

Web Forms Streamline Financial Aid Process

The iTech Enterprise Software Unit's software development team has integrated several financial aid web forms into SOAR.

This integration has improved service to students by eliminating the need for students and counselors to handle paper forms.

In many cases, it saves the student an in-person visit to the Office of Financial Aid.

Forms for Revision Requests, Dependent Care Allowance, and Computer Loan Revisions were integrated into SOAR in October, 2006 after a six-month development period.

Now students may log into SOAR and complete

To view a list of links to online financial aid forms, go to the Office of Financial Aid website:

usm.edu/financialaid/forms.html

a revision form. A checklist is automatically created which allows financial aid staff to query SOAR for the information needed to evaluate the revision requests.

Previously, students retrieved a revision form by printing it from the financial aid website or visiting the financial aid

office.

When they turned in the paper form, a staff member manually created a checklist to track the form and scanned the form into the document storage system.

Eliminating paper forms and manual data entry have reduced the volume of walk-in traffic and

improved processing at the Southern Miss Financial Aid office.

These improvements are the result of a collaborative effort. They would not be possible without the support of creative and dedicated staff from both iTech and the Office of Financial Aid.

Other forms accessible from SOAR include Foundation Scholarship, Summer Aid, and Spring Verification of Prior Enrollment applications.

Financial Aid forms are provided at www.usm.edu/financialaid/forms.html. The Office of Financial Aid homepage is at www.usm.edu/financialaid

Virus Spreads Through Attachment Disguised as E-Greeting

A major new malicious attack is occurring against Internet users, according to Sophos Labs, a global network of virus and spam analysis centers.

New variants of the Dorf computer worm are now using disguises associated with love and greeting cards in order to take over users' PCs and send spam on behalf of hacking gangs.

Subject lines used in the spam campaign include "You're so Far Away", "I Dream of you," "Old Together," and "Dream Date Coupon."

Attached to the emails are files called `flashpostcard.exe` or `greetingcard.exe`, which contain the worm.

Opening the attached files activates the worm, which

sends itself to e-mail addresses found on the now infected computer.

The worm code attempts to download further malicious code from the Internet, to take over the PC, and to convert it into part of a zombie network.

Internet users are warned not to open these attachments -- even if they seem to come from a friend

or loved one -- and to keep the virus protection on their PCs up to date.

To read the complete article on this new security threat and view a list of known subject lines for e-mail messages used to spread the virus, go to: <http://www.sophos.com/pressoffice/news/articles/2007/01/dorflove.htm>

Support for MS Vista, Office '07 to begin in Fall

The university will begin support for Microsoft Windows Vista and Office 2007 in Fall, 2007.

Please do not purchase or install either of these

applications on University-owned computers.

Changes in file formats will render documents created with Office 2007 incompatible with previous

versions of Office. This means that, if you create documents with Office 2007, users who are still working with previous versions of Office may not

be able to read your documents. We will publish further information on support policies for Vista and Office 2007 as it becomes available.