Migration to DEC 7000 Continues With SIS

The migration of administrative and academic applications from the Unisys 2200 to the DEC 7000 continues. On August 1, the cut-over was made to the SCT Student Information System (SIS) from the Unisys-based system. Most individuals contacted by @UAH.EDU agreed that the conversion has been going extremely well. The first big test of SIS came just six days after implementation, when the first registration was held. By most accounts, it was an overwhelming success.

Assistant Registrar Jan Perkins stated that the most notable improvement in the registration process has been in the area of bill printing. Where students formerly would wait in line for their bills after registering for classes, the new system has the bills printed almost immediately after the student leaves the terminal. Indeed, according to Administrative Applications Director Jean Greenwood, the only part of the SIS migration that is not "near totally transparent" to students is the improved registration process.

But registration is only one part of SIS. "We have not gone through the entire cycle yet," stated Greenwood. As the semester winds to a close, there will be the grading and reporting process to run. There is also the day-to-day operations of departments the depend heavily upon SIS. While the conversion process has meant a lot of work for people getting data into the new system, most expressed optimism for the long term.

"Once we get all the procedures down, it's going to be wonderful," stated Winnet Havens, who also noted some immediate benefits of the new system to the Bursar's Office. "This may not sound like much, but the ability to

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Editor:
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The University of Alabama in Huntsville is an equal opportunity institution and welcomes applications for employment and educational programs from any individual regardless of race, color, sex, age, national origin, handicap, or veteran status.
Usenet News Now Available

Information Services is pleased to announce that Usenet news is now available to those campus users who have the appropriate news reader software.

About Usenet

What is Usenet? Basically, it is an Internet-based mass conferencing system, with each conference being devoted to a particular topic. Each conference (called a newsgroup in Usenet lingo) has a hierarchical name that describes the topic for discussion in that conference. If you post a message (called an “article”) in a conference, it will eventually find its way to thousands of other Internet users that subscribe to the same newsgroup.

The standard newsgroups are divided into seven major categories, as indicated by the first part of their names:

- **comp** Groups related to some aspect of computer science (e.g., comp.ai or comp.sys.unisys).
- **sci** Groups relating to sciences other than computer science (e.g., sci.physics or sci.math.symbolic).
- **news** Groups relating to Netnews software (e.g., news.software.b) or of general interest to all net users (e.g., news.announce.important).
- **rec** Groups relating to recreational activities (e.g., rec.arts.sf-lovers or rec.games.chess).
- **soc** Groups for social interaction or discussion of social topics (e.g., soc.singles or soc.culture.jewish)
- **talk** Groups prone to extended or unresolved debate (e.g., talk.religion.misc or talk.politics.guns).
- **misc** Groups that do not fit into any of the other categories (e.g., misc.jobs.offered for job postings).

There are also other hierarchies that are on Usenet, such as bionet for topics of interest to biologists (such as bionet.agroforestry or bionet.genome.arabidopsis); or alt, which is another category for groups that do not fit into the traditional categories (such as alt.fan.letterman or alt.politics.europe).

So if, for example, you just bought an old pinball machine and need some technical advice on fixing it up, you could post an article in the rec.games.pinball group describing your problem, and receive replies in as little as a matter of hours. Interested in exchanging ideas with Windows programmers? Then subscribe to the comp.os.ms-windows.programmer group. There are approximately 3000 newsgroups in the various hierarchies to choose from.

What do I do to get it?

Information Services operates what is called an NNTP (Network News Transfer Protocol) server. This server software allows news readers to make an attachment and download (read) and upload (post) articles to and from desired news groups.

There are several choices for news reader software, depending upon your hardware platform. Many UNIX machines will already have news reader software (such as tin, rtin, or trn) installed. If you have a Internet-connected PC running Windows for Workgroups, then you can use the News function of the Win/QVT software (instructions on how to set that up are elsewhere in this issue). Macintosh users might want to consider a program called

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Usenet News on Email

Information Services is pleased to announce that, for those users who do not have access to an Internet-connected NNTP client, Usenet news is available on the email host. While a complete description of Usenet is beyond the scope of this article (indeed, there are numerous publications on the subject), hopefully we can provide enough information to get you started.

The newsreader software on email is NEWSRDR version 4.8, written by Matthew Madison (who has authored many free software packages for the VMS environment). It connects to an NNTP server to present news, and to allow the user to post articles to news groups.

Getting Started

The command to start the NEWSRDR software is simply

```
NEWS
```

(this is a symbol which gets defined for each user at login time). When you run NEWSRDR for the first time, it will tell you that it cannot find your profile, and then it will create one for you. This file contains information such as what editor you wish to use when composing articles, what news groups you are subscribed to, etc. It is placed in your login directory, and is called NEWSRDR PROFILE.NRPF. While you are in the NEWSRDR program, you will see the "news" prompt. All commands discussed below should be entered at this (not the DCL) prompt.

The first thing you will wish to do is examine your default profile. When NEWSRDR creates your NEWSRDR PROFILE.NRPF file, it will make some best guesses, as well as take some defaults (like your personal name) from your VMS Mail profile. The command to examine your profile is `SHOW ALL`.

A couple of things you may wish to change at this point. If you have not set a personal name in VMS Mail, you will not have one set in NEWSRDR (this is the name that will be presented in articles you post). An example of how to change this would be:

```
set personal_name "First M. Last"
```

This will cause your name to automatically appear in articles you post. Another variable you may wish to change is the editor that is called when you post an articles. By default, it will be set to the VMS EVE editor. If you are more comfortable with the older EDT editor, you can set EDITS/EDITOR=EDT and NEWSRDR will call EDT when you post or mail an article. Also, if you had a file called signature.txt that you wished appended to all mail and articles you post, you could enter

```
set signature/automatic signature.txt
```

and the specified file (the contents of which cannot exceed eight lines or 80 columns per line) will be appended to each article or message.

Subscribing to News Groups

Now you are ready to subscribe to news groups. If you already know what news group you wish to subscribe to, just use the `SUBSCRIBE` command, as in:

```
subscribe rec.food.cooking
```

If you do not know the name of the group(s) you want to subscribe to, then you can use the `DIR/GROUP/ALL` command along with a search string. For example, if you wish to list all groups starting with rec.arts, you would enter

```
dir/group/all rec.arts.*
```

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Or if you wanted all groups with the string, "cook" in the name, enter

dir/group/all *cook*

Note! If you enter the dir/group/all command with no limiters, then NEWSRDR will display all 3000+ newsgroups to your terminal!

Reading News

Now that you have subscribed to your desired groups, it's time to start reading the news! To get a list of all groups to which you have subscribed, enter the dir/group command (without the /all qualifier). This will show you what groups you are subscribed to. To change to a news group, use the group command; i.e.,

group rec games pinball

From here, there are a couple of ways you can start reading news articles in your selected group. To begin reading from the first available article, you can enter the read/first command. To get a list of articles in the group, enter the dir command with no qualifiers. This will display a list of articles, and to read individual ones just enter the article number. If you wish to search for particular subjects, you can use the dir/subject command. For example, if you wanted to search for articles with the word "Bally" in the subject line, you could do this:

dir/subject=bally

and NEWSRDR would return a list of all articles with the string "bally" in the subject line (the command is not case sensitive). To read any articles displayed, just enter the article number.

Posting News Articles

To post an article to a newsgroup, you must be subscribed to that group, and that must be your "current" group. For example, if your pet boa constrictor seemed ill, you could subscribe to the rec.pets.herp news group, then make that your current group via the group command. You would then enter the post command. The software would then display something like this:

%NEWS-I-USINGCURGROUP, message will be posted to group rec.pets.herp
Subject:

This is to remind you which news group you are posting in, then it prompts you for a subject line. At this point, you might enter something like, "Advice needed for sick boa". Then, NEWSRDR will call your editor of choice, and you compose your article. When you are ready to send the article, you exit from the editor, and NEWSRDR will give you one last chance to back out of sending. It will say,

Ready to post to: rec.pets.herp
Okay to proceed? [yes]:

If you hit <RETURN>, then you should receive the following response:

240 Article posted

(see “Troubleshooting” below if you receive a different response). Your article is now posted and you should receive replies (either via netmail or to the news group) within a day (sometimes even a matter of a few hours).

Posting or Mailing Replies

OK, now that you know how to ask questions, suppose you want to answer one. You are reading the rec.radio.amateur.packet group, and someone has posted an article that you wish to respond to. There are three ways you can respond: one, you can post your response to the newsgroup; two, you can e-mail the person a netmail reply; and three, you

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can do both. In any event, you will use the 
REPLY command, with certain qualifiers. The 
way to do this is as follows:

reply/post  to post your reply to the 
group

reply/mail to e-mail the person a 
response via netmail

reply/post/mail to send both

If you do not put any qualifiers on the REPLY 
command, then the default is taken from your 
profile (you can see what this is by entering the 
SHOW REPLY command).

Command Summary

Here is a summary of useful commands in 
NEWSRDR. For a complete list of commands 
and their qualifiers, either use the HELP 
command in NEWSRDR, or download the 
documentation from 
SYSS$SHARE:NEWSRDR_DOC.TXT.

DIR/GROUP/ALL  Shows a list of all newsgroups 
available. This should be followed by 
some sort of pattern you wish to match 
(VMS wildcards are supported). If the 
command is entered without a pattern, 
it will display all available news groups 
(one screen at a time), and the only 
way to get out of it is to Ctrl-Y out of 
NEWSRDR.

DIR/GROUP This will show all groups to which 
you are currently subscribed.

DIR  This will display all articles in the 
current group.

GROUP This command will change your 
current group. You must be 
subscribed to the group you put on the 
command line.

SUBSCRIBE Subscribe to a particular news 
group.

UNSUBSCRIBE Removes the group from the 
list you subscribe to.

POST  Posts an article to the current group. 
This command will invoke whatever 
text editor you have defined via the SET 
EDIT command. When you exit 
the editor, you will be asked if you 
really want to post the article. If your 
editor session terminates abnormally 
(i.e., you quit instead of exit) the 
message entry will automatically be 
canceled.

REPLY Sends a reply to an article you have just 
read. If the /POST qualifier is appended 
to the command, the reply will go to 
the news group. If the /MAIL qualifier is 
used, the reply will be sent via netmail. 
Both qualifiers can be used.

SHOW ALL  This will display all user settings 
(such as personal name, signature 
settings, reply defaults, etc.) that are 
stored in your profile. See the 
documentation or help screens for 
assistance on changing them. Some of 
the more useful settings follow.

SET PERSONAL_NAME  This will allow you 
to define what personal name appears 
in articles you post. The default is 
taken from your VMS Mail profile (if 
you have one).

SET EDIT/EDITOR=[editor]  This lets you define 
what editor is called when you post or 
reply. Your choices are EDT and 
EVE.

SET SIGNATURE  If you have a fancy sig file that 
you want to append to your posts, you 
can define the file name with this 
command. The file will be appended 
only if you add the /SIGNATURE 
qualifier to the REPLY or POST command. To 
have your sig file put on all posts, use 
the "SET SIGNATURE/AUTOMATIC [filename]" command.

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There are numerous other commands available, such as allowing you to filter out articles on subjects or from authors you do not wish to see (for example, if you never want to see posts from America Online users, you can say

\texttt{set ignore/global/from="*aol.com"}

See the online help or documentation for a complete list of commands and their qualifiers.

**Netiquette**

When posting an article in a news group, it is important to remember that your words are likely to land on thousands of computers worldwide, and may be seen by several thousand users. If you are unfamiliar with a group, it is a good idea to read it for a few days (this is known as "lurking") before posting, to get an idea of what is considered proper decorum and what is not. It is also a good idea to double check what news group you are posting to, especially if you subscribe to a wide variety of groups. If, for example, you intended to post an article to soc.religion.christian.bible-study and posted to alt.pagan instead, it is very likely that your perfidy will net you (and your system administrator) some not-so-very-nice responses.

**Troubleshooting**

The NEWSRDR software itself is very stable and very user-friendly. You may occasionally get a message stating that NEWSRDR was unable to connect with the news server. That is a problem with another host, and should be reported to Information Services. If you get an error message while trying to post an article, that usually indicates a problem with the news server as well. In either case, please report all problems to The HelpDesk for routing.

**Usenet News Now Available**

NewsWatcher, available via anonymous FTP from ftp.acns.nwu.edu in the pub/newswatcher directory.

The server is located at the news.uah.edu host, so configure that name in your NNTP client software setup. If you have questions or problems related to the news feed, contact James McCullars at Information Services for assistance.

**Staff News**

Information Services welcomes the following new staff members: Clifford Gaines comes to us from Unisys as a Field Service Technician; Dale Dean, also from Unisys, Programmer/Analyst; Frank McAllister, Computer Operator on the second shift; and Jan Perkins of the Records Office, who will reside in Annex B during the SIS migration. Departing staff members include Rich Hemphill, who now resides in the Houston, TX area; Ginger Demirjian, who transferred to Research Institute; and Bill Allbritton, who left to pursue a career with the Postal Service. Changes include Joe Mullican, who assumed the duties of Network Security Analyst upon Rich’s departure; and Paula White, who is now Information Security Coordinator. Our congratulations also go to Joe for his recent marriage to the former Katreena Feusner, and to Chris Albright, who was presented with a UAH Foundation Award at the President’s Picnic.

Finally, Information Services sends its deepest regrets to the family of former Programmer/Analyst Jeanne M. Kennedy, who lost her battle with cancer on April 26 of this year.
Unisys 2200 to be Decommissioned

This is just to remind everyone that the Unisys 2200 will be decommissioned at the end of this year. This has several implications for computer users on campus:

- All applications currently residing on the 2200 must be converted to another hardware platform. If you are running any application that requires a logon to the 2200 (“$$SON SxxPxx”, “MAPPER”, “@run”, etc.) and you do not know the status of your migration to the DEC 7000, you are urged to contact Information Services immediately.

- Any data files, FORTRAN programs, etc. that are on the 2200 must be moved to another system.

- Finally, when the 2200 is decommissioned, Information Services will have no facilities for reading or creating nine-track (i.e., “round-reel”) tapes. Anyone with data on nine-track tapes will need to move their data to an alternate storage medium. Anyone with “CO” or “CG” series tapes in the computer room should retrieve them by the end of the year.

Please contact the Information Services HelpDesk if you have any questions.

Bits ‘n’ Bytes

Here are some items of interest from the Information Services News Desk, too short for a dedicated article:

- The DEC 7000 came to a virtual standstill during the SIS user training. This was determined to be caused by memory bottlenecks caused by so many people logged in to the SCT software at once. The memory on the 7000 was originally 128 megabytes. Performance improved considerably after we moved the page file off the system disk and added another 128M of memory. We are currently awaiting another memory upgrade to bring the total to 512M.

- The DEC 7000 will be unavailable from 0630-0800 on the second Monday of each month to allow Systems personnel to reboot the machine and defragment the system disk.

- Email users - please be sure and delete old messages that you no longer need. The mail delivery software on email is now configured to return undeliverable mail to the sender (if, for example, your disk quota is exceeded).

- All dial-in users are reminded that neither SLIP nor PPP protocols are currently supported by the Information Services dial-in modem pool.

SIS Migration Update

(Continued from page 1)

search for students by name instead of being required to input a student number has been a big help.” She also lauded the itemization of Financial Aids data on the printed bills.

There are also other benefits to the new SIS. Some of these include: support of telephone (touch-tone) registration (scheduled for implementation in January), mutual support

from other university users, multi-user update capability, and the need for only one data network to support all operations. The system will not be without its growing pains, but, as Havens noted, “Ask me about it this time next year, and I’m sure it will receive an A+”.

The University of Alabama in Huntsville
By: Helga Schmedlapp

**Dateline: August, 1995**

Enough already. It is time for the crisp air to invigorate our spirits, to challenge us to grow in wisdom, to inspire us to rush out and bake a pie. Alas, we are like melted ice cream, excelling only in blandness. Mother is tired of the summer heat. Mother is exceedingly tired of sweating to and from her car and having to wear wool socks in her office. Mother enjoyed the spring blooms and the summer lushness. Mother has enjoyed the many hatchlings paraded before her office window. Summer has been the season of much fecundity. Now mother wants to cool off. Mother is reminded that in Victorian times ladies were protected from the heat as much as possible because makeup had a wax base and would, quite literally, melt in the sun. This image amuses mother, but it in no way gives her comfort. Mother is quite cranky.

Are the students quite cranky? They have been, mostly without their knowledge, registered and billed in a new software system on the new Digital 7000, the Alpha machine. Their financial aid has been calculated on the new system and their schedules have been processed totally using the "new" catalogue. From the reports mother has received, and she hears from so many people, the students were no more disgruntled this registration than any other. A few noticed how much faster the registration process has become. Many noticed the "new" look to the schedule/bill, but the changes were much less substantial than when we went to laser from tractorfed forms. Mother is aware of the incredible amount of work that went into this smooth transition and feels special recognition should be made of those person who believe that the students still come first and worked tirelessly to provide quality software on their behalf. Kudos to Malcolm Rice, Project Manager, and to all the others who made this registration happen.

There is still much to be done before the Univac is whisked away into computer oblivion. Soon you will be receiving paychecks created on the Alpha. PALS will fall before SIRS. Many offices are already enjoying the benefits of being migrated to the Alpha and most remaining offices are scheduled for migration. Data is being moved and/or archived for the SCT applications which are being implemented, but we are a finite bunch of technonerds. If you feel your Univac application is not being migrated and no one has contacted you about conversion, please notify Jean Greenwood at 6347 x 229. She will arrange to meet with you and your staff to discuss your particular needs. Do not wait. There will be no magical transference of data or applications. Mother hasn't seen that fairy godmother creature in years.

By the way, Mr. Editor, mother did request her own email account and was turned down. However, if any of her many readers wishes to correspond with her, please send a message on to mccullarsj@email.uah.edu. If you bug him enough, maybe he will pull strings and get mother an account.

Mother hopes all of you find that 4.0 pen and the book bag that gets you organized.

*Note: Mother can be reached via e-mail at MOTHER@EMAIL.UAH.EDU*
How to Buy a Personal Computer

Editors Note: This was originally a letter I wrote to a friend of mine who was interested in purchasing a personal computer. When I asked some individuals in Support Services to check it for accuracy, it was suggested that it be included in a future edition of @UALEDU. Recommendations, where they appear, are reflective of personal opinions and preferences.

Here is my “How to Buy a PC” lecture. You have to start with a little history.

In the beginning, Intel created a processor chip called the 8086. It had a somewhat primitive instruction set (for example, it could do only integer arithmetic, not floating point), could address one million bytes (one megabyte) of data, and had a 16-bit data path. As a cheaper alternative to the 8086, they also produced an 8-bit version of the chip, which they called the 8088. When IBM decided to market a personal computer in 1981, they chose the Intel 8088 processor to be inside their PC’s. I wish I had bought Intel stock the day before this was announced. If you had an application that was very compute-intensive, you could optionally install what they called a “math co-processor” in your PC. This chip could perform floating-point arithmetic instructions, and was called an 8087.

The IBM PC that was announced in 1981 came with one floppy disk drive, about 128K (K=kilobyte, or 1024 bytes) of memory (usually called Random Access Memory, or RAM), and a color monitor. The monitor was driven by a plug-in adapter called a Color Graphics Adapter, or CGA card. They later came out with what they called an IBM PC/XT (for extended technology), which had a 10-megabyte (approximately 10 million bytes) hard disk drive.

At some point in time, Intel developed a new chip, called an 80186 processor. It was upwardly-compatible with the 8086, but had additional capabilities. IBM didn’t buy into this, however, and I’ve never seen a PC that was based on one.

The next chip in the i86 line was called the 80286, or just a 286 for short. When IBM announced its PC/AT (advanced technology), it was based upon the 286 chip. It had 16-bit data access, and other features. The video card that was standard on these was higher resolution than the CGA, and was called an Extended Graphics Adapter, or EGA card. Like the 8086 (and 8088), the 286 didn’t do any floating-point instructions. If you had a compute-intensive application, you had the option of installing a math co-processor, called an 80287 (or just 287).

At this point, it’s significant to mention that it’s next to impossible to purchase an 8086 or 286-based computer any more. Plus, most of the new software on the market requires a computer based on at least the next chip in the i86 line, called the 80386 chip (a 386 computer). The 386 was a big breakthrough in chip technology, and featured a full 32-bit data path (meaning memory access was faster, since the processor could grab 32 bits, rather than only 16 or 8 bits, in one fetch). Also, since processors could be manufactured to run at different speeds, the computers were advertised as a 386/33, meaning the computer ran at 33 megahertz. The faster the chip, the more expensive the computer. Intel then decided that not everyone needed a 386 with full 32-bit access, so they made a 16-bit model, which they called the 386SX. When they started this, they also started calling the 32-bit version of the 386, the 386DX. So a computer called a 386SX/25 has a 16-bit 386 chip, and (Continued on page 11)
How to Buy a PC

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runs at 25 mhz (this is what I have at home). Like the i86 chips before, if you needed the ability to perform floating-point arithmetic (and some programs like AutoCAD, a very sophisticated computer-aided design package, required this), you had to purchase a separate 387 math co-processor chip. Again, the video adapter that was usually sold with the 386 systems was higher resolution than the EGA, and was called a Video Graphics Array, or VGA.

The next chip was called an 80486, or 486 for short. The 486 was basically a 32-bit 386 with some cache memory built into the chip, but more significantly, it had the 487 math co-processor functions built in. So you no longer needed to purchase a separate chip for the math instructions. The video adapter is still called a VGA, or Super VGA (SVGA). Like the 386, there are 486SX and 486DX models, but it doesn’t mean the same thing as the DX and SX designations on the 386! Let me digress a moment and explain.

When a chip manufacturer like Intel makes processor chips, they run them through a battery of tests, called a verification. Since a chip like a 486 has millions of transistors, it’s pretty easy to have a few things go wrong. Usually, this means that the chip just had to be thrown out. However, if the only thing that doesn’t pass muster is the math co-processor parts, and since not everyone needs a math co-processor anyway, how about just disable the 487 instructions and sell the chip as a 486 without the special math routines? That’s exactly what Intel did. So a 486DX has the 487 instructions enabled, and a 486SX has them disabled. (there are also designations like 486DX2 and 486DX4 that I will not get into here — you don’t need to be concerned with them).

Now that the history lesson is over, here are some things you may see while shopping for a computer:

- 486SX/33 - a 486 that has no math co-processor instructions and runs at 33 mhz
- 486DX/50 - a 486 that has a math co-processor and runs at 50 mhz.
- 486DX2/50 - the chip runs at 50 mhz, but the I/O bus doesn’t. Should be slightly cheaper than a similarly configured 486DX/50
- 486DX4/50 - ditto, sort of

So should you go with a SX chip or a DX chip? It really depends upon what you’re going to run. Large spreadsheets will run faster with a DX chip, as will applications that are big on number-crunching intensity (like some graphics applications). Unless the price break on a SX is significant, I’d go with a DX.

OK, enough about the chip. The computer has other things, like monitor, keyboard, hard drive, etc. Here is what to look for:

- Keyboard - usually, a keyboard is a keyboard is a keyboard. It should be a 101-key (at least) keyboard. If you buy locally, see how it feels.
- Mouse - You’re going to want a mouse if you use Windows. Most PC’s come with them nowadays. Although a no-name mouse is probably acceptable, if a dealer includes a Microsoft
How to Buy a PC

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or Logitech mouse with a PC, he shows a definite concern for quality, and is unlikely to cut corners to make an extra buck.

• Floppy drive - some newer models come with only one floppy drive, a 3½” drive. If it comes with two, I’d look for one 3½” drive and one 5¼” just to make exchanging floppies with other people easier. It’s important to note that most off-the-shelf software nowadays comes with the 3½” disks, and if all you have is a 5¼” drive, you have to send a coupon to the software company to get that size floppy disks.

• Hard Drive - This is the large-capacity disk drive in your computer. They are always designated by their capacity in megabytes, and sometimes by what kind of controller card is needed with them. Popular sizes are 200M and above. Popular drive types are IDE (preferred, and it’s pronounced, “eye-dee-eee”) and SCSI (“scuzzy”). Obsolete drive types are RLL and MFM.

• Monitor - The most common monitor specs are the size, the resolution, the interlacing, and the dot pitch. The size is the diagonal size of the CRT tube (14” is a popular size). The resolution is the number of horizontal and vertical lines it can display (1024 x 768 is standard). The interlacing is a bit complicated, but a non-interlaced screen is less prone to flicker than an interlaced screen. Finally, the dot pitch is the distance between dots on the screen. The less the dot pitch, the closer the dots are, and the sharper the image. Look for .28mm dot pitch.

• It should come with two serial ports (one for a mouse and the other for a modem), one parallel port (for a printer), and a game port (for a joystick). Even if you don’t attach all these things to your system now, it should have the attachments. At least one of the serial ports should have what’s called a 16550 UART (in case you’re interested, it stands for Universal Asynchronous Receiver/Transmitter) chip with it. If it doesn’t, you won’t be able to effectively run a high-speed modem.

• Multimedia kit - this refers to the sound card (should be a Soundblaster® or equivalent), external speakers, and CD-ROM drive. Make sure that what you buy is MPC-2 compliant.

• RAM - Most 486 PC’s will come with 4 megabytes (4M) of RAM as a minimum. I would go with 8M. You’re buying a PC to last for years, and memory requirements are not going down. The memory modules run about $50 a meg, so upgrading from 4M to 8M would cost you about $200 (although the seller of a PC might not charge quite that much if you get it added at the time of the purchase).

• Software - Most PC’s now come with MS-DOS and Windows already loaded. They might throw some extra stuff in as well.

• Tape Backup Unit - Hard drives last a long time, but when they go, they take everything you have, with them. A tape backup unit will add about $200 to the price of a PC. If you start to have serious home applications on your machine, it is time to start backing up your hard drive. Colorado Memory Systems is a premier maker of tape backup units. If you get one, go for the 350M instead of the 250 or 120.

• Modems - This is a contraption that allows your computer to talk to other computers over phone lines. Modems can be either internal (the modem is installed inside your computer), or external (it sits in its own box and attaches to one of the serial ports of your computer via a cable). I don’t like internal modems.

Now what about price? Here’s an ad from a magazine called Computer Shopper: (November, 1994)

(Continued on page 13)
How to Buy a PC

(Continued from page 12)

“Pro 486DX2/50 or DX/33 Multimedia” Comes with: Intel486™DX2/50 or DX/33 microprocessor with built-in cache; Upgradeable to the Pentium™ OverDrive™ processor; VLB (VESA Local Bus) Motherboard: Three 32-bit VL, Three 16-bit, and one 8-bit expansion slot (expansion slots let you add additional components to your system); 4MB of memory, upgradeable to 32M; 425Mb IDE hard drive; 32-bit VL-Bus Graphics Accelerator card and 32-bit VL-Bus IDE controller; 1.44M floppy drive (this is a 3½”); Two serial, one parallel, one game port; Enhanced, 101-key keyboard; 14” non-interlaced Super VGA, 1024x768 Color Monitor, .28 Dot Pitch; MS-DOS, Windows for Workgroups 3.11, Mouse, Quicken (a home financial software package), Prodigy, CompuServe, and America Online preloaded; WordPerfect (a popular word processing package) 6.0A (I think this is the latest version); Dual speed MPC2 powerful CD ROM drive; Soundblaster™ compatible sound card; Set of external speakers; Compton’s Interactive Encyclopedia™, Doctors Book of Home Remedies; AAA Trip Planner; 11-bay tower (this is the PC case); One year on-site warranty (this means they come to your house - how they do that, I don’t know). The price for all this is $1,319 (shipping is extra, but you will probably not be charged sales tax). The same ad has an identically configured 486SX/33 for $100 less (I’d spend the $100 and get the DX). This is, quite frankly, one heck of a deal. To give you an example, four years ago I purchased an 8088-based machine with 640K (this is less than one meg) of RAM, a 40-meg hard drive, and an EGA monitor (no CD-ROM, sound card, or software) for $1,700.

Now, this is mail order, and buying something locally might cost a bit more (although sometimes, the difference in shipping makes the difference almost negligible). The market is so cutthroat, and the margin so low that you can get almost as good a deal locally as you can mail order. The point is, you might pay more locally, but not much more.

I think that’s about it. I didn’t mention the Pentium™, which is the latest chip in the Intel i86 line. They didn’t call it a 586, since they wanted a name they could trademark. At any rate, the price of Pentium PC’s is far beyond the range of most home purchasers.

That’s all I can think of. The next section is a checklist. Let me know if you have any questions.

PC Purchasing Checklist

- You want at least a 486SX/33. If not too much more expensive, make it a DX. Also check pricing on faster clock speeds, like a 50mhz machine. If it comes to spending $100 more and getting either a DX/33 or a SX/50, go for the DX.
- Motherboard - Is it an “integrated” or a “component” system? Most PC’s sold at department stores will feature integrated motherboards, meaning that most controller (video, floppy drive, hard drive, serial port, etc) hardware is built into the main board. A system purchased from a computer dealer will most likely be of the “component” type, meaning that controller hardware is in the form of cards inserted into expansion slots in the motherboard. Each has its advantages, but I prefer the component system. If the serial adapter in an integrated board goes out, you have no choice but to replace the entire board. If the serial card is a separate component, you
How to Buy a PC

(Continued from page 13)

just throw the bad one away and go buy another one for about $20.00.

• Can the CPU chip on the motherboard be upgraded in the future?

• Power Supply - it should be at least 230 watts. I would not under any circumstances consider less than a 200-watt power supply for a 486-class computer. It should also be FCC and UL approved.

• How much RAM does the machine have? 4M is the absolute minimum. I would get an upgrade to 8M, unless the cost makes buying the PC out of range.

• Hard Drive - I would not consider less than a 500Mb hard drive. The larger, the better. Let your wallet be your guide. As of 9/9/95, you could purchase an 850Mb drive for $250, plus tax.

• Mouse - Is it Microsoft® or Logitech®? Is it a serial mouse (preferred, since you can just plug it into one of the serial ports) or a bus mouse (plugs into a card that takes up an expansion slot in your computer).

• Ports - Should have two serial ports, one parallel port, and a game port. At least one of the serial ports should have a 16550 UART chip.

• Monitor - What is the resolution (1024x768 is standard) and size (14” is popular)? Is it interlaced, or non-interlaced (preferred)? Is the dot pitch .28mm or less?

• Graphics adapter - The best performance will come from a local-bus graphics accelerator (may be called a VESA Local or VL-Bus). How much RAM is on the graphics card (look for 2M or greater).

• Floppy Drive - It should come with at least one, and will usually be a 1.44M drive (this is the 3½” drive). If you have friends with whom you wish to exchange software, see what size drive they have.

• Software - Does it come with MS-DOS® installed? Windows®? Other?

• Multimedia Kit - Does it come with speakers, sound card, and CD-ROM drive? Is the CD-ROM drive MPC-2 compliant?

• Modem - Does it have an internal modem? Can you get it without the internal modem for a lesser price?

• Tape Backup - If buying a tape backup unit, look for the Colorado Jumbo® 350. This should cost less than $200. Be sure and get a couple of DC-2120 or DC-2120XL tapes.

• Service - If something should go wrong, where do you take it for repair? Will you have to return the entire unit if something goes wrong (a real pain if you have installed software on the hard drive)?

After the Purchase

When you get the machine home, turn it on and let it run continuously for at least 48 hours (this is called burn-in). Some studies have shown that any electrical component that lasts through the burn-in period will stand an 80% chance of lasting for decades.

Note: The assistance of Larry Morphew, Joe Mullican, and John Stanton is gratefully acknowledged. -Ed

UAH Web Page Has New Look

If you’ve spent time surfing the ‘net, then you have undoubtedly noticed the new look of UAH’s home page. The new page takes advantage of features offered by Netscape Navigator and other HTML 2.0 compliant browsers, to present a more aesthetically pleasing interface. Information Services would like to recognize the following individuals for their work on the new home pages: Corey Mingo, Adnan Mukhtar, Keith Beasley, Rakesh Roberts, and Greg Davis. All are student employees of the Intelligent Systems Laboratory, and were led by ISL’s Dr. Dan Rochowiak.
Working with the Campus Email System

By: John Stanton

Sending Email

From the MAIL> prompt enter the following command:

MAIL> send < depress Enter >

The system will prompt with a To: prompt. This is where you will enter the email address for the person you wish to send email. The address you enter will be one which a colleague or friend has given you.

Information Services does not maintain a listing of email addresses. You must contact the person you wish to send email to for that. Normally an email address is the persons “username” an “@” sign followed by the Internet address of the email system they are working on. Since there are thousands of email hosts world wide with millions of accounts it is easiest to contact the person for their email address rather than trying to figure it out.

For example: Contact one of your colleagues here at UAH and ask them for their email address. If they have one it should be something like “lastnamefirstinitial@email.uah.edu”.

OK, we have the address to send to. The campus email system requires a little extra formatting so it knows how to handle the address. This is done by inserting the “smtp%” statement in front of the email address and enclosing the email address in quotes. The completed address would look like this: smtp%"lastnamefirstinitial@email.uah.edu". You would enter this address or any valid email address at the To: prompt. It will look something like the following:

To: smtp%"lastnamefirstinitial@email.uah.edu" < depress Enter >

If you get any kind of error message, be sure you did not include any extraneous spaces or characters, confirm the spelling of the address and formatting and start back at the send step listed above. You will also get an ugly error message if you transpose a letter in the smtp statement. For instance you say stmp instead of smtp.

At the Subject: prompt you can enter whatever you like. For instance: “Just trying this email stuff out.” You should not receive an error here unless you have a really long subject. Be sure to keep it short. Like you would with a memo.

After you have entered the subject you are ready to start entering your message. One thing to note: the editor for email is not a word processor. You must depress the < enter key > at the end of each line you type. There is not an automatic word wrap feature like most word processors we use today. If you continue to type your message without depressing the < enter key > at the end of each line you will receive a cryptic message stating “buffer full” after two or three lines and you will be kicked out of your message loosing the typing which you already

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have done. You will have to start all over again from the mail prompt. Just remember to
depress the < enter key > at the end of each line.

If you depress the < enter > key at the end of each line, your message can be rather lengthy.
Several pages. One short coming of the email editor is that once you depress enter you cannot
go back to previous lines. If you make a boo boo depress < ctrl > “c” and your message will
abort without sending. You will loose the current message. If you depress < ctrl > “z” the
message will be sent for delivery. The email system will do it’s very best to send the message
no matter what the content.
Once you have entered the message and are ready to send it depress <ctrl> “z” The message
will be sent.

Listing/Reading email messages you have received

Listing email messages (the directory command)

This is done with the “directory” command. At the “Mail > “ prompt enter the word
“directory” and depress the < Enter > key.

If you have any new messages they will be displayed on you screen in the order they were
received. If you have not received any messages you will receive the following message:
“%MAIL-E-NOTEXIST, folder MAIL does not exist”. This looks bad but it is just telling you
that you have not received any messages.

If you do have messages you they will be listed something like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>BILL</td>
<td>13-DEC-1994</td>
<td>The Pound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>BILL</td>
<td>13-DEC-1994</td>
<td>The Dollar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>BILL</td>
<td>14-DEC-1994</td>
<td>The Cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>MARK</td>
<td>17-DEC-1994</td>
<td>The Dime</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that the messages listed in the order received and have a message number assigned to
them.

Reading email messages (the read command)

If you want to read the message received from BILL dated 14-DEC-1994 enter the message
number “3” and depress the < Enter > key. The message will be displayed on your screen. If
you would like to read the next message depress “4” and depress the < enter > key.
Deleting email messages you have either read or don’t need any more

For safety sake, issue a “directory” command and let’s see the list of email messages you have received.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>BILL</td>
<td>13-DEC-94</td>
<td>The Pound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>BILL</td>
<td>13-DEC-94</td>
<td>The Dollar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>BILL</td>
<td>14-DEC-94</td>
<td>The Cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>MARK</td>
<td>17-DEC-94</td>
<td>The Dime</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For example, let’s say that you wish to delete message number “3” which you read earlier. From the Mail> prompt use the delete command and delete message number “3”. It’s format looks like the following:

Mail > delete 3  < depress enter >

If you do the directory command again message “3” will be tagged as deleted. The listing will look something like the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>BILL</td>
<td>13-DEC-94</td>
<td>The Pound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>BILL</td>
<td>13-DEC-94</td>
<td>The Dollar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Deleted)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>MARK</td>
<td>17-DEC-94</td>
<td>The Dime</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use care when deleting messages. Once you have deleted one it is very difficult if not impossible to restore it.

OK, the message is now marked for deletion. We will need to purge the deleted message from the mail file. We do this by issuing the “purge” command from the Mail> prompt. It will look like this:

Mail > purge < depress return >
The email system will respond with the following message:

%MAIL-I-DELMGS, 1 messages deleted This tells you that the message has been successfully deleted from your mail message file.

There are two more steps which must be performed every so often. Especially if you receive email messages often. These are the "compress" and the "delete mail.old.*" commands.

The "compress" command is done from the Mail> prompt and the "delete mail.old.*" command is done from the "$" prompt.

The "compress" command must be done first. At the Mail> prompt type "compress" and depress the <enter> key.

Here's an example of something like what will happen:

MAIL> compress
%MAIL-S-CREATED, DISK$FSUSER:[HELPDESK]MAIL_08DE_COMPRESS.TMP;1 created
%MAIL-S-COPIED, DISK$FSUSER:[HELPDESK]MAIL.MAI;1 copied to DISK$FSUSER:[HELPDESK]MAIL_08DE_COMPRESS.TMP;1 (1 record)
%MAIL-S-RENAMED, DISK$FSUSER:[HELPDESK]MAIL.MAI;1 renamed to DISK$FSUSER:[HELPDESK]MAIL.OLD;2
%MAIL-S-RENAMED, DISK$FSUSER:[HELPDESK]MAIL_08DE_COMPRESS.TMP;1 renamed to DISK$FSUSER:[HELPDESK]MAIL.MAI;1

MAIL>

OK, that was quite a few steps. Why did we do this? The answer is resource management. The email system has a finite amount of disk space available for storage of email messages. Deleting, Purging and Compressing helps by removing old messages and making room for new or incoming messages. As stated earlier, this process does not need to be done every time you delete a message, it should be done every so often, perhaps once a week, or when ever you have received a several mail messages you don’t need to reference anymore.
ARE YOU GIVING AWAY THE STORE?  
By: Joe Mullican

How private is your private information? Would you allow just anyone the ability to view and change your grades? Your salary? Your personnel history? As employees of the university, it is our duty to maintain accurate and private information concerning student grades, academic status, employee salaries, payroll, and personnel information. Specifically, it is the duty of those employees which have been granted access to such information to insure that the integrity of that information is not compromised from their point of access.

Do you protect the privacy and accuracy of this information? Take the following test to see if you are putting this information at risk through your account access privileges.

1. Is your password written down anywhere?
2. Is your password less than six characters in length?
3. Would you give your password to anyone if requested?
4. Can your password be found in any English or Foreign dictionary or dictionary of names?
5. Is your password something personal and easily accessible?
6. Do you leave your terminal logged in when you walk away from your desk?
7. Do you ever allow anyone else to use your account?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, you are failing in your duty to protect the information which has been entrusted to you. Your password should never be written anywhere, nor should it be anything that can be easily guessed. The following list gives examples of things that should never be used for a password.

- Birthdays
- Phone Numbers
- Manufacturers or models of automobile, motorcycle, computer, etc.
- Spouse's or children's names or names in general
- Street names
- Passwords with less than six characters

Good passwords, on the other hand, have the following characteristics:

- Contains numbers and/or punctuation
- Contains at least six characters
- Easy to remember
- Can be typed quickly without looking at the keyboard

If you are having difficulty finding a password that meet this criteria, there are a couple of ways to come up with easily remembered, acceptable passwords. One method is to think of a phrase or line from a poem and use the first letter of each word. For example, "The Quick Brown Fox Jumped Over The Moon" gives the password TQBFJOTM. Another method is to string two short words together with punctuation between them. For example FREE;COKE or FILE&DESK.

Once you have chosen an appropriate password, you must protect it. Never give your password to anyone! Particularly, never give your password to anyone over the telephone. If anyone calls and asks for your password, do not give it to them. Immediately call our network security analyst, Joe Mullican, at 895-6347 x 277 to report such incidents. A common method for a hacker to gain access to a system is to call a user and claim to represent Information Services (IS). Do not be fooled by this. No one from IS should ever call you to request your password. Furthermore, if

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Are You Giving Away the Store?

(Continued from page 19)

someone that you do not recognize shows up to work on your system, make sure that they really are from IS.

Upon logging in to our campus mainframe, you will be notified of the last time you successfully logged in as well as the number of unsuccessful log in attempts, if there are any. Pay attention to these times and numbers. If you notice that your account has been used since the last time you used it, change your password immediately and contact the Network Security Analyst or a User Services staff member to report the unauthorized usage. If you notice unsuccessful log in attempts that you cannot account for, notify IS immediately.

User accounts are granted to an individual, not to a department or group. It is against the Computer Usage and Security Policy of the university to share a user account between multiple people. Any such sharing of accounts discovered by IS personnel will result in the account being locked until the account owner explains in person the security violation. In order to maintain the integrity of user account passwords, the passwords for typical user accounts expire every 90 days and many faculty/staff passwords expire every 45 days. These policies are to protect you as well as the University. We have no choice but to assume that an account being used by multiple people has been compromised.

It is necessary to follow these guidelines to provide the security and privacy that our students and employee records deserve. If you have any questions regarding security in your office, feel free to contact the Network Security Officer, Joe Mullican at 6347 x277.  

Password Change Policy

Anyone who reads the newspapers today knows that computer hacking is at an all-time high. Whereas the “hacker” mentality once was “break in, look around, don’t get caught”, theft of computer time and even company-confidential information is the norm today. With many systems now linked together via the Internet, the accessibility of computers at one location to users at another location is at its greatest.

UAH is not immune to this threat. There have been at least two instances of federal law enforcement officials investigating unauthorized access of UNIX systems on this campus. The phone number of the dial-in modem pool has been published in Phrack, an electronic newsletter published by and for the hacking community. Even in Information Services, we have noticed IP connections being made to some of our UNIX systems, looking for responses from undocumented port numbers. The threat is real.

Methods of breaking into a computer range from the sophisticated to the mundane. One common way of gaining passwords is to call a system administrator claiming to be user X who has forgotten his password, and could we please reset it for him. Once legitimate access has been gained, it is sometimes possible for illegitimate security holes (or “backdoors”) to be planted.

In response to the threats, Information Services has implemented a new password change policy. In short, telephone requests to effect a password change will not be honored unless the requester is personally known to a member of the Information Services staff. In addition, anyone visiting User Services to request a password change should be prepared to show a picture ID upon request.
DEC 7000/610 COMPUTING FACILITIES

Major Hardware

The DEC 7000/610 unit processor (Alpha chip)
Clock Speed: 182 Megahertz
Memory: 256 Megabytes
Disc Storage: 26 Gigabytes of DASD

Peripheral Equipment

Two TZ867 tape drives; each capable of backing up 42 Gb of disc space unattended
One high-speed line printer (LP29): 2000 lines per minute

Software

Languages:
- C
- COBOL
- Fortran

SCT Administrative software packages:
- FRS - Accounting module
- FPR - Purchasing module
- BID - Bid module
- FXX - Fixed Assets module
- BDS - Budget Development module
- HRS - Human Resources module
- SIS - Student Information System

FOCUS
To be used as a report generator for the SCT software

VISAGE
A graphical user interface (GUI) for the SCT software

TEK
A mainframe-based technical document preparation tool

IDL
An interactive graphics display language

IMSL
A mathematical and statistical subroutine library
Person Responsible for machine:

Name:
Department:
Mailing Address:
E-Mail Address:
Phone Number:

Equipment Information:

Machine Type:
Location:
Operating System:
Ethernet Hardware:
Ethernet Address:
Network Software:

Node Name Information: Information Services reserves the right to assign node names. However, this request will be honored if possible.

Internet Node Name:
DecNet Node Name:

In making this application for computing resources I hereby consent to the monitoring of my usage of these computing resources for the purposes of detecting unauthorized use and accounting. I further understand that any unauthorized usage would make me subject to disciplinary action and/or criminal prosecution. I acknowledge that I have read the UAH Computer Security and Usage Policy.

Signature of requester

I certify that this network number is being requested for the use of the department of

Signature of Budget Unit Head

Processing Information to be completed by Information Services

IP Address: DecNet Address:
Date Completed:
Available Software:

- DOS 6.22 Upgrade: $28.00
- Windows For Workgroups: $28.00
- Office Standard: $48.00
- Office Professional with Access: $57.00
- Visual BASIC Professional: $32.00
- FoxPro Professional: $45.00
- Windows NT Advanced Server: $137.00
- Windows NT Client Access: $7.00
- Windows NT Workstation: $44.00

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UAH Number</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Software</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Software</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
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</table>

Subtotal

Total

This form must be signed on back to be processed!
MOLP Terms & Conditions

Software

This software will be installed on the personal computers which are listed by UAH inventory number on the reverse side of this form. The undersigned user will be responsible for deleting this software before this personal computer is sold, transferred to another UAH department, or surplussed.

Documentation

Documentation will not be included under this agreement. Documentation can be purchased from the University Bookstore or other retailers.

Installation of Software (Very Important)

Information Services will contact you to schedule this installation as their schedule allows.

Due to the popularity of the MOLP program please allow up to 3 weeks for installation.

Printed Name of Budget Head

Signature of Budget Head

Account Number to be charged

Date of Request

Phone Number

Department

By signing above you agree that your department will abide by the terms of this agreement and the software license certificate which will be given to the user at the time of installation.
On Course to Replace PACE

(Continued from page 1)

UAH coursework is considered to have been completed at the student’s former school. For the past several years, UAH has been using a program called PACE (Programmed Academic Curriculum Evaluation) to help automate this process. With the migration of SIS to the DEC platform, PACE will disappear by the end of this year.

Taking its place will be a SIS component called On Course. On Course is expected to provide all of the functionality of PACE, and should be implemented by December of this year. @UAH.EDU asked Jan Perkins, Assistant Registrar for Records, about the timetable for implementing the system and training the departmental end users.

Perkins, who will be working out of the Information Services offices during the SIS migration, stated that she will have to undergo special training from SCT (the company which markets UAH’s new software) some time in October. After that, she will be working with the academic departments to ensure that the proper course evaluations are in place, and that those involved in academic advising are fully trained on the new system. She expects to begin training end-users before the end of the year.

Anyone with problems or questions relating to the migration to SIS should call Jan Perkins at 895-6347, extension 234.

Credit Where Credit is Due

The following individuals contributed to this issue of @UAH.EDU: Jean Greenwood, John Stanton, and Joe Mullican. If you have an idea for a story you’d like to see us do, please contact the editor at the address shown on the inside front cover.

Fall/Winter 1995 @UAH.EDU 25
Mailing List Update Form

Please delete my name from the Newsletter mailing list:  □

Please add my name to the Newsletter mailing list:  □

Please change the following information:  □

Name: ________________________________
Address: ________________________________

An Affirmative Action / Equal Opportunity Institution

UAH
The University of Alabama in Huntsville

The University of Alabama in Huntsville
Information Services
Huntsville, Alabama 35899

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