Students making computer attacks . . .

in name of security

A conversation at a conference has evolved into a project that could impact the future of online information security.

Oswego is one of three colleges collaborating to create and test a virtual security platform, and impart resulting lessons to other colleges, under a National Science Foundation Institutional Development grant. Oswego will receive $60,000 of the funding over two years mainly to pay students to develop and test the platform and lessons, said James Early, who is coordinating Oswego’s part of the project.

The project sprang from a conversation between Early, Tom Daniels of Iowa State and Benjamin Kuperman of Oberlin College at an annual Computer Security Applications Conference last December.

“We were sitting there discussing this virtual test platform Tom’s students were developing, and we realized we could use this at different schools,” Early recalled.

The project involves scalable virtual machine laboratory systems — virtual systems and computers recreated within an actual computer — and exercises where students attack and defend those systems.

“Once we develop these virtual machines and virtual networks, we can launch attacks on them,” said Early, an assistant professor of computer science.

“We can use this virtual lab and platform to see how machines can attack one another, how computers can be affected, how to mitigate attacks. While this would damage real networks and computers, at the end of the exercise, we can press a button and everything will be like they were before.”

Protecting online citizens

The work aims to stem such dangerous invasions as spyware allowing remote hackers to take control of other machines to monitor keystrokes and take images of Web pages users access — which can lead to identity theft.

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Security project — James Early, right, of the computer science department will coordinate Oswego’s part in a three-college project on information security. Students at Iowa State, Oberlin College and Oswego will develop virtual computing systems, then attack and defend them to learn more about vulnerabilities in real networks. Early is shown talking to senior computer science major Ryan Mann.

Students share experiences in new blog project

New SUNY Oswego Student Blogs allow readers to follow students adjusting to college, playing sports, directing a play, getting involved in campus events, studying overseas, giving tours or even overcoming vision loss.

Nine students of varying backgrounds, activities and interests are participating in the first-time blog project, which can be found at www.oswego.edu/student/oswegoblogs.

Participants include:

• Sherriff Bailey, a junior public justice and psychology major interested in social justice and global issues
• Christopher Cook, a freshman English major who writes for The Oswegonian
• Kendall Hanley, a senior sociology major studying in Australia and on the women’s ice hockey team
• Kevin Hollenbeck, a senior theatre and cinema and screen studies major who is directing the play “Honor and the River”
• Cameron Jones, a senior broadcasting major involved in the Phi Beta Sigma fraternity
• Leah Matthews, a junior elementary education major on the women’s swimming and diving team
• Julie-Jo Stanton, a senior public relations major interning in the Lifestyles Center and Public Affairs Office
• Erin Scala, a senior public justice major who describes herself as “that cool blind chick you see on campus”
• Kris Vicencio, a senior music and broadcasting major who is an admissions tour guide and vocalist.

Wide-ranging discussion

The principal audience is prospective students interested in what they can do at Oswego, though a wide audience from the campus community and beyond have visited and commented on the variety of posts since the blogs launched Oct. 1.

Readers can learn more about Cook’s transition to the college environment: “I guess that it’s kind of like a bridge that you have to cross where one end of it is the life you’re used to and the other end is college life, and let’s face it, there are many of those bridges in our lives.”

Scala’s discussions of attending college after losing her eyesight provide insight: “At first, I thought that SUNY Oswego was way too big for anyone to navigate, let alone a blind person. After walking around, getting involved with clubs and meeting people, it is very easy and comfortable to go from point A to point B both on and off campus.”

Filing dispatches and photos from Australia, Hanley said the workload “is definitely challenging me, which is a good thing! . . . I really like my Coral Reef Ecology class.”

Students have pledged to update their blogs at least once a week during the academic year. Readers can provide feedback through a moderated comment system.

— Tim Nekritz

Voter registration — Sophomore Daniela Perez, right, registers to vote at a recent Civic Engagement Coalition voter registration drive in the Campus Center. Working the table are volunteers sophomore Stephanie Guzman, left, and Alison Clarke, a senior and member of the Omega Phi Beta sorority.

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College trends

Falling behind

“The latest generation of adults in the United States may be the first since World War II, and possibly before that, to attain higher levels of education than the previous generations. While white and Asian American young people are outpacing previous generations, the gaps for other minority groups are large enough that the current generation is, on average, heading toward being less educated than its predecessor. These data are among the most dramatic in ‘Minorities in Higher Education 2008,’ released [Oct. 9] by the American Council on Education as the 23rd annual survey by the population of American colleges and universities. . . . We are at a tipping point in our nation’s history,” said Molly Corbett Broad, president of the ACE, introducing the survey. Broad noted that the data also point to a growing gender gap in educational attainment, which is consistent with all of the reports about gender gaps in enrollments. For black and Latino women, for example, the most recent generation outperformed the prior ones, but the opposite is true for men. And across racial and ethnic groups, women are achieving a higher level of education than men.”

— Inside Higher Ed, Oct. 9, 2008

Per-student subsidies sink

“State and local financing of public colleges, across the board, has grown. But so has the number of students at public colleges. As a result, per-student spending actually declined by nearly 8 percent in the five years after 2002. In 2008, lawmakers have been forced to blame their inability to provide more money to colleges on the need to provide funds for things like prisons and Medicaid. And that’s a valid point. But advocates of higher education grumble that lawmakers’ unwillingness to raise taxes has also had a factor in public colleges’ falling behind in many states. The next few years are unlikely to bring much change. As the State Higher Education Executive Officers has noted, state support for higher education has declined in every recession, and ‘current economic indicators do not give much room for optimism,’ That prediction came in early 2008. Since then, prospects for states’ coming to colleges’ rescue have grown even dimmer. For public and private colleges, a down economy means fewer and smaller donations and lower endowment returns. Meanwhile, more students will be coming to college with a greater need for aid.”


Student transience

“Nearly 66 percent of American college students attend only one institution before they earn a bachelor’s degree, according to the U.S. Department of Education. Many higher education institutions struggle with two questions: How much attrition is acceptable? What are the best ways to support transfer students? Retention programs are increasingly designed to help keep students engaged and enrolled. There is, however, another perspective, one that understands and helps students prepare for positive academic transfers. . . . For some students, attending multiple institutions is inevitable, and if institutions are successful in identifying these students and directing them to the best programs, they will succeed.”

— Pulse, Education Dynamics, National Education Association, Sept. 30, 2008

Comedy about amateur theatre troupe opens season

“The Torch Bearers,” an American farce first produced on Broadway in 1922, will open tonight in Tyler Hall’s Waterman Theatre, the first play in the 2008-09 season. Written by George Kelly, the play offers a look at a hapless community theatre troupe led by eccentric and pompous director Mrs. Pampinelli, played by Sara Weiler.

Paula Ritter (Kim Greenswall) takes a role in the one-act play that the group will present for a charity performance. Her husband Fred (Jeremy Waterman) is appalled at the incompetence of the amateur actors including Mr. Hosserfoese (Daniel Williams), who forgets his lines; Mr. Twiller (Knate Roy) whose mustache takes on a life of its own; and Florence Mc- Cracken (Jessica Quindlen) who longs to emote in her role as the wronged wife of a doctor.

The Torch Bearers, a 1920s American farce about a decidedly amateur theatre company, will kick off the theatre season. In rehearsal, from left, are the befuddled production assistant Mr. Spindler (Ryan Santiago), the overbearing director Mrs. Pampinelli (Sara Weiler) and the easily disturbed prompter Mr. Kimberley Sandberg. The production is at 7:30 p.m. today in Tyler Hall’s Waterman Theatre. For information or reservations, call 312-2141 or e-mail tickets@oswego.edu.

People in action

“The Gist of Rene Girard” by Thomas Bertone- neau of the English department appears in First Principles, the online journal of the Intercollegiate Studies Institute. The article explores aspects of Girard’s “Fundamental Anthropology” as its author has refined it in his two most recent books.

Laurence Buckley was a panelist at the National Arts Club in New York City on Sept. 19. The topic was the recently “rediscovered” Hispanic-American artist F. Luis Mora and his place in American art history. Fellow panelists included the pre-eminent scholar of American artist William H. Gerds, the expert on William Merritt Chase, and the author of the new monograph on the artist, F. Luis Mora: America’s First Hispanic Master, 1874-1940, for which Buckley wrote the introduction.

Ron Graeff of the communication studies faculty will be inducted into the Syracuse Press Club’s “Wall of Distinction” in the John H. Mulroy Civic Center in downtown Syracuse on Thursday, Oct. 22. Longtime TV news viewers may know him as Ron Hastings, a former producer, anchor and reporter for WSTM TV Channel 3. For information or reservations to the event honoring Graeff and other outstanding Central New York journalists, visit www.syracusepressclub.com or contact SPC President Lou Gulino at 477-9446 or lgulino@wstm.com.

Michael Murphy, assistant professor of English and coordinator of the Writing Across the Curriculum Program, was recently named a key volunteer of the SUNY Council on Writing. Founded in 1980, the council supports faculty teaching writing across SUNY and participates in public discussions of issues connected to the teaching of writing both inside and outside the SUNY system.

Michele Reed, director of experience based education, was recently re-appointed to the advisory board of the New York Campus Compact for another three-year term. He has been involved with this initiative for the past nine years.

Roodin has also been re-appointed to the advisory board of the New York Campus Compact for another three-year term. He has been involved with this initiative for the past nine years.

And he served as keynote speaker for faculty development day at SUNY College of Environmental Science. His presentation focused on the growing movement toward the “scholarship of engagement” linking student learning with community-based projects.

In Memoriam

When the Rave Guardian system goes live on campus Nov. 3, users will have a direct connection to University Police whenever they need it. The new personal-safety option uses subscribers’ own cellular phones. When users trigger the phone-accessed application, it will automatically send their picture, mobile number and personal information to police.

A special feature allows a user walking alone at night or otherwise concerned about his or her safety to activate a timer on the cell phone that will notify police if the user does not reach his or her destination. Oswego will be the first New York campus to use the technology, said University Police Chief Cynthia Adam.

“We were looking for a system to replace the Security Escort system that had become obsolete,” Adam said. “We were specifically looking for a system that incorporates cell phone use as a security device.”

Nicholas Lyons, vice president for administration and finance, spearheaded the project. Adam and Joe Moreau, the college’s chief technology officer, investigated options and found Rave Guardian a good fit.

“More than 98 percent of students carry a cell phone,” Moreau said. “This gives us the opportunity to take advantage of the pervasiveness of cellular technology to provide additional services to students and employees at a greatly reduced cost. Individual users can subscribe to the system, and the cost to the college is nominal, because additional infrastructure is not required,” Adam said.

“It’s also more environmentally friendly,” she added, “since the system is wireless.”

It is an opt-in system, like the emergency communication system NY-Alert. While NY-Alert helps the college to communicate quickly with thousands to warn of a danger, Rave Guardian helps an individual in danger to communicate quickly with University Police.

How to subscribe
Students, faculty and staff members can sign up now for Rave Guardian by visiting the secure site https://www.getrave.com/oswego.

Adam stressed that the system also addresses concerns about privacy issues. “We would not want people to think University Police is monitoring the whereabouts of individuals,” Adam said. “The system does not have that capability.”

Moreau noted the flexibility the system allows the college. “If for some reason we decide the Guardian system doesn’t meet our expectations or we find something better, we can easily make a move,” he said. “The college has not made an investment in infrastructure, and students and employees have not purchased anything they wouldn’t normally buy for themselves. This option gives us a lot of flexibility to stay on the cutting edge of campus safety systems.”

Awareness campaign
Rave is actively engaged in implementation and develops marketing materials for campuses, Adam noted. Two Student Association senators, Chrissy Ballerstein and Greg Harris, expressed an interest in helping market the system to the campus and make students aware of it. Future editions may include friendly competitions between residence halls with prizes for the ones that prove most successful in enrolling.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill launched Rave Guardian last week on its campus. Montclair State University in New Jersey, the first campus to implement Rave Guardian, won national safety and technology awards for its mobile safety initiatives, according to Rave.

Oswego’s Family and Friends Weekend to offer variety Oct. 17 to 19

Family and Friends Weekend, starting this Friday, will feature arts, athletics, food, music, theatre events and more for students, visitors and the community.

“Family and Friends Weekend offers the students and their families an opportunity to experience a taste of life on the Oswego State campus,” said the event’s coordinator, Kelly Perkins of Campus Life. “Families can watch a sporting event, see unique acts such as a magician or hypnotist, or watch students perform in a theatrical play or musical concert.”

Students and families can have a complimentary breakfast and meet and talk with Provost Susan Coflin, president, professors and staff members at the Faculty/Staff Coffee Hour at 10 a.m. Saturday in the Campus Center Activity Court.

The weekend will feature sporting events including Laker men’s ice hockey hosting the U.S. Under-18 National Team Friday at 7 p.m. in the Campus Center arena. Tickets cost $10 and can be purchased at the Campus Center box office or by phone at 312-3073. Other sporting events for the weekend will include 1 p.m. Saturday starts for the women’s field hockey team, Hamilton at Lake Field and women’s soccer vs. Brockport at the South Athletic Complex.

The women’s ice hockey team’s Green/Gold Exhibition will begin at 3 p.m. Saturday at the Campus Center arena. These events are free.

A family carnival for students and their younger siblings with obstacle courses, painting, coloring and snacks will begin at 2 p.m. in the Sweetman Gym on Saturday.

Family and Friends Weekend will also bring performers to the Oswego campus. Magician Shaun Robinson will appear at 3 p.m. Saturday in the Campus Center auditorium. Hypnotist Kevan Harley will perform at 8 p.m. the same day in the Hewitt Union ballroom.

The theatre department will present three performances of “The Torch Bearers” at Waterman Theatre in Tyler Hall. The curtain will rise at 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday for the farcical comedy, with a 2:30 p.m. matinee on Sunday. Tickets are available at Tyler box office at 312-2239 or at tickets@oswego.edu or cost $12 for adults ($10 for seniors and 7 for SUNY Oswego students).

The weekend will feature food as well. Members of the Jewish Student Union/Hillel will host a Kosher Shabbat Dinner at 5:15 p.m. Friday in Cooper Dining Center. A special Dining with Family and Friends event at 5 p.m. Saturday at The Forum in Hewitt Union will cost $10.75 for adults ($5.40 for children ages 3 to 11). Registration is required, with forms available online. Throughout the weekend, all-you-can-eat meals can be enjoyed at residential dining centers for $4.99.

Music department ensembles will present a free concert at noon Sunday in the Hewitt Union ballroom. Featured performers will include the College Choir, Chamber Singers, State Singers, College Orchestra and Concert Band.

Other activities for the weekend will include swimming and recreation at Lee Hall and Sweetman Gym, art exhibitions atTyler Art Gallery and Oswego State Downtown, a Penfield Library book sale and tours of the college’s Rice Creek Field Station.

For a complete schedule of events, call the Office of Campus Life at 312-2301 or visit www.oswego.edu/familyandfriends.

— Julie-Jo Stanton
Oswego’s School of Business repeats as Princeton ‘Best’

The Princeton Review has named Oswego’s School of Business one of the “Best 296 Business Schools” in its latest edition of its graduate school guidebook of that title, released earlier this month.

Its profile of Oswego is substantially the same as in its first edition four years ago, which included just 143 business schools.

Among the criteria for inclusion in the Princeton Review’s “Best 296 Business Schools” are AACSB International accreditation and graduate degree programs in business.

Symposium on Learning, Teaching to convene Thursday, Friday

The fourth annual SUNY Oswego Symposium on Learning and Teaching will convene this Thursday and Friday.

Titled “Celebration of Meaningful Learning: New Ideas for Bridging the Communication Gap with Students,” the event will feature Gardner Campbell, director of the Academy for Teaching and Learning and associate professor of literature and the media in Baylor University’s Honors College.

Campbell will deliver the keynote on “Cognition Prints: Web 2.0 in Teaching and Learning” at 12:45 p.m. Thursday in Room C114 of the Campus Center. He will lead a workshop on Web 2.0 at 10 a.m. Friday in Room 206 of the Campus Center.

Attendees can view peer-reviewed posters from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Thursday in Room C114 of the Campus Center and can discuss the posters with their presenters from 3:30 to 5 p.m. that day in the same location.

That evening, a Teaching and Advisement Awards Dinner, at 5 p.m. in the Sheldon Hall ballroom, will recognize last spring’s award winners.

For more information, e-mail celt@oswego.edu, call 312-2875 or visit www.oswego.edu/celt.

Economic events to be discussed

A panel of economic and business experts of Os- wego’s faculty will discuss “The Economic Crisis: Are We Seeing the Light or Are We Stuck in the Tunnel?” at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 21, in Room 105 of Lanigan Hall. Admission is free and the public is invited to the discussion, which is sponsored by the college’s Civic Engagement Coalition.

Nominations invited for awards

Nominations are invited for Distinguished Teaching Professor, Distinguished Service Professor and Chancellor’s Awards for Excellence in Faculty Service, Librarianship, Teaching, and Scholarship and Creative Activities. Nominations form and related information can be downloaded from: http://www.suny.edu/provost/faculty/awards.cfm. Deadline for nominations is Friday, Dec. 12.

Nominations for the Chancellor’s Awards review committee are due Nov. 5. Call the Provost’s Office at 312-2290 for information.

Students may apply for funds to support academic projects

The deadline for students to apply for Scholarly and Creative Activity Grants is Nov. 3.

This program is to support and foster student scholar- lary and creative activities done in collaboration with an Oswego faculty or staff sponsor. The maximum award is $1,000.

The link to the online application form can be found at www.oswego.edu/administration/ORSP/undercampusGrants and Awards for Students.

Five to join Oswego Hall of Fame

The Oswego Alumni Association will induct five Laker greats into the Oswego Athletic Hall of Fame Oct. 25. The soccer, baseball, basketball, wrestling, women’s cross country and women’s lacrosse pro- grams will all be represented at the eighth annual cer- emony and luncheon in the Sheldon Hall ballroom.

Reservations, needed by Friday, can be made by vis- iting www.oswego.edu/alumni or calling 312-2258.

Information security

Continued from page 2

to identify theft — as well as more common viruses, worms and denial of service attacks.

“Unfortunately, attackers have figured out a way to do these things. What we’re trying to do is stay one step ahead of them,” said Early, who also develop- ing Oswego’s first information security course.

Early compared it to “an arms race” where “we’re constantly trying to figure out where vulnerabilities exist in the system, why they are there, how to miti- gate their impact.”

The project also will develop faculty workshops and an information-security curriculum and make them available to colleges everywhere so students en- tering the computer science field can avoid mistakes and vulnerabilities that endanger networks and users, he said.

“Society is putting a lot of trust in us to do it right and we could do more to be worthy of that trust,” he added.

The grant will fund workshops at Oswego, prob- ably during the summer, to bring in educators from around New York and surrounding states, Early said.

“The platform is one we want to make freely avail- able because every computer science student needs to have some exposure to this,” he noted. “We hope to . . . make this a turnkey product where they can get their own security courses off the ground.”

Oswego students will become “a sort of barometer of what students can accomplish in a given semester, how we can best organize information to maximize development” of the curriculum, he added.

Their work and the resulting dissemination will have an impact beyond the campuses involved. “Hun- dreds, maybe thousands of computer science students across the United States will learn what can happen when steps are not taken, but also how to take pre- ventative steps in the first place.” — Tim Nekritz

Police report

Since Sept. 26, University Police investigated sev- eral cases of theft, vandalism and disorderly conduct and made six arrests. Police charged a 20-year-old Rochester man with second-degree burglary, a felony; two counts of fourth-degree grand larceny, also felo- nies; and two counts of Petit larceny, misdemeanors.

He is accused of entering several dorm rooms and making six arrests. Police charged a 20-year-old North Syracuse man with facilitating unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle (license sus- pended) and speedling. A student was charged with ag- gravated unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle, and a North Syracuse man was charged with facilitating aggravated unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle.

Police charged a 17-year-old Cayuga Hall resident with criminal possession of marijuana. A 17-year-old Funnelle Hall resident was charged with unlawful possession of alcohol.

Calendar highlights

• Career and Internship Fair, today
• Graduate School Week begins, today
• Presidential Debate Watch, today
• “Torch Bearers” opens, today
• Symposium on Learning and Teaching, Oct. 16 and 17
• Family and Friends Weekend, Oct. 17 to 19
• Rice Creek Ramble, Oct. 18
• Concert: Dorian Wind Quintet, Oct. 21

For a more complete calendar, see SUNY Oswego Events online at www.oswego.edu/news/calendar.