

# LRDC Computing Services

Computing Services Newsletter

September 2000

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## **Computing Services Welcome** by Karen Bassett and Gary Wilde

We'd like to welcome all newcomers to LRDC. An influx of new people means computer account requests, computer orders, and office changes. To help make things go a bit smoother, we'd like to review these computer procedures. We especially want to call attention to the fact that the University computer accounts system has changed. Detailed information about the new **Computer Accounts Management** system is available on-line at [www.technology.pitt.edu/itplan/cds/index.html](http://www.technology.pitt.edu/itplan/cds/index.html).

### *Procedure for Requesting Computer Accounts*

**University of Pittsburgh computer accounts** give you access to campus lab computers, e-mail, dial-up Internet access, and other services like the e-Store and CourseInfo. Newly hired faculty and staff will automatically have a **primary account** created along with their employee record. Student primary accounts are created automatically once registration and payment have taken place. In special cases where a new person is not on the payroll, such as a visitor, we will be able to create a **sponsored account**. While there is currently no charge for sponsored accounts, there may be in the future. Also, sponsored accounts must be renewed at the end of each fiscal year. In special cases where a new staff or faculty member needs an account before Human Resources has processed their employee record, we can create a **jumpstart account** (which expires in 30 days, but becomes the primary account after the employee record is processed). If you have any questions or if you need a sponsored or jumpstart account, please contact Karen Bassett at x4-7037 or Shari Kubitz at x4-2881.

**LRDC file server accounts** give you access to our local servers. Your account allows you to share files with project members as well as other people at LRDC, and gives you access to network printers and software. To apply for your LRDC account, you will need to know your project leader, room number, and phone number. Once you have this information, you can stop by room 506 to fill out an account request form. Your LRDC account will most

likely be created the same day. You will be contacted by Kim Flotta to discuss your documentation and training needs for both your LRDC and University accounts. At that time, you can arrange for an individual training session, which usually lasts about 30 minutes.

### *Procedure for Ordering New Computer Hardware and Software*

LRDC Computing Services can advise you on both hardware and software purchases. Even if you know exactly what you want to order, we strongly encourage you to place orders through us, since we are familiar with vendors that offer educational discounts. Also, by ordering equipment through our group, we can better schedule your computer installations. If you need to order any computer-related items, please contact our group for assistance. You will need to have approval from your project leader and know which project and account numbers to use.

### *Procedure for Machine Moves*

Moving computers between offices requires planning. Depending on the location and number of computers involved, computer moves may require network devices. We stock the most common items, which cost between \$40 and \$100. We can charge any items you need to your project. Some network cards have to be special ordered and may take several weeks to arrive. In some cases a port activation may be required, which can take up to 2 weeks. To avoid possible confusion, we ask that all computer move requests be e-mailed to Eric Fussenegger at [efuss@pitt.edu](mailto:efuss@pitt.edu). Also, we need about 3-4 days notice in order to plan the moves around everyone's schedules. In many cases we will be able to complete your request by the next day. However, if we have multiple requests, or a very large computer move, it could take as long as a week to complete your request.

## **Life in the FastLane with NSF**

by Eric Fussenegger



As many of you are aware, the National Science Foundation (NSF) has implemented electronic proposal forms submission under the name of FastLane. One of the requirements for electronic submission is that documents must be in PDF format. PDF is a high quality, cross-platform format that provides a standard method to view documents, regardless of the type of computer or software that was used to create it.

Creating documents in PDF format is fairly straightforward but not always foolproof. NSF recommends that all proposals be previewed before submission and they will ***absolutely not*** accept proposals that do not meet their formatting requirements. Therefore, it is a good idea to begin the creation process early so you have time to preview the documents and correct any formatting problems well in advance of the submission deadline.

Computing Services can provide written instructions for creating FastLane proposals in PDF format. If you have any questions, contact Eric Fussenegger at x4-7060 or visit the FastLane web site at: [www.fastlane.nsf.gov](http://www.fastlane.nsf.gov).

## Recent Security Breaches at LRDC and Pitt

by Karen Bassett and Shari Kubitz

Recently, an outside intruder broke into several LRDC and Pitt computers running LINUX. Also, in a possibly related incident, an LRDC staff member had their University computer account password stolen; their account was used by a hacker to break into various external systems. To help reduce your risk of being the victim of a computer hacker, we suggest that you take the following basic precautions. Administrators of NT, LINUX, and web servers should take the added measures outlined below.

### *Macintosh and Windows 95/98 users:*

- T Back up all of your important files; the LRDC file servers are backed-up regularly and should be used to store user files and documents.
- T Turn off your computer when not in use, especially overnight. This will also help prevent data loss in the case of a power outage.
- T Change your password regularly and do not use words that can be found in a dictionary. The best passwords are combinations of letters and digits. Some techniques for creating passwords include thinking of a word and substituting a number for a particular letter; for example, using "0" wherever an "O" appears. Another technique is to think of a word and use keyboard letters to the left or right of each letter. Both of these techniques allow you to maintain a familiar password but only require you to make small modifications.
- T Do not leave file sharing active on Macintosh and Windows 95/98 machines when not needed. To make sure file sharing is off:

On a Macintosh, select **Control Panels**→**File Sharing** from the Apple menu. The File Sharing window should indicate that file sharing is off. If file sharing is on, click on the **Stop** button. When the dialog box asking, "How many minutes until file sharing is turned off?" appears, enter 0 minutes and click **OK**.

On a PC, right-click the **Network Neighborhood** icon on your desktop. Then click on the **File and Print Sharing** button. Make sure that neither box is checked.

### *Administrators of NT, LINUX, and web servers:*

- T Lock NT consoles whenever you are not present in the room.
- T Do not allow anonymous ftp access to your system.
- T Avoid running any non-critical services on NT, UNIX, and LINUX machines. Running services such as e-mail and ftp make your system especially vulnerable.

Computing Services and Systems Development (CSSD) recently appointed Bob James as the new director of their Incident Response Team. CSSD is now in the position to take a proactive approach to security. We plan to schedule a meeting with Bob James to discuss security issues and possible preventative measures. Anyone who is interested in such a discussion can contact Karen Bassett by phone (x4-7037) or e-mail (karenw@pitt.edu).

# New Computer Accounts Management System

by Eric Fussenegger

Computing Services and Systems Development has recently launched a new Computer Accounts Management system to replace the existing Computer Accounts Program. Along with increased reliability, the new system provides a set of web-based user tools that allow users to view and change their account information, as well as to find information about other users.

The account management tools can be accessed by navigating to the following website: <http://accounts.pitt.edu>. Click the **Connect** button to enter the system. You will be prompted for your University username (the first part of your e-mail address) and password. Once your login is complete, you will arrive at the following web page:



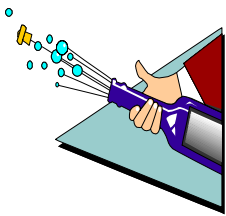
This site offers a number of useful options:

- Search the University database to find other users.
- View and edit your user information.
- Change your password or forwarding address.
- View your quota information.

The site also provides links to UNIX and VMS systems, the e-Store, Student Information Online, and CourseInfo. If you have any questions about the user tools or the website in general, contact Computing Services at x47033.

## Staff Update

by Karen Bassett and Gary Wilde



Congratulations to Kim Flotta who graduated this August with a B.S. in psychology. Kim accepted a staff position at LRDC as a media/computer assistant. Kim will work for the NetLearn project 80% of her time, and for Computing Services 20%. Kim will maintain many of her Computing Services responsibilities including troubleshooting computer problems, training new users, and overseeing the student operators. Kim's new office is room 505.

We also hired two new student operators. A belated welcome to Chris Huber, who started this summer. Chris is a senior majoring in cognitive psychology and cognitive neuroscience. Before working for our group, Chris was a work-study student for Jonathan Schooler. We would also like to welcome freshman Jeff Flotta, our newest student operator.

Lastly, Gary Wilde has moved into a new office. His new room number is 505A. His phone extension will remain the same.

## Computing Services Staff Roster

Karen Bassett, Manager	Room 508A, x4-7037
Gary Wilde, Manager	Room 505A, x4-7042
Tim Cooper, Systems Analyst	Room 507, x4-7060
Eric Fussenegger, Systems Analyst	Room 507, x4-7060
Shari Kubitz, Systems Analyst	Room 504, x4-2881
Kim Flotta, Media/Computer Assistant	Room 505, x4-7032
Jeff Flotta, Student Operator	Room 506, x4-7033
Chris Huber, Student Operator	Room 506, x4-7033
Katie Lawrence, Student Operator	Room 506, x4-7033
Johnny Ng, Student Operator	Room 506, x4-7033