

CaTT Tales

A District Information Services Computer and Telecommunication Technology Initiatives Newsletter

July 2008

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Summer is Here!

By Deborah Ludford

Happy summer to all of you! I really enjoy the slower pace and time to reflect during these three months and spend my energy looking at planning and strategic functions. One event we have had is a retreat with District Information Service managers and the Academic Computing directors from the campuses in which we examined ways we can work better together to support technology district-wide. I feel our time together was productive and will result in better support for our constituents. Much has been accomplished this academic year, both in the classroom and in the support areas of the District. Thanks to all who make NOCCCD a very special place for our students and our employees. Hopefully this issue of CaTT Tales will find you all doing the same resting and reflecting.

This edition of CaTT Tales will focus on security issues. This last year we had a security audit performed on the entire NOCCCD network and servers. Our overall rating was a "B" with some areas of real strength and needed improvement identified. One of the most important findings is the need for a Security Analyst in the district. This position will serve to work with the campuses to follow-up on the audit findings and act as backup to the Systems Analysts in the Information Services department.

One issue that is of most concern to the District is the use and sharing of Social Security Numbers. In the next major version of Banner, Social Security Numbers will be more tightly secured. Currently, in myGateway there is a very high level of security for SSN's. One system we all use which is not secure is e-mail. It is a very bad idea to share SSN's via e-mail. Chances of compromise are much higher in this system than many others we use such as Banner and myGateway. I want to encourage all of you to think twice before using this means of sharing personal information either about yourself or someone else. A simple phone call might be much safer.

Enjoy this issue of CaTT Tales!



Server Upgrade

By Tom Wallace

*"No matter how many resources you have, it is never enough"
- a computer corollary to Murphy's Law*

In March of 2005, a new Banner production server was implemented. When the system was brought up "live," Information Services watched the performance of the new server closely. Observing a system that was utilizing only a small fraction of its processors and memory, those of us who consider ourselves to be somewhat optimistic and forward-looking said something like, "it should take *years* to fill up this server!" (Note two things: 1) the confidence with which we spoke and 2) by "years" we meant *at least* 5+ years).

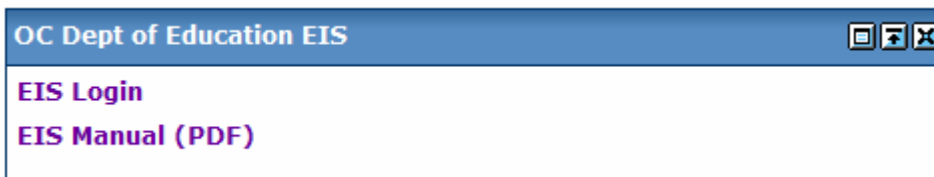
So turn the clock forward *three* years to January 2008 and we now observe that due to a general increase in the use of Banner, additional applications and tools within Banner, and the implementation of other application systems that interface with Banner, the server is now operating near capacity! Not only have new systems been added to Banner, but processes have been improved. For example, the Student Registration appointment process has been modified to allow more students to register in shorter time periods. Expanding use of Banner has created the need to upgrade the Banner server.

In March 2008, the Banner server was upgraded significantly by adding two new central processing units (CPUs) and 8 gigabytes of memory. With expectations of increasing usage and further server expansions in mind, Information Services has also worked with our vendors to update software licenses to be ready for future hardware upgrades. We expect that Banner use will continue to grow and more hardware resources will be needed. Our plan is to be ready.

View your Paycheck Stub in MyGateway

By Bob Hughes

Employees will see a new channel on the Employee tab of MyGateway entitled 'OC Dept of Education EIS'.



EIS stands for 'Employee Information System'. For employees who have net check with the OCTFCU/School's First and direct deposit with other financial institutions, this web site will provide access to view your paycheck stub on-line the day before each pay day. This does not change the official pay date; it is just allowing you to view the information that will be reflected on your regular pay day.

The EIS Manual will provide information on how to log in, and instructions on how to use the EIS system. The first time you log in you will need to update your password. This is a secure website that is accessible from any computer.

The payroll department is pleased to provide this service to employees, thanks to the direction of Pat Lee, Payroll Manager. The goal is to stop printing direct deposit/net check stubs by December 31, 2008. Paycheck stubs and W-2s will be available on-line for 3 years. If you have any questions, please contact the payroll department at (714) 808-4754.

Oracle 10g and Intelligent Systems

By Bob Hughes

I remember being amazed the first time I returned to www.amazon.com after making my first purchase there. They recommended several books and CD's that immediately appealed to me. How did the computer know so much about me? Today we interact so frequently with intelligent systems that we take them for granted. It still amazes me that you can go to a site like www.mapquest.com or maps.google.com and not only get turn-by-turn driving directions, but recalculate the best route to take for the shortest time or distance with a single click of the mouse. GPS navigation systems take directions to a whole new level as 'Gabby Garmin' anticipates your travel and reminds you to merge to the right in plenty of time before you reach your exit.

Banner now has the ability to leverage some new "artificial intelligence" in the Oracle 10g database (Oracle is the database that Banner uses to maintain student, faculty and staff records). You are probably aware that Banner and myGateway was down on Sunday, June 8 so Mike Kessler and Carl Schoner could upgrade our Oracle database from version 9i to 10g. While the upgrade was required in order for us to continue to receive Banner software updates, we now get to take advantage of new technologies built into Oracle. One of these new features is the Automated Database Diagnostic Monitor (ADDM). ADDM automatically monitors the state of the database at short, regular intervals and provides on-going database performance diagnostics in graphical form to the database administrators. It can learn of database bottlenecks, frequently-accessed tables and indexes, and not only identify poorly written computer code, but provide solution recommendations.

There are several other new features with this version of the database which will make the jobs of our database administrators easier, and allow us to more quickly and accurately correct performance issues with the database. While this all sounds pretty remarkable, I see that Oracle 11g was released last year. Soon, just like with Mapquest and Amazon.com, what we once considered to be cutting edge will be regarded as routine.

Telecommunication Infrastructure

By Tom Wallace

In January 1998, a Telecommunication Infrastructure Master Plan was created with the primary goal to allow students, faculty, and staff access to timely and accurate information using state-of-the-art information systems. The Telecommunication Infrastructure was the framework for a network that would meet the current and future access needs for basic services such as telephone, internet, electronic mail, voice mail and campus databases. Then from that master plan, standards for construction of our telecommunication infrastructure were developed.

Since that time we have seen significant changes in *how* the network is used, in *how much* it is used, and in the network components themselves. Many technologies that use the network, such as e-mail, internet and Banner, have become routine functions of how we do business. Many new applications have been added and, using the network, information is shared between them. Behind the scenes, auxiliary functions such as energy management, video surveillance, security, and alarm systems are now running on the infrastructure. If we could hear our telecommunication system speak it would be saying, "more, more" and "faster, faster." Life on the network is truly life in the fast lane.

This constantly changing environment requires that these standards be updated. Working together, the campus Academic Computing areas and Information Services periodically review and revise the Telecommunication Infrastructure Standards document. This publication is used by architects, engineers, consultants and contractors to construct and renovate campus buildings. It is because of these standards that students, faculty and staff can be assured of a network that will meet today's access needs as well as be prepared to function effectively for future applications.



Too Much SPAM?

By Erin Ridley



Does it seem to you that we have been receiving a lot more SPAM e-mail lately? These spammers get trickier all the time! Here at the District offices we have a spam filter that can "learn". This means, if I send spam e-mail to this spam filter, it will learn what email are spam and block them. However, in order to learn, we have to "teach" it! Trying to make this as easy as possible, we can create a folder in Groupwise and a rule that will email the spam for us. Just follow the simple steps below:

The first thing you need to do is to create a folder in your cabinet where you can put all of the spam e-mail. I called my folder "reportspam".

- Click on CABINET so it is highlighted. Right click on Cabinet to see options.
- Select (left click) the option "NEW FOLDER".
- Follow the prompts to add a personal folder.
- You can name the folder whatever you want - I'd suggest something like "spam" or "reportspam"

Once the folder has been created, you need to create the rule to forward the spam e-mail. Click on TOOLS, RULES. I have attached the actual rule. Create the rule using the same parameters.

- Change event new item to OPEN FOLDER
- You will need to select your newly created spam folder. Click on the little folder icon. Open the cabinet and select your new folder. OK.
- You don't have to do anything to define conditions other than check mark MAIL.
- ADD ACTION to FORWARD
- put in the TO field: report-spam@nocccd.edu
- ADD ACTION to EMPTY ITEM
- SAVE

When you get spam, don't open it... just drag the e-mail to your spam folder. When you click on the folder (which opens the folder) the rule runs, forwards the spam to [report-spam@nocccd](mailto:report-spam@nocccd.edu) and then deletes it!

So, nice and easy! Drag spam email to the folder... and every once in a while click on the folder to run the rule.

E-Mail and Confidential Information

By Erin Ridley

E-MAIL and CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Confidential information... How do we *keep* it confidential? It doesn't seem like it should be so hard to do, yet we have all seen various news reports alerting the public that something happened and now confidential information has been compromised. It has not happened to us at the district... but it could!

WHAT IS CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION?

Much of the information we see regularly in banner is considered confidential. This includes, but is not limited to, social security numbers, credit card information, banking information, medical information, grades, personal information, etc.

E-MAIL IS NOT SECURE!

You need to know that the District and campus e-mail systems are absolutely ***not*** a secure environment. It is very important to remember this. Do not send anyone confidential information in an email. For example, do not send SSNs, or reports that contain SSNs via email.

Before you e-mail something, you need to ask yourself:

- 1 - Does the e-mail or report contain confidential information?**
- 2 - Does the e-mail or report *NEED* to have this information in it?**
 - if no, remove the confidential information before sending it.
 - if yes, you should not send it in an email!

The best advice we have is similar to the old adage about the written word: Don't put anything in writing that you wouldn't want to see tomorrow on the front page of the newspaper! An easy way to think of this.- If the information you are sending via an (unsecure) e-mail was *your* information, would you care if it was splashed on the front page news? If there is ever the question... the best answer is don't!

For more information:

District Procedure AP3720 Computer and Electronic Communication Systems

<http://www.nocccd.edu/Policies/documents/AP3720.revised.C-Cabinet4-28-08.pdf>

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA):

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpc/ferpa/index.html>

Tips 'N' Tricks

By Erin Ridley



IS Training Handouts

You took the class... you saved the handout... and now you can't find it! Never fear! You can easily get copies of all of our training material. If you are in banner, click on the "Training Handouts" link located under the blue "My Links" panel. If you are in Internet Explorer, you can always click on the link:

<http://www.nocccd.edu/Departments/IS/InfoServicesTraining.htm#BannerTrainingManuals> to be taken to our web page. Be sure to save it as a Favorite! Any time we have new documentation, we will place a link here.

Rejection Messages in Banner

In banner, when an RQ is rejected for whatever reason, you are notified with a rejection message that shows up in GUAMESG. Once you "complete" the message, it goes away. Have you ever wondered how you can see old messages? It is not a hard thing to do at all - but is a little complicated to write down. So, let me *show* you! Yes... I said SHOW! With a nifty little tool called Camtasia we can record audio and capture our actions on a computer screen! Just click on the link below to be taken to our training web page.

<http://www.nocccd.edu/Departments/IS/InfoServicesTraining.htm#BannerTrainingManuals>

Then click on the "Show Me!" link for Rejection Messages in Banner (GUAMESG).

Searching for a Requisition

At some point, anyone that does requisitions will find themselves needing to find a requisition. It is really not a hard thing to do. You just need to know how to ask for it when searching. There are many things that you might need to search by: was it completed? Did a certain person enter in the RQ? Is it for a specific vendor? Was it done this month? This year? As you can see there are many variables, so writing directions can be a little tricky. We have created a "Q-card" with all the instructions on it. You can find it here:

<http://www.nocccd.edu/Departments/IS/InfoServicesTraining.htm#BannerTrainingManuals> But a picture is worth a thousand words, right? Just click on the "Show Me!" link and I will *show* you how to search for an RQ.

What Do You Think?

We hope to create more "Show Me!" video clips to help you with various tasks. Is there something that you would like to see? Let us know!

Training Schedule 2008

By Erin Ridley

Navigation Training

| | |
|--------------|------------------------|
| July 15 | 2:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. |
| July 24 | 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. |
| August 13 | 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. |
| August 22 | 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. |
| September 10 | 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. |
| September 18 | 2:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. |
| September 26 | 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. |
| October 17 | 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. |
| October 23 | 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. |
| October 29 | 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. |

RQ Training

| | |
|------------|------------------------|
| July 31 | 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. |
| October 10 | 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. |

****To sign up for either the Navigation or RQ training classes, please contact your campus training coordinator:**

**AC: Sandy Palmer, CC: Vicki Sykes
FC: Wendy Bailey, SCE: Irene Beck**

MyGateway Finance Channels

| | |
|-------------|------------------------|
| July 22 | 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. |
| August 28 | 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. |
| October 14 | 2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. |
| December 12 | 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. |

Argos Training

| | |
|---------|------------------------|
| July 17 | 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. |
|---------|------------------------|

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CaTT Toon

By Carl Schoner



If you wouldn't be pleased to see it on the front page of tomorrow's paper, don't do it!