

# IRM NEWS

(Your new technology organization is changing its name;  
Our newsletter will also have a new name— starting in December)

September 2001

Volume 3, Number 3

## Your New Technology Organization



*Dr. John McGowan, CIO*

Dear Colleagues, Students and Staff Members,

It is a pleasure to have been invited to join the FIU community. I was impressed by the energy and the potential of this University— things that quickly manifested themselves in discussions with many of you whom I was fortunate enough to meet during the interview process, and during the past few months. I was drawn to your University because of the vision statement that you have defined for FIU. And, I would like to focus on the key words of that statement because they also support the theme of what a technology organization must become to support your vision.

These five words summarize FIU’s vision: TOP, PUBLIC, URBAN, RESEARCH, UNIVERSITY.

**TOP:** *Recognized in national rankings as one of the top public urban research universities.* If it is to become a top university, it is imperative that the underlying technology be available to support the instructional, research and business functions of FIU. This requires a customer-centric organization that is proactive, highly efficient and productive. Your new organization for technology will support you in your mission to become TOP.

**PUBLIC:** *Known for the breadth of its academic programs, affordable*

*tuition, and its engagement with local communities, industries, and governments.* Your new technology organization will support the growth of FIU as an institution of PUBLIC learning. It will facilitate the community’s access to the University’s abundance of academic programs and training opportunities, and likewise enable students and faculty to have cost-effective interaction with South Florida’s diverse cultural, business, and governmental entities.

**URBAN:** *Addresses metropolitan and community issues and contributes to the economic growth and cultural richness of the region. Students, faculty and staff reflect the diversity of the urban region. Students are predominantly non-residential and older than students at traditional universities.* The URBAN focus of FIU’s vision requires that technology be available to support the outreach functions through the development of on-line and collaborative learning. The new technology organization will become involved in the support of the University’s ability to reach out to the community through education initiative support and involvement in programs such as the National Infrastructure Protection Center.

**RESEARCH:** *Faculty recognized as contributing to the discovery, invention, reinterpretation or innovative application of knowledge and technique.* Your new organization for technology will make it a priority to insure that the best computing and networking tools and support are available to support FIU’s expanding RESEARCH activities. The University will continue to foster and partner initiatives like high-speed Internet2 and AMPATH.

**UNIVERSITY:** *“Magistorum et scholarium:” dedicated to teaching and scholarship. Offers a full range of*

*programs from bachelor’s to doctorate, with professional schools, and programs for professional development and life-long learning.*

In addition to ensuring that FIU’s academic mission is supported by a robust, reliable infrastructure of enterprise-wide computing and telecommunications services, your new technology organization will act as a consultant and coordinator for more specific information technology activities and projects carried on by the various UNIVERSITY schools, departments, administrative offices, and research groups. It will actively assist those units in accomplishing their specific objectives, at the same time making certain that overall institutional goals are being set and met.

I look forward to working with you all, and I welcome any input you may have on what you think our new technology organization should be doing as we move on together— toward the TOP. ✨

*John McGowan  
Chief Information Officer  
john.mcgowan@fiu.edu*

### PantherSoft Project Update

The PantherSoft project will implement new PeopleSoft Human Resource/Payroll and Student Administration (Admissions, Financial Aid, Registrar, Bursar and Advisement functions) software. The PantherSoft Project will analyze and improve the many administrative activities that FIU performs. By improving our efficiency, we can devote more time and energy to the things we do best: teaching, research,

*Continued on Page 4*

## What’s Inside

### IRM NEWS

Your New Technology Organization— Dr. John McGowan, CIO . . . . .	1
PantherSoft Project Update . . . . .	1
Suggestions for Dealing With Problem E-mail . . . . .	2
Protect Your Home Computer System! . . . . .	2
Yogi Misir Chosen “Customer Service Employee of the Month” . . . . .	2
The FIU Libraries Systems Department . . . . .	3
TIPS & FAQs. . . . .	4

## Operations & Enterprise Systems

### Suggestions for Dealing with Problem E-mail

IRM/Operations is becoming concerned about the volume of unsolicited commercial/promotional E-mail (SPAM) being received by FIU students and staff. It is also concerned that recipients are not properly distinguishing between annoying SPAM and truly abusive E-mail.

For these reasons, we are establishing a new web page at <http://www.fiu.edu/~irmisc/spam.htm>, which contains suggestions, information, and external links for identifying and preventing E-mail abuse and SPAM.

IRM already has a mailbox at [abuse@fiu.edu](mailto:abuse@fiu.edu) for users to report offensive E-mail. For this to be really effective, though, we have to prioritize carefully the reports we receive. It would be helpful to us if you would be very prudent in making complaints to this box. You can cure many annoying E-mail situations yourself just by following the suggestions shown on our new web page.

If you are not successful in stopping an annoyance problem yourself, or if you feel that you are receiving truly abusive E-mails, then we would like to hear about your

**“You can cure many annoying E-mail situations yourself just by following the suggestions shown on our new web page.”**

situation (including exact copies of sample messages and message headers, and what you have done to try to alleviate the situation).

When they receive your complaint, staff at [abuse@fiu.edu](mailto:abuse@fiu.edu) will determine what can best be done to stop unwanted messages. They will do their best to trace back the messages to their point of origin and deal appropriately with the situation. Sometimes, this may involve complaints to the abuser's/spammer's Internet Service Provider, or, in very extreme cases, calling in requisite law enforcement authorities or blocking all messages from the offending domain so that they cannot enter the FIU E-mail system. \*

*Al Losada  
Director,  
Operations & Enterprise Systems  
[al.losada@fiu.edu](mailto:al.losada@fiu.edu)*

### Protect Your Home Computer System!

Those who have read recent University-wide E-mail, IRM Virus News (<http://www.fiu.edu/~virus>), and other virus alerts will note that the University is very concerned with the threat that computer viruses pose to both enterprise and personal data/systems. Anyone who has contracted a virus (for example, the new SirCam worm that spread very rapidly here at FIU in July and August) knows how damaging and time consuming these attacks can become.

Just recently, we purchased sophisticated McAfee virus protection software that we are now deploying on all FIU servers and desktop machines. Although we are certain that this will give us more protection than before, we could do much, much better if those who connect to us with home computers got “constructively upset” about this problem.

To give you some feel for the gravity of today's Internet security problem, I would encourage you to link to the national Computer Emergency Response Team's (CERT's) advisory “Continuing Threats to Home Users” <http://www.cert.org/advisories/CA-2001-20.html>. This report shares our concern that we cannot adequately protect FIU's computing resources unless users take steps to reasonably protect their home systems. Within the CERT advisory, a link at [http://www.cert.org/tech\\_tips/home\\_networks.html](http://www.cert.org/tech_tips/home_networks.html) points to a “must read” security primer for home users.

One of the primary recommendations of the CERT advisory and security primer is that all home users “install and maintain anti-virus software. Most current anti-virus software products are able to detect and alert the user that an intruder is attempting to install a Trojan horse [virus] program or that one has already been installed.”

Note that it is not enough just to install the anti-virus software. You **must** keep your viral definitions files updated. These are the data files the detection program compares to when trying to protect you against a virus. If you do not update frequently, you will not be protected against any new viruses!

Many anti-virus packages now support automatic updates of virus definitions. CERT recommends using these automatic updates when



### Yogi Misir Chosen June 2001 “Customer Service Employee of the Month”

[from *This Week@FIU*, 6/18/01]

An Assistant Director of Operations in Information Resource Management (IRM), Yogi Misir supervises desktop support, hardware maintenance, the IRM computing labs and the IRM Training Center. He is responsible for the supervision of nearly 90 employees.

Misir earned his bachelor's degree in Business Administration (cum laude) from FIU in 1996. He started his FIU career as an OPS student assistant in the Office of the Executive Vice Provost for Academic Affairs in 1992 and was promoted to coordinator of Budgeting upon graduation. In this capacity, he assisted the director of Budgeting for Academic Affairs in managing the division's USPS and A&P rate reserve and in handling USPS and A&P personnel actions. He developed and maintained computer tracking systems using various software applications. In July 1999, he was promoted to his current position.

He is involved in FIU campus life as a co-instructor for Freshman Experience courses, a United Way ambassador and a co-spokesman for the FIU Suggestion Program Task Force. He was nominated for the 2000 A&P Employee of the Year award. His goals include the improvement of the level of services provided by IRM to FIU faculty, staff and students. Additionally, he hopes to play a leadership role in improving communications between IRM and the University community. He would also like to see FIU become more “student-centric.” \*

*Award*

*Continued on Page 4*

## FIU Libraries

### The FIU Libraries Systems Department

#### Introduction:

The Library Systems Department (Systems) is the computer service/support and software development unit of the Library that deals specifically with library needs and issues. Library Systems supports over 500 PCs at the UP and BBC libraries— two-thirds of them being public access computers where patrons have access to local CDROM databases or can browse the web for their research. Both libraries operate in synchronization with each other, with the Biscayne Bay Library being a mirrored but smaller reflection of the UP Green Library in terms of the physical size and number of computers.

#### Research Lab Support/General Support:

There are eight open research labs available to the public. Library Systems has full responsibilities for their hardware, software and networking needs. One of the more specialized areas with a wide range of involvement from Systems is the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Department. This is a unique area with very high-end computing needs on an assortment of platforms ranging from Windows NT/2000 Dell servers, and DEC Alpha boxes to the Sun Solaris. Systems also supports GIS with programming related to the integration of databases and a web interface.

**“Library Systems supports over 500 PCs at the UP and BBC libraries— two-thirds of them being public access computers where patrons have access to local CDROM databases or can browse the web for their research.”**

Another less well-known area supported by Systems is the small suite of computers in the Disabled Student Services (DSS) Department. This area is located on the Green Library second floor adjacent to the Reference Department. Systems works directly with DSS in integrating hardware and software for the special needs of the users.

Other research lab areas are dedicated to supporting general research. Systems manages a local

CDROM server for the Government Documents Department (which covers many census and United Nations titles); the Reference Department (which covers titles from the social sciences, finance and others); Latin American & Caribbean Information Center; and the Audiovisual Department. Two library instruction classrooms are also connected to the same CDROM server. Currently, there are twenty-five CDROM titles on the Library LAN. However, this is about one-half of the number we had two years ago because many databases are now available on the web.

The Audiovisual (AV) Computer Lab located on the Green Library fifth floor, offers the full *Microsoft Office* suite and will soon offer programming language software, along with select statistical packages. Another service available in the AV lab is the ability for instructors to have their software loaded on the computers for their class assignments. The equivalent setting at the BBC Library is on the first floor just to the right of the library entranceway.

Unique to the Green Library 5th floor area is network access available for any user with a fast Ethernet-enabled laptop. Users are required to have a valid FIU E-mail address and to register the MAC address at <http://airs.fiu.edu>. An RJ-45 data cable can be checked out at the Audiovisual Service Desk.

#### **EZproxy: Connecting remote Library users to licensed databases:**

Many of the library electronic resources that were previously available on the local CDROM network have been made available on the web, directly from the vendors—the main benefit being that e-journals and databases are available wherever there is web access. However, since there is a subscription license agreement, authentication is necessary but sometimes problematic. A typical problem is that a user not on the FIUnet campus network (e.g., coming in via AOL, Bellsouth, or another ISP) will not be able to gain access to certain electronic resources; these users are considered to be at a remote location. A remote location is any computer not directly connected to the FIUnet. Users dialing into FIU with a PPP account to connect to the Internet are on FIUnet.

The solution Systems has implemented is EZproxy. The purpose of EZproxy is to provide a means for remote users to gain access to the licensed databases. Users connect to the EZproxy server in the Library. Then, it connects, on their behalf, to the licensed databases to obtain web



*These Library Systems' CDROM towers can access 28 different CDROM-archived data bases, according to patrons' requests.*

pages, and sends them back to the users. Since EZproxy runs on a machine within the Library, the database vendors see the requests as coming from an IP address from FIU, so it permits access. Naturally, authentication is a key element in order to verify that the end-user is indeed affiliated with FIU and has a valid library card.

#### **Future Library Systems plans:**

Plans are underway to implement wireless connectivity throughout the Libraries. Currently, there is wireless access in the Green Library, fifth floor AV area. On the not too distant horizon, there are plans to allow researchers to check out laptops from the Circulation Desk. This service would be provided to FIU faculty, staff, and currently enrolled students. Patrons studying at interior spaces of the library, away from the labs, would find it much more convenient to have the ability to research material from where they sit; this plan will make that possible.

#### **Collaboration with external library groups:**

Two external organizations with which the Systems department works closely are the Florida Center for Library Automation (FCLA) and the South East Florida Library Information Network (SEFLIN). These two organizations are very supportive and have collaborated with Systems on many projects. Systems also oversees a State grant provided by FCLA to support library technology and increase access for library users.

#### **Visit our web site:**

For further information about our Library Systems Department, please visit our web page at: <http://galileo.fiu.edu> . \*

*George O. Fray  
Coordinator,  
Library Systems  
[george.fray@fiu.edu](mailto:george.fray@fiu.edu)*

## Tips & FAQs

# TIPS

**Q.** Is there any way FIU E-mail addresses could be made to be more sensible or more easily remembered?

**A.** Yes. We are now implementing a scheme where each FIU addressee, including students, will have an electronic mail address of the form: `firstname.lastname@fiu.edu`.

A faculty addressee with the name Juan Morgan and current address `morganj@fiu.edu`, for example,

### Home computers *continued*

available. It is also a good idea occasionally to run a full virus scan on all the disk files in your computer system.

As we announced in June, *FREE* McAfee anti-virus software is available to FIU students/staff for installation on home computers (<http://www.fiu.edu/~irmsc/downloads/downloads.htm>). [This download will not be available to you unless you are off-campus or in University housing!] For your convenience, instructions for download updating of McAfee virus definitions and for running periodic virus scans are being summarized and will soon be available in the Support Center Knowledge Base.

If for some reason you do not care to download the free software, keep in mind that McAfee, Norton and other user-friendly virus protection programs are readily available, at reasonable prices, at many computer and electronics stores.

**DO NOT DELAY!** Please take immediate steps to better protect your home system, and by doing so, to protect the integrity of computing at FIU.

Thanks for your cooperation. ✱

*Robert Holley*  
Editor, IRM News  
[bob.holley@fiu.edu](mailto:bob.holley@fiu.edu)

would also have the address `juan.morgan@fiu.edu`. Where this convention would lead to duplicate addresses, the lastname will be followed by a number to differentiate individuals, e.g., `john.smith01@fiu.edu`.

Those who already have an E-mail address with the old format (`morganj@fiu.edu`) may continue to

**Q.** I sometimes have trouble dialing-in to FIU. Are there any plans to increase the number of ports into the dial-up modem pool?

**A.** Yes. We have just upgraded the dial-up modem pool to add 46 ports



# FIU

*IRM News*

Vol. 3, No. 3 September 2001

**Editor: Robert Holley**  
[irmpubs@fiu.edu](mailto:irmpubs@fiu.edu)

### **Contributors:**

**FIU Chief Information Officer:**  
Dr. John McGowan

**Administrative Computing:**  
Elizabeth Cobb

**FIU Libraries:**  
George Fray

**Operations & Enterprise Systems:**  
Al Losada

# FAQs

for Miami-Dade County (new dial-up number: 305-468-1674) and 46 ports for Broward County (new dial-up number: 954-229-2598).

**Q.** Does the University have an on-line phone book?

**A.** Yes. An up-to-date, on-line, FIU faculty/staff phonebook is at <http://www.fiu.edu/phonebook.html>

### **PantherSoft** *continued*

and service. See our web site at <http://intra.fiu.edu/irm/ac/PeopleSoft/> for some web resources related to the project.

The modular building to house the project team will be ready for occupancy in October. This building is located behind the Children's Center on the west side of the UP Campus. The project team includes both borrowed administrators from key functional offices and systems staff who are dedicated full-time to the project. The project team also includes end-user trainers, documentation specialists (scribes), and consultants.

In addition to the dedicated project team, many special area experts will be recruited to work with the team to make sure that the new systems accommodate every area. Examples of special area experts are key personnel from departments such as Athletics, Budget, International Students, Deans' offices, etc. Since the modular building is not within walking distance for most, a van will be available to pick-up and drop-off folks for meetings.

The project team will determine the scope and plan dates for the project. The implementation of different functional models of the two systems will take place over three years. The University is currently considering the implementation of a third system at a future date for financial functions (GL, Budget, AP, AR, Assets, Projects, Grants, Billing, and Purchasing).

Stay tuned for more information about this important project. ✱

*Elizabeth Cobb*  
Director,  
Administrative Computing  
[elizabeth.cobb@fiu.edu](mailto:elizabeth.cobb@fiu.edu)

## What's Next ..

o LOOK FOR OUR NEXT ISSUE IN DECEMBER, 2001  
o PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR OWN FIU COMPUTING EXPERIENCES TO [irmpubs@fiu.edu](mailto:irmpubs@fiu.edu) FOR PUBLICATION

o REORGANIZING TO SERVE YOU BETTER