From the Main Bridge . . .

Welcome to the first issue of the Information Services newsletter. I hope you find it informative and useful. I realize that may be a challenge for you since everybody knows that technical people are writing challenged. I believe that is one reason when you buy software you no longer get a manual. The companies can’t find anybody who worked on the program who can also write a manual people can understand. Regardless, we will give it our best shot.

We recognize that as we busily go about working on our backlog of work orders, we sometimes forget to inform the McMurry community of the changes taking place with the computer and telephone systems. Our hope is that this newsletter will be a tool to improve our communications with the campus community.

In addition to keeping you informed we plan to provide some tips and tricks that may speed up your data processing. We would love to hear your suggestions for topics. Please email them to Keely Acklin.

During the Christmas break we had quite a few projects to complete. Some of the more prominent are:

• We visited every lab computer on campus and cleaned up the hard drives for the start of the semester.

• We pulled over 4000 ft. of cable and installed the new computers for the Biology lab.

We began the planning phase for a firewall installation. We had a very productive meeting with those we thought might be affected by a firewall. If you have any questions about whether you might be affected please contact us.

In a cost cutting move, we began testing with a new long distance provider. We are waiting for the delivery of a final piece of equipment before we can make the switch. Be watching for emails detailing any changes in the dialing sequence for long distance calls.

I hope you find the Info Trek informative, if not then maybe humorous.

Brad Poorman,
Vice President for Information Services

The mission of the McMurry University Information Services Department is to provide exceptional customer support and assistance in an efficient and professional manner for the information technology needs of the McMurry community of faculty, staff and students, while always being mindful of our responsibility as good stewards of the University’s information technology investment.
NOTES ON CAMPUS CONNECT:
We have just finished our first semester of using Campus Connect and most of the comments we have received have been very positive. Students and Faculty alike seem to like this new way of getting information. I wanted to point out what the majority of the problems we had were so all who read this will be aware of them and will know what they need to do to get them resolved if they run into something similar.

STUDENTS AND FACULTY:
In some rare cases the web browser they were using was not able to support Campus Connect. When they would go to the web address for Campus Connect they were not getting all of the data. In most cases they were just getting the bluish green screen, they were not getting the box that would allow them to enter their Student ID or Faculty username. Faculty can get help with this problem if it is their office machine from our HelpDesk. For students or if it is a home machine you should upgrade to a newer web browser. It must be Java Script enabled.

STUDENTS:
The most frequent problems we had calls about for students not being able to get in to their data:
- Their birth date in the system was incorrect (this is their original PIN).
- They had changed their PIN and didn’t remember what it was.
- They had changed their PIN and put in some alphabetic characters which corrupted it.
- They must use numeric data for their PIN.
- They didn’t realize they needed to enter their social security number for their Student ID.
For all of these problems it is best to start with the HelpDesk at 4900. If it is a birth date problem they will be told they must get it fixed in the Registrar’s office.

FACULTY:
The most frequent problems we had calls about for Faculty not being able to get to their data:
- They couldn’t remember their password.
- They didn’t know their Alpha username or didn’t even know they had an Alpha account.
- They had never tried Campus Connect and didn’t know how to start.
For all of these problems they can get help by calling the HelpDesk at 4900. However, in the setup that is done for each semester I find all the Faculty that have courses assigned to them in our Course file and make sure they are set up so they can get to those courses using Campus Connect. Barring any mistakes on my part any Faculty listed as the primary Instructor for a course will have an Alpha account set up with a username of their first initial and their last name. If you must call for help it will be helpful if you tell us your username and spell out your last name just in case we hear “smith” when it should be “smyth”.

Kathy Denslow,
Director of Administrative Applications
Main Engineering . . .

You may have heard from students in the Residence Halls that the internet can seem really slow at times. What is the cause of this? We have about 600 students who live in the residence halls at McMurry. McMurry also has 1544 kilobits of guaranteed bandwidth to the internet, which can burst to 3000 kilobits if our service provider has extra available for our use. We allow the residence halls to use up to 1200 kilobits per second of bandwidth. If only 10% of the students are using the internet, that is 60 students, the bandwidth gets used up quickly. Take the bandwidth which is 1200 and divide it by 60 and you have 20 kilobits for each of those users. This would be less than a 28.8 modem. We all know that more than 10% of the students are using the internet in the evenings so it gets worse.

What has McMurry done to try and improve this situation? McMurry purchased a Packeteer Packet Shaper in September and installed it. What does this mean? It means that we can now select different types of internet traffic and allow some of them to use more bandwidth than others. McMurry believes that internet use in the computer labs during class time is the highest priority we have. The next priority is bandwidth necessary for daily operations of the university. Third on the list are the residence halls. On the average the administrative side of the network uses about 100 kilobits of bandwidth with the rest being available to the residence halls.

Before we installed the Packeteer bandwidth usage from the residence halls was overriding everything else and using all the available bandwidth on our internet connections. The graph above shows bandwidth usage in September. The green area is incoming traffic and the blue line is outgoing traffic. The values on the chart need to be multiplied by 8 to determine the kilobits per second rate. When we installed the Packeteer we placed limits on how much bandwidth the residence halls could use. Along with this we also limited the amount of bandwidth the different music sharing services could use. Music sharing has been limited to 256 kilobits of bandwidth. This improved web surfing in the residence halls.

What is McMurry doing to improve the bandwidth issues over the long run? We have started talking with different ISPs (Internet Service Providers) to purchase more bandwidth. We would like to be able to install the additional bandwidth during spring break.

Scott Fritz - Director of Networking

Tip & Tricks

When you open Microsoft Outlook, does the opening screen take a while to disappear? If so, try this....

1. Open Outlook, Click on Tools on the Toolbar. Select Options. Select the Other Tab

2. Click on the check box Enable Instant Messaging in Microsoft Outlook so the check box does NOT have a check mark. Click OK. Close Outlook. Reopen Outlook
Channel Open . . .

This section is intended for your questions or comments. Since this is our “maiden voyage issue,” I thought these two topics worth discussing. Should you have anything questions or concerns, please send them via email to the HelpDesk. You may send them to: help@mcm.edu.

Freddie Famble - Director of Customer Service

SQL Slammer . . .

This past weekend the internet, ATM machines and servers were hit by a virus. This virus or worm attacked Microsoft’s database software and spread throughout the internet over the weekend. On our campus, the virus caused slow downs on our network. The effects were widespread according to MSN (Microsoft Network). Cash machines stopped issuing money, South Korea went offline and the internet slowed to a near stop. The worm called SQL Slammer or w32.SQLExp. The “Worm” took advantage of a quirk in Microsoft’s SQL Server platform. Once the virus infects the SQL Server it starts sending out endless internet traffic causing a denial of service style attack. Although it is thought not to damage data, the virus is considered critical by Microsoft. Microsoft has issued patches for SQL Server 2000 and suggests that users of Visual Studio.Net and Office Developer Edition check the Microsoft website (http://www.microsoft.com) for security updates.

Universal Translator . . .

In order to help us help you, here are some common terms or “lingo” you might want to keep in mind:

When asked to **reboot or restart your machine**, we mean either
   a) Click Start, Shutdown, and Restart, or
   b) in extreme cases press the computer’s reset button.

When asked to **power your machine off** or **shutdown your pc**, we mean
   a) Click Start, Shutdown, and choose Shutdown, or
   b) pull the power cable from the back of the PC or press the power button on the front of PC.

When asked about the **ALPHA**, we mean the server that holds all of the Registrars, Housing, and Payroll information etc.

When asked about your **computer** we are meaning your **computer tower** not the monitor.
On the Lighter Side . . .

My computer doesn’t work!
The hard drive crashed!
What do I do?

Did you back up?

Why? Is it gonna blow?

“Why? Is it gonna blow?"

Did you back up?

“Did you back up?"

“I hit the control key . . .”
“So why am I not in control???”

Not going anywhere for a while?

Try a SNICKERS

Time on Call: 3h 24m 3s
No sir, when I say
“Move the mouse to the ‘My Computer’ icon”
I do not mean, put the mouse on the monitor screen.

ESCAPE
ESCAPE
ESCAPE