

Update on MTU System Administration 2004-2005 Top Ten List
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9/27/2005

1. (M) Capability for instructors to access instructional materials via network regardless of location. (DCS & TC)

Thirteen of the largest classrooms/lecture halls on campus now have wired Rovernet connections paid for centrally by IT. The conversion of these locations was coordinated with ETS. With the addition of a campus-wide VPN server planned for this year, faculty will be able to securely access home directories from these classrooms. There are 20 total wired Rovernet connections on campus as of the opening of school Fall 2005. PO for VPN is out to the vendor. Once received the VPN will be installed and configured in a short time frame.

2. (A) Campus Standards for Authorization. (DCS)

Develop a set of standards for determining authorization on a given service and implement these standards into an authorization service which can be incorporated into both centralized and departmental services. This includes but is not limited to desktop computing in departmental labs, web applications, and access to centralized services.

DCS has been working with sysadm auth group to coordinate efforts. We continue to discuss the functional requirements and initial engineering design for this system. The ISO system has been enhanced to provide for some entitlement management work in this area continues.

3. (E) Central Management of software licenses/contracts. (DCS & Director)

Put together a project plan, resource requirements, and implementation timeline for the development of a more comprehensive central campus software coordination office. This would include a rough estimate cost savings, service description, cost redistribution methodology, etc.

Some information has been gathered regarding the amount of time and money which is spent on software which could be centrally coordinated. The data has yet to be processed.

4. (I) Interim Wireless Policy. (TC)

This item was turned over to the CAC Security Committee for action.

5. (C) Enhance MTUNET. (TC)

The ability to change/replace the Paetec Technician Portal is dependent on API code and support from Paetec. To date, Paetec has not released any API code for the work order module, so we have not made any significant improvements to the work order portal. We have made significant enhancements to the Telecommunications Infrastructure Web site. We had a 'users forum' in Spring 2005 to get feedback on future functionality, and Telcom will work to get these items implemented in FY06. The data warehouse portion of this request will also be addressed in FY06. We didn't have the resources to get this finished last fiscal, but we support the concept, and we'll keep it on our list (this issue was addressed at the forum in the Spring). We are also currently in the process of a major version upgrade to the Paetec software.

6. (F) IT service monitoring and reporting. (DCS)

DCS has done extensive work to monitor the health and performance of servers and the services they run. Many of MTU's sysadm group have asked to have a view into this system which could greatly reduce the time to solution for problems as well as alert end users of existing problems. This view is now available on the new <http://status.it.mtu.edu> page.

7. (K) Programmatic API to the NID (DCS)

Departmental system administrators, in an effort to automate processes, are asking for an API to the NID, the campus database for coordinating userids and email addresses access departments. This will allow them to write programs that interface with this database while conforming to their own computing environment.

DCS has done initial description of what is needed. No development work has been done.

8. (O) Guest Access to university network resources (DCS & TC)

There is an ever increasing need to allow for MTU campus visitors the ability to use university resources such as the wireless network or on-line library resources. Currently this access is restricted to that of the MTU community (students, faculty, and staff). This guest access could be handed out on an as needed basis. Aspects to think about are ease of use, how to revoke this privilege when the guest leaves, how access is granted, and how to stop abuse of this service.

The engineering and software development for this project is complete. Documentation and distribution of the tools will be underway shortly.

9. (N) Centralized reclamation and disposal of IT equipment. (Director)

Occupational Safety along with Facilities has a procedure for disposal of hazardous equipment.

10. (B) Provide servers to aid in security scanning. (DCS)

Provide at our (MTU Departments) expense a server on our subnet, controlled by the security officer, to aid in the monitoring and detection of security issues.

We have not pursued these servers. The security officer has installed new scanning software which will bring more horsepower to bear on the scanning problem.

11. (D) Campus instant messaging service. (DCS)

Develop IM service for use by students, faculty, and staff campus-wide. This service should be based on standards compliant software such as Jabber, and should use the ISO system for authentication.

Many campus users have asked DCS to implement a campus instant messaging service. The service would be used in conjunction with current authentication systems, and will utilize open source IM software. It will allow for the creation of ad-hoc live discussion groups for class work, projects, student organizations and just plain fun.

The IM server is in production in support of the Admissions Portal. It will soon be brought out for general campus users during winter semester.

12. (L) Ability to run queries on card access system (who has access to which doors) (Director)

Several discussions on this have taken place. A basic framework for this will be brought back to the requestors to insure all needs are met.

It should be noted that this will not allow for non-public safety personnel to review access transactions of a particular person.

13. (G) Web replacement for local news groups. (DCS)

Replaced with phpBB (see <http://barkboard.mtu.edu>)

14. (H) Support for bulk email. (DCS)

Create tools and policy to facilitate the mass mailing of HTML mail. Currently almost every systems administrator sends some quantity of bulk email; some of them send many, many bulk emails.

Bulk email requires several steps, including the building of a population (usually from a database query), the merging of the email, the approval process if the email is to more than 500 users, the actual mailing, dealing with bounces, and finally dealing with the return email. It has been suggested that there should also be content approval and anti-spam policy added to this process.

This process could be greatly simplified by the development web based tools, database tools, and WebRT, and would reduce the workload to all those currently doing this "by hand".

15. (J) Network Clocks (Director)

While IT would install infrastructure to support this at the request of departments, the sheer number of clocks make this cost prohibitive. From discussions with other groups it seems as though some areas will be trying clocks that update off atomic clock signals.