

Computing Center working to protect against hackers

■ The University uses a variety of technologies to secure students' and faculty's private information

By Hank Hager
Oregon Daily Emerald

As the University enters the 21st century, the Internet is beginning to play an ever-increasing role in how the campus protects information. From e-mail addresses to home addresses and phone numbers, the University stores hundreds of pieces of information on every student and faculty member at the school.

The problem of keeping the University's information safe from hackers' computers is a complex one, but many at the University say there are definite ways to keep the information safe.

John Kemp, a senior security engineer for the Computing Center, said the safety of online information at the University is becoming increasingly important.

"Information security is a critical component of the operation of the University," he said. "The types of information that are gathered and stored on University computers varies in relative value and risk, and because of that, a variety of different policies are in place to protect these different kinds of information."

He said a common technique is the use of encryption, in which information is stored online in a secure format, making it harder for people outside the system to read.

Kemp added that the University understands the need to make sure the information kept on campus is secure.

He said the University has felt strongly enough about computer security that

it has allocated more funds for additional faculty positions to be created.

David Dose, a computer support specialist for the Office of Business Affairs, said a program called Banner is used to prevent outsiders from gaining valuable information. Through the program, the University's important information is stored and protected. He said the campus is largely decentralized, making it more susceptible to break-in attempts. But, he said, servers containing student and faculty information are placed in secure rooms at night to re-

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duce the possibility of a break-in.

He added that computer security has given him more work in the past few years.

"It's become a much bigger part of my job in the last few years," he said. "It's a big issue."

Joseph St Sauver, an assistant director for academic user services in the Computing Center, said there are many steps that can be taken to prevent information from being illegally acquired via e-mail accounts.

According to a fax sent by St Sauver, the Computing Center requires users to

create passwords that cannot be easily guessed. In addition, these passwords are changed periodically to ensure outside sources do not steal information. Norton Antivirus software is also used to prevent any viruses from "attacking" e-mail accounts.

St Sauver said system security is also a paramount concern for the University. Systems on campus run with back-up power to ensure no information is lost in the event of an accident, power outage or even an earthquake. Physical access is also limited in areas that store personal and confidential information.

But with all the precautionary measures, St Sauver said he does not believe it is entirely foolproof.

"I don't think any system is uncrackable if someone is determined enough," he said. "[But] with what we have, we do a good job."

Dale Smith, assistant director of network services for the Computing Center, said it's primarily up to students to protect their e-mail accounts. He said gladstone mail at the school is well-secured by the security steps, and the Computing Center keeps up to date with the latest in security features.

"Gladstone is a well-secured and well-maintained system," he said. "In terms of the main systems at the Computing Center, we are well-protected."

Because of this, he said, students are usually the first and last blockades to protecting their information. He said logging out when a person is done using e-mail is suggested, as is using a system that is encrypted, making it harder for hackers to read.

But, he said, not all people listen to suggestions.

"You can't protect the silly people," he said. "Students have to do these things, because we can't force them."

Video game re-enacts violence of WTO riots

TACOMA, Wash. — If you missed the World Trade Organization riots and protests in Seattle, you may soon get another chance.

Video gamers can march down the middle of a city street to the beat of loud music, launch a rocket or brick into a storefront window, even punch out an officer in riot gear while playing "State of Emergency."

Rockstar Games revealed the game — due in October for Sony PlayStation 2 — earlier this month at the Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles.

A spokesman for Rockstar, who asked to remain anonymous, acknowledged last week that the game had strong ties to the WTO riots of fall 1999. The News Tribune of Tacoma reported Monday. A phone message left at Take-Two Interactive Software Inc., parent company for Rockstar Games, was not immediately returned Monday.

Some 50,000 people marched through Seattle, disrupting the WTO meeting and downtown business as they protested global issues such as human rights and the environment. Most were peaceful but the protests turned riotous at times. Six hundred people were arrested and property damage reached \$3 million.

"State of Emergency" is billed as an "urban riot game set in the near future, where the oppressive American Trade Organization (ATO) has declared a state of emergency. ... It is up to you to smash up everything and everyone in order to destabilize the ATO."

A player can overturn vehicles, incite rumbles between rival gangs and attack innocent bystanders. Extra points can be made by punching out an ATO officer in riot gear, knocking him to the ground and jumping on him.

The game already has drawn criticism.

"If you want your child to become a violent anarchist, this is a great training game," said state Rep. Mary Lou Dickerson (D-Seattle). Dickerson, who joined the ranks of peaceful WTO demonstrators, called the game "a slap in the face of the peaceful ideals of 40,000 protesters."

After watching a video clip on the publisher's Web site, she said the game seems to show anarchists whose violent actions all but obscured the message of the peaceful demonstrations in Seattle.

State Rep. John Lovick (D-Mill Creek), a Washington State Patrol trooper who was on duty in Seattle during the WTO riots, also found fault with the game's premise.

"To re-enact things like that in a digital arena sends a very strong message," he said. "It's just better to try to heal a community."

Dick Lilly, spokesman for Seattle Mayor Paul Schell, said the game will never show up in any city-run community center.

"I think research has raised enough serious questions about these kinds of violent games that people should be very skeptical and critical of this kind of content," he said.

The Associated Press

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