Seasonal contributions

All departments within Information Technology joined in a Silent Auction as a part of the Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign (CVC). CVC is a voluntary, charitable donation program for state employees to voluntarily support a wide range of not-for-profit health and human services organizations. On October 31, donated items along with a hot dog and bake sale raised $1,657.15, a 60% increase over last year's total. Information Technology moved into the top participation rate for the fifth week of the CVC campaign! The funds were distributed equally to local organizations, The Women's Resource Center of NRV, Children Health Improvement Partnership of NRV, and the American Red Cross (Montgomery/Floyd Counties and Radford).

Among the donated items were Longaberger basket, Discover Scuba Diving Sessions, a cookbook, Apple Smoked Pork Loin with pineapple salsa, embroidered, smocked top, embroidered table scarves from Hungary, Christmas wreath, Firewood, Pinnacle golf balls, Decorative Birdhouse, Original art work, and VT hat and gloves.

Hokies for the Hungry is sponsored by the Marching Virginians to collect non-perishable food items for families in the local area through the Montgomery County Christmas Store. Bryan Randall was this year's honorary chairman. Spurred on by Becky Brim of the Information Warehousing and Access team, employees in the AISB/RB14 (1700 Pratt Dr./1770 Forecast Dr.) building cluster collected 1450 items of canned and other non-perishable food. Members of the Marching Virginians joined in the celebration and collection on November 18—as did the Hokie Bird!

Mail Services

University Mail Services (UMS), a unit of Network Infrastructure and Services, collects and distributes interdepartmental correspondence and incoming U.S. mail and packages for over 300 university departments. Approximately 80% of these departments receive twice daily service. UMS processes pre-sort, certified, insured, returned mail, first class letters, international media, and library packages, totaling over one million dollars in postage each year.

Additionally, UMS provides service for outgoing first class letters and packages, international, certified, insured, and express mail. Outgoing mail is pre-sorted whenever possible to so that departments may send mail more efficiently, inexpensively and quickly. Pre-sort guidelines are available at http://www.mailservices.vt.edu/firstclass.html.

Residential Mail Services (RMS), a unit of UMS, collects and distributes letters and packages to all students living in residence halls on the Virginia Tech campus. Centralized mailrooms operate in Owens, Peddrew-Yates, Newman, Pritchard, and West Ambler-Johnson during the academic year.

The University Mail Services manager, Maynard Quesenberry, works with staff members to ensure that the campus mail process is efficient and cost effective.
Sakai

Members of units within Learning Technologies and on the Portal Team in IAD are working on the Sakai project. Sakai was founded as a collaboration among the University of Michigan, Indiana University, MIT, Stanford, the uPortal consortium and the Open Knowledge Initiative. The Sakai Educational Partnership Program (SEPP), of which Virginia Tech is a member, extends the community to over 50 institutions. The goal of SEPP is to develop an integrated collection of open source education and collaboration tools.

Anticipated products include an enterprise services-based portal, course management system with assessment tools, a research collaboration system, a workflow engine, and a technology portability profile. Sakai Project institutions have committed over $2 million per year to launch and support the project.

Privacy and confidentiality updates

In July 2003, several bills regarding an agency’s use of an individual’s Social Security number (SSN) became a part of the Code of Virginia as a response to increased incidence and exposure of individuals to identity theft. Beginning July 1, 2003, agencies were no longer permitted to display SSNs on identity cards. By July 1, 2006, all identity cards used by agencies must not display the SSN. To support this change and to further protect the students, faculty, and staff of Virginia Tech, the administrative information system is changing from using SSNs as the key identifier in the administrative (Banner) system. Instead, a nine-character number is generated. Current employees and students may request the change be done while AIS and the various offices prepare for the large scale conversion to meet the July 1, 2006 deadline. Banner search forms have been modified to protect the SSN from being displayed, while permitting searches to enter a known-SSN. Other work that is underway includes:

- Changing the ID numbers of over half a million persons who are not in an active role with the university such as faculty, staff, or student;
- Change the ID numbers of current employees and students over a phased period, that includes work to make the process as convenient as possible.

Social Security numbers are still required for many business purposes (notably, employment), but the visibility of the number will be greatly reduced and only Virginia Tech staff members with specific need to know the numbers will have system access to them. An administrative university policy is being developed to provide guidance on use of SSNs.

Another effort underway is increasing the individual control over the confidentiality or visibility of their personal data elements. The Hokie Spa was updated to permit individuals to control the display of their home addresses and related information other than Virginia Tech contact information. The AIS General Team completed the development work, and staff in IRM and IAD ensured that the setting worked across the various display tools, particularly PeopleSearch and ED-Lite. Extending the same level of control over other personal data elements is currently in the planning stages.

SANS-EDU Training, March 2005

SANS Track 3, Intrusion Detection will be held March 7 to 12. Mike Poor from SANS is the instructor. See http://www.sans.org/cdieast04/ for details.

The course runs roughly from 9 am to 5 pm with 7-9 pm hands-on exercises. The course fee is $500 per person and the certification exam is an additional $300 per person.

Requests for additional information may be sent to Randy Marchany (marchany@vt.edu).