

CONTINUING tech



Computing and Online Technology
for Continuing Education Students
at Eastern Illinois University

This is Continuing tech, a fresh information source for EIU continuing education students

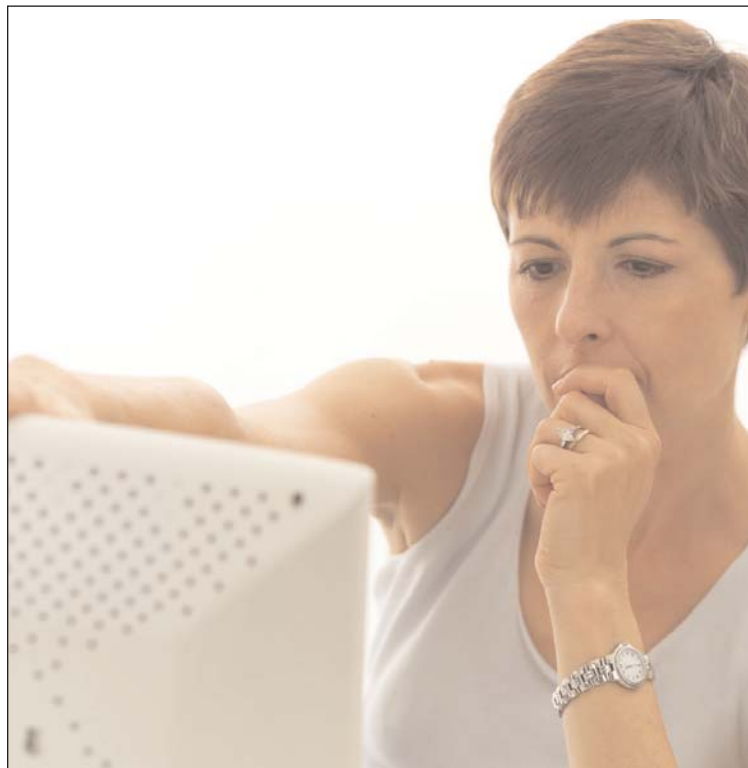
School of Continuing Ed., ITS collaborating on new publication

It is my great pleasure to introduce the first School of Continuing Education Continuing tech newsletter. The School of Continuing Education greatly appreciates Information Technology Services' collaboration on this important initiative. The School of Continuing Education is excited that the Higher Learning Commission last spring approved three new totally online degree programs, they were:

- Bachelor in General Studies Degree,
- Organization and Professional Development Program, and
- RN to BS Nursing Degree

In addition to these programs we offer a wide variety of online classes for your convenience.

The School of Continuing Education is pleased to work with Information Technology Services in providing technology support to offer these classes for you. As we are in a global lifelong learning society, expanding one's higher education and taking higher educa-



tion continuing education classes is a necessity. If you have any questions or issues related to our technology offerings and/or support please contact 581-7227 or e-mail scetech@eiu.edu.

The School of Continuing Education is the bridge to the off-campus students to meet your higher education continu-

ing education needs. Continued success in your higher education activities and please contact us if you have any questions or how we can be of service to you.

Thank you.

William C. Hine
Dean, School of Continuing Education

New ITS newsletter will keep students up to date on tech

Welcome to Continuing tech — a publication provided by Information Technology Services. This newsletter, a collaboration between ITS and the School of Continuing Education, is directed toward Eastern students enrolled in courses provided by the School of Continuing Education.

Our goal is to provide you with information about EIU technology that will prove valuable in your quest for a college education with Eastern Illinois University and in particular, the School of Continuing Education.

Current plans are to publish this newsletter once each semester. We welcome your feedback, as well as suggestions on articles that may be helpful for you. Please send that information to tlzgonina@eiu.edu.

Thank you,

Kathy Reed
Interim Associate Vice President, ITS

Technical assistance for students is just a telephone call away

If you are an off-campus student experiencing problems with your home computer or your connection to Eastern's information technology resources, you may wonder

where to turn to get help. The answer is to call SCE Technology Support information (Call or contact SCE Technology Support at 217-581-7227).

When you call SCE Technology Support for assistance, please have the following information ready in order to expedite assistance:

E-number

Your e-number is your essential means of personal identification at Eastern. To protect

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Assistance

against identity theft, the university limits the use of Social Security Numbers, substituting a nine-digit e-number instead.

This number can be found on your Panther Card. Use it to identify yourself in all communication with SCE Technology Support.

SCE technical assistance contact:

The School of Continuing Education technical assistance contact phone number for students is 217 581-7227.

By e-mail, students can access SCE technical assistance at scetech@eiu.edu

NetID

Every Eastern student also is assigned a NetID when he or she is first admitted.

Your NetID is the same as

your EIU e-mail address without the @eiu.edu suffix.

Your NetID is a combination of your initials and last name and possibly a number. For example, if your name is John Q. Student, your NetID might be `jqstudent`.

If you don't know what your NetID is, search for yourself in Eastern's Web page phone book (top of the university's main Web page at www.eiu.edu).

Find your entry, which has (Student) or (Gradstu) after your name. Click on "Additional Information." Your NetID will be listed in the pop-up window (example):

Student, John Q. (Student)
Phone: <no entry>

Email: `jqstudent@eiu.edu`
www: `http://pen.eiu.edu/~jqstudent`

Curriculum: Technology
NetID: `jqstudent`

WebCT8: What you need to make online learning work

Eastern's community of Continuing Education students is diverse and stretches across the United States.

But one thing all CE students share in common is their learning lifeline to the university: WebCT8.

WebCT8 is an interactive, online learning management system that provides a virtual learning environment to deliver classroom instruction to distant students online. WebCT8, the version employed at Eastern, gives instructors a tool to manage their course materials and helpful resources to communicate with students and share information. It gives students an on-demand, environment that is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for completing classwork.

WebCT8 is easy to use, and the newest version has made navigating courses simple. Having the right computer hardware, software and settings, however, will make WebCT8 even more student friendly.

Here are some technical specifications to optimize your WebCT8 experience:

Internet connection

To take online courses at Eastern you must have access to a computer with an Internet connection and e-mail. A broadband Internet connection is preferred.

For WebCT8 to function properly, your computer must use a compatible operating system and browser. A variety of supported browsers, plug-ins and operating systems have been validated for use with WebCT8. Other browsers and operating systems may work but are not supported.



Operating systems/browsers

WebCT8 will function with the following browser/operating system configurations:

- Microsoft Internet Explorer Version 8 browser with Windows 7, Windows Vista Desktop and Windows XP operating systems.

- Firefox 3.5 and 3.6 browsers with Windows XP, Windows Vista Desktop and Windows 7.

- Apple Safari 4 browser with Mac OS10.6, 10.5 and 10.4 operating systems.

Before logging in to WebCT8, it is recommended that you perform a browser check to see if your computer is properly configured. This browser check function is located on the WebCT8 login page.

Many of the problems students encounter, such as login failures or course tools not working properly, can be traced to browser configuration. Your web browser must be configured so that:

- Java and JavaScript are enabled
- Cache is set to reload the page each time
- Cookies are enabled
- Pop-up blockers are disabled

Java

Java is an application that

enables many of the tools in WebCT8 to function. You may already have a version of Java on your computer. It is important that you:

- Have a compatible version of Java installed

- Remove any other versions of Java

- Enable Java and JavaScript

- Turn off any automatic updates of Java

WebCT8 supports these versions of the Java :

- Sun 1.4.2 (1.4.2_06 minimum)

- Sun 1.4.3

- Sun 1.5.x (excluding 1.5.0_02)

- Sun 1.6.x

- IBM 1.4.x

- Apple 1.3.x

- Apple 1.4.x

To learn which version of Java is on your computer, click the Start button, then Settings then Control Panel. Double-click the Java icon. Then click the About button for details.

Having more than one version of Java can cause problems in WebCT8. Remove any versions other than one of the recommended ones. Click the Start button, then Settings then Control Panel. Double-click Add or Remove Programs and delete any previous versions of Java. Once you install a recom-

mended version and remove any others, make sure Java and JavaScript are enabled.

Do not download newer versions of Java before they have been validated, as this could cause compatibility problems. Turn off automatic Java updates:

On the Start menu, click Settings and Control Panel.

Double-click Java (or Java Plug-in).

Click Update.

Make sure the checkbox next to Check for Updates Automatically is unchecked.

Click Apply.

Close the Java Plug-in Control Panel window.

Pop-ups

Pop-up blocking programs must be disabled or uninstalled for WebCT8. These programs serve to block unwanted advertisements, but they also prevent many of WebCT8's course tools from working, especially Mail, Discussion and Quiz.

If you have installed a pop-up blocker on your PC, locate the program on your hard drive and follow the vendor's instructions to disable or uninstall it.

If you are uncertain, open My Computer, double-click Hard Drive and double-click Program Files. Look for programs with "pop-up" in the title. Disable or uninstall any such programs.

Pop-up blocking tools also may be bundled with some Internet service provider software, browsers, and anti-virus and security software. If you remove all known pop-up blockers but still are unable to open a link in an online course, make certain any pop-up blocking tools and firewalls have been turned off. Common soft-

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WebCT8

ware packages that contain pop-up blocking tools include Earthlink, Firefox, Google Toolbar, Internet Explorer, McAfee Internet Security Suite, Mozilla, MSN Toolbar, Netscape, Norton Internet Security, Safari and Yahoo! Toolbar.

Other software

Because of the nature of the assignments they find themselves working on, students using WebCT8 also should have word-processing software, as well as a PDF-reader such as Adobe Acrobat Reader.

Hardware

System requirements to operate WebCT8 include:

Minimum Pentium II 750 MHz processor

Minimum 128 MB RAM (128 required for Windows XP users)

Sound card and speakers/headphones

CD-ROM drive

But just as important as software or hardware when it comes to success as a continuing education student is your relationship with your faculty member, says ITS WebCT specialist, Janel Moore.

“If you’re having an error problem with WebCT, especially if you’re a distance education student, get in touch with your instructor,” she said. “If they don’t have the answer, they can help mediate the problem. Keep them involved in what’s going on. Always allow time. Don’t work up to the deadline; allow yourself time so you have time to finish.”

Protect your computer and yourself when working online

As a continuing education student, your computer and Internet connection are your link to Eastern.

But the Internet can be a dangerous place, filled with viruses, scams and schemes.

Protecting your computer and yourself is essential -- and fortunately, not difficult, if you know what to do.

Operating system updates

Staying safe online starts with keeping your computer’s operating system up to date.

Whether you have a PC with Windows or a Macintosh, operating system updates are made available at regular intervals to correct flaws in operating systems, deal with new threats and incorporate technical improvements.

Instructions on how to update your computer’s operating system can be found on the Information Technology Services’ website at http://its.eiu.edu/security/os_updates.php

Antivirus software

It’s also essential that you install an antivirus program on your computer, whether it has a Windows or Mac operating system, to protect against both old and new virus threats that can slow or damage your computer.

Several products are available for purchase, and Symantec and McAfee are among the most popular. You also can download free antivirus programs, too, among them avast! and AVG. Microsoft Security Essentials provides several security solutions for Windows users.

“But updates and antivirus software are not enough,” said Eastern’s Security Officer, Adam Dodge of ITS. “You have

A glossary of the bad things that can infect your computer:

Information Technology Services at Eastern strives to provide you with the most secure network possible. A safe computing environment at Eastern is dependent on the vigilance of both the ITS staff and the employees and students who access the network. There are a number of steps that you can take to help protect your privacy and ensure the safety of your computer.

■ **Hacking:** Malicious individuals may exploit the security breaches in your computer software in order to steal your personal information such as passwords and credit card numbers. Hackers may also attempt to secretly install programs on your computer designed to abuse your Internet connection.

■ **Malware:** Malware is a term used to describe any kind of malicious software that proves detrimental to your computing experience, such as viruses and worms.

■ **Viruses:** Computer viruses are programs that install themselves onto a computer for the purpose of damaging computer files and copying themselves to other computers.

■ **Worms:** Computer worms are typically installed when a user opens an infected e-mail attachment or clicks on an Internet link to an infected Web page. Worms scan electronic address books on your computer for the purpose of sending copies of themselves to other people.

■ **Adware:** Adware programs are installed on your computer for the purpose of displaying advertisements in separate pop-up windows.

■ **Spyware:** Spyware programs utilize your machine resources and Internet connection in order to relay information about your Web browsing habits to a parent company.

to practice safe browsing and computer habits.”

One particular danger involves e-mail.

Never open an attachment on an e-mail that you receive from

Configuring your Windows machine for Microsoft updates:

To configure the automatic updates feature:

On the Start menu in the lower left corner of your monitor screen, right-click My Computer and then click Properties on the dialogue box that pops up. Click the Automatic Updates tab in the next dialogue box that appears, then click Notify Me Before Downloading Any Updates and Notify Me Again Before Installing Them On My Computer.

When you configure this setting, Automatic Updates will check the Windows Updates site periodically for critical updates while the computer is connected to the Internet but the connection to the Internet is not being used.

After Automatic Updates has compiled a list of available updates, the list will be displayed in Internet Explorer. Click any updates that you want to download. Automatic Updates downloads only the updates that you select. When the download is complete, you will be prompted to install the updates. Some updates require that you restart the computer.

If you do not select updates from the list, the updates will not be displayed in any lists that Automatic Updates generates in the future. To unhide the updates, click Restore Hidden Items on the Automatic Updates tab to view the items.

an unknown sender. E-mail attachments are often used to transmit viruses and malware intended to infiltrate your computer, and opening an attachment can release the infection onto your machine. Other malicious individuals may send e-mails seeking personal information about you such as your username or password that they will later use to access your account or steal your identity.

“If you are not expecting an e-mail or don’t know who sent

one, just delete it,” said Dodge. “ITS and Eastern will never send you an e-mail asking for your username or password.” If you have a concern, you can contact SCE Technology Support information (Call or contact SCE Technology Support at 217-581-7227) or check the e-mail verification page on the ITS website <http://its.eiu.edu/> where all official Eastern e-mails are verified.

But there are other risks as well, and social media sites such as Facebook are among the newest of them.

“Social networking sites are a favorite of those trying to infect computers or install viruses,” said Dodge. “What will happen is, a friend on Facebook will get infected and the virus will use their contact list to send out fake messages that say, ‘I just found this great app, check it out,’ and since it has your friend’s name on it, you click it and it will infect your computer.”

Another new threat: rogue viruses. These are pop-ups that appear on your screen telling you that your computer is infected and that you need to click the pop-up to fix the problem. Ironically, your computer isn’t infected, but when you click the pop-up, you download the virus.

“You really need to be careful online,” Dodge said. “There are a lot of malware sites that will try to infect your machine, so you need to watch out where you are going. Stick to the major websites and known companies. Avoid random clicking. Google has a safe browsing program. If you call up a website

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How to get access to your student information on PAWS

PAWS (Panther Access to Web Services) is an online application that enables students (as well as faculty and staff) to access a variety of information via the Internet. All you need is a computer with access to the Internet and a Web browser.

PAWS is available 24 hours a day except 8-10 a.m. Sundays and other times with prior notification to your EIU e-mail address.

Through PAWS, students can securely:

- Register for classes
- Look at student payroll records
- Pay university bills
- View the course catalog
- Access financial aid
- Search the class schedule
- See records and transcripts
- Obtain your automobile parking pass

From the main EIU home page, www.eiu.edu, click on PAWS (Fig. 1)

Click Login to PAWS on the screen that appears. (Fig. 2)

Login to PAWS (Fig. 3). You will need your NetID and password.

More information about PAWS is available at <http://www.eiu.edu/paws/> (Fig. 4).

Please call SCE Technology Support information (Call or contact SCE Technology Support at 217-581-7227) if you have forgotten your Net ID or password or are having problems signing on to PAWS.

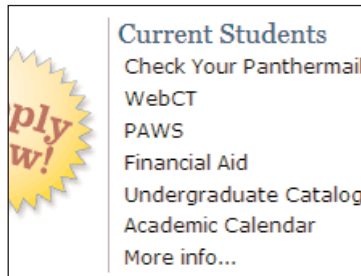


Figure 1



Figure 2

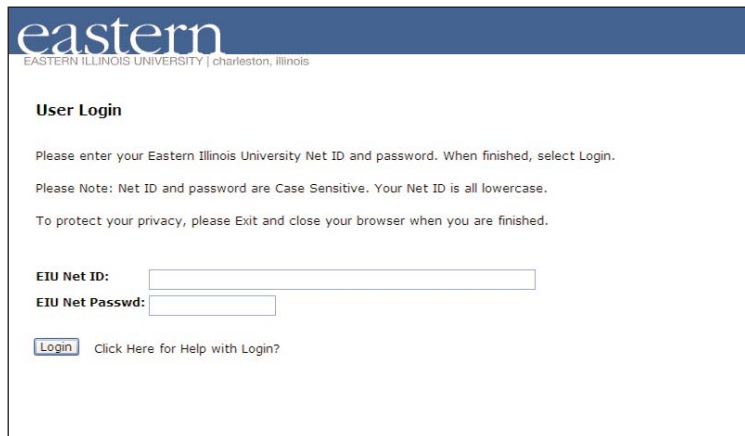


Figure 3

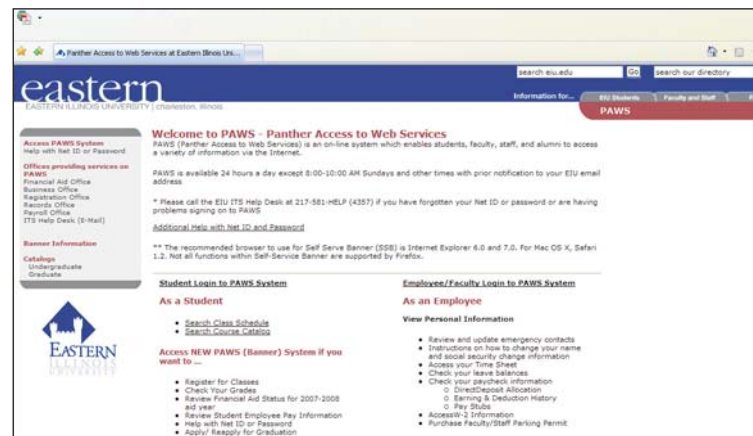


Figure 4

Student Guide provides valuable information about EIU technology

Eastern Illinois University is committed to providing the resources and services necessary to keep its students on the leading edge of the use of technology.

To enhance the learning environment, Eastern has invested in a number of resources, among them, an online student technology guide.

This guide is intended to provide you with basic information

that will help you get started using the many technological resources available at Eastern. It also serves as a reference guide for determining how and where to access specific technology services. Information ranges from the types of facilities available and where they are located, to how to obtain assistance and additional guidance.

The Student Guide can be accessed at this [link](#).

Protect

that is known to be infected with a virus, it will warn you." How will you know if you are infected?

"Watch your computer," said Dodge. "If it's running slow or if it crashes a lot or you have a lot of pop-ups, chances are you have a virus. And it's a lot easier to prevent getting one in the first place than it is to get rid of it."

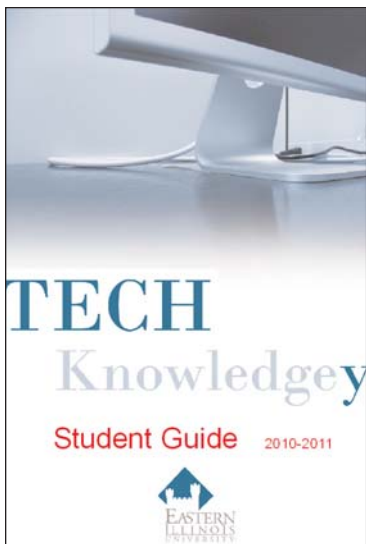
Passwords

Practice good password habits, too. When picking a password, you should be sure to choose one that is easy for you to remember but would be hard for others to guess. Don't pick a simple word as your password. Try using an acronym, made up of the first letters of the words in a phrase, with some numbers and keyboard characters added in, instead. Also, avoid using the same password on multiple sites.

The rules for passwords at Eastern:

- The first character of your password must be alphabetic.
- Your password must be a mix of upper and lower case letters.
- Your password must contain at least one number.
- Your password must be at least eight characters long.
- Your password must contain at least one special character from the following list: ! % * - ?
- Your password may not be longer than 15 characters total.

The ITS website has a page about passwords <http://its.eiu.edu/security/passwords.php> and what constitutes a good one.



Computers: The technology to be a successful student

Students at Eastern frequently ask what type of personal computer they need. While the university does not require most on-campus students to have their own PC, for continuing education students who do their classwork mostly from home, a computer is a necessity.

For students about to purchase a computer, Eastern makes recommendations for minimum specifications, which will be academically appropriate and compatible with the campus network.

Any brand-name personal computer currently available off the shelf at retail will function on the Eastern network and meet your basic academic needs. Computers purchased within the last two or three years should work properly, too.

Whether you use a desktop or a laptop computer is up to you, too, and is a matter of convenience.

You need not spend thousands of dollars for a computer, as long as your machine meets these minimum guidelines established by Eastern's Information Technology Services department:

Hardware

These are the minimum recommended specifications for a desktop PC:

Processor: 2 GHz or better
Screen: Your preference
Video: Directx 9 capable 3D video
Memory: 2GB or more. (3GB for 32bit Windows and 4GB for 64bit Windows)
Hard Disk Drive: 160 GB or better
Floppy Drive: None (We recommend students purchase a 128MB or larger USB flash drive)
Optical Drive: DVD burner or DVD combo
Operating System: Microsoft Windows 7 / Microsoft Windows Vista / Microsoft Windows XP Pro / Mac OSX / Kubuntu



Linux

Antivirus Software: Symantec, Norton or free software such as AVG.

Network Adapter: Integrated 10/100 Ethernet

These are the minimum recommended specifications for a laptop PC:

Processor: 1.6 GHz or better
Screen: Your preference
Video: Directx 9 capable 3D Video
Memory: 2 GB or more. (3GB for 32bit Windows and 4GB for 64bit Windows)
Hard Disk Drive: 160 GB or better
Floppy Drive: None (We recommend students purchase a 128MB or larger USB flash drive)
Optical Drive: DVD burner or DVD combo
Operation System: Microsoft Windows 7 / Microsoft Windows Vista / Microsoft Windows XP Pro / Mac OSX / Kubuntu
Linux
Antivirus Software: Symantec, Norton or free software such as AVG.
Network Adapter: Integrated 10/100 Ethernet
Wireless Networking: Integrated 802.11 G or N
All other features are optional and at your discretion.

Considerations when looking at a warranty for a PC or laptop:

A three- or four-year total protection plan limited warranty that covers parts/labor/technical support with three-year or four-year accidental damage protection. Review the websites of computer vendors to determine the limitation to the coverage.

Example of what the total protection plan might cover:

7x24x365 Technical Support from the computer vendor, ensuring a technical expert is available when you need them.
Parts and labor warranty, providing assurance that manufacturing defects will be repaired at no additional costs to you.

Next-business day support for replacement parts.

If the computer is mailed to vendor for repairs, the repaired computer will be returned to consumer in one to two business days.

Accidental damage protection extends the warranty to cover accidental damage such as liquid spills, drops, power surges, or cracked LCD/monitor.

Software packages recommended for a personal computer:

Whatever system you decide to use, your computer will need the capability of working with files for word processing, spreadsheet, graphics, Web browser, file transfer, e-mail, and calendar programs. The following software packages provide these essential capabilities. A new computer gives some assurance of not becoming obsolete in a year or two. If you already have a computer, the following information will allow you to judge whether your present system can meet your current needs.

Software recommended specifications:

PC or clone:

Windows 7 / Windows Vista / Windows XP Pro
Microsoft Office XP, 2003, 2007 or Open Office (openoffice.org)

Macintosh:

Mac OS x (10.5 and above)
Microsoft Office 2003, 2008 or Open Office (openoffice.org)

Browsers:

Information Technology Services offers support for the following Web browsers:
Firefox 3.0 - 3.5
Internet Explorer 7-8
Safari
Google Chrome.

CONTINUING tech

Information Technology Services publishes CONTINUING tech semesterly to provide Continuing Education students information regarding computing resources and activities.

