



Wednesday, February 20, 2002

OU's e-mail server is upgraded

OU's Office of Information Technology (IT) completed an e-mail server upgrade on Sunday, Feb. 17. Chia-Poh Tai, IIT assistant director of operations, answers common questions about the upgrade.

Q: What is the goal of the e-mail upgrade?

A: The main purpose is to create a more stable and reliable e-mail server environment.

Q: What instability issues in the e-mail system are you addressing with the new system?

A: Mainly, our goal is to reduce for users the number of error messages when receiving or sending e-mail.

Q: Preparation for this upgrade involved "cleaning up" 10,000 accounts that were no longer in use. Would you explain that process?

A: A lot of planning, research, analysis and verification went into the cleaning process. We want to make sure we don't disturb anyone who has a relationship with the university in Banner. For people who have relationship with the university but are not in Banner, we also are taking steps to make sure we keep their account. A notification message was sent to each of the 10,000 accounts and a 10-day grace period was given to allow users to contact the IT Help Desk in case they were not on our list. We are logging and handling each of the users responding to the account deletion notice.

Q: Why was the e-mail system so unstable?

A: An operating system glitch was spotted and then confirmed with the vendor. The e-mail server gets overburdened when there is an excessive amount of requests from users to check e-mail.

Q: Any other problems that you're trying to address with this upgrade?

A: No.

Q: What was going on around Jan. 21 when many OU users couldn't access Web mail and the university could not receive e-mails?

A: We encountered an unforeseen circumstance that caused the upgrade to take longer than we expected. In deciding whether to continue with the upgrade or bring back the service, we decided to bring back the e-mail service first and postpone the upgrade. All e-mail messages received by the mail server that didn't get delivered during the upgrade were delivered after the existing server came back online.

Q: How could e-mail software be enhanced in the future, and when may that happen?

A: We are looking at enhancing our Web mail functionality in response to user demands for the ability to access their e-mail from anywhere. There is no definite date set on this yet, but we are planning on it.

Q: What else do you want the OU community to know about the upgrade?

A: We would like to bring stability and reliability back to our e-mail services while staying current with the industry norm. We also welcome user comments. Users can send their comments or suggestions to helpdesk@oakland.edu.

Q: How can OU users get help if they have trouble with e-mail?

A: Users should check the **IT** Web site for the most up-to-date information on the e-mail server upgrade. Problem reporting should go to helpdesk@oakland.edu.

SUMMARY

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