The Gossip Wars

Anonymous campus discussion sites can foster hurtful sentiments and spread lies

H1N1: Students share experiences about recovery

By Sarah Malis
Contributing Writer

Ever since kindergarten and elementary school, we were taught to say "if we don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything." It seems as though the older we get, the more we reject this advice and continue to spew abhorrent remarks about fellow classmates, professors and even friends.

We are living in a digital age, where virtual markets, relations and sites are booming, which has ultimately created a haven for a World Wide Web café addiction.

In an effort to feed off of the gossiping trend, various internet gossip sites allow college students to freely and openly rant about peers through anonymous message boards and posts.

While a few of the websites have disintegrated, others have risen up and are spreading like wildfire through college campuses across the nation.

One internet site's mission statement seeks "to give students a place to vent, rant, and talk to college peers in an environment free from social constraints and about subjects that might otherwise be taboo."

The site also has a policy of deleting posts that are deliberately malicious in content, use full names in attacks and attempts to respond to direct complaints from users.

While this moderation is a step in the right direction, the site still promotes repugnant gossip, unnecessary conduct and vicious personal attacks.

Essentially, these sites have become the

By Chris Russell
Staff Writer

The very mention of the words “swine flu” is all it takes to have several students clutching desperately for hand sanitizer, but several students have made it safely through the disease with only a few days of make-up work to show for it.

As the signs and hand sanitizer dispensers dotting campus will attest, Health Services has attempted to limit student exposure to the H1N1 virus and help students with it recover as soon as possible.

Signs and guides are posted in residence halls and online, covering every topic from what symptoms to expect, how to keep from getting others sick and how to deal with professors whose classes you are missing.

Students attempting to access the Health Service page will first be redirected to a special alert page, dedicated entirely to H1N1.

A statement on this page says, “Health Services first priority continues to be the safety and care of its students and is fully prepared to address student concerns related to their own health, screen patients as needed, assure prompt and appropriate medical care, and implement precautions to protect others.”

Despite the large amount of attention paid to the disease, many students found it to be little more than an annoying hassle.

Hamza Hasan, third-year ARCH, said his encounter with the virus really only consisted of a tiring long weekend. After beginning to feel symptoms on Friday, Aug. 29, Hasan realized he had H1N1 that Sunday, and after a few sleep-filled days, was back on his feet early in the week.

Hasan said he did make it to the Health Center while he was ill, though. “Sunday I knew I had it, so I just slept in all day...Monday I didn’t go to studio, didn’t go to class, and didn’t even notify my professors until later. I went to the Health Center on Monday around noon or one o’clock, and I was there for quite some time,” Hasan said.

Hasan said the trip was largely uneventful, aside from a few standard tests and the fact that everyone in the building was wearing surgical masks. He said after a doctor told him to continue the medication he was on (a decongestant, standard cold medicine, and Ibuprofen for fever), they sent him home.

It’s not just students with classes that are being affected, though. Co-op students are also having to deal with the illness.

James Fisher, second year IE, had a much rougher time with his experience. "I was there for quite some time," Hasan said. He backs up Hasan’s claims even though, professors and employers have a fairly understanding attitude towards work missed due to the illness.

Hasan said that, though one never really catches up in studio, he was able to make-up missed work with little to no hassle. “All the professors are way cooler about swine flu than any other sickness,” Hasan said.

Construction masks, tissues and cough drops join forces to fight the spread of the H1N1 virus and help students to recover.

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WPA pilot for LAWN offers security, convenience

By Chris Russell
Staff Writer

LAWN’s reluctance to admit us to the Internet is something that many students at Tech have tapped a toe at once or twice. Whether your goal is to start up a night-long raid or just look up an assignment, up until now, LAWN (Local Area Wireless & Walkup Network) has required all its users to log in before showing them anything more than the now familiar white, green and yellow screen.

Recently, though, Tech’s Office of Information Technology (OIT) has been tinkering under the hood to see how this process could be improved.

Though many have already heard about the switch from WEP to WPA-backed wireless service, most of those are only the particularly tech-savvy, even by Tech standards.

In a nutshell, the switch from WEP (for Wired Equivalent Privacy) to WPA (Wi-Fi Protected Access) means two things. First, the new encryption scheme increases security on the network. Second, that students who choose to access campus wireless services through the walkup method only have to provide their log in information once instead of at each log in.

“We while we continue to make improvements to the web-based captive portal login, including a new captive portal that works for up to 15 days, WPA gives users the ability to enter login credentials only one time. A WPA supplicant can provide your login credentials every time you are required to authenticate,” said Matt Sanders, Wireless Services Manager at OIT.

The security provided with WPA marks an improvement over what was used in GTwireless (WEP).

“WPA users get the benefit of better security over the wireless portion of their connections to services. However, we still encourage users to practice strong end-to-end and host-based security,” Sanders said.

Not only has WPA increased the security of the wireless the students use, it has also allowed OIT to better identify and maintain the network.

“For OIT, WPA has additional benefits, the most important of which is the ability to authenticate users before they are placed on a network or given an IP address. This gives us some ability to scale the network and differentiate services and policies without having to introduce new wireless networks,” Sanders said.

The other benefit of changing to WPA is the ability to log onto the wireless without accessing the LAWN page in one’s browser each time.

“One of the most consistent requests we get for improvements to LAWN is to improve the login process so that users don’t have to type in their username and password as often,” Sanders said.

“Something students should keep in mind, though, is that the ability to automatically log in could be dangerous on a shared device, and the LAWN website cautions against configuring any computer used by more than one person for WPA at this time.

“The main thing that users need to know is that what is changing with WPA is when and how you authenticate, not what network you are on. You are still on a LAWN network when you authenticate via WPA, but you’ve done a network based authentication to get connected to an IP network, as opposed to a web based authentication which requires you to have an IP address on a LAWN network,” Sanders said.

No platform is completely perfect, though, and WPA has a few kinks left to work out, mostly with compatibility issues. Though its more recent versions are much improved in this area, with most operating systems and devices perfectly capable of making the switch, there are still a few hard-to-handle cases. The LAWN website provides users with troubleshooting guides for hooking up a long list of devices to WPA.

Sanders also described how the lack of direct interaction from students with the system makes debugging it more difficult.

Another drawback is that if there are issues related to authentication with WPA, it can sometimes be hard to diagnose since you are not involved [with] its activity. In fact, the primary reason we held off implementing WPA, and the reason it’s still a pilot, is that some of the client issues are difficult to diagnose,” Sanders said.

A statement on the LAWN website said, “Our experience to date with WPA has been mostly favorable; however some problems do exist and can be very frustrating. By using this service you will help us to better evaluate and make improvements before the service goes into production.”

Sanders said that in addition to the switch to WPA, many of the wireless nodes across campus are currently being upgraded, meaning that Tech students who on Tech’s wireless networks could see a jump in their data rates.

The change to Wi-Fi Protected Access (WPA) will enable students to log on to the LAWN network and stay logged in for up to 15 days with enabled cookie settings and also provides more security.

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who needs a apartment when you can sleep in the library
The ME 3057 paper grader needs to chill out on taking off a ton of points on a paper that I put so much damn time into jeez
Asian girl in IC engine...i think you’re cute, what’s your name?
Due to recent budget cuts, Georgia Tech has been forced to make some hard decisions.
The ISyE School will henceforth be closed down.
All ISyE majors are required to take their LAWN’s reluctance to admit us to the Internet is something that many students at Tech have tapped a toe at once or twice. Whether your goal is to start up a night-long raid or just look up an assignment, up until now, LAWN (Local Area Wireless & Walkup Network) has required all its users to log in before showing them anything more than the now familiar white, green and yellow screen.

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EOCC
LED lights offer potential green alternative

By Andrew Nelson
Contributing Writer

What used to only be found in instrument panels and holiday light bulb strings, LED (light-emitting diode) technology shows great promise in lighting the way for Tech to become a more economic and environmentally-friendly campus.

Facilities faculty has completed several lighting rennovations already on campus, including converting all the lighting in the Tennebann Auditorium to LED lamps. This project alone reduced electricity consumption by 39.2%, and light per square foot more than doubled. They also installed LED can lights on the second floor of the Price Library.

"We are currently working on several projects in the IBB building to convert high ceiling fixtures to LED lights, and eventually expand this to other buildings. The architecture building is next on the list," said Stanford Fong, Facilities department Electrical Engineer I.

"Heat, output and energy usage are the greatest factors in LED lights' benefits. Since LED lights don't burn out as quickly and less of the energy emitted is heat (versus incandescent for stage work, which is often under extremely hot rows of lights). Since less energy is emitted as heat, it does not require as much energy to produce the light, saving money and the planet.

Thanks to a recent cost drop in semiconductor material, they are now a viable option for wide-spread use. This has opened a new window for mass-emasplishment of LEDs, like in department stores. Wal-mart has recently begun improvingment to energy and cost savings by installing LED lighting in their refrigerated cases. The new fixtures and dimming capabilities could net 66% in energy savings. If 500 Wal-mart stores were to use these, it would reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 35 million pounds and save the company $2.6 million per year. The light could add over three years to the refrigerated cases' lifetime.

LED lighting can also be applied to large parking lot lights, medium highway and walkway lights and small classroom lights. They can last over 50,000 hours (over five years) and the lower power consumption with equal or greater luminosity than conventional lighting could save big money for Tech.

"LEDs save a great deal over incandescent lamps. For example, the can light we are installing in the Petit building is a 12-Watt LED can light, as compared to an 80-Watt incandescent in lighting output," said Fong. Such a fixture could save 85% in energy.

Facilities will soon procure a street light test unit to evaluate more demanding applications on campus such as streetlights, emergency lights and shop lights. Thanks to high-frequency and longevity, any light fixture that is on a great deal of time or in too many locations is a good candidate for an LED application.

Indoor lighting sees a change for the better as well. The pervasive use of fluorescent lighting in classrooms has garnered criticism for eye strain and headaches from the (through too fast to notice) lights' high-frequency flickering; however, LED lighting is flicker-free. Fluorescent lamps are also less efficient, less longevous, and less environmentally friendly (they contain mercury). In this sense, changing the lights may actually directly improve student and faculty performance.

Tech has been a leading institution in LED technology. In 2002, ACE professor Russell D'Souza earned the highest national honor in science, the National Medal of Technology for his work in developing and commercializing LEDs in applications like traffic lights and automotive lighting.

More recently, a top international chemical company, Solvay, has joined with the University's Center for Organic Photonics and Electronics (COPE) in organic applications of LEDs.

"The Enterprise Innovation Institute at Georgia Tech–Savannah recently helped the city of Savannah evaluate its environmental impact. Savannah accepted the Enterprise's energy strategy, and it now uses a revolving loan fund to energy its renovation projects, which will ultimately repay the city through energy savings.

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H1N1 from page 7

due to H1N1, as a doctor’s note verifying the illness was all Fisher had to provide.

Another statement on the H1N1 page says, “Fortunately, we are learning that this new flu seems to be causing mostly moderate, uncomplicated illnesses in the U.S., with most people recovering without medical intervention. We all are advised to remain alert not alarmed...and always practice good hand washing.”

The symptoms of the Swine Flu include fatigue, fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and runny or stuffy nose.

Students that believe that they have the H1N1 Virus are instructed to stay at home and self-isolate themselves until their fever breaks without the help of a fever reducing medication.

The Health Services website also offers a list of emergency health services to contact when Health Services is closed if the students believes that they are be-

Preventing the spread of the H1N1 Virus:
- If you believe you have the virus, stay away from other people as much as possible
- Cover your cough
- Wash your hands frequently and use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer often
- If you know you have the flu and have to leave home, wear a facemask in public
- Sanitize common area items, such as door knobs, with a sanitizer on a regular basis when living with a person with the virus