

Information Technology in the News

SECURITY LAB AT IOWA STATE

■ Iowa State University will begin work on an Internet-security lab with a \$500,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, though further funding will be required to complete and sustain the lab. Researchers developing the lab, called the Internet-Scale Event and Attack Generation Environment (ISEAGE), plan to build a replica of the Internet, including simulated Internet traffic. Researchers can then launch large-scale attacks against the Internet replica to test various security technologies. Doug Jacobson, director of the ISEAGE (pronounced "Ice Age") laboratory, said other labs are able to conduct similar tests but not of the size that the ISEAGE will allow. Jacobson said graduate and undergraduate students will be involved in the operations of the lab. The initial grant will allow early development, and officials are already seeking further funding to complete the lab, according to Jacobson. (*Des Moines Register*, <<http://www.dmregister.com/news/stories/c4780927/22591497.html>>)

INTERNET SITE TARGETS SUICIDE RISK

■ The Web site Ulifeline offers mental health services targeted at college students at risk of suicide. The site was started by Donna and Phil Satow after their son, Jed, killed himself while a student at the University of Arizona. Tools on the site assess a user's risk of suicide, as well as evaluating several other disorders, and provide advice about what steps the user should take based on the diagnosis. Seventy-two colleges and universities have signed up for the free service, which is customized for each institution and locale. Health services officials at several institutions noted that presenting useful resources for depressed students in an online medium is often the combination that college students need. Some students echoed this idea, saying the anonymity of

net news

PENN STATE TO OFFER FREE MUSIC TO STUDENTS FROM NEW NAPSTER

Pennsylvania State University has struck a deal with the recently launched second-generation Napster to provide online music to all of the university's students, faculty, and staff. The university negotiated a discounted fee from Napster—which otherwise charges \$9.95 per month—and will pay the cost of the service out of a mandatory \$160 information technology fee that students pay each year. Penn State users will be allowed to download unlimited numbers of songs on up to three computers. Students who want to keep songs after they have left Penn State or users who want to save songs to CDs will have to pay 99 cents per song. Officials and student leaders from Penn State hope that this approach will appease student demand for online music while satisfying record companies by using the now-legal Napster service. Some students, however, expressed reservations that a portion of student technology fees is being used for online music and noted that the restrictions of the new deal between Napster and Penn State may also encourage students to continue using peer-to-peer networks that have no restrictions. (*New York Times*, <<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/11/07/national/07STAT.html>> [registration required])

AUTOMATED TOOL ENFORCES STUDENT P2P RESTRICTIONS

A program at the University of Florida (UF) aims to enforce P2P restrictions on the school's network while educating students about copyright law. UF developed an open-source tool, called Icarus (Integrated Computer Application for Recognizing User Services), that monitors network traffic. Students are required to read about P2P technology when they initially register to use the network. At that time, Icarus scans the student's computer for applications that would allow the machine to be used for sharing files or acting as a server, which is prohibited by university policy. After that, if Icarus detects that a computer is sharing files, network access is cut off for thirty minutes, an e-mail is sent, and a pop-up warning is issued to the computer. On second offense, network access is disabled for five days; a third offense cuts off access indefinitely and sends the case to the university's judicial process. According to university officials, the program has led to a steep decline in the amount of P2P traffic on the network. Despite some frustration, students seem generally to understand the rationale for the program and the risks of violating copyright law, officials said. Critics note that such an application will restrict legitimate uses of P2P technology in addition to copyright violation, and some students claim to have found loopholes in the system. (*Wired News*, <<http://www.wired.com/news/digiwood/0,1412,60613,00.html>>)

using online tools allowed them to open up in ways they would have resisted in person. Some involved in the project want to learn how well the Web site's di-

agnoses correspond with those that human therapists would reach. (*Wired News*, <<http://www.wired.com/news/culture/0,1284,60418,00.html>>)

tech watch

USC OFFERS VIDEOCONFERENCING

■ The University of Southern California (USC) has begun offering free videoconferencing services to students as part of a communications package that also includes local and long-distance calls and collaboration tools. The university has discontinued long-distance phone service, citing the prevalence of cell phones on campus, and the three applications in the communications package use Internet technology rather than phone lines. Officials from USC said the software they chose to implement the videoconferencing is less expensive and simpler to install and use than other desktop videoconferencing products. USC's system works with both Windows-based and Macintosh computers, and students and researchers expect the system to become an important educational tool. (*Chronicle of Higher Education*, <<http://chronicle.com/prm/weekly/v50/i13/13a02902.htm>> [subscription required])

COLLEGES ADAPT TO STUDENTS' POWER CONSUMPTION

■ As students show up at colleges and universities with larger and larger numbers of electrical appliances, many institutions are having to make substantial and sometimes expensive changes to accommodate the growing demand for power. Penn State University, for example, has seen its electricity usage rise from 27 million kilowatt hours in October 1996 to 33 million in October 2003; the university spends about \$1 million a month on electricity. Many institutions are upgrading dormitories with more outlets, new electrical panels, and rewired fuse boxes. Wright State University spent \$500,000 to upgrade electrical services at one of its dorms to cope with students bringing computers, printers, scanners, stereos, TVs, and other appliances to campus. Andrew Matthews, of the Association of College and University Housing Officers—

FOUR NEW DMCA EXCEPTIONS

Officials at the Library of Congress are required to periodically review the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA). The latest review led to four new exceptions to the DMCA's prohibition against circumventing electronic copyright protections. Under the new exceptions, copyright protections can legally be broken to access the following: lists of Web sites blocked by Internet filters; computer applications protected by broken or obsolete copy protections; applications that use obsolete hardware or formats; and e-books that do not allow disabled-access tools, such as screen readers, to function. Many DMCA critics complained that the new exceptions are fairly narrow and called again for exceptions that would allow users to break copyright protections in order to play files on various devices and in other formats. James Billington, the Librarian of Congress, said that his office does not have the authority to grant those kinds of exceptions and that such requests are typically made by individuals who do not understand copyright law. (*CNET News.com*, <http://news.com.com/2100-1028_3-5098639.html>)

Legal Issues

International, noted that many existing dorms were built in the 1950s and 1960s and were not constructed to meet current electrical demands. But some school officials argue that rising demand for electricity results more from campus facilities, such as larger and more numerous computer labs, than from student usage. (*MSNBC News*, <<http://www.msnbc.com/news/995816.asp>>)

WEB SITE ADDRESSES STUDENTS AND IDENTITY THEFT

■ Citing what it said is a greater vulnerability among college students, the U.S. Department of Education has launched a Web site (<http://www.ed.gov/misused/>) designed to educate students about the dangers of identity theft. Roderick R. Paige, the secretary of education, noted that most college students receive many credit card applications, which are often not disposed of properly to prevent identity theft. Paige also commented that many students do not carefully check credit card statements for fraudulent charges, allowing identity theft to continue for months before it is even noticed. The new Web site offers tips on how to

prevent having personal information compromised and provides information on contacting various agencies to report identity theft. (*Chronicle of Higher Education*, <<http://chronicle.com/prm/daily/2003/12/2003121202n.htm>> [subscription required])

SUNGARD TO ACQUIRE SCT

■ SunGard Data Systems Inc. of Wayne, Pennsylvania, has announced it will acquire Systems & Computer Technology Corp. (SCT), a leading supplier of technology products and services to higher education. The purchase amount, about \$584 million, reflects a price of \$16.50 per share of SCT stock. SCT CEO Mike Chamberlain said that the company began investigating several options, including a takeover, last April and that selling to SunGard was in SCT's best interest. In the event that SCT pulls out of the deal, it will pay SunGard \$22.5 million. SCT will become an operating unit in SunGard's public sector and nonprofit systems division, according to Chamberlain. There are no plans to lay off any of SCT's 1,600 employees. (*Reuters*, <<http://www.reuters.com/newsArticle.jhtml?storyID=3971778>>)

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