Virus sickens many

With a computer virus running rampant across Tech's campus, the Office of Information Technology (OIT) has recently been forced to lock the ports of many students' computers. More than 1,000 network accounts have been turned off due to infection in the past week, creating quite a hassle for the large number of affected students.

While having personal internet access turned off is a major inconvenience, especially for newer students who might not realize why their service isn't working, it is commendable that OIT rapidly took the steps necessary to prevent the spread of this detrimental virus. This helped protect further students from being affected.

Although OIT handled the situation well, it does seem slightly ironic that they chose to inform students that their ports were being locked by sending emails to the students' accounts.

It is recommended that any students who have thus far escaped the spread of the latest virus sweeping across campus download a patch, establish a firewall and be wary of attachments from unknown senders.

Six Flags over Tech

The latest offering sponsored by the relatively new Student Life Fund promises to be one of the best (and biggest) things happening for students, by students. Since Ben Folds Five played the Coliseum, O pening the Six Flags amusement park at a deeply discounted price for Tech students is ingenious— not only is it a good way to kick off this year's installment of Ramblin' Nights, but it also promises to provide an environment that will foster community.

The fact that this event is occurring within the first three weeks of the semester shows the hard work and extensive planning that must have been done during the summer. Additionally, the timing could not have been better—at this point in the semester, students are not yet swamped with school work and the campus is still excited to be back. The widespread knowledge of the event, even among students who are not normally involved in campus activities, is a testament to the success of the publicity campaign.

A measure of the night's success will be to look at the number of students at the event on opening night and post-event responses by students. If the event provides as much on the spread of the latest virus sweeping across campus download a patch, establish a firewall and be wary of attachments from unknown senders.
Ten Commandments do not dictate American law

This week, officials removed a 5,300 pound monument en-graved with the Ten Commandments from the rotunda of the Alabama Judicial Building. The chief justice of the state supreme court, Judge Roy Moore, placed the granite block therein August 1, 2003. When asked if the monument violated the principles of separation of church and state, Moore said no. The Ten Commandments, and Judeo-Christian beliefs in general, he said, form the “moral foundation of our law,” a federal dis-trict court disagreed.

“Terrorist ruled that the monument can remain,” Judge John H. LeMond wrote in a two-page order. “[Moore’s] purpose in displaying the monument was non-secular and because the monument’s primary effect is to advance religion.”

Moore appealed the decision, lost and then disregarded a court order to remove the granite block.

This week, the judge, who cites judges such as Justice Thurgood Marshall as role models, says he plans to pursue a career in law enforcement. Moore promises to remain a judge, though.

“I can see some benefit from it in the future, but right now it isn’t something I can really think about. I have my life, my spouse and those things in my possession. The same can be said of the Judeo-Christian equation? Why isn’t there a law against that?”

Robert Provenok
Math, ES Senior

“I hate it.”

Daniel Amick
News Editor

“I covet your car, your house, your market share and I’m going to secure it for myself.”

“Tigers fans can now purchase tickets for next season. Monday and the temperature is shining and the Tigers are drawing quite the crowd (and high prices on eBay).”

Josepha Ikhumets
BME Junior

“I don’t like it because it wasn’t well publicized.”

Whitney McIntyre
Bio Sophomore

“My fellow Tech students, I am assistant Wodruff N orth. I have wanted to live in Wodruff ever since I visited it in my earlier years at Tech. However, when I moved into Wodruff this fall, I became a victim, due to the irresponsibility of many others. This was my move-in process: The elevator in Wodruff North would not close properly; I figured that it was probably the result of repeated usage due to move-in. However, when I stepped into my room, my suit-case immediately mentioned the broken, “Fine,” I thought, I just would have to rely on manpower. No desk appointment—Wodruff Dinning Hall is all under renovation. We must walk to the Student Center, which is at least 10 minutes away. As I walked toward it, I began to wonder if this was a scheme to reduce students’ consumption of food. To my surprise, or lack thereof, many of my neighbors have experienced the same broken AC problem.

To begin my adventure of fixing these problems, my suit-case and I sent at least three online maintenance requests. After no response, we called Housing. The response we received was the following:—Did you send in a maintenance request? How many times did you send it? Are you sure that you entered the request correctly?—The attitude was a classic example of finger pointing. Of course, they might have been after a lot of dollars in increased tuition, who failed to complete a simple online request.

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Through the looking glass

Five-year curriculum best option for engineering

Ask most Georgia Tech students about their four-year trek to an engineering degree and all you get is blank stares and muffled giggling. The reason is not that they haven’t considered what it takes to complete their degree, but rather that the curriculum has steadily grown and changed until it can no longer be called a traditional four-year program.

Simple arithmetic: on the number of hours required for a BS in ME or EE shows that a student has to average 17 hours per semester, which is a good deal more than the average student is willing to take. This is in involvement in student organizations, intramurals and the cooperative program or internships, and you’re typically looking at a full five or six years.

The most important aspect to redefining Georgia Tech’s engineering degrees as five-year programs is the opportunity to improve the quality of instruction that we receive. Georgia Tech (and many schools of her caliber) show a gradual trend in their caliber) show a gradual trend in their major courses, something nothing in their non-major classes. I’ll admit I’m guilty of skimming my way through them just because I could — had I a better preparation in physics, I probably would have found these as more interesting and paid attention (students in my ECE 3710 class, disregard the last comment). The ripple effect is that students are actually less prepared for their “more immediate employment” and will have to relearn fundamentals or simply proceed in ignorance. The better option is to stop squeezing out the fundamentals and redefine the system so that graduating in five years no longer carries a stigma.

What about the preparation for graduate school? I see a distinct disparity among those students in my classes who have adequate exposure to higher mathematics courses and those who do not. As a double major, my only task is to translate mathematics to engineer-speak before I can begin grasping the desired engineering concepts. Most international students are also well prepared in subjects that never see the light of day in U.S. schools, while students without proper preparation are basically up a creek trying to learn two or three courses of mathematics before even competing as an engineer. Quite frankly, a snowball has a better chance in Hades than teaching cryptography, heavy in applied number theory and algorithms, to a student who knows only smatterings of calculus and pseudocode.

There are obvious reasons that the curriculum will not soon be recognized as a 5-year degree: Georgia Tech HOPE program that is already breaking the bank is only one. Regrettably, another is that professors whose only interest is to perform research get off easier by dumbing down their upper-level classes (I’ll address grades in another day). Appearing to them with easy grades takes far less effort than preparing and supporting an interesting and engaging presentation of the material. I throw no slamming comments from a bitter soul, but a call for re-evaluating a system to which I proudly belong.

Georgia Tech has sought ways to compete with schools like J.T. and Stanford, but the intrinsic liability of being a public institute, dependent on increasingly nonexistent state funds.

The administration is doing a wonderful job of propelling Georgia Tech into the 21st century as a top American school; I think these successes will be to break the mold on the old four-year engineering curriculum. The best engineer will be the one capable of learning new ideas from basic principles as well as performing specific skills upon graduation, a learning task requiring five years in practicality.

Letter

AC problems aside, Housing failed to surprise me when I found out that I had to use the ULC laundry room to wash my clothes. Of course, when both ULC residents and W oodruff residents all tried to jam their clothes into the few laundry rooms nearby, there resulted hours and hours of waiting and queuing.

Who would have thought it? Of course, it had to be the students who paid the increased tuition. How could it possibly be the unprepared and finger-pointing Housing personnel and staff?

The last issue I would like to stray away from fire alarms. On Sunday, August 24, I was awakened by a fire alarm at about 7:30 a.m. Later that same day, another fire alarm occurred around midnight. So far, there have been at least four fire alarms in W oodruff alone, according to my memory. This frequency is obviously too high. I am not blaming Housing for this; however, there must be a source of error. If five students, caused the alarm, then my fellow W oodruff residents need to be more careful. However, if this was caused by a mechanical error, then please, no more finger-pointing and no more wishing that the system would fix itself.

Any might disagree with what just mentioned, yet my protest displays mere bits and pieces of the truth that many other residents have witnessed. I guarantee you this much.

Alani Michaels

ALAN MICHAELS

COLUMNIST