



News about **I**nformation **S**ervices and **T**echnology throughout **MIT**

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Inside! Schedules of Hands-on Training Courses and Free Computer Events

Savvy Online Buys for MIT **2**

Software Spotlight
Getting the Most Out of FileMaker Pro 8 **3**

Network Notes
Mailman: Moderation and Spam
Filtering for Your Email Lists **4**

Bits and Bytes **4**

Safe Computing
"Freedom of Mobility" Services Are Not Risk Free **5**

Tech Tips: FileMaker Server **6**
OPENSTUDIO Fosters Creativity, Collaboration, and Capitalism **6**

Administrative Aspects
Get Ready! HR-Payroll Project Offers Extensive Training **7**
ShopMIT Points the Way to the Institute's Internal Providers **7**

Getting Help **8**

Surf Sites: Consuming Interests **8**

Virtual Customer Initiative Taps the Web for Market Research

• Lee Ridgway

Mention "market research" and most people probably think of focus groups (with observers watching through a one-way mirror), telephone surveys (usually calling at suppertime), or being stopped in a mall to try product samples. These methods are still around, but in recent years savvy companies are harnessing the Internet to aid in coming up with new product designs. The goal is to understand more clearly what customers really want and to get these products to market more rapidly.

Helping make the move to Internet-based market research is the Sloan School's Virtual Customer Initiative (VCI), led by Prof. John Hauser. The VCI is a multidisciplinary research project focused on developing methods and software to improve the speed, accuracy, and usability of customer input to the product development process. These Web-based tools can help companies stay focused on customers by making it easier to obtain insightful consumer input.

Faster, Better, Not Much Cheaper

The VCI started in the late 1990s, in MIT's Center for Innovation in Product Development, with a vision to arm engineers with the ability to do market research very quickly. According to

Hauser, "We know that if you understand the customer you can design a better product. Sloan teaches this, engineering groups teach it, but it is hard to do. Market research seems easy, but is actually quite difficult, and expensive."

VCI researchers initially believed they could come up with Web-based tools to do market research faster, better, and cheaper. What they found is that with the Web, market research can be done much better and faster, but not necessarily more cheaply.

The older, traditional methods of market research, while effective, are time-consuming and labor-intensive. For example, one-on-one interviews can only be done with one research participant at a time, with the interviewer usually following an interviewer guide. Focus groups require resources of people and equipment to elicit and record responses from the participants. With both of these methods, all of the gathered responses must then be collated and analyzed, often by hand, to produce meaningful results – another time-consuming process.

Web-based market research methods make it possible to closely simulate the customer's real buying experience and decision-making process. The Web's rich media capabilities can deliver more realistic product prototypes, advertisements, and other stimuli to research participants. In turn, participants respond to these rich stimuli in a more active, personal manner.

continued on page 2 ►

▼ VIRTUAL CUSTOMER INITIATIVE

continued from page 1

Also, since a computer is both feeding information to and collecting responses from the participant, sophisticated computational analysis can be going on in the background, in real time. Using highly efficient algorithms, based on work done at MIT's Operations Research Center, the program behind a given market-research method can analyze the participant's responses and use that analysis as the basis for tailoring what it presents next. This gives a flexibility and spontaneity to the interaction between the market-research tool and the participant that would be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve with older methods.

The VCI currently has about 20 Web-based methods in its repertoire, some with names that can sound daunting to the layperson – try, for example, "Adaptive Choice-based Conjoint Analysis (with Polyhedral methods)" or "GARDS (Non-compensatory Measurement: Must-Have Features)." But what a research participant sees when working on the Web is not daunting. Well-designed, highly graphical screens

and text, and prompt feedback from the system, engage participants and retain their interest.

Methods in Action

As an example of conjoint analysis, a research participant is presented with a set of features for a product, such as a PDA or a vehicle. The participant clicks through a series of screens that describe features – and how they may or may not affect the price – and selects combinations for a desired final product. The participant may be asked to rank various design combinations in order of preference, and to answer questions or give ratings to statements about preferences, all in an effort to hone in on what is involved in a purchasing decision for a given product. With computational power humming behind the scenes, customer preferences can be determined with fewer questions and in a shorter amount of time than previously possible.

Another method developed by the VCI is an idea-generation game. In this process, a number of individuals give input via the Web at their own locations, over a period of time and not necessarily at the same time. The computational system tracks responses and presents feedback to the participants

to keep them focused on hard thinking about the problem at hand. Through incentive schemes, the system encourages the participants to build on each other's ideas as well as exercise their individual creativity to come up with innovative product designs, and marketing and advertising strategies. While this looks like an electronic version of brainstorming, Hauser considers it a conceptual breakthrough, producing better ideas, and more of them.

Real-World Applications

From the beginning, the VCI intended to move its work into the commercial arena of large market-research firms and product development companies. To that end, the code for all of the tools developed by the VCI is open source, and free. The expectation is that firms will read the VCI research papers, take the code, and rewrite it into customized commercial code for their own purposes. To date, over a dozen companies have made use of the VCI's work.

To see demos of several methods, check out the VCI web site at

<http://mitsloan.mit.edu/vc/>

The site also provides links to online publications describing its research in detail. ☉



Savvy Online Buys for MIT

Stationery Web Site Adds Invitations

Is your department or group hosting an event? If you need MIT invitations, you can now order a customizable package that includes matching envelopes through the ECAT catalog at

<http://web.mit.edu/ecat/businesspapers/>

You can select from two attractive layouts; the invitations print in two colors (MIT red and black) on your choice of white or natural-white recycled paper. Local vendor Ambit Press will deliver the printed product right to your door.

These invitations are the latest addition to MIT's stationery suite. You can also go online to order letterhead, envelopes, business cards, notepads, and mailing labels. The MIT Publishing Services Bureau (PSB) has negotiated discounts with Ambit Press. Savings range from 20 to 40 percent, depending on the item and quantity ordered.

If you have questions or want to request printed samples, contact the PSB at [<psb-ecat@mit.edu>](mailto:psb-ecat@mit.edu).

Smart Buy Web Site

The Smart Buy web site, launched by the MIT Procurement Department, helps members of the MIT community order printing and shipping, with many other services/products to come. This initiative was undertaken to help MIT use its bulk purchasing power to save time and money and improve services.

The print team analyzed Institute print-buying trends and came up with a list of 11 preferred printers representing an array of capabilities. The web site provides vendor profiles and helpful resources. Another team evaluated express shipping vendors. DHL and Skycom Courier were selected. You can now register and create an airbill online to take advantage of new lower rates.

For more information on printing, shipping, and other commodities being evaluated, visit

<http://web.mit.edu/smartbuy/> ☉



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Getting the Most Out of FileMaker Pro 8

• Cecilia Marra

The FileMaker Pro 8 product line-up has plenty to offer new users and long-time fans of this database software for Macintosh and Windows. However, if you haven't upgraded since version 5 or 6, be aware that this version of FileMaker looks – and is – very different under the hood. Data entry administrators may only notice a sleeker look and feel, but if you've developed databases with FileMaker or even just designed layouts in the past, you'll notice some major changes. Fortunately, a host of resources can help you get familiar with FileMaker's new structure and features.

What's New

FileMaker 8 offers users several handy new features. You can

- Create Adobe PDF or Microsoft Excel files for easy sharing of FileMaker information
- Email the contents of any field instantly using the Fast Send feature
- Search databases quickly using the Fast Match feature
- Create cleaner-looking database layouts with new alignment tools
- Easily perform an email merge to send personalized messages to many customers
- Import tables into FileMaker more efficiently
- Build layouts with multiple tabs in a single step using Tab Control

For details on these and other new features, visit the FileMaker site at <http://www.filemaker.com/products/fmp/features.html>

Now I Am 7 – or 8?

In many ways, FileMaker 8 is “the other half” of FileMaker 7, which made its debut a few years ago. There was a quantum leap between versions 6 and 7; less of one between 7 and 8. Still, many “8-only” features make life a lot easier for database developers. So if you are using a version 5 or 6 solution, skip straight to FileMaker 8 in your migration planning, rather than moving first to 7 and then to 8. If you're already using 7, you can simply move forward, continuing your development efforts in a version 8 environment.



The former FileMaker Developer has been re-named FileMaker Pro Advanced in version 8. FileMaker Pro and Pro Advanced are both at 8v2, as is FileMaker

Server. Be sure to stay up to date with version patches as they are released.

The file extension for FileMaker 7 and 8 databases is .fp7. The file format and structure are the same for both versions, so you won't need to “convert” version 7 files to 8. In theory, you can use either version to work with the same file. However, there are some feature and functionality differences between the two versions, and differences between how FileMaker Server 7 and 8 handle data processing. If a database was built with version 8, users running version 7 won't be able to take advantage of “8-only” features. At best this will be inconvenient and at worst can cause real operational problems. The safest plan of action is to make sure all of your users and servers are running *either* FileMaker 7 or FileMaker 8, and not a mix of the two.

Obtaining FileMaker 8 Products

Several FileMaker titles (in versions 6, 7, and/or 8) are available to MIT departments through a volume license agreement that IS&T maintains. Products include FileMaker Pro, FileMaker Pro Advanced, FileMaker Server, FileMaker Server Advanced, and FileMaker Mobile. For details, go to

<http://web.mit.edu/ist/products/vsls/mitfmp/>

Resources for Support

IS&T offers a range of support for FileMaker developers and users at MIT.

Training

IS&T Training Services offers several options for learning to use FileMaker Pro. Hands-on classes cover basic to advanced skills and also scripting. The Basics class covers

- Introduction to database concepts
- Navigation basics
- Data entry tips and tricks
- Saving and backing up your FileMaker files

- Sorting records
- Search techniques

You can also take Web-based training through MIT's partner vendor, Element K. To learn more, see

<http://web.mit.edu/ist/topics/training/>

End User Help

Staff at the Computing Help Desk can assist with the areas covered in IS&T's FileMaker Pro Basics class, and can also help with installation, printing, sharing, and importing and exporting data. If you have an issue that involves modifying or troubleshooting the structure of a database, your case may need to be escalated to more expert staff on the Help Desk or beyond. You can reach the Help Desk at 253-1101 or <computing-help@mit.edu>.

Departmental Consulting and Application Development (DCAD)

Struggling with converting an old FileMaker solution? Not sure if your solution meets MIT standards for security? If you have FileMaker database development needs, IS&T's DCAD Team can help. DCAD can partner with you to ensure that your solution fits with current best practices. For more information, visit

<http://web.mit.edu/ist/dcad/>

FileMaker User Group (FMUG)

The FileMaker User Group is an excellent resource for users at all levels. Meetings are held on the first Friday of every month in the N42 Demo Center. The FileMaker user community can also help answer your FileMaker questions through the fmug mailing list. For more information, check out

<http://web.mit.edu/ist/help/filemaker/fmug/>

Further Reading

FileMaker, Inc., maintains an excellent collection of white papers and technical briefs relating to migration and other topics. Here's where to find assorted online documentation:

<http://www.filemaker.com/support/whitepapers.html>

<http://www.filemaker.com/products/upgrade/techbriefs.html>

<http://www.filemaker.com/support/product/documentation.html>



Mailman: Moderation and Spam Filtering for Your Email Lists

• Laura Baldwin

S&T offers support for Mailman mailing lists as an alternative to the simpler “moira” or Athena lists. Mailman has several features that make it appealing, especially for large lists:

- Moderation of list email, including “announce-only” settings
- Filtering based on sender and other headings such as SpamAssassin tags
- Simple archiving
- Automatic processing of bounced email
- An administrative web site for each list

However, given Mailman’s extensive features for list administration, it may not be the first choice for small lists. Also, Mailman has a limited ability to manage nested lists and sublists. Another consideration is that you can’t use Mailman lists as groups for AFS permissions or htaccess permission to restrict access to pages served by <https://web.mit.edu>.

Login Options

Mailman lets list owners administer their mailing lists by logging into an administrative interface with a password or by logging in with their MIT personal certificate. The standard login page is

```
https://mailman.mit.edu/
mailman/admin/LISTNAME
```

where LISTNAME is the name of the mailing list.

If you administer several Mailman lists, you may prefer a single login using certificates rather than remembering multiple passwords. To log in using your MIT certificate, go to a slightly different URL

```
https://mailman.mit.edu:444/
mailman/admin/LISTNAME
```

(making sure there’s an “s” at the end of <https://web.mit.edu>: and adding “:444” after [mailman.mit.edu](https://web.mit.edu)).

If you created your Mailman list using the automatic list creation service at

```
http://web.mit.edu/accounts/www/
list.html
```

you will be logged in using your certificate. You may continue to do this, or you can set the password for the list using the Passwords option. Note that any administrator of a Mailman list with an address other than username@mit.edu must use the password login option.

Spam Filtering

Your Mailman list can be set up so that only members can post messages to it (e.g., a private discussion list), or so that only a particular set of people can post messages to it (e.g., a departmental announcement list). This sort of moderation generally blocks all incoming spam from being posted to the list.

However, you may want your list to be able to receive messages from outside addresses, while still cutting down on the amount of spam received (or the amount of spam that the moderator has to discard). **Spam filters** – in the **Privacy Options** section on the list’s administrative web page – will let you add additional filtering to your list. If you add a filter of `X-Spam-Flag: yes`, then messages that match MIT’s default spam criteria (a score of 10.5) will be filtered. If you want to fine-tune the spam scoring, you can use a filter along the lines of

```
X-Spam-Level: \*{7, }
```

This filter matches everything with a spam score of 7 or above.

Keep in mind when setting up filtering that instructions to “discard” (throw away the mail silently) or “reject” (throw away the mail, but notify the sender that it has been rejected) will delete mail permanently. Rather than set up filters to discard or reject immediately, it may be safer to set them to “hold” first. This lets you look through the messages that have been flagged by the filters, and make sure that nothing has been flagged that you didn’t want thrown away. Once you’re sure that your filters are working the way you want, you can change them over to discard or reject.



Support for Mailing Lists

If you need help determining whether a Mailman or Athena list best fits your needs, or have other questions about mailing lists at MIT, contact User Accounts at accounts@mit.edu or 253-1325. ☺



This column presents announcements about IS&T-supported software. For more information about recent releases, see <http://web.mit.edu/swrt/>

SWRT Hires Platform Coordinators, Seeks Volunteers

IS&T oversees the release of MIT’s supported software for Macintosh, Windows, and Linux platforms through its Software Release Team (SWRT). The team recently hired two platform coordinators: Alex Kozlov for Windows and Bill Cattey for Linux. They join Al Willis, the Macintosh platform coordinator.

These staff manage a complex process that involves evaluating software, identifying and promoting supported software, selecting distribution venues, and ensuring that software is easy to acquire and use at MIT.

Volunteering

Volunteers play an integral role in the software release process as testers and even as product release coordinators. Volunteering is a great way to try a new role or improve existing skills without changing jobs. These opportunities are not just for “techie” types. Members of SWRT are happy to help volunteers build their skills.

If you want to increase your knowledge of an application or operating system, or hone your troubleshooting skills, SWRT encourages you to be a tester. Using structured testing techniques, you will report behaviors observed while downloading, installing, and using applications and documentation. Testing can range from a few hours to several days.

If you’d like to build leadership, project management, negotiation, or communication skills, consider signing on as a product release coordinator. By overseeing the work of a software release team, you will gain an understanding of installer development, testing, documentation, communication, and training. You will also work to ensure that Help Desk staff have been trained and stakeholders engaged. Essentially, your task is to make sure that all the mechanisms are in place to deliver and support the software.

To find out more about volunteering, go to

```
http://web.mit.edu/swrt/
participate.html
```

or contact SWRT at swrt@mit.edu. ☺



“Freedom of Mobility” Services Are Not Risk Free

• Tim McGovern

During the heyday of MIT’s Project Athena, the old saying was “Wherever You Go, There You Are.” Athena was built so you could move about the campus, sit down at any Athena workstation, and access your data or homework securely from the shared servers operated by MIT.

Today’s consumer electronic and information services vendors urge us to seek the “ultimate freedom of mobility” – that is, ready access from just about anywhere to everything on our computers back in the office or at home. All you need is a portable device and a subscription to a remote service.

While these capabilities are freeing in many ways, this “freedom of mobility” paradigm involves not just a change in scale, but a change in control. With that change comes the risk that sensitive personal or Institute data may be exposed. Protection of Institute data is mandated by MIT Policy 13.2.2 as well as Federal laws (HIPPA, FERPA, GLBa).

MIT Policy 13.2.2 on Information Security and Preservation

This MIT Policy states that “individuals who manage or use the information and computing resources required by the Institute to carry out its mission must protect them from unauthorized modification, disclosure, and destruction... Protection shall be commensurate with the risk of exposure and with the value of the information and of the computing resources.”

The evolving national digital infrastructure has fanned the growth of new services to meet customer needs for remote access. People want to access their email, files, schedules, documents of various types, and even TiVo recordings from wherever they happen to be. Let’s consider just a few of the most prominent services that have been introduced over the last few years – services that are being used by millions of consumers.

Agile Email Services

Yahoo, AOL, HotMail, Google, and others offer free email accounts that can be accessed from any computer with a web browser. This has been a tremendous boon to democratizing access to email. When used thoughtfully, there’s little risk; however, if you use one of these services to transmit or receive sensitive personal or Institute information, the risk rises markedly.



PDAs – Personal Digital Assistants – have become nearly as ubiquitous as cell phones and, in some cases, have merged with them. The PDA vendors promise to provide you with an access portal into your email, calendar, and more. Some of these providers actually keep copies of your email. As with the agile email providers, sending sensitive data in unencrypted email via these portals risks disclosure, and either personal or Institute loss.

Agile File Access Services

Several services – one of which is GoToMyPC – let you access your computer desktop from somewhere else. Your data doesn’t get moved somewhere else, but the contents of your files may travel over unprotected portions of the Internet to reach you.

The most recent entrant in agile file access, Google, takes a different approach. Search Across Computers, part of Google’s Desktop Version 3, promises to store any file you specify on their servers, allowing its retrieval by an authorized user from anywhere on the Internet. But the security of electronic files on shared systems and networks is limited. Security and privacy mechanisms are not foolproof, and can be susceptible to interception unless you take steps, like encryption, to protect the data. Worse, giving your personal data, or sensitive Institute data, to a

third party could lead to a loss of control over that data in the event of a legal action.

Agile Desktop Management

Both Apple and Microsoft provide a feature for remotely accessing computers running their operating systems. This feature enables system administrators, who may be responsible for many computers, to install new software or repair computers from one central location. If you, as a “regular” user, tap into this feature to access your computer remotely, you run the risk of having your data intercepted. You may also be vulnerable to exploits, depending on the software you’re using and how you’ve configured it.

Weigh the Risks

Down the road, Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) virtual private network (VPN) systems may be widely adopted by providers as a way to let users connect securely. But these systems aren’t yet commonplace. In the meantime, IS&T recognizes that sometimes you will want to put your files and data elsewhere, or access your files and data remotely. When you do, it’s key that you treat this information as you would other valuables. Pay attention to what you send, access, and store remotely! The *Worth Asking* box below can help you frame how to handle your data.

If you have questions about keeping your data safe, send mail to the IT Security Support Team at <infoprotect@mit.edu>.

Worth Asking

- Is the information sensitive, personally or with respect to MIT?
- Where will my data be stored? At MIT or on a third-party server?
- Who will have control over my data? MIT or a third party?
- Who might be able to see my data without my knowledge?
- How secure is the path I’m using? (Public networks in cafes, airports, hotels, and libraries are especially vulnerable.)
- What can I do to prevent the accidental exposure of sensitive data – is encryption an option?



This column presents tips about computing. If you have a question you would like to see answered here, send it via email to <techtips@mit.edu>.

For more information technology Q&As, check the IS&T Stock Answers database at <http://itinfo.mit.edu/answer/>

Q I plan to share my group's FileMaker database with other users. What server software do you recommend for hosting the database?

A FileMaker Server is the way to go. Two key reasons are data security and backups. Here's the inside story.

Data Security

FileMaker 7 added the ability to turn on Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) encryption for the transmission of data across a network. This is particularly important if you are working with sensitive data. In versions earlier than 7, all shared FileMaker data and passwords are sent over the network in the clear. Securing sensitive data from potential network sniffing is crucial, and is now easily accomplished in versions 7 and 8 with

a simple checkbox. You can access this checkbox through the Security section of the FileMaker Server Admin tool. (In fact, please stop reading and do it now!)



Backup
For years, FileMaker Server has had its own backup scheduler

utility built into the product. Not only is it good practice to make frequent backups of your data, it is safer to include this tool in your carefully planned backup procedure. If you have been relying on TSM alone to back up your databases, you have very likely been putting both your data and files at risk.

First, as mentioned earlier, your data is not encrypted when transmitted over the network, and that includes sending files across the network via TSM under its default settings. It is possible to encrypt your TSM transmission, but don't do this lightly. See the cautionary note at

<http://itinfo.mit.edu/article.php?id=7444>

With FileMaker 7 and now 8, the files are compressed and unreadable by simple network sniffing. So it's acceptable to transmit version 7 or 8 files over the network, without encrypting your TSM connection.

Second, if you've been backing up your database while it is hosted and open, your files are at high risk for corruption. Only back up closed database files with TSM.

The best approach is to implement a backup schedule through FileMaker Server. With the Backup Scheduler, you can set FileMaker Server to make copies of all your hosted files to anywhere on your server's hard drive without disrupting your users' activities. And you can schedule it to run automatically as often as you like, whenever you like. Just be sure to exclude the hosted databases folder from TSM backup, and only back up the copies created by FileMaker Server. Back up the copies via TSM if your files are hosted on Server 7 or 8, or through removable media if your files are hosted on Server 5.5. ☺

OPENSTUDIO Fosters Creativity, Collaboration, and Capitalism

• Robyn Fizz

OPENSTUDIO, from the Media Lab's Physical Language Workshop, is an experiment founded on some pretty big ideas. The project's cornerstone is a web site for the exchange of digital art, complete with its own currency. OPENSTUDIO breaks free of the gallery/patron model of selling art, or at least digital art. The goal is to cultivate a community of creators in a viable online economy. Painting with an even bigger brush, OPENSTUDIO hopes to encourage an expanded role for creativity in ethics, politics, and business.

This experiment is the brainchild of the students of John Maeda, Associate Professor of Design and Computation. From a research perspective, Maeda and his team expect OPENSTUDIO to leave its mark on digital media service architecture, ecommerce, distance education, and visual information display systems.

How Does It Work?

OPENSTUDIO lives at

<http://openstudio.media.mit.edu/> and is open to the public for browsing. However, membership is currently by invitation only, since the project is still in its alpha stage.

OPENSTUDIO provides simple creative tools for free in a Web-based environment. The main tool, Draw Alpha, is very basic, offering rectangle, oval, freehand, line, and color selection options. Other tools are under development. The tools and web site will evolve over time, spurred in part by member feedback. Even though the team developing OPENSTUDIO works with far fewer resources than those available to commercial software vendors, members have adopted the web site with enthusiasm.

OPENSTUDIO's economy is based on the "Burak" (named after team member Burak Arikan). New members are given starter currency of 50 to 100 Buraks, and can then earn more by selling their artwork to other members.



in burak we trust by Brent Fitzgerald

They also have the option of giving away their artwork.

Everything members make and save in OPENSTUDIO is stored on an IBM server. Each work of art remains private until the creator chooses to post it in an online gallery. Members can access and edit their creations, via web browsers, from anywhere in the world.

Insightful Blog

The OPENSTUDIO team maintains a weblog at

<http://openstudio.media.mit.edu/blog/>

Entries take note of the project's server snafus, and include links to a minibook of OPENSTUDIO art and some collective brainstorming about the project's future. As team member Brent Fitzgerald notes, "Deep down we all believe that creativity and intelligence can make the world a better place." ☺



Get Ready! HR-Payroll Project Offers Extensive Training

• Diana Hughes

The HR-Payroll Project is heading into the home stretch, with the implementation of the new SAP Payroll system set for July 1, 2006. Several new electronic tools for faculty, DLC administrators, and employees (including hourly-paid students) will be available for payroll functions that are done today on paper. Examples include electronic time-sheet submission and approval; salary distribution and certification; and maintenance of W-4 tax withholding and direct-deposit bank information.



Get Ready, Get Set, Get Trained
HR-Payroll training classes will begin on Tuesday, May 30.

To help the MIT community make a smooth transition to the new tools, an extensive curriculum is being offered through the summer, with refresher classes in the fall. The demo and hands-on style classes will be supplemented with “quick card” documentation and online demonstrations and help.

The roster of HR-Payroll classes is listed in the box to the right. You can get class descriptions and details about schedule, location, seating availability, and registration requirements via the Employee Self Service (ESS) web site at <http://web.mit.edu/sapwebss/>

From the **Training** tab, click on the **Training Catalog and Registration** link. Navigate to **Administrative Skills and Computing**, then to the subcategory **Payroll-SAP Web for Community Users**.

DLC administrators and faculty may need to attend various training sessions, depending on their role. Support and Service staff and hourly paid students who fill out time sheets will only need to attend one session.

Need Assistance?

If you have questions about which classes to attend, check with your local Human Resources or Payroll administrators. The training registrar <payroll-registrar@mit.edu> can field questions about the schedule. For help using ESS, contact the Computing Help Desk at <computing-help@mit.edu> or 253-1101.

To learn more about the new payroll system and electronic tools, visit the HR-Payroll Project web site at

<http://web.mit.edu/ist/delivery/hrpayroll/>

HR-Payroll Project Training

Employee Training Classes

- ESS Support and Service Staff Time Sheet Entry
- ESS Student Time Sheet Entry

DLC Administrator Training Classes

- SAPweb Time Sheet Approval and Distribution Review
- SAPweb Time Sheet Approval
- SAPweb eDACCA Certification (*not offered until the fall*)
- SAPweb Salary Distribution and Certification (eSDS)
- SAPweb Salary Distribution and Certification Workshops
- SAPweb Salary Distribution Process
- Electronic Student Personnel Action Form
- Roles Database Management
- Data Warehouse Reporting
- HR-Payroll Forms

Note: For classes that require registration, please sign up by June 15 using the Training tab on ESS.

ShopMIT Points the Way to the Institute’s Internal Providers

• Robyn Fizz

Are you scouting for a caterer, or need to get your hands on a video camera? Do you want to print an outsize color poster, or have a brochure ready for mailing? Or perhaps your requirements are a bit more off the beaten path: you need access to a machine shop, or would really like TIM, the MIT mascot, to make an appearance at an event you’re hosting.

These services and more – and some products as well – are available right on campus. ShopMIT, a project managed by MIT Enterprise Services, serves as a gateway to MIT’s internal providers. The group’s primary outreach effort is the ShopMIT web site at

<http://web.mit.edu/shopmit/>

Participating providers include

- Academic Media Production Services
- Audio-Visual Services
- Campus Activities Complex
- Campus Dining
- Copy Technology Centers
- Endicott House
- MIT Card Office
- MIT Libraries: Document Services
- MIT Museums
- MIT Press Bookstore
- Parking and Transportation
- TechCash

For a full list of offerings, click on the web site’s Products and Services link.

Note that the ShopMIT web site does not have “shopping cart” functionality. Instead, it directs you to web sites for

the internal providers, some of which have online purchasing options.

The MIT Advantage

All of ShopMIT’s providers are dedicated to excellence in customer service and product quality. In addition, when you buy MIT-produced products and services, you can both save money and help keep MIT funds “in house.”

If you don’t shop MIT, Enterprise Services would like to know why. Is there is a product or service you’d like MIT to offer? If you’re going outside for a product or service you can get here, what might encourage you to return? Enterprise Services would also like to hear from you if your group is an MIT internal provider that would like to be added to the ShopMIT site. To reach Associate Director John McDonald, send mail to <jmcd@mit.edu> or call 253-9897.



If you don't know where to get help for your computer, network, or telephone problems, dial one of the help lines listed to the right.

If you prefer to use email, you can send your questions to the corresponding email addresses on the far right. (When logged into Athena, you can also use the `olc` command to send questions to Athena's online consultants.)

You can also submit a question online via Casetracker at

<http://casetracker.mit.edu/>

For help with...

Dial...

Or send a message to...

General computing questions Macintosh, Windows, network/ connectivity, business applications, computer buying advice	253-1101	computing-help@mit.edu
Academic computing	253-0115	et-consult@mit.edu
Athena Computing Environment	253-4435	olc@mit.edu
Computer and printer repairs	253-0815	pcservice@mit.edu
Disabilities and computing	253-7808	atic@mit.edu
Telephone and voice mail services	253-3670	telecom-csr@mit.edu
Telephone repairs	253-4357	3help@mit.edu
Unix/Linux	253-1103	unix-linux-help@mit.edu



Surf Sites: Consuming Interests

The Virtual Customer Initiative (see lead article) uses the Internet and a variety of sophisticated algorithms to gain insights into what customers want. As a consumer, your Web research may be focused on learning about product features, finding unbiased reviews, or even discovering the best way to get through to customer service. The Internet is also a good venue for keeping tabs on the latest cons and scams.

For help in staying one step ahead as a savvy consumer, check out the web sites on the right.

Consumer Action

<http://www.consumer-action.org/>

Consumer Reports WebWatch

<http://www.consumerwebwatch.org/>

ConsumerSearch – Product Reviews and Reports

<http://www.consumersearch.com/>

Epinions

<http://www.epinions.com/>

Federal Consumer Information Center: Consumer Action

<http://www.consumeraction.gov/>

Gethuman – Changing the Face of Customer Service

<http://gethuman.com/>

Recalls.gov

<http://www.recalls.gov/>



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