



UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
Learning. Leading.™

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

APRIL 2005

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

IT SUPPORT CENTER

PHONE SUPPORT
713.743.1411

24 hours a day, 7 days a week
(except University holidays)

WALK-UP SUPPORT

M. D. Anderson Library,
Room 58, which is
accessible only through the
Technology Support
Services entrance located
directly across from the
University Center
Monday through Friday,
8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
(except University holidays)

EMAIL SUPPORT
support@uh.edu

Customers can also request
IT support from any computer
by using the online support
form at
www.uh.edu/infotech/help.

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

Your feedback is appreciated
because we are constantly seek-
ing ways to better serve you. If
you have any thoughts or ideas
as to how we can better sup-
port you through new or exist-
ing IT products or services,
please let us know.

To provide feedback, please
contact the IT Support Center
by calling 713.743.1411 or
emailing support@uh.edu.

New Anti-Spam Tool Available in May

Even though the amount of spam at the university is less than the worldwide average, its impact on campus users is still significant. Although 70 to 80% of the world's email is spam, only 60% of UH email is spam -- largely due to steps already taken to address the problem. However, that is still a significant amount of unwanted email.

To further reduce the amount of spam received by the university, Sophos PureMessage, one of the industry's most powerful anti-spam tools, is being implemented on May 18. It promises to bring welcome and much needed relief to the university community. Users of the campus mail.uh.edu and central.uh.edu email systems will benefit from its deployment.

The university's current anti-spam tool, Spam Assassin, flags spam messages but does not block them. With PureMessage, spam will still be flagged, but through the use of sophisticated algorithms, PureMessage goes a step further.

Instead of merely flagging spam, the new software redirects email that has the highest probability of being spam to a quarantined area from which they may be retrieved. Or, if desired, users can choose to "opt out" of the functionality so all of their messages, including spam, are received in their Inbox as it is today.

Other user configurable options include an approved senders list, a blocked senders list, a daily quarantined email digest, and the length of time for which quarantined email is held -- up to 120 days.

For more information about this innovative software, go to the story at www.uh.edu/infotech/puremessage.

Phishing Scams

Phishing (pronounced "fishing") scams are techniques spammers employ to entice email recipients into divulging personal information and sensitive data such as credit card, bank account, and Social Security numbers and passwords. Once this information is in the hands of a phisher, it can be exploited for financial gain or other malicious purposes.

While phishing isn't well known to many, it has already become one of the fastest growing forms of identity theft. For example, in the six month period from November 2003 to May 2004, phishing attacks increased by 4000 percent.

This explosion in prevalence is expected to continue, making it incumbent upon users to educate themselves about phishing in order to minimize their risks.

To read more about this rapidly increasing problem, go to the IT news story at www.uh.edu/infotech/phishing.

IT Web Browser Support

Microsoft issues security updates to block vulnerabilities in Internet Explorer (IE) as they become known. However, some campus users have expressed concern about IE's security and asked for more information about alternative browsers.

In a recent reevaluation of web browsers, the Information Technology department found that only two, IE and Netscape, are fully supported by all three of the university's mission-critical, web-based applications: PeopleSoft, WebCT/Vista, and Enrollment Services Online.

Discussions with industry experts like Gartner, a leader in computer industry

Continued on back

research, indicate the use of alternative browsers, such as Firefox, Netscape, Mozilla, and Safari, is on the rise. However, according to industry experts, no one browser is more secure than another at this time.

Newer browsers, such as Firefox, are being touted as more secure by virtue of “security through obscurity.” However, as more users change to a new browser, the focus of hackers also shifts to it. Therefore, industry experts recommend that organizations not undertake a wholesale switch. Instead, organizations should consider ways to manage the coexistence of multiple browsers in the same work environment. These sentiments were echoed through conversations with technology support staff at other higher education computing organizations.

Currently, IE and Netscape are fully supported by IT because they are the only browsers supported by all of the university’s enterprise solution providers. However, limited IT support is also available for other popular browsers.

To read more about IT's web browser recommendations, go to www.uh.edu/infotech/browsersupport.

Adobe and Macromedia Software

Through contracts with Adobe and Macromedia, IT Discount Software sells many of the latest versions of selected software at highly discounted prices to UH students, faculty, and staff.

For example, Adobe Acrobat, with a regular educational price of \$449, can be purchased for only \$46 from IT. Other popular Adobe titles that are available include Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, and GoLive.

Macromedia’s Dreamweaver, Flash, Fireworks, and Freehand comprise Macromedia Studio, which carries an educational price of \$200 but can be purchased for \$99.

These popular products are in stock and available at the IT Support Center. For more information, go to www.uh.edu/infotech/adobe-macromedia.

IT Online Resources

Want to find out how to remove a virus from your laptop computer, or how to download the latest version of UH’s antivirus software?

Does unlimited access to thousands of free online courses on such diverse topics as communications, digital photography, project management, Adobe Photoshop, strategic planning, management, or web design principles interest you?

Then you will be happy to discover that Information Technology services encompasses much more than the computing infrastructure and computer network at the University of Houston.

In fact, IT has dozens of services that may be useful to you. A number of these services, from AskShasta to the IT Support Center, from WebCT to a portfolio of eLearning courses can be obtained online, allowing you to access them

wherever you have an Internet connection.

To read more about IT’s available online services, go to www.uh.edu/infotech/it-onlineresources.

Free Windows XP SP2 CDs Availability Extended for UH Students

Windows XP Service Pack 2 (SP2) CDs, which contain the SP2 update for Windows XP Home and Professional editions, are available from the IT Support Center at no charge for installation on UH student-owned computers until June 1, 2005.

SP2 is considered a critical upgrade to Windows XP. In addition to features that improve the stability and overall performance of the XP operating system, SP2 contains important security components, including a limited firewall and pop-up blocker. These security features provide a defense against the dramatic rise of virus, spam, and spyware attacks.

SP2 CDs are in limited supply, available on a first-come, first-served basis until they run out or until the date of June 1, 2005 is reached.

To obtain additional information about SP2, go to the IT News story at www.uh.edu/infotech/xpsp2cds.

How do I contact IT for more information about its products and services?

ASKSHASTA

Got a question? AskShasta at www.uh.edu/askshasta.

ELECTRONIC MAIL

- abuse@uh.edu to report incidents that may involve abuse of UH computer systems
- security@uh.edu to report illegal or questionable incidents
- spam@uh.edu to report spam that is prevalent or disruptive to the University
- support@uh.edu for questions, comments, or suggestions about IT support
- ctscustomerservices@uh.edu for questions, comments, or suggestions about Computing & Telecommunications Services (CTS) products and services

IT SUPPORT CENTER

- **Phone support:** 713.743.1411
Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, except University holidays.
- **Walk-up support:** Available in Room 58 of the M.D. Anderson Library, but it is only accessible via the Technology Support Services entrance, which is directly across from the University Center. Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., except University holidays.
- **Email:** support@uh.edu