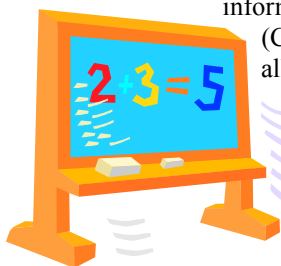




Blackboard integrated with NEIUport, student systems

by Anthony Pina
*Coordinator of Learning Technologies
Center for Teaching and Learning*

Our Blackboard Learning Management System has been upgraded to the latest version (7.3) and is now fully integrated with NEIUport and the student information system



(CARS). This allows us to further our goals of making the system easier, more efficient and better performing.

In 2008, when NEIU's student information system changes from CARS to Banner (NEIUworks), Blackboard will already be integrated into the new system.

Some of the features of our current system are:

- Faculty and students now use a single username (NetID) and password to access Bb through NEIUport (<http://neiuport.neiu.edu>) by clicking the Bb icon (without a separate login to Bb).
- Bb course shells for every section in CARS are created automatically several weeks prior to the beginning of the next semester (over 2,000 Spring 2008 sections were created Nov. 1).

eral weeks prior to the beginning of the next semester (over 2,000 Spring 2008 sections were created Nov. 1).

- All new Bb courses are created "unavailable" to students. This allows faculty to work on their courses in advance and make them available for student view when they are ready.
- Faculty are now able to copy course content between their Bb courses at any time.
- Faculty who wish to use a single Bb course for multiple sections can send a request to etlt@neiu.edu to have the section enrollments combined up to the 10th day of the semester.
- After students are enrolled into their courses via CARS, they are enrolled automatically--within 1 day--into their Bb courses as students.
- After faculty are assigned to their courses in CARS, they are enrolled automatically--within 1 day--into their Bb courses as instructors.

Our past practice of not removing old/unused Bb courses from the system has resulted in our Bb database large and unwieldy. In order to increase Bb performance (and avoid being charged tens of thousands of dollars in additional server space), Blackboard is working



with us to implement procedures to clean up and manage the Bb databases. We will be implementing the following procedures:

- All Bb courses will normally be kept on the server for two calendar years.
- Bb courses over two years old will be archived to disc by Blackboard and removed from our production server on an annual basis. A copy of the disc will be delivered to NEIU, so that individual courses may be restored if necessary (e.g. if a grade from an old class is grieved).

Faculty questions about Blackboard can be addressed to the Center for Teaching and Learning at etlt@neiu.edu.

Student questions about Blackboard can be addressed to Student Computing Services (773) 442-4390 or scs@neiu.edu.

EVERYTHING CHANGES



Remote access, Internet dial-up discontinued in phases

by Kim Tracy
Executive Director
University Computing Services

For the past several years, the University has provided Internet dialup service to students, faculty and staff to access the Internet.



Many of us used this service when other alternatives were

limited and/or more expensive than the traditional dial-up service.

During the last several years, technological advances have put a greater demand on connectivity speeds that can only be met by commercial carriers.

High-speed broadband (DSL, wireless and cable) services provide consumers with highly reliable and much faster Internet connectivity. In addition to being more reliable and faster, prices for these services have dropped significantly as well. For instance, a standard DSL

connection today is only half of the 1998 cost for dial-up service.

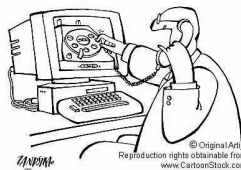
As a result, many former users of the dial-up service are migrating to high-speed broadband because the old service does not meet their connectivity needs.

Unfortunately, supporting the old dial-up technology for the remaining users gets more expensive each year.

With a significant decrease in usage and surging equipment maintenance charges, the per user cost to provide dial-up service is very high and continues to increase.

With the combination of decreased prices of alternative connectivity, increased costs to maintain the old technology, and decreased dial-up usage, University Computing Services has developed a two-phase plan to discontinue NEIU dial-up service:

Phase 1 Effective July 16, 2007, the number of available concurrent dial-up connections has been decreased by 40%. Based on our metrics, users did



not see an impact, as this change removed unused capacity within the system.

Phase 2 (effective July 1, 2008) – University Computing Services will discontinue the dial-up service. This one year advance notice will allow dial-up users sufficient time to investigate available high speed Internet service providers and transition their service.

Multiple Web resources are available to help find commercial carriers available in your area. While we do not recommend one carrier over another, users may access Websites such as www.dsl.com, www.broadbandinfo.com, www.cable-modem.net or www.buytelco.net to get useful information that will help in making a decision.

We also suggest talking to friends, family, fellow students, and professors in order to survey them and find out which provider they use. Be sure to ask them about their satisfaction with their provider as well.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact NEIU Helpdesk at helpdesk@neiu.edu or Student Computing Services Support Center at scs@neiu.edu.

NDS News

by Ozair Noor
Director
Network and Distribution Services

Network, Web connectivity

University Computing Services is pleased to announce completion of a one-year long project to upgrade network and Internet connectivity at the Center for Inner City Studies (CCICS), Chicago's Teacher Center (CTC) and El Centro (EC) off-campus locations.

All NEIU campuses are now connected to the Illinois Century Network (ICN), NEIU's Internet provider, via AT&T's Metropolitan Area Network (MAN). This new connection allows us to provide dedicated Internet connectivity at each of the campuses, double the bandwidth and lower operating costs.

Furthermore, completion of this project improves inter-campus network reliability to support deployment of

NEIUworks and enhance user experience.

Data center remodeling

In 2007, NEIU's main data center, located on the third floor of the Classroom Building, was modernized to accommodate expanding NEIUworks and related services. Many improvements to the operational infrastructure have been made to make the campus data center more reliable.

A new central UPS (Uninterruptible Power System) with extra capacity was installed to protect servers, switches and storage devices from electrical power outages.

In addition, a highly-reliable large capacity Automatic Transfer Switch was installed to transfer electrical power from the main feed to emergency generators, during power outages.

Also, a fire suppression system, not harmful to humans, was installed to protect valuable assets in the event of a fire. To address the issue of increasing heat generated by the equipment, new



air conditioning units were installed as well.

Completion of this project positions UCS to better accommodate the increasing technology implementations at NEIU.

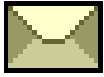
UCS would like to thank NEIU Facilities Services for their help in this project.

Student Computing Services makes changes

by Scott Simon
Coordinator
Student Computing Services

Webmail

The NEIU's student e-mail system was upgraded Aug. 19, 2007 and now provides increased spam protection and supports new features, such as message filtering and enhanced



e-mail

searching capabilities.

One of the features added to the newest version of WebMail is Filtering. Filters are sets of criteria that can be used to perform a variety of actions such as inspect incoming e-mails to prevent spam, viruses and other unwanted messages or to inspect keywords of incoming messages in order to organize messages or groups of messages into customized folders.

For example, the user may block any message that contains the word "Sale" in the subject line, or block any messages from one or more e-mail addresses, or forward some messages to other email addresses, etc. The user may also wish to prioritize messages by creating folders and setting criteria that determine which messages go to which folders. WebMail filters also allows "time frame" sorting, which means that the user may choose to exclude messages received during a particular period of time by setting dates.

Students can access through NEIUport, by clicking on the e-mail icon in the upper-right hand corner of the NEIUport screen. For more information on how to use the new features of NEIU Webmail, please visit the Student Computing Services website at <http://www.neiu.edu/~scs> and select the Tutorials link. The Webmail guide is found under the section "How to Use Webmail."

GoPrint:



Students now have a maximum printing limit of 2000 pages per semester. This is

in part due to initiatives that are geared toward expanding services for students. Some of our initiatives are:

- Implementing GoPrint to reduce the amount of paper and print waste
- Setting the default on all printers in the labs to duplex printing (printing on both sides of the page)
- Recycling print cartridges back to the vendor
- Testing the use of acid free, recycled paper in the labs
- Installing new, higher-capacity printers

While the initiatives have been successful, we need to do more.

Although Spring 2008 limits printing to 2000 pages, (or 1000 sheets printed two-sides) per student, beginning Fall 2008 semester, our plan is to implement a 1000 printed page limit (or 500 sheets printed two-sides) per student.



Our computer lab data show that 99 percent of Northeastern students print less than 2000 pages per semester, so this change will affect less than one percent of the lab clients.

These efforts will continue our move toward more fiscally and environmentally responsible print services, while making sure that the printing resources are shared fairly among all students.

For Website tutorials on how to print, visit www.neiu.edu/~scs and select the Tutorials link. To view print usage statistics, visit www.neiu.edu/~scs and select the Computer Lab Information link.

Computer Labs' Internet:

Over the past several semesters, the student computer labs have seen an increase in activity from various social-networking sites which are used for non-academic purposes. As a result, many

students have not been able to access the computers in order to complete school assignments. Therefore, due to student



complaints regarding improper computer utilization and the abuse of resources in the computer labs, a limited amount of machines have been modified to only allow access to NEIU approved sites.

The computers in the center area and the north side of B-103, and the north side of CIS-0002 are restricted, whereas all other machines have unrestricted access.

If you require the use of an academic Website that has been blocked, please inform the student workers in the labs or visit www.neiu.edu/~scs and select the link that says "Report a Computer Problem."

For a listing of the Student Computing Services computer labs, visit www.neiu.edu/~scs and select the Computer Lab Information link.

Personnel:

Student Computing Services department welcomes Luigi Pezzarossi to the team. Luigi joined the department October 1, 2007 and has been with Student Computing Services since 2004.

During that time, he has worked as a lab assistant and most recently, as a technician. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Music Performance from NEIU and is still active in the university's jazz band. He is currently continuing his education at NEIU and hopes to earn his MBA in the near future.

Luigi was born in Guatemala and lived there until the age of 11. In addition to English, Luigi speaks Spanish and Italian. His fluency in other languages has been helpful when working with the students in the computer labs.

For more information about the Student Computing Services department or the services offered, please visit www.Neu.edu/~scs, or contact the department directly at 773-442-4390.

Enhancing cellular service

by Kim Tracy
Executive Director
University Computing Services

In order to improve cell phone service on campus, UCS has been working with Verizon Wireless on two projects.

One, is to install an in-building system in the C building and the other is to place a full cell site on top of the library. Verizon Wireless is the primary wireless carrier for NEIU.

Installation of the C building system was completed February 15.

This system is designed to give Verizon cell phones data and voice coverage within the building and to connect them to the main cell phone network. It is being provided to NEIU at no cost.

The second project is to add a full cell site that will serve the entire main campus and surrounding neighborhood. It will be located on the roof of the library.

This project was approved at the February NEIU Board of Directors

meeting.

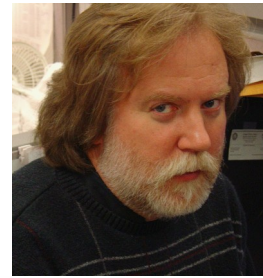
This is sorely needed by Verizon



Wireless to improve their coverage in this part of Chicago and will give us reliable cell phone service on campus.

Both of these projects will support all data and voice services offered by Verizon wireless including their high-speed data network based on CDMA EV-DO.

Staff News



Effective December 31, 2007, Bob Ganzer – Assistant Director of Administrative Information Systems retired from NEIU

University Computing Services after 15 years of service. Prior to joining NEIU, Bob worked at the Board of Governors IT department for 18 years. Bob was instrumental in supporting a number of NEIU systems including FRS and CARS and will be missed. We wish Bob best of luck!

George Kurylak and Nur Habza Ahmed have joined Administrative Information Systems group in the roles of Senior and Junior Database Administrators respectively. Their main concentration will be to support implementation and on-going support of NEIUworks and other university systems. We welcome George and Nur to our team!

Bits & Bytes

Pay phones discontinued

Starting April 1, AT&T will be discontinuing support of the pay phones and will remove them from all NEIU campuses.

Pay phones have been installed on our campuses for many years. However, their usage has drastically decreased, while operating costs have increased. The key driving force of this trend is adoption of cellular telephones by our students, faculty and staff.

To be better stewards of NEIU resources, University Computing Services will not contract another vendor to continue payphone service.

EVERYTHING CHANGES



Dear Students,

Over the past 18 months, we have been working to build a new computer system that will streamline services for Northeastern students. Earlier this year, you were introduced to NEIUport, a new way for students, faculty and staff to: Be Connected, Be Informed, and Be Yourself. We are pleased to announce that in March 2008, beginning with summer registration, NEIUport will serve as the gateway to online registration, financial aid and student billing services.

In March, Northeastern students will have access to these online services through NEIUport:

- SEARCH FOR NORTHEASTERN CLASSES ONLINE BY SUBJECT, INSTRUCTOR, LOCATION, TIME & GENERAL EDUCATION CATEGORY
- REGISTER FOR CLASSES ONLINE
- VIEW COURSE SEATING CAPACITIES (OPEN & CLOSED CLASSES)
- PRINT OUT A CLASS SCHEDULE
- REVIEW FINANCIAL AID AWARDS
- REVIEW INDIVIDUAL ACADEMIC PROFILE INFORMATION
- PRINT OUT A TUITION & FEE STATEMENT
- PAY TUITION & FEES ONLINE WITH CREDIT, DEBIT OR CHECK

What does this change mean to you?

- TOUCHSTONE REGISTRATION SERVICES (TTRS) WILL NO LONGER BE USED TO REGISTER FOR CLASSES
- STUDENTS WILL NO LONGER RECEIVE TTRS NOTICES IN THE MAIL
- STUDENT MUST ACTIVATE THEIR NEIUport ACCOUNTS IN ORDER TO ACCESS THESE SERVICES
- CONFIRMATION AND PAYMENT PROCESSES WILL CHANGE FOR THE FALL 2008 SEMESTER
- PREREQUISITE REQUIREMENTS WILL BE ENFORCED

Updates about these exciting new services will be posted to NEIUport. Don't miss out on these new developments. If you have not already activated your NEIUport account, do so now at www.neiu.edu/neiuport.

We wish you all the best with your final exams, papers and projects. Remember, next year . . . EVERYTHING CHANGES!



Regards,

NEIUworks Student & Academic Systems Team

FOR MORE INFORMATION: <http://neiuport.neiu.edu>

University Computing Services

Executive Director

Kim Tracy

Printed by authority of the State of Illinois,
March 2008