Students connect to College network

Fast ethernet connections from campus residences

Many students who live in campus residence halls and townhouses are currently taking advantage of the fast, robust network connections available from their rooms. These students are lucky enough to own good personal computers and have further invested in the necessary connectivity hardware: a fast ethernet 100BaseT network interface card (NIC).

For information on connecting your computer directly to the College network, see the OIT web pages at:

www.philacol.edu/it/docs/docs.htm

An effort by OIT to bring an outside vendor on campus to sell, install, and configure NICs for student machines didn’t generate much interest—apparently, most students prefer to save cash by purchasing and installing their own NICs.

E-mail becomes a communications force on campus

In a recent test, OIT was able to determine that 954 students logged on to their e-mail accounts within a one-week period. That still leaves more than two thousand students who haven’t yet caught the wave, but we’ll keep reaching out to them! Remember that all students at the College are entitled to e-mail accounts. If you’re not checking your e-mail, you may be missing some fascinating correspondence from fellow students, faculty members, or friends and family around the world. Stop into an academic computing lab in Search Hall and log into your account. It’s worth the trip!

E-mail tip of the month

Are you haunted by “over quota” messages from our e-mail system? Microsoft Outlook, our supported e-mail program, has some funny ways of filling up your mailbox. For tips on how to avoid this problem, see:

www.philacol.edu/it/docs/quot.htm

Stop the madness!

One frequent complaint to OIT, and a common cause of over quota messages, is the sending of well-meant informational messages by individuals to everyone on the global address list. The College is currently drafting an official policy on mass mailings. In the meantime, please observe these commonsense ideas:

- Restrict mass mailings to official College business only
- In particular, avoid forwarding internet chain letters like jokes, virus warnings, special offers, etc.
- If you must send mass mailings, enter the addresses into the BCC: (blind carbon copy) field, rather than the TO: field. This will hide the enormous address list from recipients
- Set an expiration date for your message, so it will be deleted from the mailboxes of those who don’t read it within a week
Gutman launches “Gateway to Information”

The beginning of the new term marked the debut of the Gutman Library “Gateway to Information.” The College network and the world-wide web are now being used to deliver two of the Library’s most heavily-used databases, Lexis/Nexis and InfoTRAC, directly to you at your desktop computer. The systems are now easier to use, allow you to download articles to a disk, or in the case of InfoTRAC, even to e-mail articles to yourself. These services can be accessed from any computer connected to the campus network, including networked computers in residence halls and dial-up computers from off campus. The URL of the Gateway is http://www.philacol.edu/library.

Lexis/Nexis UNIVerse is a web-based interface to the world’s leading provider of electronic, full-text information. Newspapers, magazines, government documents, wire services, and more are available. The new interface neatly organizes the information into categories such as general news and company news. The search screens require users to fill in any field marked with a red asterisk and can change both source publications and date range of the search. UNIVerse documents can be viewed in full text.

SearchBank is a web-based version of InfoTRAC, which has long been a popular database available in the Library. You can search either Expanded Academic ASAP or General BusinessFile—the content has not changed, but the search interface is much improved. Searches are easier to enter and edit and documents are easier to view. Documents may even be e-mailed to your own or another e-mail address. SearchBank is not a complete full-text system; however, searches may be limited to retrieve only full-text articles. SearchBank also features PowerTrack, a more sophisticated search interface.

The Library has also added two new databases to its web site. STAT-USA is a Department of Commerce web site that features economic data and market research reports on a wide range of topics. Geared to the needs of exporters, STAT-USA provides information on foreign markets. Britannica Online is a multimedia, web-based version of the well-known Encyclopedia Britannica. The interface is simple—just enter your query in the form of a sentence. All of the above databases are accessed through “domain recognition.” No special password is needed, but you must be connecting to the Library web page through the College network (i.e., these services cannot be reached from AOL or other Internet service providers). To facilitate your use of these databases, the Library has provided some resources on its home page. Click on the red question mark for links to database information. All have online help screens as well. However, if you have any questions about using these resources, please contact Steven Bell at x2847 or send e-mail to BellS@philacol.edu. Instructions for e-mailing from SearchBank and downloading articles to disk for all systems are available from the library, or go to the “publications” option on the home page. If you would like a tutorial session for yourself or a group, or if you are faculty who would like to arrange a class for students, contact Steven Bell.

Contributed by Steven Bell, Director, Paul J. Gutman Library

Telecommunications on the web

Are you looking for assistance with your voicemail account or telephone service? Check out the Telecommunications pages on the OIT web site. From URL www.philacol.edu/it, click the link for “telecom.” You can also send e-mail with questions to:

telecommunications@philacol.edu.

Information included on the telecom web pages includes a full listing of telephone exchanges considered part of our free local dialing area, directions on accessing your voicemail account for the first time, and trouble-shooting tips on using your College phone lines.

More tips from Telecommunications

New numbers

Occasionally, you may be blocked when trying to make a call to a brand new area code or exchange (the exchange is the first three digits of a seven-digit phone number). If you hear a recorded error message and cannot complete the call, it may be that the number is so new that it has not yet been programmed into the College phone switch. If that happens, please call our trouble line at x6857 and report the number. We will add the new area code or extension as soon as possible.

Locked out of your voicemail?

Resident students with voicemail should know that it’s possible to lock yourself out of your own voicemail box. To prevent unauthorized people from repeatedly guessing at your password to obtain access, our voicemail system will lock the account if anyone attempts to log on three times in a row with an incorrect password. If you’re particularly forgetful, this could happen to you! Simply call x6857 and request that your voicemail password be reset.