

Miami TechTalk

Computing News You Can Use...



Look Ma, No Wires!

Most of us are familiar with the phrase “no strings attached.” In fact, it meant a complete change in lifestyle for Pinocchio. Miami students might feel as if they have been liberated in much the same manner with Miami’s wireless network.

MU Wireless network services are now available in all academic and administrative buildings, as well as some popular outdoor areas. Buildings with wireless network service include all residence and dining halls, Shriver Center, and the Libraries. Outdoor locations with



wireless capabilities include the areas around Shriver Center, in front of MacMillan Hall, and in the Yager Stadium complex.

MU Wireless allows students to gain access to the web by simply opening a web browser and signing in using the wireless login page that automatically displays. Students can browse the Web, Chat, or check their web e-mail. Additional network services are available when a secure connection is established. Please check the Miami Knowledge Base at <http://kb.muohio.edu> for information about creating a secure wireless connection.

If you have questions about MU Wireless, please contact the IT Services Support Desk by phone at 513-529-7900 or by e-mail at supportdesk@muohio.edu.

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Personal Wireless Access Points and 2.4GHz Cordless Phones Prohibited

Personal Wireless Access Points (WAPs) and 2.4 Gigahertz devices (such as 2.4 GHz cordless phones**) cannot be used in the residence halls. These devices use the same radio frequency as the devices providing MU Wireless service.

** 900MHz and 5.8GHz cordless phones do not interfere with wireless service.

Students Save with Microsoft Agreement

Miami’s agreement with Microsoft allows students to obtain a number of Microsoft software applications, including Windows XP upgrades, Office, FrontPage, and Visual Studio.net, at a fraction of the retail cost.

“Miami is pleased to continue the Microsoft agreement for another year; it is important that our students have access to this industry-standard software.” says Reid



Christenberry, Vice President for Information Technology.

Currently enrolled students are eligible to obtain one copy of each of the Microsoft applications listed above. Students can purchase the software at the University Bookstore by presenting a valid Miami ID.

The software is purchased on a subscription basis; that is, students may use the software as long as they are at Miami and Miami’s Microsoft agreement is in force; the agreement is reviewed for renewal annually. Upon graduation, students become eligible to receive a “perpetual license”.

Due to the substantial increase in the cost of the contract for the coming year, the price of the software for students will be somewhat higher than the previous year’s price of less than \$20 per software title. Exact prices had not been set at the time that this publication went to press, but even with the increase, the price will be a fraction of the standard academic rate. Check with the University Bookstore for additional details.

About TechTalk

Stay informed about what’s happening with computing on campus by subscribing to TechTalk, Miami’s online information technology newsletter. TechTalk is published four times per academic year. To receive an e-mail when a new issue is available, go to www.muohio.edu/techtalk and click “Subscribe”.

Student Laptops on the Rise at Miami

A recent residence hall survey indicates 96%+ of students living in Miami's residence halls possess a personal computer. An increasing number of students are choosing laptops because of the mobility they offer. According to Joe Martin, Manager of Computer Sales for the University Bookstore, 71% of students purchasing a computer at the bookstore during Summer 2004 purchased a laptop.

The availability of wireless network service in all university buildings on the Oxford, Hamilton, and Middletown campuses is one widely cited reason for the increasing popularity of laptops. "I couldn't make it without my laptop" says Jason Dees, a sophomore in Mass Communications. "I take it with me everywhere. With wireless so widely available, I can easily get to the web or check e-mail no matter what building I'm in on campus."



In an effort to make laptops more affordable, Miami is exploring new cost-saving opportunities with leading computer vendors. The University Bookstore already offers several significantly discounted Apple and IBM laptop packages (see www.muohio.edu/bookstore for details). Watch for updates on Miami's laptop direction and vendor negotiations in future editions of TechTalk.

Computer Requirement?

While Miami does not currently have a computer or laptop requirement for all undergraduates*, the university strongly recommends that all students have a personally-owned computer.

To ensure success connecting to the university network, students should bring a computer that meets or exceeds Miami's recommended computer specifications. These can be found in the IT Services section of the Orientation office's 2005-2006 Guide for Families, in the Orientation student binder, or online in Miami's Knowledge Base (<http://kb.muohio.edu>) - search for "computer specs".

*Note: a number of majors do require a specific computer and software, please check with a departmental advisor for guidance on your program.

Computer Mechanic: Preparing Your Computer for the School Year

Maintaining security updates on your computer is as critical as maintaining oil, water and gas levels in your car. Just as you would prepare a car for a long trip by changing the oil, checking the air in the tires and filling the gas tank, you will need to prepare your computer for the trip across the coming school year. Follow our "six-point inspection" guideline for a smooth ride this year.

✓ Install Windows/Macintosh Operating System Updates

One of the most overlooked, yet critically important, security practices is installation of operating system updates (Windows Updates and Software Updates for Macintosh). To update Windows simply click on "Start" then "All Programs" and look for "Windows Update" at the top (follow the on-screen directions from there). Mac users can click on the apple menu at the top left of the screen and then choose "Software Update" (follow the on-screen directions from there).

✓ Create a Password for Your Computer

Creating a password for your computer is vital to keeping it safe. Most people have administrative accounts on their computer that do not have a password assigned for protection. This practice is very bad, as a computer with a blank password is similar to an unlocked car – open to anyone who wants to open the door and climb in. To create a password on a Windows computer, go to the "Start" menu and choose the "Control Panel", then select "User Accounts". You will see an option that allows you to assign a password to each account. Macintosh users can assign a password to accounts by choosing "System Preferences" from the "Apple" menu and then selecting "Accounts."

✓ Install and Regularly Update Anti-virus Software

Making sure that your anti-virus software is up to date is just as important as having anti-virus software installed! Windows and Macintosh users can obtain anti-virus software for free from the University. The software comes with a subscription which provides updates as well. Please visit <http://software.muohio.edu> in order to get your free copy of McAfee (for Windows) or Virex (for OS X). You will be asked to enter your Miami UniqueID and password to initiate the download.

✓ Install Spyware Protection

A recent threat to computers is the emergence of spyware, also known as malware or even "Potentially Unwanted Programs" (PUPs). There are numerous variants of spyware; some, like tracking cookies, can be a mild nuisance while others will take advantage of security holes and act very much like a virus. Miami is reviewing anti-spyware software; recommendations will be forthcoming. Please visit the Knowledge Base at <http://kb.muohio.edu> for updated information on this topic.

✓ Enable your Windows/Macintosh Firewall

Windows XP with Service Pack 2 and the Macintosh operating system (OS 10.1 and up) have built in firewalls that will help protect your computer from attacks. Windows users can find the settings for the firewall in the "Control Panel" and then "Security Center," while Macintosh users should navigate to "System Preferences" and then "Sharing."

✓ Set-up a SPAM Filter in E-mail

Junk e-mail can be much more than just a simple annoyance. Viruses as well as Phishing scams can be damaging. Miami University runs a process on incoming e-mail that scores potential SPAM messages. For instructions on how to include this filter in myMiami or in your desktop e-mail program, please visit the Knowledge Base at <http://kb.muohio.edu> and enter the keyword "spam" in the search box.



Security Alert: Avoid Internet "Phishing" Scams

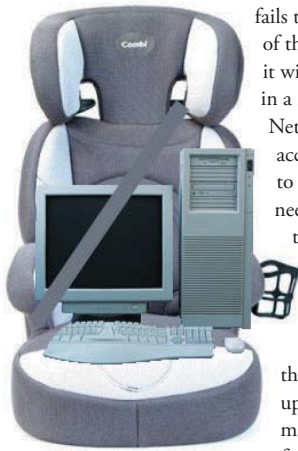
According to Webopedia (www.webopedia.com), "Phishing is the act of sending an e-mail to a user falsely claiming to be an established legitimate enterprise in an attempt to scam the user into surrendering private information that will be used for identity theft." People need to know that such practices are common and that they should guard their private information closely. If you have questions as to the legitimacy of an e-mail, search www.google.com for common phrases from the e-mail or visit www.antiphishing.org.

Windows Computer Users: Prepare to Buckle Up for Safety

Today most drivers won't operate a motor vehicle without putting on a seat belt. So, why would someone want to travel on the Information Superhighway without the proper protection? To this end, Miami is helping on-campus students protect themselves, their computers, and their data.

Beginning this fall, all residence hall students will be required to logon to the Miami computer network. Windows computer users will be asked to install a small software application that will check to make sure their computer meets the following criteria:

- All critical Windows updates installed
- All virus protection software is installed



- The virus protection software has up-to-date virus definitions

If a Windows computer fails to meet any of these criteria, it will be placed in a Remediation Network where access is limited to the resources needed to correct the problem. Instructions will be provided for installing the necessary updates. The main objective of this service is to combat the problems created by viruses, spyware, and the negative impact of infected computers on Miami's network.

To help prepare your computer for using Miami's network, IT Services will be mailing a CD to each on-campus student later this summer. The CD will include a utility to help test your machine for compatibility before you

arrive on campus. The CD will also include information about Miami's technology resources, as well as web links to some commonly visited Miami sites.

Non-Windows Users and Gamers Take Note

Although users of non-Windows computers (Mac, Linux, etc.) won't need to download a software application to gain access to Miami's computer network, they will need to log in. Simply launch a web browser and follow the login instructions.

Other devices that use the network, but do not have a web browser (Xbox, PlayStation, Tivo), will need to be registered online to receive network access. Students who will be living in residence halls can register these devices at any time by visiting www.muohio.edu/networkregistration.

Introducing myMiami - Your Window on the Miami World

To date, www.muohio.edu has likely been your destination on the web for information about Miami. Now that you are officially a part of the Miami family, we would like to introduce you to your new web home:

mymiami.muohio.edu

Here you'll find information geared to current students, faculty, and staff as well as many web-based tools that you'll use frequently throughout your time at Miami.

"Like what?" you might ask.

While the list is too long to name everything, a few of the most popular services include:

BannerWeb - register for courses, check grades, and view/pay Bursar bills

Blackboard - view course materials and assignments, take quizzes, and participate in online chats/discussions

E-mail - receive and send e-mail using your Miami e-mail account

netDisk - access your Universal Disk Space (UDS) from any computer with an Internet connection. (UDS is 100 MB of personal space on a University server that can be used to publish web pages or simply store files for access from multiple computers.)

Also on myMiami you'll find:

- Miami announcements and campus calendars
- Information about university offices and activities

Take a peek at what myMiami provides. Once you do, we think you'll want to set your browser's home page to myMiami so you have ready access to all that it provides.

This is the current myMiami home page after login - big changes are coming over the next six months. A preview of the new myMiami and a feedback link will be available on myMiami soon.

Getting Help with Technology

As you get settled into your new routine with classes, living on campus, and making new friends, you might not be thinking about what to do if you have problems with technology (for example, your e-mail, IM, or connection to the MU network, etc.) Help with such issues is just a click or a call away. Here are your main sources for technology problem solving.

Miami Knowledge Base (MUKB): an easy-to-use online self-help tool that contains information on a wide variety of technology topics. You can find answers to questions about Miami e-mail, MU network, residence hall phones/voice-mail, MUTV, and much more. Access the Knowledge Base at <http://kb.muohio.edu> and explore!

IT Services Support Desk: the central point of contact for technology related issues. If you have a problem or question regarding your e-mail, Miami accounts, online services such as myMiami or Blackboard, and you are unable to find resolution in the Knowledge Base, contact the IT Services Support Desk. Usually, you can expect very quick resolution; however, during high-traffic periods (such as the beginning of a semester), you might have to wait a bit longer. The IT Services Support Desk can be reached by phone at 513-529-7900 or by e-mail at supportdesk@muohio.edu.

Computer Remediation Center: if you have a virus-infected computer, or have Internet connection issues due to spyware, call the IT Services Support Desk at 513-529-7900 for a quick fix over the phone or a free appointment with the Computer Remediation Center. The Computer Remediation Center repairs computers that are having network connection problems due to viruses or debilitating "spyware."

Web-based training: while you are at Miami, you might want to take advantage of the wide variety of web-based training opportunities available to you. You can take online training courses that complement your university classes and keep you up-to-date with current technologies. Access the training site at www.muohio.edu/training, and explore the training courses on SkillPort and VTC.

Computer Help on Move-in day...



On first-year-move-in day - August 19 - the IT Services Support Desk will have technicians in each of the first year residence halls from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. to offer free, on-site assistance with connecting your computer to the wired and/or wireless network.

If you experience problems once you have set up and plugged in your computer, sign up for assistance on the first floor of your residence hall. An IT Services Support Desk staff member will be dispatched to assist you – each will have an identification badge and will be wearing a yellow shirt with 'IT Support' clearly visible.

Miami Adds New Cell Phone Plan Options

Miami University and the IT Services Office of Telecommunications have expanded the university's contract with Cincinnati Bell Wireless to offer a variety of plans. All of the plans provide competitive pricing without the obligation of a contract, the convenience of on-campus support and the ease of charges placed on your Bursar account.

Phones and accessories may be purchased from Telecommunications (price determined by model). Monthly charges are billed through the University Bursar system. Phones will be programmed with either a Hamilton wireless area code and exchange or a Middletown exchange depending on the area where most usage will occur.

For information on wireless plans and phone prices, visit the IT Services Office of Telecommunications web site at www.muohio.edu/tlc.



Coming Summer 2005

Later this summer, IT Services will be mailing a CD to each on-campus student. This CD will serve as an electronic technology guide describing the many technology services available to students on the Miami campus. The CD will also include a utility to help test Windows-based computers for current Windows updates and virus protection software, so you will know if your computer can access the Miami network before you arrive on campus. (See page 3 for more information.)

