

Senate Computing Usage Committee – October 1, 2010 Meeting Minutes

Members in attendance: Vincent Arena, Frank Beatrous, Joe Costantino, PJ Dillon, Kenny Doty, Irene Frieze, Arif Jamal, Alex Labrinidis, John LaDue, Susan Sereika, Fran Yarger, Jinx Walton

TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION TO BE TAKEN
Call to order	Alex called the meeting to order at 10:05am.	
Chair/Co-Chair Election	Alex Labrinidis and Vincent Arena volunteered to serve as chair/co-chair of the committee, and were voted unanimously (with show of hands).	
CSSD's Report – Jinx Walton	<p><u>Announcements/new initiatives:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Pitt Portal has been updated. This was done using focus groups and the pages are customized per target group (student, faculty, staff, etc). One click access to email (minimizing number of clicks to get to a page was one of the optimization goals in the redesign). <p>Payroll statements can now be accessed online, through the My Pitt portal.</p> <p>Unfortunately, some pages were moved around which resulted in some departments' pages to now have broken links. This is being worked on.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PeopleSoft Upgrade to version 9 in July. Only incremental changes from this point on. <p>Suggestion to have a reminder mechanism for faculty (just before grades are due and/or whenever the grades have been successfully posted).</p>	

	<p>Upcoming feature: advisor product (scheduling appointments)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CourseWeb privacy question Are all clicks (by students registered to a course) monitored and made available to faculty (teaching the course)? If yes, then this probably needs to be made clear to students. • Mobile service upgrades -- routeShout (for shuttle schedules) • Student notification service – modified version of Emergency Notification Service, used by Student Affairs for student groups (3,000 students currently subscribed). Considering expanding to other groups, departments. • Added Live Chat service as another way to contact the CSSD Helpdesk. This should have good use by foreign students (instead of contacting over the phone). • October is Cyber-Security month. One recent issue is with a grade gambling web site where one bets on what grade they will get in a course. The site asks for students' Pitt username and password to verify the grade! 	
<p>Making a list of approved software available</p>	<p>Jinx Walton is following up issue with Purchasing and General Counsel. Such a list would definitely make life easier for many people who make software purchases outside the University, and would also reduce the workload at the Purchasing dept.</p>	
<p>Network/Computer service fee for staff taking classes</p>	<p>There is a question why staff members should pay the network/computer service fee when taking classes at the University, since they already have network/computer access.</p> <p>The reason is that staff members who take classes are considered students for software licensing purposes, both in terms of the software</p>	

	<p>to manage student information (e.g., peoplesoft) and also in terms of getting software for personal use (staff members who are also students are entitled to get all the free software that students get).</p> <p>Pitt pays \$2.5mi annually for software to students.</p>	
<p>Issues/possible updates to PeopleSoft/CourseWeb</p>	<p>There are some issues with transferring class rosters from PeopleSoft to CourseWeb, when dealing with multi-session courses. Unfortunately, given that not the same faculty member is teaching all sessions of a course, this process cannot be automated further.</p> <p>There was a question on whether it is possible to export easily the class rosters from PeopleSoft to Excel. Jinx pointed out that there is a download icon (in the shape of a small spreadsheet) on the header of every roster, which will download the roster in Excel. One suggestion is to specifically include the word download next to the icon, to make it easier to find.</p>	
<p>Issues/possible updates to firewall</p>	<p>Statistics for campus network:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently 99.6% of all units is behind the University firewall. • Buildings internally are wired for either 100Mbps or 1Gbps. • Many 100Mbps buildings are being upgraded in the near future • Firewall rule changes occur only three times every week (Tuesday/Thursday/Saturday) • Will take another look at rules when project is finished (=100%) <p>Question on why the default for network ports is set at 100Mbps and half-duplex (instead of full-duplex). Jinx answered that the ports fail otherwise (because some of the hardware cannot support full-duplex). These issues are to be solved when a building is upgraded.</p> <p>Question on why direct ssh access is not allowed directly on specific</p>	<p>[Jinx] present network upgrade schedule for buildings</p> <p>[Jinx] present plans for research firewall zone, after testing is completed</p>

	<p>campus machines from the outside (blocked from the firewall). SSH is a secure transport protocol where data is encrypted before transmission. Jinx answered that this is true, but the authentication part (i.e., verifying who is the user making the secure connection to the specific machine) is done locally at the destination machine and that is something that can create problems with security. This is an auditing requirement.</p> <p>Alex suggested that there are indeed two extremes (local authentication on every machine versus campus-wide authentication with a single sign-on), but there is a hybrid in between, where authentication is handled by a trusted server (e.g., Kerberos, running at the department level).</p> <p>Jinx said that CSSD is looking into creating different firewall zones, one of them for research, that will have different rules, and that should address these issues. This is currently in testing phase and is expected to be released this term.</p>	
<p>Electronic delivery of mass campus mailings</p>	<p>Jinx is working with involved parties to see this through.</p>	
<p>Other business</p>	<p>USENET</p> <p>Currently the University is paying \$30,000 per year to continue receiving the Usenet feeds (internet newsgroups). There are alternate ways to receive these feeds nowadays and there are fewer than 50 users on campus.</p> <p>Motion to not renew subscription (expiring in December 2010) was put forward. Motion was approved unanimously by the committee.</p>	
	<p>Meeting was adjourned at 11:10am</p>	