Important Y2K Update!

ITS is pleased to report that we do not expect any significant Y2K problems with the enterprise-wide computer systems that we manage. This includes the campus fiber-optic backbone, the college telephone system, VMS and UNIX minicomputers, student, faculty, and administrative Novell file servers, public and office workstations, and the college's administrative information system (Banner). ITS has completed, or is in the process of completing, any necessary upgrades to these systems to ensure that they will function properly when the date rolls over to the new millennium. However, there are some precautions that you should take to protect your departmental and personal information resources.

Non-Standard Systems

ITS staff is working with departments to ensure that any software or equipment purchased or supported by ITS will function properly. Upgrades that address Y2K problems in departmental systems have been completed or are in progress. However, if you or your department purchased software or hardware without ITS funding or support, you are responsible for ensuring that your system is compliant. If you need help from ITS, please contact Robert Davis (faculty/academic applications) or Kimberly Butz (administrative applications) as soon as possible.

Office Workstations

There are well over 1,000 workstations on faculty and staff members' desks. The model, configuration and age of these machines and the make and version of operating systems vary greatly. ITS has done significant testing of various models of hardware and releases of operating systems and has carefully reviewed the college's workstation inventory. We have identified a small number of machines that must be upgraded or replaced. This work will be completed by the end of December. Although most machines on campus will rollover to the new year correctly, we do expect that there will be problems with some. To address this, ITS has developed a synchronization script which will ensure that your workstation date is "in synch" with the dates on the college's file servers. This script will execute the first time that you log into the network after December 31st. To ensure that this rollover process executes correctly, please log out of the network and shut your computer and printer off before leaving campus for the winter holiday break.

We have determined that Windows95, Windows98, and recent versions of the Macintosh operating system handle the switch to the new year without incident. However, Windows 3.1 does not handle the rollover. If you are still using Windows 3.1, please contact Cheryl Donaldson-Davis to request an upgrade.

Points to Remember

1. **If you or your department purchased software or hardware without ITS funding or support, you are responsible for ensuring that your system is compliant.**
2. **Log out of the network and shut your computer and printer off before leaving campus for the winter holiday break.**
3. **If you are still using Windows 3.1, contact Cheryl Donaldson-Davis (ext. 2613) to request a Windows upgrade.**
4. **If you use the "date value", "days 360", or "times value" functions, you should consider upgrading to Office2000.**
5. **We suggest that you review any databases or spreadsheets that you have created to see if they contain dates with two-digit years.**
6. **If your home computer is older than a 386, it is likely that you will be unable to change the date to 2000.**

Desktop Software

The software that runs on your desktop workstation and the data that you have created using this software must also be checked. We are confident that the email and terminal emulation software in use at Smith will not be a source of problems. However, there is concern about some features of the Microsoft Office suite. If you have not used dates in functions or calculations in your spreadsheets or databases, you should not have any problem with Office95 or 97. However, if you have used the "date value", "days 360", or "times value" functions, you should consider upgrading to Office2000. The problems with these functions have been addressed in Office2000. In December, Office2000 will be available to faculty and staff who have Office95 or 97 Y2K issues. Please contact Cheryl Donaldson-Davis to request an Office upgrade. (Note: Office2000 will be made available to the entire Smith community beginning in January.)

You may also experience sorting and selection criteria problems with any dates that you have defined with two digit years. This will be a problem in any Excel or Access document, regardless of the version of Office that you are running. We suggest that you review any databases or spreadsheets that you have created to see if they contain dates with two-digit years. Dates that have been defined with two-digit years should be redefined, and the "19-prefix" added, prior to the end of the calendar year.

Your Home Computer

If you have purchased a late-model computer for use at home, we anticipate that the worst problem you will have will be an erroneous date setting after January 1st. To help you resolve this, we have posted instructions for manually changing the date on your computer on the ITS Document Server at www.smith.edu/its/documents/Oper_Sys/Windows/y2k_datechange.htm.

Be sure to check with vendors for any software compliance issues or updates. If your machine is older than a 386, it is likely that you will be unable to change the date to 2000.