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The ultimate student collaboration service, @u.northwestern.edu, has recently expanded to include even more students. The Graduate School recently jumped on board, and now, all incoming eligible students automatically receive an @u.northwestern.edu account.

New to @u

@u.northwestern.edu Presentations, in accompaniment with Docs and Spreadsheets, is the latest collaboration service to be added. In addition, if you’re in a student group and want to better communicate and share documents with group members, you might want to think about activating an @u.northwestern.edu group account.

You can utilize a group account in several ways:

- Coordinate meetings and post project plans and meeting minutes for Wildcat Philanthropy
- Publicize the Wildcat Residence Hall group's fall activity schedule through the calendar publication page
- Inform Wildcat Fraternity members of the upcoming meeting schedule with one click to your user group
- University departments can advertise co-curricular activities to their students
- Transfer group account ownership while keeping group documents for future access

You can also publicize your group’s events on the @u.northwestern.edu Calendars page. Think you or someone you know could benefit from a group account? Submit a Group Account Activation Request form.

r u @ u Yet?

Eligible students are still able to take advantage of the service that includes:

- Increased e-mail storage - multiple GB and growing
- Improved service quality with calendaring, instant messaging, and documents, spreadsheet, and presentation applications

So, if you haven’t activated your account yet, follow these steps to start collaborating with classmates today.
Instant Message Tech Support at Your Fingers

February 2008

Want to know a quick way to get that simple answer to your technical question?

Try LiveHelp Chat Support, the instant message troubleshooting assistance resource recently implemented by the NUIIT Support Center.

Easily accessible from the left navigation bar on the NUIIT home page, the NUIIT Support Center page, and the LiveHelp Chat Support page, the instant message assistance program aims to offer convenient support for basic technical requests.

“This is the perfect tool for anyone – students, faculty, staff, and even parents – to get quick answers to some of the more simple questions,” NUIIT Support Center consultant Matthew Gruhn recently said about LiveHelp. “Users are reacting positively to LiveHelp because they can get support from wherever is most convenient for them.”

Specific issues that can be addressed via LiveChat include, but are not limited to:

- NetID password resets
- Questions about the @u.northwestern.edu service
- Simple configuration questions about e-mail clients, WebMail, or VPN
- Where to find information on the NUIIT Web site

LiveHelp is available during all hours the NUIIT Support Center is open. You can tell whether or not a consultant is available by checking the LiveHelp image. It will read “Online” or “Offline”, as appropriate.

If you try to chat with a consultant after hours, you will be prompted to send an e-mail to consultant@northwestern.edu; the message will be answered the following business day.

Give LiveHelp a try; you’re only one click away from that answer.
Get Geared for Spring Break

February 2008

Whether you’re staying local or hitting the beaches this spring break, it’s critical to protect your tech gadgets before you pack your bags.

NUIT recommends a few simple steps to ensure that your computer and the NU Network are ready for your grand return from that much needed vacation.

Before you leave:

- Turn off your computer and unplug it from the network to ensure safety for your system and the NU Network.
- If you have a laptop, stow it in a secure location.
- Remember to backup your data (now and on a regular basis).
- Unplug all of your technology-related gadgets, including printers and gaming consoles.

When you return:

- Download and install antivirus definitions and any software updates that have become available. You might see a pop-up reminder as there are usually monthly updates.
- Begin spring quarter with a new and secure passphrase/password. As a reminder, make sure it’s easy to remember and hard to hack, and keep it to yourself!

Follow these steps to begin spring quarter with a safe, secure system. Questions? Contact the NUIT Support Center at 847-491-HELP (4357).
Disaster Preparedness, Recovery and Business Continuity
--What I Learned from the 1994 Northridge Earthquake

February 2008

David Kovarik,
Director NUIT Information & Systems
Security/Compliance

Everything I have come to appreciate about disaster preparedness, disaster recovery, and business continuity was realized in a twenty-second window, at 0430 PST, Monday, January 17, 2004, during the Northridge Earthquake, magnitude 6.7 Richter scale.

What did I learn?  Let’s start with a definition of “disaster”.  I believe these few words summarize the concept: “a grave and untimely misfortune”.  The definition can be applied to any number of events: PC hard drive crash (total failure); the Northridge earthquake; complete loss of power at the Evanston Datacenter.  Admittedly, these events are markedly different, but they each resulted in some level of adversity.

Disasters typically occur with little notice, emphasizing the need for “disaster preparedness”.  The more you prepare for a disaster, the smaller the impact it has on personal and business conditions.  In 1986, following the advice of California emergency personnel, I prepared three containers with the recommended supplies (water, canned goods, flashlights and batteries, etc.) and stashed them in different locations within the house.  Eight years later, the earthquake occurred; one of the containers was flattened by falling debris, but we still had provisions for several days.  The time and money invested in preparation helped offset the immediate adverse impact the earthquake had on our personal well-being.

With immediate needs resolved, we looked to “recover” from the damage caused by the earthquake, restoring conditions to those that existed before the disaster, e.g., ensuring doors and windows were functioning, utilities were in working order, sanitation facilities were operating, etc.  After two to three days, in spite of continuous aftershocks, some semblance of normalcy was achieved.

During this time, I was also assisting in the “business continuity” efforts to restore functionality of my employer’s data center and network, ensuring that the business—the largest bank in southern California—continued with as little interruption as possible.  ATMs were needed to provide funds for customers, checks needed to be honored, payments needed to be processed, etc.  Working remotely and using local transportation, we were able to staff the operations centers and branch locations to provide customer services with minimal interruptions.
OK – I agree it’s unlikely we’ll experience an earthquake (hopefully we’re far enough away from the New Madrid fault line); but snowstorms, tornados, and power outages are fairly common occurrences.

Are you prepared?

Read more about emergency preparedness:

Northwestern University Emergency Preparedness
American Red Cross
Illinois Homeland Security
Department of Homeland Security
Citizen Corps
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March 5 – Protecting Privacy: Safe Disposal of Computers and Personal Private Information

Recently thrown out an old computer? Did you remember to properly delete all of your personal private information? Are you sure? Attend this Tech Talk to learn more about:

- Critical disaster recovery techniques
- Backing up options for your vital data
- Plans for Preparedness Month at Northwestern

Register now for this Tech Talk.

April 23 – Spring Cleaning: Remembering the Technology?

The closets and cabinets have been spruced up, but what about your tech gadgets? All tools need regular maintenance to keep them working their best, and computers are no exception. Your machine can continue to run quickly and safely with an easy-to-complete spring cleaning, no matter what the season. Attend this NUIT Tech Talk and learn:

- What aspects of your computer need regular upkeep
- Recommended steps and scheduling of user maintenance
- Suggested programs to run and updates to install

Register now for this Tech Talk.

May 14 – Set Yourself to “Connected” This Summer

Is your computer set for the summer? Did you remember to forward or redirect your e-mail? Make sure to keep your computer safe and yourself connected to Northwestern when you are off campus. Attend this Tech Talk to learn more about:

- Best practices for safe computing while traveling
- Connecting to Northwestern from off campus
- E-mail forwarding and redirecting tips

Register now for this Tech Talk.