



Computer Services Newsletter

John Province retires after 23 years of service to SMSU

In late June Computer Services said goodbye to John Province, Coordinator of the Technical and Systems Programming group, who retired with more than 23 years of service to the

University. John began his career at SMSU in 1979 and has seen many changes take place both in the computer industry and on the SMSU campus. As a tribute to John, we in Computer Ser-

vices wanted to spotlight his dedicated service with a few of his own words. In the following article, John looks back on his career, SMSU, and having a full head of hair. ■

The last 600 words of Coordinator John Province

I didn't feel old when I filled out my retirement papers and sent them to MOSERS, but with so many folks coming up and reminding me of events that occurred so long ago, I'm starting to feel a little ancient. Ah, then they show me photos taken way back when I had a full head of hair, no glasses, and confidence that life was going to get better (get with me on that one offline). It doesn't seem possible that 23 years and six months have gone by. I have been going through my archives, which you all call "drawers," and uncovering things that unleash sweet and sour, wonderful memories.

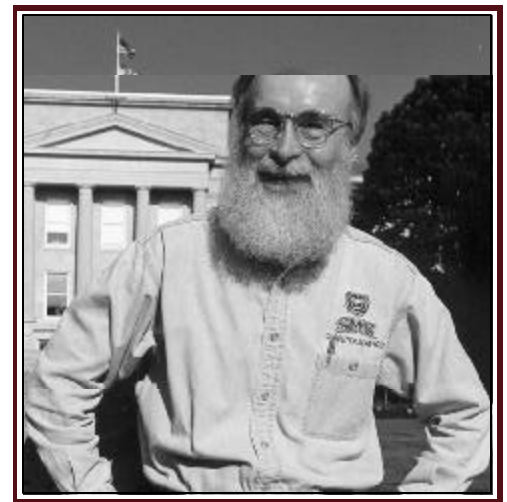
We had just started doing online computer processing for administrative purposes when I

first came to SMSU. All academic computing was done with punched cards in a single lab on the first floor of Sicheluff Hall using what was called Remote Job Entry, or RJE as the acronym devotees at IBM® called it; even IBM® is an acronym. The most satisfying accomplishment in my early years was working with Jerry Smith in Enrollment Services developing the Continuous OnLine Registration system (COLR). Before the implementation of this system, students stood in long lines for several days using punched cards to put together class schedules. President Duane Meyer asked Jerry to "take the pain out of enrollment." With COLR, the process from beginning to end took only minutes using online terminals and magnetic ID cards (Jerry was carrying a stop watch). It was only later that I truly realized the impact of COLR.

After six years of programming, I moved to Systems Programming on the mainframe and the hair started to go. The PC invasion began in the early 80s, expanding our responsibilities. It included an operating system called DOS from some company called Microsoft®. Hey, we had DOS on the mainframe; how tough can it be? Sigh, the hair is really going now. Oh, by the way, I got a Mac®.

Another milestone was reached when we installed a 56KB modem line from MU and joined BITNET in the late 80s. This connected SMSU to the outside world and allowed us services such as listservs and email. Wow, networking. Can the MP3s be far behind? Just a few short years later this connection was replaced by an Internet connection as the state-supported Missouri universities formed MORENET.

We used to be a mainframe-only shop, but look at us now: Unix®, Dec®, Harris®, Prime®, Novell®, Cisco®, PCs sprouting up like mushrooms, networking – we need a staff. Oops, I got



John Province, former Coordinator of Technical and Systems Programming

a staff; even the strong hairs have surrendered now! All joking aside, I have been privileged to have the best system support people working with me that anyone could ask for. What we have accomplished in providing technology for the University has been outstanding. I have never hesitated to compare our systems to any other university, even major universities (inside joke). It has been the result of outstanding work done by outstanding people, and I'm proud to have been a part of it.

I wish to thank everyone, past and present, for everything they've done for me. Over the years I've had unsolicited offers for jobs paying more than what a university can offer. What has always kept me at SMSU, quite honestly, is the people. The campus has always been an extended family to me. The friendships, combined with the sincere appreciation I have received for my contribution to these team efforts, have given me a sense of fulfillment most systems people do not experience. I will most dearly miss the people – and the hair. ■

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Fall 2002 computer lab schedules

Cheek Hall 150

Monday - Thursday.....open 24 hours
Friday.....closes at 11 p.m.
Saturday.....10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Sunday.....opens at 12 noon

Glass Hall 228-229, 234-235

Monday - Thursday.....8 a.m. to midnight
Friday.....8 a.m. to 11 p.m.
Saturday.....10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Sunday.....2 p.m. to 11 p.m.

Strong Hall 107

Monday - Thursday.....8 a.m. to 11 p.m.
Friday.....8 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Saturday.....11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sunday.....3 p.m. to 10 p.m.



A student worker in the Cheek Hall open-access computer lab assists a student.

Helpful telephone numbers



Help Desk for faculty and staff
(417) 836-5891

Dialup hotline for students
(417) 836-6327

Short Course registration
(417) 836-6288

Server upgrade will improve communication capabilities on the SMSU campus

By Kevin Piercy, Windows® Systems Programmer
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Over the past year, Computer Services has been busy upgrading the University's email systems to Microsoft® Exchange Server 2000 Enterprise Edition. This upgrade has entailed the purchase of new servers to handle increasing user demands.

Twelve new rack-mounted servers have replaced the three aging servers that previously housed University email. These new servers provide a system that is both more stable and

more responsive. Additionally, the new servers have allowed Computer Services to increase mailbox size limits. The mailbox size limit for faculty and staff is now 60 Mb, and the mailbox size limit for students is 20 Mb. These increased size limits will allow users to better take advantage of the University's email resources and will enable the University to communicate more effectively with its members. ■

From the Director...

Our efforts continue in Computer Services to support emerging technologies as SMSU enters a new era of information technology. We are excited about the advances being made in technological areas such as application development, networking, and user support. Our department currently consists of 61 full-time employees and 60 student workers. Our departmental structure is a staff divided into three groups: Systems and Operations, User Support, and Management Information Systems. A major objective in each of these areas is to continue to provide reliable, easy-to-use services. A central goal for the entire Computer Services department is a commitment to customer satisfaction. We are striving to become more sensitive to the support needs of all who use computing technologies at SMSU. If you have comments concerning your service or are interested in details about a certain project, please don't hesitate to call on us for assistance.



Jeff Morrissey, Director of Computer Services
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...and from the Coordinators



David Liss, Coordinator of User Support, DavidLiss@smsu.edu

As technology continues to become more prevalent and complex, the demand for support continues to increase. Computer Services' User Support group has been actively working with other campus-wide support staff to solidify standard procedures and to provide the SMSU campus community with the best support possible. By implementing the Computer Services Help Desk as a central point of contact, faculty and staff members are only a phone call away from a person with whom they can discuss their support needs. We also have focused on strengthening the support in our campus-wide computer labs as well as enhancing our services in Assistive Technology support. Additionally, be on the lookout for our expanded Short Course offerings from the Technical Training group on such topics as Microsoft® Word, Excel, and Access. Providing you with quality service and support continues to be our goal and focus. Please feel free to contact me anytime with comments on the quality of our service and support.



John Province, former Coordinator of Technical and Systems Programming, JohnProvince@smsu.edu

In writing this, I looked at last year's status and am amazed at how much the Systems and Operations group has done in the past year. Last year I thought we had all the nodes we could use, but we've actually added 25 percent more and almost 20 percent more servers. Our email system has had a major upgrade to ensure reliability, functionality, and response time as email has become the electronic communication hub within the University and the outside world. We have migrated the majority of the campus buildings to 100 Mb service and hope to complete this project soon. Our major servers will soon be on the first gigabit service to be offered, and soon we will be purchasing an enterprise capacity iSeries (formally AS400) to begin converting and migrating production database applications to someday replace our current mainframe. Despite the problems of the economy and budget constraints, Computer Services will continue to make significant progress in information technology, developing a solid base of technology to empower our users.



Frank Williams, Coordinator of Management Information Systems, FrankWilliams@smsu.edu

As Coordinator of the Management Information Systems (MIS) group within Computer Services, I coordinate the efforts of the many programmers and analysts who develop, implement, and maintain business applications for the University. MIS is currently in the process of migrating from a mainframe environment to an integrated application and relational database server environment. SMSU is fortunate to have very talented and capable staff members in MIS, and they will do their best to complete the migration within the given timelines. MIS is in the process of testing a couple of pilot projects that will pave the way for the continued migration and conversion efforts. Once the testing of those pilot projects is complete, procedures and documentation will be created that will help expedite and guide the programming staff through the remainder of the changes. The new computer environment will allow increased speed for new application development within a platform that is more web-centric.

2002 Resource CD provides easier installation, Norton AntiVirus®

By Rob Tinney, Centralized User Support Specialist
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The latest incarnation of the SMSU Resource CD is now available.

Several fundamental changes made to the layout and design of the 2002 edition have eliminated erroneous software installations and have made the entire installation process easier.

In past versions, users frequently installed unnecessary patches or software by mistake. This often caused problems and decreased the overall effectiveness and reliability of the Resource CD. In response to this situation, Computer Services set out to solve this problem with the latest version of its Resource CD.

The 2002 edition automates many tasks for the user. It determines the operating system, Internet browser, applicable software, and their respective versions and then selects the appropriate options for the client. If, for example, the client has Internet Explorer 5, the Resource CD selects the option to install Internet Explorer 6 by default. This structure applies to the Computer-Based Training player and course installations as well.

The biggest change in the 2002 edition of the SMSU Resource CD is the incorporation of Norton AntiVirus®. Under SMSU's current agreement, individuals are licensed to use the software until they are no longer SMSU affiliates, at which time they are required to remove Norton AntiVirus® from their machines so that SMSU can reclaim the license for reissue.

Until recently, keeping track of issued licenses was a manual process that lent itself to human error. To remedy this, Computer Services created an alternative method to automate and track antivirus installations and chose the 2002 Resource CD to implement the new system.

To install Norton Antivirus® successfully, users log in to a secure SMSU web site to read the terms of use for the

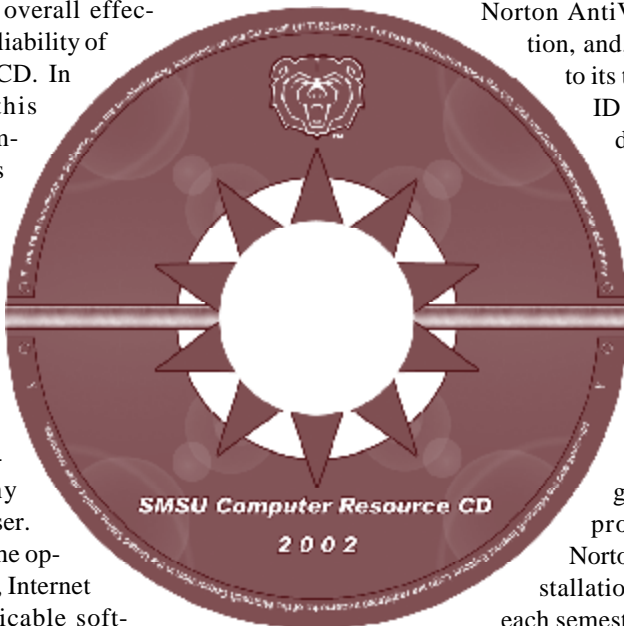
Norton AntiVirus® installation, and, upon agreeing to its terms, their user ID is recorded in a database. To

verify that they have agreed to the terms of use, a text file is transferred to their machine, which then informs the 2002 program that it can proceed with the Norton AntiVirus® installation. At the end of each semester, the accumulated

user IDs are matched against the user IDs of any students who have graduated. Those who have graduated are removed from the database, and SMSU recovers the license.

The automation incorporated in the 2002 Resource CD has already proven to be a useful tool in reducing software license loss and licensing conflicts. Additionally, it has eliminated potential problems with manual installations by streamlining the installation process for users.

Feel free to stop by any open-access lab in Cheek 150, Strong 107, or Glass Hall 229 to check out a copy of the Computer Services 2002 Resource CD. ■



Assistive Technology moves to Meyer Library

By Bill Carnagey, Assistive Technology Specialist
BillCarnagey@smsu.edu

In 1999, Assistive Technology Services (ATS) at Southwest Missouri State University established a four-station assistive technology lab within the Cheek Hall open-access computer lab. ATS also placed satellite stations in both Glass and Strong Halls. Since these beginnings, ATS has continued to expand the range, scope, and quality of technology access services and resources for students, faculty, and staff who are differently abled. When the ATS program began, it served an active caseload of approximately 12 students. Today, the program serves 40 to 60 students and more than ten SMSU employees.

Because of the rapid growth in both clientele and services offered, it is indeed fortunate that the planners of the addition project to Meyer Library foresaw the need for assistive technology services in the new facilities. At the outset of planning, it was determined that specially designed facilities would be devoted to the needs of ATS patrons in the new addition.

The vision of ATS services and resources in the new library addition became a reality in June 2002 when ATS moved into a new six-room complex on the second floor of the library. The new location for ATS operations is room 201D, and Assistive Technology Specialist Bill Carnagey's new office is in room 201E. The remaining four rooms function as individualized assistive technology stations. The ATS area is now equipped with nearly \$25,000 worth of modern assistive technology equipment (in addition to ATS' already existing inventory of equipment valued at over \$60,000).

ATS is continuing to maintain the four adaptive computer stations in the Cheek Hall open-access computer lab and the satellite stations in both Glass and Strong Halls. ATS patrons now have access to ten adaptive computer stations located on campus. Equally important, individuals now have their choice of accessing assistive technology in integrated open-lab settings or in private and enclosed individualized stations.

For more information about ATS and its expanded facilities, please call 836-4275 (TTY 836-8795). ■

Antigen® software now protecting SMSU from virus threats

By Kevin Piercy, Windows® Systems Programmer

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Email is increasingly used for University communications. It plays a critical role in the University's move toward web-based, self-service systems, providing an affordable and effective means of communicating with all members of the campus community. Enhancements to the University's email and dialup systems have made it easier than ever to access the email system from a wide variety of locations.

As email use increases, it becomes more important to insure the safety of both the system and users from email-based threats. Most computer viruses that enter the University systems are transmitted through email. While many users run antivirus software on their personal computers, email is often accessed from different locations, from computers that may not have antivirus software installed.

Computer Services has taken steps to protect University users and systems by installing antivirus software, Sybari® Antigen®, on the University's main email gateway. The Antigen® software scans every message that passes through the email gateway, including all messages entering or leaving the University email system. When a virus is found, Antigen® tries to disinfect the message. If a message cannot be disinfecting, it is removed. Notification emails are sent to both the sender and the recipient, informing them of the message status.

Antigen® also allows Computer Services to be proactive in defending against viruses. It has facilities that allow for the blocking of file signatures or types that contain viruses, even if the virus definition files have not been updated. This allows Computer Services to respond more effectively to outbreaks of new viruses that are not yet blocked by desktop antivirus software, protecting the campus from potential damage.

Since its installation, the Antigen® software has scanned more than 14,000,000 messages and has stopped more than 190,000 viruses with an average of 1,400 viruses a day. ■



Kevin Piercy works with SMSU's new servers, which are protected by Sybari® Antigen® software.

Antigen® at work against W32.Klez virus

By David Liss, Coordinator of User Support

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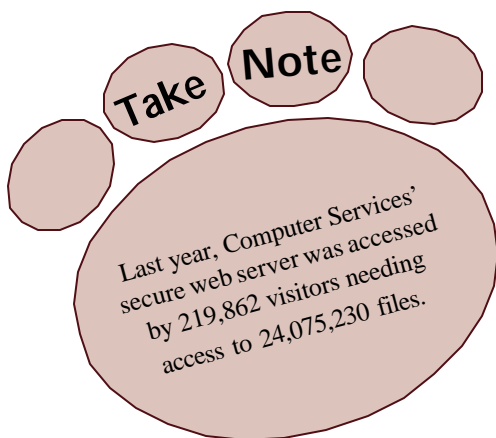
The W32.Klez virus has caused some confusion with respect to Antigen's process of notifying senders and recipients of emails that have been intercepted because they were infected with a virus. Many email users on campus have received Antigen® email notification messages saying that they sent or were sent an email that contained a virus. The problem is that they may have no idea what this email message is or who sent it! With the W32.Klez virus, this is very understandable.

The W32.Klez virus is a mass-emailing virus that is delivered from randomly chosen addresses found in a user's mailbox. This includes addresses from emails in the user's inbox in addition to all of his or her address lists and contacts. For example, Steve Beckman's computer is infected with the W32.Klez virus due to outdated virus software. When the virus goes to work, it finds the email address of Janet Timmons. The virus inserts Janet's email address into the "From:" section of the infected message and sends it to Lee Steel. Lee then contacts Janet

to inform her that she sent him an infected message, but when Janet scans her computer, she doesn't find the virus because it was the email message that was infected and not her computer. With the W32.Klez virus, you could receive an email from any one of 20,000 potential email users who are associated with SMSU—even people you don't know.

Though the Antigen® virus notification emails can become a nuisance from time to time, they also serve as a reminder that Sybari® Antigen® software is providing virus protection as designed. The email notifications are actually very positive in nature because they notify users of infected emails that are not received or sent emails that did not get delivered because of virus attachments.

With Antigen® software at work on the email system and Norton Antivirus® at work on your computer, you are doubly protected from the threat of potentially destructive viruses. Once the effects of the W32.Klez virus begin to fade, email notifications from unknown individuals should decrease...at least until the next virus comes along. ■



A new day is dawning: Migration to the IBM® iSeries

By Frank Williams, Coordinator of Management Information Systems
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One of many positive developments on the horizon in Computer Services is the planned migration to the IBM® iSeries. The IBM® iSeries is a high performance, integrated application server that works as a relational database server, a web server, a mail server, and a file server. The iSeries provides a variety of user-friendly utilities and a robust set of application development software and database management software. SMSU has submitted a proposal for a Title III grant to help offset the cost of purchasing the iSeries.

The migration to the iSeries will position SMSU and Computer Services very well regarding future IT development. The iSeries will facilitate the use of newer and more powerful programming languages and tools. In addition, it will eliminate some problems associated with the current mainframe such as obsolete software, high hardware and software maintenance costs, and the difficulty of finding information technology professionals with mainframe skills.

Major initiatives in this migration task include designing, creating, and moving existing database tables to an iSeries; converting and moving existing Virtual Storage Access Method (VSAM) data files from the mainframe to a Relational Database Management System

(RDBMS) on the iSeries; converting several thousand programs within existing applications and many hundreds of queries, forms, and procedures; training campus users to use new tools; and providing training to the Computer Services Management Information Systems (MIS) analysts and programmers. The RDBMS will improve student and administrative services by enabling reliable methods of accessing and updating data. Furthermore, this system will allow accelerated application development and will improve SMSU's effectiveness and efficiency by transferring its academic and administrative functions to a computer platform that is more web-centric.

This is a massive undertaking that will take the next two to three years to complete because the MIS group must move the legacy systems and data from the existing mainframe to the iSeries. This will give us greater ability to uti-



Frank Williams logs on to the iSeries.

lize the advantages of the iSeries and the Internet. MIS will continue to evaluate and improve converted applications even after the migration is finished.

SMSU is fortunate to have very talented and hard-working staff members in Computer Services, and they will do their best to complete the given task in a timely manner. ■

Open-access computer labs upgrade to Windows®/Office XP

By Tom Franklin, Centralized User Support Specialist
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The 2002 summer semester students at SMSU saw some changes when they sat down at a computer in one of the Computer Services open-access computer labs: Windows® XP Professional with Internet Explorer 6.0, Microsoft® Office XP, and the latest versions of applications that were requested by the academic colleges.

Windows® XP Professional, the newest operating system of Microsoft®, will provide users with faster access to applications, enhanced memory management, and more Internet functionality. Although Windows® XP Professional offers many new features (see the Microsoft® website at <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/pro/default.asp> for details), Computer Services hopes that users will most appreciate the new technology that deals with security and the Internet.

Office XP has the general touch and feel

of Office 2000, but there are several changes in the menus and the ways in which certain menu items are used. One notable change is found when inserting clip art from the Insert menu. Now after selecting **Insert, Picture, Clip Art**, an "Insert Clip Art" selection window appears. The selection window provides the capability of performing a text search to find the desired clip art instead of the familiar display of clip art in Office 2000. The text search can then be narrowed by selecting a specific collection and media type. For example, suppose you want to insert an animated stop sign. Enter "stop" in the "Search text" field, select **Web Collections** from the drop-down menu for the "Search collections" field, and choose **Multiple media file types** from the "Results should be" drop-down menu. You are now provided with several images from which to choose.

Other changes in Office XP are more

subtle. For example, instead of looking in the top section of the Tools menu for "AutoCorrect," you should now look in the bottom section of the menu where that option is called "AutoCorrect Options." As always, Microsoft® has made these changes to provide a smoother user interface. See more about Office XP at <http://www.microsoft.com/office/>.

Both Windows® XP Professional (which includes Internet Explorer 6.0) and Office XP have been used on a number of machines in the open-access computer labs for testing. Lab users should make note of some changes that were made to accommodate Windows® XP's new desktop appearance. For example, to access the SMSU BearMail Login, Blackboard®, or Computer-Based Training, click on the **Start** button. To access the student files on White, double-click the **My Documents** icon on the Desktop. ■

Electronic workflow system soon to be in place at SMSU

By Mark Oglesby, Workflow Systems Analyst

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Development continues on an electronic workflow system, consisting of several electronic forms, that will soon be implemented at SMSU. Since a significant part of the University's business operations rely on the submission and approval of forms, the use of electronic workflow technology will promote the accuracy and expediency of these operations.

Using business rules defined in a workflow pilot project completed in June 2001, representatives from Computer Services, Human Resources, Financial Services, and the Graduate College have conducted ongoing meetings to design and test the submittal and approval processes associated with the Position Authorization form and various Personnel Action forms.

Development and testing of the workflow forms will continue throughout the fall semester. Once completed, Computer Services will offer training sessions for those who approve hiring and personnel action forms.

The reviewer of a workflow form will see a concise view of the data entered on the workflow form, the approval and comment history, and a list of possible actions. Participants in the electronic workflow system also will have the option of receiving email notifications whenever workflow items are routed to them for approval.

The Management Information Systems (MIS) staff in Computer Services will address new requests for workflow application development through standard procedures. The University's administration prioritizes requests for MIS programming support. MIS systems analysts meet regularly with administrators to review the priorities and schedules for programming projects. ■

Student Computer Usage Fees go to work to update Glass Hall open-access computer lab complex

By Guy Fox, Lab Support Administrator
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SCUF (Student Computer Usage Fee) monies have been used this year to upgrade the Glass Hall open-access computer lab complex. The labs have 142 new Gateway® computers, each with 256 Mb of memory, 40 GB hard drive, 250 Mb Zip® drive, 17-inch monitor, and something completely new in our labs: CD-RW drives. Now lab users will have more than 600 Mb available to store that spiffy final project they've been working on all semester, and the media—a CD-RW—costs less than \$2.00! This upgrade will provide all lab users with new technology and continued reliability.

By the way, ever wonder what happens to the older machines from the labs? These computers are redistributed on campus to areas that need newer equipment with priority given to those areas that directly serve the most students. The Writing Center in Pummill Hall will inherit 35 machines, a computer lab in Kemper Hall will receive 24, the athletic department is slated to receive 22, and nine other areas will benefit as well.

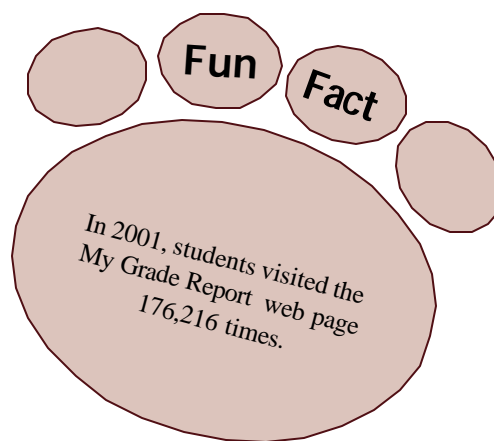
Computer Services has made some physical changes in the Glass lab rooms, too. In Glass 235, Computer Services has created an area specifically for those who are working on group projects with room for three or four people and extra table space for their materials. Also, the lab complex will offer a stand-up station right by the entry door in three of the four rooms. These machines are designated to be used for



The Glass Hall computer lab complex received 142 new Gateway® computers this year.

checking email or making last minute changes to a project or paper. Computer Services is trying to provide short-time computer access (10 to 15 minutes) at the stand-up stations so users don't have to wait when the labs are busy just to make a few minor changes to a document or to quickly check email between classes. Everyone's cooperation will make these stations a success.

Computer Services is very pleased with the changes and upgrades in the Glass Hall computer lab complex. Please feel free to stop by and check things out when you're in the neighborhood. ■



My Information expanded to offer more services

By Theresa McCoy, Senior Systems Analyst
TheresaMcCoy@smsu.edu

The Management Information Systems (MIS) group has been busy this past year adding more applications to its web site. Every member of the MIS team has been working to create new and convenient ways for the campus community to get information or to perform tasks.

The new Academic Status page provides the college deans with a convenient way to review academic progress by bringing together key information about academic performance. The application also allows the deans to update student records with their academic action decisions.

Students and advisors alike are benefiting from the new Advising Notes application. This system allows advisors to electronically document the information they have provided to their advisees. Prior to this system, paper folders were passed around campus and rarely kept pace with the student. Now advisors may review past comments or enter new notes at any

time. Whenever something new is added to the file, an email notification can be sent to the student. Having the notes available via the web makes them easily accessible for students who are changing majors, seeing a new advisor, etc.

Advisors also may release students via the web for registration. This has eliminated the need for students to present a Registration Request form for their advisor to sign before they can register for classes. Advisement can now occur at a distance when necessary. This information is stored electronically and checked automatically.

Some systems even benefit students before they actually begin attending SMSU. The new SOAR registration system allows future students to sign up for the orientation session they would like to attend. In addition, newly admitted students and newly hired personnel are able to use the web to establish a personal identification number.

The My Work web page brings together



various web applications used by faculty and staff to perform their jobs. Employees are presented with a list of applications to which they have personally been granted access, as well as a complete list of available applications and a page explaining what each application does and how to seek permission for access. Some of the applications included are the Faculty/Advisor Resource Center, SMSU Calendar Item submission, Booklist, and the Housing Reapplication systems.

It is MIS' desire to provide you with applications that meet your needs and serve you well. We welcome your feedback and suggestions. Join us and get caught up in the web! ■

Email alias available for faculty and staff

When you obtain your SMSU account, you automatically receive an email address. This email address is your user ID followed by @smsu.edu (such as abc123f@smsu.edu). This is your default email address; it cannot be removed or replaced.

Faculty and staff may also obtain a second email address, also known as an email alias. Formatted like their name (such as JohnDoe@smsu.edu), the email alias delivers mail to the same location as the default email address.

Email aliases have a standard format of FirstnameLastname@smsu.edu. If you are not called by your first name, you may substitute your called name for the first name (for example, you may substitute "Bill" for "William"). Email addresses are not case sensitive, may be up to 255 characters long, and can contain hyphens.

To request an email alias, follow this link: <http://computerservices.smsu.edu/Training/forms/frm005/default.htm>. ■

Database conversion will enable quicker, more efficient work for students, faculty, and staff

By Frank Williams, Coordinator of Management Information Systems
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Management Information Systems (MIS) is currently in the process of converting Virtual Storage Access Method (VSAM) files to the IBM® DB2® Relational Database Management System (RDBMS) on the SMSU mainframe. This conversion will allow users to obtain information in a timely manner so they can work effectively in an ever-changing environment. The University's data need to be stored in a RDBMS because of the many powerful tools that are available to allow users to search for information and to display the results in a useful form. The RDBMS will provide MIS with the ability to allow extended "up time" for students, faculty, and administrators to access data.

MIS has several hundred VSAM files that will need to be converted into database tables. MIS is using proven data modeling methods, such as normalization in the database table design. Once that process is complete, the tables are created and the data are loaded. The next step is to make changes to the hundreds of pro-

grams that access the data. This usually involves changing the code that "reads" the data into the program that in turn does something with it, such as producing a report or updating information. After the changes are made, systems analysts and programmers will take on the tedious job of testing the applications.

Backup and recovery, historical data files, standards and procedures, user training, and documentation are other concerns that Computer Services will have to deal with. More tools and ad-hoc reporting utilities will be available so processes that have been in place for many years may also change.

The conversion to a RDBMS will provide the SMSU campus with an enhanced possibility of expanded hours of operation, improved flexibility, and greater accessibility for users. It will further position SMSU to be able to develop web-based applications and to provide a "self-service" environment for students, staff, and administrators. ■

Invisible networks: Progress as promised

By Mark Harsen, Networking Administrator
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In today's world, reliable high-speed communication between computer systems and their users is often viewed as a utility. It's something that just should exist, and it should do so quietly, behind the walls, with no one ever being affected or even knowing about any problems or changes. And even the dreaded "upgrades" shouldn't affect our ability to communicate.

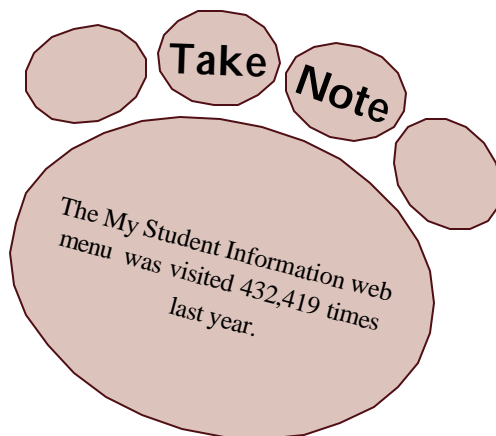
The SMSU Networking team has the job of keeping over 12,000 network connections operating efficiently. It is difficult to keep this working all of the time while other necessary changes are being made. The Networking team is adding more users, upgrading speeds so users can communicate up to twenty times faster, adding new capabilities, installing newer equipment, and protecting mission-critical applications. It's like driving a car down Interstate 44 while the mechanics are desperately trying to change the oil or install new brakes!

The potential for failures always exists: a fiber link gets cut, an interface card quits working, or a memory error crashes the main campus router taking everyone down. A tripped breaker, a failed power feed, or even someone turning off a breaker on purpose can take down segments of the network.

Networking has, therefore, started installing duplicate fiber links to buildings. Multiple

interface cards support critical links, secondary fast-failover routers are being strategically deployed, and critical equipment has multiple power supplies with battery backup where possible. If any one of these components fails, another one is standing by, ready to take over the load in seconds.

Growing pains are inevitable, but the Networking team hopes to minimize these and to continue to improve reliability and failover capabilities, making our networks invisible and always ready to carry everyone's traffic. We strive for no "construction zones" or "reduced speed ahead" signs. So it's full speed ahead and "Progress as promised." ■



Meet Computer Services' new members



Front row from left to right:

John Harralson (systems analyst), Susan Sanford (systems analyst), and Nan Woodsome (systems analyst)

Back row from left to right:

Frank Williams (Coordinator of Management Information Systems), Shawn Lin (web programmer/analyst), and Sam Garman (programmer/analyst)

Not pictured: Christine Shirey (computer operator)

Twelve steps to healthy computer use

By Joe Arens, Microcomputer Support Administrator
JoeArens@smsu.edu

"How could this have been prevented?" a frustrated caller asks.

Preventing computer mishaps is a common concern that Help Desk analysts hear frequently. The feeling of uncertainty leaves many computer users wondering if they did something wrong or if something "just happened." While it's not possible to be prepared for every technical problem, following a few guidelines will provide a more productive experience with your computer. Here is a list of the top-twelve tips compiled from Help Desk calls that can keep little problems from turning into bigger ones:

1. Backup important files to floppy, Zip®, network, or CD.
2. Do not open email attachments without checking for validity first.
3. Do not share passwords.
4. Change your password often.
5. Log off from the computer when you're not using it.
6. Do not install resource-intensive programs such as Morpheus™, Webshots, or BonziBuddy™ that can slow your computer down.
7. Close multiple programs running in the background when they are not needed.
8. Do not install software without a license to use it.
9. Use the Help Desk website, <http://helpdesk.smsu.edu>, as a source for useful technology information.
10. Take advantage of Computer Services Short Courses and Computer-Based Training, which will enhance your computer skills.
11. Use the online Help in software applications for "how to" types of questions.
12. Be careful using your email address when signing up for free offers. Free offers can generate unwanted spam email.

Following these tips will help you to be more productive with your computer and may actually allow you to enjoy your computing experience. ■

Need help? Computer Services can assist you!



Help Desk Analyst Robert Odwora answers a call for computer-related help.

To get help with your office computer workstation or any other personal computing workstation on campus, please call the Help Desk at (417) 836-5891 or visit the Help Desk in Cheek Hall 150 anytime between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. You may also visit the Help Desk online at the following web address: <http://helpdesk.smsu.edu>.

The Help Desk staff can determine whether your computer problem requires on-site assistance, and if so, they will either send a Help Desk analyst or your college's Distributed User Support Specialist to assist you. The Help Desk supports specific standardized software and hardware. These standards are detailed on the Computer Services Help Desk web site (<http://helpdesk.smsu.edu>).

If a Help Desk analyst needs to visit you, he or she will call to set up an appointment or to let you know when he or she is coming. During an on-site visit, an authorized faculty or

staff member must be present.

When a Help Desk analyst performs an on-site visit, he or she will leave a copy of the Customer Service Ticket with you. A Customer Service Ticket is a concise, one-page report of your call that includes call information, client information, a description of the problem the client is facing, the problem's resolution, and the call notes. Please keep a copy of the Customer Service Ticket for your records.

If necessary, a Help Desk analyst will transfer your equipment to Electronic Support Services (Kemper 201) for maintenance. Help Desk analysts will not transfer equipment without the owner's consent. Once a Help Desk analyst transfers the equipment to Electronic Support Services, Electronic Support Services becomes responsible for that equipment. Questions and comments for Electronic Support Services can be made at (417) 836-5042. ■

Helpful Internet and email addresses

Computer Services Home Page

<http://computerservices.smsu.edu>

—services, policies, procedures, and links to Computer Services' component areas

News and Notices

<http://computerservices.smsu.edu/news.htm>

—latest computer-related news and notices, including scheduled outages

Help Desk

<http://helpdesk.smsu.edu>

—support, downloads, and virus warnings

Computer-Based Training

<http://training.smsu.edu>

—online computer-based training courses

Short Courses

<https://www.secure.smsu.edu/idp/courses/>

—free instructor-led classes taught by Computer Services

BearMail

<http://bearmail.smsu.edu>

—email via your web browser

Dialup Support

<http://computerservices.smsu.edu/dialup>

—help for dialing up to SMSU from a remote location

Computer Labs

<http://openlabs.smsu.edu/>

—hours, locations, support, and available equipment

Training and Documentation

<http://computerservices.smsu.edu/training>

—training and documentation provided free of charge by Computer Services

Assistive Technology Support

<http://computerservices.smsu.edu/assistivetech>

—assistance, services, and policies

Change Your SMSU Domain Password

<https://www.secure.smsu.edu/cpw/cpw.asp>

—change your password online

My Information

<http://myinformation.smsu.edu>

—accounts receivable, benefits information, payroll, and other information

Networking Information

<http://networking.smsu.edu/default.htm>

—utilization charts, port assignments on hubs or switches, wire tests, pending requests for DHCP reservations, and trouble reports



Computer Services Department

ComputerServices@smsu.edu

Computer Services Help Desk

HelpDesk@smsu.edu

Computer Services Backups

Backups@smsu.edu

Computer Services Networking

Networking@smsu.edu

Computer Services Training

CSVtraining@smsu.edu

Computer Services Documentation

CSVdocumentation@smsu.edu

Computer Services Newsletter

CSVnewsletter@smsu.edu

SMSU Computer Services staff members



What is your learning style?

By Larry Dudley, Technical Trainer
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Though a dichotomy of sorts exists between those who prefer instructor-led courses and those who believe that some type of computer or web-based training is more productive, certain aspects of learning are so fundamental that they bridge across these two approaches to teaching.

Just as a computer can receive input through visual (scanning), auditory (voice recognition), and tactile/kinesthetic (mouse, keyboard) methods, humans take in information and process what they have absorbed in several different ways. Unlike computers, however, humans tend to favor one type of sensory input, even though they will use all learning methods to some degree.

Visual learners learn through seeing and make the most out of visual aides. They learn best when videos, charts, handouts, and other visual media are used in the learning process.

In the classroom, visual learners will often sit in front of the class to avoid distractions from those around them, and on the computer, visual learners often ignore or turn off any sound that may accompany a tutorial. Because computers are predominately a visual device, most visual learners embrace computer-based learning.

Auditory learners learn through listening. They enjoy lectures, discussions, and talking things through when problem solving. As expected, auditory learners tend to be extroverted and often formulate ideas and opinions as they are speaking to others. When listening, they often interpret the tone, pitch, and speed of the person speaking for further understanding. Written or visual information sometimes has little meaning until read out loud. Naturally then, auditory learners benefit from computer or web-based learning that makes use of nar-

ration and other auditory features.

Tactile learners do best when they can employ a hands-on approach to learning. They need to physically explore the material world around them and often employ a trial-and-error method when learning. Tactile learners do best with computer learning of a technical nature that utilizes three-dimensional graphics. Though they do not have the benefit of touch in the traditional way, tactile learners, in a sense, feel with their mind by mentally associating an image with how they think it would feel if physically handled.

Regardless of one's dominate learning style, anyone can benefit from both classroom and computer-based training. With practice, one can also apply a less familiar style of learning if that style is better suited to the course material or type of instruction. ■



William Howard Cobb
1946-2002

In remembrance of Bill Cobb

William Howard "Bill" Cobb joined the staff of Computer Services in 1998 as a User Support Specialist and computer lab supervisor. He pioneered the third shift, enabling the Cheek Hall lab to be a 24-hour facility, and most recently worked as a second-shift computer lab supervisor in Glass Hall. Bill routinely went that extra mile for the students using "his" lab; he was always willing to give them his full assistance in solving problems. Bill loved his job and its contribution to the SMSU community.

In January 2002, Bill lost a two-year battle with cancer at the age of 55. Bill graduated from Parkview High School in 1964. He served in the United States Army from 1965 to 1969 and again from 1976 to 1981. During this time he was stationed in Turkey, Japan, and Germany. After separation from the Army in 1981, he stayed in Germany, working with the Department of Defense Dependent Schools, especially

the Darmstadt Middle School, until 1987. While in Europe, he earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management with an emphasis in computers in 1985 through the University of Maryland's European Division. When he returned to Missouri, Bill earned an elementary education teaching certificate from Southwest Missouri State University.

Bill married Dr. Carol J. Miller, an SMSU professor, in 1989. Attending Lady Bear basketball games, including the Road to the Final Four, was a passion they shared as season-ticket holders. Bill also had a keen interest in history, culture, and genealogical research. One of his favorite hobbies was portraying a historical Springfield figure from the mid-1800s, Daniel Dorsey Berry, for whom Berry School is named. For several years, Bill was also the local coordinator for the Civil War Soldiers System for the National Parks archives. He is sorely missed by all of his friends here at the University. ■



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