IT Security

IT Security Week Review ...

IS Services and the College IT Security Officer hosted IT Security week at the end of January. It was an initiative designed to raise IT Security awareness and provide clear up-to-date information for students and staff.

Each day that week a news item was posted to the IS Services website which covered practical tips for protecting and securing mobile devices, computers and files. Please see the IS Services website for a complete list of topics covered during IT Security week.

Booths were set up in both the Arts Building and the Hamilton to give access to students and staff with questions to the College IT Security Officer, Sara McAneney, and student representatives from the student computing societies DUCSS and NETSOC. Here’s what they had to say about IT Security week:

What did you think overall of the week?

(Sara McAneney, IT Security Officer) The purpose of the week was to generally raise profile of IT Security as an issue that staff and students need to be aware of in their day-to-day computing activity. Judging from the feedback that I received from staff members who have been in touch and students who I met during the week I am confident that we have achieved this. Staff were interested in creating and storing secure passwords and students were interested in encryption and security for their phones and tablet devices.

(Ben Doyle, DUCSS) We reached a lot of people who were interested in learning about securing their devices and information, but didn’t necessarily know how to go about doing that. We were busy on the stands and there was a good turnout for the talk, I was very impressed by the number of students who weren’t just interested in the free chocolate or entering the prize draw and had specific questions about how they could go about being safer online, or protecting their laptops/phones/tablets. It was great to see that a lot of the student body actually care about their personal data.

Benefits of an event like this?

(SMca) The main aim and benefit is to promote awareness of IT Security as an issue that affects ...
everyone especially in the current era of BYOD and cloud computing. Hopefully staff and students will be more likely to know that resources exist on the IS Services website and through the Helpdesk to assist them with any queries.

Other thoughts?

(SMca) It was a great experience to get out and meet College users and hear their thoughts on IS Services and the type of IT issues that concern them.

(BD) Overall I think the week was a big success and IS Services did a great job; I think we should go on building from this success as well as repeating what we did this year. The involvement with the Computer Science and Networking societies was a great idea, and I know both are keen to get even more involved in this next year.

Service Disruption

Major service outages in January ...

As you might already be aware, College experienced a loss of data network connectivity and access to core data network services on Monday, 7th January, and a staff email outage on Wednesday, 16th January. During incidents such as these, it is the priority of IS Services to restore normal service as quickly as possible or find a suitable workaround for those who rely on services.

ISS restored data network services to major College areas within an hour of the first report of disruption. Services were fully restored to all areas of College by 7am on the following morning, Tuesday, 8th January. The root cause was identified as a failure within the network core routing and switching hardware. ISS replaced the relevant hardware component on Thursday, 14th February.

On the morning of 16th January, there was an unanticipated outage during a routine software update of the Staff email server. Services were fully restored within four hours of the first report of disruption and final remedial work was completed on Sunday, 10th February.

We apologise for any inconvenience caused as a result of these outages. During incidents such as these, our focus is on identifying root causes and restoring services with as little disruption as possible. We have established a ‘major incident’ management process within ISS whereby the restoration of service is efficiently managed and the findings of a review of events feed into our continuous improvement regime.

Developments

RSS School Analytics Application ...

The RSS School Analytics Application went live on 22nd January. It is a web application featuring data visualizations and interactive reports communicating activity on the Research Support System for Schools. The application is available to the Dean of Research, Heads of Schools, School Directors of Research and School Research Administrators via the Research Support System main menu.

Mobility and Wi-Fi Services

Mobility and Wi-Fi Update ...

As part of our continuous service improvement, IS Services has been expanding and enhancing Wi-Fi services in College. Here is the latest:

- deployed Wi-Fi in Early Printed Books and Manuscripts Reading Room;

(continued on next page)
• new pop-up TCDconnect support clinics in the Arts Building offering first-come, first-serve;
• high density Wi-Fi in the Burke lecture theatre, Buttery Food Court & Cafe;
• a reduction of the age-out policy to 40-days on the TCDconnect service;
• an added number of supported anti-virus applications on the TCDconnect service;
• adopted support for Windows 8 devices on TCDconnect.

Since the launch of the mobile device pilot, 4,749 mobile devices have been connected, which includes 3,863 iOS devices by students, 47 Android devices by postgraduates, and 839 iOS and Android devices by staff.

Work is currently being carried out to expand the capacity of the TCDconnect system to allow support for Android devices.

Information Systems Service

Service Improvement Activity ...

During the year, IS Services has been working on continuous improvement across the services we offer to College. The objectives of this initiative are to achieve higher levels of user satisfaction while also reducing levels of support activity.

We select the services for improvement using the following information sources: monthly Helpdesk statistics (what staff and students have been contacting us about at the Helpdesk), feedback from the IS Services User Group, and analysis of the data in the ISS 2012 satisfaction surveys.

Here are just a few items of continuous improvements completed to date:

• modification to the wireless infrastructure to increase network traffic throughout;
• roll-out of additional wireless access points to areas with no coverage or over-subscribed zones;
• reduced connection complexity to TCDconnect Wi-Fi;
• new single password management page and removal of 6 month password expiry for students;
• modification to network security rules to provide greater access to external resources;
• roll-out of wireless mobile device connectivity pilot.

The ISS Satisfaction Survey for 2013 will be advertised in the coming weeks and so we would strongly recommend you take part. Your views and comments will be heard and will be used directly in establishing the continuous improvement developments for the year ahead.

STAFF PROFILE

Ms. Nicky Cooke,
Network Administrator

Who are you and what do you do?

I am a Network Administrator in IS Services. I am involved in new technology evaluation, procurement, implementation and maintenance of these systems, Project Management and support of existing systems. Currently, I am involved in looking at high density Wi-Fi deployment in the areas with a high demand for wireless connectivity.

What’s your favourite film?

Total Recall (the original)

What music are you listening to at the moment?

100 90s Dance Hits - it was a Christmas present; I feel like I am reliving my youth.

What’s the next thing in IT?

Having an interest in mobility, I definitely feel it is palm of your hand technology, all access at all times. I think as wireless speeds improve coupled with smarter handheld devices the sky is the limit. You literally will have your ‘life’ in the palm of your hand.
How to keep your accounts secure with strong passwords ...

Creating a secure password for one account can seem like a challenge, trying to remember multiple secure passwords for multiple accounts can be stressful and daunting. ... Read here for complete article on how to create strong passwords.

How to recognise a phishing attack ...

This article covers what phishing is, how to recognise a phishing email and what you should do if you have clicked on a link within a phishing message. Read here for complete article and to see an example of a recent phishing email sent College users.

How to keep your computing devices malware free ...

Malware comes from the words ‘malicious’ and ‘software’, and is designed to infiltrate or damage a computer system without the owner’s consent. Malware includes computer viruses, worms, Trojan horses, spyware, and other malicious and unwanted software. ... Read here for complete article.

Top tips for data back-up and how to recover when disaster strikes ...

It’s happened to everyone. You are right in the middle of working on something very important on your computer, you haven’t hit ‘save’ yet, and the computer just powers off for some inexplicable reason and now it won’t turn back on. ... Read here for complete article and advice on data back-up.

Top IT Security privacy tips for social media users ...

There are a few IT security tips that just make sense for any time you find yourself using a computer, phone or tablet, whether that is a College device or a personal one. ... Read here for full article and practical tips for staying safe online.