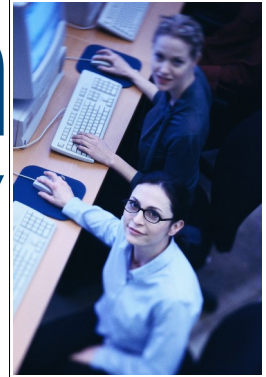


Northeastern ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

University Technology Services User NEIUZ



From the Desk of Kim Tracy

Technology Initiatives



Kim Tracy
Executive Director
University Technology
Services

A lot of what University Technology Services does is behind the scenes—to keep our services running efficiently, reliably, and cost-effectively. So, I'm excited to relay a few of the upcoming improvements in services that will be directly experienced by the University Community. Some of those changes include Student E-Mail, Phone System, and NEIUPort Self-Service Functionality. Additional information on these updates is given below:

1. Student E-mail: We are planning to migrate student e-mail to use Gmail. Many universities have already gone this route and we expect to be able to offer a much better e-mail service to students as a result of this migration. The

Google e-mail service is the same service that is offered to companies at a fee, but offered to universities at no cost. This allows us to create and manage the e-mail accounts and still maintain them as mailboxes at an NEIU address. We're expecting to deploy this to students sometime in the Spring or Summer of 2012.

2. Phone System: We recently awarded the contract to replace the old phone system. This means that all the old phones will be replaced with new phones and will enable us to provide more modern phone features. This project will begin in early 2012 and is expected to complete before July, 2012. The new phone system uses Cisco's Voice over Internet Protocol. More of the details on this project are included on the next page.

3. NEIUpport Self-Service Functions: We recently rolled out some enhancements to pay reporting that is accessible through NEIUpport. In particular, you can get year-to-date totals for deductions you may have on your pay. You also have the ability to sign up for electronic W2s which will allow you to access this important tax document earlier than the mailed version.

Phishing Attacks: Finally, we continue to fight phishing attacks and the attackers seem more determined than ever to steal your login and password. Please guard those and do not send them to anyone via e-mail or to a web-based form of any kind. The attacker will use your account information to access your account. So far, they have been only using this information to send spam (which causes a great deal of strain on our systems and staff). But, we are increasingly concerned that they may access personal information via NEIUpport, which uses the same account information.

These attackers are becoming much more sophisticated and, of late, have targeted NEIU accounts. So, their messages will mention NEIU, NEIUpport, and other details about the University. Please, never give your account and password information over e-mail, via a web form, or to anyone. Given the level of attacks lately, I would appreciate you being overly cautious rather than compromising NEIU security and your personal information.

Issue 14

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Special points of interest:

- Technology Initiatives
- Safeguarding Against Phishing Attacks

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Scantron Replacement

This is a reminder that effective December 31, 2011, the previous Scantron OMR Forms were replaced with a Plain Paper Scan Form solution by Datablocks. The green and blue OMR forms are no longer accepted. New black & white forms are now available for exams and instructor evaluations. The black & white forms were piloted during the Fall-2011 semester, and we had great success with them. We feel that the new solution is more flexible and provides more reporting options than the previous Scantron system. If you have any questions or need the new forms then please contact Diana Lewis (d-lewis@neiu.edu) at extension 4364 or Jean Potillo (j-potillo@neiu.edu) at extension 4335.

New Phone System



University Technology Services is pleased to announce the procurement of a new Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP) telephone system to replace the existing Siemens infrastructure. The VOIP system is a modern solution with a rich set of features. It is also going to be a greener solution compared to our current system. The new system is a win-win solution for the University.

Based on the current implementation schedule, we will be starting the conversion one building or department at a time starting in late February 2012 with complete conversion and removal of the existing system slated for the end of June 2012. Managers and administrators can expect communications from UTS throughout the pre-conversion information gathering stage and during the actual conversion stage.

We will be providing each department manager and administrator with spreadsheets showing data we have been able to compile. We would need each department to return the spreadsheet with any corrections, additions or subtractions that need to be made. Through this process we hope to ensure we have adequately accounted for every individual who requires a phone and voice mail box. A spreadsheet that will be sent out to all departments will be accompanied by instructions as to what information is required and an explanation of the required fields.

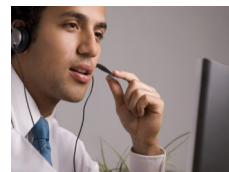
We are looking forward to assisting you in this process and ask that you address any questions to Eric Whinery (e-whinery@neiu.edu) or Nick DiMaso (n-dimaso@neiu.edu).

Microsoft Home Use Program



As part of a new offering from Microsoft, NEIU employees are eligible to participate in the Home Use Program (HUP). Through an arrangement between Microsoft and NEIU, employees are eligible to order a licensed copy of select Microsoft Office desktop programs you use at work to install and use on a home computer. Currently available are Office 2010 professional and Office for Mac 2011. Microsoft charges a nominal fee of \$19.95 to cover media (CDs), shipping, and handling. If you are interested in participating in the Microsoft Home Use Program (HUP), send an email request to helpdesk@neiu.edu. Please include the phrase "Microsoft Home Use Program" in the subject line of your e-mail.

Technology Services



Technology Services provides technical support to NEIU employees and students on supported hardware and software issues. It is a one-stop shop for your technology needs such as computer problems, audio visual technologies, telecommunication (for employees), and password reset. We can be reached via email at helpdesk@neiu.edu or via phone at 773-442-HELP (4357).

Safeguarding Against Phishing Attacks

INTRODUCTION



Lately NEIU has seen an uptick in phishing attacks. The purpose of this article is to provide an overview on phishing and some of the things you can do to avoid from being a victim of a phishing attack.

Phishing attacks are designed to steal someone's personal information and/or possessions (e.g., money). Phishing attacks are generally carried out via email and/or phone, in which the attackers try to get the victims' personal information by posing as a credible person or organization. Then the attackers use that information to gain illegal access to your accounts or other personal information. Phishing attacks can occur in various shapes and forms; some of which are discussed below:

1. Fraudulent Email Message: They appear to come from organization that you may do business with or work for. These email messages would appear authentic. In many instances the return email address may be to a different organization. For example, you may get a message from NEIU but the return address may belong to a different organization.
2. Fraudulent Charities: These may be fraudulent organizations posing as credible organizations. They would generally ask to make donations to their organizations.
3. Fraudulent Web Sites: These may be fake sites that appear to be legitimate sites, and may install a spyware on your system. The spyware may send some information back to the attacker without your knowledge.
4. Fraudulent Sales Transaction: A buyer may be willing to buy an item from you. S/he would say that they would send you a check for larger amount and ask you to return a check with the difference in amount. Or it may be a fake online auction site that would lure you into giving up your personal information.

RECOGNIZING PHISHING ATTACKS AND STEPS TO TAKE

Generally, a phishing attack (email) may contain some or all of the following elements:

1. Spelling/Grammatical Errors: While the Phishing attacks have become very sophisticated, in some instances phishing emails or letters may have grammatical or spelling errors.

Action: This should be a red flag that this may be a possible phishing attempt. Review the information carefully and do not respond to the email or letter.

3. Award/Prize Emails or Calls: Sometimes they may claim that you have won a prize or an award, and in order to claim your prize you may be required to provide certain information. In some instances the phishing attempt may happen over the phone. In a phone phishing attempt the attackers may be very flattering about you (your organization) and want to ship something for "free" or as a "prize"; and eventually say that all you have to do is agree to buy this that for some small price.

Action: Disregard such messages and if you must respond then you shouldn't respond with any personal information. Also, remember that as an NEIU employee you cannot just buy anything without a purchase order otherwise it may become a personal liability.



Safeguarding Against Phishing Attacks (Continued)

4. Attachments: Emails may ask you to open an attachment to fill a form or view some multimedia. In some cases these message may come from some you may know.

Action: The attachment may contain some sort of a virus or spyware. You should not open any attachments that you were not expecting. Additionally, if the attachment came from someone you know and the email itself looks suspicious then don't open the attachment.



Figure:1

5. Fake Links: Emails may often instruct you to click on some links. One the surface these links may seem to be legitimate but once you click on them, they may take you to the attacker's website.

Action: Don't click on any links that come from a suspicious source. You can also put your mouse over the link (but don't click) and check the status bar for the address that the link is pointing to. For example, in Figure 1 you can see that the link actually states http://www.neiu.edu; however, if you put your mouse over the link then the status bar and/or the tooltip shows that it is pointing to a different site. Also, watch out for website names with slightly altered spelling in comparison to a legitimate website.

FINAL THOUGHTS:

As mentioned earlier phishing attacks are designed to steal your personal information. Therefore, you should be really careful when responding to such emails or calls. Remember that Technology Services (helpdesk) or any other legitimate organization will **NEVER** ask for your username and password via email or phone, especially if the email or call was originated by them. So, if you ever get emails or phone calls that look authentic, but ask you to click a link or to provide personal information then please disregard them.

If you think that your NEIU information may have been compromised then you should immediately contact Technology Services (helpdesk) at extension 4357 or send an email at helpdesk@neiu.edu.

Source: <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/powerpoint-help/how-office-helps-protect-you-from-phishing-schemes-HA001230041.aspx?CTT=1>
 Image Source: <http://computer.howstuffworks.com/phishing.htm>

Automatic Calculations in Excel

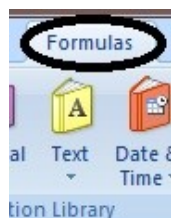


Figure 1

By default **Automatic** calculations are enabled in Excel. This option, when enabled, will automatically perform calculations anytime you add or edit a formula or expression. However, if you have a large and complicated workbook, then changing one cell can cause this option to recalculate all the dependent formulas or expressions. This can be a reason for a sluggish performance in Excel. To improve the performance of Excel, you can disable this option when you are editing a complicated workbook, and enable it once you have finished editing. To locate this option in Excel 2007/2010:

1. Click on the **Formula** Tab (Figure 1)
2. Click on **Calculation Option** under the **Calculation** group. (Figure 2)
3. To enable or disable automatic calculations, click on **Automatic** or **Manual**, respectively.

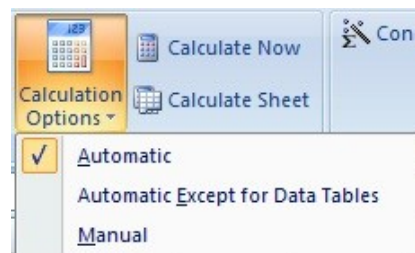


Figure 2

New Hires in UTS

Jim Thompson:

Jim joined NEIU from the Chicago Sun-Times, where he served as Manager of Interactive Media Operations. His previous roles have included Director of Technology for the American Bar Association, and systems performance planning and project manager for SunGard Investment Management Systems, where he was responsible for managing migration from mainframe to open systems platforms for numerous customers, including TD Waterhouse, American Express and Bank of New York.

In nearly 15 years at Motorola, he participated in software development and lead deployment and support for the first cellular text messaging product, working with customers throughout the US, South America, and Israel. Other roles at Motorola included development manager, project manager, system test, field service, classroom instructor, and engineering support.

His introduction to information technology came at Gould Research in Rolling Meadows, where he started part time as a Unix Systems Administrator while attending night school, and later at Gould Ocean Systems and Gould Intelligent Systems Laboratories in Baltimore, MD, providing support for Gould's own line of Berkeley Unix systems (the Gould Pownode series) and DEC VAX.

Jim has his MS in Computer Science from DePaul University in Chicago, and has been active in the Chicago Chapter of the ACM since 1989.

Kamran Khan:

Kamran joined UTS as Systems Administrator in August 2011 and has over 20 years of IT experience. He is part of the Network & Distributed Services and reports to Jim Thompson. Kamran completed his graduate degree in Computer Science from NEIU in 2007. He started his IT career as mainframe professional in the early nineties and during the course of his career he has put on many hats. He feels that new wave of Virtualization will determine the future of the IT industry. Among the other projects at NEIU, Kamran is also involved in the desktop virtualization project.

Jonathon Castro:

Jonathon joined UTS in Dec-2011 as the Lead Banner Programmer and System Analyst. He has over 10 years of IT experience. Before joining NEIU he was the Web Project Leader at Purdue University. Jonathon plays baseball for the Outlaws and likes to play racquetball. He also enjoys working out.

Xiangsheng (Sean) Hu:

Xiangsheng (Sean) joined UTS in Dec-2011 as the Assistant Director and the Lead Banner / Oracle Database Administrator. He has over 20 years of Database Administration (DBA) experience. Previously he worked at Financial Solutions, HNC as Financial Application/Database (Oracle/DB2/SQL Server) Architect for almost four years. He also worked for Morningstar for over 10 years as a Senior Oracle DBA and Oracle EBS admin and functional analyst. Before coming to NEIU he was the Data Warehouse Architect/DBA at UIC. As a hobby Sean likes to play bridge.

Chief Editor:

Kim Tracy
Executive Director
University Technology Services

Contributing Editor:

Faisal Kalota, Ed.D.
Technology Training Coordinator
University Technology Services

Lech Walesa Hall
LWH 4067
Phone: X4190
FAX: X4370

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