INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY OUTAGE POLICY

Document Number: **IT-001-POL-3**

Audience: **Information Technology Staff**

Effective Date: **April 25, 2003**

Revision Date: **January 12, 2005**

Author(s):   **Jim Beechey, Theresa Dennings**

Contributors: **K. Kimalat, B. Younce, C. Nelson, A. Salva, K. Randall, D. Yost**

Approved By: **Bob Wisler**

Document Security: **Public**

SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to determine appropriate operating procedures for handling system outages at Northwood University. A system outage is defined as multiple customers being unable to use a piece of hardware, software, or system supported by Information Technology. System outages will be broken into two areas: planned outages and emergency outages. Planned outages are known about ahead of time and scheduled. These are typically used for upgrades or routine maintenance. Emergency outages are not known ahead of time and typically the result of some type of system failure.

PROCESS - EMERGENCY OUTAGES

- The following people should be notified immediately during an emergency outage: Help Desk, IT Managers, and Lead IT Staff in Florida and Texas if their campus is affected. It is the responsibility of the responding staff person to ensure these people are notified.
- Customers should be notified via email during emergency outages. If email is unavailable due to the outage, a broadcast voice mail should be sent. The Help Desk is responsible for customer notification and should work with IT Staff in Florida and Texas to send out voice messages on their campuses if necessary. In the event that the outage is after hours, the staff member working should send out the notifications. Templates can be located at the end of this document or in the Public Folder under Information Technology, Outage Templates.
- During normal business hours one of the IT managers should first approve the outgoing message.
- Customers should be notified upon conclusion of the outage.

PROCESS - PLANNED OUTAGES

- Every effort should be made to plan and schedule known outages at least one week in advance. This will allow proper discussion and planning regarding the outage, it's effects, and coverage requirements.
- Currently, IT schedules planned maintenance on the second Thursday of each month. This includes, but is not limited to, Colleague patches, NT and email servers patches and upgrades, network upgrades and maintenance, various security patches.
- All IT Managers should know about and discuss each outage before dates and times are finalized. This responsibility lies with the manager whose group is requesting the outage.
- A notification email should be developed or approved by the requesting group's manager for dispersal to customers affected by the outage.
- As planned outages normally occur on Thursdays, a *combined* IT notification should be sent to customers on the Monday of that week via email using the template below.
- For affected staff/administrative Colleague users, a "netsend" message will be sent out the afternoon of the outage.

- The "netsend" message should be reviewed by a manager before delivery..
- Full system backups should be performed on all impacted systems before hardware and software changes or major data moves are attempted.
- Backups of hardware configurations on appliances or network equipment should be made before upgrades or major configuration changes are made.
- Every effort should be made to not impact daily university business. Note that the Texas campus is in the central time zone and one hour behind the Michigan and Florida campuses.
- Downtime for student centered services should be avoided unless absolutely necessary. Major implementations or system work should be scheduled during summer months or term breaks. Students expect access to our systems 24 hours a day. Efforts should be made to plan outages towards the end of the week (Thursday or Friday).

OUTAGE EMAIL TEMPLATES

- The following template should be used for sending out **emergency system outages**.

  Subject: ***EMERGENCY "SYSTEM NAME" OUTAGE***

  To: Customers Affected

  Brief Description

  Customers Impacted: Information here

  Cause: Information here

  Outage Duration: Information here

  If there are any questions or concerns regarding this outage please contact the Help Desk at 989-837-4421 or 877-209-HELP. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

  Information Technology

- The following template should be used for sending out **planned outage** announcements.

  Subject: ***"SYSTEM NAME" DOWNTIME***

  To: Customers Affected

  Brief Description

  Start Time: Information here

  Outage Duration: Information here

  Purpose: Information here

  Impact: Information here

  If there are any questions or concerns regarding this downtime please contact the Help Desk at 989-837-4421 or 877-209-HELP. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

  Information Technology

Outage Voicemail Template

- The following template should be used for sending out **emergency system outages**.

    This is Information Technology with an important message regarding the current "put the name of system here" outage. We are currently working to resolve the issue, when the "name of system" is back-up a voicemail will be sent out.

    If there are any questions or concerns regarding this outage please contact the Help Desk at 989-837-4421. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

    Information Technology