Message from our new Vice President for Information Technology

It is exciting to move to a new career opportunity. It is even more exciting when that opportunity is with a great institution like Miami University. I am pleased to join the team here at Miami as the institution's first vice president for information technology. We have some interesting challenges facing us as an institution between now and our bicentennial year of 2009. My expectations are that, along with the rest of our institution, information technology services will be instrumental in making Miami "First in 2009."

I arrive at Miami after eight very enjoyable years at Georgia State University in downtown Atlanta. Georgia State is a very diverse, urban research institution that has undergone major growth in academic programs and increases in enrollment (ten per cent per year the past two years). While there, I was fortunate to participate in and contribute to a significant maturing of the institution's information and instructional technology portfolios.

Information technology is a means to accomplishing desired institutional outcomes. It is not an end in itself. Over the next several months, our institution will engage in developing a university-wide information technology strategic plan. This plan will encompass instructional, research, administrative, infrastructure, student life and external constituency aspects of this rapidly changing and increasingly strategic asset within today's modern institution of higher education. It will help us focus our attention and resources on those activities that will meet Miami's strategic goals for becoming "First in 2009." We will be well served by developing this plan as a team, ensuring that our technology uses and activities are aligned with the university's direction toward excellence. I invite the entire community to join me as we develop this vision of how technology is appropriately used in accomplishing our objectives. Once developed, the information technology strategic plan will become the overarching architecture for development of annual action plans to address the information and instructional technology needs of our institution. This, in turn, will drive decisions about future resource allocations in these areas.

Please feel free to contact me with your suggestions of how we can make Miami first!

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Buy Your Microsoft Software Now!

Our current Microsoft contract will expire on September 30, 2003. While we expect to sign a new contract, prices for Microsoft software will be substantially higher after September 30, 2003.

If you are thinking of purchasing Microsoft software for your personally-owned computer, please do so prior to September 30, 2003, to take advantage of the low pricing. Some examples of pricing include, but are not limited to:

- Windows XP Professional - $12.50
- Office X (Mac) - $18.50
- Office XP (Windows) $18.50

You will need to present your Miami ID card and sign a license agreement when you purchase the software. For a complete list of Microsoft software savings, check out the Miami University Bookstore web site at: http://www.muohio.edu/bookstore/microsoft.htm.

Students please note: Students own the license even after leaving Miami, as long as the software has been registered with Microsoft. Further, students must select one platform - Macintosh or Windows.

Faculty and staff please note: Faculty/staff members will have access to both Mac OS and Windows software in the event that the faculty/staff member elects to install a second copy on a home or portable computer. Faculty and staff have the right to use the software as long as they are employed at Miami. If you are interested in installing the Microsoft software on a university-owned computer, please contact your TSR; different contract provisions apply on software installation on university computers.

Gartner Research

Examples of new Gartner research articles are available from Miami's web site to all Miami students, faculty, and staff, and are listed below. You will be prompted to login using your UniqueID and MUnet password.

Gartner research will be of particular interest to any student, faculty, or staff member learning, teaching or using technology. Areas of focus for Gartner research include E-Learning, Business Management of IT, Security and Privacy, Higher Education, and Emerging Trends and Technology. The web site is updated every Friday with new research articles.

Six Keys to Better Procurement Contract Management
[20-MAR-2003 - Research Note - Kyte, Andy]
Every procurement team has specific requirements for managing contracts. Six key, technology-based features should be on your shopping list for consideration when choosing a contract management application.
Wal-Mart Encourages Vendors to Join UCCnet
[27-MAR-2003 - Research Note - White, Andrew; Peterson, Karen]
A recent letter from Wal-Mart to its suppliers urges UCCnet adoption for product data synchronization. Providers of data synchronization outside of UCCnet will suffer as this value-add service evolves to a commonly shared service.

Supply Chain Management (SCM) Applications: Perspective
[26-MAR-2003 - Technology Overview - Stang, Daniel; Arcuri, Gerald]
SCM functionality continues to enhance supply chain business relationships, transactions and communication. More recent SCM advances are available due to increased maturity and use of the Web.

Q&A Highlights Internet and Networking Security Issues
[12-MAR-2003 - Research Note - Neil, David; Mazur, John]
The war on terrorism makes securing network infrastructure essential, but enterprises too often overlook vulnerabilities in WANs. Improving WAN security will require renewed focus and some balancing of priorities.

Records Management Essential for Risk Management
[21-MAR-2003 - Article Top View - Gilbert, Mark; Logan, Debra]
The Internet age of lightning-fast global communication has opened a "Pandora's box" of new liabilities. A life cycle approach must be used to manage the information onslaught created by digital documents.

Windows Client and Office Migration: 4Q02 Survey
[24-FEB-2003 - Commentary - Silver, Michael]
The Windows 2000 and Office 2000 installed bases grew steadily as enterprises gave XP time to mature. There was lots of talk about alternative platforms in 2002, but they will see little action in 2003.

Coming Soon to a Notebook Near You: Intel's Centrino
[11-MAR-2003 - Research Note - Fiering, Leslie; Gammage, Brian; Reynolds, Martin; Margevicius, Mark]
Intel's Centrino mobile technology will speed the adoption of built-in wireless in notebook computers. Enterprises should start evaluating Centrino now for their mainstream use.

Intel's Centrino Wireless Is a Maybe, Not a Must
[10-MAR-2003 - Research Note - Dulaney, Ken]
Intel wants Centrino's wireless PRO/Wireless component to become a checklist item for enterprise notebook purchases. Consider Centrino a viable option, but original equipment manufacturer bundles can have equal appeal.
**Red Hat: An Appraisal and Outlook**
[04-MAR-2003 - Research Note - Weiss, George]
Red Hat is the leading Linux distributor, with a wide lead over its next competitor. Although opportunities abound, Red Hat will be challenged to leverage market share into higher profitability and revenue growth.

**Vendor Rating: 1Q03 Novell Ratings Update**
[27-FEB-2003 - Research Note - Enck, John]
Novell was busy in 2002 refining its management team and redefining its product sets. These efforts are beginning to pay off for Novell.

**The Portal Is Dead, Long Live the Portal**
[28-FEB-2003 - Commentary - Phifer, Gene]
Portal products, the frameworks for building enterprise portals, have gained momentum since the market started in 1998. The tide has turned, due to integrated suites delivering portal functionality.

**Microsoft vs. Linux: The Changing Nature of Competition**
[13-MAR-2003 - Commentary - Smith, David]
Microsoft's attitude toward competition has changed as a result of Linux and other open-source software. Its business tactics are changing to focus on areas that have not been Microsoft's traditional strengths.

**Intrusion Detection Systems: Perspective**
[18-MAR-2003 - Technology Overview - Allan, Ant]
An intrusion detection system is a "burglar alarm" for malicious activity on an organization's networks and servers, but does not necessarily provide a strong defense against all kinds of "cyberattacks."

[13-MAR-2003 - Product Report - Noakes-Fry, Kristen; Allan, Ant]
Microsoft's Windows Server 2003 operating system includes native security features, such as PKI and Kerberos; however, organizations must set the advantages of these against Microsoft's recent security record.

**CIO Alert: Use Gartner's Guidelines to Update Security on Internet Servers, Reduce Risks**
[26 February 2003 - Point-To-Point - Pescatore, John]
As the "Sapphire" worm proved, enterprises face critical security issues that include Web servers. CIOs should evolve their security strategies for Internet-exposed services by following Gartner's guidelines.
Miami ID Card Gets a New Look This Summer

For privacy reasons, the university has moved away from using social security numbers to identify Miami faculty, staff and students. Instead, the university is converting to new ID cards that use Banner IDs. This change requires new ID cards for all faculty and staff members, as well as students. These ID cards will present a new look that you may preview at www.muohio.edu/IDCard.

The above website also provides the most current information regarding the project. The actual conversion begins on May 5. Be sure to check the detailed timeline that describes how to get your photo updated as well as dates, times and locations for picking up your new cards.

New TV Programming for Campus

Miami University has awarded a new contract to Dish Network to provide programming for the MUnet campus television system beginning on July 1. Six hundred students living in campus housing were recently surveyed about their television viewing habits. The results of that survey, along with budgetary considerations, allowed us to make adjustments to the programming lineup.

Some less popular channels will be removed and some programming not currently carried will be added, including the Disney Channel and BBC America. Although the exact schedule is not yet known, the MUnet television system will be down for three to four days around the end of June so that improvements and changes can be made. Stay tuned!

NOC Reports Number of Unplanned Outages Down

Technical Services' Network Operations Center reports outages soon after they are detected for MCIS production services. Some of these services include:

- servers
- network equipment
- Novell printer support
- Blackboard
- e-mail
- Internet and other network outages

Outages are reported to Technical Support Representatives (TSRs) via a LISTSERV. They are also reported via a webpage accessible on the School Services tab of MyMiami.

Outages are classified as either planned or unplanned. As the name implies, planned outages are coordinated ahead of the outage. For instance, a production service may be made unavailable for maintenance or reconfiguration. Over spring break the entire Hoyt machine room was powered down; this was scheduled well in advance of the outage and was therefore a planned outage.
Unplanned outages are just that - unplanned. Our goal is to reduce the number of unplanned outages. Steps we have taken include:

- Rigorous stress testing of new and upgraded services (e.g. Real Time Registration)
- Migration of service to a dedicated computing environment (e.g. authentication)
- Enhancement of testing abilities and capabilities including new software, hardware and procedures
- Termination of service if the service could not be made robust (e.g. Campus Pipeline)

The Network Operations Center diligently reports unplanned outages and reviews them with Support Center and University Applications personnel to ensure completeness as well as to strategize remedial actions.

There are many ways to evaluate the results of this effort. The chart below illustrates one simplistic view; a comparison of the raw number of unplanned outages for the last several academic years, August through March. The chart shows the number of outages is decreasing.
Print Center Update

You may be interested in two new additions to technology at the Print Center:

- Xerox Docutech 6135
- Miami U-Print

**Xerox Docutech 6135**

A Xerox Docutech 6135 production printer has replaced the 10+ year-old Docutech 135. This state-of-the-art device provides increased capacity for the growing volume needs of the Center. It also will act as a backup unit for the Docutech 6180, which is used to print most of the University's bursar bills, telephone bills, and other mailings.

**Miami U-Print**

For about 10 years the Print Center has been receiving digital printing orders via the campus network. This required downloading the proper print drivers. While this service remains available, the Print Center has new solution for receiving digital printing orders called Miami U-Print. It is available by going to the Print Center web page at [www.muohio.edu/printcenter](http://www.muohio.edu/printcenter), and clicking on Miami U-Print in the navigation bar at the top of the page. Using Miami U-Print requires downloading two files: one works with your web browser and the other is a print driver.

Using Miami U-Print is about as easy as using your local laser printer. Miami U-Print creates a job ticket for your order, allowing you to tell the Print Center all the specifics. It then creates an Adobe Acrobat PDF file from your document, and sends both the PDF and the job ticket to the Print Center server. You will receive an email with a web URL that you can visit to proof your document(s) before it is printed.

At the proofing stage, you can reject the proof and the file will be deleted from the Print Center server. You may then return to your original file, make the changes you need, and resubmit the revised document. You may repeat the proofing process until the file is ready to print. Once you approve the proof, Miami U-Print notifies the Print Center that your order is ready to run. The Print Center staff takes it from there.
Slammer Worm Burrows at Miami University

On Saturday morning, January 25, a malicious computer program called Slammer attacked computer systems worldwide. The program exploited an exposure in Microsoft's SQL database software. After installing itself on a vulnerable server, it sent copies of itself to other servers, where it installed and repeated the process in a continuing loop. A program that behaves like this is called a worm. It caused many servers to crash and the general Internet to slow to a crawl. In fact it caused such havoc that it was widely reported in the Sunday newspapers the next day.

It appears that the worm was first recognized in Asia around 5:30 GMT Saturday morning. Even before the general news alert that talked about the worm, Miami’s Network Operations Center noticed that the university’s network was affected. Here is what happened next. After a Miami network engineer received the emergency call at 2 a.m., an hour later he had profiled activity on campus caused by the worm and had begun to identify affected machines. While he found no vulnerable centrally supported machines, there were about ten infected machines on campus, approximately half in residence halls. At 8 a.m. all affected machines at Miami were disconnected from our network. At this point, local network activity returned to normal.

Microsoft knew that its SQL software was vulnerable to this attack. They had provided a fix about six months earlier. Despite that knowledge, even Microsoft was reported to have a number of machines infected by the worm.

MCIS is installing technology that will identify this type of nefarious activity and allow more timely remedial action. Intrusion Detection Services are now being tested, and we can report that they have already identified machines infected with other such programs.

Spring Break Outages

MCIS wants to thank all our clients who patiently endured some inconvenience from outages during Spring Break this year. Three significant accomplishments were planned and realized for Spring Break week.

- The University's central computer machine room was completely powered down to test emergency power generation as well as to install additional electric capability.
- The University's centrally supported e-mail servers' file space was upgraded.
- Universal Disk Space servers were migrated to new hardware.

Each outage required careful planning and cooperation of many clients who were unable to use services. It is a common misconception of our non-university neighbors that Spring Break is a relaxed time for university staff. We know that is not the case and appreciate your cooperation in scheduling these important outages.
The power outage was the first planned power outage of the Hoyt Machine Room in many years. There were several goals including:

- Test "emergency power off" capabilities
- Load test the uninterruptible power supply (UPS) that protects the machine room from utility outages.
- Upgrade electrical capabilities.

While the UPS is designed to protect the Hoyt Machine room from unanticipated utility outages, it requires regular testing and maintenance. We are working with our service providers to establish the optimal timing for this maintenance. We expect periodic outages will be necessary to maintain this equipment in good working order.

**Summer-time computing: using Miami accounts while away from campus**

With many of you leaving campus over the summer, we have a few technology tips that should make your time away from campus easier.

For an overview of using your accounts while off-campus, please see this Knowledge Base case [http://kb.muohio.edu/cgi-bin/webcgi.exe?new,KB=MUKB,case=obj(92563)].

**Passwords**

While away from Miami, it is easy to forget your MUNet password when you are not using it every day.

To avoid a long delay in recovering your password, it is very important that you set a secret question and answer pair at [http://www.muohio.edu/password](http://www.muohio.edu/password). This will allow you to answer the secret question and change your password without having to come on-campus.

If you took the time to set a secret question and answer pair when you changed your password, you can now change a forgotten password by visiting the password self service tools located at [http://muohio.edu/password](http://muohio.edu/password).

Two other options:

- If you did not set a secret question and answer pair and you are near campus, you can get your password reset to its default value at one of the locations described in this Knowledge Base case [http://kb.muohio.edu/cgi-bin/webcgi.exe?new,KB=MUKB,case=obj(1314)].

- If you are not in the area, you can download and fill out the password reset form located in the same Knowledge Base article. You will need to notarize the form and either mail or fax it to the Support Desk.
E-mail
Your e-mail is accessible worldwide via the web from myMiami http://mymiami.muohio.edu. Once logged in, click on the e-mail icon to access your e-mail.

If you are using an e-mail client such as Eudora to access your Miami e-mail during the summer and if you are NOT using Miami for Internet access, you will need to do some reconfiguration. You will need to change your outgoing SMTP server setting to your Internet Service Provider's (ISP). Your ISP should be able to help you make the necessary configuration changes.

Novell File Servers and Net Disk
If you want to access your Universal Disk Space (UDS, M: drive) or your departmental space while away from Miami, you will no longer be able to use your Novell client to access the Novell file servers. The NetDisk utility in myMiami will allow you to access Miami's Novell file servers via a web browser. See this Knowledge Base case for details:
http://kb.muohio.edu/cgi-bin/webcgi.exe?new,KB=MUKB,case=obj(86662)

Knowledge Base and MCIS Support Desk
During the summer, you may not have your usual easy access to the Support Desk or your Technical Support Representative (TSR) when you have technology problems. Available via the web, the MCIS Knowledge Base http://kb.muohio.edu is full of useful technology information. If you cannot find help in the Knowledge Base, you can easily expedite your search by clicking on the "No, I need help" button at the end of every Knowledge Base case.

The MCIS Support Desk http://www.muohio.edu/supportdesk is available by phone at (513) 529-7900 or by e-mail at supportdesk@muohio.edu to assist you with your computing needs over the summer.

A Final Word: Virus Protection
If your computer will not be turned on or connected to the Internet over the summer, you will be more than three months behind on updated virus definitions. When you begin using your computer again, it will be vulnerable to three months worth of new viruses. It is very important to update your virus definitions as soon as possible after reconnecting to the Internet.

Top Picks from the Knowledge Base
Curious what the current hot technology questions/topics are on campus? Knowledge Base traffic provides a great clue. Following are some of the most frequently viewed categories and Knowledge Base cases over the past semester:

Miami accounts/Using MUnet

- Technology services/resources for students, faculty and staff
- Choosing a good password
- MUnet overview and connection information
- Accessing MUnet services from off-campus or through another Internet Service Provider (AOL, Road Runner, Fuse, etc.)
Web Publishing

- Publishing web pages using your Universal Disk Space (UDS)
- Setting up webspace on Unixgen
- Using Unixgen for CGI scripting
- Using access counters on UDS or CDS web pages
- Creating a simple mail-to form on a web page
- Transferring (FTP) files to Universal Disk Space (UDS) using Dreamweaver

E-mail and e-mail lists

- Registering an e-mail account with Miami’s electronic directory
- Using your Miami e-mail account
- Joining a LISTSERV list
- MCIS plans and recommendations for managing Spam e-mail

Blackboard

- Logging into a Blackboard course
- My Blackboard course list doesn’t accurately reflect my current courses
- Removing students from Blackboard sites

Wireless

- Wireless network services at Miami University
- Configuring a laptop or workstation for a wireless connection

RoadRunner

- Road Runner service through Miami: pricing, eligibility, and hardware requirements

As you can see, people are finding answers to a wide variety of technology and other questions in the Knowledge Base. Next time you have a technology or general service question, please visit kb.muohio.edu to find answers.

Looking for information in the Knowledge Base and not finding it?

If you can’t find what you need in the Knowledge Base, please let us know!

- If you need immediate help, please use the "Contact the Support Desk" button.
- If you are suggesting general topics for coverage, please use the "Send Us Your Comments" button.
Training Notes

One of the best kept secrets, that we don't want to keep, is that we have free computer-based training available to faculty, staff and students at Miami University. Please forgive our repetition of this fact here in TechTalk, and, if you haven't checked out the new MCIS Training page, please have a look. The page gives access to:

- several types of online training links (including PC and Macintosh computer based training)
- information about training and workshops all over campus
- the TRAIN registration system.

CBT Update

The MCIS Support Center recently sent out requests for proposals to several CBT companies, and we will spend time for the next couple of months to find the best computer based training company for Miami University. Our current contract will end at the end of June. If we change vendors as a result of the RFP process, be assured that there will not be any cessation in service. We are hoping to acquire wider course offerings and new functionality. More about this project in the next issue.

Workplace Orientation Welcome (WOW)

This summer the Personnel Office will present orientation sessions for new employees at Miami. The program is called WOW - Workplace Orientation Welcome. MCIS has been asked to do a session on technology every month. The Support Center has developed a presentation to familiarize new employees with the technology resources and services that are available at Miami University and what they are called. It is hard to present even just the basic information in a short time, but hopefully the new employees will get the message as to where to find further details, and will be familiar with some of our technical jargon.

Banner Training

If you are new to the Banner system, you may want to register for a navigation workshop through the TRAIN system. The instructor-led workshop is designed to help participants become more comfortable with screens, functions and terminology used with Banner. Navigation is the first step in learning to use Banner. The next step is to concentrate on the individual tasks you need to do. You will gain this expertise through colleagues in your office, or through workshops provided by individual offices. The next navigation classes meet:

- Thursday, May 08, 2003, 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM in 305 Hoyt Hall Oxford
- Tuesday, Jun 17, 2003, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM in 305 Hoyt Hall Oxford
Planned Summer Blackboard Upgrade

On Tuesday, May 13, MCIS will be upgrading Blackboard from version 5.0.2 to 6.0.7. Faculty currently using Blackboard have received an e-mail detailing the new features. In addition, we will also be moving Blackboard to two newer and more powerful servers. These should make using Blackboard faster and allow more people to use it concurrently.

An additional change will be the absence of the "Community" and "Library" tabs. These features are absent in this version of Blackboard 6. Instead, the Miami Libraries will be accessible via a link at the top of the screen and organizational sites will be converted to standard course sites.

All Summer session course sites, one year's worth of earlier course sites, and all organizational sites will be copied to the new Blackboard servers automatically. As usual, all old course sites will be preserved for at least two years and can be copied to the new servers upon request. The current (old) Blackboard servers will be directly accessible by instructors and students (who may wish to view grades in their Spring course sites) until October 1, after which time materials will be accessible by request. Instructions for accessing the old servers will be provided within Blackboard after the upgrade.

Important note for faculty: Gradebooks and task lists cannot be migrated from the old servers to the new. Please refrain from adding gradebook entries or tasks to your Summer sites until after the upgrade.

Please send any questions and comments to blackboard@muohio.edu.