

Minutes
Kansas State University Faculty Senate Committee on Technology
September 2, 2003 - 1:30 PM - K-State Union 204

Members present: Chang, Haddock, McHaney, Ross, Selfridge

Guest: Harvard Townsend

Harvard Townsend, Director of Computing and Network Services provided a security update. The recent worm attacks were the largest such events to ever hit the university. At the peak on August 20th, the central mail server rejected 233,000 messages infected with the Sobig.F worm. The Blaster and Welchia worms also struck at the same time. These attacks coincided with the return of the students and the start of the fall semester. Townsend complimented the CNS staff for the quick action they took and long hours they put in to contain the threat. Though most of the infected messages originated outside of campus, CNS was able to rapidly detect infected on-campus computers and isolate them from the network. The downside was that the CNS staff was temporarily pulled away from other projects to deal with this issue. Townsend also praised Housing and Dining Services, the College of Architecture, and KSU Salina for their rapid institution of plans to limit potential damage. Townsend reported that the Security Incident Response Team (SIRT) that was established last spring functioned quite well before and during the attacks. A SIRT report will soon be released. Last spring, there was a strong effort to ensure that the SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor System) was made very secure, in order to avoid problems that arose at other institutions. (SEVIS is the Internet-based system that maintains information on non-immigrant students, exchange visitors, and their dependents.)

Consideration is being given to providing centralized updating of virus software rather than management of updates at the desktop level. CNS has created a local mirror for critical Microsoft updates that is being tested at this time. Soon it will be released to the campus community. They will also very shortly roll out an interim solution that will allow central mail system users to filter spam. A longer-term solution to both viruses and spam is being examined as part of the new e-mail enhancement project.

The University is negotiating a contract that will provide faculty and departments with a 30% additional discount on Adobe products, and is working to get special pricing on Microsoft products for students and faculty. Townsend reported that 60% of the classrooms on campus now have network connections. CNS is looking at how much it will cost to put a connection in every classroom. Wireless access points are gradually expanding around the campus. The colleges of Veterinary Medicine and Education, Throckmorton Hall, the K-State Union, and Hale Library now have wireless access. Wireless capabilities have also been established at the Konza Prairie Biological Station to enable access to research experiments in the field.

FSCOT member David Rintoul submitted an excellent summary of the recent requirements gathering meeting on e-mail clients for the E-mail Enhancement Project. Additional meetings are to be held on September 4th and 5th.

The next FSCOT meeting will be held on October 7, 2003, at 1:30 PM in Union 204. Agenda topics will include a system overview of the LASER project and a report on CATnet, the new K-State Digital Library. Future agenda topics will include the Advising System, K-State Online, and the K-State Portal Project.