

## Wireless: The Next Big Tech Thing on Campus

The *Chronicle of Higher Education* reported last fall that a national survey conducted in summer 2003 found that wireless networking is one of the top five information technology concerns in higher education today. More than three-quarters of the surveyed institutions reported having their own wireless networks, with almost 14 percent having complete wireless coverage on their campuses.



Poindexter Barnes goes wireless in the Law School.

According to Mike Myrick, Manager of Network Development in the Office of Information Technology, the use of wireless networks is growing on the University of Mississippi campus, too.

“Wireless networks should not be considered a replacement for ‘hard-wired’ computer networks,” he states, “but they can enhance a traditional system by providing alternative access to the network and a greater degree of mobility for laptops, PDAs, and other mobile computing devices.”

The Lamar Law Center was the first official wireless deployment on campus, and Poindexter Barnes, the Network

Administrator there, has been thrilled with the results.

“We went wireless in 2002,” he says, “and it has been really great. Our wireless signal covers the entire building and even goes a little outside it. The students love it, and we have a lot of new faculty who welcome this kind of technology.”

Michael Waterstone, Assistant Professor of Law, finds the wireless network useful in several ways.

“In the classroom I can refer to an article or case online, and my students with laptops can simultaneously access it,” he explains. “And a student who might be hesitant to ask a question in class can e-mail it to me in real time. I’ve noticed, too, that having wireless available cuts down considerably on congestion at our public computers.”

“I’m an avid user of the wireless network,” says Mary-Carole Young, a second year law student. “I can look up cases in the hallways between classes, and I’ve even been seen checking e-mail while hiking upstairs. It’s definitely addictive.”

The survey cited by the *Chronicle of Higher Education* did report faculty concerns with wireless access on some campuses, since students with laptops can surreptitiously check e-mail or surf the web while in class.

According to Barnes, there are technical caveats as well.

“You have to have new equipment, new switches and access points,” he notes. “You can’t just have your old system and add this onto it. It’s an investment, but it’s well worth it, because otherwise you are going to get a lot of complaints if your system doesn’t work well.”

Holman Hall, Connor Hall, and the Galtney Center also have wireless capabilities. With more entities on campus interested in using wireless, the University has established an official wireless network approval process. For more information on its purpose and the process of applying, visit [www.olemiss.edu/depts/it/wireless.pdf](http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/it/wireless.pdf).

## Mark April 15 on Your Calendar!

It’s not just tax deadline day. It’s also when the **SAP R/3 Enterprise Upgrade** begins!

From 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 15, to 5:00 p.m. on Monday, April 19, the SAP PRD and all dependent applications will be unavailable for use. During this time, users will not be able to perform any task which requires access to the system, such as creating purchase orders or registering students.

“We really appreciate everyone’s patience and cooperation as this upgrade takes place,” comments Dr. Kathy Gates, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Information Technology. “By doing this, we will be able to make substantial technical improvements in the current system and also take advantage of important new functionality with future releases of Campus Management.”

# Graphics Lab Gets a Major Makeover

When Virginia Rougon Chavis graduated with a bachelor's degree in art from The University of Mississippi, she had no idea she would be teaching here one day.

"It's really interesting to be teaching in the same department where I studied," she says, "because I know what I lacked when I left, and now I want to make sure I give students those missing pieces."



Luke Walker, Virginia Chavis, and Lance Herrington with new equipment for the computer graphics lab. Walker is an art major emphasizing in graphic design and Herrington is Curator of Visual Resources for the Art Department.

One of those "pieces" is a comfortable, up-to-date computer graphics lab. Chavis got her Master of Fine Arts degree from the Savannah College of Art and Design where, she says, they had multiple computer labs with "the latest and greatest in everything." Teaching computer graphics and graphic design here, she realized the one and only lab needed some serious improvement.

"When I arrived in January 2002, the lab wasn't even functional due to outdated equipment and the room was really drab with peeling paint," she explains. "The first thing I did was get some students to help me paint it over spring break. I hung some posters, just to make it look more inviting, and the students loved it. The morale went up just with changing the color of the room!"

New equipment and software soon followed when Chavis got an Associates Grant for \$25,000 later that year. She received a second grant for \$20,000 in 2003. (See related box on the Associates and Partners program.) According to Chavis, the money has been well spent.

"We've got all new computers, including four new G5s to replace the last of the old computers that were here when I came," she details. "We used to do demonstrations on a TV screen that was hard to display and see. Now we've got an LCD projector mounted on the ceiling, and I've just gotten a real screen to replace the white sheet we've been using. We have all new software now, we've got four laser printers, and we're getting new tables wired with outlets and even new chairs, too. It is just a vast

improvement over what we had before."

Chavis cites the support of Nancy Wicker, Chair of the Art Department, as being critical to her success in making these improvements.

"Nancy really understands technology and the fact that it does get outdated," she notes. "She has made it so easy by asking what I need and signing off on what I'm doing."

In addition to teaching and managing the lab, Chavis is also webmaster for the Art Department and will be creating a new web site over the summer. She is advising a new club for graphic design students and also finds time for free-lance and volunteer work of her own. A design she did for a faculty show was one of 244 selected, out of 4,000 submitted, for inclusion in *How Magazine's* recent International Design Annual.

Despite the obvious role technology plays in graphic design these days, Chavis reminds students they still need to start with the basics.

"I have them do sketches on paper first," she says, "because the computer is just a tool, like a pencil or paintbrush is. Drawing on paper, your ideas start flowing, and then you use those to create on the computer. Graphic designers wear all sorts of hats. They can draw, paint, write, talk, so many things, and it's important to know which hat you need to wear to make it work."

When it comes to the graphics lab, Chavis isn't through wearing her planning hat.

"I want to require that graphics students have their own laptops," she explains. "We need more space, and I would love to have studios where the students could go in and work anytime they need to. Central heat and air, carpeting, those kinds of amenities would be nice, too."

"We'll see what happens when we move to Meek Hall with the rest of the department!" she says with a smile.

## Associates and Partners Grants

are funded by The University of Mississippi Foundation's annual giving campaign and distributed each year by the Provost's Office to assist faculty with equipment and commodities needs for teaching and research.

Associates Grants have a cap of \$25,000 and usually go toward purchasing equipment. Partners Grants have a cap of \$1,000, making them ideal for acquisition of smaller items such as software and lab supplies.

The competition is announced early each fall with an application form circulated to faculty. A committee reviews the applications and recipients are usually announced just after Thanksgiving.

For more information, contact Dr. Maurice Effink at 915-5974 or [effink@olemiss.edu](mailto:effink@olemiss.edu).



# Espionage in Your Computer

By Robby Seitz at the Information Technology Helpdesk

Seeing pop-up ads on your computer, no matter what websites you try to avoid? Does your home page revert to something else no matter how many times you've reset it? Does it seem like your machine is suddenly taking much longer to start up than it used to? If so, you may have a spyware problem.

Spyware (also called "adware," "malware," or "junkware") is the generic name given to any program which serves up advertising to your computer or records information about you, your computer, and your computing habits. Some spyware is fairly innocuous, such as web cookies which allow a user to log onto a website and then follow the user's movements from one page to another. More malevolent spyware, though, can compromise your computer, even accessing the personal information stored on it.

Spyware can originate from a number of different sources. Sometimes it is loaded just by visiting a website, but more often it sneaks in while installing some other software. Music and file-sharing software programs are notorious for including spyware in their installations. Not all, but most computers on campus which are set up for file-sharing also seem to have one or more types of spyware installed—at least those are the ones reported to the Helpdesk for problems of this sort.

Spyware can produce streams of network

traffic which may contain private information. For this reason, it should be removed from your computer. This is especially important in the campus environment where many offices have access to both employee and student records. If a computer has access to such information, then so does the spyware installed on it.

Preventing spyware from getting on a machine isn't easy because the user almost never learns about the installation until after the fact. Virus scanners don't block spyware because it isn't a virus. Fortunately, free and trusted programs such as Ad-Aware, Spybot, and Spy Sweeper are available to remove most spyware programs. We recommend running one of them weekly, or more often if you suspect a problem.

For more information, contact the IT Helpdesk at 915-5222 or [helpdesk@olemiss.edu](mailto:helpdesk@olemiss.edu).

## You Don't Need James Bond to Battle These Spies

Just visit one of the following sites to remove spyware from your computer:

Ad-Aware

[www.lavasoftusa.com](http://www.lavasoftusa.com)

Spybot

[www.safer-networking.org](http://www.safer-networking.org)

Spy Sweeper

[www.spysweeper.com](http://www.spysweeper.com)



## LANDesk to the Rescue!

When you're having a computer problem, do you ever wish you could instantly "beam" an IT Helpdesk consultant to your office? Well now, thanks to a remote support assistance software called LANDesk, you almost can.

"After using LANDesk the first time, I've wanted to use it whenever I call the Helpdesk because it's so much easier!" says Caitlin Craddock, Senior Secretary in the English Department. "Before, you would have to log a call and then you would be put in a queue, and it might be days or even a week before they could come over and fix the problem. With LANDesk, I get almost instant service."

According to Nathan Robbins, Microcomputer Consultant II, the folks at the Helpdesk are equally pleased.

"Everybody loves it, because it is so much more efficient," he explains. "Instead of a consultant having to leave the Helpdesk to go across campus just to fix a small problem that takes five minutes, they can now connect to that computer right from their work station."

The connection is made when the Helpdesk consultant directs a caller to a web page which allows them to temporarily load LANDesk onto their machine. This installation is for a one-time

use only, and once disconnected, the Helpdesk consultant cannot reconnect without the caller repeating the process.

"The connection has to be explicitly allowed by the user," notes Robbins, "and all traffic passed in the session is encrypted, so your data is completely secure."

Once connected, the consultant can work on the caller's computer as if sitting in front of it. The caller can watch as the consultant works to diagnose and solve the problem.

"It's kind of weird at first, because the mouse is moving all over the place and you're not touching it,"

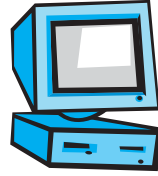
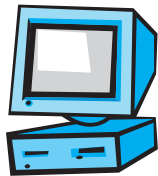
Craddock says. "But then if you have the problem again, you'll know how to fix it. One day I was getting help with doing a mail merge, and I had two or three people behind me watching what the consultant was doing, almost like a mini training session."

"It's two-way communication," explains

Robbins, "so if the user says, 'Hang on, let me show you what it's doing,' then you can watch and see the problem as it happens."

Once LANDesk is disconnected, a window announcing this appears on the caller's screen. It contains a log of everything done during the session which can be retrieved if future problems occur.

For more information, contact the IT Helpdesk at 915-5222 or [helpdesk@olemiss.edu](mailto:helpdesk@olemiss.edu).



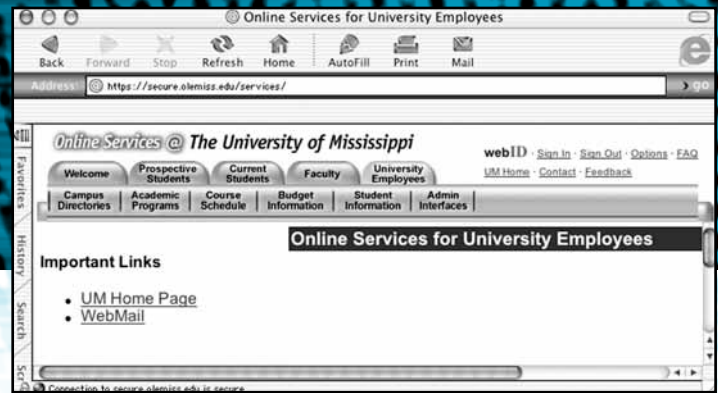
# Services Page Offers New Options

University of Mississippi employees can now elect not to receive “optional” messages from E-mail to Groups. Likewise, E-mail to Groups senders can indicate whether a message should go to all employees or just those who wish to receive “optional” messages. Health and Safety Officer Ed Movitz had the good idea to make these preferences available.

The Department of Human Resources, in conjunction with the Office of Information Technology, is pleased to announce a new web-based tool which allows employees to view their payroll stubs for current and past pay periods.

To take advantage of these options, visit the Online Services page at [secure.olemiss.edu/services/](https://secure.olemiss.edu/services/) and choose “University Employees” from the blue tabs followed by “Self Service” from the gray bar.

Faculty visiting the Services page will find two new options for communicating with students. Instructors can



now send e-mail messages to those enrolled in a given section. To do this, choose “Faculty” from the blue tabs, then “Class Rolls and Grades” from the gray bar. Select the term and year, hit “Submit,” and a new link called “Send Email” will be shown.

Advisors can send messages to their advisees by selecting “Student Information” from the gray bar. There they will see a new link called “Advisor Tools” which contains an e-mail feature.

Users need to access their web ID accounts before first time use of the Services page. Please send questions, comments, and suggestions to [web@olemiss.edu](mailto:web@olemiss.edu).



## Two Smart Guys and a Certificate

**Tyler Simon** and **Taner Pirim**, Ole Miss graduate students and staff members in the Mississippi Center for Supercomputing Research (MCSR), show off the award they recently received at the Mississippi Academy of Sciences (MAS) Conference held in Biloxi. They co-wrote a paper entitled, “Performance Analysis of Linear Algebra and Numerical Aerodynamic Simulation Benchmarks on the MCSR Beowulf Linux Cluster,” which took first place in the student paper competition of the Mathematics, Computer Science, and Statistics Division of MAS. Simon presented the paper as part of a special high performance computing sub-session of the conference co-sponsored by MCSR.

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