Campus Police Chief censures destructive hacks

By Harold A. Stern and Andrew L. Fish

Cambridge, Aug. 28 - Finalizing Safety Office and Physical Plant concerns, the Office of Safety and damage hacks have resulted in warnings from the Campus Police. Hackers could face severe penalties if the campus situation does not change.

Last year, the Campus Police began seeing a "visible change" in what they were seeing on the part of campus residents as they interpreted hacking, in the words of Chief of Police James Olivier.

In the past, much of the hacking on campus was committed by "professional hackers with scruples, ground rules, and formal methods of control, who operated in a professional manner, and did no damage to private property or malicious activities," he explained.

Recently, there has been such a proliferation of interest in hacking that the "control" exerted by such groups as the Technological Hackers Society, the MIT Hackers, and the Harvard Hackers has diminished, according to Olivier, in his 28 years on the force.

"There are many hackers with too much imagination," said another hacker. "People are getting information that they are not ready to use it." Hackers have "done a lot of damage lately, but they have not been caught."

Others deny changes are needed Two long-time hackers did not believe the changes are necessary, or that hackers have become less responsible. Rather, they saw a need for enforcement of existing regulations and penalties.

They perceived most damage as resulting from the mistakes of beginners, rather than intentional misconduct. "It is a completely false perception that hackers have become less responsible," one said. He estimated that there are approximately four or five "many students hacking as there was a year or two ago."

Hacking has always resulted in damage to private property, they said, and policy changes have not alleviated the situation. In the late 1970's, one explained, MIT installed card readers at the tops of stairwells to restrict access to rooftops. They were removed after students began to break those machines. "Hacking for fun is not a new problem either. Students have been tampering with elevators for years," they said. "They have electronic mail systems." "Linking" unifies freshmen courses

By Eric L. Chang

The "linking" of freshmen core subjects has opened the channels of communication between professors and recitation instructors in different departments, according to Peggy Richardan, academic dean for curriculum support.

The program, which is in its second year, places groups of freshmen together for the same calculus and physics recitations. The original motivation of the "linked" sections was to provide a common academic environment for freshmen, facilitating more class participation and collaboration on homework, Richardan said.

The Office of the Dean for Undergraduate Education has realized that another advantage of "linked" sections was in the coordination of efforts between professors who teach related material. The rationale for this practice is to allow physics and math instructors to coordinate their syllabi and to discuss common problems and needs of their students, an ODEU report said.

Linked math and physics instructors have met regularly to discuss course content and teaching practices, the report said. Linking has also occurred on the lecture level. Calculus (18.01) lecturer Paul Vogan attended all of the Physics I (8.02) lectures to gain a better perspective of that class. Vogan was able to better appreciate the mathematics being used in physics courses, Richardan commented.

Professor Hale Bradt PhD '71, lecturer in Physics II, compiled a "Special Math Supplement for 8.02." This supplement, which was passed out on the first day of 8.02, this term, includes material on series approximations, integration, line integrals, triple integrals.

At present, there are three linked sections of Physics II (6.02) and Calculus (18.02).

But transfers between recitations make it difficult to maintain sections that are completely "linked." Students often switch to different recitations after Registration Day and the number of students who are actually in the same recitation is not known. For this reason, Richardan said, "we have different treatment of subject matter within sections."

Students who enjoy studying applications will be placed in one section while students who like solving problems will be placed in another, Richardan said. "Whether it's possible to do this is still in the talking stage, but people are excited about it."

Erratum

The new housing management system was explained incorrectly in "The Freshmen's Assured housing." (Feb. 3) All new students will enter one lottery. A new system of guaranteed housing has also been announced. The system, which has been described as "less burdensome" for those students who were not postured for guaranteed housing, will provide freshmen with more campus security and satisfaction arrangements.

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