

Miami TechTalk

Issue Number 7

February 11, 2004

Winter Break Kicks Off a Busy 2004

"It sure was nice to have the break over the holidays, huh?" is what I heard from a colleague in early January when I ran into him at the grocery store. Retrospectively, I thought about how I, indeed, had enjoyed the brief respite with an opportunity to see family and friends over the holidays. Then my acquaintance continued by saying, "Things sure do slow down on campus when classes are out, don't they?" That's when I recalled what the IT Services staff had been doing during the December-January time frame, and I commented, "Well, actually, that's one of our busiest times of year." The other person was surprised. Ironically, during the "time off" period, there were only two days when no IT Services staff members were at work: December 25th and January 1st. Because of this, I thought it would be a good idea to share what has been occurring over the past two months. Here are some accomplishments we are proud to share:



- Semester break upgrades to operating systems, database systems and other services, many of which are necessary to make ready for the Banner upgrade to occur this fall
- Applying patches to systems and servers to keep them current (over 27 patches to Windows servers alone!)
- Began a network fault tolerance study and planning process for the "next generation" campus network, using the professional services of the Burton Group and Champlain Services
- Installed a new campus network Intrusion Protection Appliance (IPA) called "Tipping Point," that has already assisted Miami in protecting its campus network from worms and viruses better than most other universities
- Implemented a beta test of a workstation management software product that will both "push" the latest virus protection to personal desktops and support "personal firewalls" on these workstations
- Initiated a wireless authentication procedure for all wireless access points managed by IT Services
- Committed approximately \$200,000 in classroom technology upgrades to occur during the summer break
- Formulated and proposed a "Curriculum Transformation Through Technology" grant program for faculty
- Assisted our functional administrative departments in preparing W-2s, 1099s, and 1098s
- Assisted the academic administration by implementing online grade reporting
- Began a new email-based process for distributing monthly financial reports
- Developed a project plan for conducting a new "wireless cable modem" solution for off-campus broadband services, to be tested before fall semester
- Worked with our cellular phone provider to deploy newer technology (GSM) cell phone service in Oxford
- Worked with three telephone companies to re-route telephone traffic to the Middletown campus to be more cost effective
- Began using project management techniques to manage four major projects, two of which are underway
- Distributed a draft Information Technology Strategic Plan and began collecting feedback about this
- Continued toward hiring senior director leadership positions
- Accepted a gift of fiber optic strands from Normap Corporation that is worth over \$1 million and will assist Miami's Ohio campuses in participating in the Third Frontier Network

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Better Network Protection for Miami's Network

Over winter break, IT Services acquired, tested and deployed an Intrusion Prevention Appliance (IPA). This device analyzes network traffic, inspecting it for computer viruses, worms and other attacks that can be spread on the network. Network traffic carrying infections or representing attacks is blocked. Unlike previous generation devices, the IPA attempts to block nefarious network traffic before it causes a major problem. The previous generation device told us that a problem existed, and identified what was causing it, but did not attempt to block the traffic.

IPA devices are expensive to purchase and maintain; they can also introduce significant complexity. The IPA was originally deployed to protect residence halls in North Quad, the segment of MUnet at greatest risk. The IPA was installed on Miami's Internet link somewhat ahead of the original schedule in anticipation of rapid spread of a virulent virus released in January 2004. It is used in conjunction with the Campus firewall and Intrusion Detection service. This provides a very high level of protection for MUnet hosts from Internet-borne attacks and elevates protection from intrusion notification to intrusion prevention.

The early deployment of the IPA was a significant factor in the university experiencing minimal impact from the MyDoom virus. After its deployment in late January, the IPA and other virus scrubbing technology intercepted over 850,000 viruses in a 2-week period.

There is substantial benefit from the IPA even when network attacks are not in progress. The IPA identifies already-infected workstations and reduces the effect of many low-level attacks that have a negative impact on network performance. Intrusion protection will be a significant component of the long term MUnet network redesign that is being driven by the emerging IT Services Strategic Plan.

Of course, neither the IPA nor any other protection device is a substitute for good computing practices. Hackers know these devices exist and work diligently to launch attacks that these devices cannot detect. Thus, all of us need to be diligent about maintaining current operating system patches and virus protection as well as being cautious about opening email attachments. For more information, please refer to the following Knowledge Base articles:

- [Protecting your Microsoft Windows computer from viruses/attack](#)
- [Using Mac OS Software Update to install security and software updates](#)

Universal Disk Space (UDS) Quota Increased for All Faculty, Staff, and Students

Universal Disk Space (UDS) is networked disk space available to all Miami University students, faculty, and staff. IT Services has increased the amount of disk space allocated to each person from 50 to 100 megabytes.

UDS can be used to store papers, projects, web pages, or other files. UDS makes an excellent replacement for floppy disks and can be accessed via the netDisk service in [myMiami](#). There are other ways to access UDS—see "[Accessing Universal Disk Space](#)" in the Knowledge Base for details.

More information on UDS can be found in the [Universal Disk Space](#) category in the Knowledge Base.

Buy Your Microsoft Software Now!

Our current Microsoft contract will expire on June 30, 2004. While we expect to sign a new contract, prices for Microsoft software may be substantially higher after that date.

If you are thinking of purchasing Microsoft software for your personally-owned computer, please do so prior to June 30 to take advantage of the low pricing. Some examples of pricing include, but are not limited to:

- Windows XP Professional - \$12.50
- Office X (Mac) - \$18.50
- Office XP (Windows) - \$18.50
- Office 2003 (Windows) - \$18.50



You will need to present your Miami ID card and sign a license agreement when you purchase the software. For a complete list of Microsoft software savings, check out the Miami University Bookstore web site at: <http://www.muohio.edu/bookstore/microsoft.htm>.

Students please note: Students own the license even after leaving Miami, as long as the software has been registered with Microsoft. Further, students must select one platform - Macintosh or Windows.

Faculty and staff please note: Remove first sentence Faculty and staff have the right to use the software as long as they are employed at Miami. If you are interested in installing the Microsoft software on a university-owned computer, please contact your TSR; different contract provisions apply on software installation on university computers.

Junk Mail Filter Available in Eudora 6

Eudora 6 is site licensed, e-mail client software available to all faculty, staff and students. The latest version of Eudora contains a special mail filter called "SpamWatch". This filter identifies junk mail and automatically transfers junk messages to a special Junk mailbox.

Each message receives a junk score. Messages that receive scores higher than the junk score threshold are considered spam and will be transferred to your Junk mailbox.

Junk mail filtering is not always accurate, but over time, you can train Eudora to identify messages you consider junk. Selecting "Junk" from the Message menu will change a message's junk mail score and will transfer the message to your Junk mailbox. You can also select "Not Junk" from the Message menu if Eudora, by mistake, places a good message in your Junk mailbox.

There are several settings that customize Eudora's junk filter. You can change the junk score threshold – the score used to determine if a message is junk. You can set the number of days junk messages should remain in your Junk mailbox before they are trashed.

Information on all the Junk Mail settings is available in the Knowledge Base article: [Understanding and Using Eudora 6.x Junk Mail Feature \(Windows\)](#)

MUnet Passwords Will Expire Every 180 Days

Faculty, staff, and students at Miami use the MUnet password to access a variety of services including myMiami, e-mail, netDisk, BannerWeb, the Miami Directory, and Novell servers.

As part of our effort to enhance security, IT Services will begin to retire passwords on March 8th. The initial expiration of accounts will continue until April 8th, during which time you will be prompted to change your password when logging into web-based services. The message will contain a link to a web page where you can both change your password and set a secret question/answer pair. If you forget your password, you can answer your secret question and set a new password.

Please choose your password carefully. Passwords should be difficult to guess; using names of family members or pets, though easy to remember, does not provide the level of security recommended. Great passwords are those that contain both letters and numbers and are non-dictionary terms. For more tips on password selection, please see the Knowledge Base case [Choosing a good password](#).

Announcements with more information will be provided on [myMiami](#) as the March 8th implementation date nears.



Oracle (Banner) Password to be Changed Every 90 Days

The SCT Banner system contains information about all students, faculty and staff. This information is considered highly confidential. The data that is contained in the SCT Banner system and many other applications are secured by an Oracle password.

Because of the very sensitive nature of your Oracle password, the University Auditor and the Miami University Security team have determined that Oracle passwords should be changed every 90 days. In February, SCT Banner users will see notifications that their Oracle password are about to expire.

Upon notification of pending expiration of your password, go to www.muohio.edu/oraclepassword and set your Oracle question/answer pair. The Oracle question/answer pair can be used to change your Oracle password or reactivate locked passwords.

If you have a computer account that is secured by an Oracle password, you will receive further information by e-mail. If you have any questions or concerns, please call the Support Desk (529-7900) and press #2, then #1 for Administrative Support.

Modem Redistribution Information for Dial-in Users

On Monday, January 5, 2004, the number of modems on the 523-9444 Oxford dial-in number was significantly reduced (to 92) and the number of modems on the Hamilton 737-2120 dial-in number was increased (to 276).



Changes were made due to the following factors:

- The Hamilton exchange is toll-free to the Oxford calling area and there are significant budget savings in moving T1's to Hamilton.
- Some Oxford modems need to be maintained because of the unusual Local Area Telephone geography; if all modems were moved to Hamilton, some Oxford-area clients would incur long distance charges.

In December 2003, the technology supporting 737-2120 was upgraded to provide dial-in speeds comparable to the Oxford dial-in service. **However**, connection speeds to this number from Oxford exchanges were noticeably slower immediately after the move. Technicians from IT Services, Cincinnati Bell Telephone and Verizon worked together to resolve this situation and now speeds are at acceptable levels.

If you encounter a busy signal when dialing in using 523-9444, please consider using 737-2120. Instructions for setting up a new dial-in connection by operating system are provided in the Knowledge Base:

[Windows 98/ME/2000](#)

[Windows XP](#)

[Mac OS 8.6 - 9.2](#)

[Mac OS X](#)

Please contact the IT Services Support Desk at (513) 529-7900 if you need assistance.

SkillPort

Miami Moves from Smartforce to SkillPort for Web-based Training

In late January, Miami migrated from SmartForce to SkillPort for delivery of web-based training courses. Through SkillPort, Miami faculty, staff and students have access to 328 self-paced, web-based training courses on computer applications, advanced technical topics, and business skills (see [complete course listing](#)).

SkillPort offers a number of new features to enhance ease-of-use:

- The ability to log in with your Miami UniqueID and MUnet password - no need to remember a separate username and password.
- Immediate access to the site - no filling out a registration form and waiting for approval before getting access.
- A streamlined user interface and improved browsing and search functions so it is easy to locate relevant courses.

Miami will continue to also offer VTC web-based training courses for faculty and staff. VTC courses focus primarily on computer applications and operating systems and can be accessed from both Windows and Macintosh computers. (SkillPort can only be accessed from a Windows computer.)

Both SkillPort and VTC are accessible from myMiami by clicking the "**Training**" link which will appear under **Quick Links** on the right side of any myMiami page.

For more information about the SmartForce to SkillPort transition, please see the [Migration Announcement](#) in the Knowledge Base.

Invitation to Web-based Training Open Sessions Hosted by IT Services

February 2004

362 Gaskill Training/Videoconferencing room
Thursdays - 8 to 10 am
Fridays - 3 to 5 pm

Come get started with SkillPort and/or VTC web-based training courses in a supportive environment. Whether you need some quiet time away from your desk to concentrate or want help getting up and running using web-based training, these sessions are for you.

You are welcome to come for as many sessions as you like and stay for however long you wish.

If you get a chance, please register in TRAIN just so we have a rough idea how many people to expect. To register:

1. Go to TRAIN (<http://www.muohio.edu/train>)
2. Click on **Learning Opportunities** and then **Topics**
3. Click on **Open Session for Web-Based Training**
4. Click on the Workshop Code **ITS-SP&VTC** and then click on the section you want.

Accessing Novell Servers is Made Easier

Novell servers provide disk space for all students, faculty, and staff. This service is commonly referred to as Universal Disk Space (UDS). Divisions and departments may also provide Novell disk space to faculty and staff. Until recently, accessing Novell servers required the Novell or ProSoft client to be installed on your desktop.

Native File Access Protocol or NFAP is a Novell server based solution. NFAP allows desktop users to securely access file space using components built-in to the Macintosh or Windows operating systems.

NFAP consists of two parts; AppleTalk Filing Protocol (AFP) for Macintosh users and the Common Internet File System (CIFS) for Windows users.

To use AFP or CIFS to access Novell file space, you need to know your Miami UniqueID and MUnet password. You also need to be using Windows 2000, Windows XP or the Macintosh OS X operating systems.

Complete instructions can be found in the following Knowledge Base articles:

- [Accessing Department/Division file Space from Windows via Native File Access \(NFAP\)](#)
 - [Accessing Department/Division File Space from Mac OS X via Native File Access \(NFAP\)](#)
 - [Accessing Universal Disk Space from Windows via Native File Access \(NFAP\)](#)
 - [Accessing Universal Disk Space from Mac OS X via Native File Access \(NFAP\)](#)
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Service Changes/Upgrades Over Winter Break

A common misconception among my non-university acquaintances is that life at university is slow while the students are away. I know you know better! I know you were busy during the holiday break because you were concerned every time IT Services needed to schedule service maintenance. You needed to get your work done and many of those services are important to you.

The maintenance is needed for a variety of reasons - most relate to providing stable service, some to providing increased functionality.

This past break the following upgrades and changes were made to avoid future service problems. They were announced to the university's Technical Support Representatives. The outage notices were also posted on the Technology Outage Page, which can be navigated to from the School Services tab of the myMiami page at <http://mymiami.muohio.edu>

Academic Instruction & Research Systems

- Patched Blackboard to make database queries more efficient
- Upgraded the operating system on four Universal Disk Space servers
- Patched the UNIXGEN instructional server
- Upgraded the GNU Compiler Collection (GCC) on UNIXGEN
- Performed maintenance on UniPrint servers
- Removed Ohio Cluster Supercomputer unit number 11 for maintenance.

Services Changes/Upgrades Over Winter Break (continued)

Business and Student Support Systems

- Upgraded Oracle from release 8 to release 9i for six databases
- Upgraded Harvest to version 5
- Upgraded the operating system on the production and reporting database servers
- Upgraded the operating system on two Central Disk Space servers
- Upgraded the operating system on two utility servers
- Moved the phone-a-thon server and upgraded
- Reconfigured Kronos Web hosts
- Replaced the power supply in network file system

Network Upgrades / Changes

- Eliminated IPX and Appletalk from ResNet networks
- Configured and installed a Tipping Point Intrusion Prevention Appliance
- Upgraded the DNS server operating system
- Upgraded the DHCP server operating system
- Moved modems:
 - 184 from Oxford to Hamilton
 - 92 from Hamilton to Oxford
- Converted Middletown modems to CBT service
- Performed maintenance on the Williams hall router
- Upgraded the Content Sensitive Switch load balancer
- Replaced several communication closet UPS devices
- Put WAM (Wireless Access to MUnet) into place for many wireless access points in academic and administrative buildings:
 - Alumni
 - Art
 - ASB
 - Gardner-Harvey
 - Gaskill
 - Hoyt
 - Hughes (Brill Library)
 - Johnston
 - Kreger
 - Laws
 - Levy
 - Murstein
 - Middletown RecCenter
 - Pearson
 - Shriver Center
 - Upham
 - Yager

Personal Productivity

- Upgraded the e-mail operating system on:
 - Mail file store server
 - Two mail route servers
 - Two mail forward servers
- Adjusted e-mail memory configuration for IMAP usage
- Adjusted e-mail software configuration for IMAP usage to avoid memory leak
- Upgraded the operating system on the Campus Event Ticketing server

Windows Servers

- 27 Windows servers were patched. These servers are used for a variety of services.

IT Services Training Room Moves to 362 Gaskill Hall

Over winter break, the IT Services training room moved from 305 Hoyt to 362 Gaskill. 362 Gaskill opened for use on Jan. 12, 2004 as a dual purpose computer training/videoconferencing facility.



362 Gaskill is a laptop facility with both wired and wireless access to MUnet featuring:

- A new projector with enhanced resolution (1024x768) and brighter image
- A new Windows teacher's station (Dell Pentium 4 desktop with wireless capability)
- The capacity to seat 20, each with a laptop (see next items, can be all Windows or combination of Windows/Macs)
- 20 Windows (Dell Pentium M) laptops with wireless cards
- 5 Mac (Apple Powerbook G4) laptops with wireless cards
- 802.11g wireless via a dedicated wireless access point
- 100 Mbit Ethernet wired access to MUnet
- VCR
- Document camera

The room retains its distance learning/videoconferencing capabilities via an updated projection system and microphones distributed throughout the room.

Please note that while the distance learning/videoconferencing and computer training capabilities reside in the same room and can be used simultaneously, they are not integrated.

Scheduling events in 362 Gaskill: You may schedule 362 Gaskill by selecting it from the **Public Directory ->Locations** list as a guest when you create a MeetingMaker invitation for your event. Since this space will be reserved primarily (but not exclusively) on a "first come, first served" basis, we encourage you to schedule the room as soon as you know you need it. In the case of conflicts, we will try to prioritize use of the space as follows:

1. Distance learning
2. Training
3. Meeting with projection needs
4. Other

IMPORTANT! Please indicate the type of use (according to the list above) and # of participants in the agenda area of your MeetingMaker invitation. This will help us should we need to resolve any conflicts.

For assistance with scheduling the room, please contact Valerie Garnett in Gaskill Hall (e-mail: garnetvg@muohio.edu; phone at 529-6013).

Please note that use of the room is limited to scheduled events.

362 Gaskill default configuration: The default configuration will be 15 Windows and 5 Mac laptops tethered in place. The room can be reconfigured as needed to either remove the laptops or move to all Windows laptops. If you need a configuration other than the default, please contact the Gaskill Training Room administrators (e-mail: it-gaskilltrainingroom@listserv.muohio.edu) at least two business days before the event.

For more information: Please contact the Gaskill Training Room administrators if you have any questions or would like to schedule a time to view the room.

Miami to Host OHECC IT Conference April 14-16, 2004

Miami's IT Services is pleased to announce that it will be hosting this year's Ohio Higher Education Computing Council (OHECC) conference. The conference will be held on April 14-16 at the Marcum Conference Center and Inn.



OHECC brings together Ohio/Indiana/Kentucky higher education professionals involved with providing, supporting and using technology with vendors of technology-related products and services. The theme for this year's conference is **Technology - Teaming with Possibilities**. Over the 3 days of the conference, we'll explore how through teamwork and collaboration (within and between universities) we can exploit the opportunities technology provides to enrich the higher education experience.

OHECC 2004 itself sets a new standard of teamwork and collaboration for OHECC conferences. It is being planned by a newly established cross-university program committee and will bring together presenters and roundtable moderators from higher education institutions throughout Ohio and neighboring states. The conference program is being organized around 4 tracks:

- Management, Leadership and "Soft" Skills
- Teaching and Learning
- Technology and Infrastructure
- Support and Training

We are still seeking presentation proposals – particularly for the Management, Leadership and "Soft" Skills track. The extended deadline for proposal submissions for TechTalk subscribers is February 17, 2004.

We encourage you to consider presenting at OHECC 2004 or attending the conference. For more information, please visit the OHECC 2004 web site at <http://www.muohio.edu/ohecc>.



Microsoft Office 2003

In October 2003, Microsoft released the latest version of their popular office suite, Microsoft Office 2003. Miami's Microsoft contract, which has been extended until June 2004, permits the use of Office 2003 Professional on university owned machines.

The University Bookstore will soon be selling the Office 2003 version covered in the contract for student and faculty/staff personally owned machines. We expect Office 2003 to be available at the University Bookstore in early spring.

Office 2003 Professional edition includes Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, Outlook, and Publisher.

IT Services Staff and Technology Support Representatives from across the university are completing an evaluation of Office 2003. Technology Support Representatives are responsible for setting the deployment schedule for their departments.

The user interface is similar to previous versions and file formats are backward compatible with earlier versions of Office. However, system requirements have changed – Office 2003 requires Windows 2000 Service Pack 3 or higher or Windows XP. Office 2003 will not run on Windows 98 or Windows ME.

Microsoft Office 2003 (continued)

Some of the new features include:

Office 2003 (all components in the suite)

- Document Security
- Improved Search features
- Research Task Pane for easy access to references such as dictionaries and encyclopedias
- Support of XML file formats

Word 2003

- Review and Markup features for document collaboration
- Compare Documents feature for side-by-side review of two versions of the same document

Excel 2003

- Enhanced List Management features
- Enhanced Statistical Functions
- Compare Documents feature for side-by-side review of two spreadsheet versions

Access 2003

- Enhanced error checking in Forms and Reports
- View Object Dependencies
- Propagating Field Properties to apply a field's formatting changes to Forms and Reports

PowerPoint 2003

- New Slide Show navigation tools
- Package a Presentation to CD
- Enhanced Viewer for playback of today's graphics, animation and media

Visit Microsoft's Office web site at <http://office.microsoft.com/> for additional information about the new features in Office 2003.

New Test Scoring Equipment On the Way

The optical scanner and associated equipment used to scan tests and faculty evaluations has aged to the point that it is being replaced. The IT Services Test Scoring Office, 101 Gaskill Hall, will oversee the installation of new scanning and computing equipment early in the second semester. The present equipment only reads forms filled in with a number two pencil; any forms filled in with ink are rejected and returned to the submitter, causing problems for all involved. The new equipment will read markings from both number two pencil and ink, thus eliminating the need to reject any forms due to improper markings.

The new equipment requires that all the forms used for testing and evaluation be printed in specific ink colors. These ink colors are different from the colors on the present forms; the present forms will not work with the new equipment.

In working with the manufacturer of the test scoring equipment it was discovered that several Miami departments have recently reordered evaluation forms. To allow departments to use up some of this inventory, the Test Scoring office has arranged to keep the old equipment "on-line" until June 15, 2004, to allow those departments to use as many of the old pencil-only evaluation forms as possible. This means that both the new and old equipment will be available for a short time. After June 15, though, only the forms printed in the new colors will be accepted for processing.

New test scoring forms are in the process of being printed, and will be available in the Supply Room in Wells Hall. Departmental evaluation forms will need to be reprinted using specific ink colors. Contact Jon Patton, (513) 529-8751, to select the ink color you would like to use on any departmental evaluation forms. This may also be a good time to revise any of these forms before reprinting.

Please contact John Bowser, (513) 529-1382 or bowserjh@muohio.edu, with questions.

Section 508 - Legal Mandate for Creating Accessible Web Sites

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was enacted more than fourteen years ago to prohibit federal agencies from buying, developing, maintaining, or using electronic and information technology that was inaccessible to people with disabilities. In 1998, Congress passed the Workforce Investment Act giving members of the public and government employees with disabilities the right to sue agencies in federal court and file administrative complaints for noncompliance. This legal leverage has helped in getting accessible products developed.

Section 508 states that "...electronic and information technology allows Federal employees with disabilities to have access to and use of information and data that is comparable to the access to and use of information and data by Federal employees who are not individuals with disabilities, unless an undue burden would be imposed on the agency." (You can read the full regulation at www.section508.gov). **Section 508 applies to higher education institutions that receive federal funding.**

Note: Section 508 applies to a broad range of electronic and information technology. The remainder of this article addresses Section 508 as it applies to "Web-based Intranet and Internet Information and Applications."

Section 508 - Legal Mandate for Creating Accessible Web Sites (continued)

Section 508 and the Web

Debates continue about the benefits and the limitations that Section 508 brings to web developers. This should be looked at as an opportunity, not meant to limit design and creativity, but to enhance it!

Any time that visual, hearing, motor, or cognitive impairments might impact the ability to access information/services provided via the web, steps should be taken to make web content as accessible as possible. Many of the requirements for compliance with Section 508 are common sense.

- A well thought out design structure is not only good for people with disabilities, but for everyone that might view the site.
- Good color contrast selection is also a smart decision. Did you know that over ten percent of all males have some form of color blindness?
- Alt tags for images are simply good coding practice and are beneficial to those who choose to turn off images for faster browsing as well as those with visual impairments.
- Text equivalents for audio and captioning for video make content available both to those with hearing or visual impairments and those whose computer systems may not be equipped for playing audio or video.

There are two sets of guidelines related to web accessibility:

- [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\)](#) of the W3C
- [Section 508 standards](#).

The 508 standards and the W3C priority 1 benchmarks have subtle differences, such as the approach for implementation, but the checkpoints are very similar.

There are many tools that can be used to assess how well a web page meets the Section 508 or WCAG 1.0 standards. A few examples:

- Watchfire's "Bobby", a free online audit tool: <http://bobby.watchfire.com/bobby/html/en/index.jsp>
- The built-in audit tool in Macromedia Dreamweaver MX: visit the Macromedia Accessibility Center online for more information <http://www.macromedia.com/macromedia/accessibility/>

There are also many online resources for learning about developing accessible web content. A few examples:

- www.w3.org/WAI/ (Web Accessibility Initiative of the W3C)
- www.section508.gov
- www.webaim.org (Web Accessibility in Mind - a Utah State University Project)
- www.accessify.com

For the past year, a sub-committee of the Technology Support Representatives (TSR) has been informally working to develop a strategy for helping Miami web developers create accessible web pages. IT Services and the Office of Equity and Equal Opportunity are strategizing on formalizing this effort with the goal of providing support in the form of training and recommendations regarding accessibility tools.

If you would like to receive updates on this topic, we encourage you to join the Miami web developers LISTSERV. To subscribe, send an e-mail to LISTSERV@listserv.muohio.edu with **subscribe MUWEBDEV Your Name** in the body of the message. (While this LISTSERV list has not had a lot of activity in the recent past, we would like to foster its use as a discussion forum for university web developers and we will send updates on this topic to this list.)

The philosophy of Section 508 is to create inclusion and it is exciting to think about all the possibilities being made available for persons with disabilities. In order for Section 508 to be successful, it must be part of the development or modification cycle and the procurement process.

Miami Receives Fiber Donation

Miami University has received 6 fiber optic strands as a gift from alumnus Robert C. Schuler, '85 of Dublin, Ohio. The strands of fiber are part of the Butler County Loop connecting Oxford, Hamilton, Middletown and Evendale. The estimated value of the gift is more than \$1 million. Miami leases 12 fiber optic strands of the Butler County Loop from the County; they are used for network communications among the university's Ohio campuses.

The Butler County Loop, or cable, has 96 strands and traverses 100 miles. It was developed by county commissioners to attract new high tech businesses and to serve government offices and schools as well as existing businesses. Access to residents will be available soon.

If the cable is broken in any one place, the loop becomes a line, but it continues to work because data can flow in either direction, explains Reid Christenberry, Vice President of Information Technology Services at Miami. The completion of the loop brought faster connections among Miami's regional campuses in summer 2002.

The six new strands will provide vastly improved connectivity to OARNet, the university's Internet service provider, adds Christenberry. They will connect Miami to the Third Frontier Network, a part of the governor's Third Frontier Project to promote research and technology jobs in Ohio. They will be an important compliment to the "Cluster Ohio" supercomputer installed at Miami this past year providing university researchers with a high speed data connection to the supercomputer in Columbus. They will also be used to connect fiber optics in Hamilton County to OARNet.

Miami expects to begin testing and deploying the new strands within the first half of this year.

Gartner Research

Examples of new Gartner research articles are available from Miami's web site to all Miami students, faculty, and staff, and are listed below. You will be prompted to login using your UniqueID and MUnet password.

Gartner research will be of particular interest to any student, faculty, or staff member learning, teaching or using technology. Areas of focus for Gartner research include E-Learning, Business Management of IT, Security and Privacy, Higher Education, and Emerging Trends and Technology. The web site is updated every Friday with new research articles.

[Charting the Course for Higher-Education IT in 2004](#)

[26-DEC-2003 • Letter From the Editor • Yanosky, Ron]

While administrators wait for economic recovery to catch up to higher education in 2004, their agenda will be a mixture of delivering on the promises of the boom years and using the lessons learned during the hard times.

[Predicts 2004: Higher Education](#)

[26-DEC-2003 • Article Top View • Yanosky, Ron; Zastrocky, Michael; Harris, Marti]

In 2004, higher-education IT will begin returning to the unfinished business of the Internet boom years, but will remain mindful of the tough realities exposed in the post-boom era.

[Developing SLAs to Demonstrate the Business Value of IT](#)

[02-JAN-2004 • Commentary • Matlus, Richard T.]

The pressure on IS organizations to demonstrate their value creates the need for business-driven service-level agreements. The key is recasting technically oriented SLAs as business goals easily understood by the business units.

[How to Respond to Wal-Mart's RFID Requirements](#)

[08-JAN-2004 • Research Note • Woods, Jeff]

Wal-Mart has clarified its radio frequency identification requirements for vendors in its supply chain. You will need to act quickly to stay at the forefront of logistics within the Wal-Mart ecosystem.

Gartner Research (continued)

Microsoft's Yukon: Late and Lacking Focus

[22-JAN-2004 • Commentary • Burton, Betsy; Strange, Kevin H.; Mein, Jonathan; Friedman, Ted; Park, Alvin R.; Anderson, Mike]

After three years of waiting for Yukon's final release, you should expect to wait another year. Yukon is an incremental enhancement and does not radically change Microsoft's position in the database management system market.

Mobile and Wireless Services and Service Providers in the United States

[19-JAN-2004 • Operational Management Report • Skvarla, Carol; Dooley, Brian]

The U.S. mobile vendors continue to pursue third-generation rollouts and services in expectation of driving more revenue. Capital conservation has created pressures to move more slowly and improve margins.

Will Longhorn Really Be the Next Version of Windows?

[22-JAN-2004 • Research Note • Silver, Michael A.; Smith, David Mitchell (NH); Mein, Jonathan; Park, Alvin R.; Burton, Betsy]

Many users signed up for Microsoft's Enterprise Agreement primarily to get new versions of covered products. Microsoft may need an interim version of the Windows client to deliver the value its customers thought they were buying.

PDA and Smartphone Operating Systems: Technology Overview

[07-JAN-2004 • Technology Overview • Hubley, Mary I.; Troni, Federica; Kort, Todd; Clark, William]

The handheld device operating system market includes Palm OS, Symbian OS, Windows Mobile and several Linux systems. They vary in price, application, form factor, market, security and wireless capabilities.

Microsoft Windows Server 2003, Datacenter Edition Operating System

[02-JAN-2004 • Product Report • Hubley, Mary I.; Richardson, MaryAnn]

Windows Server 2003, Datacenter Edition builds on Windows 2003 Server, Enterprise Edition to provide scalability, availability and reliability, including a 99.9 percent uptime guarantee.

Red Hat Enterprise Linux Operating System

[29-DEC-2003 • Product Report • Hubley, Mary I.; Muller, Nathan J.]

Red Hat Enterprise Linux is a family of Linux products for the desktop to the enterprise. It supports seven processor architectures, supports major applications and is certified on Dell, HP, IBM and Sun systems.

Big Bumps for Windows Security, but Still on Track

[22-JAN-2004 • Commentary • Pescatore, John]

The worms in 2003 showed there's a long way to go before Windows is secure, and prompted Microsoft to refocus on improving security. By 2005, Microsoft's server software products will be at or above the industry security average.

Digital Documents and Imaging Guide

[16-JAN-2004 • Gartner Dataquest Guide • Iorns, Camille D.; Gobin, Cecile; De Silva Leon, Federico; Chatzidakis, John; Prabhakar, Tosh; Mitani, Tomoko; Lam, Lai-ling; Johnson, Andrew; Grant, Peter J.; Ritter, Lynn; Dixon, Don; Haueter, David; McNee, Sharon; Hancock, Malcolm]

A market share survey overview, research metric definitions, regional definitions, product definitions, exchange rate definitions and a hierarchy of markets are presented.

Best of 2003 Research for IT Operations and Infrastructure

[21-JAN-2004 • Letter From the Editor • Scott, Donna]

We've compiled the best research of 2003 that had the greatest impact on IT operations and infrastructure directors.

Did you know . . .

Technology tidbits for Miami faculty, staff and students:

- Until 6/30/2004, you can buy Microsoft Office and upgrades to Microsoft Windows operating systems for less than \$20 at the Miami University Bookstore in Shriver Center. Visit www.muohio.edu/microsoft for information.

Students: Buy your software now! Miami's current Microsoft agreement expires on June 30, 2004. While Miami is negotiating a new agreement, the prices could be considerably higher.

- You can make a 3-way call on most university phones without the assistance of an operator. [View details in the Knowledge Base.](#)
- You can arrange a conference call (for calls with more than 3 participants) through the Miami University switchboard at (513) 529-1809. [View details in the Knowledge Base.](#)
- In addition to laptops and projects, faculty and staff can also check out conference phones for use in meeting rooms from AV/Technology Services. [View details on the AV Equipment web page.](#)
- The Learning Technologies Center in 200 Gaskill, open 24/7, offers a group work room and a classroom with computers and a projector. These can be scheduled by contacting Tom Montgomery at montgota@muohio.edu.
- Miami offers virus protection software for all faculty, staff and students. Without current virus protection, your computer is at tremendous risk. [View virus protection information in the Knowledge Base.](#)