Brock

FOBTECH NEWS

Summer Updates from FOBTECH

Summer is once again behind us and the FOBTECH Team has been busy bringing new features online and improving existing functionality.

The computers in all of the graduate classrooms were upgraded and tweaked over the summer months to make daily operations faster and safer (see article below) while maintaining familiar function to ensure smooth classroom use.

The graduate student computer lab was overhauled this summer replacing the 6 year old systems.

Multiple technologies allowing remote access to your computer/files were implemented. These new features allow you to use your FOB resources from anywhere you can access the internet. This builds on the features already offered through Citrix.

The network in Taro Hall was upgraded over the summer and this allowed for the FOB to become the first Faculty to reside in the "Private Network" at Brock. The private network increases network security by further isolating the FOB from the residences, computer labs, and the internet. The hardware upgrade also provides a faster network connection.

FOBTECH also released a new module to the FOB undergraduate student advisors/students provid-ing online instant degree audits. This project is a first for data sharing between a Faculty and the University Information Systems and hopefully a precursor to further cooperation.

While the new University website project is run centrally, FOTECH is actively participating on the technical committee to ensure a November launch of the new site meets the design goals and needs of the FOB. Porting of the existing FOB web applications to the new site is on schedule for the launch date.

Please read on for details on more projects and new features available now!

Changes for Classroom Computers

The logon behavior of classroom computers across campus (including FOB graduate classroom computers) has changed to allow easier use while providing greater flexibility and security to you.

When you turn on a computer in a classroom, it will automatically log on using a generic user account. This new system alleviates the problems of forgetting to log out at the end of class . This change also resolves the problem of guest lecturers not being able to use classroom computers.

If you wish to log in as yourself , you may still do so. The method for doing so is:

- Log off the generic user while holding down the shift key

- Once the generic user is logged off, release the shift key

- You will be presented with the familiar username and password logon box

Remote Control your Work

Remote control is a large part of the upgrades completed this summer.

The new features give you the ability to work from home or any internet connected PC as long as you meet a few simple requirements.

You can now use your office desktop just as if you were sitting in front of it from the comfort of your home.

Your My Documents folder is now more accessible than ever with the new web based file manager, you can open, save, download, create new, rename, or just move files around.

Citrix of course is still available and better than ever with a faster experience and ever increasing list of applications. Also new for Citrix is the ability to connect from your iPhone for true compu-ting on the go!

See the 2 articles below for more information of the new remote control capabilities.

Remote Desktop Access

There is no reason for any individual to have a computer in his home.
~Ken Olsen, 77

You no longer need to be in your office to use your office computer. FOBTECH has released 2 ways to connect to your desktop computer from the comfort of your home or your laptop when you travel.

You can connect from the web by going to https:// remote.bus.brocku.ca or by double clicking a file that is created and automatically emailed to you.

Once you are connected to your office computer you can run applications and access your files just as if you were at your desk. Your desktop will look just as it did when you left Brock with the same applications running, great for checking in on long running calculations!

For full instructions on how to use these new features see the documents titled "Using Remote Desktop Access" and "Using Remote Desktop Access Website" available on the portal FAQ section now.

Remote My Documents Access

If all you need is access to a file then this is for you!

Using the new file management webpage you can transfer your files to and from just about any other computer that has an internet connection.

Just go to https:// remote.bus.brocku.ca , select the remote My Documents link and log in. Remember to enter your username as *campus\username*.

You will be able to move files at the speed of your internet connection.

This is also a great way to access your files from the classroom.

For full instructions on how to use these new features see the document titled "Using Remote My Documents Access" available on the portal FAQ section now.

How-To Safely Store your Files

Don't let this happen to you!

Hard drives are one of the few remaining components in your computer that have moving parts, and as such they fail more frequently than any other component. The hard drive in your office desktop is <u>not</u> backed up.

External hard drives are even more prone to failure and while USB keys do not have moving parts, they do fail and are easy to lose so they should not be relied upon as a sole source of storage.

To protect yourself against hard drive failure make sure you save all your Brock files to the My Documents folder on your office desktop.

Only you have access to your My Documents folder, and it is replicated in near real-time to another server on the other side of campus.

Back-ups occur numerous times throughout the day and are committed to tape weekly.

Windows 7, Friend or Foe

"Compared with Vista, Windows 7 feels as though every component has been stripped down and polished ."

~Guy Thomas

Windows 7, the successor to Vista is just around the corner. On October 22 most new PC's will ship with 7.

7 can best be described as being what Vista should have been, in fact some argue that 7 is simply a service pack for Vista. All that is important though is that 7 works.

Most software that runs on Vista should run on 7. While not officially supported we were able to successfully install SPSS 17 and SAS 9.2 .

The biggest concerns of compatibility will be with old peripherals such as scanners and printers. As a rule, if they work with Vista they should work with 7.

7 will also help usher in 64bit computing. This means your new computer can use more than 4GB of memory. New 64bit versions of software , including Excel, will allow larger datasets to be analyzed in less time. The best part of 64bit computing is that your existing 32bit software continues to run!

7 is a safe bet for your next computer.

SAS 9.2 is Here

SAS 9.2 is finally here! After a long wait SAS 9.2 is now available.

Instructions for an automatic installation of SAS on your office Desktop are available here.

SAS 9.2 is also available for installation on your laptop. You may sign out the installation media or make an appointment to leave your laptop with us for installation.

Here are some links that explain some of the new features of SAS 9.2:

What's New in the Base SAS 9.2 Language

A Sampler of What's New in Base SAS 9.2

Modernizing Programs with Base SAS 9.2 Enhancements

Factsheet

§sas®

THE POWER TO KNOW®

Lo-Fi Computing

Netbooks are the fastest growing segment in PC sales this year. Some say the netbook's popularity is a function of a weak economy while others say they are simply what people want in a computer today; simple.

Whatever the cause for its popularity a netbook is not a primary computer. Netbooks achieve their diminutive size and price by sacrificing perfor-mance and functionality.

Even the highest end netbooks perform at the level of a low end laptop of 3 years ago. The computer industry has however not stopped creating new ways to use processing power and

netbooks tend to provide a poor experience with common applications and even when using online multi-media.

Netbooks do prove a great traveling partner if communication is the goal. Checking email, web browsing, and basic word processing are a perfect match for the netbooks capabilities. You can leave the DVD's at home though as netbooks do not have built in optical drives. No watching movies on a long flight! Tethered to an appropriate mobile phone (see below) a netbook might be the perfect addition to the cottage.

Contact us:

Please contact us with any questions or concerns regarding this newsletter, your feedback is always appreciated.

The best way to ensure we see your request in a timely fashion is the submit a technical support request through the FOB portal; Click *Tech Support* under the *Utilities* section on the left.

We are often away from our desks for long periods of time while helping other members of the FOB. We will however receive notification of new requests submitted to the portal within minutes and can re-prioritize our routes as necessary.

FOBTECH

TA401

http://www.bus.brocku.ca/portal

FOBTECH@brocku.ca

Email on the Run

There are many phones on the market today that have the ability to check email and your calendar. Our Microsoft Exchange email system supports many of these devices and allows you to check your email or calendar without sitting down at a computer.

While the ubiquitous Blackberry is most commonly associated with mobile email there are many other options available now. Nokia, Motorola, Sony, and HTC all have phones available that work seamlessly with our email system. One of the most popular phones today, the iPhone, also works well.

These devices also offer the ability to surf the web from your phone and some even

Plethora of choices for email on the run

allow you to tether your laptop to provide an internet connection almost anywhere. Most phones also double as MP3 players and some will

allow you to watch video, providing a compact alternative to a laptop on flights or daily commutes.

While picking a compatible phone is important, picking an appropriate data plan is paramount to avoiding massive monthly charges. Using data while traveling can be a **very** expensive endeavor and a quick consultation with your provider could save you thousands of dollars.

If you are thinking of buying one of these phones, stop by and visit us so we can ensure that it will serve your needs as well as verifying compatibility with our email system.