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Computing Services News

Linux Support

Over the coming months, Computing Services will be launching a Linux initiative to determine support options for Linux users at LRDC. The first step is to meet with the LRDC Linux users to discuss their use and support needs. Specifically, we need to determine what Linux is being used for and the type of assistance needed. If you are interested in attending a Linux Support Needs meeting, please contact Karen Bassett at x4-7037 or karenw@pitt.edu.

From past discussions with Linux users, we know that security and best installation practices are of key concern. One of our first goals will be to develop a guide for installing Linux on a desktop computer at LRDC. We will address issues such as networking, printing, and security. We will also keep users informed about the latest patches and updates via an e-mail list. If you would like to be added to this e-mail list, please contact Eric Fussenegger at x4-7060 or efuss@pitt.edu.

Norton AntiVirus Upgrade Rollout Plan

Every year, Symantec requires a new license code for Norton AntiVirus users to continue to receive updates through LiveUpdate. License codes may be updated with or without upgrading the AntiVirus program. There is an updated version of Norton AntiVirus available for Windows, featuring improved autoupdate reliability and outgoing e-mail scanning. While a new version exists for Mac users, the only change is its native support of OS X. Mac OS 8.x and 9.x users will only need an updated license code.

Throughout the summer, Computing Services will be updating Norton AntiVirus on all LRDC computers, starting with Windows-based systems, since they are the most

vulnerable. If your subscription is within one week of expiring, or if you are running Mac OS X, please contact Anthony Taliani at x4-7474 or taliani@pitt.edu, so that we can make your computer a priority. If you feel comfortable installing and/or upgrading Norton AntiVirus, you can download the software from: www.technology.pitt.edu/software or borrow a CD from LRDC Computing Services (room 506; x4-7033).

Staff Update

We are pleased to announce we have hired Anthony Taliani as a full-time systems analyst. Anthony is a recent Pitt graduate with a degree in Information Science. He has been working for LRDC since his sophomore year, first for Fiscal Services, and more recently as a computer operator for Computing Services. Anthony's newly created position will replace about half of our existing student hours, as Chris Huber and Tom Simunich have both graduated. Tom, our Help Desk Coordinator, is now working for the Institute for Learning, serving as their technical advisor. Chris will be moving to the Washington, D.C. area at the end of August. We wish them both the best of luck!

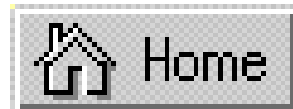
We are confident that Anthony's position will provide more continuity with our Help Desk support. His responsibilities include overseeing the Help Desk (room 506); user support; hardware and software installation; hardware and software purchases, including annual Software Licensing Services (SLS) renewals; and printer maintenance. He will also help support poster printing and the AV equipment in the 2nd and 9th floor conference rooms.

Also, we would like to welcome Jonathan Dean, our most recent student hire. John will be starting his sophomore year this fall, pursuing a degree in Computer Science. Zachary McCoy, who is also a sophomore Computer Science student, is home for the summer, but will return at the end of August.

Creating and Housing Project and Individual Web Sites

by Shari Kubitz

There has been some confusion regarding the LRDC web site, project web sites, and individual web pages. This article aims to clarify the purpose of each, as well as to address our recommendations for creating a web site, and deciding whether to house it on the LRDC web server or on your Unix account. Information about available training and documentation is also included.



The LRDC web server is a dedicated computer—running Windows NT and Microsoft FrontPage—that houses the LRDC web site, as well as several project sites. If you have an extensive project web site, one with numerous pages, and would like to have it housed on the LRDC web server (as opposed to providing a link to your site), please contact Gary Wilde at x4-7042 or wilde@pitt.edu. You will need to have a special account created to allow for the necessary access rights. In most cases, your project web address will be www.lrdc.pitt.edu/project name.

If you have, or want to create, an individual web site or a web site with only a few pages, the most appropriate place to house it is in the public directory of your Unix account. If the site is related to a project, we can create a sponsored e-mail account (with Unix space) under that name. You can easily FTP files to your account without additional access rights. Your web site would be www.pitt.edu/~username.

If your project web site is not housed on the LRDC web server, we encourage you to provide a link that we can add to relevant areas of the LRDC web site. We also encourage anyone with their own web site to provide the web address so that your home page can be referenced from the LRDC web server. To add a link, you can contact Chris Zurawsky, communications director, at 4-7487 or zurawsky@pitt.edu.

While we are more than happy to assist with any problems you encounter, and even offer some initial assistance in creating your web page/site, we do not have the staff to create the site for you. We are here for support while you learn to create web pages, and in the event that you encounter problems at any time with your site.

There are numerous commercial software packages available for web page/site creation. For elaborate web sites, we recommend Dreamweaver or FrontPage. For individual pages or small sites, we recommend Netscape Composer. Our recommendations are based on software availability at Pitt as well as available support, training, and documentation.

Beginners should find Netscape Composer to be user-friendly with its familiar interface. And, if you have Netscape Communicator, then Composer is already installed on your computer and available from within Netscape.

CSSD Quickstart classes are sometimes available for Composer. Although there are no classes currently scheduled, training material is available at: [**http://technology.pitt.edu/training/downloads.html**](http://technology.pitt.edu/training/downloads.html). The documentation includes:

Netscape Composer - Level 1: Getting Started

Netscape Composer - Level 2: Lists, Links, and Tables

Netscape Composer - Level 3: Pictures

The Getting Started guide provides instructions for properly setting up your Unix account and naming your home page so that it may be accessed by Pitt's web server. Hard copies of these documents are available from LRDC Computing Services. Call x4-7033, or stop by the documentation rack across from room 506.

For PC users connected to PittNet (directly from campus, through the modem pool, or through the Stargate VIP), computer-based training (CBT) is available at [**http://technology.pitt.edu/training/web.html**](http://technology.pitt.edu/training/web.html). The first time you access the training site, you will need to download and install *CBTPlayer*. Instructions and the download link are included at the above site. Pitt computer labs already have this plugin installed on all PCs.

If you require additional help, LRDC Computing Services can provide individual training as needed.

Support for Windows XP and Mac OS X

by Anthony Taliani

Computing Services is now supporting Windows XP and Mac OS X. All PCs are now shipping with Windows XP preinstalled; there is no longer an option to choose Windows 98. Macs are still shipping with both OS 9 and X. While both operating systems are full of tempting new features, they are not for everyone. Windows XP and Mac OS X have a different look and feel from their predecessors. Inexperienced users may find it difficult to navigate the new menus, desktops, and data locations.

Both of the new operating systems are designed to have multiple users. As a result, it is necessary to enter a username and password when the computer is started. You can assign an administrator as well as guest users. This allows you to specify custom rights for each user. This added "security" feature makes both systems more vulnerable when on the Internet. For the first time, Mac users are susceptible to break-ins. Windows XP, which is based on NT, has the same security risks as NT and 2000. Users moving to these systems must be diligent about applying security patches as they are released.

With Windows XP, Microsoft has moved away from the 9x/Me-based operating system. Both Windows XP Professional and Home Edition are based on NT/2000. Since XP is based on previous operating systems, there should be few compatibility issues with current versions of software. Products such as Endnote, SPSS, Eudora, Norton AntiVirus, and various graphical packages are all compatible with Windows XP.

The Unix-based Mac OS X cannot run software developed for Classic Mac OS in Native Mode. However, you can run Classic software either in Classic Mode within OS X, or by rebooting into OS 9. As more software vendors have released versions compatible with Mac OS X, Apple has changed the default boot operating system from OS 9 to OS X. Recent software releases for OS X include Photoshop 7.0, Norton AntiVirus, and Eudora Pro. However, before we decide whether to upgrade LRDC's site license for Eudora Pro, we need to thoroughly evaluate it. SPSS and EndNote versions for OS X are expected to be released soon.

When Apple first released OS X, AppleTalk was removed, leaving TCP/IP as the only networking protocol. With OS X version 10.1, AppleTalk is back. However, there are serious problems. First, the computer loses network access and sometimes freezes when it wakes up from sleep mode while connected to the network. Only a reboot will restore networking. Customizing the power settings to turn off sleep mode can avoid this problem. Second, several users have reported trouble using the LRDC file servers. This issue appears to be intermittent. We are researching the problem, and ask users experiencing difficulties to contact Computing Services.

Although Windows XP and Mac OS X are shipping with new machines, software and hardware vendors are still developing products for Windows 98/Me and Mac OS 9.x. Therefore, there is no real need to upgrade at this time. For the experienced user with a high-end computer who would like to make the switch, LRDC Computing Services will now provide support for these operating systems.

Plan Ahead - Order Computer Equipment Now!

Summer is a great time to order new computers for the fall. During August, the demand for new computers increases, resulting in delivery delays of up to 10 weeks. This does not include the time needed by Computing Services to configure each computer to meet individual user needs. Also, if enough projects place orders early, we could receive additional discounts for purchasing in quantity! See current specials below.

The compatibility of current applications and new operating systems should be carefully reviewed. Computing Services can review your project's needs, recommend equipment at a price that fits your budget, and order your computers for you. Please call Anthony, Eric, Jo-Anne, or Shari (see extensions below) to discuss your computing needs.

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Computing Services Staff Roster

Karen Bassett, Manager	Room 508A, x4-7037
Gary Wilde, Manager	Room 505A, x4-7042
Eric Fussenegger, Systems Analyst	Room 507, x4-7060
Jo-Anne Krevy, Systems Analyst	Room 507, x4-7060
Shari Kubitz, Systems Analyst	Room 504, x4-2881
Anthony Taliani, Systems Analyst	Room 506B, x4-7474
Jonathan Dean, Student Operator	Room 506, x4-7033
Jeff Flotta, Student Operator	Room 506, x4-7033
Chris Huber, Student Operator	Room 506, x4-7033