

Senate Computing and information Technology Committee
Meeting Minutes – October 27, 2023

Present: A. Zack, M. Fullem, K. Doty, A. Hobaugh, J. Duska, I. Frieze, H. Fischer, K. Libertus, M. Henderson, A. Hobaugh, S. Quigley, M. Tang, B. Hart, S. Sereika, S. Wells, V. Arena, S. LeMieux

Absent: R. Kear, J. Costantino, A. Jones, D Kielur, J. Shaibani, H. Venkatesh, S. Wisniewski, A. Jamal, S. Belle, K. Fish

Call to Order: 1:00 p.m. Minutes of the September meeting approved unanimously (motion by Libertus, seconded by Quigley)

- Software Acceptable Use Fact Sheet (distributed in advance). Zack reported that this document was first presented in April 2023 by Mike Pierce of the Office of University Counsel and Carl DePasquale of Pitt IT Vendor Relations. Hart summarized the areas where changes were made in response to questions raised about the original at the April 2023 meeting. If members have questions, Pierce and DePasquale can be invited to a future meeting. Otherwise, Pitt IT will publish the document in its current form.
- CIO Report – Henderson and members of his staff reported on the following:
 - **IT Security Proposals.** Henderson reported that Pitt recently experienced a large-scale email phishing attack. More than 100 members of University community clicked on links in these messages. The issue caused Allegheny Health Network and Highmark to temporarily block University email. John Duska, Interim Chief Information Security Officer, has made a number of recommendations on how to resolve this kind of problem. Henderson has met with various stakeholder representatives about this. Idea here is to share Pitt IT thinking and potential challenges that may need to be overcome. Duska updated the Committee as follows:
 - The initial attack occurred on October 6. A total of 21 Pitt accounts were compromised, then used to distribute more phishing messages and compromise even more accounts. The payload of this message was intended to gather information, but was not destructive. Pitt IT already takes the following actions:
 - Pitt IT enrolls users who fall prey to phishing messages in security training.
 - Multifactor authentication will be required for anyone setting up or changing email on a Pitt account.
 - Anti-phishing email filtering been applied for internal email messages in addition to external messages. In the past, emails from with the University were given a higher confidence level, but the policy has been modified to consider both internal and external email as potentially risky.
 - Proposed New Actions:
 - Set realistic limits on the number of emails that can be sent from any account on a given day. Most people do not need to send 10,000 emails per day and those who need to should use a mailing campaign program.
 - Restrict automatic email forwarding on University accounts. Pitt users can currently automatically forward email to any external account. Pitt

IT Security cannot take action in connection with any non-University account. Automatic forwarding restrictions will greatly enhance email security.

- Reduce the number of active alumni accounts. These accounts have higher risk of being involved in phishing scams because alumni are more likely to forward email to external accounts, and alumni do not use multifactor authentication.

Member Questions:

- Quigley asked about the cost for multifactor authentication. Duska estimated cost is \$6.00 per account.
- Morel asked number of alumni accounts: 83,000 with 20,000 forwarding email externally.
- Frieze – asked about automatic forwarding from one Pitt account to another. Duska indicated this would still be permitted.
- Libertus – asked if we could use Microsoft Authenticator instead of Duo for alumni accounts to control costs? Duska indicated that this option will be considered. Libertus also noted that Pitt IT periodically sends simulated phishing messages to test user response and asked if these could be presented as games to better engage people. Duska indicated that Pitt IT is considering several ideas and noted that our training tool provider has just added badges. He also noted that publishing statistics by department is being considered to encourage departmental competition to increase phishing awareness.
- Fischer asked if we track users who click on messages. Duska noted that we do in order to enroll these users in further training.

Henderson noted that the additional measures are still being socialized within the University community for feedback and noted that as these kinds of problems evolve, our security requirements may need to become more stringent.

- **Cybersecurity Awareness Month:** on Halloween, Pitt IT and our Tech Ambassadors (students hired and train to promote technology to students) are focusing on student security awareness with games, giveaways, and raffle prizes to learn about Cybersecurity tips and services. This program has been very well-received by students in past years. (Libertus asked in chat if these types of things might be offered to faculty and staff also).
- **Faculty Information System Replacement.** Michelle Fullem announced that a Request for Proposals (RFP) has been issued to replace the current system, Elements, which is coming to end-of-life. The RFP will consider cloud-based faculty research information management systems. Stakeholders who use the present system are involved in looking at improvements to processes, functionality and reporting from the new system. The RFP issued to five vendors. Goal is to select a product by the end of November and start implementation in early 2024.
 - Morel – noted that the present system does not seem to be widely utilized by faculty. Fullem acknowledged that the current system has not been widely adopted across the University, but areas such as the Swanson School of Engineering use it extensively. Stakeholder groups (Health Sciences, Swanson

School of Engineering, and others are helping to identify a system that will be more widely adopted throughout Pitt.

- Sereika – asked if the current system is being improved while a new system is being selected. Fullem acknowledged that an upgraded version of the present system is being planned in the interim while a replacement system is being selected.
- **Institutional Data Review Committee.** This is a new committee to be chaired by Alex Labrinidis of the School of Computing and Information. It is the result for a recommendation of the Data Governance Committee of the Information Technology Advisory Committee. Its purpose is to review requests from the University community for access to data for research and other purposes with an eye to streamlining processes to approve access. The committee will begin meeting soon.
 - Morel asked about who might be submitting these kinds of requests, whether members of the University community or outside it. Henderson indicated that it would often involve reviewing requests from faculty who are looking to use information for research. He noted that one area the committee might consider is role-based requests and setting up automated processes for access to data. Morel indicated that the Research Committee has discussed and there are challenges with regulations in terms of openness versus the need to secure.

➤ Member Topics:

- Libertus – concern about the requirement to use GlobalProtect software on computers connecting to the University network. He noted that a faculty colleague runs a lab that uses older computers to run old software. Upgrading to computers that can run GlobalProtect will involve significant cost, but the current system is working and sufficient. Asked if something can be done to mitigate. Duska indicated that it might not be an issue if the computers are not connecting to the Internet. Hobaugh indicated that Pitt IT Network Engineering might be able to work with Security and the user to find a solution.
- Frieze asked if there is an update on Chat GPT or other AI software programs? Henderson indicated that Pitt IT Vendor Relations is continuing to work on licensing issues.
- Quigley asked if Pitt has a Google license and wondered about their integration of AI with word processing. Henderson offered to have Joe Yun with Pitt IT who serves on Provost and SVC Committees who are looking at AI to come to a future SCITC meeting. Zack agreed that this would be a good idea.

Meeting Adjourned 1:45 p.m. Date and time of November meeting to be arranged by member poll.