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NU Information Technology Retires Original Telnet From Central Email Servers In Favor Of Secure Telnet

On November 19, 2001, NU Information Technology (NUIT) will remove the telnet application from the four central email host computers (hecky, lulu, casbah and merle) in favor of a service that encrypts transmitted data: secure shell (ssh) telnet. The new service is supported by different client software: MacSSH (MacOS) and SSH Secure Shell (Windows).

To avoid interruptions in service, current users of telnet services should install the appropriate client software and begin using the new service as soon as possible before November 19. More information and links to the client software can be found at a special Web page, http://www.tss.northwestern.edu/reference/ssh.html.

The telnet application (both the original and the secure shell variant) is an Internet application for running programs directly on a remote host computer. The original telnet service sends all data between the host and the user's computer in clear text, including the NetID and password used at system logon. Moving NetID and password information over the campus network is a security concern that NUIT has been addressing for the past few years.

Last academic year, NUIT added ssh telnet service on the central email hosts in the first step of replacing the original telnet. The action planned for November 19 will complete this replacement on the central email hosts. No other hosts are affected.

A common use of the telnet function has been by travelers accessing email from sites that do not have Eudora or similar software available. The WebEmail Gateway at http://Webemail.northwestern.edu/ was deployed one year ago to address this need. Now travelers can check their Northwestern email from any computer with a Web browser.

Assistance for telnet users on how to transition to either SSH telnet or the WebEmail Gateway is available from the NUIT Information Center. Call 847-491-HELP for assistance.