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## Benchmarks - November, 2013

### Campus Computing News



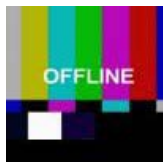
#### EagleConnect and Talon Upgraded, Microsoft Goodies Available for Faculty and Staff

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

Lots of IT-related work has been accomplished since the last issue of *Benchmarks Online* was published. The *EagleConnect Wave 15* upgrade was completed; UNT's high performance computing (HPC) system, known as Talon, has been replaced with *Talon 2.0*, an advanced system that will accommodate a continually growing base of computational research; and the UNT System site license for Microsoft products was renewed.

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### Blackboard Vista Archive Server Goes Offline in December 2013



By [Jane Himmel](#), Associate Director, CLEAR

Faculty and staff have until December 2, 2013 to make requests to have content downloaded or courses migrated from Blackboard (formerly WebCT) Vista. Vista was last used for course delivery at UNT during the Fall 2012 semester and has been out of production since December 2012.

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### High Performance Computing: Talon 2.0



By [Dr. Philip Baczewski](#), Senior Director of Academic Computing and User Services and Deputy Chief Information Officer for University Information Technology and [Dr. Scott Yockel](#), HPC Services Manager

The University of North Texas' high performance computing (HPC) system, known as Talon, has been replaced with Talon 2.0, an advanced system that will accommodate a continually growing base of computational research. The acquisition of this new system represents a significant service upgrade for those doing computationally-based research at UNT.

## By the Numbers

### Down the Corridor of Years

1998

The [April, 1998 issue](#) of *Benchmarks Online* notes these milestones:

- *Desktop Application Software Guidelines* for the campus were approved by the Information Resources Council.
- The Microcomputer Maintenance Shop started selling and supporting two models of Dell laptop computers.
- Academic Computing purchased an upgraded version of a Web-based testing package called *QuestionMark Perception*. It "... does automatic grading of tests (but not, unfortunately, of essay question answers!) randomized selection of questions from test banks at the time of testing, and has extensive reporting capabilities."
- The Interactive Learning Team from Academic Computing put on a 16-session Distributed Learning Curriculum for Faculty from January 27<sup>th</sup> through May 12<sup>th</sup>. The purpose of the course was to introduce faculty to the possibilities of distributing their courses on the Web and via two-way videoconferencing.
- A "Computer Advantage" program was established to train staff members across the campus "... so they can offer computing

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## [Microsoft Home Use and E-Learning Available to Faculty and Staff](#)



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

The Microsoft Home Use program has been available to UNT faculty and staff members for a number of years, as has Microsoft E-Learning. This is due to the fact that the UNT System has a site license for Microsoft products. Sometimes they are temporarily unavailable, however, when the site license is in the process of being renewed. Following is an announcement that was sent out to the UNT System on November 11, 2013 by Michael DiPaolo, Associate Vice Chancellor and Chief Information Officer.

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## [Thanksgiving Break Hours](#)



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

Thanksgiving and all the good things normally associated with it is almost here. This year Thanksgiving and Hanukkah overlap, giving rise to the term *Thanksgivukkah*. This happened before, back on November 29, 1888, but it won't happen again for another [79,043 years!](#)

[Read more](#)    

## [EDUCAUSE: Looking Back at SPRINT 2013](#)



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

The EDUCAUSE SPRINT 2013 event lives on via a 3-Day Sprint Summary.

[Read more](#)    

## [Today's Cartoon](#)

Click on the link above for an information age laugh.



short courses and have already offered several courses such as Microsoft Word, Excel, and GroupWise 5.2. They will be offering an expanded curriculum of courses in the future, including Microsoft Access classes in the Summer."

- The Registrar's office and Academic Computing cooperated to establish and equip a new computer training room in the Eagle Student Services Center (room 152.) "The new facility has 23 student workstations and will be used for SIMS training, etc. as well as for the short courses that Academic Computing and the Computer Advantage program offer."



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Microsoft products was renewed.

Details about each of these milestones can be found elsewhere in this issue of *Benchmarks Online*:

- The *EagleConnect Wave 15 Upgrade* is the topic of this month's [Helpdesk FYI](#) article.
- The HPC Talon upgrade is discussed [here](#).
- The UNT System's renewal of the Microsoft product site license makes it possible for faculty and staff to have access to the Microsoft Home Use program and Microsoft E-Learning. Read all about it [here](#).

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## Blackboard Vista Archive Server Goes Offline in December 2013

By [Jane Himmel](#), Associate Director, CLEAR

Faculty and staff have until December 2, 2013 to make requests to have content downloaded or courses migrated from Blackboard (formerly WebCT) Vista. Vista was last used for course delivery at UNT during the Fall 2012 semester and has been out of production since December 2012.

The Vista server was kept running as an archive for the past year in order to meet requirements for records retention, to enable students to finish incomplete course work, and to provide faculty with a full year to retrieve course material they might still need. At the end of December 2013 the license for keeping this server running expires, and IT Shared Services will bring down the Vista server.

To make a final request to have course content migrated from the Vista server to Blackboard Learn, faculty and staff should complete a request as soon as possible, but no later than December 2, 2013, by completing this form: <http://bbsupport.unt.edu/content/learn-migration-request>.

Please email the CLEAR Faculty Helpdesk at [clearhelp@unt.edu](mailto:clearhelp@unt.edu) if you have any questions.

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## High Performance Computing: Talon 2.0

By [Dr. Philip Baczewski](#), Senior Director of Academic Computing and User Services and Deputy Chief Information Officer for University Information Technology and [Dr. Scott Yockel](#), HPC Services Manager

The University of North Texas' high performance computing (HPC) system, known as Talon, has been replaced with Talon 2.0, an advanced system that will accommodate a continually growing base of computational research. The acquisition of this new system represents a significant service upgrade for those doing computationally-based research at UNT.

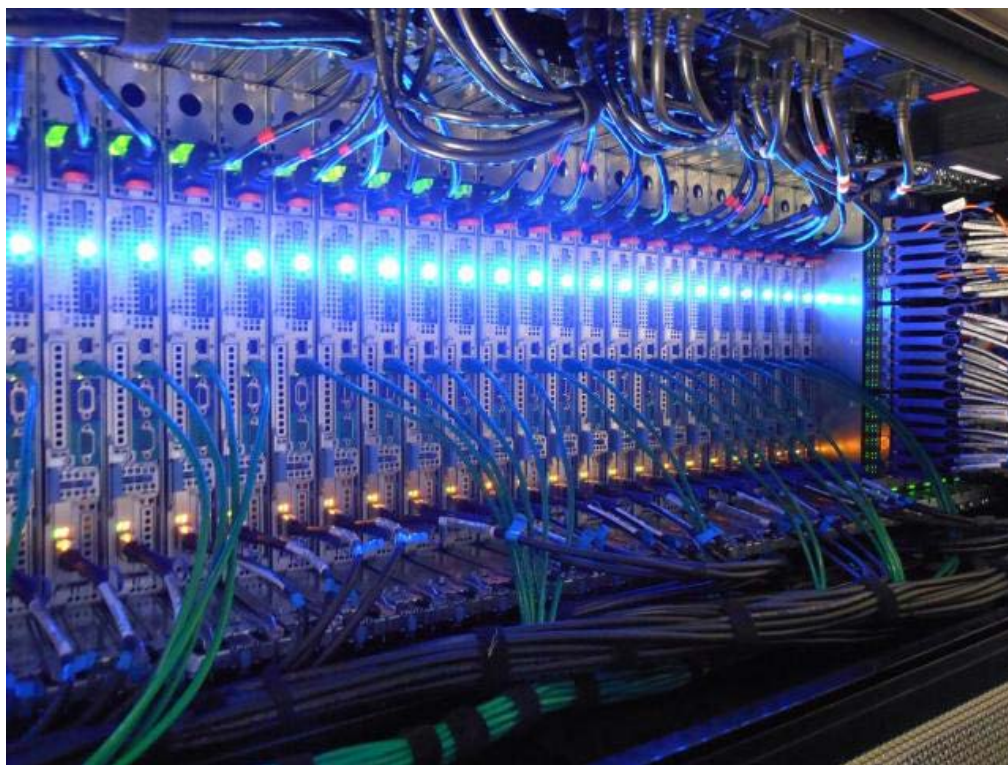
UNT first invested in the Talon HPC system in 2009. Since the 2009 installation, the number of researchers using the system for various projects has grown by hundreds. The number of principal investigators utilizing HPC Services has grown five-fold to 55, with over 350 users in those PI groups. The number of departments has expanded from 4 to 14, across 5 colleges. Users conduct research in biology, chemistry, mathematics, physics, materials science, computer science, electrical engineering and other subjects. The Total number of researchers could easily grow to 500 users by fiscal year 2016.

"The upgrade gives UNT researchers plenty of room to grow," said Scott Yockel, manager of UNT's High Performance Computing Services. "Our current Talon system was at full capacity. The new system is much larger and will support a larger class of research because it has capacity to solve larger computational problems."

### Increased processing power

The new system is more than five times faster in terms of processing power and has more than 10 times the amount of high throughput storage space for research data collections. Talon 2.0 is only a 42% increase in equipment cost, but provides:

- 5 times the processing power with 4096 computing cores in 250 Dell R420 series of servers;
- 10 times the high-performance storage at 1.5PB with Dell-Terascale's HSS4.5 Storage Appliance;
- 3 times the interconnect speed at 56Gb/s with Mellanox FDR InfiniBand;
- Twice the available memory, with up to 512GB in a single server.



Back (rotated view) of the Talon GPU rack

## Heterogeneous design

The heterogeneous design of the HPC system, featuring 4 distinct type of compute servers that can handle specialized workloads or function as part of a large processor group, ensures that the system can support the varied computational problems pursued by UNT researchers and will enable the system to be adapted to new research areas that may be pursued at UNT. The four node types include:

- 160 Parallel nodes (32G RAM, 16 cores each) – useful for computations that use multiple nodes (servers) to perform one set of calculations, such as materials science applications.
- 64 Large-memory nodes (64G RAM, 16 cores each) – useful for serial (one dedicated server) computations that require a large memory space, but also available for parallel processing, such as computational chemistry applications.
- 8 Extra-large memory nodes (512G RAM, 32 cores each) – useful for serial calculations that are the most memory intensive, such as computational chemistry modeling of large molecular systems.
- 16 GP-GPU nodes (64G RAM, 8 cores each, 1024 CPU cores each) – onboard NVidia co-processor cards provide access to thousands of additional processor cores in a serial or parallel processing model. These nodes can be applied to some existing computational problems, but could also be used for tasks like rendering complex visual output.



## Helping to meet research goals

This new system aims at addressing sophisticated problems requiring massive parallelization, large memory arrays, and/or a large volume of high-performance storage that are crucial to the research goals of 55 research groups at UNT. With the acquisition of Talon 2, the University has made a commitment of ongoing annual funding to be able to replace aging equipment on a regular multiyear cycle.

**Above: Front View of the Talon 2 Aisle**

For more information about Talon 2.0, visit: <http://hpc.unt.edu/> or contact Dr. Scott Yockel ([scott.yockel@unt.edu](mailto:scott.yockel@unt.edu).)

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## Network Connection

By [Dr. Philip Baczewski](#), Senior Director of Academic Computing and User Services and Deputy Chief Information Officer for University Information Technology

### A Win for Fair Use (Sort of)

Virtual cheers resounded recently when Google apparently prevailed (appeal pending) in a lawsuit brought by an association of authors who claimed that Google was infringing on their copyright rights by scanning library books and making search results from those books available on the Internet. This seems now like Internet ancient history, since Google began this project in 2004 and the [litigation](#) stems from 2005 or earlier. Even more surprising, the favorable decision for Google was substantially based upon the fair use provisions of U.S. copyright law.

#### Fair Use?

Fair use has seemed to be taking a [beating](#) in the new world of digital media. The [Digital Millennium Copyright Act](#) (DCMA) initially passed in 1998, strengthened media industry's control over digitally-encoded content and implemented provisions against circumventing copy-prevention measures put in place by content distributors. In 2012, Google settled a lawsuit over its book scanning with five publishing companies and [gave up](#) its argument in that case that such scanning was allowed as fair use of the copyrighted books. It was a fit of irony, then, that saw the recent decision in favor of Google be based upon the fair use provision.

Section 107 of the copyright law [outlines](#) when use of a work by someone other than the copyright holder may be allowed for activities like scholarship, teaching, or research. Whether such use is fair or not depends upon the use case (commercial or non-profit), the nature of the copyrighted work, the amount of the work used, and the effect of that use upon the potential market value of the work. It would generally be fair use to quote a portion of a work in a scholarly article for the purposes of research and education, but it would not be fair to reproduce a whole work which ordinarily would only be available for a fee.

The judge in the recent Google [case](#) noted that Google's project would make it easier for teachers and researchers to find books but still preserve author's rights. Google's search service would also likely boost book sales rather than reduce them. Therefore, Google's scanning and providing search results and small amounts of text from those scanned books was ruled to constitute fair use and the lawsuit was dismissed.

So, it would seem that creating and maintaining a digital copy of a physical work may be allowed under fair use, but a [ruling](#) last Spring would deny this to be true in the case of a digital work. Some may [recall](#) the story of ReDigi, a company that seemed to have devised a way to allow the resale of iTunes music. In a very interesting [decision](#) in a lawsuit between Capital Records and ReDigi, the judge ruled that the fair use and first sale provisions of copyright law specifically did not allow the resale activity that ReDigi was supporting.

The logic in that decision is roughly that the resale was not fair use because it was not transformative in nature (i.e. did not add value as a scholarly work or news report would) and was clearly to the commercial advantage of ReDigi and the seller of the music. Furthermore, the right of [first sale](#) was said to apply to a physical instantiation of a work ("phonorecord"), but the digital representation remains under the control of the copyright holder. Any digital transfer was seen to be unavoidably a copy of the original work. In other words, you can't resell your iTunes tracks, but you could potentially sell your iPod full of tracks if no additional copies of the music files were made and didn't exist elsewhere (such as on your computer.) By reselling a copy of the digital file, the copyright holder's reproduction rights for the work were ruled to have been infringed upon. That's bad news for ReDigi and its potential customers.

#### What is fair use, what is owned?

While the Google decision is seen as commendable by [some](#), it would seem that there's still work to do to sort out what is fair use and what is owned in this age of digital media. Google's fair use seems to arise from the fact that physical copies of the books they scanned would still be available for purchase or loan. However, [thought experiment] what if all physical copies of those scanned books were destroyed? Would Google be compelled to delete all scanned copies? Would it benefit society to lose the only extant copies of works just because they were digital but the rights were not assigned to Google? It would seem that there is no right to ownership of copies of digital works. In such a case, how does one establish a library where others can borrow digital copies of books or music? Do you just have to hope that digital copies survive to live in the [public domain](#) (assuming that copyright expiration doesn't get extended to infinity)? Many questions remain.

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## Link of the Month

### EagleConnect Wave 15 Upgrade

Watch an overview of the new EagleConnect Wave 15 features:



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kL5mhJ34NW4&feature=youtu.be>

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## Helpdesk FYI

By [Jonathan "Mac" Edwards](#), UIT Helpdesk Manager

*This is the last **Helpdesk FYI** article we will be publishing from Mac as the UIT Helpdesk Manager. He has taken a position with the UNT System ITSS department. We wish him well and look forward to seeing him on campus from time to time. -- Ed.*

### EagleConnect Wave 15 Upgrade completed

In Fall 2013, EagleConnect email accounts were upgraded to Microsoft Office 365 Wave 15. SkyDrive Pro and Office Web Apps were applied to EagleConnect accounts on November 19, 2013.

- [Watch a video overview of the exciting new features available in Office 365 Wave 15](#)
- Visit our Wave 15 page at <https://eagleconnect.unt.edu/upgrade>.

### What new features are included?

- EagleConnect email accounts now feature Microsoft's Metro User interface. This means EagleConnect will have a more intuitive layout with a modern look and feel, as well as several new features that will make searching for and communicating with classmates easier. [Visit Microsoft's Mail overview Page to find out more about the EagleConnect Wave 15 mailbox.](#)
- SkyDrive Pro is now included with EagleConnect account. SkyDrive Pro offers 25 GB of cloud-based storage to current students. Files stored in SkyDrive Pro are accessible from almost any web enabled device.
- Office Web Apps are now available to current students through their EagleConnect account. Office Web Apps provide free online access to the Microsoft Office suite of web applications such as Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. Office Web Apps and SkyDrive Pro allow students to work on, access, and share their documents through most web browsers.

### What is SkyDrive Pro?

SkyDrive Pro is Microsoft's online cloud storage solution. Much like Dropbox or Google Drive, SkyDrive allows current students to store documents online allowing them to access their files from almost anywhere that has an internet connection. SkyDrive Pro applications are available for the desktop and certain smart phones, which allows for easy access, synchronization, and the transfer of large files.

[Visit Microsoft's SkyDrive Pro page to find out more.](#)

### What are Microsoft Office Web Apps?

Bundled into SkyDrive Pro are Microsoft's Office Web Applications which include Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote. Files are saved using standard Office extensions, such as docx, so there will be no compatibility issues when viewing files with the desktop version of Office. All files are automatically saved in a SkyDrive account so they can be accessed from almost any web enabled device through the browser.

[Visit Microsoft's Office Web Apps page to find out more.](#)

## SkyDrive Pro App for phone or tablet

There is a SkyDrive Pro App for iOS and Windows 8 mobile devices. The app allows you to store, access, and share work documents and other files in the cloud from your mobile device.

- iPhone or iPad
  - [Instructions for use.](#)
- Windows Phone
  - [Instructions for use.](#)
- Android
  - At this time there is no official SkyDrive Pro App for android devices

## SkyDrive Pro desktop application.

SkyDrive Pro offers a desktop application available for Windows only. This application will allow students to automatically sync files between their desktop and SkyDrive Pro account.

[Overview and instructions for installing the desktop application.](#)

## I already had a UNT SkyDrive account.

Over the summer existing SkyDrive accounts were moved off of EagleConnect and moved to Microsoft's live.com platform. All of your files are still accessible.

[More information on accessing your old SkyDrive account and transferring files between the accounts](#)

## Do Alumni and Retirees have access to SkyDrive Pro and Office Wel

SkyDrive Pro and the bundled Office Web Apps are available to current students only. Alumni and Retirees will retain access to their EagleConnect email account, but will not have access to the included SkyDrive Pro and Office Web Apps. Fortunately, SkyDrive and Office Web Apps are available for free to everyone.

You can sign up for a free SkyDrive account at [www.live.com](http://www.live.com).

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## University of North Texas

### Five easy steps *scraping* data from web pages

Link to the last RSS article here: [Why R: it's not a question, it's an answer.](#) -- Ed.

By [Dr. Jon Starkweather](#), Research and Statistical Support Consultant

In a perfect world, all data would be easily available to everyone as comma separated values (CSV) files. Unfortunately, Earth is not yet a perfect world. Occasionally, some interesting data is *unavailable* as a CSV download, but is available and / or displayed on a web page. The term *scraping data* refers to the process of parsing the HTML source code of an available web page in order to extract, retrieve, or *scrape* some specific data from the web page. In truth, the title of this article is a bit misleading. The functions used to scrape data are fairly straightforward and easy to use; but, there is a significant assumption when using them. The time consuming assumption is...you need to know where the desired data is located among the lines of HTML code of the web page you are scraping. However, once the line, or lines, have been identified; the R script used to scrape the data and put it into a manageable [R](#) format is very easy to use and can be reused over time. The example below illustrates the process of scraping the DOW Jones Industrial average from the Reuters© Commodities (2013) website; specifically, the following web page: <http://www.reuters.com/finance/commodities/energy#oil> (displayed below). Keep in mind; scraping data does not require the target web page to be open in a browser. In fact, the script in this article, and other scripts like it, will work without ever opening a browser – only an internet connection is required. Of course, the target web page needs to be public (i.e. not behind a log in or encrypted).



The screenshot shows the Reuters website's commodity page. It features three main data tables: OIL, NATURAL GAS, and ELECTRICITY. Each table lists various commodities with their respective exchange, currency, and price details. On the right side, there is a 'MARKETS' section with a search bar and a table of market indices. The DOW index is highlighted with a green box, showing a value of 14,805.05. Other indices include S&P 500, NASDAQ, and TRUS INDEX. Below the market indices, there are sections for Currencies and Commodities, each with a table of values and percentage changes.

The specific data retrieved in this example will be the DOW, which is listed in the small Markets table on the right side of the page [screen capture] above and marked with the green rectangle. At the time of writing (August 27, 2013; the number changes throughout the day), the number desired is 14805.05.

## Step 1: Get the web page.

Obviously, the first step is to know the URL for the page you will be scraping. The URL for this example is stated above. The function used for importing an HTML page into R is 'readLines' which is available in the 'base' package (installed with every installation of R). There are other functions which can accomplish this task, such as those found in the [RCurl](#) package, which allow more complex control and parsing of HTML code.

The key argument, indeed the only necessary argument, is the connection (con) which specifies the location of the file to be imported. Below we use the 'readLines' function and the URL (as the connection to the file / web page) to import the web page and name that object 'r.page' for Reuters page.

```
r.page <- readLines("http://www.reuters.com/finance/commodities/energy#oil")
```

Given the length of the page (in number of lines of HTML source code), it may take a significant amount of time to find the line number (or row) of the page which contains the data of interest.

```
length(r.page)
```

```
[1] 2005
```

Some web pages are fairly simple and the specific data of interest can be found relatively easily using the 'which' function and other common R indexing functions. Unfortunately, the Reuters page used in this example is fairly complex and contains over 2000 lines of HTML source code. It can be helpful with complex pages, such as this example, to copy and paste the source HTML code (here, the 'r.page' object in R) into a text editor (most have line numbers along the left edge and do not *text wrap* each line) so that the data of interest can be identified by the row of HTML code where it is found.

## Step 2: Scraping the line(s) of data.

We know from previously looking through the HTML source code that we need line 917 (of the 2005 lines) to get the DOW number (14805.05). So, we retrieve this line of HTML using its line number and assign the line of HTML to the object 'dow.data'.

```
dow.data <- r.page[917]
```

```
dow.data
```

```
[1] "\t\t\t\t\t\t\t<td class=\"data size8\" valign=\"middle\">14,805.05</td>"
```

Keep in mind; we could specify multiple lines to retrieve, creating a vector of lines with each line containing some data of interest. As an example, we might also be interested in the price of Gold (1420.10 in the screen capture above). In which case, we would also scrape, or retrieve, line 1005 of the `r.page` object and add it to the `dow.data` object – would then contain both lines of HTML code (i.e. one line for the Dow and one line for Gold).

### Step 3: Reducing the HTML to isolate the data.

The next obvious step is to replace and / or remove the HTML code which is not needed, in order to isolate the actual data of interest. It is important to note that the entire line retrieved (and displayed above and below) is a character string. Therefore, we need a special function which will read each place or character of the line. To do this, we use the 'gsub' function, also from the 'base' package. This function is extremely useful; it allows fine control for parsing character strings and replacing (substituting) patterns or specific characters with any other value or no value at all. If no value is specified (as the replacement), then the pattern or character specified in the 'pattern' argument is simply removed.

```
new.line.1 <- dow.data; new.line.1
```

```
[1] "\t\t\t\t\t\t\t<td class=\"data size8\" valign=\"middle\">14,805.05</td>"
```

Notice there is one other 'number' in the line of HTML which we DO NOT want ("...size8..."), so we first replace or substitute that pattern of character string with the letter "a". Here we are using "a" as a replacement value (the choice is fairly arbitrary). Also, below we are creating a 'new line' (new.line.2) rather than simply writing over the old line (new.line.1) – again, that choice is rather arbitrary.

```
new.line.2 <- gsub(pattern = "size8", replacement = "a", x = new.line.1,
  ignore.case = TRUE, perl = FALSE, fixed = FALSE, useBytes = FALSE)
```

```
new.line.2
```

```
[1] "\t\t\t\t\t\t\t<td class=\"data a\" valign=\"middle\">14,805.05</td>"
```

Next, we need to remove all the remaining HTML symbols, including the comma (but not the decimal point). Notice the space between each element of the pattern we are specifying. Also notice the last element of the pattern is "a-z" which indicates all letters. Here, we are not actually substituting, but rather removing all the elements of the pattern; because, we are using no value as the replacement – there is nothing between the quotation marks in the replacement argument below.

```
new.line.3 <- gsub(pattern = "([\\t =\\ <\\ >\\ \\\" \"/>

```

```
new.line.3
```

```
[1] "14805.05"
```

It is important to realize that the "number" returned from the code above (i.e. new.line.3) is not actually a 'number.' It is still formatted as character string; that is why it has quotation marks around it.

### Step 4: System time and a data frame.

Now, we can create a data frame in which to put our new line of DOW data as well as the time stamp indicating when we scraped or grabbed the data from the web page.

```
dow.df <- data.frame(matrix(rep(NA,3), ncol = 3))
names(dow.df) <- c("string.date", "numeric.date", "DOW")
dow.df
  string.date  numeric.date  DOW
1    NA             NA      NA
```

Below, we retrieve the date and time using the 'Sys.time' function and make sure to store the numeric version as well as the character string version.

```
dow.df[,1] <- Sys.time()
dow.df[,2] <- as.numeric(Sys.time())
```

Finally, we can convert our data into numeric and put it into the data frame we created.

```
dow.df[,3] <- as.numeric(new.line.3)

dow.df

      string.date  numeric.date      DOW
1 2013-08-27 14:58:10  1377633491  14805.05
```

## Step 5: Export the data.

We can then save or export the data by setting the working directory to the location we want to store the file and using the 'write.table' function.

```
setwd("C:/Users/jds0282/Desktop/")

write.table(dow.df, file = "dow.df.txt", sep = ",", na = "NA",
           dec = ".", row.names = TRUE, col.names = TRUE)
```

## Conclusions

Keep in mind, although it may take significant effort to identify the line number of the data of interest, once the script has been written and checked, it can be used repeatedly (e.g. each day) to retrieve the data of interest (i.e. to build a time series data file). The only real problem which can occur is when the HTML source code is changed, in other words, if the web page author(s) update(s) the layout of the page. Then, of course, it would be necessary to verify the line number of the data of interest and re-check the script to make sure it returns the desired information.

As stated above, there are other ways of accomplishing what was accomplished in this article; the 'RCurl' package is apparently quite popular. All of the functions used in this article are available with a base install of R – the functions are available in the 'base' package. For more information on what R can do, please visit the Research and Statistical Support [Do-It-Yourself Introduction to R](#) course website. An Adobe.pdf version of this article can be found [here](#).

Until next time; remember what Stewart Brand said: *"information wants to be free"*....

## References / Resources

Lang, D. T. (2013). Package RCurl. Package documentation available at: <http://cran.r-project.org/web/packages/RCurl/index.html> and further information available at: <http://www.omegahat.org/RCurl/>

ProgrammingR.com (2013) Webscraping using readLines and RCurl. Available at: <http://www.programmingr.com/content/webscraping-using-readlines-and-rcurl/>

Reuters. (2013). Commodities: Energy. Retrieved on August 27, 2013 from: <http://www.reuters.com/finance/commodities/energy#oil>

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## Training

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

Do you need training on widely used computer programs including those used in statistical analysis? If so, this monthly *Benchmarks Online* column is for you.

### Statistical Analysis

Instructor-led courses are offered only by special request. Please contact an [RSS member](#) or [Claudia Lynch](#) if you are interested in taking such a class or wish to have someone offer a class for your students. **SPSS, SAS** and **Introduction to R** are offered online. Make sure and check out the **RSS Matters** article [Statistical Resources](#) in the July 2012 issue of *Benchmarks Online*.

**Special classes** can always be arranged with the RSS staff. Also, you can **always** contact the RSS staff for one-on-one [consultation](#). Please read the [FAQ](#) before requesting an appointment though.

### Especially for Faculty and Staff Members

In addition to the online statistical courses, which are available to students, faculty and staff, staff and faculty members can take courses offered through the [Business Service Center](#) (they have a new comprehensive training curriculum), and the [Center for Learning Enhancement, Assessment, and Redesign](#) (CLEAR). Additionally, the [Center for Achievement and Lifelong Learning](#) (CALL) offers a variety of courses, usually for a small fee.

**EIS training** is available and expanding. Click [here](#) for online tutorials.

### Microsoft IT Academy

All **students, faculty and staff** within the UNT System now have access to online learning via the Microsoft IT Academy. See [this article](#) in the July 2012 issue of *Benchmarks Online* for more information.

### Microsoft E-Learning

Microsoft E-Learning courses are available for **faculty and staff** via our UNT System Microsoft Campus Agreement. See [the article](#) in this issue of *Benchmarks Online* for more information.

### Central Web Support

Central Web Support [provides](#) "End-User and Administrative Support for hosted general web sites, and Drupal websites for academic and administrative departments." Visit their [website](#) for "How-Tos about Everything."

### CLEAR

CLEAR offers courses especially for Faculty Members. *CLEAR training includes:*

- Blackboard
- Turnitin
- Turning Point

- Assessment
- Teaching Effectiveness
- Respondus

Please check out CLEAR's training and event calendar at <http://clear.unt.edu/calendar> for the latest information regarding Blackboard, CLEAR's initiatives, and on campus instructional events.

Further information can be found [here](#).

#### FREE SLOAN-C ONLINE WORKSHOPS

The University of North Texas is a premium member of Sloan-C College Pass. To request FREE ENROLLMENT in an online workshop by Sloan-C, please contact [Amber Bryant](#) by December 15th with the name and date of the workshop selected.

- [Sloan-C 2013 Workshops](#)
- [Sloan-C 2014 Workshops](#)

*Please click on the links above to see all of the remaining 2013 workshops and the available 2014 workshops.*

## Ed2go

Ed2go are courses that are offered, for a fee, to UNT faculty, staff and students as well as the general public. According to the CALL [website](#):

*CALL has partnered up to provide online learning on a variety of topics. From standardized test preparation to database programming to training for libraries and their staff, there's a variety of areas from which to choose in online learning.*

*The online minicourses, provided in conjunction with Ed2go, are standardized 12-lesson modules released over a six week period. (Courses are active for eight weeks to provide some flexibility). Each module features a quiz. Lessons are instructor-led and course participants and instructor communicate through a course discussion board. Lessons can be downloaded and saved. At the end of the course there is a final quiz. A passing grade opens a window that allows students to print out a course completion certificate.*

*Most courses are \$89, and UNT faculty, staff and students may receive a \$10 discount.*

For additional information surf over to <http://www.ed2go.com/unt/> Visit the **Ed2go blog** [here](#).



This November, we're thankful for the opportunity to continue providing you quality, affordable online courses. [Browse our complete course menu!](#)



## Information Security Awareness

The ITSS Information Security team offers Information Security Awareness training to all UNT faculty and staff.

It is a policy requirement that ALL staff take an information security course at least once a year.

See July's "[Link of the Month](#)" for the latest information about Security Awareness training.

## Business Service Center Training & Development

Provides training to UNT System institutions: <http://bsc.untsystem.edu/training-development>. There is also a link to [download Office 2010 training](#) (in PowerPoint 2010 format) on the BSC website.

### UNT System HR has announced Fall/Early Winter 2013 Schedule of Training Opportunities

See the attached [Training Opportunities PDF file](#) for an outline of current offerings for professional development and technical training. Instructions on how to enroll are contained in the attached [instructional PDF file](#).

## Alternate Forms of Training

Many of the General Access Labs around campus have tutorials installed on their computers.

See <http://www.gacl.unt.edu/> for a list of labs and their locations. The 24 Center in Willis Library, for example, has a [list of Tutorials and Software Support](#). The Library Instructional Unit also offers workshops and training, including "tech skills" training. Visit their websites for more information: <http://www.library.unt.edu/library-instruction>.

## Info~Tech, UNT's IT Research Partner

Info~Tech is UNT's IT research partner. UNT System, UNT, UNT Health Science Center and UNT Dallas employees have access to Info~Tech research at: [www.infotech.unt.edu](http://www.infotech.unt.edu) (click on the UNT System name to login). Your standard EUID and Password gains you access to the Info~Tech system. Please take a moment to read their terms and conditions by clicking through the agreement when you set up your profile the first time you log in.

## State of Texas Department of Information Resources

Another possible source of training for staff and, perhaps, faculty members is the Texas Department of Information Resources. A look at their Education and Training [website](#) reveals some interesting possibilities.

## New Horizons Computer Learning Centers

New Horizons is a DIR vendor, which means that state agencies, like UNT, get special pricing for their services negotiated at the State level (click [here](#) for more information about DIR vendors). [New Horizons](#) offers courses at their own facilities in Dallas and Fort Worth, but will arrange for onsite training as well.

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## Staff Activities

Staff activities for [UIT](#) are reported in this column. ITSS staff activities are handled by [ITSS Communications](#).

## Transitions

### New Employees:

- **Bruno Fleurquin**, CSS Tech, Classroom Support Services (part-time).
- **Reynaldo "Rey" Aviles**, CSS Tech, Classroom Support Services (part-time).
- **Lisbeth Kouphin**, CSS Tech, Classroom Support Services (part-time).
- **Andrew Albright**, CSS Tech, Classroom Support Services (part-time).
- **Robert Sherman**, CSS Tech, Classroom Support Services (part-time).
- **Prabhu Dokku**, AITS Desktop Support (part-time).
- **Matthew Burson**, AITS Desktop Support (part-time).
- **Keith Wickramasekara**, AITS Desktop Support (part-time).

## Changes, Awards, Recognition, Publications, etc.

- **Jonathan "Mac" Edwards** has left his position as UIT Helpdesk Manager to work in [ITSS](#). We'll miss him and wish him well in his new position.
- **Dr. Elizabeth Hinkle-Turner**, Director - Academic Computing Technical Services, received a 2013 [ASCAP](#) grant. The award is for \$500 and recognizes creative contributions to American music in the past year. This is one of many ASCAP awards Hinkle-Turner has received through the years.
- **Claudia Lynch**, Documentation Services Manager, ACUS, UIT, won a UNT-branded gift pack (T-shirt, lapel pin, water bottle, poster, eco-friendly bag) by entering [one of the InHouse](#) and Green Pride Friday giveaways.
- **Helpdesk Halloween Bake Sale** -- The UIT Helpdesk held a charitable Halloween bake sale on October 30th. **\$170.67** was raised with all proceeds donated to America's VetDogs, which provides service dogs to US Veterans. More information on the charity can be found [here](#). We greatly appreciate all of those who stopped by!



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## Microsoft Home Use and E-Learning Available to Faculty and Staff

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

The Microsoft Home Use program has been available to UNT faculty and staff members for a number of years, as has Microsoft E-Learning. This is due to the fact that the UNT System has a site license for Microsoft products. Sometimes they are temporarily unavailable, however, when the site license is in the process of being renewed. Following is an announcement that was sent out to the UNT System on November 11, 2013 by Michael DiPaolo, Associate Vice Chancellor and Chief Information Officer.

Information Technology  
Shared Services

UNT SYSTEM

DATE: November 11, 2013

TO: All UNT System, UNT, UNT Health Science Center, UNT Dallas Employees

FROM: Michael DiPaolo, Associate Vice Chancellor and Chief Information Officer

RE: Microsoft Office available to employees for home use

Because the UNT System has a site license for Microsoft products, employees are automatically eligible to use Microsoft Office Professional and Microsoft Learning on their home PC or Mac. If you are an employee of the UNT System, UNT, UNT Dallas or UNT Health Science Center, you can purchase the latest Office suite for less than \$10.

Microsoft Learning is available at no cost and has hundreds of courses about Microsoft products. Follow the simple instructions below. Some restrictions apply, most notably:

- 1) This offer is conditioned upon you being licensed for Office at work.
- 2) The license expires upon termination of employment.

If you have any questions, contact your helpdesk or departmental IT specialist.

**To get your copy of Office:**

1. Go to <http://hup.microsoft.com/>
2. Select a country.

3. Enter your UNT email address and insert the following program code: [Contact your [Network Manager](#) for the program code]. *Note: This program code is assigned to UNT and may not be shared with anyone outside UNT.*
4. Follow the directions to download your copy or have one mailed to you.

**To enroll in Microsoft Learning:**

1. Go to: <https://business.microsoftlearning.com/activate/>
2. Input your multiuse access code that you obtain from your departmental IT manager. (Each department has an IT point of contact through Administrative IT Services.)
3. You are prompted to sign in using a valid Windows Live™ ID. (This is the user name and password you will use to access the site each time you log on.) If you don't already have a Live™ ID, click "sign on" and create one.

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## Thanksgiving Break Hours

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

Thanksgiving and all the good things normally associated with it is almost here. This year Thanksgiving and Hanukkah overlap, giving rise to the term *Thanksgivukkah*. This happened before, back on November 29, 1888, but it won't happen again for another [79.043 years](#)!


Following are the hours for University Information Technology-managed facilities during the Thanksgiving break. The University is [officially closed](#) Thursday, November 28, and Friday, November 29.

- The [Helpdesk](#) will be **closed** on Thanksgiving day. They will maintain their normal hours Friday, November 29 through Sunday, December 1, but will be **closed to walk-in traffic; phone and email only**.
- [Data Management Services](#) will be **closed** Thursday, November 28, and Friday, November 29.
- The **ACUS General Access/Adaptive Lab** ([SYMR 104](#)) will **close** Thursday, November 28 and re-open for regular hours Monday, December 2.



### Hours for Other Campus Facilities

### General Access Labs

 <p><a href="#">24 Center</a> (formerly known as WILLIS)</p>	<p><b>Close at 7 p.m.</b> on Wednesday, November 27.</p> <p><b>Closed:</b> Thursday, November 28 through Saturday, November 30.</p> <p><b>Open</b> at 11 a.m. Sunday, December 1. Return to 24 hour schedule.</p>
<p><a href="#">College of Information General Access Computer Lab (CI-GACLab)</a> (B205)</p>	<p><b>Close at 10 p.m.</b> on Wednesday, November 27.</p> <p><b>Closed:</b> Thursday, November 28 through Sunday, December 1.</p> <p><b>Open</b> for regular hours at 7:30 a.m. Monday, December 2.</p>
<p><a href="#">MUSIC:</a></p>	<p><b>Open</b> Wednesday, November 27 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.</p> <p><b>Closed:</b> Thursday, November 28 through Sunday, December 1.</p> <p><b>Open</b> for regular hours Monday, December 2.</p>

<p><a href="#">PACS Computing Center</a> (College of Public Affairs and Community Service, Chilton Hall)</p>	<p><b>Close at Midnight</b> on Wednesday, November 27.</p> <p><b>Closed:</b> Thursday, November 28 through Sunday, December 1.</p> <p><b>Open</b> for regular hours at 7 a.m. Monday, December 2.</p>
<p><a href="#">CVAD</a></p>	<p><b>Close at 11:30 p.m.</b> on Wednesday, November 27.</p> <p><b>Closed:</b> Thursday, November 28 through Sunday, December 1.</p> <p><b>Open</b> for regular hours at 7:30 a.m. Monday, December 2.</p>
<p><a href="#">COE</a></p>	<p><b>Close at 5 p.m.</b> on Wednesday, November 27.</p> <p><b>Closed:</b> Thursday, November 28 through Sunday, December 1.</p> <p><b>Open</b> for regular hours at 7 a.m. Monday, December 2.</p>
<p><a href="#">COB</a> (BLB 190)</p>	<p><b>Closed:</b> Thursday, November 28 through Sunday, December 1.</p> <p><b>Open</b> for regular hours Monday, December 2.</p>
<p><a href="#">CAS</a> - All CAS labs will be <b>closed</b> Thursday, November 28 and Friday, November 29.</p>	<p><b>GAB 330:</b></p> <p><b>Close at 10 p.m.</b> on Wednesday, November 27. <b>Open</b> for regular hours Saturday, November 30.</p> <p><b>GAB 550: Close at 5 p.m.</b> on Wednesday, November 27. <b>Open</b> for regular hours Monday, December 2.</p> <p><b>Terrill 220: Close at 7 p.m.</b> on Wednesday, November 27. <b>Open</b> for regular hours Monday, December 2.</p> <p><b>Wooten 120:</b></p> <p><b>Close at 8 p.m.</b> on Wednesday, November 27. <b>Open</b> for regular hours Monday, December 2.</p>
<p><b>Engineering General Access Lab</b> (CENGAL, <a href="mailto:englab@unt.edu">englab@unt.edu</a>, Discovery Park, B129, 891-6733)</p>	<p><b>Close at 5 p.m.</b> on Wednesday, November 27.</p> <p><b>Closed:</b> Thursday, November 28 through Sunday, December 1.</p> <p><b>Open</b> for regular hours on Monday, December 2.</p>

**UNT Shuttle Service**

Check out the transit [website](#) to keep up with the shuttle schedule. A 2013-2014 calendar is available here: [http://www.unt.edu/transit/pdf/2013-2014\\_calendar.pdf](http://www.unt.edu/transit/pdf/2013-2014_calendar.pdf). **There is no service Thursday, November 28 through Saturday, November 30.**

**Remember:**



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## EDUCAUSE: Looking Back at SPRINT 2013

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

The EDUCAUSE SPRINT 2013 event lives on via a 3-Day Sprint Summary.

### Get Briefed

EDUCAUSE Sprint is over but you can now view a [full summary](#) and revisit the resources from the event.



This brief summarizes key themes from the EDUCAUSE Sprint 2013—"Beyond MOOCs: Is IT Creating a New, Connected Age?"—which was held July 30–August 1. Webinar presenters and more than 1,200 participants from 35 countries and all 50 U.S. states exchanged ideas via online conversations. For more information, see the [EDUCAUSE Sprint 2013](#) web page.

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## Today's Cartoon

© Randy Glasbergen  
www.glasbergen.com



**“Go to Google, then type: How To Uncook A Turkey.”**

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