Welcome from the CIO

Welcome back from what I hope was a pleasant and somewhat relaxing summer. We have many important projects and strategic initiatives to look forward to during the 2005/2006 academic year. Some of those projects and initiatives are discussed in this opening issue of ITS News.

- You will be hearing more this year about **SIRP (Student Identification Replacement Project)** as the campus-wide team that was formed last year completes its work to replace the social security number as the primary identifier on student records.
- A **Privacy Committee** , comprised of faculty, staff, and student representatives was formed over the summer. The initial task for this group is to create a new Privacy Policy for the Institute
- **Identity Theft** continues as a major problem across the U.S. In anticipation of new laws being passed in New York State requiring notification of potential misuse of information, ITS is focusing even more attention on protecting faculty, staff, and student personal information.
- A special welcome to **Gurcharan Khanna, the new Director of Academic Research Computing** . We look forward to working with him on academic research computing projects.
- Institutional Research will continue to work with Academic Affairs to evaluate the effectiveness of **Learning Communities** and other retention initiatives
- A new and improved version of the **RIT portal myRIT** will be unveiled during fall quarter. MyRIT continues to be a primary communication vehicle for faculty, staff and students
- ITS now has a **Communications/PR Manager** . Michelle Cometa, previously Administrative Assistant to the CIO, has taken on this role.

A special welcome to new students, faculty and staff.   Welcome to RIT and the services and support of Information & Technology Services.

Diane Barbour
Chief Information Officer
Information & Technology Services

RIT to Change University Identification Number

Social Security Numbers will no longer be used

Dave Pecora, Associate Director, ITS (Dave.Pecora@rit.edu)

Go to just about any administrative office on campus, and you'll probably need to provide some identification.   If you need to make an official transaction such as request a transcript or get your password reset, you certainly will.   In many cases, the only ID number you can provide is your Social Security Number.   Soon, this will no longer be the case - by May, 2006, Social Security Numbers will no longer be used on the RIT campus except where mandated by law.

A new number - University ID - will replace the Social Security Number as the most commonly used unique identifying number for transactions done on campus.   The project is massive - over 900 programs supported by ITS alone need to be modified - but very welcome.   "We are committed to doing what's necessary to protect the sensitive information we keep in the core systems of the university," said Dave Hostetter, Associate CIO of ITS and the project champion of the initiative.   "It's a matter of trust. Expectations are high, and we intend to live up to them."

Other offices are very supportive of the change, despite the fact that many of their processes and procedures will need to change.   One of the most affected departments is the Registrar's Office, who has responsibility for the maintenance of course schedules, grades, and ID card information.
    "This will require a great deal of effort and planning," says Joe Loffredo, Registrar.   "We will need to print a new ID card for every student, faculty, and staff at RIT.   But it absolutely needs to be done to protect people's personal information."

Legislation is also changing to reflect a growing concern over the protection of personal information.   A New York state law requiring institutions to notify people when certain personal information is compromised is set to go into effect on December 8 of this year.   "California passed the first such law a few years ago,' said Jim Moore, Information Security Officer for RIT, "and now almost 20 states have similar laws in place."

The project has been identified as "the top ITS initiative until it is completed", according to Diane Barbour, Chief Information Officer for RIT.   "While many of our projects are very important to the university," she stated "this is such a massive effort, and we felt the need to make it clear that this is our number one priority.   It is imperative that we dedicate our resources to this effort to make it successful."

Following is a brief Q&A about the project.   For more information, please visit www.rit.edu/its/initiatives/sirp.

Q: Why does the university need to do this project?

Identity theft has become a major issue in the United States and in many other countries.   Usage of Social Security numbers (SSN) in common transactions increases the chance that an SSN can be stolen, which could put a person's identity at risk.   A New York State law requiring institutions to inform people of potentially compromised SSN information will take effect on December 8, 2005, and a federal law is also under consideration.   RIT is taking this action to improve the security of the identities of all RIT students, faculty, and staff .

Q: What will replace the Social Security Number as identification?

Social Security Number has historically been used as a unique ID number for students, faculty, and staff.   To eliminate use of the SSN except where absolutely necessary, we will create a new unique identification number: the RIT University ID (UID) number.   The UID will replace the SSN for all (a) transactions involving student records or (b) transactions using the RIT ID card. SSNs will still be required information within university records, but the SSN will not be used at RIT to simply identify a person.

Q: What will be the format of this new number?

The RIT University ID will be a nine-digit number with the format nnnnn-nnnn.   The nine digit format was purposely selected to minimize the impact on university systems that use SSN as an identifier today.   The dash in the format nnnnn-nnnn will be used for display purposes only, and will not be stored with the number itself.   The purpose of the das h is to make the number easier to remember, similar to how phone numbers are formatted.

Q: If the new number is nine digits in length, might it be the same as someone's SSN?
No, steps are being taken to ensure that this does not occur.

Q: Will everyone get a University ID number?

Yes, all RIT students, faculty, and staff will receive a unique University ID number.   In addition, everyone with an RIT ID card will be assigned a University ID number.   This includes alumni, retirees, contract employees, and any other individuals that have an RIT ID card.

Q: I'm an employee.   Will my University ID number be different from my employee number?

Yes.

Q: When will I use my University ID and when will I use my employee number?

The RIT University ID will replace the SSN for all (a) transactions involving student records or (b) transactions using the RIT ID card.   Employee number will still be used for employment related transactions such as the I-9 and Employee Action Forms (EAF) used by Human Resources.

Q: What if my University ID number is compromised?   Can I get a new one?

Yes, if your number is compromised or stolen, it will be possible to request and receive a new University ID number.

Q: Will everyone in the university need to get a new ID card?

Yes, all RIT ID cards will need to be reissued.   This is because the current card contains your SSN on the barcode (front of the card) and on the magnetic stripe (back of the card).   The new card will contain the University ID number in the barcode and on the magnetic stripe, but will not contain your SSN.

Q: Will the new ID card be the same format as today?

Probably not.   The look and format of the RIT ID card is currently being reviewed by the Registrar, and may be changed.

Q: Will everyone need to get their picture retaken?

No.   Even if the format of the RIT ID card is changed, it will not be necessary to get a new picture taken.   The Registrar will be able to issue RIT ID cards using your existing photo on file.

Q: When will the conversion take place?

Implementation will take place from May 27 - June 4, 2006, which is immediately after the end of the Spring academic quarter. This was determined to be the best time to implement, as this is a break week, and the May 27-29 weekend is a long weekend due to the Memorial Day holiday.

Q: What systems will be down during the conversion, and how long will it take?

We expect that the major systems supported by ITS will take between 2-3 days to convert, and will be down during this conversion period.   This includes SIS, STARS, and Faculty Advising. Conversion time will also be needed for Financial Aid, Admissions, and the Oracle HR system.

Many other systems supported by other colleges and divisions will also need conversion time. Please check with the systems administrator or support team for these systems for more information on outage time.

Q: Will I ever be asked to supply my Social Security Number at RIT again?

Yes.   SSN will be kept on file as a part of official university records for each RIT student, faculty, and staff.   SSN will also be used where absolutely required, for example when applying for financial aid and for payroll processing.

Q: How is the project organized, and do I have a representative?

A task force was established in the fall of 2004 to guide the university through this project. Members of the task force are:

Name	Division
Chandra V McKenzie	Academic Affairs
Christopher Lerch	Academic Affairs

David M Cronister   Academic Affairs
Deborah Cooper   Academic Affairs
Joe Loffredo   Academic Affairs
Joeann Humbert   Academic Affairs
Jonathan Jiras   Academic Affairs
Joel Yates   CAST
Maria Aglietti   CAST
Bradley J Coudriet   CIAS
Linda Georgakis   CIAS
Michael Dear   CIAS

ITS News Changes: From Newsletter to News Magazine and Online Format

by Michelle Cometa, Michelle.Cometa@rit.edu

"Trying to be a first-rate reporter on the average American newspaper is like trying to play Bach's 'St. Matthew's Passion' on a ukulele."

-Ben Bagdikian, former dean of the University of California at Berkeley's School of Journalism

For the many years that *ITS News* has been in existence, the staff has tried to "play Bach" and make information technology news as interesting and rich as a symphony but without too many complicated rhythms. There have been successes and challenges as well as changes - this year will be no different. Starting this fall, *ITS News* will take on two new formats - a print magazine and online journal.

In recent ITS Customer Satisfaction Surveys (2004 and 2005), participants raised questions of why, as an IT organization, we did not have more of an online presence. It seemed a natural outgrowth of the IT business we are in to have this type of news channel and take advantage of its broad impact. In response to this, we've developed **ITS eNews Online.**

ITS eNews Online will be a monthly newsletter, similar to the former print publication. It will be emailed to readers via the *ritstaff* mail list. Information will be about current IT projects, how to use various products and services supported by ITS and include links to more campus IT resources. The editors of the online issue are Dave Bradstreet, Team Lead for the ITS HelpDesk and Omar Phillips, Sr. HelpDesk Analyst - Communications Specialist.

"We're looking forward to the new online format and the ability to send the most current, and up-to-date information about projects and our services to customers," Dave said. "We'll be joining several other divisions with an online presence and think the new format will be a welcome addition to campus news."

Look for the new design developed by Omar Phillips, articles and links to various informational sites in the first issue. "We'll offer people a full graphical look for the issue as well as text-only," he said. "Regardless of the look, the information will be the same."

ITS News in its print format has gone from a three-page, typed and stapled note in the early 1970s to its current form of 16-20 bound pages. In 30-years, the newsletter changed just as much as the technology it was focusing upon. It's next progression will be more a magazine-style, similar to RIT's University Magazine and Educause Review, and be a quarterly publication rather than a monthly publication.

ITS News Magazine offers us the opportunity to do more in-depth articles, still related to information technology.   The content will include the traditional information about IT projects and services, as well as interviews, editorials, customer participation and other features.

Both the online and new print format will be a means to continually provide information about IT products and services - this will not change regardless of format and we look forward to providing new avenues of information for our customers.

"It's amazing that the amount of news that happens in the world every day always just exactly fits the newspaper." Jerry Seinfeld

Navigating the ITS Website

by Michelle Cometa, Michelle.Cometa@rit.edu

From current news about network outages and virus protection resources to information about registering computers and getting desktop support, the ITS website is rich in information for customers. Divided into sections for students and faculty and staff, the site offers both self service options and online contacts.

Navigating the website is straightforward with most information available from links on the front page banner: **Getting Help, Services, Frequently Asked Questions, ITS News and About ITS** . All these general areas have drop down menus with specific product or service links.

Getting Help

This first area can give customers immediate links to HelpDesk contact information. The HelpDesk is located in the Gannett Building (7B) if you prefer to work with staff directly. They can also be contacted through telephone and email when there are computer problems or the need for desktop support. Additionally, this Getting Help site houses many of the HelpDesk's current online documentation about different products and services. Some titles include:

- About RIT Computer Accounts
- Setting Up E-mail Clients: Microsoft Exchange 2000, Microsoft Exchange 2000 using IMAP, and other Quick Reference Guides
- Accessing Your E-mail From a Web Browser
- Using RIT's Directory Service
- Connecting to the RIT Network using Dialup and Wireless Networking
- Anti-Virus Software such as McAfee Virus Scan for Windows and virus protection for Macintosh computers
- Telecommunications: RIT Messenger System User Manual (The RIT voice/TTY messaging system is called *RIT Messenger*)
- About Multi-User Computer Systems - General and Digital UNIX

Services

This multi-functional area is separated into information for students and for faculty and staff. It is probably the most information-rich area and has items unique to each audience. For students, the links to residential computing (Resnet), the *my* RIT portal and Cdigix, (the online music service) are three of the featured links.

For faculty and staff, items related to computer accounts, mobile computing, specifically wireless locations, as well as a listing of software licensing/volume purchasing information can be found. Many "how-to" questions can be answered by accessing this part of the website, especially if you are looking for quick tips on using Exchange, calendaring, and computer lab availability and resources. One featured area is the **Gartner Intra-Web Service,** a technology database. An RIT computer account is all that is needed for access to this service with the latest technology research from Gartner Inc.

FAQ's - Frequently Asked Questions

An extensive list of questions about email, computer accounts, and using various software and system applications can be found in this area of the website. The material is sectioned for an "easy find". Some sample questions:

Q: How do I schedule groups in Exchange (email)?
A: For individuals, the best method is to create local address groups by selecting people from the GAL. Once this list is created, one can then schedule meetings with the group. The real benefit is that the group will combine everyone's free busy information so that you don't need to check each individual's free/busy times.

For departments, the recommended solution is to call the ITS HelpDesk and ask to have a group added to the GAL. This way it is available to all users in the department.

Q: What is a delegate?
A: A delegate is a person that has heightened access to another users data. Normally, other RIT users will only see your free/busy information and can only request your attendance at a meeting. However, if you have the need to allow others to access your calendar as if they were you so that they can schedule and add other information on your behalf, you can set them up as a delegate. Delegate access can also get very granular, and can be applied to select folders, or your entire mailbox.

ITS News

This section lets users access the current and archived issues of ITS News, the Division newsletter and also provides access to system down times and general department information. (The system downtimes can also be found on the main ITS web page, so there are several means to find out about outages and downtimes that could affect computer use in your office area.)

About ITS is the area you can find our organizational chart, Division mission statement and current IT Strategic Plan. This latter document lists the Division's current projects and initiatives, many of which are joint projects with various campus partners.

But, beyond documents and web pages, our staff is readily available to answer any network or product questions you might have. Providing the choice to gather technology information independently or to have office or classroom support is one of ITS' priorities for customers. Is Your RIT Email Address the "pits"?

by Dave Pecora, ~~dlpits@rit.edu~~ Dave.Pecora@rit.edu

When I joined RIT in January of 2002, I gave my new email address (dlpits@rit.edu) to many of my colleagues so I could keep in touch with people I had met and worked with over the years. Inevitably someone would write back "So Dave, exactly why are the last four letters in your email address pits ?" Having nothing clever handy as a response, I would usually attempt to explain the 3-initial plus department account naming algorithm developed years ago at RIT. This tended to bore the very people I wanted to keep in touch with, but I had no better answer.

Name based email turned out to be the answer.

Email addresses: There are multiple email addresses per account

Every account has more than one email address.   All accounts have a basic account name email address.   All users can optionally set up a personalized email address.   And, as of about a year ago, accounts for all faculty and staff employed by RIT have a name based email address.

1) Account name email address

Every account has an email address based on its account name.   This is the email address still most commonly used at RIT.   Account name email addresses follow the format <account name>@rit.edu.   My account, for example, is "dlpits", which means I have an email address of dlpits@rit.edu .   This email address is automatically generated for each account and cannot be changed.   But that doesn't mean you're stuck with it - all accounts have alternative email addresses which can be used to send email to you and printed on business cards.

2) Personalized email address.

Each account can have a personalized email address, which follows the format <your choice>@mail.rit.edu.   You can choose what goes before the "@" sign.

Personalized email addresses are optional - you don't need to have one. If you chose to set up a personalized email address, go to http://start.rit.edu and click on "Manage your mail preferences".   (Be careful on this page as some of the options can change where your mail is delivered).   About midway down the page you see the option to set your personalized email address.   The only rules here are: 1) letters and numbers only - no special characters, and 2) what you enter cannot already be used by someone else.   Personalized email addresses have been available for years - mine is dpecora@mail.rit.edu.

3) Name based email address .

Personalized email addresses are great - but the fact that its format contains "@ mail .rit.edu" can make it more difficult to remember.   Most email addresses are not formatted with the word "mail" after the @ sign.   Also, because the format allows for personal choice, there are many different formats at RIT.   I chose dpecora@mail.rit.edu , but I could have just as easily chosen davepecora@mail.rit.edu or dlpecora@mail.rit.edu , or made up a name for myself.   Such flexibility is handy, but can make it difficult for someone to remember your email address.

Name based email addresses are, well, based on your name.   They follow the format "<first name>.<last name>@rit.edu".   They require no set-up - if you are a faculty or staff and have an RIT computer account, you have a name based email address. (Student accounts do not have name based email addresses - for privacy reasons).

The name used for your name based email address comes directly from the Oracle HR system. Your official name on file with the university is what is used.   Middle names or initials are not used by default.   If your nickname is not your official name on file with HR you can change your name entry in the directory to use a common nickname.

To change your name in the directory, go to http://start.rit.edu and choose "Manage your identity preferences".   Here you will be given a limited set of options for your name.   The only person to ever call me David was my mom so I changed my name from David to Dave.   This gave me an email address of Dave.Pecora@rit.edu , which I find much more professional and aesthetically pleasing than dlpits@rit.edu .

Common nicknames are available via the drop down choices on the page.   If you go by a name that is not available on the form, you can contact the ITS HelpDesk (by phone at 475-4357 or online at http://www.rit.edu/its/help) to request that your name be changed in the directory.

So go ahead - use the name your parents gave you.   Put it on your business cards and in your email signature.   And save time by not having to explain it to your friends.

RIT Joins Supercomputing World Community Grid

Millions of personal computers sit idly in businesses and homes worldwide. What if each of the world's estimated 650 million PCs could be linked to focus on the most complex biological, environmental and health-related issues?

RIT is a new partner of World Community Grid, joining the IBM Corp. and a group of other universities, foundations and companies. The World Community Grid establishes an infrastructure that provides researchers with an available pool of computational power that can be used to solve problems plaguing humanity.

RIT will initially launch the project with a controlled group of computers in an ITS-managed lab in Nathaniel Rochester Hall. After a pilot period, Information & Technology Services and the Information Security Office will evaluate next steps for further application on RIT-owned computers. For more details, visit http://security.rit.edu.

"World Community Grid provides RIT with an efficient and effective way to make a difference in solving complex problems around the globe," says RIT President Albert Simone.

Grid technology joins together many individual computers, creating a large system with massive computational power that exceeds the power of a few supercomputers. World Community Grid will address global humanitarian issues such as new and existing infectious disease research, genomic and disease research, and natural disasters and hunger.

The benefits are proven, says Susan Puglia, an IBM vice president and a member of RIT's Board of Trustees. In 2003, IBM was one of the sponsors of a smallpox study that took advantage of grid computing. The study, using today's largest super computers, would have taken years to complete. With grid computing, this study was completed in less than six months, explains Puglia.

"We are pleased to bring RIT on board," says Puglia. "World Community Grid will be the world's largest public computing grid benefiting humanity."

After only a few weeks, the NRH computer lab has produced an amazing amount of data. The lab is assigned points daily based on individual and overall run times and time calculated to perform a task. These points assist in calculating the contribution to the project. There are currently 71,134 participants offering 115,019 computers, located throughout the World. The date has resulted in a run time comparable to 12,273 years.

Stay tuned for further information on how the NRH computer lab on campus is contributing in the world effort to better our planet!

Portions of this article provided by University News Services

ITS is "Canning the Spam": Additional Filtering Solution Recommended for Campus Use

Tom Dixon, Resnet tom.dixon@rit.edu

ITS is working on a campus wide solution to provide better filtering options for junk email known as *Spam* . ITS continually watches current spam trends and manually enters filters to prevent spam from reaching your inbox. Manual filtering is not necessarily the most efficient way of providing spam filtering, nor does it catch everything that users would like it to catch.

Over the past several months an ITS team has been investigating several commercial solutions to this problem. The list has been narrowed, and the team has recommended a product created by Symantec, called **Brightmail** . Brightmail will soon be incorporated into our hardware array to automatically filter unwanted Spam messages from incoming email. This brings up the question, *"What does that mean for me?"*

Brightmail does two main things. First, the software scans incoming email for obvious Spam messages, many of which we currently block. Second, Brightmail will scan for "potential" spam. This scan quarantines certain email messages that the product believes may be spam.

The scans will create a quarantine list. Users will be able to enter the quarantine list and determine if the message is indeed spam or not. Users may leave messages in quarantine which will eventually be deleted, and mark any other similar messages as spam. Releasing a message from quarantine will allow for the message to return to your inbox, and thus all other messages similar to this will then be sent to your inbox in the future.

The Brightmail project is being developed to help RIT users get security back in their email. Using this solution will make your inbox virtually spam-free. This is a solution which many users have been asking for. In fact, it was the number one concern in the 2005 Spring ITS Customer Satisfaction Survey (distributed to students, faculty and staff this past year). ITS has heard your concerns and is actively working to make your online-life better.

Spam By The Numbers

Current industry estimates indicate that approximately 90% of all email received via the Internet is spam. As you can see in the table below, although ITS is getting much better at catching Spam at the gateway to RIT. We are, however, a long way from catching the 90% that the industry has estimated.

We are currently able to filter 59% of all possible Spam messages. We estimate being able to block more Spam with the added filtering capabilities of Brightmail.

Why are we being so aggressive?

The numbers speak for themselves. In four years RIT has seen an increase in total messages received by nearly 5 million messages per half-year period. However the number of legitimate email messages has remained constant at approximately 500,000 per half-year period.

While the legitimate mail messages are expected to remain relatively constant, projections show that spam messages will continue to rise almost exponentially. Our current system can not continue to hold back the flood water. It is now time to build a permanent dam to block these messages. As you can see in the table below, Brightmail will be the dam to aid in securing our network even further.

Year	Incoming Mail	Removed Spam	Total Delivered Email Messages	% of Messages as spam
2001 (1st half)	1,530,000	260,000	1,270,000	17%
2002 (1st half)	2,240,000	400,000	1,131,000	18%
2003 (1st half)	3,470,000	920,000	2,460,000	27%
2004 (1st half)	6,290,000	2,900,000	3,390,000	46%
2005 (1st half) prior to Brightmail	6,390,000	3,760,000	2,630,000	59%
2005 (2nd half) after Brightmail	Est. 6,390,000	Est. 5,900,000	Est. 500,000	Est. 99.9%

About Brightmail

Brightmail is a spam-filtering product being used in 20 countries with 300 million customers. It is integrated as part of the spam filters for nine of 12 major Internet Service Providers. This project is continuing in a test phase through Fall Quarter.