



A Can of Worms

Network Safe After Worm and Virus Attacks Prior to Start of Quarter

By Mark Kimble, Technical Support Services mjkits@rit.edu

The frustration caused by the old Can of Worms at the junction of routes 590 and 490 in Rochester is not the only “worm trouble” to complicate local traffic.

The end of summer brought a spate of computer worms exploiting features of the Windows Operating System that could have caused far greater problems on the RIT network. Well, at least greater problems for those dependent on computers to travel the “Information Super Highway.”

Fortunately, ITS and the RIT IT community managed to get control of the worms fairly quickly, allowing us to keep the network up and running, and preventing potential damage by the worms. Sure, there was some inconvenience as people’s network connections were temporarily interrupted due to the various worms, but RIT as whole faired quite well.

RIT’s IT community became aware of these vulnerabilities in the Windows operating system in mid-July when Microsoft released its warning. In mid-August, a hacker produced the initial worms exploiting the vulnerabilities. From that point it didn’t take long to realize there was a serious situation forming.

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This month’s issue of ITS News features the myRIT portal – one year later. The portal was developed to channel news and information to one convenient source. “Common characteristics of portals include single sign on and authorization capability, personalized information provided in a secure environment, access to channels of information from external sources, and the ability for users to customize the portal in terms of content and appearance,” said David Eisler in Syllabus Magazine. The myRIT portal has all of those things and has recently added several new services such as the Events Calendar and Food/Flex Balance, a site where students, faculty and staff can check account food service balances, add money to the account or pay for services via credit card. Articles with more information about the portal and these services can be found starting on page 3.

A Can of Worms

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On the first day of actively checking RIT's network for vulnerability over 650 computers tested vulnerable. ITS and Risk Management raised the red flag and entered crisis management mode to ensure a collaborated management strategy was formed.

As of early September only 1,493 computers had been declared vulnerable to infection by ITS; they were either patched, cleaned, repaired, rebuilt or disconnected from the network. Considering there are 15,981 computers registered on the RIT network, and the (oft publicized and scientifically unproven) mean time to infection of a vulnerable Windows computer connected to the Internet is about 30 seconds, a vulnerability level of less than 10% is not too shabby!

According to an Associated Press article, several universities took strong measures to combat the attacks:

- University of North Texas technicians removed "viruses from roughly 16 computers every 90 minutes." Additionally, they charged users a mandatory \$30 cleaning fee for the removal.
- Vanderbilt University found infection rates at nearly 25% in returning students' computers.
- Salisbury University in Maryland shut down its entire network for students in the residence halls for one day..." as did George Mason University on September 4th.

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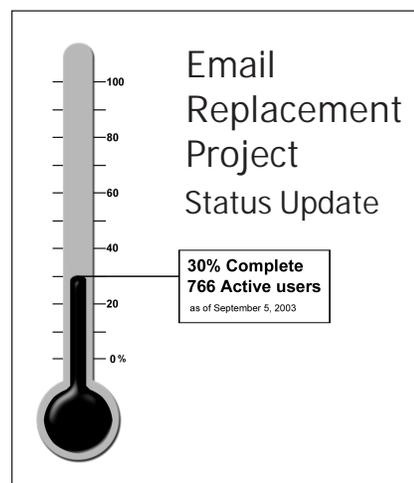
"The net result of more than three weeks of furious (and seemingly endless) work is that less than 10% of the computers connected to RIT's network today were vulnerable to infection, and far fewer still actually became infected."

2004 Benefits Open Enrollment: October 27th - November 19th

Open enrollment is online this year using your Oracle ID and password. Don't know your Oracle ID? Contact the ITS HelpDesk now with your employee number (located in the upper right corner of your paycheck) or come to the HelpDesk with your RIT ID.

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myRIT Portal Adds New Services

By Kristi Davis, Customer Support Services, kaddss@rit.edu

myRIT is Rochester Institute of Technology's portal which provides the RIT community with a web page that can be personalized with news, services, resources, and access to online courses. Introduced by Information & Technology Services (ITS) with Student Affairs, Student Government, On-Line Learning, Educational Technology Center (ETC), and University News in the spring of 2002, our general mission is to continuously improve it and to offer more and more services to the RIT community.

The overall goal of myRIT is to become a single point of entry on the web that is useful enough to be everyone's home page.

We are pleased to announce some *new features* for those of you returning this fall:

Persistent Login

We are happy to announce that we have successfully implemented the much-desired "persistent login" feature. Of all the suggestions received, this was by far the most requested improvement. We listened! Now you can select "Remember me" when you log in and the next time you return to the myRIT page, you will be able to skip the initial login! Of course, you will have to subsequently login to access personal areas such as myCourses, but that's so your individual access is kept safe.

Events Calendar

The ITS Web Team has been working hard this summer with input from Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Student Government, Government and Community Relations, University News, Alumni Relations, Housing Operations and Athletics to create a consolidated Events Calendar tool. You can add this portlet to your layout and discover what events are going on each day on campus!

RIT Food/Flex Balance

Don't feel like going out of your room to add money to your food or flex account? Want to know if you have enough money for lunch today? A new service (a.k.a. portlet) will show you your food and flex account balances. A quick link will allow you to charge your credit card and add more money to either account!

The myRIT portal team is working to improve RIT's portal. We want to thank those of you who have already given us ideas and feedback. Your continued input will help us provide a portal that you will find useful.

The team will continue to work hard and as soon as we get a new service developed, we will deliver it to you! We hope to be offering more and more improvements to the RIT community through the year.

Food/Flex Balance Portlet Added

By Ryan Boyd, Customer Support Services, rbisd@rit.edu

You might have noticed a new portlet available on the myRIT Portal: RIT Food/Flex Balance portlet. This portlet allows faculty, staff and students to view their balances on food and flex accounts and also add money instantly via a credit card.

This portlet was developed through a joint project between the Bursar's Office, Food Service and ITS. The primary goal of the project was to eliminate the delay between adding payments via credit card on the traditional e-commerce site (ipay.rit.edu) and the crediting of the food service account. The group also believed that having live balance information would be an added convenience for the RIT community.

The RIT Food/Flex Balance portlet is an example of the type of services that will continue to be added to the myRIT portal. This new portlet on myRIT contains personal, timely and accurate information that will make the RIT community more efficient in the essential tasks of everyday life.

To add this portlet to your portal layout, connect to <http://my.rit.edu>, login, and click on the 'layout' link at the top right of your portal view. Then select the 'RIT Food/Flex Balance' portlet from the list and click the 'add' button.

Soon to come: Persistent/Automatic login

How to Personalize the myRIT Portal

By Michelle Cometa, Office of the CIO, macits@rit.edu

One of the interesting things about portals that make them different from ordinary web pages is the ability to modify the content of an individual's main page. There are numerous feeds from online news sources available for RIT portal users. From the different feeds, they can build a site that's unique and of interest to them.

The content areas, or portlets, range from Wired News to stock information. There are subject areas such as health, fitness, technology and politics. All are available to build a portal that is a one stop resource for news, course links and specific RIT information.

Modifying the Portal Layout

To modify your portal layout, begin by logging into the portal:

<http://my.rit.edu>

The portal is password protected and customers log in using their RIT computer accounts. Across the top of the right-hand side of the page, there are several items in the tool bar:

[Courses](#)! [Account](#)! [Layout](#)! [Help](#)! [Feedback](#)! [Logout](#)

1) Click on **LAYOUT**

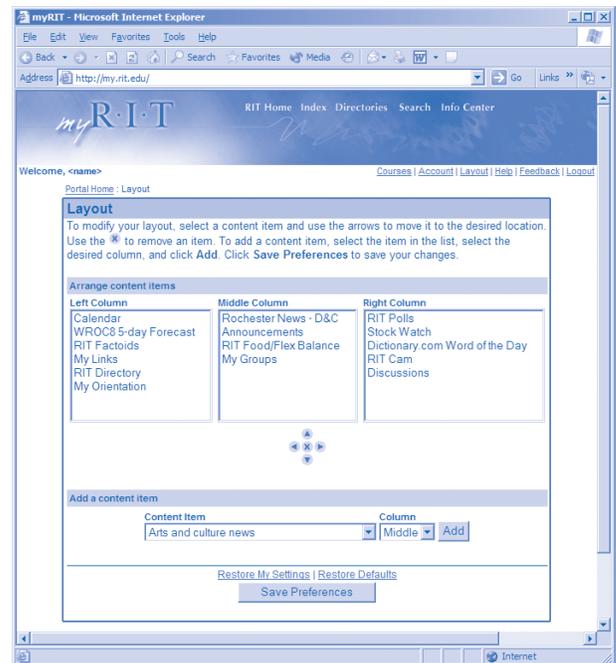
This brings up a task box with two areas to: A) Arrange Content Items and B) Add or Remove Content Items.

At ADD A CONTENT ITEM

Click on the arrow to see a full list of content items available. Some examples:

- Consumer News
- Canada News
- MP3 News
- Cyberculture News
- NEOFLEX.com
- Personal Financial News
- Slashdot
- Sports News (including RIT Sports Ticker)
- Stock Watch
- US Politics
- Asia-Pacific Latest
- Wired
- Salon
- CNN

- 2) Highlight one content item such as Asia-Pacific Latest
- 3) Determine the location for the content area by selecting COLUMN: Left, Middle, Right
- 4) Click ADD
- 5) Click SAVE PREFERENCES



After **Save Preferences**, you'll return to the main portal page. Scroll though to find the newly added content area.

Moving Content Areas

To move any of the content areas, start at the main portal page.

1) Click LAYOUT

In the area: ARRANGE CONTENT ITEMS

2) Highlight the content area to be moved. Use the arrow graphics to move content between columns as well as higher or lower in the same column.

3) Click SAVE PREFERENCES

Again, upon return to the main portal page, scroll through the page to see that content items have been arranged or added accordingly.

The portal team will continue to add interesting content items. Use the feedback link to share your ideas for possible content items for the future.

Stay connected at RIT with new calendar: events.rit.edu

by Bob Finnerty, University News Services

The RIT community can now stay connected with a new unified events calendar at <http://events.rit.edu>. The site will serve as the central calendar for all of RIT. A link to the site will be provided off the RIT homepage as well as the myRIT portal.

The intention of the new events calendar is not only to have one site for users to find out what is going on at RIT but to make it as easy as possible for users to find out what is going on at RIT, said Jeremy Trumble, the senior web applications manager for ITS. Whether you use one click from the RIT homepage, or you have the Events Calendar portlet in your myRIT portal view, or you have subscribed to the e-mail update service, you will find it very easy to see what is going on at RIT.

Key features of the site include:

- The search function allows users to hunt for events in a variety of ways: date, event name, and type of event.
- Users will be presented with a list of all public events for the current day.
- Users will be able to click onto a detail page that will give information ranging from any potential costs to

URLs associated with the event.

- Users will have the option of receiving e-mail updates of new events in a wide-range of selected categories.
- A real-time portlet view of the Events Calendar from the myRIT portal.
- Ability to list events from the centralized Events Calendar on your own website using RSS or customized XML-feed.

Here is an example of some of the many categories the site includes:

- Cultural/musical/theaterLecture/speaker
- Club events/activities
- Athletic/recreation
- Academic/college events
- Major student events
- Alumni events.

The site was developed by ITS with input from Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Student Government, Government and Community Relations, University News, Alumni Relations, Housing Operations and Athletics.

Introducing Gartner IntraWeb

Key IT Research Site Now Available for RIT

By Dave Hostetter, Director, Customer Support Services, dwhits@rit.edu

In the fast paced and somewhat chaotic world of Information Technology (IT), it can be very challenging to find comprehensive and reliable information needed to enable the effective use of IT resources and support strategic decision making. Sorting through the volume and reliability of the data available is a significant undertaking:

- How do you separate vendor hype from reality?
- How do you manage the inherent risks of technology decisions?
- Who are the emerging leaders in technology and will they survive?

One key tool available to IT professionals is the use of an IT research and advisory service. There are several prominent services available in this area and ITS has retained Gartner Inc. as RIT's advisory service provider. RIT chose Gartner for two key reasons - the company's position in the marketplace, and its Web delivery of research materials.

Access to services like Gartner is typically limited to a small

group of individuals in an organization. At RIT, this service will be available to all students, faculty and staff and they will have available to them high quality technology research and information.

To Use the New IntraWeb Site

- The site is located at <http://www.rit.edu/its/services>
- Users can log onto the site using their RIT computer account (DCE)
- The IntraWeb service provides online access to the following Gartner research services:

Gartner Core Research, Gartner Dataquest, Gartner G2

ITS is pleased to be able to offer this service to the RIT community. It will be a valuable asset for students, staff and faculty as a source of leading edge IT research. Feedback on the service or questions about usage should be directed to the ITS HelpDesk at helpdesk@rit.edu or call 5-HELP (5-4357), 5-2810 TTY.

Save the Dates: ITS Technology Seminar Series Opens October 29

By Michelle Cometa, Office of the CIO, macits@rit.edu

Do you need information about network security and how you can safeguard your computer? Or would you like to learn about using speech recognition software for teaching? These and other technology topics will be part of the 2003-2004 ITS Technology Seminar series.

The seminars are sponsored by the Office of the CIO and open to all faculty, staff and students. They are part of an ongoing effort to keep the campus up-to-date about technology issues, practices and emerging technologies.

The first two scheduled sessions are:

- October 29, 11 am – 1 pm, “Instructional Technology in the Classroom and Online – More than Posting the Syllabus”
- November 10, 2 - 4 pm, “How Learning Development Center Staff Use Speech Recognition Software for Teaching and Learning.”

Both seminars will take place in the Carlson Learning Center, 76-1275.

The guest speaker for the Instructional Technology program in October will be Professor Larry Belle, of Online Learning. He will present updated information about faculty use of instructional technology. He will also highlight information from a University of Wisconsin study about how faculty use instructional technology and what the motivation and barriers are to more creative use of this medium.

This past spring, several demonstrations of speech recognition software were presented by ITS. Members of the Learning Development Center (LDC) participated in the demonstration and incorporated the software into some of their coursework for their students. The November seminar will showcase how LDC staff used the software product. Kristy Mooney Graves, Academic Accommodations Coordinator, will be the main seminar presenter. She will be joined by several student participants.

Additional seminars will take place, approximately one-per-month. Topics will cover network security measures and Internet 2 applications, as well as web technology and e-portfolio information.

There will be a modified format for two of the seminars: Security Week will take place in December, and Web Week in January. Each week will consist of a main technology seminar with smaller, more focused workshops about the topics during the week. Both morning and afternoon sessions will be scheduled.

For example, during Security Week, the opening seminar will be about the recent security assessment conducted by Information Security Officer, Jim Moore. He will relate the process undertaken for assessing RIT network security and present both findings and recommendations. Throughout the week, topics such as identity theft, patching operating systems, antivirus software, ethics, and firewall technology will also be discussed.

For more information about the ITS Technology Seminar Series or to register for one or more of the sessions, contact the Office of the CIO at cioits@rit.edu. Look to ITS News for updated information about scheduled technology seminars.

ITS Technology Seminar Series - 2003

Instructional Technology in the Classroom and Online – More than Posting the Syllabus

Professor Larry Belle

October 29 11 am – 1 pm
76-1275 Carlson Learning Center

This program is a discussion of the ways faculty successfully employ technology for more than “classroom management and page turning tasks.” Topics will include: Updated information from a survey L. Belle conducted about how faculty are currently using online instructional technology and how they go about learning what to use and how to use it. Also, highlights from a recent University of Wisconsin study of how faculty use online instructional technology and what the motivation and barriers are to more creative and imaginative use of this medium will be discussed.

How Learning Development Center Staff Use Speech Recognition Software for Teaching and Learning

Kristy Mooney Graves, Academic Accommodations Coordinator, Learning Development Center

November 10 2 – 4 pm
76-1275 Carlson Learning Center

Demonstration and applications discussed by staff developer and students using the software.

Security Week

December - Week of 12/8 to 12/12
Main session is December 8, 2-4 pm
Xerox Auditorium

This will be a week long series opening with information from the recent security assessment conducted by J. Moore. Several additional topics include: Information about firewalls, Identity Theft; SPAM; Patching Operating Systems and Antivirus Software; physical Security; Ethics; Social Engineering and Competitive Intelligence; Hacking. Debate: RIAA/MPAA, faculty and students: regarding peer-to-peer file sharing issues.

A Can of Worms

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At RIT shutting down the entire network would mean no drop/add, no class schedule verification, no online learning classes, no email, or any other network-based services from the residence halls or apartments. This was something we all obviously wanted to avoid.

The strategy for managing these worms was three-fold:

1. Protect production servers (ITS and non-ITS) around campus from compromise
2. Clean and patch all vulnerable faculty and staff computers currently on campus
3. Prepare for the more than 6,500 new and returning resident students and their computers.

The server protection aspect of the strategy was relatively simple, as the server administrators whose job it is to care for those computers are generally conscientious of the need for patching. ITS and Risk Management merely reminded administrators to patch and reboot their servers.

The cleaning and patching of the on-campus vulnerable workstations proved a bit more challenging. First of all, many of the users of these workstations were not on campus. Secondly, there were so many of them. A decision was made to block network connectivity to all vulnerable hosts and notify the appropriate people for remediation. This at the bare minimum got people's full attention!

As a result of an amazing effort on the part of administrators and users all over campus, 653 of the initial 995 vulnerable computers were given a clean bill of health between August 12th and August 18th.

The next challenge was a much larger potential problem than the servers and faculty and staff workstations had been. Some 6,500+ students were arriving on campus in under a week

(I'm told close to 90% of the resident student population has computers.).

ITS started meeting twice a day to brainstorm, plan, and implement management of the Worm v Students' PCs problem; any infected computer on campus would infect any other vulnerable PC within seconds. The ramification of shutting down the entire residential network was briefly discussed. Wanting to avoid such measures, it was decided that a communication campaign and a mass produced CD-ROM distribution plan would be the best tact.

A compact disk image containing the appropriate windows patches and rudimentary programs to implement the patches was developed by ITS staff. The CDs were produced in a lab donated to the cause by the Information Technology Department of GCCIS.

The CDs were given to the Resident Advisors in each of the residence halls to distribute to student rooms on each floor. Posters were also placed over the network jacks warning new and returning students of the need to run the CDs before they would be able to connect to the network.

The net result of more than three weeks of furious (and seemingly endless) work is that **less than 10% of the computers connected to RIT's network today were vulnerable to infection**, and far fewer still actually became infected.

The entire RIT community has enjoyed consistent access to the Internet from the RIT network throughout the course of the crisis. A tremendous amount of hard work has cleared out the worms and kept traffic flowing smoothly on the "Information Super Highway" at RIT. Thanks to everyone involved.

As **ITS News** – October goes to press, we are in the midst of another virus related crisis. Several RITSTAFF and ALLSTAFF emails have been sent to the RIT community with news of system patches and virus protections to safeguard individual systems. For concerns, contact the ITS HelpDesk at 5-HELP. Staff are available to answer questions and help with installing patches.

ITS Update

New RIT Voice Mail Subscribers: Training sessions

Voice/TTY messaging training sessions continue this fall for all new on-campus users. The following is a list of October training sessions available for new faculty and staff.

Date	Voice Mailbox	Dual Language Mailbox*
Oct. 2	10 a.m.	11 a.m.
Oct. 7	2 p.m.	3 p.m.
Oct. 14	2 p.m.	11 a.m.
Oct. 22	10 a.m.	11 a.m.
Oct. 29	10 a.m.	11 a.m.

**Dual language mailboxes can accept voice and TTY messages*

Classes will be held in building 99, room 1285
Please call Char Ipacs at 5-5858 to register for training.

ITS Contact Information

DSS Computing Labs

Hours, locations, hardware, software, and reservations information available at:
http://www.rit.edu/its/services/computer_labs

Telecommunications Services

Located in the Facilities Mgmt. bldg. (99)
To contact the Telecommunications Services call 475-5800.

ITS HelpDesk

Located in the Gannett building, rm. 7B-1113

To contact the ITS HelpDesk

- Call 475-HELP or 475-2810 (TTY)
- Send e-mail to helpdesk@rit.edu

Regular hours

Sunday	12 p.m.–6 p.m.
Monday–Thursday	8 a.m.–8 p.m.
Friday	8 a.m.–5 p.m.

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Managing Editor: Dave Pecora, dlpits@rit.edu

Editor: Michelle Cometa, macits@rit.edu

Design/Layout: Omar Phillips, odphelp@rit.edu

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Rochester Institute of Technology

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135 Lomb Memorial Drive

Rochester, NY 14623-5608