INNER CIRCUITS

A Technology Newsletter for Extension Specialists

Also in this Issue:

Computer Terrorism

by John Myers

Hackers are located all over the world, and since we are on the internet, we are accessible. Last week, a person at Caltech in California probed the University System's email system from 7:58 am until 9:02 am. The initial results of this probe locked over half of the email accounts. Users couldn't access their email until their accounts were unlocked. The next day I received a call about missing email. Without asking the user for their password, I made a guess and was able to access their email. Upon further investigation, I found that somehow the messages were deleted between 10:14 am and 10:17 am. It could only have happened in one of three ways: the user deleted the messages; or the user left their computer and email open and someone else used their computer to delete the messages; or a hacker deleted the messages. So we are all at some risk, but here are few ways to keep the risk to a minimum.

One way to protect yourself is to keep your computer up-to-date on critical updates. These are patches to the operating system that hackers can use to gain access to your data. See the *Windows Update* article in this issue of *Inner Circuits* for more details on this. Also, make sure your computer has anti-virus software and that it too, is up-to-date.

Your best weapon against hackers is your password. If a hacker knows your username (and they do), and your password, then they have access to everything you have access to. This is why your password is so important. A weak password is a hacker's dream.

So, how do I pick a "good" password? How do I change my passwords? What is the policy on passwords? Later this year, the University will be enforcing a stricter password policy. Here are some guidelines to help you choose a "good" password.

· Passwords should be at least eight characters long.
· Passwords should contain at least one character from each of the following three groups:
    o Letters
    o Numbers
    o Non-alphanumeric such as !,@,#,$,%,^,&,*,(,),~,<,>,?,etc.
· Passwords should have at least five unique characters

· Passwords should not be words contained in dictionaries

· Your username is a bad password

· Your first, middle or last name in any form is a bad password

· Your license plate numbers, telephone numbers and social security number are bad passwords

I know that these guidelines make it hard to pick a password, but that is what we want. We want to give the hackers a hard time. The best approach I have found for passwords is to use a memorable phrase or sentence, like "I hate this password policy!". If we take the first letter of each word, we've got "Ihtpp!" which is two characters short. Let's insert a symbolic "curse" to make it "Iht&*pp!" which is a "good" password. Hackers are familiar with substitution strategies, so don't take words from dictionaries and substitute the number "0" for the letter "o".

If your email is in the UM-Users domain you can go to http://webmail.umsystem.edu/ and click on "email ID's password" to change your password. If your email is in the UMC-Users domain you can go to https://iats.missouri.edu/passwordchange.html to change your password. Do **not** use the "Change Password" button when you first start Outlook to change your password.

If you have never changed your password or you have a bad password, I would recommend you pick a good password and change it immediately. Later in the year when the password policy is finalized, processes will be set up to check for weak passwords. If your account is associated with a weak password, your account could be disabled.

Windows Updates
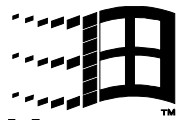
by Charles Baerwald

Some computers have an icon that occasionally appears on the system tray (bottom right of screen) prompting the user to download and install one or more Windows Critical Updates. Critical updates are software patches that apply fixes to Windows and Internet Explorer, and close known security holes in those same programs. These should be

downloaded and installed. If it's an inconvenient time to do so, just click "remind me later". The utility is generally set to prompt the user to download updates when available by showing the Windows Update symbol in the system tray. If you click the symbol, you'll be asked if you want to download the updates. The icon will stay in the system tray until the files are completely downloaded, then clicking the system tray icon again allows you to install. Often these updates require a restart. It's best to close all open programs before installing (it's ok to have open programs when downloading). Settings for Windows Update can be found in the Control Panel under the Automatic Updates applet.

Those that do not have the automatic update utility enabled or installed can manually apply critical updates by following the instructions at http://etcs.ext.missouri.edu/windowsminutetips.shtm (click Critical Update Install for Windows ME & 2000 to see the "tip in less than a minute").

Re-Tired

By Bill McFarland
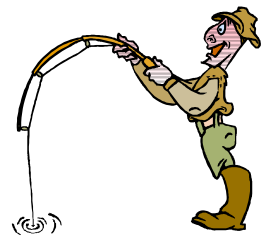
I owe most of my life to the University of Missouri. In the Fall of 1963, I left home in Sedalia and started school in the Electrical Engineering Department at MU. Except for 2 ½ short years when I worked for McDonnell Douglas Aircraft, I have been with the University, one way or another, ever since. The University has been good to me, including providing for my early retirement.

A few friends have asked questions in such a manner, that I had to answer, "Hey, I am retiring, not dying". Since this is a *voluntary* retirement, I really am looking forward to "life after work", starting July 31, 2002. I may even buy a fishing pole.

ETCS Changes

By John Myers

The budget crisis has forced ETCS to make some changes. With the retirement of Bill McFarland at the end of the July, the resignation of John Grissom

in the middle of May, and Lois Reeves being laid off in July, we are a little short handed. We no longer have someone to answer the main ETCS phone. We are therefore changing the 882-2096 number to a calling tree. The calling tree will allow you to select who you want to be transferred to by pressing the number associated with that person. Everyone at ETCS does have voice mail. If the person you wish to talk to is on the phone, away from their desk, or unable to answer the phone, you will be transferred into their voice mail to leave a message.

The preferred method of contact is still email, but if you have immediate needs, call 882-2096 and use the calling tree or you can use the table below to contact us.

For CEIS Problems

Darlene Schmitz	573-882-7146
Ali Saheli	573-882-1704
Kirk Sumpter	573-882-6884
Brad Hardin	573-884-4588
Megan Wallace	573-884-6267

For Network Problems

Joe Lear	573-884-3629
Ethan Froese	573-882-7691

For Software/Hardware Problems

Jill Dourty	573-882-7260
Charlie Baerwald	573-882-7172

For Administration/Orders

Jeanne Meyer	573-882-7130
John Myers	573-882-7284

Filtering Your Email

by Jill Dourty

Are you tired of the inappropriate and obnoxious emails from random email addresses? Would you like to know how to fix your email so that you don't see those messages any more? In Outlook 2000, you have a few options on how to set up your account so that these unsolicited emails are properly disposed of—keep reading to find out how.

Option #1: Set up a "Client Only" rule
A client only rule is a rule that is set up on a machine that only applies when you check your email from that machine. If you set up the rule at work, and then access your University email at home or elsewhere, (through Outlook, Outlook Express, Eudora, Internet Explorer, etc.), this rule will not apply.

How to set up this rule:
1. Click on Tools.
2. Select Rules Wizard.
   Click on New on the right hand side of the Rules Wizard dialog box.
3. Choose "Move message based on content" by putting a check in the box.
4. Down below, under Rule Description, click on "specific words".
   a. (will bring up a dialog box).
   b. Enter words commonly found in the inappropriate emails you have received. For example, if you receive a large number of emails about how to get out of debt, include the words "debt" and "consolidation".
   c. After each word, click ok to add them to the list.
   d. When done, click ok
5. Now click on "specified" folder
6. Select the folder (i.e. Deleted Items) or click on "New" to create a new folder for "Junk Mail" - click on OK to get back to the Rules Wizard dialog box.
7. Click "Next".
8. If there is an email address from which you continue to receive unsolicited email, scroll down the list under "Which conditions do you want to check?" and select "with specific words in sender's address" When you put a check in the box, that detail will show up in the Rules Description box below.
   a. Click on "specified words" to specify just the sender's email "handle" – the part before "@".
   b. Again, after each word, hit add.
   c. When done, click ok.
9. At this point, you can finish out the rule or click "next". If you click on "next" and are certain no legitimate email will ever match the rule details you defined, you can opt to "permanently delete it". **You will not be able to retrieve these emails from your Deleted Items folder!** When you put a check in the box in front of this option, you will instantly receive a warning message from Outlook reminding you that this is permanent. Click ok.

10. Click Finish.

11. A message will pop up saying "This is a client only rule and will process only when Outlook is running" Click "Ok".

You may rename this rule if you would like. Click on "Rename", type the new rule name, click "Ok" and then click ok again. All incoming email will be checked as long as you have Outlook open. Remember this rule will only be processed when you have your Outlook open on that particular machine.

Option #2: Organize your Inbox (Server-side)
Using the Organize "Junk Mail" feature in Outlook 2000 allows you to set up a rule that sends your incoming junk mail directly to a folder on the server (like the Deleted Items folder). (If you set up the junk mail to be moved to a personal folder, it becomes a "client only" rule and will only apply on the computer on which you set this feature up.)

1. Go to Tools.
2. Select "Organize".
3. Click on "Junk E-Mail".
4. You can either have junk email and/or adult content messages moved or colored.
   a. If you color messages, select the color and click on "Turn On".
   b. If you move messages, select the folder and click on "Turn On".
5. If you want to edit, add, or remove a particular sender to your junk or adult content sender list, click on "Click here" for more options.
6. If you get an inappropriate email from brittany98@yahoo.com, right click on her email address in your inbox, go down to "Junk Mail" and add her email address to the appropriate list. You can add it to both if you wish.
   a. Now, whenever you get email from brittany98@yahoo.com, it will go directly to the folder or it will be the color you specified for Junk Mail.
   b. Keep in mind, if you send this junk mail to a personal folder, then you will make this organization only apply to the machine on which you set it up.

ETCS wishes there was a reliable and easy way to eliminate unsolicited emails to University email accounts. Unfortunately, there isn't. However, with this information, you can now clean up your incoming mail on your own. You can edit the junk mail filters or the rules as many times as you wish to incorporate new email addresses or key content words. You can also set up as many rules as you would like as well.

Please note: Just because there is an option to unsubscribe included in the unwelcome email, does _**NOT**_ mean it will work! Do _**NOT**_ attempt to unsubscribe simply because it validates your email address to the sender and gives "those people" a legitimate email address to sell to other bothersome email abusers.
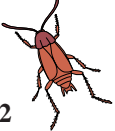
If you have any questions or concerns about unsolicited email, please contact Jill Dourty at DourtyJ@missouri.edu or call her at 573/882-7260. For severe email abuse, please contact abuse@missouri.edu before you delete the improper email.

Reset Your Bookmarks!

by Jill Dourty

Due to some "behind the scene" changes to the ETCS web site, we highly recommend you delete your bookmarks to our web site and add them again. To do this in Internet Explorer, click on your favorites list, highlight the ETCS web page you have bookmarked, right click on it and select delete. Then go to http://etcs.ext.missouri.edu, retrace to that page of information and set your bookmark again. If, at any time, you experience problems with any of our web pages, please contact Jill Dourty at DourtyJ@missouri.edu or call her at 573/882-7260.

Anti-Virus Corner

Current Norton Anti-Virus Versions

Program Versions:		
Program:	**7.50.846**	
Scan Engine:	**4.1.0.6**	
Virus Definition File:		
Version:	**40715c**	
Date:	**7/15/2002**	

(Your versions should be at this level or greater.)

See **http://etcs.ext.missouri.edu/tips/default.htm** for instructions on updating your anti-virus.