

UF/IFAS IT-Network Systems

The primary Network Operating System used by Information Technologies is OpenVMS. This system performs several of our core statewide network functions, such as Domain Name Service, Web Serving and E-mail. At the beginning of this fiscal year, UF/IFAS IT-NS was given two goals: 1) Establish Windows NT as the primary network platform by June of 2001, and 2) establish platforms needed to integrate with university-wide systems.

In order to achieve the first goal, the core network functions must be ported from OpenVMS to Windows NT. Of the three essential network services (WWW, DNS and E-mail) currently under OpenVMS, two have been implemented under Windows NT.

- Microsoft's Internet Information Server and Front Page Extension were deployed over the last few months. The goal is to emulate the web services that are being performed under OpenVMS with this product and then have our users migrate to it. There are technical issues that need to be addressed before this conversion can be completed.
- Microsoft's Dynamic Domain Name Service (DDNS) is currently under going regression testing. If successful, this service is intended to replace the DNS that is currently running on an OpenVMS Vax. Unfortunately, It is too early at this time to decide the outcome of the Microsoft DDNS service under NT.
- For the conversion of E-mail, ITNS will soon be installing and testing Microsoft Exchange on a DEC Alpha machine running NT.

Software related barriers are not expected to play a major role in the process of replacing systems that are performing our current core network functions statewide. However, increased demands on the system will require attention and investment in hardware resources. To build a Windows NT replacement solution and maintain services, old systems will have to remain active and run parallel to the new system. This will require a carefully managed transition-and-obsolescence-plan to reduce to a maximum the duplication of resources.

Due the renovation of our current building, ITNS has relocated to a set of temporary trailers. The relocation of the entire office and computer room took place as planned with minimal disruption of services. During the past year, ITNS has added 210 new user accounts and 11 new departmental standalone NT servers in our statewide Windows NT Domain, IFASDOM.

Additionally, our new website ([HTTP://ITNS.IFAS.UFL.EDU](http://ITNS.IFAS.UFL.EDU)) has allowed ITNS to disseminate network-related information in a more accurate and timely manner. Plans to connect the remaining County Offices and Research Education Centers to the Wide Area Network (WAN) were developed in close cooperation with the Florida Information Resource Network (FIRN). The result of this is substantial savings to UF/IFAS on

recurring connectivity expenses (\$158,000/year).

In summary, ITNS has effected a very successful computer room move, managed expanding its statewide Windows NT network, increased its ability to deliver accurate and timely network-related information to it users, and developed a working partnership with FIRN to finalize plans to expand network connectivity to County offices and RECs.

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