

The Tech Digest

November 2008

ITS LAUNCHES GREEN COMPUTING INITIATIVES

Today, no large organization can afford to ignore rising energy costs, or its contribution to climate change. Enterprises face ever-increasing pressures to 'go green' and reduce power consumption. Thousands of faculty, staff and students access our IT services both from on campus and off campus, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year. We strive to offer excellent services to our constituents while taking our energy use very seriously. Computers generate heat and require additional cooling which adds to energy costs.

ITS has launched several **Green Computing** initiatives that can help the University reduce its overall energy consumption. As an example, ITS is utilizing Virtual Computing more and more to reduce the power consumption required by servers in our data center. Other efforts are focused on reducing the power consumption from desktop and laptop computers here on campus. Here are some basic things you can begin doing immediately to help the University reduce its power consumption and energy cost starting with your office computing equipment.

When not in use, turn off the juice.

This is the most basic energy conservation strategy for any type of equipment. Consider the following:

- Turn off your computer and/or peripherals when they are not in use. Turning on and off will not harm the equipment.
- Don't run computers continuously unless they are in use continuously.
- Turn off at night and on weekends
- Look for ways to reduce the amount of time your computer is on without adversely affecting your productivity.

You Can Turn Your Computer Off!

The common misconception that a computer's life is shortened by turning it on and off has led some to leave computers on all the time. Others are reluctant to switch their computers on and off a

couple times during their workday despite only using this equipment for a fraction of that time.



Desktop computers are designed to protect the internal circuitry from power damage from on/off switching. Turning PC equipment off at night or on and off a few times a day will not appreciably affect its useful life. Electronic equipment life is a function of operating hours and heat — both these factors are reduced when equipment is switched off. Modern hard drives are designed and tested to operate reliably for thousands of on/off cycles.

Thus, you CAN turn off your computer (and monitor and printer)! The inconvenience of waiting a minute or two for a computer to reboot or peripheral to come on line may be trivial compared to the energy savings achieved by keeping computer equipment off when not in use.



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Some specific suggestions to assist you are listed below.

- Unless you require immediate access to e-mail or other Internet services, break the habit of turning on all your computer equipment as soon as you enter the office each day.
- If practical, informally group your computer activities and try to do them during one or two parts of the day, leaving the computer off at other times.
- Avoid using the switch on a power strip to turn on all your equipment.
- If you use a laser printer, do not turn your printer on until you are ready to print.
- Turn off (shut down) your entire computer system (CPU, monitor and printer) or at least your monitor and printer when you go to lunch or will be out of office for a meeting or an errand.
- For "computer servers" which must be on to serve network functions, explore ways to turn servers off at night.
- If monitors are not needed for "servers" to operate, keep server

monitors off. If server monitor is needed during the day, at least turn it off at night and weekends.

While the energy saving suggestions listed above are appropriate for many campus PC users, some of the suggestions may be inappropriate for certain computer applications or work situations. When in doubt, discuss possible energy conservation measures with your colleagues, supervisor, or computer lab director to determine which steps can be taken without harming productivity.

Our Green Computing initiatives will not work without your help. Be an energy educator and gently remind your co-workers and colleagues to save energy by changing their computer habits. Gain the support of your supervisor and set up a brief meeting to discuss how to implement energy saving strategies.

Stay tuned for other Green Computing Practices that can help us in conserving energy here on campus. Thank you in advance for your immediate attention to this matter. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to send an email to itscommunications@ncu.edu.

NCCU AND COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT



NCCU technology users often wonder (and ask) to what extent can Information Technology Services (ITS) monitor their usage of the Internet and how they will be affected judicially, for an act such as copyright

infringement. ITS has implemented a policy where a user's port is turned off when they receive a complaint from an outside party. The first inquiry made by the music and film industry gives users an opportunity to delete these files from their hard drive. If the user complies and signs a certification document, ITS will restore their Internet connection.

Ideally the purpose of ITS' copyright infringement policy is to minimize users exposure to potential lawsuits not to invade their privacy. In an effort to

combat the issues that arise from peer to peer (P2P) networks, ITS has partnered with Ruckus to offer each enrolled student a free subscription to access the Ruckus Network. The Ruckus online music service provides students with the ability to access more than 2,500,000 tracks of music. Students can access unlimited downloading for free. Faculty and staff members can also access Ruckus for a nominal monthly fee. For all users, the cost to download a file to copy to your mp3 player or burn to a CD is only \$0.99 (or less) per song and \$9.99 per album.

With every increasing incident at NCCU, more copyright infringers are expected to change their ways. The Recording Industry Association of America's (RIAA) first wave of suits proved that anyone could be the campaigns next target, don't put NCCU or yourself at risk!

For more information on Ruckus, visit www.ruckus.com.

NCCU ITS AND WINDOWS VISTA

Windows Vista is the latest operating system available for personal computers from the Microsoft Corporation. Vista was set to replace Windows XP as the next standard operating system sold with new personal computers. Computers with Vista pre-loaded are already being widely sold.

The NCCU ITS Division is not promoting the usage of Windows Vista, at this time, due to the following reasons:

- Blackboard,
- Adobe Acrobat 8.0 and below,
- Mozilla Firefox,
- SAS (some modules may install),
- SPSS (runs, but has known issues), and
- Symantec Antivirus Version 10.1.5 or earlier.



There are a substantial amount of compatibility issues with Windows Vista in numerous programs to include, but not limited to the fact that your computer must have the minimum system requirements to properly run Vista:

- 1 GHz 32-bit (x86) or 64-bit (x64) processor,
- 512 MB of system memory,
- 20 GB hard drive with at least 15 GB of available space,
- Support for DirectX 9 graphics and 32 MB of graphics memory,
- DVD-ROM drive,
- Audio Output, and
- Internet Access

If you have any questions and/or concerns about Windows Vista, please forward all requests to itscommunications@nccu.edu.

THE NCCU CURRICULUM GUIDE

The ITS Web Team is working on several projects to improve the functionality of our NCCU webpage. One of these projects is the curriculum guide. The curriculum guide provides a graphical list of recommended courses for 89 undergraduate degree programs. Along with this information you will find the course descriptions.

The curriculum guide is being updated every day. At the time of this article, Web Services published 32 undergraduate programs out of 89. To view the curriculum guide visit <http://www.nccu.edu/curriculum/> and click on the degree program of your interest.

Another outstanding project from our NCCU ITS Web Team!!!

ITS SECURITY INFORMATION AND TIPS

Phishing Scams and Identity Theft are two very serious issues that threaten the integrity of you and the university. Phishing Scams seek to steal confidential information by sending "official looking" e-mail messages that ask you to verify private information, such as a social security number, credit card



information, passwords, etc. Phishing Scams often lead to Identity Theft, one of the fastest-growing

crimes, and could ultimately corrupt the integrity of NCCU.

Here are 8 tips to prevent us from becoming victims of phishing scams and/or identity theft.

1. NCCU or any reputable business will NEVER ask you for a password, social security and/or credit card number via email.
2. If you are on a website and entering personal or confidential information, CONFIRM that the website is secure. The easiest way to check is to look at the site address for https:// and/or the secure site lock icon.

3. LOOK for typos. Legitimate business will take the time to proofread all communications they send to customers.
4. Don't email personal or financial information. Email is not a secure method of transmitting personal information.
5. Don't click on links in pop-up windows or in spam e-mail.
6. ALWAYS shred confidential and personal information. This information should never be tossed in a wastebasket. This ensures that dumpster divers have nothing they can use.
7. ASK questions. If you are unsure about a message contact ITS and ask about the message.
8. FORWARD all spam messages to spam@nccu.edu.

Identity theft occurs when someone uses an individual's personal information to impersonate the victim in financial transactions. Several recent incidents have highlighted the susceptibility of college and university data collections to theft. At the University of Texas, New York University, and other institutions of higher learning, security flaws have revealed students' Social Security numbers and other personally identifiable information.

By reporting all instances of spam, not sending confidential information through email, shredding confidential information and being cautious about the emails you respond to, you will be doing your part to protect the integrity of NCCU and yourself.

THE VIRTUAL COMPUTING LAB

The Virtual Computing Lab (VCL) is a remote access service that allows you to reserve a computer with a desired set of applications for yourself, and remotely access it over the Internet.

The VCL is a simple, yet very effective tool. With this tool you can:

1. Access the VCL through a web interface and select from a menu a combination of applications, operating systems and services that you need. If a specific combination is not already available as an image an authorized user can construct one's own from the VCL library components;
2. Have either sole use of one or more hardware units; and
3. Share the resources with other users.

VCL allows the campus users to access various applications, like SAS, SPSS and Office 2007, without

having to install the software locally. These services can be accessed on or off campus using high speed internet. No

longer do you have to have an application tied to a specific computer lab here on campus.

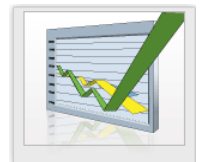
All you need is an NCCU username, the password and Internet accessibility. The VCL is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, basically anytime you need it!

Visit <http://vcl.nccu.edu> to participate in the world of Virtual Computing. Please contact the Eagle Technical Assistance Center (ETAC) for questions regarding access or to have a specific application loaded on VCL.



NCCU WEB STATISTICS

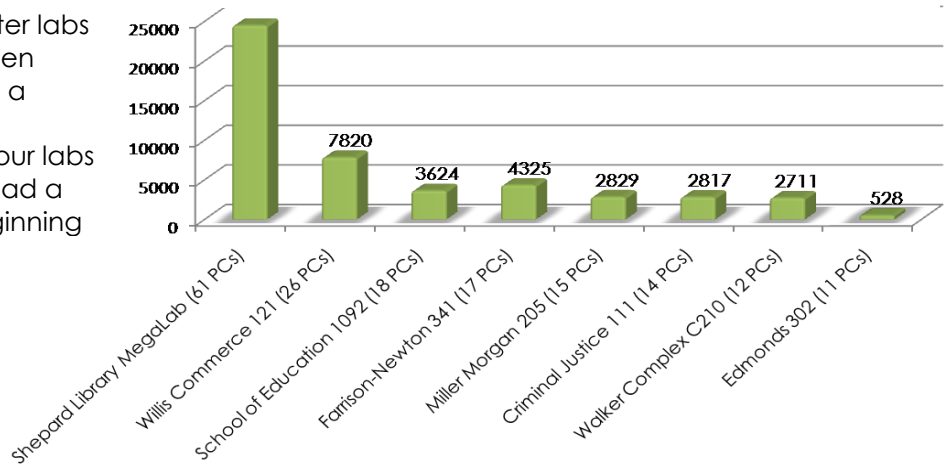
Did you know that ITS tracks the usage to www.nccu.edu? It is important for us to see what pages are the hot spots and where our web traffic is coming from. Web Services uses Google Analytics to capture and measure statistics for NCCU.edu. We use this tool to tell us information such as the site you came from, the search engine used, the keywords used to find our site and the pages you view while visiting our site.



For the month of September, we had 395,351 visitors. Out of 395,351 visitors, we had 99,873 that came for the first time. An interesting fact about our visitors is that they hail from 148 countries/territories. The largest number of visitors comes from Durham, North Carolina. We use the information tracked not only to track our usage, but to see where improvements are necessary on our site. If you are interested in these statistics, please contact Damond Nollan at dnollan@nccu.edu.

OPEN USAGE LABS

We currently have 8 open usage computer labs throughout the campus of NCCU. All Open Usage Labs are available to anyone with a current NCCU username and password. Pictured is a graph showing the logins in our labs from August to October 2008. We have had a total of 49,147 logins in our labs since beginning the Fall 2008 semester.



TIPS FOR ENSURING SMOOTH TECHNICAL SUPPORT FROM THE EAGLE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER (ETAC)

Below are ten tips to assist you in ensuring you have the best quality service available from the Eagle Technical Assistance Center (ETAC).

1. Reboot your computer before calling. Often this one simple technique solves the problem. This is normally the first troubleshooting question that will be asked of you.

2. ETAC is your FIRST place to contact for technical support. We understand that you have created relationships with other ITS personnel, however your issue will be resolved more efficiently if you follow and respect the process created by our division.

3. If you feel you are inadequately serviced contact Customer Service. In ITS we have a division devoted to ensuring our community is served following the guidelines set in our Service Level Agreement. To contact Customer Service call 7676 and select Option "4."

4. Be in front of your machine, ready to perform tasks, if necessary. At least 90% of the time ETAC will need you in front of your machine to perform a troubleshooting task.

5. Make sure you know what type of machine is having the issue. (i.e. Dell Optiplex 745). This information is just like the make and model of your car.

6. Write down the entire error message, verbatim. Often it is easier to correct a problem if we know the exact wording of the error message.

7. Don't worry if you aren't computer savvy, you don't need to know technical terms for us to assist you with your issue. We are here to provide you the best technical support possible. Every

day we talk to people with a broad array of computer knowledge.

8. Be patient. We ask a lot of questions to determine the exact issue. We answer requests in the order received, everyone is a top priority.

9. Be courteous. We are here to assist you and resolve your technical issues. We require courtesy to make your experience with ITS great one.

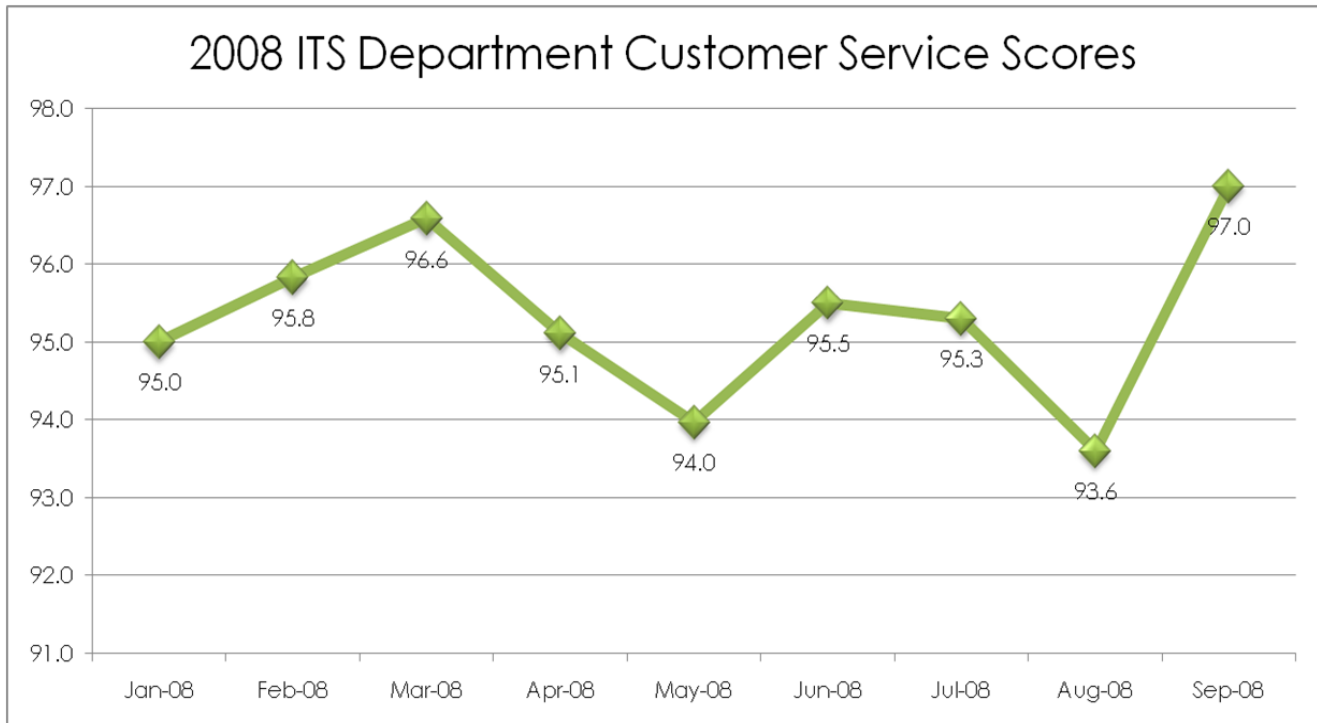
10. Become familiar with all ITS policies, procedures and guidelines.



QUALITY SERVICE MEASURES IN ITS

ITS is aware of the importance of customer service, and has implemented a campaign that stresses this importance to all employees. Awards have been established and goals have been set to ensure that each customer's experience is pleasant and friendly.

We encourage the NCCU family to take a few seconds and complete a customer service survey, which is sent to you after each trouble ticket is resolved. These surveys serve as a tool for monitoring and providing top rate service. We use the results of these surveys to calculate a score for rating the department, entities within the department, as well as all ITS staff members. Scores from January to September are January 95, February 95.8, March 96.6, April 95.1, May 94.0, June 95.5, July 95.3, August 93.6, and September 97.0.



How are the scores calculated?

Every month a customer service score is tallied for each ITS employee that has a survey submitted on their behalf. Surveys are divided into 5 sections:

1. Courtesy
2. Responsiveness
3. Problems with Service
4. Overall Satisfaction with Assigned Personnel
5. Overall Satisfaction with Service

Each section is worth 20 points. Within each of these sections, customers are given the following 4 options:

1. Excellent (20 points)
2. Good (15 points)
3. Fair (10 points)
4. Poor (5 points)

**** Scores are only tallied if customers agree that the work order is in fact completed. ****

ITS has also established a new award. The award, appropriately named The People's Choice, is given to the ITS employee that customers feel have exhibited exemplary customer service skills. Each customer that submits a work order request is sent a survey upon completion. This survey serves as a platform in which customers are able to voice their opinions regarding the service they were provided.

There are many awards given within the ITS department that acknowledge the exceptional work and contributions of its team members. This award however gives a voice to the NCCU family. It allows you an opportunity to recognize individuals who make your experience with ITS a joyful one.

We look forward to extending our quality service to you this academic year!

EMAIL ETIQUETTE



Of all Internet activities, email is the most popular. Almost 88 percent of all Internet users in the U.S. use email. This information comes from a survey conducted by the UCLA Center for Communication

Policy (*The UCLA Internet Report: Surveying the Digital Future*. UCLA Center for Communication Policy, 2001). According to the same survey, approximately 90 percent of those who use the Internet at work use it to access business email.

Creating a Message

- Have a meaningful subject line. This assists the reader to know the purpose of the e-mail message.
- Use standard spelling, punctuation and capitalization. ALL CAPS IN AN E-MAIL REPRESENT SCREAMING IN A MESSAGE.
- Always use spell check and grammar check before sending your message.
- Don't discuss multiple subjects in a single message. This makes it easier for the recipient to search for particular e-mails.
- Write clear, short paragraphs and be direct and to the point. We never want to waste the reader's time.
- Do not attach unnecessary files.
- Do not abuse the High Priority Option.
- Use a signature with your contact information.

- Add disclaimers to your e-mails. This protects NCCU from liability.
- Proofread the e-mail before you send it.
- Don't use abbreviations or emoticons (smiley faces).
- Never use e-mail to discuss confidential information. Sending email is like posting information on a billboard.
- Always type in the sender's address last. This keeps you from accidentally sending an e-mail before you finish or edit the message. (especially if you are using a laptop).
- Use the CC: field sparingly. Placing an address in this field is only to inform a person what is going on, not to request action.
- Be concise and be professional (when possible, be brief).

Responding to a Message

- Don't overuse Reply to All. 85% of the time everyone the message was sent to does not need to see your response.
- Respond in a timely manner. This shows a high level of quality service; by showing the sender you honor their request as a top priority.
- Never forward chain letters.
- Never reply to SPAM messages.
- Never send usernames and passwords.
- Never send personal information, such as credit card numbers or social security numbers.



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