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By the Numbers

Administrative Information Systems

PeopleSoft module additions/
customizations in Campus Solutions and
Financials = 9384

Customizations of PeopleSoft delivered
modules in Campus Solutions and
Financials = 3.35%



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Campus Computing News

A word from your E-mail Postmaster ...

By [Bahram Paiani](#), Postmaster, UNT Messaging Systems Group

Hi there,

I would like to welcome all students, faculty and staff to the 2009 spring semester here at UNT and assure you that the state of UNT's E-mail system is sound. As you all know, E-mail has become a major communication tool. Everyday we communicate with friends, family and almost everybody else via E-mail. Only ten years ago we had one very small computer as the backbone of our E-mail system. The campus at most sent and received a few thousand E-mail messages a day; there was no spam, no viruses, and no other major treats. Things changed, however, and about five years ago we needed to come up with a more sophisticated system to protect UNT from malicious viruses and unsolicited commercial mail. We went through a number of homemade E-mail systems until we obtained a new anti-spam/anti-virus software system that [came online](#) in November 2007. This new system is called IronPort which is now a subsidiary of CISCO™ systems. IronPort uses several different techniques to eliminate a broad range of known and emerging treats. In the last year alone we have blocked 1.2 Gigabytes of messages that potentially contained major treats targeting our E-mail systems and the UNT community (see other statistics in [Figure 1](#)).

IronPort Spam Quarantine



IronPort also quarantines E-mail that is perceived to be "spam". You can access our quarantine system by logging in to <https://spam.unt.edu> with your EUID and your password. You have the option of deleting the E-mail or releasing it if you would like to have that piece of mail in your mailbox. You also have the option to put any E-mail message that you do not want to receive anymore in your personal blacklist. Spammers constantly use new techniques to penetrate our E-mail systems so please be vigilant to report any piece of E-mail that you perceive to be spam to spam@access.ironport.com. We use your reporting to incorporate new rules into our system to block further e-mail from the spammer(s) site(s).

Please do not hesitate to contact the UNT [Messaging Systems Group](#) if you have e-mail questions.

Again welcome back and good luck in the new semester!

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.



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is Coming Soon!

This is a slightly edited and updated article that [originally appeared](#) in the December 2008 issue of Benchmarks Online. -- Ed.

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

Beginning next month, all UNT students will be moving to a new digital communications system replacing the existing Eaglemail email-only system. This is an exciting development for the students and for the university as a whole because it greatly expands the way various members of the UNT community manage online information and communication. While the Eaglemail system only featured email communications, the new EagleConnect will allow for email, chat, calendaring, text-messaging, and online student storage as well as ever-evolving new features and capabilities.

EagleConnect is powered by Microsoft Live@EDU - a solution that centers around the 'Exchange Labs' offering best described as 'Outlook for Students'. This is significant for UNT because the faculty, staff, and students will all be on the same kind of digital message system technology allowing for many communication possibilities such as shared address books, shared and published calendars, email, and chat. Some of these features will be implemented immediately while some will come in on a more gradual schedule. The CITC [helpdesk](#), the "Student Tour" [site](#) and a variety of other places will be keeping students up-to-date on current and upcoming features as they are put into place. Extensive tutorials will be available via the CITC Helpdesk website and the my.unt.edu portal and an example of this documentation is published [here](#) in *Benchmarks Online* this month by CITC Helpdesk Assistant Manager Jonathan "Mac" Edwards.

A new communication solution for UNT students

The final launch of EagleConnect represents the culmination of an 18-month process for choosing and implementing a new communication solution for UNT students. The timeline below illustrates some of the main highlights of the process which involved faculty, staff, and student input:

- **Spring 2007** – Student Computing session of the IT Peer Review Team brings initial call for investigating alternative digital communications solutions for the students to the current Eaglemail solution.
- **Spring/Summer 2007** – Survey conducted of the general student population regarding digital communication habits and solutions. Associate Deans' Council

campus wide forum on communicating with students held.

- **Fall 2007** – Student Email Task Force convened.
- **Winter 2008** – Microsoft Live@EDU chosen as student digital communications system solution. Product is called Exchange Labs (Exchange for students – identical to faculty/staff system).
- **August 2008** – [SkyDrive](#) portion of Live@EDU rolled out. SkyDrive is the online document storage part of EagleConnect.
- **Fall 2008** – Timeline for remaining parts of EagleConnect finalized and online documentation and instructions created in preparation for the spring semester 2009.

Rollout of the EagleConnect system will be measured, with care taken to give users plenty of time to migrate from Eaglemail to EagleConnect. Tools and/or instructions to use the new system are provided and actually, many students are already using part of it by storing documents on the SkyDrive, web-based online storage solution. The timeline for the move is currently scheduled as follows:

- **January – February 2, 2009** - Students begin receiving notices of new system and implementation timeline in preparation.
- **February 3, 2009 (13th class day)** – launch date: Students told system is live now and to migrate now. Instructions and tutorials posted on using new system and migrating to new system. Full scale notification campaign begins. Current Eaglemail users given notice of the deadline for moving to new system and migrating current Eaglemail holdings to new system.
- **May 18, 2009 (Monday after spring graduation)** – Currently proposed shutdown date for turning off Eaglemail.

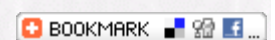
New format for student email addresses

The new format for student email addresses is

FirstnameLastnamePossibleNumber@my.unt.edu (ex. ElizabethJones@my.unt.edu, JohnSmith03@my.unt.edu). Students who already receive Eaglemail through the **eid@unt.edu** (xyz0001@unt.edu) format or custom email address (fredsmyth@unt.edu) will not have to worry about losing touch - email will continue to come to this old address format as well. This new format is also the login name for other EagleConnect services but students will be able to use the same password that they use for their EUID. Students will be able to get their login name/new format email address from their my.unt.edu portal and through a variety of other links.

Stay tuned ...

EagleConnect (Microsoft Exchange Labs for students) works well using Outlook or a web-based interface (Firefox, Internet Explorer) on Windows machines and using Entourage (Macintosh), Safari (Macintosh), or Firefox (Macintosh and Linux). Stay tuned as we greet the 2009 New Year as the Year of EagleConnect! Any questions regarding this new system should be directed to Elizabeth Hinkle-Turner (ehinkle@unt.edu).



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The Best of '08, Redux

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

In case you missed it last month, you have another chance to revisit these articles from past issues of *Benchmarks Online*. Published in 2008, they contain information that is still helpful and timely:

Feature Articles

- [Managing Your Spam](#)
- [UNT, Microsoft partner to give students free access to top software development programs](#)
- [CITC Projects Planned for 2008 or 2009](#)
- [Student SAS Distribution Policy Changed](#)
- [Photoshop Express - Free Online 'Photoshop' is a pretty good deal](#)
- [IT Help is Here](#)
- [Information Security Training Now Available Through WebCT Vista](#)
- [Computing Information for Faculty](#)
- [Information Security Awareness](#)
- [The College of Education General Access Computer Lab Renovation: Creating a welcoming environment for all learners](#)
- [Wimba Classroom Provides Green Alternative to Campus-Based Meetings](#)
- [Merger of Faculty Support Units – CDL and CTLA are now CLEAR](#)
- [New Computer Classrooms for General Use Being Developed at the Discovery Park](#)
- [The General Access Computer Lab Managers: What We Did This Summer](#)
- [Where in the World Did UNT Student Storage Go?](#)

- [S-Plus 8 and EViews 6 are Now Available](#)
- [CITC Strategic Directions](#)
- [Protect Yourself From Phishing](#)
- [Mean Green VM Machines](#)
- [Stay Secure During the Holidays](#) (and beyond!)
- [New Scantron 888P Test Scoring Machine Now Available](#)
- [Banished from the Garden of Facebook, a 21st Century Tale](#)

Link of the Month

- [University Union Information Center](#)
- [Center for Achievement and Lifelong Learning](#)
- [UNT Lost and Found on Facebook](#)
- [The CITC Helpdesk](#)
- [ITHelp Center](#)
- [Messaging Systems Group's education page](#)
- [The Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities \(CSRR\)](#)
- [Six Degrees of UNT](#)
- ["Free – and Legal – Music, Videos and More"](#)
- [UNT Staff Council Perks Program](#)

Helpdesk FYI

- [Microsoft Outlook's Task System](#)
- [RSS Feeds in Microsoft Outlook](#)
- [Phishing](#)
- [Recalling a Message in Outlook](#)
- [IT Help Center](#)
- [Outage Calendars](#)
- [Preferred UNT Email Address](#)
- [Activating Your EUID account](#)

- [EUID Passwords](#)
- [Campus VPN](#)
- [Forwarding Eaglemail to Exchange](#)

RSS Articles

- [New Developments With R - version 2.6.2](#)
- [Mapping And Data Representation In Stata: Part 1](#)
- [Mapping And Data Representation In Stata: Part 2](#)
- [Getting Started with a Modern Approach to Regression](#)
- [How Long Should My Data Analysis Take?](#)
- [Overview of ACS-Supported Software for Fall 2008](#)
- [Creating Maps With GIS Data in SAS 9.1.3, Part 1](#)
- [Statistics: a Clarification](#)
- [The State of SPSS @ UNT](#)
- [Creating Maps With GIS Data in SAS 9.1.3, Part 2](#)

The Network Connection

- [Going the Last Mile](#)
- [No Reasonable Expectation of Privacy](#)
- [Understanding](#)
- [The End of Media as we Know IT](#)
- [Long Live the Browser](#)
- [Brand X](#)
- [A Bit of History](#)
- [Lost in the Clouds](#)
- [Brave New Browser](#)
- [Bits in Space](#)
- [No Escaping the Big G](#)
- [Obama Tech](#)

Casting a wider net

Here are some "best of" links from the wider world. This a slightly different list from the one published in December.

- [The Best of 2008 on iTunes](#)
- [Best Inventions of 2008](#)
- [50 Best Websites 2008](#)
- [The Top 10 Everything of 2008](#)
- [The Best Books of 2008](#)
- [Best Books of 2008](#)
- [Best Books for Young Adults 2008](#)
- [American Film Institute Awards hail top 10 best movies of 2008](#)
- [Best TV of 2008 - TV.com](#)
- About.Com's "The Most Popular Top 10's of 2008":
 - [The Top Ten Sites for Free Full Length Movies](#)
 - [Ten Ways to Find People For Free Online](#)
 - [The Top Ten Job Search Engines on the Web](#)



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EDUCAUSE in San Antonio

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

There is *still time* to register for the 2009 EDUCAUSE Southwest Regional Conference and get a discounted rate. The cut-off date for early registration is **January 27, 2009**.

The theme for the conference is "Balancing Acts: Making IT Work for Everyone," and according to the conference [website](#), participants "will examine solutions and strategies for meeting the broad range of technology needs that define the higher education experience. The increasing importance of demonstrating IT's value and the ubiquitous nature of technology as a resource require IT professionals to juggle many different perspectives. This conference will offer colleagues the opportunity to share insights on what works and how to prepare for the next big thing coming our way."

If you are interested in attending any pre-conference seminars, they begin the morning of February 24 and follow the full conference. The seminars are (separate registration and fee required):

- Leveraging Identity Management for Privacy, Security, and Compliance
- Managing Time and Priorities
- Building a Blueprint: Millennials, Web 2.0, and the Future of Learning

The full conference program runs from February 24 - 26, 2009 and follows four key tracks:

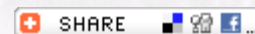
- Act 1: Balancing IT's Role in the Enterprise
- Act 2: Balancing Innovation and Operations
- Act 3: Balancing Learning 2.x
- Corporate and Campus Solutions

The General Session speakers are:

- Alan Levine -- Vice President, NMC Community & CTO
The New Media Consortium (NMC)

- Susan M. Zvacek -- Director, Instructional Dev & Support
University of Kansas

More Information? Visit the *EDUCAUSE Southwest Regional Conference 2009* [website](#).



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Today's Cartoon

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www.glasbergen.com



"I'm starting a new social networking site for dogs. It's called, Lick Your Face Book!"

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BOOKMARK

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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, 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 Dr. Mike Clark talks about "Free ! = Cheap: Open Source and/or Free Alternatives in Statistical Analysis" 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 join's Dr. Clark's discussion with "Why Not Open Source Software?" Click on the Network Connection link above and get in on the conversation.
- [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 "EagleConnect," a new communication solution for UNT students. 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 Mac Edwards talks about "Migrating email from Eaglemail to Outlook." *If you are not a student and you have been using Eaglemail, this article is a must read!***
- [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.

Spring short courses are coming soon! They will be offered

starting the first part of February. The schedule should be complete some time during the week of January 20th.

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 IRC minutes were available for publication 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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Network Connection

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

Why Not Open Source Software?

In an essay [elsewhere](#) in this journal Michael Clark poses the following question:

"...There is a common misperception in the academic world among students and even those with Ph.D.s that if something is free in the software world it is not as good. This is very odd considering how many things we regularly receive free in daily life such as love from family members, meals provided by friends, books etc. from libraries, countless commonly used applications for computers and web-browsing, additional services if certain other conditions are met and so on. If a friend offers a ride to the airport, have you ever heard of someone responding that they'd rather take a cab because it's obviously better based on price?"

I too have encountered the same attitude regarding open source software, but I think the avoidance of such software goes beyond this attitude, even when the availability of the software and support for it are readily available. I'd say the most people are not willing to pay the time cost associated with switching to something like the R statistical language. There is little time cost in using Firefox, or even Ubuntu these days. However, given that R is a programming language (or at least a command-driven environment), it has a much higher time cost (even for me). If all of your training and experience supports it, it's much easier to use commercial products SAS or SPSS until the economic conditions change.

Economics 101

IT organizations find themselves in the business of preserving the status quo of economic conditions. As long as they (we) fund SPSS and SAS (or Windows or Office), there will be no cost advantage for people to switch to R (or Linux or OpenOffice). This is illustrated by a recent [report](#) that "Companies may use Microsoft Word for word processing out of habit rather than necessity." Economic changes may break that habit, and drive companies to open source, but more likely to the cloud, where Google and Microsoft are both trying to entice users to an alternative to the desktop office suite. (I think in 5-10 years, you won't pay for a word processing program any more.)

A change in economic conditions may force a cost choice - pay for the commercial product or learn the free one. So, why would anyone choose the for-pay option? To borrow Dr. Clark's analogy, your friend might offer to take you to the airport for free, but also might be late and prone to getting lost. You might pay because you will have some assurance of making it to the airport on time. Likewise, people who have used SPSS or SAS all their life will not pay the time cost learning R when they know they can get to their goal via SPSS or

SAS, and I fall into that category -- as much as I support and want to learn R, it's faster for me to go back to SAS when I need to do something quickly.

So, it's not enough to espouse the virtues of open source and free software. To change people's behavior, you must change their economy. Sub-\$200 netbooks are [on the way](#) and they are [running Linux by default](#). Why? If you want a \$200 computer, are you willing to pay \$100 in addition for the Windows OS? Linux looks really good when the functionality is equivalent for most common activities and it drops the price by one third. Scale that up -- Do you want the \$2000 Linux HDTV or the \$3000 Windows HDTV? Do you want the \$20,000 Linux car or the \$30,000 Windows car? Do you want the \$200,000 Linux house or the \$300,000 Windows house?

So, what will change the economy in favor of R? Some people would still pay the monetary cost for SPSS rather than pay the time cost for R. Ultimately, the payback for R must be much greater than the cost. That means effortless access, immediate support, powerful results, meaningful output, etc., and the most important of those is immediate support. The time cost is less when help is immediately available. This is why people are willing to pay for support for otherwise free open source software (i.e. RedHat, MySQL, etc.) It's become a business model.

Just Google it!

Even without commercial support for Open Source software, there is quite a bit of support out on the Internet, and if you are willing to do a few Google searches, using open source software is no more difficult than changing a Windows configuration. Of course, if you're not willing to investigate and read, then you're probably not going to be changing your Windows configuration either. But, because of the de facto standard that Windows has become, it's more likely to find someone with a bit of Windows knowledge than the equivalent Linux knowledge. You can leverage some kind of relationship to get support, and the economic cost may range from a cup of coffee to a nice dinner. This kind of transaction, by the way, is the motive for the "[No, I will not fix your computer](#)" T-shirts which often adorn the IT knowledgeable, otherwise known as "geeks."

Is it really free?

I'm not an economist, but I have to say that there's probably no such thing as a free lunch or free software. There may not be a monetary expense for open source software, but there is a time expense in any attempt to do something new, whether it be running Linux, using R, or learning to play the banjo. However, if economic conditions make that time expense worthwhile, we could eventually have more people that are knowledgeable about Linux than Windows, although Microsoft is apparently [doing all it can](#) to prevent such an occurrence.

Pardon me while I tune my banjo...



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Link of the Month

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



A new communication solution for UNT students

EagleConnect is coming! Frequently asked questions, answers, and more are available at the EagleConnect website: <http://eagleconnect.unt.edu/>

Faculty and staff members who have Eaglemail accounts will need to migrate their Eaglemail messages to Microsoft Outlook. See this month's "[Helpdesk FYI](#)" for more information on migrating messages from Eaglemail to Outlook.



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Helpdesk FYI

By [Jonathan "Mac" Edwards](#), Assistant Manager of the CITC Helpdesk

Migrating email from Eaglemail to Outlook

With the upcoming migration to the new [EagleConnect](#) email system, *faculty and staff members will need to migrate their Eaglemail messages to Outlook.*

Those migrating may wish to set up forwarding from Eaglemail to Outlook, so after migrating older messages, new Eaglemail messages will then be forwarded to Outlook. For instructions on how to forward Eaglemail messages to an Outlook employee account please see our December 08 [Benchmarks Article](#).

In addition to the steps below you can watch a full demonstration at helpdesk.unt.edu/outlookmigration

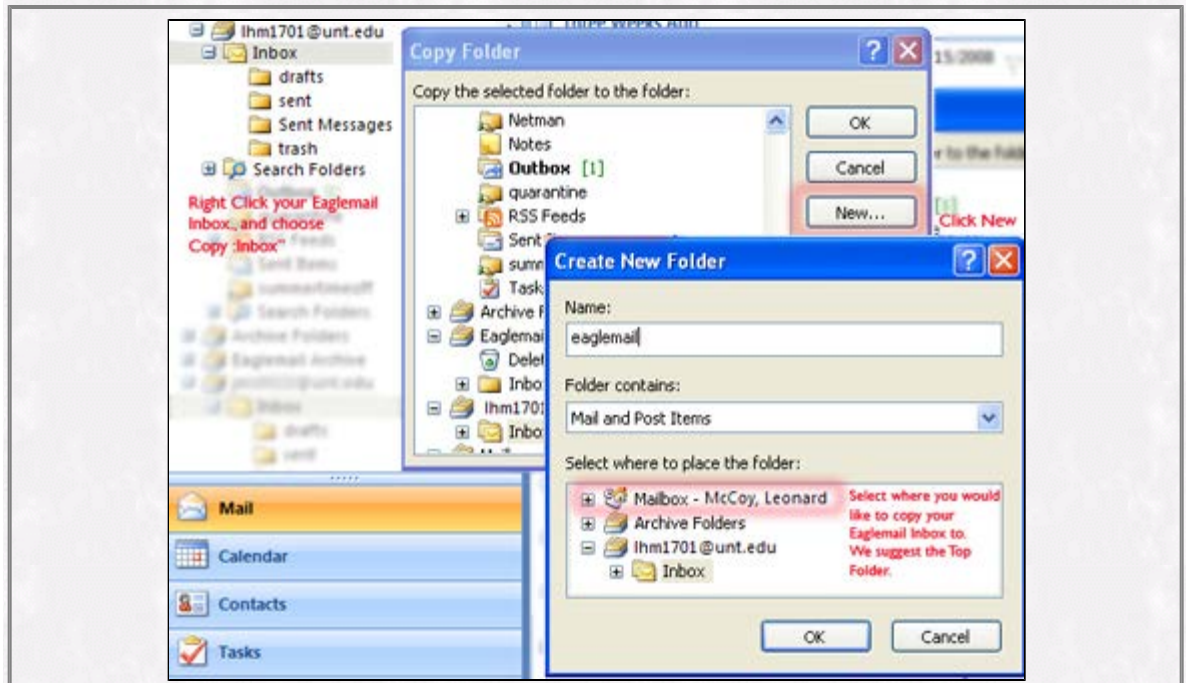
First Connect Outlook to Eaglemail.

<p>User Information</p> <p>Your Name: <input type="text" value="Leonard McCoy"/></p> <p>E-mail Address: <input type="text" value="lhm1701@eaglemail.unt.edu"/></p>	<p>Test Account Settings</p> <p>After filling out the information on this screen, we recommend you test your account by clicking the button below. (Requires network connection)</p> <p><input type="button" value="Test Account Settings ..."/></p>
<p>Server Information</p> <p>Account Type: <input type="text" value="IMAP"/></p> <p>Incoming mail server: <input type="text" value="eaglemail.unt.edu"/></p> <p>Outgoing mail server (SMTP): <input type="text" value="mailhost.unt.edu"/></p>	
<p>Logon Information</p> <p>User Name: <input type="text" value="lhm1701"/></p> <p>Password: <input type="password"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Remember password</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Require logon using Secure Password Authentication (SPA)</p>	<p><input type="button" value="More Settings ..."/></p>
<p><input type="button" value=" < Back"/> <input type="button" value=" Next > "/> <input type="button" value=" Cancel"/></p>	

1. Go to the Tools menu, Account Settings, from the Email tab select New
2. Select "Microsoft Exchange, POP, IMAP, or HTTP" and click Next
3. Click "Manually configure server settings", and click Next
4. Select "Internet E-mail" and click next
5. Populate "Email address" with Eaglemail address, "Account type" with IMAP, and "User id" with euid
6. Click "More settings...", click the Advanced tab
7. Under the "Incoming Server (IMAP)" settings, change "Use the following type of encrypted connection" to SSL

8. Optionally click “Test account settings...”
9. Click Next and Finish
10. Enter Eaglemail username(euid) & password when prompted

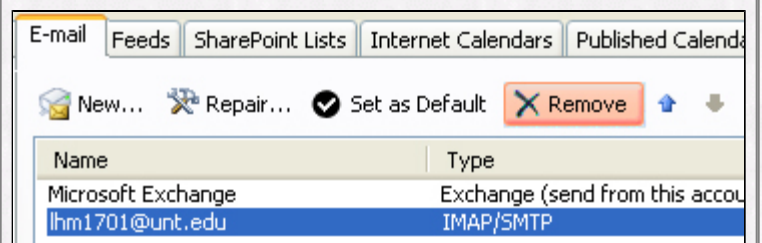
Next Copy your Eaglemail Inbox into Outlook.



1. Right click on the newly imported Eaglemail Inbox folder
2. Choose Copy “Inbox.”
3. Select “New” in the window that pops up.
4. Select your “parent” Inbox, or another folder you wish to move your mail to. In this example we chose "Mailbox -McCoy, Leonard"
5. Enter in the name of the New folder for your Eaglemail, such as “Eaglemail Archive”, and click OK.
6. Click OK again, and your mail should be transferred.

Finally remove the Eaglemail account from Outlook.

1. Go to Tools > Account Settings.
2. Select your Eaglemail account.
3. Select Remove.



Further assistance

If after following these steps, and watching the demo, you still have questions please contact your Distributed Support Contact. To find your representative please refer to

helpdesk.unt.edu/netman.



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IRC News



Minutes provided by Sue Ellen Richey,
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.

* 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](#).



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.

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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 2.](#) - Ed.

Free ! = Cheap: Open Source and/or Free Alternatives in Statistical Analysis

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

I'll admit being a relative newbie to the technicalities of the [open source](#) scene, though mostly this was out of ignorance not any reluctance to use things that were open source and/or free on principle. But over the years I find myself using more and more of the work of those whose generous nature has allowed others to partake of the fruits of their labor. Whether it was stand alone single function stat programs, media players, PDF converters, etc., if something performed an activity I needed and it was freely and readily available, common sense dictated the obvious choice to use it rather than pay for something that did the same thing. This has held up to the point where now I start to look for open source and/or free alternatives in the early stages of software needs and use them even if the more costly proprietary software is available as it is here on campus. I do not do this to the point of zealotry, to where I suffer a noticeably inferior product just because it is free or abides by open source principles. However even at home I can watch an episode of classic star trek, type up a paper, browse the web, and perform advanced statistics using zero cost programs/websites. Such are the times in which we live.

Focus on R

The focus here however is on statistics and in particular R, which was featured on the web version of the [New York Times](#) on January 7th. R is open source, and not only [free as in speech but free as in beer](#), i.e. the full statistical package is available at no cost. You can download it and the 1600+ packages from its website and have analytical capabilities *unmatched* by heavy hitters such as SPSS and SAS. If it can't do something, you can alter the functions within to do what you want. What's more, you can subscribe to the help and developer lists and gain insights and assistance from top statisticians and researchers from around the world (again freely). And finally to top things off, one can always keep up with the times with daily updates and new versions as they come out. Is it perfect? No software is or ever will be, but it does what's needed and more, and for typical academic applications

just as well and often more easily. In my experience R has yet to prove unable to do anything that our clients typically want, but it is often used by us to make their projects much better than they otherwise would have been or just simply more efficient. Perhaps even more telling regarding its (and Python's) capabilities is that SPSS has an add-on that allows one to use its code (and with 17.0 its graphics) within the syntax editor. If R is good enough for SPSS to use to make up for its many weaknesses, it should be good enough for anyone that would consider using SPSS. It is not as easy to learn, but I'm not sure that learning it takes any more than the long hours put into doing workarounds for more popular programs that do not have its functionality, and if this former menu-clicker can shift to it as a primary stat package anyone can.

R is not alone however in the statistical/mathematical computing arena. [SciPy and NumPy](#) offer further choices in scientific computing via the Python programming language and already [work well with R](#). [OpenStat](#) is a general statistical package option that includes advanced techniques. There are open source alternatives geared toward the look and feel of specific proprietary scientific/statistical software packages such as [Octave](#) for Matlab and [PSPP](#) for an alternative to SPSS (in the early stages). Getting more specialized one comes across things like [Gretl](#) primarily geared toward econometrics, [Tetrad](#) for causal modeling, [OpenBugs](#) for Bayesian analysis and even more specific analysis such as [G*Power](#) which does sample size/power estimation. The gist is that there is something out there for most academic statistical needs that will only cost the time to learn them, and may not only work as well but even better.

Free = Bad?

Unfortunately however, there is a common misperception in the academic world among students and even those with Ph.D.s that if something is free in the software world it is not as good. This is very odd considering how many things we regularly receive free in daily life such as love from family members, meals provided by friends, books etc. from libraries, countless commonly used applications for computers and web-browsing, additional services if certain other conditions are met and so on, not to mention how long the open source movement has been around. If a (reliable) friend offers a ride to the airport, have you ever heard of someone responding that they'd rather take a cab because it's obviously better based on price? The vast majority of our computing relies on freely available programs/languages (e.g. C), but there are open source or free versions of many software/internet utilities (open or proprietary) that millions of people take advantage of daily like Firefox, Open Office, virus scanners, file compression utilities, email accounts and clients, Linux features prominently in the server market, most web servers run the free and open source Apache web server software etc. It is unusual to assume that the same satisfaction people have with the functionality of those programs could not also be found also in academic research computing, and it is the case that high quality products are available.

Everything of course has *some* cost whether monetary or simply the time and efforts of those involved in providing the product or service. But in the end the distinction to be made is one of quality, not monetary cost. When choosing statistical software one only needs to ask -- Does it do what you want *and* does it do it well? The first part of that question regards bare minimum functionality, the second regards quality, as just simply providing a basic statistical or statistically-related function, e.g. standard deviation, bar/line graphs, ordinary least squares regression, etc. is not enough given modern computing capabilities and what is available nowadays. Just remember that there are open source and otherwise free alternatives that are advanced in their offerings and often flexible enough to tailor to your research needs, whatever they may be.

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UPDATED Short Courses

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

Spring short courses are finally here! Surf over to the [Short Courses](#) page to see what classes are being offered.

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](#), 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](#).

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:

- **Akshara Anugula**, ACS GAL Consultant (part-time).
- **Dayanand “Dave” Jhingade**, ACS GAL Consultant (part-time).
- **Danielle Landy**, ACS GAL Consultant (part-time).
- **Azeem Rehman**, ACS GAL Consultant (part-time).
- **Trayton Oakes**, Microcomputer Consultant, Helpdesk (part-time).
- **Lakesha Clark**, Computer Operator (part-time).

No longer working in the Computing and Information Technology Center:

- **Shravan Banda**, ACS GAL Consultant (part-time).
- **Trent Ryan**, ACS GAL Consultant (part-time).
- **Sravanthi Samula**, ACS GAL Consultant (part-time).
- **Alis Smbatyan**, ACS GAL Consultant (part-time).
- **Daniel Harris**, Microcomputer Consultant, Helpdesk (part-time).
- **Michelle Ridings**, Computer Operator (part-time).
- **Stormy Shippy**, Computer Support Specialist, Communications Services.
- **David Walden**, Telecomm Specialist, Communications Services (Retired).

Changes, Awards, Recognition, Publications, etc.

Maurice Leatherbury Elected Chair-Elect of LEARN

At its annual Board meeting in December, the Lonestar Education and Research Network (“LEARN”) elected Maurice Leatherbury to the office of Chair-elect of the 34-member organization. **Dr. Leatherbury, Associate Vice President of Computing and Chief**

Technology Officer at UNT, will become Chair of LEARN in December 2009, following Dr. Carl Van Wyatt (CIO at Texas State University) who is serving in that post this year.

LEARN is the statewide consortium of institutions of higher education in Texas that has developed a fiber optic network connecting all major universities in the state. The LEARN Board is composed of chief information officers at the member institutions, and Dr. Leatherbury served as Secretary of the organization for three and most recently, as Chair of the Governance and Participation Committee of LEARN.

***InHouse* Spotlights on CITC**

- **Charlotte Russell**, Director, CITC Administration and Compliance, was profiled in *InHouse* Portrait gallery January 9. See the [article](#) "Charlotte Russell: Director of administration, and compliance and information security officer" for fun facts you might not know about Charlotte.
- **Dr. Elizabeth Hinkle-Turner**, Student Computing Services Manager (ACS), was featured in the e-mail version of *InHouse* for January 16. The subject line was "Legislative session, King Day, inauguration: *InHouse* Newsletter Jan. 16, 2009." The newsletter contained a brief interview with Hinkle-Turner about EagleConnect along with her picture and a link to the December [article](#) on EagleConnect that appeared here in *Benchmarks Online*.

Fun Fact Winners

Continuing the tradition, **Krysta Kaye**, Communications Manager, Data Communications, was a winner in the [Dec. 15 *InHouse* Fun Fact](#) giveaway.

Congratulations

- Congratulations to **Rhonda Holmes** who is now the Assistant Director of CITC Administration and Compliance.



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