

The Silicon Ear

(with apologies to Linda Coughlin)

An occasional academic-computing newsletter for faculty and staff.

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With the Learning Systems Group*
Vol. 4 No. 1 (19 November 2007)

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Do you really need that 10-year-old, 4-gigabyte photo portfolio?

The "L drive," the "H drive," and the physical disk that houses everyone's "G drives" is getting full, now requiring more than a whole day to back up! According to George Waggoner, many of the files on these drives haven't been accessed in more than two years, so if you have files on a network drive that don't really need to be there, delete them. If you're keeping them for archival purposes only, consult with someone in Technology Support for more system-friendly ways to maintain your archives. Currently there is no limit specified for faculty G drives, but the time will probably come when such a limit becomes necessary; most other colleges have limits (typically just 1 or 2 gigabytes) for faculty network storage.

TWO Help Desks?

You may not be aware (we weren't) that there are actually two helpdesk numbers, x4357 (H-E-L-P) and x2357. The "HELP" number is primarily for faculty and staff, while the second is primarily for students. However, the "HELP" number is only staffed during normal working hours, while the student help desk is available M-F 8 AM – 10 PM, Saturday 10 AM- 2 PM, and Sunday Noon-10 PM. So, don't give up on that gnarly printing problem that's keeping you from getting your exam ready to go for Monday morning: maybe the student help desk can help you. Take a look at the Student Help Desk web pages <http://shd.smcm.edu/about.php>.

Goodpaster: Be patient.

As everyone undoubtedly knows by now, getting Goodpaster Hall up and running has taken somewhat longer than originally thought. Be aware that Campus Technology is just as frustrated by these delays as the rest of us, and that they have only recently been able to get into the building to begin setting up the network.

They're working very hard to get it done as soon as they can, but they did get a very late start. Bear with them.

Clicker Pilot

A "clicker" is a system (actually there are several competing systems) for allowing electronic interaction during class: students have "clickers," small hand-held gizmos that look a lot like TV remotes, and they can respond to things like multiple-choice questions and in-class polls by clicking the appropriate buttons. Each clicker is uniquely identified, so it's even theoretically possible to give quizzes and exams with this technology (though I can see the potential hackers rubbing their hands together gleefully at the possibilities for mischief). Although mostly designed for much larger classes than are typical here, clickers do have some uses at small colleges. Two systems are currently being piloted at SMCM. Michael Cain, in Political Science, is working with a system called "Turning Point" <<http://www.turningtechnologies.com/>>, and Allan Hovland, in Chemistry, will be trying out "iClicker" <<http://www.iclicker.com/>> this coming semester. If you have further questions, ask these faculty members; we'll also try to rope them into making some kind of public presentation about their experiences in the near future.

Reset Your Own Password

Just a reminder that, as noted in a recent e-mail from CTSS, it is now possible for us all to reset our own passwords (just giving this capability to one user—your editor—will probably reduce the Help Desk's load by at least 50%!). If you haven't signed up for this service yet, go to <<https://pwr.smcm.edu/SSRPM/>>, type in your secret questions and answers (note that the last question is free-form), and then the next time you forget your password you can fix it yourself.

Friday Morning Maintenance

CTSS will be performing routine system maintenance between 5 and 8 AM on Friday mornings. It is possible that services such as access to shared drives, e-mail, SMARTNet—anything involving the campus network—may sometimes be unavailable during this period.

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