Computing at MIT: Basics

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Key take-aways:

- Utilizing the MIT residential network
  - Responsible network behavior
- Safe Computing Practices
  - Protecting your computer and yourself while online
- Where to go for help
  - Computing resources offered by IS&T

The MIT residential network

- One MIT network port per pillow
- Wireless
  - Each dorm has 802.11b/g wireless - network name “MIT”
  - Some dorms have 802.11a connectivity available
- DHCP
  - Plug-in, register and go
  - Should be no need for extra configuration
- Open connection to the internet
  - There is no firewall on the MIT network
The MIT network and you, cont.

• Connectivity shared with nearby residents
  – Usually shared by residents on multiple floors
• Shared mediums (wired and wireless) are prone to saturation and congestion when abused
  – Sharing, serving or streaming files to or from your computer can severely impact the connectivity of those around you.
  – Most of the time, slow or loss of connectivity is a result of high bandwidth usage from a nearby resident.

Your MIT identity

• Kerberos Account
  – Also known as: MIT email account, kerberos principal, kerberos identity, email username, etc…
• MIT personal web certificates
  – http://web.mit.edu/certificates
  – Key to accessing supported software and many online resources
• Strong Passwords
  – Unique, multiple character types, change often

Computer security

• IT Security Support: Learn how to protect your system
  – http://web.mit.edu/ist/topics/security
• Patch your operating system
• Backing up data
  – CDs, DVDs, External Hard Drives, USB keys, Athena Account, TSM, etc…
  – http://web.mit.edu/ist/topics/backup
Antivirus and Firewalls

- Antivirus Software
  - MIT provides VirusScan for Windows, Mac OS X, and Linux
  - [http://web.mit.edu/software](http://web.mit.edu/software)
- Most OS’s have a built-in firewall
  - Should stay running at all times
  - Protect your computer from some unsolicited network connections

Control Access to your Computer

- Require a password to log on and to turn off the screen saver
- Protect your MIT certificates with a password
  - Contact the MIT computing helpdesk or your RCC
- Physically lock your laptop
- Do not leave items unattended or in an unlocked room

Secure Connections

- Use SSH, SCP, Secure FX (Windows), Fetch (OS X)
  - Required for IS&T supported Athena servers
- MIT offers Cisco VPN client software
  - Virtual Private Network
  - Encrypts traffic between your computer and a server on the MIT campus
- Use Secure websites
  - Look for the lock icon in your web browser or [http://](http://)

[MIT IS&T: Computing at MIT - Basics](http://web.mit.edu/ist/)
Identity Theft

- Avoid phishing websites
  - Do not click links in email to get to your personal account information
  - Go directly to their known web page or call a publicly listed phone number
- Free Credit Report
  - http://www.annualcreditreport.com
  - Check your credit with each of the three major creditors once per year

SPAM

- You will get SPAM in your MIT email account
- Use the MIT Spamscreen service:
  - http://web.mit.edu/ist/services/email/nospam/
- Update your allow/deny list
  - These lists can be used to flag email messages regardless of their “Spam Score”
- Internal SPAM
  - Use MIT mail lists appropriately

DMCA: Digital Millennium Copyright Act

- Respect intellectual property
- Engaging in unauthorized file sharing of copyrighted media (movies, music, games, software, etc…):
  - Is against the law
  - Can lead to notifications from the copyright holder
    - Multiple notifications can lead to disciplinary proceedings
  - Can lead to legal action from the copyright owners
  - May result in you losing your network connectivity
Guidelines

- MIT Policies for IT use: http://web.mit.edu/ist/topics/policies
  - No extended networks: No hubs, routers, switches
- MIT network is shared
  - Use bandwidth responsibly
- Be careful with peer to peer applications
  - They use A LOT of bandwidth
  - Can cause network problems for nearby residents
  - Can open your computer to a possible data compromise
  - Copyright infringement is against the law

Where to get help

- Networking in residence halls
  - http://web.mit.edu/ist/helpdesk/rcc, 8-9444
- Athena Consulting
  - http://web.mit.edu/ist/helpdesk/athena, 3-4435
- Computing Help Desk
  - http://web.mit.edu/ist/helpdesk, 3-1101

Networking in the Residence halls

- Consultants available for each residence
- Submit help requests to the Residential Computing Consultants
  - http://rcc.mit.edu or x8-9444
- Support and advice for connecting to network, computers and other peripherals
- Typical response time is within 24 hours
Help Desk Services

- http://web.mit.edu/ist/helpdesk
- Call Center
- Walk-in Service
- Computer Buying Advice
- Hardware and Software Services

Help Desk: Call Center

- Hours of operation:
  - Mon-Fri, 8am - 6pm (Tuesdays 5pm)
- Contact us via phone, email or web
- Technical assistance for IS&T supported products and services
- Computer buying advice
- Refer clients to other sources of help

Help Desk: In-Person Consultation

- Walk-in Hours (N42):  
  - Mon-Fri, 9:15am - 5pm
- By appointment (one per hour) or walk in
- Computer buying advice
- 15-minute problem assessment at no charge
- If not resolved, you may choose to leave your machine for repair
Help Desk: Computer Buying Advice

- MIT vendor partners: Apple, Dell, IBM/Lenovo
- Recommended desktop/laptop configurations that meet MIT computing requirements
- Purchase online
  - [http://web.mit.edu/ist/services/hardware/presales.html](http://web.mit.edu/ist/services/hardware/presales.html)

Help Desk: Repairs

- Hardware service contracts for Apple, Dell, IBM/Lenovo
- Hardware upgrades
- OS and Software installation and upgrades
- Backup and restore
- Troubleshoot and remove virus, spyware, and adware
- Software repairs are fee based ($60/hr)

PC Repair recommends

- Back up your data frequently
- Keep your computer up to date with software and security patches
- Make sure you have anti-virus software installed and running: MIT provides VirusScan to all MIT affiliates at no charge