Benchmarks Online

Computing and Information Technology Center

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Volume 12 - Number 6 * June 2009

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By the Numbers

UNT.EDU

Tuesday, June 16, 2009: A total of 373,060 visitors (154,525 unique) this month, an average of 24,777.9 per day (10,263.3 unique). Click here for the latest statistics.

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Available for RSS/XML syndication. See the list of all available xml/rss feeds.

Questions, comments and corrections for this site: lynch@unt.edu
Site was last updated or revised : June 17, 2009

Benchmarks Online

Campus Computing News

The Microsoft Home Use Program

By Claudia Lynch, *Benchmarks Online* Editor

A new program called "Home Use" is now available to UNT faculty and staff members.

"Home Use" enables those who are eligible to download and install Microsoft® Office software at a reduced price on their home computers. They will also be able to keep the software on their home machines, even if they leave the university. Employees will still have the option to order a back-up DVD and, the current software purchase program is still available through the UNT Bookstore.* If you are using a University computer, you could use the Bookstore's program for it and use the new program for your personal machine, for example.

Anyone interested in getting Microsoft® Office software through this new program should contact their Network Manager for further instructions. Contact the UNT Bookstore at 940-565-3185 for additional information about the Microsoft products available to faculty and staff and/or visit www.unt.bkstr.com.

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*As we mentioned last month, UNT has had an agreement with Microsoft for a number of years that allows us to distribute various Microsoft products to employees of the University. According to the agreement, you can "use the software for school-related purposes on a personally-owned computer or an institution-owned computer designated for your exclusive use" and you must remove the software from your home machine if you leave UNT. *This agreement does not cover students unless those students are also UNT employees. UNT Health Science Center employees CAN purchase their software on the HSC campus.*

BOOKMARK

Please Note: The University of North Texas will never ask for personal information by e-mail. If you receive an e-mail purporting to be from the University that asks for personal information or account passwords, do not respond. If there is any question regarding the authenticity of an email, please contact UNT Information Security at (940) 369-7800.

Eagle ALERT
Update your contact information

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Benchmarks Online

What the New Students are Learning about Computing this Summer

By **Dr. Elizabeth Hinkle-Turner**, Assistant Director - Academic Computing and User Services

It is that time of year again -- no, not "high air conditioning bill time" -- ORIENTATION TIME! As always, this is a great time for everyone to review the computing services that are offered to UNT students and which we will be discussing with new students and their parents during orientation. New students receive so much information while on campus for the two-day orientation event that they may not remember everything so it is quite helpful to them for all of us to know what services and opportunities they have in the computing realm. Advisors and faculty are especially encouraged to study the information in this article and impart it to the students.

All aboard for the Student Tour!

To assist students in finding all their computing resources in one place and also to cut down on paper use, Academic Computing and User Services launched the 'Student Tour' several years ago and continuously updates this site making it the most reliable "one stop shop" for UNT community members to learn about and link to technology services. The Student Tour is located at http://helpdesk.unt.edu/studenttour. For this article, I will be your "tour guide" on the site and point out the highlights along the way.

First Stop, UNT CITC Helpdesk.

The first stop on the tour discusses the UNT CITC Helpdesk and reminds everyone that whenever a computing issue or questions arises, the Helpdesk should be contacted. The Helpdesk staff has an up-to-the-minute website: http://helpdesk.unt.edu with an exhaustive array of information resources on using campus computing services, reporting problems, configuring email, buying a computer and much, much more. The Helpdesk can be contacted via phone at 940-565-2324, by email -- helpdesk@unt.edu , or during their extensive walk-in hours at their physical location, ISB 119. Some of the most common issues that the Helpdesk deals with are resetting passwords and helping UNT community members configure their machines for the wireless network and for receiving email.

Next Stop, Account Management.

The next stop on the tour discusses student accounts and is one of the most important pages on the site as it assists students in configuring their usernames and passwords, accessing the student email system, and creating web pages. Most online account configuration and modification occurs by using the account management system, located at http://ams.unt.edu . The new student digital communication system (featuring email,

texting, chat, calendaring and much more--) is EagleConnect and a link to all pertinent EagleConnect information is included here. Finally, if a student wants to build a website to post their resume or other non-commercial information, they can use the people.unt.edu service to do this.

Up Next: My.unt.edu, General Access Labs ...

Next on the tour is a page with links to http://my.unt.edu where students pay their bills, check out their financial information, find their grades and so much more. After this stop we move on to the page about the General Access Computer Labs. Though almost 100 percent of students will come to campus with a personal computer, the labs get quite a workout and their use continues to increase. UNT has 14 general access computer labs spread across the main Denton campus, at the Discovery Park and at the Dallas campus. These labs feature PCs, Macs, outstanding printing facilities and a host of general software (Office 2007, internet browsers, Adobe Acrobat etc.) as well as a lot of specialty hardware and software that students may need to utilize for their major study but cannot afford to purchase individually (Photoshop, slide scanners, large-format printers, advanced statistics software etc.). There is one 24/7 lab (Willis) and one 24/5 lab (Chilton) as well as an adaptive technology lab (ACS/ISB) with hardware and software for students with special needs. A detailed map of the lab locations is found here. All students need to present a valid picture ID to enter the labs.

On to Safety and Security Information

The next stop on the tour features safety and security information and links. Students are reminded to back up their data regularly which they can do by burning CDs and DVDs or by uploading their stuff to the SkyDrive student storage portion of EagleConnect which gives them 25 GB of storage space. Students are reminded to regularly patch their computers and keep their virus protection up to date. McAfee virus protection software is offered free to students and a link for downloading and installing this application is included. Other links to the UNT CITC security website are given for further information about protecting data, configuring strong passwords and the like.

Continuing on to the dorms, watch those legal issues!

Following the important security page is a description of ResNet -- the computer network used in the dorms. This service is provided by an off-site provider, Apogee, and links to their information are found here. After this page, the tour takes you to important information about copyright and fair use of materials. Not only are links to extensive and thorough information about legal and illegal use of copyrighted materials found but on the next tour page a lengthy section outlining free or low-charge, LEGAL distributors of copyrighted materials for use is featured. These services include the iTunes store, Napster, and the many media offerings by the UNT Library System.

Eaglenet Wireless up ahead, software and hardware around the corner.

After exploring the world of legal downloads, the student tourist next travels to a page detailing use and availability of the Eaglenet Wireless Network which is available in all the buildings on campus. Following this information is a page outlining the many discounted software and hardware items available at the UNT bookstores located in the Union. Students can purchase a variety of computing products for far less than they would pay at the "big box stores". Additionally links to the educational stores of Apple and Dell are featured.

Online learning, next to the last stop.

Finally, a page with extensive information about the many online course offerings at UNT is featured. UNT has one of the largest online programs in the country and their online offerings have won regional and national recognition. This page gets students started on searching for classes, logging into classes, and finding flexible online degree programs to suit their needs. Nearly every student at UNT will be interacting with our online Blackboard Vista system so this page is one of the most informative and important on the tour.

Final Stop, PDF junction.

The tour closes with a page linking students to PDFs of our most popular and informative brochures. As mentioned earlier UNT is "going green" and the CITC is contributing to these environmental efforts by doing less paper publication and more online publication. These PDFs are of brochures we used to print out by the thousands. Now we have students look at them online so they get the same great information and save a tree at the same time!

All information on the student tour is compiled and maintained by CITC Documentation Services Manager, Claudia Lynch, and if you have information to include here you can contact Claudia at lynch@unt.edu . Any questions about the content of the pages especially as it relates to students" needs and issues should be referred to me, Elizabeth Hinkle-Turner, Assistant Director of Academic Computing and User Services at ehinkle@unt.edu .

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Benchmarks Online

What to Buy Your New or Returning UNT Student This Year

By **Dr. Elizabeth Hinkle-Turner**, Assistant Director - Academic Computing and User Services

You know, when I was a high school graduate, parents bought their newly minted college students luggage and an electric typewriter. Amazingly, I still have pieces of the lovely shocking blue American Tourister luggage (that stuff is really tough!) my parents bought me almost -- ahem!...30 years ago, and my (also bright blue-- what was it with me and bright blue?) Smith Corona electric typewriter which now sits on a shelf in my storage closet next to my first computer (a lovely Mac SE purchased in 1988 with the proceeds of the sale of my motorcycle-- now THAT was a big sacrifice!). These days parents get their students computers and also apparently (at least in the case of my nephew who will be an Aggie in the fall) hotplates, microwaves, and dorm refrigerators. Well, I cannot help parents with hotplate and microwave purchases but I DO know a whole lot about what to get a UNT student as far as computing goes so this article will attempt to give a checklist of important hardware and software considerations for the 2009-2010 school year.

Desktop or laptop?

First of all -- desktop or laptop? There are advantages to both. Desktop computers can be bought for just a couple of hundred dollars these days and extra money can be spent on a large LCD display -- especially useful if you have a music or art major coming to UNT. Of course, they are not portable which is a great disadvantage. I always tell parents to use their best instincts on making a laptop or desktop purchase. Laptops can be easily dropped and broken or stolen so make sure that your student is responsible and will keep that laptop in a protected case and with them at all times (that even means taking the machine into the bookshelves or into the bathroom with them when they are studying in a public area like the library). Laptops can "run away" in a flash! If you student is the type who has been through about 20 iPods because they have been lost, dropped, stolen, or washed-- well, they are probably not a good candidate for a laptop!

As mentioned above, with desktops, you get far more computer for your expenditure and the large display you can afford with these machines can be very useful to your student depending on his or her major field of study. A good compromise may be to get a desktop machine and then invest money in a smart phone or a netbook for smaller-scale "mobile" computing. Be sure that all student technology devices are inventoried on your homeowners insurance so should the worst happen, compensation and replacement will be easier.

Mac or PC?

The next question is usually -- Mac or PC? Once again -- it depends on your student. Many students in the arts or journalism utilized the Mac OS almost exclusively. Mac hardware has the added advantage of being able to host either the traditional Mac operating system or the Windows operating system and /or Linux operating system of your choice. Apple offers a variety of solutions for a "dual boot" machine (in fact I am typing on one right now) and so much flexibility is available when buying a Mac. However, if your student is going to be in a field like business or the sciences, more than likely a PC running Windows is a good bet with a wide variety of brands to choose from. If you or your student aren't sure what type of machine to buy, stop by the UNT bookstores in the Union -- they have hardware from Dell and Apple for purchase at great prices and you can "try before you buy."

Fortunately, for consumers these days, computers have remained at a fairly "steady state" feature-wise for the past few years (unlike cell phones-- I haven't bought a new cell phone myself for ages because I know that if I get one today, tomorrow there will be one with twice the features and connectivity offered -- I am in "cell phone purchase paralysis" as a result!). The general configuration rules still apply -- purchase a machine with at least 1GB of RAM (2 GB is preferable) with the largest hard drive and processor speed you can afford. Unless your student is some sort of mega-gamer (which means quad cores and high-end graphics cards-- just kiss your dollars good-bye!), the "student models" offered at the "big box stores" or online at Dell, Apple, HP etc. will suit most UNT students just fine. Links to the online stores can be found at the UNT CITC Helpdesk website at http://helpdesk.unt.edu and as mentioned, earlier, check out the deals at the UNT bookstore while on campus.

Vista or XP?

The last question we usually get is, Vista or XP? This even applies to Mac users who generally have both Mac and Windows operating systems on their machines. Most PC manufacturers still offer a "downgrade" to Windows XP -- if you go that route, make sure you are getting XP Professional for all the networking features you will need to take full advantage of connectivity at UNT. Vista users should go with Vista Business for full networking features. If you buy a machine with a "Home edition", don't panic -- you can get affordable upgrades through the bookstore if needed as special education prices. However, hook up your machine here at UNT and make sure everything works as needed before going out and spending money on upgrades. Chances are whatever operating system your machine came with will work just great (unless it is Grandpa's old Windows 95 box, you should be just fine!).

And that is really all there is to say this year about computer purchases for your UNT student. If you have any additional questions, feel free to contact me at ehinkle@unt.edu or the fine folks at the CITC Helpdesk at helpdesk@unt.edu or 940-565-2324.

BOOKMARK

best to search the UNT Website - http://www.unt.edu . You can also search *Benchmarks Online* - http://www.unt.edu/benchmarks/archives/back.htm as well as consult the UNT Helpdesk - http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/
Questions and comments should be directed to benchmarks@unt.edu

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Summer Hours

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

Summer will arrive officially on June 20 but SUM , 3WK1, 8WK1 classes* began on May 18. Following are the hours for Computing and Information Technology Center-managed facilities during this time period and, in some cases, the summer. The Helpdesk plans, at this point, to be open their normal hours, including on July 4. The University is **officially closed** for Independence Day, July 4.

- **Data Management Services** will maintain their normal schedule throughout the summer.

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

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

  Special Closings:
  Closed Saturday, July 4.

Hours for Other Campus Facilities

General Access Labs

- WILLIS:

  Will maintain a 24hr schedule.

- College of Information GACL (B205 GACL, formerly SLIS):

  May 18 - August 14:
  Monday - Friday: 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
  Saturday: **Closed**
  Sunday: **Closed**

- MUSIC:

  May 18 - August 14:
  Monday-Thursday: 8 a.m.-9 p.m.
  Friday: 8 a.m.-5 p.m.
  Saturday: 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
  Sunday: 1-8 p.m.

- [PACS Computing Center](#) (Chilton Hall):

  May 18 - August 13:
  Monday – Thursday: 8 a.m. – 10 p.m.
   Friday & Saturday: 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
  Sunday: Noon – 10 p.m.

  Special Closings:
  Semester Break: August 14 - 23

- **CVAD** (formerly SOVA) Art Building 232
   (940)565-2470:

  Hours currently unavailable.

- [COE](#):

  May 18 - August 14:
  Monday- Thursday: 7 a.m.-Midnight
   Friday: 7 a.m.-5 p.m.
   Saturday: Noon-8 p.m.
  Sunday: **Closed**

  Special Closings:
  Saturday, July 4

- [COBA](#):

  May 18 - August 14:
  Monday - Thursday: 8 a.m. - 11:50 p.m.
   Friday - Saturday: 8 a.m. - 7:50 p.m.
   Sunday: Noon - 11:50 p.m.

   Special Closings:
   Saturday, July 4.

- [CAS](#):

  GAB 330

    June 8 - August 14:
    Monday - Thursday: 8 a.m. - Midnight
     Friday: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
     Saturday: Noon - 8 p.m.
     Sunday: Noon - Midnight

    Special Closings:
    Independence Day: July 4
    Semester Break: August 15 - 23

  GAB 550 - Closed all summer

  Terrill 220

Remember:

**Get your alerts fast
in case of inclement weather**

Visit the new Emergency Management website

**City of Denton Residents, sign up for the
CodeRED Emergency Notification System**

Stay informed!

Faculty/Staff Announcements

announce.unt.edu

Originally published, June 2009 -- Please note that information published in *Benchmarks Online* is likely to degrade over time, especially links to various Websites. To make sure you have the most current information on a specific topic, it may be best to search the UNT Website - http://www.unt.edu . You can also search **Benchmarks Online** - http://www.unt.edu/benchmarks/archives/back.htm as well as consult the UNT Helpdesk - http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/ Questions and comments should be directed to benchmarks@unt.edu

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TODAY'S CARTOON

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www.glasbergen.com

GLASBERGEN

"I have a very close relationship with my children.
I visit their Facebook pages and Twitter
them at least twice a week."

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

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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:

- **By the Numbers** - Not really a column, rather a feature, giving you a glimpse behind the scenes of the volumes of data, spam, etc. processed, managed, and otherwise handled here at UNT.

- **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 Patrick McLeod shows how totally modern he really is with "PROC TWEET: Using SAS to Analyze Twitter." Read all about it!**

- **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, Dr. Baczewski celebrates the birthday of UNIX in "UNIX is 40!" Click on the Network Connection link for a trip down memory lane.

- **Link of the Month** - As it says on the top of the "Link of the Month" page, "Each month we highlight an online mailing list or website. Frequently the link is associated with UNT." **This month's link is to "myUNT on Twitter" Click on the link above and check it out!**

- **Helpdesk FYI** - A new monthly feature from the CITC Helpdesk. Each month they will tackle a topic that has been of particular interest to callers/visitors to the Helpdesk. **This month Jonathan "Mac" Edwards, continues the EagleConnect conversation with some very helpful information in "EagleConnect Redirect." Click on the link above and read all about it.**

- **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.

Short courses have been scheduled and will begin at the end of June.

Need some research/statistical training? *Special classes* **can always be arranged with the RSS staff, and they are always available for consultation. Click on the Short Courses link above for information about classes likely to be offered next semester and/or other training resources.**

- **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. **No minutes were published this month.**

- **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 are featured here.

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Benchmarks Online

Network Connection

By Dr. Philip Baczewski, Director of Academic Computing and User Services

UNIX is 40!

UNIX is 40 and it seems just like yesterday that it was a fresh new OS toddling around on strange new hardware platforms. When UNIX was born, IBM mainframes running MVS were the dominant processing systems, and you didn't have one in your house unless you had a few million dollars to spare. Now, thanks to LINUX, you can run a version of UNIX on your laptop if you want to and large business database software such as Oracle is more likely to be running on UNIX than anything else.

In the beginning ...

The development of UNIX is inextricably linked with the development of the Internet.[*] Many of the first computers connected to the Internet ran UNIX and some of the first Internet utilities were developed or most common on UNIX systems. Telnet, ftp, sendmail, BIND, and many of other fundamental Internet programs were intrinsic to UNIX systems before they made their way to other platforms. Sendmail and BIND in particular were developed as part of a UNIX variant programmed at UC Berkeley named the Berkeley Software Distribution also known as BSD (which is also the basis for today's Mac OS X.) The first web browser was programmed on a NeXT microcomputer that ran a version of UNIX based on BSD.

Over the years, UNIX systems have served as the Internet servers that have provided information and services accessible via the Internet. Yesterday's Internet mail servers and mail routers were mostly on UNIX systems. Today's World Wide Web servers run on more UNIX servers than anything else, and the Apache web server, which runs mostly on LINUX, hosts more than 45% of web pages, by most accounts.

UNT and UNIX

Here at UNT, the UNIX revolution began in the early 1980s with the acquisition of a Digital Equipment Corporation VAX minicomputer running a version of UNIX.[**] This system was known as the "Research VAX" and was mostly used by Computer Sciences faculty and students. In the early 1990s, a new UNIX computer was acquired for use by those doing scientific or computational research. This computer was made by a company named Solbourne and was a Sun Microsystems-compatible minicomputer running Sun OS, a variant of BSD at the time. This system was named "Sol", both as a variant of "Solbourne" and as an indication of its status as a large and central computing resource. Sol was the first UNIX system at UNT to be connected to the Internet. Previous to its acquisition, UNT's

Internet connectivity was based on VAX computers that ran an operating system named VMS.

In a bit of personal history, I can relate that when it came time to upgrade the Solbourne's processors, I found out that the procedure would be to take out the old circuit boards and replace them with new ones. I suggested to Billy Barron, the VAX/UNIX manager at that time, that since we'd have these processor boards left over we should buy a smaller computer without processor boards and plug them in to make a UNIX computer that students could access to get onto the Internet and send e-mail. This led to the creation of a system named "Jove", following a solar system-based naming convention for our UNIX systems, and was the first student e-mail system at UNT. So in the spirit of Al Gore, I guess I can claim to have invented the Internet at UNT (just kidding.:)

In the 1990s, Academic Computing's collection of UNIX systems grew in support of Internet services, instruction, and research and Internet-based communication became more and more a part of research, scholarship, and learning. The Solbourne computers were gradually supplanted by newer versions of Sun Microsystems equipment. By the mid 1990s, Sun had released Solaris, which was a version of UNIX known as System V, release 4 (SVR4), which represented a unification of earlier disparate developments of the UNIX code. But, by the late 1990s, many Internet services could be accessed on personal microcomputers and the dominance of UNIX system as the access to Internet services began to fade. However, UNIX servers continued and still occupy a place at the core of Internet operations and services.

Thank a UNIX server

So, the next time that you send an e-mail or browse a web page, thank a UNIX server. What we've witnessed in the last 40 years was a remarkable synergy that has created the online world that we now take for granted. There could have been an Internet without UNIX or a UNIX without the Internet, yet together along with the computer technology that grew up with and round them, they've transformed how we live our lives.

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* Hobbes' Internet Timeline, circa 1994, provides an interesting view of the history of the Internet and UNIX, and, if you poke around the rest of that issue of *Benchmarks* a bit, UNT computing. The complete (so far) timeline can be found here.

** See Computing Center Chronology - Equipment for a history of the computer purchases etc. at the University from the 1960s through the early 2000's.

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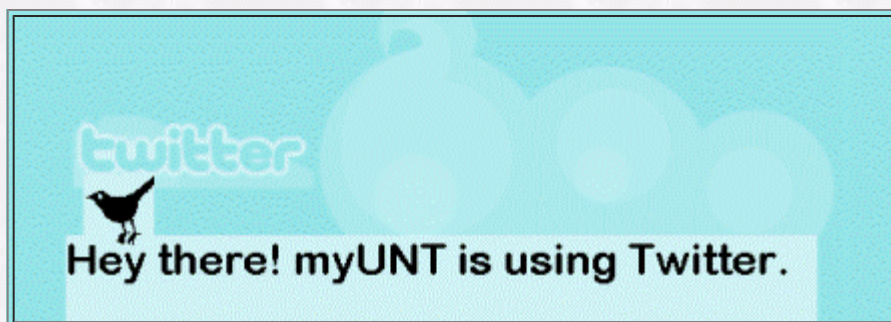The Network Connection

Link of the Month
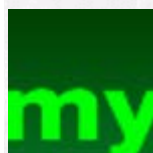
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Link of the Month

Each month we highlight an online website or mailing list. The link is usually associated with UNT.

Hey there! myUNT is using Twitter.

myUNT on Twitter

myUNT is a web portal designed to provide a central location where UNT community members can access the Enterprise Information System (EIS) and other available online services using a single login. MyUNT was featured as last month's "List of the Month." Lots of important information is published on myUNT and **NOW**, *NOW*, you can follow **myUNT** on Twitter! To follow **myUNT**, go to the link below and either login if you already have a twitter account or join (it's free).

http://twitter.com/myUNT

What could be easier?

Originally published, June 2009 -- Please note that information published in *Benchmarks Online* is likely to degrade over time, especially links to various Websites. To make sure you have the most current information on a specific topic, it may be best to search the UNT Website - http://www.unt.edu . You can also search **Benchmarks Online** - http://www.unt.edu/benchmarks/archives/back.htm as well as consult the UNT Helpdesk - http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/ Questions and comments should be directed to benchmarks@unt.edu

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Helpdesk FYI

By **Jonathan "Mac" Edwards**, **Assistant Manager of the CITC Helpdesk**

EagleConnect Redirect

With the new EagleConnect email system it is fairly simple to redirect or forward your email to other accounts. To do this we recommend you use IE7 or higher, Firefox 3 or higher, or the latest version of Safari. Older browser versions may put you in the "light" version of EageConnect which will not allow you to set up email redirect.

Instructions:

After logging into EagleConnect look for the Options tab, which should be next to the search field.
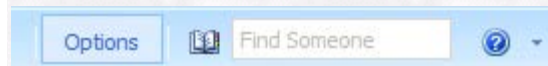
Click on the Options tab.

From the Left Hand Menu choose Organize E-Mail.
Next Choose Inbox Rules.
Select New...
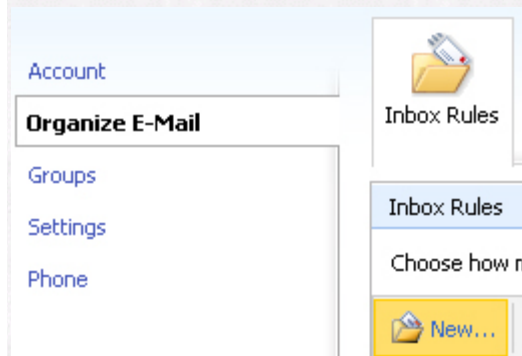
The Rules Window will now open.

Choose the following options:

***When the message arrives, and:** Choose [Apply to all messages]. This will ensure that any message sent to you gets redirected.

***Do the following:** Choose Redirect the message to...

We **strongly** recommend that you chose Redirect, as this will allow you to reply to the original sender.

```
*Required fields

Apply this rule...

    * When the message arrives, and:
    [Apply to all messages]                      ▼

    * Do the following:
    Redirect the message to...                   ▼
```

A new window will open prompting you to input the address you wish to Redirect your Messages to.

In the To field type in the destination address, and click OK.

Now select Save to save your settings.

Your messages should now properly be redirected.

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IRC News

Minutes provided by Susan Richroath, Recording Secretary*

The IRC -- unofficially now known as the INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL (ITC) -- is currently undergoing a reorganization, see the May 20, 2008 minutes for more information.**

No IRC/ITC minutes were available for publication this month.

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* For a list of IRC Regular and Ex-officio Members click here (last updated 12/12/08). Warren Burggren is now the Chair.

**DCSMT Minutes can be found here.

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Originally published, June 2009 -- Please note that information published in *Benchmarks Online* is likely to degrade over time, especially links to various Websites. To make sure you have the most current information on a specific topic, it may be best to search the UNT Website - http://www.unt.edu . You can also search *Benchmarks Online* - http://www.unt.edu/benchmarks/archives/back.htm as well as consult the UNT Helpdesk - http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/ Questions and comments should be directed to benchmarks@unt.edu

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Research and Statistical Support
University of North Texas

RSS Matters

Link to the last RSS article here: Introducing AMOS 17 and SPSS 17. - Ed.

PROC TWEET: Using SAS to Analyze Twitter

By Patrick McLeod, Research and Statistical Support Services Consultant

This month's *Benchmarks Online* article brings together something we're all familiar with (SAS) and something that is a bit more recent (Twitter). Twitter is a micro-blogging service that is free to sign up for, free to use and, most importantly for the purposes of this paper, free to access. The idea behind Twitter is that users post short missives about something (140 character limit) and share these with their followers (other Twitter users who are following that user) and the public in general. These posts, known as tweets, can use a topic convention for certain messages pertaining to a specific topic. This convention involves the use of a hash tag (#) followed by a topic name. For instance, the topic #nbafinals is a Twitter topic about the NBA Finals between the Lakers and Magic.

#iranelection

For this article, we're going to import a trending Twitter topic (#iranelection, a topic covering tweets about the contested Presidential election in Iran) and examine the occurrences of two hot sub-topics concerning Twitter's scheduled maintenance later this evening. To provide a bit of background on why I'm examining this, last Friday, June 12, 2009, there was a Presidential election in Iran. For a variety of reasons, the results of this election have been questioned by the Green Party and other opposition parties fielding candidates in Iran and by many organizations and individuals in the international community. Iranian citizens using Twitter were providing an almost-instantaneous stream of information via the social media platform to the outside world at a point in time when international journalists were (and continue to be) restricted from travelling outside of Tehran, Iran's capital. These tweets gave the outside world an unparalleled look at what was going on as protests against the election began and were suppressed by the Iranian government.

Twitter announced earlier in the day today that Twitter would be unavailable for an hour and a half later this evening for scheduled maintenance. This announcement sparked two trending sub-topics in the #iranelection topic, #twitterfail and #nomaintenance. Both sub-topics expressed dismay at Twitter being unavailable for any amount of time, particularly considering

that information coming out of Iran right now is mostly coming from Twitter.

To look at these two sub-topics, we're going to use SAS 9.2, SAS XML Mapper, a small macro, PROC PRINT and PROC SGPLOT. I based this example on Chris Hemedinger's blog post at the SAS Dummy on using SAS to mine Twitter for an informal poll of the VP debate winner from last Fall's Presidential election. You can find it [here](#).

The first step in this process is to create an XML feed for the topic #iranelection. This can easily be done on Twitter's home page (http://www.twitter.com). Under the trending topic sidebar, click on the topic you would like to examine. A new page showing only tweets with that topic will appear. On this page, click on the link that reads RSS feed for this topic. This will create another page that will provide you with the Atom feed for the topic in question. In this case, my feed URL for #iranelection is http://search.twitter.com/search.atom?q=%23iranelection . It's worth taking a moment to note that taking data from topic feeds when they are very active (as #iranelection is at this time) poses a unique set of considerations. For one, new tweets can be added to a topic amazingly fast such that your data's time frame can change considerably depending on how active the topic. If you want to capture a wider time frame for an active topic, you will need to get more pages of tweets than for a slower topic.

I ran my SAS program that utilizes the XML Mapper to grab data from the Atom feed above at 4:42pm Central Time. All 541 tweets that were captured were issued no earlier than 4:40pm Central Time. Using a regular expression matching statement with Perl, I selected all the tweets in the dataset that contained the #twitterfail and #nomaintenance hash tags and generated a horizontal bar graph of the results. Here it is:
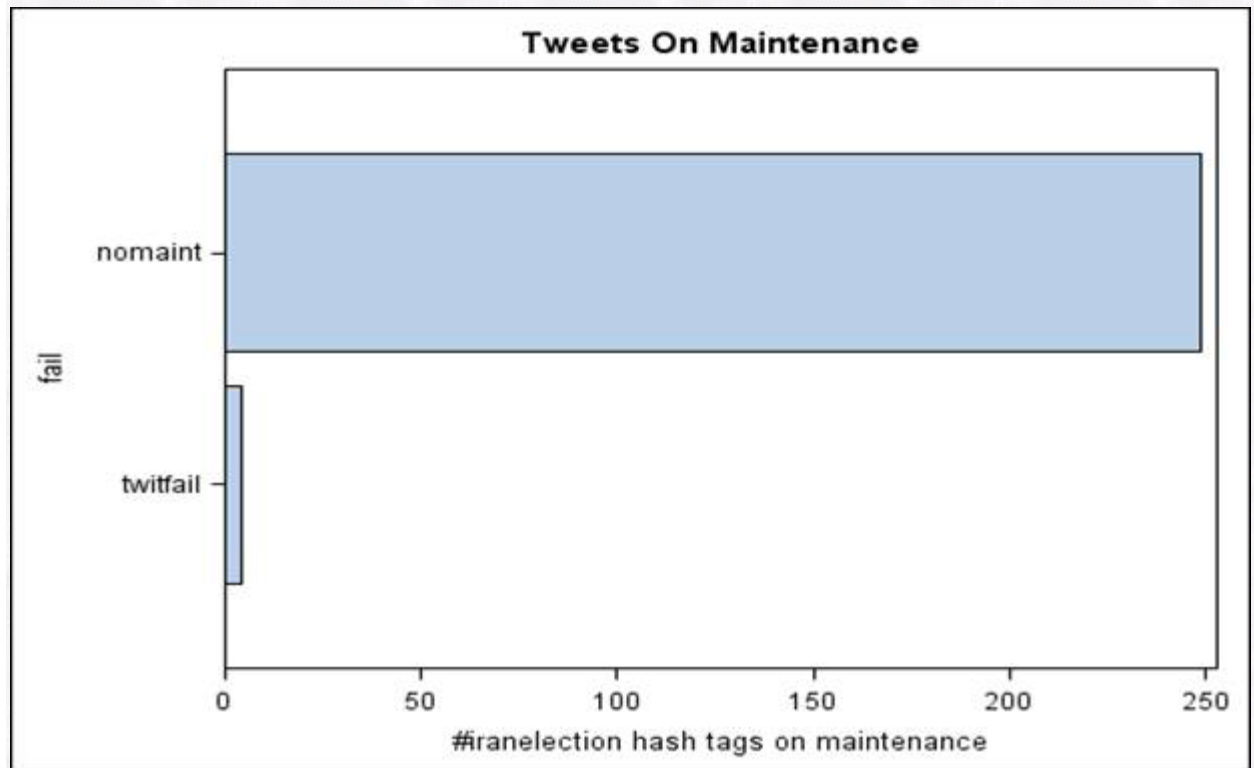
The number of Twitter users using the #nomaintenance hash tag in these two minutes of tweets is far greater than the number of Twitter users using the #twitterfail hash tag.

There is quite a bit of mining that could be done using Twitter's Atom feeds. I hope that this example of how one might employ SAS, its XML Mapper and a well-formed XML-based RSS feed like Atom will open up some new possibilities for you when it comes to using the most current that the web can offer in conjunction with some simple statistical analysis. Until next

time, happy computing!

Code for this article:

```
filename twsearch temp;
/** this is the XML map that will convert the RSS search feed
    into a SAS data set **/
data _null_;
  infile datalines truncover;
  file twsearch;
  input line $1000.;
  put line;
datalines4;
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="windows-1252"?>
<!-- ############################################################ -->
<!-- 2008-10-03T11:35:31 -->
<!-- SAS XML Libname Engine Map -->
<!-- Generated by XML Mapper, 902000.2.1.20080911191346_v920 -->
<!-- ############################################################ -->
<SXLEMAP name="SXLEMAP" version="1.2">
    <!-- ############################################################ -->
    <TABLE name="entry">
        <TABLE-PATH syntax="XPath">/feed/entry</TABLE-PATH>
        <COLUMN name="id">
            <PATH syntax="XPath">/feed/entry/id</PATH>
            <TYPE>character</TYPE>
            <DATATYPE>string</DATATYPE>
            <LENGTH>37</LENGTH>
        </COLUMN>
        <COLUMN name="published">
            <PATH syntax="XPath">/feed/entry/published</PATH>
            <TYPE>numeric</TYPE>
            <DATATYPE>datetime</DATATYPE>
            <FORMAT width="19">IS8601DT</FORMAT>
            <INFORMAT width="19">IS8601DT</INFORMAT>
```

```
          </COLUMN>

          <COLUMN name="link">

               <PATH syntax="XPath">/feed/entry/link</PATH>

               <TYPE>character</TYPE>

               <DATATYPE>string</DATATYPE>

               <LENGTH>32</LENGTH>

          </COLUMN>

          <COLUMN name="title">

               <PATH syntax="XPath">/feed/entry/title</PATH>

               <TYPE>character</TYPE>

               <DATATYPE>string</DATATYPE>

               <LENGTH>140</LENGTH>

          </COLUMN>

          <COLUMN name="content">

               <PATH syntax="XPath">/feed/entry/content</PATH>

               <TYPE>character</TYPE>

               <DATATYPE>string</DATATYPE>

               <LENGTH>261</LENGTH>

          </COLUMN>

          <COLUMN name="updated">

               <PATH syntax="XPath">/feed/entry/updated</PATH>

               <TYPE>numeric</TYPE>

               <DATATYPE>datetime</DATATYPE>

               <FORMAT width="19">IS8601DT</FORMAT>

               <INFORMAT width="19">IS8601DT</INFORMAT>

          </COLUMN>

          <COLUMN name="author">

               <PATH syntax="XPath">/feed/entry/author</PATH>

               <TYPE>character</TYPE>

               <DATATYPE>string</DATATYPE>

               <LENGTH>32</LENGTH>

          </COLUMN>

     </TABLE>

</SXLEMAP>

;;;;
```

```sas
/** this is the data set that will hold the "tweet" content **/

data work.feed;
  length fail $ 10;
run;

/** this macro makes it simple to get several "pages" worth of tweets **/

%macro getpage(num);
    %let feed="http://search.twitter.com/search.atom?q=%23iranelection";
    filename twit URL &feed
    /** if you need to specify a proxy server to get to the internet **/
    /**    proxy="http://myproxy.com"   **/
    ;

    /** use the XML library engine **/
    libname tf XML xmlfileref=twit xmlmap=twsearch;

    data work.feed;
      set work.feed tf.entry;
    run;
%mend;

%getpage(1);
%getpage(2);
%getpage(3);
%getpage(4);
%getpage(5);
%getpage(6);
%getpage(7);
%getpage(8);
%getpage(9);
%getpage(10);
%getpage(11);
```

```
%getpage(12);

%getpage(13);

%getpage(14);

%getpage(15);

%getpage(16);

%getpage(17);

%getpage(18);

%getpage(19);

%getpage(20);

%getpage(21);

%getpage(22);

%getpage(23);

%getpage(24);

%getpage(25);

%getpage(26);

%getpage(27);

%getpage(28);

%getpage(29);

%getpage(30);

%getpage(31);

%getpage(32);

%getpage(33);

%getpage(34);

%getpage(35);

%getpage(36);

%getpage(37);

%getpage(38);

%getpage(39);

%getpage(40);

%getpage(41);

%getpage(42);

%getpage(43);

%getpage(44);

%getpage(45);
```

```sas
%getpage(46);

%getpage(47);

%getpage(48);

%getpage(49);

%getpage(50);

%getpage(51);

%getpage(52);

%getpage(53);

%getpage(54);

%getpage(55);

%getpage(56);

%getpage(57);

%getpage(58);

%getpage(59);

%getpage(60);


/** if the tweet contains the #twitterfail topic, it gets a tick **/

/** if the tweet contains the #nomaintenance topic, it gets a tick **/

data work.feed;

  set work.feed;

    if prxmatch('/(#twitterfail)/',lowcase(title)) >0 then fail="twitfail";

    if prxmatch('/(#nomaintenance)/',lowcase(title)) >0 then fail="nomaint";

run;


proc print data=work.feed;

var fail;

run;


title "Tweets On Maintenance";

ods graphics / width=800 height=600;

proc sgplot data=work.feed;

hbar fail;
```

```
xaxis label="#iranelection hash tags on maintenance";

run;

quit;
```

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Benchmarks Online

Short Courses

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

Short courses have been scheduled and will begin at the end of June. Classes in SAS, SPSS, R, S-Plus and New Technologies for Survey Research will be offered. Surf over to the Short Courses page to see the schedule.

Special classes can always be arranged with the RSS staff. See "Customized Short Courses" below for further information. Also, you can *always* contact the RSS staff for one-on-one consultation. **Please read the FAQ before requesting an appointment though.**

Customized Short Courses

Faculty members can request customized short courses geared to their class needs from ACS. 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 (they have a new comprehensive training curriculum), and the Center for Learning Enhancement, Assessment, and Redesign. Additionally, the Center for Achievement and Lifelong Learning offers a variety of courses, usually for a small fee.

EIS training is available. Questions or comments relating to EIS training should be sent to EIStrn@unt.edu.

Microsoft E-Learning

Microsoft E-Learning courses are now available for *faculty and staff* via our UNT-Microsoft Campus Agreement. Please contact Claudia Lynch at lynch@unt.edu for instructions on accessing this training.

Microsoft Outlook Training and more

The Messaging Systems Group has all sorts of useful information on their website, including training information.

Central Web Support

Consult Central Web Support for assistance in acquiring "Internet services and support." As described on their newly re-designed website:

> CWS provides Internet services and support to UNT faculty, staff and students. Services include allocating and assisting departments, campus organizations and faculty with web space and associated applications. Additionally, CWS assists web developers with databases and associated web applications, troubleshooting problems, support and service.

Tutorials are available from CWS on a variety of topics.

CLEAR (was Center for Distributed Learning)

CLEAR offers courses especially for Faculty Members. A list of topics and further information can be found here.

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 CLEAR Website.

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.unt.edu/minicourses/

Information Security Awareness

The UNT Information Security team has been offering Information Security Awareness courses to all UNT faculty and staff. Topics to be covered will include workstation security, sensitive data handling, copyright infringement issues, identity theft, email security, and more.

For more information, or if you would like to request a customized course to be taught for your department, contact Gabe Marshall at x4062, or at security@unt.edu.

Also, Information Security Training is now available through WebCT Vista.

Alternate Forms of Training

Many of the General Access Labs around campus have tutorials installed on their computers. See http://www.gal.unt.edu/ for a list of labs and their locations. The Willis Library, for example, has a list of Tutorials and Software Support.

The [Training Website](#) has all sorts of information about alternate forms of training. Computer Based Training (CBT) and Web-based training are some of the alternatives offered, although due to the rising costs of training, shrinking budgets and changing technology, computer-based training at UNT is in a state of transition. For up-to-date information on CBT at UNT, see the CBT [website](#).

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. For example, under [Conferences, Briefings, and Events](#) is a "Microsoft Training Series" described as "free training classes ... delivered by Microsoft and hosted by DIR as part of the Technology Today Series (TTS)."

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Staff Activities

Transitions

New Employees:

- **Trent Geerdes**, Computer Systems Manager, Host Computer User Services (ACUS).

- **Marci Mason,** Programmer Analyst, Constituent Relationship Mgmt., Student/Contributor Services (AIS).

- **Masha Aziz,** Programmer Analyst, Student Records Systems, Student/Contributor Services (AIS).

- **Katherine Bynum**, Data Management Student Assistant (part-time).

No longer working in the Computing and Information Technology Center:

- **Zachary "Zac" Sprague**, Data Management Student Assistant (part-time).

Changes, Awards, Recognition, Publications, etc.

Publications

Dr. Richard Anderson, Information Security Coordinator, had an article published in the *Bulletin of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*. The article, "Reconstructing Bellour: Automating the Semiotic Analysis of Film," can be found here: http://www.asis.org/Bulletin/Jun-09/JunJul09_Anderson_OConnor.html

Service to UNT

The following people were recognized in the May 11 *InHouse* for their years of service to the University. Congratulations and thanks to:

20 years of service

Scott Alan Windham, Communications Manager, Data Communications.

15 years of service

Robert J. Blake, Programmer Analyst, Application Infrastructure Mgmt (EIS).

10 years of service

Krysta Lee Berry, Communications Manager, Data Communications.

Kory Glen Booth, Computer Equipment Operator, CITC Operations & Infrastructure Support, Administration and Compliance.

Soaring Eagles

The following people were recognized as Soaring Eagles in the June/July issue of *HR Connections*, the Human Resources Newsletter. They will all be honored at President's Staff Sack Lunch in October 2009.

- **Claudia Lynch**, Documentation Services Manager (ACUS) and *Benchmarks Online* Editor.

- **Don McClure**, Support Database Analyst, Call Tracking Administration (ACUS).

- **Monty Slayton**, Computer Systems Manager, CITC Infrastructure and Technical Services.

- **Academic Computing and User Services** was recognized as a *Soaring Eagle Department*!

Wedding Bells!

- Congratulations to **Mikal David Hensarling**, ACS General Access Lab Manager, and Shera Danae Richards who were married on May 23 in Jacinto City, TX. The lucky couple spent a week in Hawaii on their honeymoon!

Fun Fact Winners

Continuing the CITC tradition, we have more "Fun Fact Winners." Congratulations to **Jeri Takimoto**, Contributor Relation Systems Development Team leader (AIS) and **Hanish Sharma**, Programmer Analyst, Payroll/HR Systems (AIS). **Jeri** was a winner in the May 20 *InHouse* prize giveaway. **Hanish** was a winner in the June 15 *InHouse* prize giveaway.