Could the end be near for IT&S problems?

Internet could be made campus-wide.

Every connection to the Internet was counted separately, and most computers were using multiple connections at a time. Each Internet window is a separate connection, as are pop-up ads and chat boxes of instant messaging programs. It is not unusual for a single computer to have 10 or more connections open at any one time.

When the number of connections met the firewall restrictions, the entire network went down until the system could be reset. This could be done in a matter of minutes if the correct people were on campus, but frequently the server would crash in the middle of the night and stay down until the morning.

The firewall has since been changed to allow an unrestricted number of connections.

IT&S right now-

"Get ready for calls," IT&S Director Leah Kraus says to a student worker. "I can't get to my space." The next instant, the phone rings.

"IT&S help desk," the student answers the phone. "Hobbs is down."

It's 12:30 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 22. Classes are winding down and students are logging off of computers all over campus. Everyone is making demands of Hobbs, and Hobbs doesn't like it at all.

"Think of it like a road," Kraus said. "There are all these cars trying to get through a bottleneck at one time. The road gets backed up."

The road is the campus network; the bottleneck is the Hobbs server.

And the drivers – in this case students and faculty – are getting frustrated.

"Hobbs is perfectly capable of handling the traffic generated by the campus," Kraus said. "But asking Hobbs to handle the traffic of every user at once is a little much."

There are now two network cards in the Hobbs server, which should help increase traffic flow even during high demand times.

With all of these improvements to the campus network, students should expect to see a decrease in technology problems. But these may be only temporary fixes. As the college's population continues to increase, larger demands will be made of the campus facilities.

"There are too many users, not enough servers," senior IT&S Help Desk worker Christin Guilick said.

The Plan-

In the online-newsletter *Guilford Beacon* sent Jan. 23, IT&S announced its intentions to begin reorganization of the campus resources. By Feb. 9, student share spaces will be moved from the Hobbs server to a new one. The new server, as yet unnamed, has the storage capacity for seven terabytes of disk space.

The server has been on campus since September, but IT&S has been unable to install it before now. The department is currently down two staff members – one in telecommunications and one in multimedia. The remaining staff has split the extra duties among themselves.

Between threats to the campus network and regular duties, there hasn't been time for the new server to be installed.

"We're bringing in consultants Feb. 3 - 5 to help with the installation and hopefully spot potential problems to the Internet could be made campus-wide.

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Students can expect to lose access to their share spaces Feb 6 - 8 during the installation of the new server.

Over the summer IT&S hopes to achieve multiple things to prevent problems as have been present this year. Norton Anti-Virus will likely be a requirement for all computers hooked to the campus network, including student's computers. IT&S is making plans to have the program available to students at a discount through the campus bookstore.

The campus computers will all receive upgrades to their operating systems to Windows XP or Macintosh OS X.

IT&S also hopes to create more access points for laptop wireless access to the college's network. There are also plans to move the residence halls back to the separate network of years past, but with the new technology they acquired during this past summer's upgrade.

Duking it out over renovations

Director of Faculties and Campus Services Jon Varnell agrees. "The need for remodeling has been apparent for years," he said.

When Worrall was asked what he thought Duke needed the most improvement, he gave a list of problems he had noticed. "The ceilings were rotting, the paint was peeling, the carpets were awful, the elevator didn't work, there was a door that wouldn't open unless you turned the handle a certain way, and I think there was one clock in the entire building ... and it was wrong."

All of these problems, and more, will be resolved by the project's projected July 15 completion date. The list of improvements is extensive, with highlights including new floors, walls, lights, whiteboards, and heating and plumbing, and a completely revamped Leak Room.

According to Varnell, "The Leak room has been completely demolished down to the concrete, brick and studs. The removal in the Leak room is extensive, but so is the rest of the renovation throughout the building. The Leak room and the whole basement level had significant moisture problems."

"Thank God," Worrall said. "When I had class (Contemporary China in Film) in there last semester, people got sick. We had to move to Bryan Jr. (Auditorium.)"

Students are hardly the only ones excited about the renovations taking place. "The Leak Room was awful," said German professor Dave Limburg, who held screenings of German films in the Leak Room last semester. "There was mold, and it was giving people trouble with allergies."

Limburg is one of 13 faculty members who had offices in Duke. When renovations began, faculty members in the department of math were relocated to Archdale Hall, while faculty members in the department of foreign languages were moved to King Hall.

"I don't mind it," Limburg said of his temporary displacement. "It was tough getting settled, but it's working out great."

Planning for the renovation began in the spring of 2003, with actual renovation originally scheduled to begin in September of 2004. However, the plans were moved up to take advantage of "better contract pricing based on the time of year, and a more favorable schedule," according to Varnell.

While the project has its critics, such as first-year Nathaniel Miller, who said that Duke was "fine from a utilitarian perspective ... I would rather see the money go to updating the school's servers," the overwhelming response has been extremely supportive. For many in the college community, July 15th can't arrive fast enough.