FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NUIT implements Secure Sockets Layer e-mail encryption, phases out Kerberos

In the interest of creating a more secure and convenient e-mail environment at Northwestern, NUIT has implemented SSL (Secure Sockets Layer) encryption technology on its main e-mail servers. SSL is being implemented in place of Kerberos password encryption software or plain-text password processing.

Although Kerberos has been used for some time at Northwestern and is an effective network security tool, SSL’s superior features prompted its implementation by NUIT. Users will no longer need to install and configure the Kerberos client to protect passwords. In addition, some current mail clients such as Outlook and Netscape support SSL but do not support Kerberos.

SSL encrypts passwords, making them extremely difficult to decode. Previously, unless Kerberos was used, passwords were sent in clear text. In addition, messages received by a user’s e-mail software will be transmitted from the e-mail server encrypted. Outgoing e-mail messages are sent as clear text.

To help ease the transition for the University community, NUIT is phasing out Kerberos and Kerberized POP (Post Office Protocol) as well as plain-text password processing, over the next 12-15 months. As part of the process, it is strongly recommended that users upgrade their e-mail software to assure compatibility with SSL. Software configuration instructions are available at www.it.northwestern.edu/email/config/.

Questions about SSL can be directed to consultant@northwestern.edu.