



ping msstate.edu

ping/Ping *n*: 1. a message sent by a computer to confirm connectivity with remote systems.
2. a bi-monthly newsletter sent by Information Technology Services to stay connected with the Mississippi State University user community.

January/February 2007

Emergency Notification Through Instant Messaging

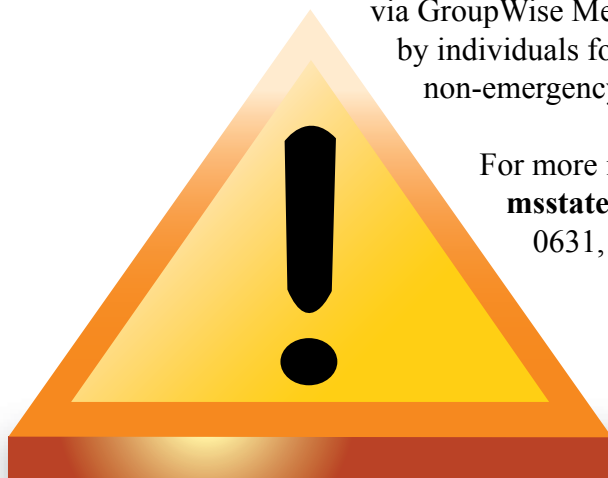
In order to facilitate effective and timely communication with students and employees in emergency situations, a new instant messaging capability has been implemented. When utilized, an emergency message from the university will appear on the screens of computers configured to receive these messages. This system is different from popular, public instant messaging systems such as AOL and MSN Messenger in that it is limited to MSU students and employees and will be used only for critical communications.

In order to participate in this system, GroupWise Messenger client software must be installed. This software is free to all MSU employees and students, and it works on Windows, Mac, and Linux computers. Users may install the software on university-owned as well as personally-owned computers. The software will work regardless of geographic location so long as the computer is connected to the Internet. To download and install the software go to www.its.msstate.edu/Services/Software/introgwim.php and follow the instructions.

When the software runs, users will be prompted to log into GroupWise Messenger with their NetID and NetPassword. Users must be logged into GroupWise Messenger in order to receive critical university communications sent via this mechanism. It is recommended that users set up their computer to automatically launch GroupWise Messenger when their computer boots.

While the institution will only send broadcast messages of an emergency nature via GroupWise Messenger, it should be noted that this software can also be used by individuals for secure, authenticated instant messaging communication of a non-emergency nature.

For more information, contact the Help Desk on the Web at www.its.msstate.edu/Services/report-problem.php, via phone at 662-325-0631, or toll free at 888-398-6394.



Mississippi State
UNIVERSITY



www.its.msstate.edu

iPrint

MSU faculty, staff, and students now have the ability to print from their personal Windows, Macintosh, or Linux computers to the high-speed printers located in the Butler Computer Lab and the Library Computer Commons. iPrint, a new service offered by ITS, enables people to send documents to these lab printers from anywhere on the network.

Initially, the iPrint service will be available just for printers located in Butler Computer Lab and the Library Computer Commons. Printouts sent to these printers will incur the current per-page fee of 5 cents for black-and-white and 25 cents for color, and these charges will be posted to the university A/R account of the person who sent the printout. iPrint should be especially popular with students taking advantage of the wireless network available throughout campus as well as students in residence halls.

Step by step instructions for using this service are available at iprint.its.msstate.edu. Basically, a one-time setup must be performed to install the iPrint software and the printer drivers for the desired printers.

For more information about iPrint, go to its.msstate.edu or contact the Help Desk.

Butler Hall Computer Lab and Library Computer Commons

Information Technology Services maintains two public computer labs on the MSU campus. Faculty are encouraged to tell students about both labs, one of which is located in Mitchell Memorial Library Computer Commons and the other in Butler Hall. While the Library Computer Commons is the most widely known and heavily used of the two, the Butler Hall computer lab, with equipment and software identical to that in the Library Computer Commons, is conveniently located near the Northeast Village residence halls and usually has no waiting time for a machine. Software manuals are available for use in the labs, and a complete listing of installed software is located at its.msstate.edu/Information/PublicLabs/softwarelabs.php. For more information about Butler Hall and the Library Computer Commons visit its.msstate.edu/Information/PublicLabs/ or contact the Help Desk.



Butler Hall Computer Lab

NOTE: When using the online Help Desk submission form or email, please do not include any social security numbers. This information is not needed or required to process your ticket. Continuing to be self aware of personal information is a key element in protecting yourself and the university.



Audience Response System Approved

At the request of the Provost's Office and the Information Technology Advisory Committee, ITS and the Center for Teaching and Learning conducted a pilot project to evaluate three audience response systems. Audience response systems allow students to participate in lectures by submitting responses to interactive questions using an electronic 'clicker', similar to a remote control. Selected faculty used the audience response systems during actual classes in the Fall 2006 semester. Feedback from both faculty and students, as well as other findings, were forwarded to ITAC at the end of the Fall 2006 semester. Based on these findings, ITAC recommended to the Provost that MSU should adopt eInstruction as the standard audience response system. The Provost approved the recommendation at the beginning of the Spring 2007 semester. The salient points of the recommendation include:

- MSU adopt eInstruction as the university's audience response system to be implemented in Fall 2007.
- This is the only system that will be supported by ITS and CTL.
- This is the only clicker system that students will be asked to purchase. If a faculty member chooses another system for their class, they must provide the student's with the clicker for that course.



ITS is currently working on integrating eInstruction into the 51 technology enhanced classrooms on campus. The Center for Teaching and Learning is developing documentation and training that will be available in the late spring. Full technical and user support will be in place by the beginning of the Fall 2007 semester. For more information visit the Center for Teaching and Learning Web site at ctl.msstate.edu.

Information Security Warning

The file servers known as Jade, Topaz, and Onyx are maintained by ITS to provide general-purpose, shared, network-accessible disk space for faculty and staff. For participating departments, an area of shared storage is allocated and is mapped to the "J:" drive of that department's users. In addition, users are allocated a private area of storage which is mapped to their "I:" drive. For Macintosh users, these areas of storage will appear as network-mounted HOME and COMMON folders. Beyond these basic allocations, individual departments may have other special-purpose areas of storage for unique applications or needs.

These servers provide disk storage to augment the functionality of office computers. Information stored on these servers or the user's local hard drive is inherently less secure than information stored in systems such as Banner. Understanding this, these servers or your local hard drive should not be used to store Social Security numbers, credit card numbers, or other sensitive information.

If you have questions please contact the ITS Help Desk at 325-0631.



Minimum Supported Hardware Specifications

Information Technology Services (ITS) provides varying levels of desktop computer support for faculty, staff, students, and retired employees actively engaged in University business. Basic support includes phone and email-based assistance for routine technical problems and questions. More comprehensive support is available to departments for University-owned computers.

A primary tenet of this support stance is that ITS will support hardware for a reasonable life expectancy. The computer industry generally recognizes three to four years as the typical lifespan of a desktop computer. Computers older than this tend to be more difficult to support and are often inadequate to run current software. Following are the minimum hardware and operating systems specifications for Windows and Macintosh computers that ITS will support effective July 1, 2007.

Minimum Hardware Specifications for Windows XP Computers



- Processor: 1.8 GHz (Pentium 4, Celeron, or compatible AMD)
- Memory: 512 MB
- Hard Disk: 40 GB
- Optical Drive: CD-ROM
- Operating System: Windows XP Professional SP2

Minimum Hardware Specifications for Windows VISTA Computers



- Processor: 2.4 GHz Pentium 4
- Memory: 2 GB
- Video Card: DirectX 9 capable with 256 MB video memory
- Hard Disk: 80 GB
- Optical Drive: DVD-ROM
- Operating System: Windows VISTA

Minimum Hardware Specifications for Macintosh Computers



- Processor: 800/900 MHz G3 PowerPC
- Memory: 512 MB
- Hard Disk: 20 GB
- Optical Drive: CD-ROM
- Operating System: OS X 10.3 (Panther)/OS X 10.4 (Tiger) or higher

Another primary principle of desktop support is that it is not possible for ITS to support all types of hardware and software. To ensure that new hardware and software fall within the scope of ITS support, departments should consult with ITS prior to acquisition if ITS is expected to support the hardware and/or software. For a complete version of ITS Desktop Support Guidelines go to www.its.msstate.edu/Services/Support/desktop_support.php.