



[CITC Home](#)

[Help Desk](#)

[Training](#)

[About Us](#)

[Publications](#)

[Our Mission](#)

Volume 11 - Number 10 * October 2008

Columns

[NetworkConnection](#)

[Link of the Month](#)

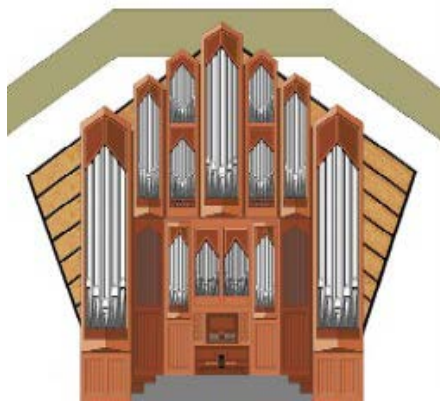
[Helpdesk FYI](#)

[IRC News](#)

[RSS Matters](#)

[Short Courses](#)

[Staff Activities](#)



By the Numbers

Number of student accounts that have been provisioned so far in Microsoft Live@edu SkyDrive: 46,505

Campus Computing News

[October iSecurity Awareness Month](#)

[Get YouSkillPort While You Can](#)

[Where in the World Did UNT Student Storage](#)

[S-Plus 8 and EViews 6 are Now Available](#)

TODAY'S CARTOON

[Don't forget our monthly columns!](#)



About Benchmarks



Search Archive



Subscribe to Benchmarks



ACUTA Member Sites to See

Click on the graphic to the right to learn about the addition of the UNT Dallas campus to EIS and other EIS activities.



[Return to top](#)

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS™

[Network Connection](#) | [Link of the Month](#) | [IRC News](#) | [RSS Matters](#) | [Helpdesk FYI](#) | [Short Courses](#) | [Staff Activities](#)

[Computing and Information Technology Center Home](#) | [Help Desk](#) | [Training](#) | [About Us](#) | [Publications](#) | [Our Mission](#)

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 : October 16, 2008

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

[UNT home page](#) | [Search UNT](#) | [UNT news](#) | [UNT events](#)

[Page One](#)

[Campus Computing News](#)

[Get Your SkillPort While You Can](#)

[Where in the World Did UNT Student Storage Go?](#)

[S-Plus 8 and EViews 6 are Now Available](#)

[Today's Cartoon](#)

[RSS Matters](#)

[The Network Connection](#)

[Link of the Month](#)

[Helpdesk FYI](#)

[Short Courses](#)

[IRC News](#)

[Staff Activities](#)

[Subscribe to Benchmarks Online](#)

Campus Computing News

October is Security Awareness Month

By [Gabe Marshall](#), Information Security Analyst

Fall is finally here. While most people are out enjoying the cool weather, the fall festivals, and looking forward to Halloween, there is an ongoing effort in the IT world to increase the popularity of what is now known as "Security Awareness Month."

The following article is part one of a three part series the UNT Information Security Team will be providing to the campus this month as a part of our own security awareness program. Please check our site throughout this month for the remaining articles that will be covering various important topics. To find out more information security and the training opportunities we have available at UNT, visit our website at www.unt.edu/security.



Password Security

Passwords are a common frustration shared by many people in the world today. These days usernames and passwords are required to accomplish most of our daily tasks; whether it be paying bills, going shopping, or getting through a day at the office. A common misconception with passwords is that there is little reason to spend time worrying about protecting the passwords for each online account we use. The truth however, is that passwords are frequently stolen then sold and traded across the internet. What can be done to protect our passwords? There are a couple easy steps that you can take to ensure your safety.

First and foremost, remember to always create strong passwords. A strong password should be at minimum eight characters long, and should include a combination of upper and lower case letters, numbers, and at least one special character or symbol. Keep in mind that an obscure password will make it exponentially harder for a hacker to obtain access to your information.

Secondly,

Always remember to keep different passwords for the different systems that you use. The reasoning behind this is that if one of your accounts is compromised, the hacker will attempt the same password on various other websites and systems that they've seen you access in the past. Do you have trouble remembering multiple passwords like most of us?

The best advice we can give is to install what is known as a password manager. A password manager is a program that runs on your local machine, and encrypts the login information for the various websites you access. Think of the password saving feature built into most internet browsers, but much more secure. Popular password managers that can be obtained for free online are products such as [KeePass](#) and [1Password](#).

Lastly,

Change your passwords often. It is a fact that no one looks forward to changing their password, but the reason passwords are stolen so frequently is a combination between users creating weak passwords, and the fact that most users never change their passwords unless they are forced to. Remember, time is always on the side of hackers. The longer you go without changing your password, the more time hackers have to slowly but surely crack it. Although most systems at UNT require a password reset every 120 days, you still need to remember to change the passwords on other non-UNT system accounts, as well as any local servers you may have running on your machine.

To summarize, try and remember to protect your passwords just as you would the keys to your car or your house. Don't share them with anyone, don't leave them laying out on your desk when you're not around, and if you think they've been compromised make sure you change them as quickly as possible.

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.

Originally published, October 2008 -- 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

[Return to top](#)

[Page One](#)

[Campus Computing News](#)

Get Your SkillPort While You Can

[Where in the World Did UNT Student Storage Go?](#)

[S-Plus 8 and EViews 6 are Now Available](#)

[Today's Cartoon](#)

[RSS Matters](#)

[The Network Connection](#)

[Link of the Month](#)

[Helpdesk FYI](#)

Short Courses

[IRC News](#)

[Staff Activities](#)

[Subscribe to Benchmarks Online](#)

Get Your SkillPort While You Can



By [Dr. Elizabeth Hinkle-Turner](#), Student Computing Services Manager

The SkillPort computer-based training system is going away in November but is still available to UNT community members this month. So if you have never taken advantage of the training – now is the time! SkillPort has several offerings in many of the applications that have recently been adopted on this campus including Outlook, SharePoint, and Project.

The SkillPort CBT system was an expensive item and unfortunately, the limited university use of this resource no longer justifies the expense. However, there are some die-hard SkillPort users out there who will need guidance in where to go for their training in the future. Do not despair – SkillPort users and SkillPort wannabes – check out these ‘free CBT’ articles which have been a regular feature of *Benchmarks Online* for the past several years:

- [Information Security Training Now Available Through WebCT Vista](#)
- [Free and Legal: Copyright Advice and Training Online](#)
- [Adobe Provides Thorough Online Instruction at No Cost](#)
- [Using the Adobe Education Website - Revised November 2005](#)
- [No-Hassle CBT: Library Online Tech Book Resources](#)
- [Windows Vista Learning Resources](#)
- [Get Revved Up for Office and Outlook 2007!](#)

Current UNT community members can still email ehinkle@unt.edu with their EUID to get a SkillPort account. Don't miss your final chance!

Originally published, October 2008 -- 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



[Return to top](#)

[Page One](#)

[Campus Computing News](#)

[Get Your SkillPort While You Can](#)

Where in the World Did UNT Student Storage Go?

[S-Plus 8 and EViews 6 are Now Available](#)

[Today's Cartoon](#)

[RSS Matters](#)

[The Network Connection](#)

[Link of the Month](#)

[Helpdesk FYI](#)

[Short Courses](#)

[IRC News](#)

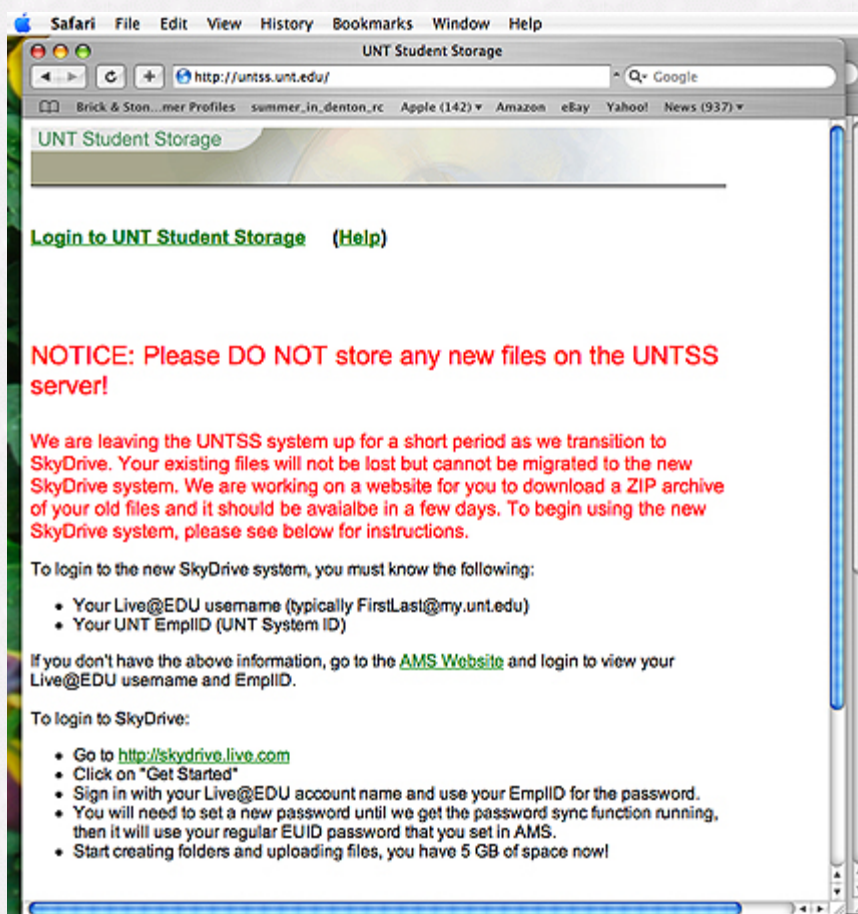
[Staff Activities](#)

[Subscribe to Benchmarks Online](#)

Where in the World Did UNT Student Storage Go?

By [Dr. Elizabeth Hinkle-Turner](#), Student Computing Services Manager

As if there wasn't enough insecurity in the world today what with stock markets crashing, hurricanes blasting and the like....now you go to untss.unt.edu and you see something like this:

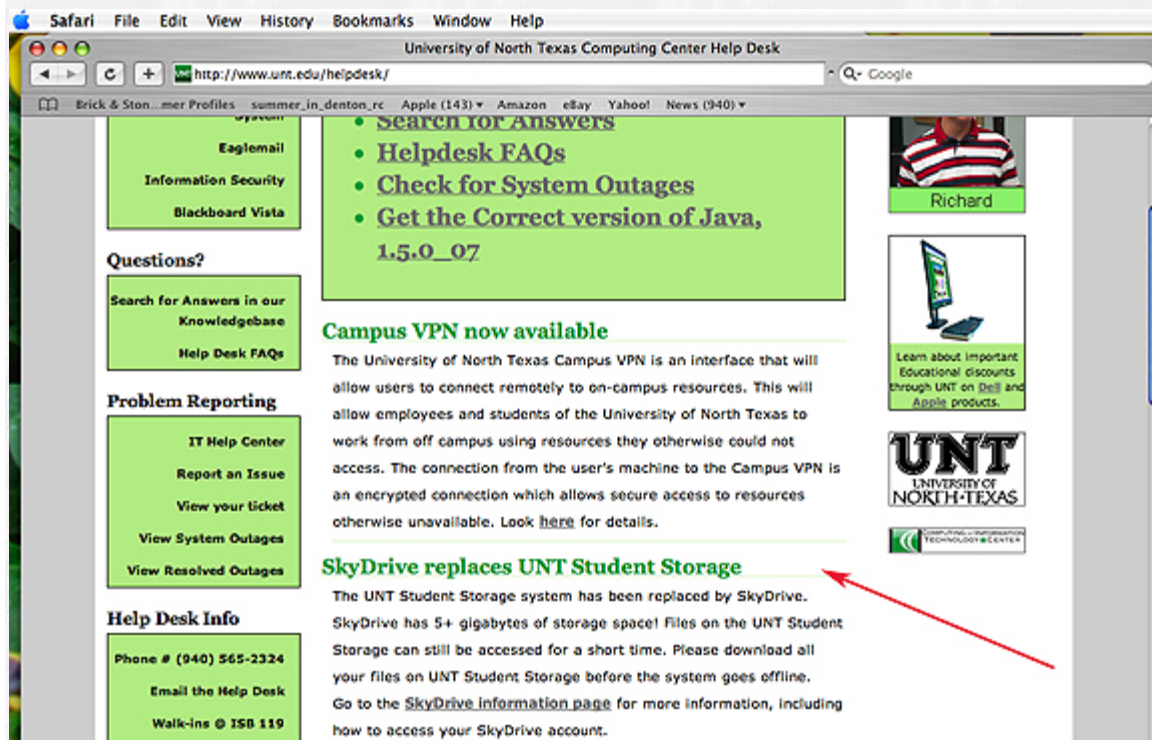


"Where did UNT Student Storage go? Where are my documents? I want my mommy! " These may be just some of the thoughts going through your head (I am censoring some of the other possible thoughts you may have had!). Actually, UNT Student Storage hasn't gone away - it has just gotten better! As in "now there are more than 5 GB of storage space for each student instead of only 250 MB" and "soon your student storage will be accessible along with your email from one single login page".

UNT Student Storage resided on a Netware system and now has been moved to a Microsoft system. As [was reported](#) in last month's *Benchmarks Online*, this service is called SkyDrive and is phase one of UNT's move to the Microsoft Live@EDU system

for student email, calendaring and a variety of other digital communication options. One thing does need to be emphasized - this is a system for the **STUDENTS**. Faculty and staff do not have access to storage on SkyDrive and should talk to their network managers about storage options for their work. All current students already have accounts 'provisioned' on the SkyDrive and should start using Sky Drive right away.

In addition to the brief instructions offered at the old UNTSS site, the CITC Helpdesk team has created a tutorial about the use of the system including more information about upcoming features and access:



This tutorial is linked on the homepage of the CITC Helpdesk website.

Anyone wishing to 'migrate' their documents from UNTSS to Sky Drive (if you are a student) or some other place (if you are faculty and staff who had documents on the old UNTSS system) will need to do this 'by hand' - downloading them to their hard drive or a removable device and transferring them. CITC Helpdesk technicians can assist with this process and answer any questions.

Stay tuned for further implementation of the Live@EDU system which is steadily progressing towards full implementation.

Originally published, October 2008 -- 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

[Return to top](#)

[Page One](#)

[Campus Computing News](#)

[Get Your SkillPort While You Can](#)

[Where in the World Did UNT Student Storage Go?](#)

S-Plus 8 and EViews 6 are Now Available

[Today's Cartoon](#)

[RSS Matters](#)

[The Network Connection](#)

[Link of the Month](#)

[Helpdesk FYI](#)

[Short Courses](#)

[IRC News](#)

[Staff Activities](#)

[Subscribe to Benchmarks Online](#)

S-Plus 8 and EViews 6 are Now Available

By [Dr. Elizabeth Hinkle-Turner](#), Student Computing Services Manager

All of you statistics junkies now have the latest versions of EViews (version 6) and SPLUS (version 8) available to you from Academic Computing and User Services. Users of these applications should consult their [network managers](#) about getting these latest updates in the labs.

Network managers should contact Elizabeth Hinkle-Turner for technical details for installing these applications and Patrick McLeod for licensing questions.



Originally published, October 2008 -- 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

[Return to top](#)

[Skip Navigation Links](#)

[Page One](#)

[Campus Computing News](#)

[Get Your SkillPort While You Can](#)

[Where in the World Did UNT Student Storage Go?](#)

[S-Plus 8 and EViews 6 are Now Available](#)

Today's Cartoon

[RSS Matters](#)

[The Network Connection](#)

[Link of the Month](#)

[Helpdesk FYI](#)

[Short Courses](#)

[IRC News](#)

[Staff Activities](#)

[Subscribe to Benchmarks Online](#)

maincontent

Today's Cartoon

Copyright © Randy GLasbergen.
www.glasbergen.com



“If I turn my subwoofer way up during the financial report, I can create a booming economy!”

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

Originally published, October 2008 -- 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

[Return to top](#)

[Page One](#)

[Campus Computing News](#)

[Get Your SkillPort While You Can](#)

[Where in the World Did UNT Student Storage Go?](#)

[S-Plus 8 and EViews 6 are Now Available](#)

[Today's Cartoon](#)

[RSS Matters](#)

[The Network Connection](#)

[Link of the Month](#)

[Helpdesk FYI](#)

[Short Courses](#)

[IRC News](#)

[Staff Activities](#)

[Subscribe to Benchmarks Online](#)

Don't Forget Our Monthly Columns!

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

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

- [By the Numbers](#) - Not really a column, but a new 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's article is by Dr. Mike Clark. It is called "Statistics: a Clarification" Check it out!**
- [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 says "It's 'Bits... in... Space...' with a booming voice and an echo effect." Say what? Click on the Network Connection link above to find out.

- [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 the new UNT homepage. 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 Richard Sanzone tells you all about the EUID Passwords. Check it out!**
- [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.

We hope to be able to offer at least a few short courses before the end of October, we apologize for the delay. We've had problems with getting software installed in the location we plan to offer the courses. Special classes can also be arranged with the RSS staff. Also, you can always contact the RSS staff

for one-on-one consultation. Click on the Short Courses link above for more information.

- **[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 IRC minutes were available for publication this month, there was no meeting in August or September. The IRC is currently undergoing a reorganization, see the May 20, 2008 [minutes](#) for more information.**
- **[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.

October Bonus: Click on the graphic to the right to learn about the addition of the UNT Dallas campus to EIS and other EIS activities.



Originally published, October 2008 -- 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

[Return to top](#)

[Page One](#)
[Campus Computing News](#)
[Get Your SkillPort While You Can](#)
[Where in the World Did UNT Student Storage Go?](#)
[S-Plus 8 and EViews 6 are Now Available](#)
[Today's Cartoon](#)
[RSS Matters](#)
[The Network Connection](#)
[Link of the Month](#)
[Helpdesk FYI](#)
[Short Courses](#)
[IRC News](#)
[Staff Activities](#)
[Subscribe to Benchmarks Online](#)

Network Connection

By [Dr. Philip Baczewski](#), Director of Academic Computing and User Services

Bits in Space

It's "Bits... in... Space..." with a booming voice and an echo effect.

More than four years ago, I [reported](#) on efforts to set up connections between various Mars orbiters in order for NASA to be able to relay data coming from planetary rovers. I dubbed this the Intergalacticnet, but noted that NASA had been operating a deep space network for over 40 years. More recently, I saw a note about efforts to design and deploy an "interplanetary Internet" which is proposed to support ongoing efforts in manned and [unmanned space exploration](#).

A British company called Surrey Satellite Technology Ltd (SSTL) is experimenting with fault tolerant methods to send data from satellite observations to ground stations via a standard Internet Protocol. Networking in space is a bit more challenging than networking on the ground, but a bit less challenging than setting up your own [wireless base station](#).

A satellite is not always in range of its communication base station as it orbits the earth. Across larger distances, asteroids, meteors, or even other planets may block a direct communication path to an earth-based receiving station. The solution being worked on for these cases is called Delay-Tolerant Networking (DTN, in case you were worried that we did not have enough Internet acronyms -- or initialisms if you want to be totally accurate.)

The idea behind DTN is that information should be able to be transferred when a communication window is available or opportune. This is done by defining a protocol supporting "bundles" of information that can operate within a store and forward service over "normal" Internet Protocols. There is a [DTN Research Group](#) who are working on developing such a protocol. Lloyd Wood and a bunch of other folks from NASA and SSTL have described such a protocol in a recent [presentation](#). (I guess this really is rocket science.) According to [Lloyd et al.](#), "Key capabilities of the Bundle Protocol include:

- Custody transfer – the ability for a bundle node to take full responsibility for a bundle reaching its final destination.
- Ability for implementations to cope with intermittent connectivity if required.
- Ability for implementations to cope with long propagation delays if required.
- Ability to take advantage of scheduled, predicted, and opportunistic connectivity (in addition to continuous connectivity).

- Late binding of overlay network endpoint identifiers to constituent internet [SIC] addresses."

All this talk about custody transfer, intermittent connectivity, delays, and predicted and opportunistic connectivity sounded oddly familiar, so I consulted the "[Way-back Machine](#)" and found [FidoNet](#) way back in the recesses of my (and the Internet's) memory. FidoNet was/is a store and forward network to relay e-mail between standalone computers that were able to make phone modem connections to other standalone computers (it was one of several such networks in operation back in the [BBS](#) era). One of the things proposed in that bygone era (1988) was the concept of "[Bundles.](#)"

The FidoNet bundle was described as follows:

"Messages are transmitted in "bundles." A bundle is a sequence of 'packets.' Every bundle has at least two packets: a header and a footer."

The DTN Bundle is a little more sophisticated:

"A bundle is a protocol data unit of the DTN bundle protocol. Each bundle comprises a sequence of two or more 'blocks' of protocol data, which serve various purposes. . . . A bundle payload (or simply 'payload') is the application data whose conveyance to the bundle's destination is the purpose for the transmission of a given bundle."

A translation of the DTN bundle definition could read, "a bundle is a sequence of packets used to transmit messages." Somehow, that sounds familiar. It just proves that there are no old ideas -- just old implementations. So, the next time you're whizzing around the solar system reading your e-mail, remember that it may not have been possible without FidoNet. That's right -- thank dog!

Originally published, October 2008 -- 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

[Return to top](#)

[Skip Navigation Links](#)

[Page One](#)

[Campus Computing News](#)

[Get Your SkillPort While You Can](#)

[Where in the World Did UNT Student Storage Go?](#)

[S-Plus 8 and EViews 6 are Now Available](#)

[Today's Cartoon](#)

[RSS Matters](#)

[The Network Connection](#)

Link of the Month

[Helpdesk FYI](#)

[Short Courses](#)

[IRC News](#)

[Staff Activities](#)

[Subscribe to Benchmarks Online](#)

Link of the Month

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



The UNT homepage has a new streamlined look that is already being [appreciated](#). Check it out:



Originally published, October 2008 -- 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

[Return to top](#)

[Page One](#)
[Campus Computing News](#)
[Get Your SkillPort While You Can](#)
[Where in the World Did UNT Student Storage Go?](#)
[S-Plus 8 and EViews 6 are Now Available](#)
[Today's Cartoon](#)
[RSS Matters](#)
[The Network Connection](#)
[Link of the Month](#)
[Helpdesk FYI](#)
[Short Courses](#)
[IRC News](#)
[Staff Activities](#)
[Subscribe to Benchmarks Online](#)

Helpdesk FYI

By [Richard Sanzone](#), CITC Helpdesk Manager

EUID Passwords*

EUID "Enterprise" passwords expire after 120 days. You can receive an email notification prior to your password expiring by logging into the Account Management System (AMS) at <http://ams.unt.edu> and enabling the "Password Expiration Notice" option.

There are two ways to reset your password:

1. The first method is the Password Reset process linked on the AMS <http://ams.unt.edu> site. The Password Reset process does not require you to provide your existing password but it does require you to verify your identity by providing some biographical information and answering your "secret question".
2. The second -- and easiest -- way to reset your password is by logging in to AMS and selecting "Change Password". The Change Password process does not require you to go through the identity verification steps that the Reset Password process does because you have to successfully login to initiate the Change Password process.

It is suggested that you go through the Change Password process prior to your password expiring to avoid having to go through the more lengthy Reset Password process.

*This is useful information that we re-print from time to time. -- Ed.

Originally published, October 2008 -- 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

[Return to top](#)

[Page One](#)
[Campus Computing News](#)
[Get Your SkillPort While You Can](#)
[Where in the World Did UNT Student Storage Go?](#)
[S-Plus 8 and EViews 6 are Now Available](#)
[Today's Cartoon](#)
[RSS Matters](#)
[The Network Connection](#)
[Link of the Month](#)
[Helpdesk FYI](#)
[Short Courses](#)
[IRC News](#)
[Staff Activities](#)
[Subscribe to Benchmarks Online](#)

IRC News



Minutes provided by Sue Ellen Richey,
Recording Secretary*

No IRC minutes were available for publication this month, there was no meeting in August or September.

The IRC is currently undergoing a reorganization, see the May 20, 2008 [minutes](#) for more information.

* For a list of IRC Regular and Ex-officio Members click [here](#) (last updated 3/14/08).

**DCSMT Minutes can be found [here](#).

IRC Meeting Schedule

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

Originally published, October 2008 -- 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

[Return to top](#)

[Page One](#)
[Campus Computing News](#)
[Get Your SkillPort While You Can](#)
[Where in the World Did UNT Student Storage Go?](#)
[S-Plus 8 and EViews 6 are Now Available](#)
[Today's Cartoon](#)
[RSS Matters](#)
[The Network Connection](#)
[Link of the Month](#)
[Helpdesk FYI](#)
[Short Courses](#)
[IRC News](#)
[Staff Activities](#)
[Subscribe to Benchmarks Online](#)

Research and Statistical Support University of North Texas

RSS Matters

Link to the last RSS article here: [Creating Maps With GIS Data in SAS 9.1.3, Part 1](#). The article below is an encore presentation. It originally appeared here [September 2007](#). Links have been updated. - Ed.

Statistics: a Clarification

By [Dr. Mike Clark](#), Research and Statistical Support Services Consultant

Many people who ask for our help at RSS do so in part, whether consciously or not, because they are not exactly aware of what statistics is. As such I have cobbled this list together in hopes of making that at least a little clearer. The list is by no means definitive nor exhaustive, but does hit on what I perceive to be some basic misunderstandings prevalent in both the applied setting and to the uninitiated. By *statistics* I mean all parts of a statistical analysis from conceptualization through interpretation and as the chosen tool of scientific investigation. Clicking on the numbers will take you to the corresponding clarification.

Some things statistics is *not*:

1. Math
2. A collection of heuristics
3. Getting output
4. Done quickly or something for which there is a 'quick' answer to
5. Easy
6. Impossible to learn
7. Disconnected from theory
8. Expensive

1. “Statistics is a science in my opinion, and it is no more a branch of mathematics than are physics, chemistry and economics; for if its methods fail the test of experience—not the test of logic—they are discarded.”

That's from Tukey¹, and he was right.

2. While rules of thumb have their place, engaging in statistical analysis is not simply deeming ‘meaningful’ to anything with X value (whatever the metric), doing X analysis whenever the variables are just so, etc. In some sciences this is only a recent revelation to those on the applied side, and others still have yet to get to that understanding. No research endeavor is an island, and any analysis must be thoughtfully interpreted in light of relevant history, current context and future implications.
3. Getting statistical output has been rendered so easy by technology it could be produced by children with some programs. Just because one has some output doesn't mean one has done a statistical analysis. If this is confusing to you as to why you need more training.
4. If you're doing a proper statistical analysis, it will never be something you can do quickly if you want to do it well. See this related RSS Matters [article](#) by Dr. Herrington. Also, people ask us ‘quick questions’ all the time. We've yet to ever find a quick answer that would be adequate.
5. This goes with #4 to some extent. Even the simplest of techniques (e.g. calculating a ‘middle’) has several possibilities available (median, mode, mean, winsorized mean, M-estimators etc.), and some might be equally viable given a situation. A simple independent samples t-test could be done standard, robustly (e.g. trimmed means), nonparametrically (e.g. bootstrapped), determined via a confidence interval for the mean difference, approached purely from an effect size perspective etc. If you think something is able to be done quickly and easily, odds are you have taken a severely limited approach.
6. Learning statistical concepts can certainly be difficult but it certainly is not impossible for *anyone* to learn. It will take time though, and if one equates time with overwhelming difficulty, and many do, then perhaps it is impossible for that person, as much of life probably is.
7. I've often heard people claim to be good with theory and bad with statistics. I have yet to understand how that is possible. No scientific theory gets by without an implication of measurement, and if a theory is devised without an understanding of how it would be measured (and thus eventually analyzed) it is not a scientific one. As such from the very get go methodological and analytical considerations should be at the forefront of any research project, and be continuously considered from that beginning to the end. One of the more common and biggest problems we come across at RSS is data that has no connection to the theory a client is interested in.
8. It can be, but it doesn't have to be. There are alternatives, and one such alternative is [R](#), which is free and which we support here at RSS and use quite extensively. For much of our needs it does everything and more than the expensive stuff. If you don't like the price for something there are options. Here are [some](#).

Some things statistics is:

1. An essential part of scientific inquiry
 2. Something that entails critical thinking
 3. In a constant state of development
 4. A source for new ideas
 5. Exploratory as well as confirmatory
 6. A means by which to understand causal structure
 7. A means by which to reduce uncertainty
 8. Mathematically intensive
 9. Interpretive
 10. A very useful tool
1. There is no science without measurement, and no understanding of the measurement without statistics applied by a keen observer. It is the analysis that enables us to extract the knowledge hiding within the data.
 2. This part really gets folks that tend to think statistical analysis is many of those things listed in the 'not' column. If you don't like to think hard, you shouldn't be doing statistical analyses or trying to interpret them.
 3. People seem to think that their introduction to statistics at the undergrad or graduate level is some sort of overview of the field. Something to take note of: anything in a typical stats textbook involves methods that at the very least are probably a quarter century old, contains many and perhaps most that are well older than that, and omits the vast majority of the field. Things have changed since Fisher's days, a lot.
 4. The result of a good analysis is always a springboard for new ways to think about things and a fuller way of understanding previous findings from some research domain. If it does not lead to new ways of thinking you can assume something has gone wrong. As a hint: non-'significant' results are still meaningful.
 5. Description and exploration are part and parcel of science. One can gain a tremendous amount of insight from an initial glimpse into a research domain as well simply examining the data to the fullest. For some reason that fell out of favor in some areas of science and/or was not deemed to be 'enough' (for theses, dissertations, publications), or somehow cheating if you explore your own data. A good exploration can be as good as any confirmatory one, and oftentimes can be more useful.
 6. If one thinks causal explanations are not possible in a domain of scientific research, they have a gross misunderstanding of both science and causality. There is a continuum of confidence in causal statements, but the goal of science and its methods is to assign causal attributions to natural events.
 7. There are lots of things we don't know. Science and its methods are the most viable means with which to reduce our ignorance regarding ourselves and the world around us.
 8. Statistics uses a lot of math. So does everyday life, what's the big deal?

9. Whatever the results are, different interpretations are available and perhaps equally plausible based on the experiences and knowledge of interested parties. This is a *good* thing, not a reason to throw our hands up in frustration.
10. In the end, statistical analysis is simply the tool we use to extract meaning from a great deal of information we can not possibly comprehend otherwise. Seen as such it should hardly be seen as something aversive, nor should there be an inherent negativity or suspicion associated with it. Save that for politics.

All of this may sound like just employment-related bias (though I might mention that I would not refer to myself as a statistician), and much of my experience comes from a social science realm where perhaps this clarification is more needed. However, it doesn't take much to see there are plenty out there in various domains of research that are content to play a game. Some, perhaps many, perhaps a majority of people in some areas of research take a minimum effort approach to their methods and analysis, then try to convince others about what they have supposedly discovered and concluded from those lackadaisical efforts.

While there is enough good research being done to sustain progress, it is slowed considerably by such shenanigans. Furthermore, those reading others' works who have the aforementioned misunderstandings of statistics restrict themselves to having to believe whatever the authors conclude or simply distrusting whatever is presented, not a very good state of affairs, but unfortunately one the general public has to deal with.

The causes and possible solutions to these problems I will have to leave for another article. For now it is hoped that the clarification will provide some insight for those that we assist and others who might come across it. Be seeing you.

Originally published, October 2008 -- 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

[Return to top](#)

[Page One](#)
[Campus Computing News](#)
[Get Your SkillPort While You Can](#)
[Where in the World Did UNT Student Storage Go?](#)
[S-Plus 8 and EViews 6 are Now Available](#)
[Today's Cartoon](#)
[RSS Matters](#)
[The Network Connection](#)
[Link of the Month](#)
[Helpdesk FYI](#)
[Short Courses](#)
[IRC News](#)
[Staff Activities](#)
[Subscribe to Benchmarks Online](#)

Short Courses

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

We hope to be able to offer at least a few short courses before the end of October, we apologize for the delay. We've had problems with getting software installed in the location we plan to offer the courses.

Surf over to the [Short Courses](#) page to see what sort of classes will likely be offered. Special classes can also 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](#), 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 Outlook Training and more

The GroupWise to Microsoft Exchange Migration is complete. 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.

For further information on CBT at UNT, see the CBT [website](#). Note, also, some *Benchmarks Online* articles that have been published in the recent past:

- [Get it while it lasts! UNT Support of SkillPort Computer-Based Training Ends November 2008](#)
- [Computer-Based Training for Microsoft Project 2007 is Now Available](#)
- [More Windows Vista and Microsoft 2007 Server Courseware Added](#)
- [SkillPort Training Site Update](#)
- [Free and Legal: Copyright Advice and Training Online](#)
- [The Gift that Keeps on Giving: Even More Outlook and Office 2007 Training Posted on the CBT Website](#)
- [New Titles Added in SharePoint Server 2007, Publisher, Project, and Office 2007](#)

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)."

Originally published, October 2008 -- 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

[Return to top](#)

[Skip Navigation Links](#)

[Page One](#)

[Campus Computing News](#)

[Get Your SkillPort While You Can](#)

[Where in the World Did UNT Student Storage Go?](#)

[S-Plus 8 and EViews 6 are Now Available](#)

[Today's Cartoon](#)

[RSS Matters](#)

[The Network Connection](#)

[Link of the Month](#)

[Helpdesk FYI](#)

[Short Courses](#)

[IRC News](#)

Staff Activities

[Subscribe to Benchmarks Online](#)

Staff Activities

Transitions

New Employees:

- **Jeri H. Takimoto**, Contributor Relation Systems Development Team leader (AIS).
- **Sam Cook**, Programmer, Student Records Systems Development Team (AIS).
- **Mikal Hensarling**, ACS General Access Lab Manager.
- **Brian Thompson**, Programmer Analyst, Constituent Relationship Management (AIS).
- **Joseph Leichty**, CSS Tech, Classroom Support Services (part-time).
- **Henry Stewart**, Computer Systems Manager, Infrastructure & Technical Services (AIS).
- **Keifer Stone**, MMS Tech, Microcomputer Maintenance (part-time).

Changes, Awards, Recognition, Publications, etc.

Dr. Elizabeth Hinkle-Turner, Student Computing Services Manager (ACS), will be presented with a Staff Contribution Award at the kick-off party for [Staff Appreciation Week](#). The Staff Contribution Award is one of the highest honors a staff member can receive and includes \$1,000 and a crystal award.

Soaring Eagles

Congratulations to the following people who were recognized as Soaring Eagles in the October/November 2008 Human Resources newsletter, [HR Connections](#).

- **Donna Cagle**, Travel Administrative Services, Computing & IT Administrative Services.
- **Krysta Kaye**, Communications Manager, Data Communications.
- **Gary Primeaux**, Customer Services Center, Telecommunications.

Fun Fact Winners

Continuing in the lucky tradition of CITC staff recently, **Anna West**, Administrative Services, was- a winner in the [Sept. 22 InHouse Fun Fact](#) giveaway.

Service to UNT

Congratulations to **Mahshid Grooms**, Team Leader, Financial Aid & Scholarships Systems Development and **Richard Sanzone**, CITC Helpdesk Manager. Grooms was recently recognized for her **25 years of service** and Sanzone for his **5 years of service** in [InHouse](#).

Originally published, October 2008 -- 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

[Return to top](#)