh*, etc).

How do I change the way it works?

While autorpm is functional just as installed, you will probably want to do some configuration, and that means editing the /etc/autorpm.d/autorpm.conf file. Even if you want to leave autorpm as installed, perhaps it's a good idea to change the Report address so your user account is sent email when activity takes place (ie when some potential rpms have been fetched). This is done by changing "root" in the following line from the autorpm.conf file to your e-mail address:

Set_Var("ReportDest", "root");

The default Config_File line in the autorpm.conf file points to the normal configuration for downloading RedHat updates and new RPMS for the current version of RedHat installed on your computer (named redhat-updates.conf). If you want to automate the installation of RPMS rather than do that part interactively, you will need to edit the redhat-updates.conf file. The instructions for doing this are included in comments in that file. You will still receive email, but it will be identifying what rpm updates were made rather than what updates are available. If you automate installation of updates, you might want to make provisions to NOT install new rpms. This can be done by putting "Install(No)" in the "actions (new)" block. How do I configure autorpm for local updates?

There are a selection of ftp pools all over the world which autorpm uses to download rpms. If, however, your system is on the UNT network (which means it has an IP address that begins with 129.120), you can point your system at a local server by adding the following lines to your autorpm.conf file (just preceding the Config_File lines):

# Local definition for FTP server
Set_Var("FTP_Server", "ftp://tbyte.acs.unt.edu");

Then comment out the supplied Config_File line and add a new one:

Look for official Red Hat updates
(won't automatically install anything unless you edit the file)
#Config_File("/etc/autorpm.d/redhat-updates.conf");
Config_File("/etc/autorpm.d/addons/apply-RH-updates");

The FTP server line points to the host providing the service, and the Config_File line names the new script autorpm should run. That script, named apply-RH-updates in this case, must be added to the directory /etc/autorpm.d/addons as in the Config_File line above. Here are the contents of the apply-RH-updates script:

# Check for standard RedHat updates
ftp ("${FTP_Server}/redhat/linux/updates/${RHVersion}/${Lang}/os") {
Report_To("${ReportDest}");

# Don't upgrade kernel packages...
Regex_Ignore("^kernel-");

Recursive(Yes);
Regex_Dir_Accept("${Arch}");

action (updated) {

```
PGP_Require(Yes);
Install(Interactive);
Auto_Follow_Deps(Yes);
}

action (new) {
Install(No);
Report(No);
}
}
```

Notice that the apply-RH-updates script does not automatically install the RPMS (ie Install(Interactive) rather than Install(Auto)). Change the Install line in the "action (updated)" block to be Install(Auto) to automatically install the updated rpms.

More Information?

The man pages for autorpm and autorpm.conf are a good source of more specific information passed over in this brief article. Because autorpm is written in perl, you may read the source code as well to learn more about the program.

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EDUCAUSE Redux

By Claudia Lynch, *Benchmarks Online* Editor

The EDUCAUSE 2003 Annual Conference is coming up, November 4–7 in Anaheim, California. According to the Conference Website, "If you can attend only one conference in 2003, make it the premier IT event in higher education —EDUCAUSE 2003 . . . You'll participate in an outstanding, peer-developed program designed to help you tackle the issues you face each day and prepare you for future challenges."

This year's theme is "Balancing Opportunities, Expectations, and Resources." The program includes pre-conference seminars, track sessions, corporate exhibits, workshops, presentations, and small group meetings.

As their Website says, "The annual conference draws attendees from all professional levels, all sizes and types of institutions, and from across the United States and around the world. You'll leave with an even stronger network of colleagues and friends in the field."

The time has passed for you to submit a presentation proposal, but you can still begin making plans to attend the next EDUCAUSE Southwest Regional Conference.

According to the conference Website, a focal point of the conference will be practical "how to" sessions that will emphasize ways to save time, effort, and money while maintaining important services and without burning out talented staff.

Sessions will follow four key tracks:

- Leadership and Management Skills

- Teaching, Learning, and Support

- Technology and Solutions

- Corporate Presentations

Prior to the sessions, pre-conference seminars will be held on the morning of February 25.

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Today's Cartoon

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"Sometimes you get a brainstorm, sometimes you only get the clouds."

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Benchmarks Online

Network Connection

By Dr. Philip Baczewski, Associate Director of Academic Computing

Internet . . . 3?

If you are reading this, you are familiar with the Internet. You may or may not have heard of Internet 2. Now there's a new network being developed within the U.S. It's not called Internet 3, and it won't immediately have its bandwidth absorbed by Kazaa P2P file sharing traffic, but it may very well spur the same kind of quantum change that the original Internet caused in the last decade.

The new network on the block was little more than a proposal a year ago, but has a bit more substance today. On September 16, National LambdaRail, inc. issued a news release which described the deployment of a national networking infrastructure to support research efforts in the areas of science and engineering. (Included in the list of participants and potential participants is a "Texas universities consortium.")

It's called the National LambdaRail (NLR) after the wavelengths of light (or "lambdas") which are transmitted over a fiber-optic network. What's new about the NLR is that it is a network "from the ground up." The NLR is a network of "dark fiber" -- that is, fiber optic cable which is not currently carrying networking or telecommunications traffic. The NLR can apply whatever technologies are most appropriate for supporting an academic research network.

Like Internet 2, the NLR is an academic-only network. But unlike Internet 2, the NLR will initially connect supercomputing and high-speed networking centers. In this way, it is similar to the NSFNet which lead to the development of the commercial Internet that we know today. NSFNet took the concepts developed on the Department of Defense-funded ArpaNet and built a core infrastructure which could support connection by a multitude of research institutions.

Internet 2

Internet 2 was supposed to spur new developments in networking by creating a high-bandwidth network which was limited to academic institutions. This seemed like a good idea when bandwidth was snapped up by the commercial Internet as soon as it was available. With the great "Internet crash" of the late 1990s, the U.S. finds itself with an overbuilt telecommunications infrastructure making projects like the NLR possible. Internet 2 is just the regular Internet, only faster. The Internet 2 core network sees normally a maximum usage of 30%, with many links running at only 5% utilization. Providing all that bandwidth has not yet yielded a "killer application" which would justify it's existence (if you don't count Kazaa, which helped create its own killer of a sort -- an overly aggressive RIAA). With the ArpaNet, e-mail and ftp were the revolutionary technologies. With NSFNet, it was

the World Wide Web (WWW).

Remember when?

Anybody remember how the World Wide Web was [invented](#)? In 1990, Tim Berners-Lee implemented a design he had begun describing in 1980. The technology was intended to help disseminate scientific research information of the type produced by [CERN](#), the European particle physics laboratory.

The other part of the picture was Mosaic, a program developed at the National Center for Supercomputing Applications at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign [(NCSA)](#). Mosaic, the foundation on which the popular Netscape browser was built, was the first widely available program which could take advantage of the WWW ability to mix text, graphics, and hyperlinks within the same application window. From this spark, the Internet we know today exploded.

Back to the Future

The NLR's emphasis on connecting research institutions seems similar to the NSFNet's initial role of connecting Supercomputing and research centers in the U.S. The NLR may provide a boost to the TeraGrid [initiative](#) which seeks to build and provide a distributed processing network of supercomputer proportions. Such a resource could yield dramatic advances in areas such as weather modeling and biochemistry. Maybe supercomputing won't change the world, but as we've seen from the NSFNet and the U.S. space program, sometimes, it's the supporting technology which has the most long-standing and life-altering affect on society (remember Tang?). If the NLR really does deploy and make available significantly new technologies, the side affects can only be imagined. Maybe in 10 years you'll be able to read this column as soon as I think it onto the net. You never know...

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).

Commuter and Off-Campus Student Services Office (COSSO)

According to their Website, "The Commuter and Off-Campus Student Services Office serves as a liaison between students and on and off-campus services. This office is responsible for the delivery of services and resources to commuter, off-campus, and non-traditional students. Commuter Services works to provide students with connections to the University through services such as off-campus housing assistance, carpooling, and locating alternative transportation. This office coordinates and co-sponsors off-campus housing and transportation related programs such as the Annual Apartment Fair and Pedestrian Safety Day."

Some links available from the COSSO Website are:

- Newsletters
- Off-campus Housing
- Organizations
- Publications
- Nontraditional Student Services
- Programs
- Carpool System: make arrangements online
- E-Trans: On Campus Shuttle system to facilitate transportation around the University Campus and at the new Research Park
- Campus Parking
- Ford Ride Board
- Commuter Lists
- Campus Maps
- Denton Area Maps
- Weather
- Traffic in DFW area
- Information on starting a Dart Vanpool
- Dining Services Commuter Meal Plans
- City of Denton

Benchmarks Online

IRC News

Minutes provided by Sue Ellen Richey, Recording Secretary

IRC Regular and Ex-officio Voting Members: *Judith Adkison, College of Education; Donna Asher, Administrative Affairs; Lou Ann Bradley, Communications Planning Group; John Castledine, Graduate Student Council; Cengiz Capan, College of Business and GALC; Bobby Carter, UNT Health Science Center; Christy Crutsinger, Faculty Senate; Jim Curry, Academic Administration; Chuck Fuller, Finance and Business Affairs; Don Grose, Libraries and University Planning Council; Joneel Harris, EIS Planning Group; Elizabeth Hinkle-Turner, Student Computing Planning Group; Bruce Hunter, College of Arts and Sciences; Max Kazemzadeh, School of Visual Arts; Abraham John, Student Development; Jenny Jopling, Instruction Planning Group; Armin Mikler, Research Planning Group; Kenn Moffitt, Standards and Cooperation Program Group; Ramu Muthiah, School of Community Services; Jon Nelson, College of Music; Robert Nimocks, Director, Information Technology, UNTHSC; John Price, UNT System Center; Kathy Swigger, College of Engineering and Computer Sciences: Philip Turner, School of Library and Information Science and University Planning Council (Chair, IRC); VACANT, Student Government Association; VACANT, Staff Council; VACANT, University Planning Council; VACANT, Chancellor, for Planning;* *IRC Ex-officio Nonvoting Members:* *Joe Adamo, Computing and Information Technology Center /Telecommunications; Jim Curry, Microcomputer Maintenance and Classroom Support Services; Richard Harris, Computing and Information Technology Center and University Planning Council; Coy Hoggard, Computing and Information Technology Center /Administrative; Scott Krejci, GALMAC; Maurice Leatherbury, Computing and Information Technology Center /Academic; Doug Mains, UNT Health Science Center; Patrick Pluscht, Center for Distributed Learning; Sue Ellen Richey, Computing and Information Technology Center (Recording Secretary) .*

September 23, 2003

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT: PHILIP TURNER, Chair, ELIZABETH HINKLE-TURNER, COY HOGGARD (for JONEEL HARRIS), LOU ANN BRADLEY (for DON GROSE), ROBERT NIMOCKS, MELISSA OZUNA (for DONNA ASHER), KENN MOFFITT, WIL CLARK (for JOHN PRICE), RAMU MUTHIAH, JIM CURRY, JENNY JOPLING, JON NELSON, CHRISTY CRUTSINGER, MAX KAZEMZADEH, CHUCK FULLER, ABRAHAM JOHN, BRUCE HUNTER **NON-VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:** RICHARD HARRIS, JOE ADAMO, MAURICE LEATHERBURY, PATRICK PLUSCHT, SUE ELLEN RICHEY (Recording Secretary) **MEMBERS ABSENT:** CENGIZ CAPAN, VIRGINIA WHEELESS, DOUG MAINS, KATHY SWIGGER, ARMIN MIKLER, BOBBY CARTER, JUDITH ADKISON, SCOTT KREJCI **GUESTS:** JENNIFER LAFLEUR

The Chair explained for the benefit of new members that items considered and approved by the IRC are presented to the President's Staff at a monthly meeting, where they are considered for approval. The most recent meeting of the President's Staff was Friday, September 19, at which Dr. Turner reported on distributed learning enrollment. The Chair passed around graphs depicting the growth of the distributed learning program, noting that at the present time, 4,200 students are totally on-line. There are 1,761 graduate students totally enrolled on-line, and 2,482 taking on-line classes which means that 30% of graduate enrollment is online. 2,409 undergraduate students are totally online and 4,057 undergraduates are taking at least one on-line class. That is about 1000 above where the distributed learning program was at this time last year.

Distributed Computing Support Management Team

Maurice Leatherbury reported for the Distributed Computing Support Management Team that at recent meetings they have dealt with establishing a standardized training program for new computer support specialists, which a subcommittee is developing. Another subcommittee has been formed to work on patch management to deal with the numerous worms and viruses coming out. In addition, Robert Jones spoke to their group about the implications of the EIS project on desktop machines in end-user departments. Joe Adamo also briefed the group on the wireless network which is now available in five buildings on campus: ISB, Union, ESSC, Gateway Center, and as of this week GAB.

Electronic Records Compliance

Paul Dworak spoke to the Council concerning electronic records compliance and distributed an outline of what is needed in this regard. Dworak indicated that an Email retention policy, along with standards for electronic records retention need to be developed, as well as financial record security standards. He asked that the appropriate sub-committee of the IRC be charged with the study and development of policies and standards regarding electronic records compliance. The Standards and Policy Planning Group was so charged.

Instruction Planning Group

Jenny Jopling reported for the Instruction Planning Group that they have not met since they presently do not have a charge. In the past they have been involved in equipping classrooms with technology for classroom instruction.

Communications Planning Group

Lou Ann Bradley reported for the Communications Planning Group that the group was presenting to the IRC a revised Network Connections Policy for discussion and approval. Since there are new members who have not previously seen this policy, and since the IRC has not met since July, the policy will be voted on at the October meeting.

EIS Planning Group

Coy Hoggard reported for the EIS Planning Group that the central back-office of the Purchasing module went live in the summer and still is running live. The roll-out to end-users is scheduled for late December or January. The General Ledger and Accounts Payable portions are still live although they are dealing with some problematic issues with that portion of the system, namely the check writing process, and sending USAS transactions to the State Comptroller's office.

Coy announced that the Admissions system is set to go live September 29th, as well as the Health Science Center's Contributor Relations module. UNT's Contributor Relations portion of the system has been moved to a time around Thanksgiving or early December. Other than that, Coy stated that everything else is on schedule. In answer to a question as to when Registration will go live, Coy explained that it is planned for Spring 2004.

Jon Nelson expressed concern about the lack of financial information available to departments during this interim where the OBIS system is no longer available and the EIS financial system is not yet available to departmental users. He stated that a report sent out once a month is not sufficient for departmental accounting.

Standards and Policy Planning Group

Kenn Moffitt reported for the Standards and Policy Planning Group that he was presenting the Group E-mail Guidelines for discussion, and distributed copies of the document. There was some discussion about the Guidelines and suggestions were made for revisions.   Members can send additional comments to Kenn before the October meeting when there will be a vote on this.

Student Computing Planning Group

Elizabeth Hinkle-Turner reported for the Student Computing Planning Group that they have all of the technology in place to put the Student Computing Survey on line.   They hope to have the survey on line by mid-semester.

Distance Learning Team

Patrick Pluscht reported for the Distance Learning Team that a new tool for accurately implementing the distributed learning funding model's 50-mile rule was distributed to the departments who are participating in that model. Students enrolled in electronically-delivered courses who are claimed for distributed learning funding model revenue by a department must meet the following two criteria: 1. The student must <u>NOT</u> be simultaneously enrolled in any courses which meet on the UNT Denton campus for a majority of the course. 2. The student's primary residence must be located further than 50 miles from the UNT Denton campus as determined by the student's zip code. This is not driving distance from UNT-Denton, but rather based on a circle with a radius of 50 miles. Patrick extended his thanks to fellow IRC member Bruce Hunter who used Geographic Information System tools to identify a legitimate set of zip codes which were within 50 miles of campus. Bruce also created graphical representations of the resulting area determined to meet the 50-mile rule criteria.

The CDL has been working on a project to develop a course information database for distance education courses that will enable faculty to put course information on the web for later retrieval by students. There will be a portal called UNT Campus where students can browse for courses that are of interest to them. Their goal is to have at least 30% of the courses on the site before it is launched on October 15th with 90% on the site by mid-December. Patrick also reported that WebCT has had software and hardware upgrades completed and the new version of WebCT, called Vista, has been installed though it isn't yet in production. Training for the new version will be available in Spring of 2004 with the switch-over beginning during the Summer of 2004 and continuing through the Fall of 2004. The goal is to have all courses migrated to Vista by Spring 2005. There is a migration tool that is being evaluated for faculty so that courses won't have to be built from scratch on the new version.

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: *Using Report in SPSS 11.5, Part 1 of 2* *Part 2 will be published next month. -- Ed.*

Out With the Old, In With the New…Format!: UNT's New Faculty Evaluation Reports

By Patrick McLeod, Research and Statistical Support Services Consultant

After 20-plus years of providing faculty from across the UNT community with feedback on student evaluations, the program that calculated faculty evaluations was retired at the beginning of this semester with the decommissioning of the UNT's academic mainframe.

Academic Computing Services' Data Entry offices and Research and Statistical Support offices have combined to produce a new processing platform for the UNT community's faculty evaluations. From now on, faculty evaluations will be processed on desktop computers using customizable syntax from the SPSS statistical package.

As with any change, there are benefits and drawbacks to this necessary evolution. On the benefits side, the most compelling benefit in this transition is that departments can now customize their evaluations to any level or measurement and modeling that SPSS syntax can handle. Departments can remain with the standard reporting of means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages, or they can utilize their own descriptive reporting and/or in-house models.

On the drawbacks side, the major drawback is that after 20-plus years of seeing a consistently formatted report semester by semester, the format of the faculty evaluations will change. SPSS simply cannot accurately replicate the format of the now-retired mainframe output.

While this will be a rude shock to some, there is nothing to fear! The content of your reports will not change, unless you elect to develop a different reporting system, and this brief article will hopefully provide the UNT community with some advanced notice on how to read the output from the new faculty

evaluation reports.

Going Vertical

In football, those who are devotees of a pass-intensive offense will often refer to such a strategy as "going vertical." The passing game was not enthusiastically embraced in the early days of football. It took some getting used to, it took some time for players, coaches, and fans to see the beauty and utility in incorporating the forward pass into offenses as regular plays versus the occasional gimmick. Well, just as the forward pass revolutionized the game of football as we know it in the United States after some initial qualms, our new faculty evaluations will hopefully better meet the needs of the UNT community through the same change in format.

The most obvious difference in the new faculty evaluations and the older evaluations is in the presentation. The new evaluations are printed on regular 8.5x11 paper on a standard laser printer. Also changed is the layout of the report. Instead of a landscape-printed rectangle of results, SPSS prints question summaries in a single table (with means and standard deviations for questions) and then prints individual question summaries in single tables (with frequency and percent scores.) Below are two examples:

First, we have the first part of a sample question summary table:

Statistics(a)

		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
N	Valid	14	14	13	14	14	13	14	14	13	14
	Missing	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
Mean		4.79	4.79	4.77	4.86	4.57	4.85	4.64	4.79	4.69	4.79
Std. Deviation		.579	.579	.599	.535	.756	.376	.745	.579	.630	.579

a INST = , SECTION =

This table reports question means, standard deviations, and the number of valid versus missing responses per question. These were previously found on the left-hand side of the older faculty evaluation output.

Second, we have a sample specific question table:

Q1(a)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	3	1	7.1	7.1	7.1
	4	1	7.1	7.1	14.3
	5	12	85.7	85.7	100.0
	Total	14	100.0	100.0	

a INST = , SECTION =

In this table, we see both the frequency and percent scores by valid response category for question 1(a). Not only does this SPSS format report the information found in the older tables but also reports valid percents (useful if you have a lot of missing data) and cumulative percents, a bit of information that can serve as a primitive trend or cluster indicator.

Conclusion

In conclusion, all of us in Academic Computing Services hope that you will find the new faculty evaluations to be both a robust replacement for the old faculty evaluations and a good foundation to begin any customization your department might desire on this new platform.

Benchmarks Online

WWW@UNT.EDU

It Worked! -or- How we transitioned to new WebCT server hardware and kept 18,000+ students happy.

By Austin Laird, Distance Learning Administrator, Central Web Support

Online learning here at the University of North Texas has grown by leaps and bounds over the past several years. Our primary and centralized means of delivering course content online is via WebCT. This semester (Fall 2003) we have over 955 UNT course sections enrolled in over 473 WebCT courses. Our total unique student enrollment is over 18,300 for a total number of seats in WebCT courses just under 30,000. What is more exciting is that 4,200 students are strictly distance education students. That means that nearly 7% of the student population of the University of North Texas doesn't necessarily ever step foot on the actual campus. For these students, the University of North Texas is found online and in WebCT.

Why did we move to a new machine?

These numbers show that WebCT is a mission critical application here at the University of North Texas. As the Distributed Learning Administrator, I am charged with keeping WebCT available 24 X 7 for our student and faculty. Our WebCT users are accustomed to this high level of availability and expect that anytime they go to webct.unt.edu they'll find a functioning and responsive application. Recently, however, we experienced several unexpected downtimes due to server hardware failure. We also recently experienced slower than normal performance from our WebCT server.

Unplanned downtime and slow server response are unacceptable in our WebCT environment and thus we quickly sought a path to moving to new WebCT hardware to remedy these problems.

How did we make the transition?

We had been planning to move to new WebCT hardware during the next semester break and already had this hardware in place. We decided to go ahead and move to this new hardware during the semester because we could not risk more unexpected downtime. Sun Microsystems had replaced every part of our old WebCT server, but we were still having problems with hardware failures. On Tuesday, September 16th we made the transition. This of course is all easier said than done so what follows is the path we took to a successful

migration.

System Specification

Hardware:

Old: Sun UltraSparc II E450 with dual 400 MHz processors, 1gig of RAM, 120gig mirrored internal hard drives

New: Sun Fire UltraSparc III 280R with dual 1 GHz processors, 4gig of RAM, 170gig fibre attached SAN (expandable as we need it).

Software:

Old: Solaris 8, Sun Solstice Disksuite Volume Management software, UFS, WebCT 3.8

New: Solaris 8, Veritas Volume Manager, Veritas File System, WebCT 3.8

We chose to move to Veritas File System because it is better at handling our millions of small files than UFS. We have Veritas Volume Manager in place to build the large volume from our drives that are presented to the machine from the SAN.

Data:

Approximately 120 gigabytes of data, made up of 8.5+ million files in the WebCT file system structure!

Method :

We were challenged with finding a way to move these 8.5+ million files from the old server to the new one without losing changes to them that the students and faculty were making. We did not have the option to take the machine offline long enough to directly copy all the data from one machine to the other; WebCT would have been down for nearly 36 hours had we chosen this route. We also could not simply copy the files while the system was live because of the constant changes being made to files and because that would have negatively impacted our IO. After much investigation and testing, we decided on the following method:

1. We took the latest full system tape backup of the old WebCT system and restored it to the new WebCT system. This process brought our new system up to date as of September 7th. This process was also our first indication of the performance improvement that the new hardware and the new file system would give us: it took 7 hours to restore the 120+ gig 8+ million files, whereas on the old system it would have taken approximately 36 hours!

2. Once this process was completed, and we had worked out some bugs in the Veritas File System settings, we began synchronizing the two systems with rsync. Rsync is an open source tool that provides incremental file transfer by comparing the source system (in this case the old WebCT machine) to the new system and determining what files have changed and thus what files need to be copied from the old machine to the new one.

Initially, beginning on September 12th, we ran rsync across the entire file system. This was a very processor intensive and time consuming process (30+ hours), but it ensured the system was up to date as of at least the 12th.

3. Next, we began running rsync only on the parts of the WebCT file system that we knew had been changed since September 12th. We determined what to rsync based on what courses had been accessed (as reflected in the Apache web server logs of WebCT). We ran an rsync on Monday, September 15th overnight to catch up all changes that had been made to the system since the 12th.

4. Throughout the day Tuesday, we ran several incremental rsyncs to maintain consistency between the two machines.

5. Our last rsync before we brought down the WebCT server was at approximately 9:00PM. We took down the WebCT application at 11:30 so that users were no longer able to login to the system and make changes. With the system down, we could take information from the latest Apache logs (from 9:00PM to 11:30PM) and rsync just those courses that had been accessed during that 2 ½ hour block, thus minimizing our downtime. As it turns out, over 300 courses had been accessed by 1000s of users during that 2 ½ hour timeframe! We began an rsync of these 300+ courses that lasted until about 3:00AM.

6. After we had completed this final rsync to ensure all the most recent updates and changes were copied to the new system, we had to reinstall the WebCT application. This was necessary to ensure that all of the paths that are hard-coded in WebCT scripts were set properly (we had changed the mount point of the WebCT application). This process took approximately 45 minutes. We also re-configured the new machine to reflect the same IP address and hostname as the old machine.

7. Once the re-install of the WebCT software was complete, we were able to begin comparing the two installations. We checked key parts of key courses that we knew were accessed frequently and compared them to make sure they were identical. We also tested all the pieces of WebCT to make sure they were working. FrontPage access to the server was not completely functional at this point, but it is not necessary for the functioning of WebCT. We fixed that piece throughout the days following the move to the new server.

8. At approximately 6:30AM, Tuesday September 17th we gave everyone access again to WebCT, on the new system

Results

Our method for transferring and synchronizing files was very successful. We have had literally only one or two problems that were attributable to this transition. In those cases, we were able to go back to the old server and pull the needed information that did not properly copy from one machine to the other. We've found that our server performance is vastly improved. The improvement is a combination of the faster Veritas file system, and the improved hardware. Transactions that might have taken minutes to complete on the old

server (user queries for instance) now take a few seconds. As one user told us, "the new server is sooooooooooooooooooooooo much faster!!" Most importantly to us, we now have a reliable WebCT server again.

Benchmarks Online

Short Courses

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

Fall Short Courses are still available. Please consult the [Short Courses](#) page to see the to see the course schedules and to register for the classes of your choice.

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](#). As stated on the site, The GroupWise 6 course has been divided into 3 classes, which are spread out through the semester. **All classes are held in the Eagle Student Services Center, Room 152 (Training Lab) from 10 a.m. - Noon.** The remaining class schedules are as follows:

- **Basic GroupWise 6 - Class 2** (Configuring GroupWise) - October 21 or 23. Download the manual: [Basic GroupWise 6, Vol. 2](#)

- **Intermediate GroupWise 6 - Class 3** (Productivity with GroupWise) - November 18 or 20. Download the manual: [Basic GroupWise 6, Vol. 3.](#)

You can register online by [clicking here](#) or by calling Human Resources at 565-4246.

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

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. Of particular interest are courses available via SkillSoft/SmartForce. See http://www.unt.edu/smartforce/ for more information.

Benchmarks Online

Staff Activities

Transitions

New Employees:

- **Ryan McFarland,** ACS General Access Lab monitor (part-time)

- **Selva Ganesan,** ACS General Access Lab monitor (part-time).

- **Sree Palvancha,** ACS General Access Lab monitor (part-time).

- **Connie Burns**, I/O Operator, Production Services Team, Enterprise System Technical Services (part-time).

- **Mike Harrison**, I/O Operator, Production Services Team, Enterprise System Technical Services (part-time).

- **Sara Pinckard**, Computer Support Representative, Computer Support/Helpdesk, Academic Computing Services (part-time).

- **Christopher Titus**, Report Distribution Assistant, Production Services Team, Enterprise System Technical Services, (part-time).

- **Matt Duncan**, UNIX System Administrator.

No longer working in the Computing and Information Technology Center:

- **Binit Gupta,** ACS General Access Lab monitor (part-time).

- **Cliff Cozzolino**, UNIX System Administrator.

- **Rachel Keith**, Computer Support Representative, Computer Support/Helpdesk, Academic Computing Services (part-time).

Awards, Recognition, Publications

Chris Cofer, UNIX System Administrator, was recognized as an "Outstanding

staff" award recipient at the Staff Convocation, September 29.

Congratulations to **Shane Jester,** UNT Web Administrator, on the birth of his son Noah Cortez Jester, October 1.

Richard Harris, Associate Vice President for Computing and Communications Services, talked about the cooperative relationship between Denton and its two universities, UNT and Texas Woman's University, in the Sept. 21 Denton Record-Chronicle (reported in the October 3, 2003 issue of *Inhouse@unt*).

The following people were recognized for their service to UNT in the October 17, 2003 issue of *InHouse@unt*:

- **Maurice Leatherbury**, Executive Director of Information Technology and Academic Computing, 10 years of service.

- **Austin Laird**, Distance Learning Administrator, Central Web Support, 5 years of service.

- **Sharon McLaughlin**, Telecommunications Administrative Assistant, 5 years of service.

- **Steve Voncelka**, Computer Operations Manager, 5 years of service.

The following people were recognized as Soaring Eagles in the October 2003 issue of the *Human Resources Newsletter*: They will receive their awards at the President's Staff Lunch on October 21.

- **Dan Freise**, , UNIX System Administrator, was praised for his patience and help in aiding Network Computing Services' search for solutions to LDAP connectivity issues.

- **Saeid Parivash**, Programmer Analyst on the Voice and Web Strategic Applications team, was recognized for the long hours he worked on an important project that was unfamiliar to him.

- **Dennis Scroggins**, Program/Project Specialist, EIS Project, spent several days working on major computer issues between UNT and the Health Science Center.

- **Mike Williams**, Network Computing Services, Desktop Support, Antivirus Coordinator, Symantec Ghost Support, was recognized for the wonderful job he does keeping everything current with the University's virus scanning software

- **CITC Help Desk staff** was given a group award for going above and beyond to solve computer problems for a fellow staff member.

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 Patrick McLeod and is titled "Out With the Old, In With the New…Format!: UNT's New Faculty Evaluation Reports."**

- **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 "Internet . . . 3?" Dr. Baczewski gives you the lowdown on the continued development of the Internet.

- **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 "Commuter and Off-Campus Student Services Office."**

- **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 "It Worked! -or- How we transitioned to new WebCT server hardware and kept 18,000+ students happy."**

- **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 GroupWise courses and find out about the Fall Short Course offerings.**

- **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 September IRC minutes and view the current IRC membership list.

- **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.