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Information Technology and Communication Services (ITACS)   ITACS Technology News

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NPS Information Technology and Communications Services (ITACS) Technology News / October 2010

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CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS MONTH

During Cybersecurity Awareness Month 2010, ITACS focused on the user, not only showing what good cybersecurity practices to use, but also how to use them.

A number of focused classes were offered to small audiences throughout the month. The topics included:

Malware and Phishing: How to recognize, respond, be reactive and preventive in regards to phishing and virus activity;

Privacy: How to protect your information on social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and MySpace;

Passwords: How to create and manage good passwords;

Signing and Encrypting: How to digitally sign and encrypt your e-mails and recognize them when sent from others.

Additionally, brown bag sessions were held covering the topics of Cybercrime, Securing Stored Data, Identity Protection and Quantum Security will be offered by NPS faculty.

Following the example of other universities, ITACS has created a mailbox for suspicious e-mail. If you receive a suspicious e-mail, do not open and/or click on any of its links; rather, create a new e-mail, drag the suspicious e-mail into the new e-mail and send it to NPS Abuse or abuse@nps.edu. If you require any assistance, please contact the Technology Assistance Center at Ext. 1046.

HIGH-PERFORMANCE COMPUTING (HPC)

As part of the HPC "Roadmap for the Future" initiative, on October 19, representatives from IBM and the HPC team installed state-of-the-art IBM 755 and 780 Power 7 systems that NPS obtained through a "try-and-buy" program — which required vetting through NPS legal channels and approval from President Oliver. A small group of users and HPC will evaluate the systems for 90 days, with an option to renew for another 90 days. IBM trained the evaluating group on October 21, 2010.

The HPC team also received 4 AMD state-of-the-art rack-mounted servers, each containing four 6-core AMD Opteron chips. Each of the systems takes up very little space: only 1 unit (1U) of rack space or 24 cores (equivalent to a CPU). For comparison, to replace the current hamming system with an equivalent AMD system would take 48U, which could be contained in a single tall rack. The AMD systems are being evaluated by researchers in Applied Math and Computer Science.

TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE CENTER (TAC)

Requests for assistance in the Technology Assistance Center (TAC) have increased 15% over the past two years, and cases are increasing monthly. The greatest need for support is related to software and password lockouts. To help increase the customer response rate, one new person has been hired in Tier 1 and a student hire has been retained. Other proactive solutions include increasing training for TAC staff, developing "how to" articles on setting up e-mail, mobile devices, videos and a self-help wiki (available in about one month), and procuring a VMware Thinapp that will allow students to run some software on their home machines.

LAB AND CLASSROOM UPDATE

Since July, 35 rooms have been added to the lab recap plan. Lab recap funding of $550,000 was combined with some opportunistic funding of $370,000 from various NPS and non-NPS sources to perform $920,000 worth of recapitalization projects which included the lifecycle replacement of 250 new computers for classified and unclassified computer labs; video system upgrades to high definition projectors and digital signal switching in King Hall and all four auditoriums; lifecycle replacement of classroom projectors, the VBrick system, Elluminate servers and VMWare; an upgrade to the President's Conference Room; and Thinapp licensing.

Within 3-6 months, a Windows 7 machine loaded with Thinapps, where appropriate, will be tested in all labs before going live. Announcements will be made on the Intranet about the locations of the test machines.

KUALI FINANCIAL SYSTEM (KFS)

Some changes have been made to the KFS Web site: the login page has been streamlined and simplified to eliminate items not specific to NPS, and the Intranet information page provides all current information on Kuali, including training schedules, members of the KFS advisory committees and contacts for each school and department.

Reimbursable carryover budgets have been loaded into the system, but direct budgets have not. Travel and labor data is loaded daily. Work is still in development on providing live links for SPFAs to access four transactional database components within DMAS.

NETWORK ACCESS CONTROLLER

Another layer of ITACS' defense-in-depth strategy is the installation of a Network Access Control (NAC) appliance – Safe-Connect – by Impulse Point, which will proactively monitor end-user systems and provide a layer of protection between the network firewall and the Internet by enforcing compliance with antivirus software, virus definitions, and operating system patching preferences on NPS wired, wireless, and home (when connected to the NPS network) computer systems. Safe-Connect is used by higher education institutions such as UCLA, the University of Cincinnati, Denver, Missouri, Nebraska, and Auburn.

Implementation requires a one-time authentication, unauthorized device prevention, verification of antivirus software and definitions, and verification of operating system update preferences. ITACS will be testing the system until November 23, 2010, after which time the NAC will go live with wireless and VPN. Wired deployment is scheduled to start approximately January 17, 2011.

COMMITTEE ON THE FUTURE

RADM Jerry Ellis (ret.) presented a briefing to the IT Task Force at their meeting on October 7, 2010, and reported that the Committee on the Future, charged by President Oliver to examine trends and issues related to the Department of Defense (DoD) and within higher education and to produce a report in August 2011 that will set the foundation for the school's next strategic planning process, met in August 2010 and split their topics for study into ten different areas with leaders within each. The ten teams are currently in a data collection mode, which includes conducting interviews with (DoD)/Department of Navy (DoN) leaders, NPS deans, faculty, students, active duty military and

other selected small groups to seek their input on important issues as well as a review of findings from the University of California Commission on the Future and the Council of Graduate Studies.

Dr. Christine Haska leads the team related to Information Technology (IT), and RADM Ellis (ret.) said that everyone at NPS is affected by this critical support area. Because of budget constraints, decisions regarding the best procurements — those that bring the highest return on investment for the institution — will be a high priority for study and analysis in this section of the report.

RADM Ellis (ret.) told the Task Force that he is honored to be a part of the Committee on the Future, whose members include a member of the NPS Board of Advisors, the President of the Monterey Institute of International Studies, a leader of the Georgia Tech Research Institute, and DoD/DoN experts. RADM Ellis (ret.) also reported that he has provided regular briefings to President Oliver and Provost Ferrari on the progress of the Committee. RADM Ellis (ret.) concluded by saying that he appreciates the IT Task Force for their role as an advisory body in the development of the IT portion of the document.

PARTNERSHIPS AND OUTREACH

On October 19, 2010, the NPS Board of Advisors held a subcommittee meeting at the Center for Naval analysis in Alexandria, Virginia where **Dr. Christine Haska,** ex officio member, joined RADM Jerry Ellis (ret.), Chair of the Committee on the Future, for his status briefing to the Board.

On October 26, 2010**, Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates** announced that State of California CIO **Teri Takai** has been named as the **Department of Defense CIO**. Dr. Takai visited NPS in July, where she met with faculty members, administrators, and regional members of the higher education and DoD community. Dr. Takai was impressed with NPS and the significant amount of the School's cooperative inter-institutional initiatives.

ITACS will undergo an external review from November 18-19, 2010 by **University of California Santa Cruz Vice Chancellor for IT/CIO Mary Doyle** and **California Institute of Technology CIO John Dundas.**

A team from ITACS and Dr. Christine Haska attended the **EDUCAUSE Conference** in Anaheim, California, during the week of October 11-15, 2010.

President Oliver, Vice President and Dean of Research Karl van Bibber and **Dr. Christine Haska** visited Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) on October 20-21, 2010, and met with **RPI President Shirley Jackson** and campus leaders to continue discussions about research-related collaborations.

Mr. Jon Russell of ITACS spoke about open source software at the Government Open Source Conference held in Portland during the week of October 25, 2010.

The team from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges **(WASC)** visited the campus to conduct the educational effectiveness review from October 26-28, 2010. Dr. Doug Moses and Dr. Rob Dell, who lead the WASC Steering Committee, will report to the campus about the results of the visit.

TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE CENTER

From October 1 through October 28, 2010, the Technology Assistance Center (TAC) received 4,530 requests for assistance, 3,231 of which were resolved by the Tier 1/Tier 2 areas. The remaining 1,299 requests were escalated to groups outside of TAC for specialized assistance. This number represents a 43% increase in requests for assistance from October 2009.

Requests for assistance were categorized as follows:

Phone: 2,543
E-Mail: 1,335
Walk-in: 619
Web: 9
Technician: 24

This month, 91% of all calls were resolved within the Service Level Agreement (SLA). Those that were carried over are awaiting parts, pending information from the customers, etc.