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**SPAM:
searching for
solutions** 1

**Passwords: you
are the weakest
link** 4

**Mail forwarding
caution** 5

**Use your knowledge
to help others** 7

▼ **Libraries**

**In June: temporary
disruptions to
circulation
services** 3

**Japanese journal
articles** 4

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Information Technology

Newsletter

Update: Searching for Solutions to SPAM

The May and June monthly meetings of departmental technical coordinators and the Office of Information Technology's (OIT) mail server administrators were largely devoted to the topic of corralling e-mail SPAM. Everyone's getting plastered with SPAM. Everyone wants to stop it without limiting access to needed information, a challenge considering the international scope and diverse research needs of the University community.

What can OIT do?

OIT Security's SPAM tips and resources Web page was featured in the April 2002 issue of this newsletter. Their page includes the often ignored warning to not respond to SPAM. (Responding lets the sender know that your mailing address is active and being read, resulting in more SPAM.) The Security page is available at: <http://www.umn.edu/oit/security/spam.shtml>

The Office of Information Technology also manages the central e-mail servers and has a role in enforcing University policies related to this service (as does any department that sets up its own mail server). What can OIT's managers of this e-mail service do to help the University community manage their mail inboxes?

- Look for solutions that prevent abusive mail from ever landing in recipients' mailboxes.
- Define abusive e-mail.
- Allow exceptions to any automatic "blocking" system on an individual username basis.

OIT is looking for solutions for blocking e-mail that meet widely agreed upon definitions of abuse yet allows individuals to make exceptions for specific usernames.

<http://www.umn.edu/oit>

One definition of abusive e-mail is that the mail is sent from sites that:

- do not have an “abuse” e-mail address
- are not in the DNS (domain name server) or are not available for reverse lookup. (Running reverse name lookup on a DNS server is also a security step against spoofing; it is done to verify the identify of an IP [Internet Protocol] address of an incoming connection.)

For example, many people have gotten spammed by e-mail from 211.*.* and 218.*.* domains that are not in the DNS. This newsletter editor has received a lot of unwanted e-mail from those domains; two examples are shown in Figure 1. To get the IP numbers you must be able see the e-mail’s full header, portions of which are shown in Figure 1.

E-mail headers

E-mail headers include routing information. Since the route (path) the e-mail took to reach you is long and technical, most e-mail programs are set up to display simple, rather than full, headers. Generally you only need to view the entire header if you or system administrators need to know more about the sender.

When you forward a message, most e-mail programs do not forward the complete header. So if you want to

view the header yourself or send it to a system administrator, you will probably need to turn your e-mail program’s show-entire-header feature on. The “spam.abuse” and “spamcop” Websites are good resources for more e-mail header information.

- This “spamcop” site has information about turning on headers for popular e-mail programs:
<http://spamcop.net/fom-serve/cache/19.html>
- The “spam.abuse” site is a good resource for learning how to find and use headers:
<http://spam.abuse.net/>

Acceptable Use Policy: AUP

The University of Minnesota’s acceptable use policy states: “The University grants members of the University community shared access to these resources in support of accomplishing the University’s mission.” SPAM works against this goal. The policy is available via the Web:

- Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources Academic/Administrative: Policy 2.8.1:
http://www.fpd.finop.umn.edu/groups/ppd/documents/policy/Acceptable_Use.cfm

■ Material for this article provided by Phil Kachelmyer, Frank Grewe, Mary Kelleher

Figure 1: Example e-mail headers



Library Circulation Services

We appreciate your patience and apologize for any inconvenience during the transition period.

W

e are getting ready to introduce a new MNCAT (the library catalog). To switch over to the new MNCAT, the University Libraries must temporarily disrupt some library circulation services.

The new MNCAT

- <http://www.lib.umn.edu/about/mncat/>

Visit this page to read about the upcoming changes to MNCAT.

Ordering

- <http://www.lib.umn.edu/ordering/>

This page has information about ways to order materials through various library services, including:

- Interlibrary Loan**
Request materials not owned by the University of Minnesota Libraries.
- LUMINA to U**
Request library materials to be delivered to your office, etc. (for qualified users only).
- MLAC**
Request materials housed in the Minnesota Library Access Center (MLAC) storage caverns, located in Elmer L. Andersen Library. When you see a MNCAT record that gives MLAC as the location, use the Web address provided in the record to fill out an online request.

- Point-to-Point**
Request materials from a distant campus library to be delivered to a closer library.

Borrowing

- <http://www.lib.umn.edu/borrowing>

This page gives the details you want about:

- Course Reserves**
Borrow materials submitted to the Libraries by instructors for use by enrolled students.
- Recall**
Recall a book currently checked out to another patron.
- Renew**
Extend the due date for materials you have checked out.
- Borrowing Privileges and Fines**
View the general policies for checking out library materials.

Ask Us!

For more information contact AskUs!

- on the Web: <http://infopoint.lib.umn.edu/>
- on the phone: 612.626.2227

■ University Libraries, submitted by Nancy Herther

<http://www.lib.umn.edu/about/mncat/>

Japanese Journal Articles

Title Database Project: <http://eastasian.lib.umn.edu/eal/ealfinder.phtml>

A joint digital project “Japanese Journal Article Title Database” is ready for you to access. This joint effort aims to provide easy and quick access to Japanese journal articles for faculty and students on campus.

We plan to include up to 40 journals held by the East Asian Library that suit faculty’s teaching and research interests and had been excluded by the print index, *Zasshi kiji sakuin*.

Browse or search

The Browse function allows you to view all entries in the database. The search function allows you to search journal titles, article titles, authors and keywords. There is no need to install Japanese software to search or to display since searches can be performed by using Romaji.

Make sure you are using your Web browser with Japanese characters loaded; look for languages settings in the preferences menu.

The URL is: <http://eastasian.lib.umn.edu/eal/ealfinder.phtml>

The project is supported by the Digital Project Division at the University of Minnesota Libraries. The database is designed and maintained by Mr. George Swan from Collection Development and Management. Ms. Ikuko Pastrona, the Japanese language library assistant, proofreads the entries to ensure quality.

Your comments and feedback are most welcome. They will help us to improve our services. Thank you very much.

■ Su Chen, Librarian, East Asian Library, Wilson

You are the weakest link!



You chose a password that’s easy to remember; it includes your pet or child’s name and your street numbers or the date of a family milestone, such as someone’s birthday.

You are so typical! Change that password now. Change it if it includes any dictionary word that’s over 4 characters. Now that your pay statement is available online you have an additional reason to safeguard your Internet access.

HRSS enhancement

If you ignored the e-mail from Carol Carrier, Human Resources Self Service (HRSS), you may want to access the Employee

Services section on the HRSS Website: <http://www.umn.edu/ohr/hrss>

The same old password cautions about leaving the door open to malicious hackers, smug snoopers or determined hooligans still apply. Undoing their mischief or damage means time not spent doing something more useful or enjoyable.

You are a gatekeeper

Everyone who has a University of Minnesota Internet account is a gatekeeper and should be aware of the provisions of the University’s acceptable use policy:

Excerpt from Policy 2.8.1, Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources:

These resources are a valuable community asset to be used and managed responsibly to ensure their integrity, security, and availability for appropriate educational and business activities.

This also means when you leave your computer, you should be sure any secure systems you have accessed cannot be accessed by a passerby.

Mail Forwarding Caution

Do you plan to forward mail sent to your University of Minnesota e-mail address to another e-mail address? Are you sure you'll receive it?

Since the University uses students' e-mail addresses for official communications, it is important that current and former students be able to receive important messages. (For more information see: Using Email as Official Student Communication, Policy 2.2.3, http://www.fpd.finop.umn.edu/groups/ppd/documents/policy/Email_Pol.cfm)

Increasingly staff and faculty also receive information about important University events, opportunities or changes via e-mail.

Hotmail surprise

If you forward your University e-mail, be sure that you can easily receive it at your chosen address. Some mail services, such as hotmail.com, have automatic "junk mail" filters that you can activate. Unfortunately, you

may learn too late that junk mail status has been automatically assigned to mail from "umn.edu" (University of Minnesota), as some hotmail users who selected the "low" option have found.

Test it

If you set forwarding, it's a good idea to use your University address to send e-mail to your non-University address to be sure it arrives in your inbox. An easy way to do this is to use the University's Webmail Pro option, discussed below.

Can you customize?

If you can disable or customize filtering that excludes umn.edu e-mail, then it can be safe to forward your mail. Just be cautious about your Internet/E-mail service provider's future attempts to filter umn.edu e-mail.



Avoid breakable passwords

All students and employees of the University get a centrally assigned Internet ID and password that gives them access to a wide range of resources and to resources that are restricted to current students and employees.

Creative minds could turn that access into their gold mine and wreck mischief or a serious disaster for you and the University.

Here are guidelines to help you select a password that will foil the readily available password-cracking programs or take a long time to break, thus discouraging concentrating on your ID and password.

Do not

- use proper names or words from any dictionary
- use characters that are easily associated with you, such as family birthdates, street addresses or phone numbers

Do

- include at least two numbers if your password is mostly letters, e.g.: b3gm13nd
- take advantage of case sensitive systems (systems that recognize the difference between upper and lower case

letters, such as Aa Bb Zz); and use upper case somewhere other than the first letter, such as: noMORe34

More tips

More security tips are available at the Office of Information Technology's (OIT) Security Website: <http://www.umn.edu/oit/security/>

■ Tips from 1-HELP, OIT's Technology Helpline

The exact menu settings and clickable options change from time to time for all software. Look for these key words and kinds of settings: options, preferences, mail handling, filter, junk mail filter.

June 2002 excerpts from hotmail's FAQ:

"Use MSN Hotmail's new Junk Mail Filter [it] ... automatically sends e-mail it has identified as 'junk' to your Junk Mail folder. You can choose your own level of protection: off, low, high, or exclusive; each with varying degrees of protection. Once e-mail is sent to your Junk Mail folder, messages are automatically deleted after a specified number of days.... Once you have signed in to your account, click Options, and under Mail Handling, click Junk Mail Deletion to choose your deletion options."

Turn UM forwarding on and off

Provided you know your Internet ID and password, you can set the forwarding option for your University account yourself (Figure 1). Links are available from the "Internet Accounts" section of the Academic and Distributed Computing Services Website and directly from the "validate" Web page. Those links are:

- Internet Accounts:
<http://www.umn.edu/adcs/info/accounts.html>
- Validation page: <http://www.umn.edu/validate>

Improved Webmail Pro

If you use another Internet/E-mail service provider to access your e-mail, you can still manage your University of Minnesota e-mail without forwarding it — as long as you know your University of Minnesota Internet ID and password. You can access **Webmail Pro**, the University of Minnesota's Web-based e-mail option, from anywhere on the planet where you have an Internet connection. Webmail Pro is available as a link from many University of Minnesota pages and available directly from this Web page:
<http://www.mail.umn.edu>

The improved Webmail Pro supports custom folders and attachments; and a short "how to" guide is available from the same Website as the Webmail Pro program.

A separate version of Webmail Pro is available for those who use a University department e-mail address rather than their centrally assigned e-mail address or who are students on the Duluth, Crookston or Morris campuses. (Current centrally assigned e-mail addresses follow this pattern: noone123@umn.edu -or- noon1234@umn.edu, where noone123 or noon1234 is an Internet ID. This pattern creates unique IDs for the thousands of University account holders, avoiding misdirected mail to common names while providing expansion room for common last names like Larson.)

■ Tips from OIT's 1-HELP Technology Helpline

Figure 1:

Get information about your University Internet Account and manage it yourself.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Internet Account Options

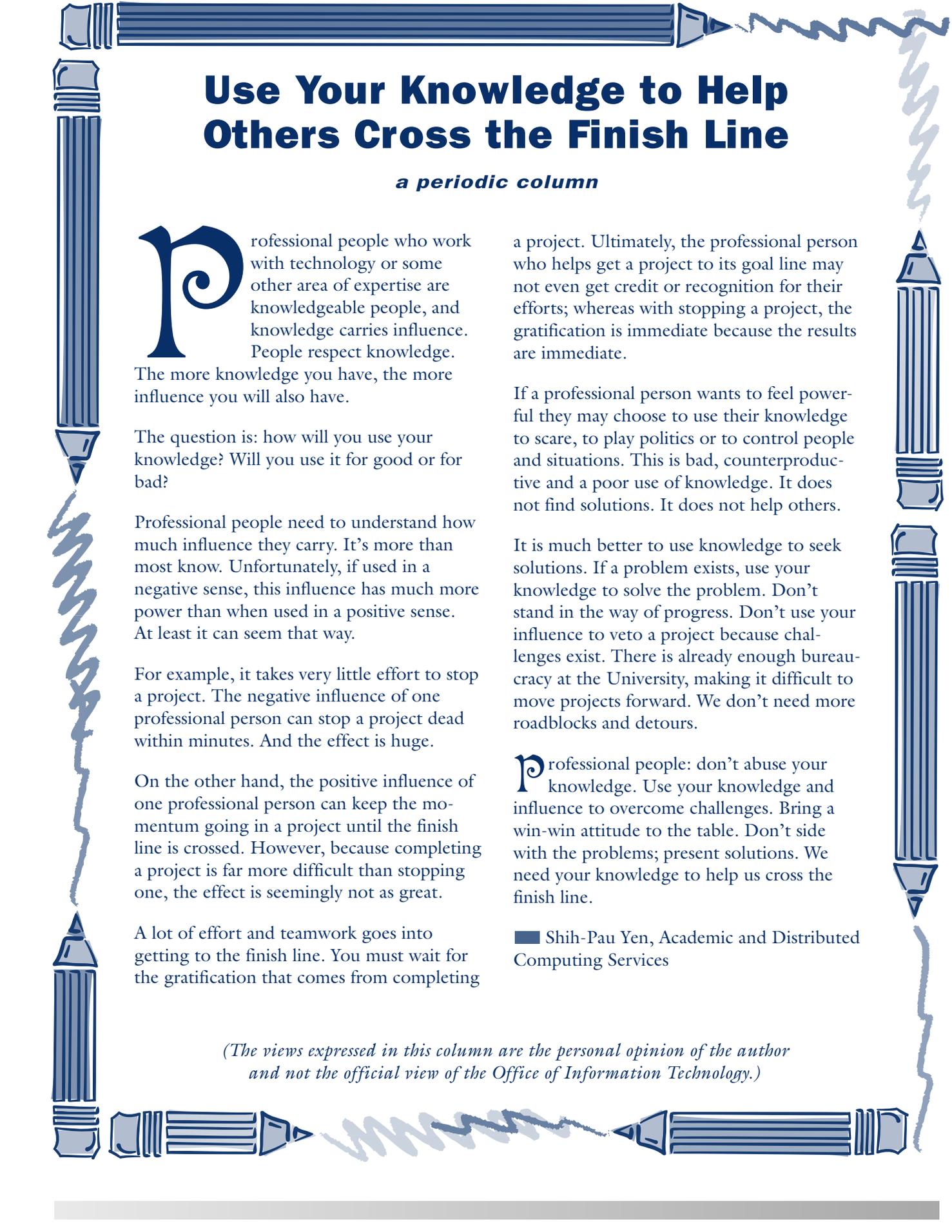


Account Information
Lists your unique identifiers and servers for software configuration, such as your e-mail address, mail servers, etc. Use these to set up your e-mail and related Internet software.

For assistance, call:
Crookston:
(218) 281-8000
Duluth:
(218) 726-8847
Morris:
(320) 589-6391
Twin Cities:
(612) 301-4357
Carlson School Alumni:
(612) 625-5550

Password Change
E-mail Account Options
Set E-mail Forwarding and Autoreply
Nickname
E-mail to Fax Gateway Long Distance Code (UPAC)
World Wide Web URL
Twin Cities Modem Pool Status/Payment
PGP Public Key Management

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Use Your Knowledge to Help Others Cross the Finish Line

a periodic column

Professional people who work with technology or some other area of expertise are knowledgeable people, and knowledge carries influence. People respect knowledge.

The more knowledge you have, the more influence you will also have.

The question is: how will you use your knowledge? Will you use it for good or for bad?

Professional people need to understand how much influence they carry. It's more than most know. Unfortunately, if used in a negative sense, this influence has much more power than when used in a positive sense. At least it can seem that way.

For example, it takes very little effort to stop a project. The negative influence of one professional person can stop a project dead within minutes. And the effect is huge.

On the other hand, the positive influence of one professional person can keep the momentum going in a project until the finish line is crossed. However, because completing a project is far more difficult than stopping one, the effect is seemingly not as great.

A lot of effort and teamwork goes into getting to the finish line. You must wait for the gratification that comes from completing

a project. Ultimately, the professional person who helps get a project to its goal line may not even get credit or recognition for their efforts; whereas with stopping a project, the gratification is immediate because the results are immediate.

If a professional person wants to feel powerful they may choose to use their knowledge to scare, to play politics or to control people and situations. This is bad, counterproductive and a poor use of knowledge. It does not find solutions. It does not help others.

It is much better to use knowledge to seek solutions. If a problem exists, use your knowledge to solve the problem. Don't stand in the way of progress. Don't use your influence to veto a project because challenges exist. There is already enough bureaucracy at the University, making it difficult to move projects forward. We don't need more roadblocks and detours.

Professional people: don't abuse your knowledge. Use your knowledge and influence to overcome challenges. Bring a win-win attitude to the table. Don't side with the problems; present solutions. We need your knowledge to help us cross the finish line.

■ Shih-Pau Yen, Academic and Distributed Computing Services

(The views expressed in this column are the personal opinion of the author and not the official view of the Office of Information Technology.)

▼ Help

Phone: Area Code = 612

Computer Misuse or Abuse (also see Procedure 2.8.1.1)

- Emergency Network Help Line 625-0006
- Non-emergency, e.g., spamming: abuse@umn.edu

1-HELP •24/7 unless otherwise noted 612-301-4357

Dial 1-HELP. Listen to the voice menu list of options.

Press the number of your desired option.

- Technology Help: <http://www.umn.edu/adcs/help>

■ Passwords: new and forgotten ones

■ CCO Central systems, PeopleSoft

- by email: x-help@umn.edu

■ Internet, Email, Microcomputers

- call-in Monday–Thursday • 8 am–11 pm
 - call-in Friday • 8 am–5 pm
 - call-in Saturday • noon–5 pm
 - call-in Sunday • 5 pm–11 pm
 - walk-in 8 am–5 pm, M–F:
152 Shepherd Labs; 93 Blegen Hall; 50 Coffey Hall
 - by email: help@umn.edu
- Networking and Telecommunications Services: NTS
- by email: help@umn.edu

▼ Dial-in Computer Access

Internet/PPP/SLIP: up to 53kps if v.90 612-627-4250
(56k K-flex, Flex56, X.2 protocols are unsupported)

▼ Quick Guide

Modem Usage (current activity on your account)

<http://www.nts.umn.edu/services/modemusage.html>

Internet/Email account management/validation

<http://www.umn.edu/validate>

MNCAT/LUMINA (Library) – <http://www.lib.umn.edu>

Office of Information Technology

<http://www.umn.edu/oit>

One Stop Services – <http://onestop.umn.edu>

Techmart – <http://www.techmart.umn.edu>

Technology Training Center

<http://www.umn.edu/adcs/info/training.html>

UM News Servers – news.tc.umn.edu, news.umn.edu

.....

Threats, UM Police Department 911 on campus

- off campus 624-3550

Computer Accommodation Program – voice/tty... 626-0365

U Computer Services/Computer Repair Serv 624-4800

Statistical Software Support:

- including SAS and SPSS 624-3330

Associate Vice President and

Chief Information Officer, Steve Cawley 612-625-8855

Newsletter subscription information and archives at <http://www.umn.edu/oit/newsletter>

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Twin Cities campus address label trivia: the 2nd number after the Rec# is the Campus Mail delivery code, <http://umn.edu/lookup>

Jul. 2002 [pantone295,1205]

Delete/Cancel

Change Name

Change Address

Change Other

Add

If you cancel or change a campus address, please tell us the Rec#. Just tear off the end page and send the entire mailing label to us. Or send email to: oitnsltr@umn.edu

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