Distributed Support Services (DSS)  
02/01/2003

Mission Statement

To provide enterprise-quality desktop computer support to staff and faculty working on university-owned machines in an efficient, cost effective, and professional manner. Services provided include operating system and NUIT distributed software installation and troubleshooting, best practices consultation, and basic desktop hardware and peripheral installation and troubleshooting.

Funding

DSS is a cost-recovery, University group within Technology Support Services (TSS) (a division of Information Technology). Therefore, costs are recovered through a charge-back model established by the University. Services rendered are charged to the individual/department requesting service on a fee schedule that is dependent upon the type of service rendered and/or contracts previously agreed upon by both DSS and the individual requesting service. Information about services and fees are included in this document.

UNITS Support

DSS is also responsible for the guidance, assistance, cohesion and direction of the UNITS representatives. The UNITS group was set up to be the first line of support for each individual department. UNITS representatives are familiar with their local environments and the needs of their department and are therefore best able to act as a first line of support, go-between and advisor to more senior level support.

DSS disseminates useful information to the UNITS groups, offers guidance on central-IT related issues and responds to all queries that are posted to the UNITS listserv. DSS also assists the TSS Training department in organizing training for the UNITS representatives and other IT professionals on campus.

Support Service Offerings

DSS was created to provide staff and faculty with desktop-level support services on University owned equipment, on University property. There are currently four levels of service available. Each is outlined below.

Call-in/Web-submitted Ad-hoc service

Phone: Staff or faculty of the University may request service through via the telephone, at 1-HELP or 7-7911.
- Available from 8:30am to 5pm, Monday through Friday, excluding standard University holidays
Free of charge. Telephone support consists of basic assistance only.
  o The service representative will determine whether a field visit is required to resolve the issue
  o Telephone assistance will generally consist of any resolution that can be achieved within five or ten minutes
In the event a field visit is required, the service representative will take down all pertinent information, provide a ticket number that is unique to the call, and schedule a DSS field representative to come out and assist the caller
The charge for a visit is $40.00 per hour, with a 1-hour minimum charge
Service response is guaranteed in under 24-hours. (Please note that this is “response” time and not time to completion)
Issues extending beyond 5pm will generally be picked up again at the start of the next business day, unless special arrangements for “overtime” are made with the Manager of Distributed Support Services

Please note, DSS does not handle NETID password changes.

Web: Staff or faculty of the University can also request service via the DSS Web form at http://www.tss.northwestern.edu/DSS/Help/
  o The web form is available 24-hours a day, however service is only provided 8:30am to 5pm, Monday through Friday, excluding standard University holidays
  o The ticket will be automatically routed to a DSS field representative who will be scheduled to assist you
  o The charge for a visit is $45.00 per hour, with a 1-hour minimum charge
  o Service response is guaranteed in under 24-hours. (Please note that this is “response” time and not time to completion). If a ticket is entered after 5pm, the 24-hour response time will begin at the start of the following business day

Priority service (via phone or web): Staff or faculty of the University can also request Priority service via the phone.
  ▪ The charge for Priority service is $80 per hour
  ▪ Priority service means that, if available, a DSS field representative will be dispatched within 15 minutes to attend to the issue reported in the call
  ▪ A valid CUFS number will need to be provided at the time the call is placed

Billing for Ad-Hoc Service:
  o Invoices are sent out at the beginning of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} week of the month following the month the service call was placed
  o Payment is due upon receipt
  o Invoices will include:
    ▪ date (of service)
    ▪ DSS consultant
    ▪ Description of service
    ▪ Customer name
    ▪ billed hours
    ▪ extended cost
  o Departments will need to provide a valid CUFS number and signature
  o Bills are inter-office mailed
  o Checks are acceptable, if made payable to Northwestern University
• Note that DSS is moving to a cost-recovery model that includes requiring a valid CUFS account number be provided at the time the service call is placed

Specific Ad-Hoc Services Offered by DSS:

Hardware support:

- DSS will support Windows and Macintosh business computers, PDA’s, Laptops, printers and any regular, associated peripherals such as mice, keyboards, etc. that are generally under three years old
  - DSS will assist in commodity-type hardware upgrades, replacements such as memory upgrades
  - DSS will only provide best-effort service on repairs such as motherboard replacement, data-recovery, etc.
  - Hardware that is over three years old is considered to be “out of lifecycle” and support may be problematical
  - DSS will make best attempts at support of this equipment, but cannot provide the same standard of resolution as with equipment that is under three years old, therefore, DSS reserves the right to refuse service on equipment older than three years old
  - DSS retains the right to defer service to a third party

Software support:

- DSS will assist with installation, upgrading, and troubleshooting of the following on business computers (not including servers):
  - Windows 98, 2000 and XP and Macintosh OS 8.6, 9.1 and X operating systems
  - Meeting Maker client
    1. Note that DSS will provide best-effort support for the Java client for Meeting Maker.
    2. Meeting Maker has not provided an updated version of the Java client, therefore the client should recognize that the product has inherent, internal flaws and DSS cannot guarantee a working Meeting Maker Java service
  - The University standard virus protection software
  - Other University “standard” software, i.e. software provided on the Northwestern University software installer CD, such as:
    - Eudora Mail client
    - VPN for wireless networking
  - Standard Microsoft Windows 98, 2000 and XP client-side setups and connectivity to existing Microsoft NT and 2000 shares and print queues
Standard Novell 5.1 client-side setups and connectivity to existing Novell 5.1 servers/trees and print queues

Software required by core administrative services such as HRIS, SES, and CUFS

Other support:

- Setup of printers and regular peripherals on the client/desktop side
- Setup of supports Palms and other devices using the Palm OS operating system
  - DSS can only put forth best-effort support for cross-application or cross-platform data transfers (for example, transferring an Outlook Calendar to Meeting Maker), thus DSS cannot guarantee the success of such service

Networking support:

Network support generally includes configuration and administration of desktop based networking services that reside on the users computer or within the users office up to the data connection.

- DSS will provide TCP/IP client support and troubleshooting of connectivity issues
- DSS is not responsible for resolving hostmaster requests for IP numbers, IP registration requests, and IP conflicts and for any issues involving an Ethernet jack but can facilitate communications with the proper IT departments

DSS will not:

- Set up users, server shares, server applications, operating systems or patches, security groups, print queues or server hardware (except in the case of Northwestern University File and Print services, or NUFP)
- Develop web pages other than the support pages specified in the standard Partner level agreement
- Purchase hardware or software on behalf of a faculty or staff member
- Stock parts for equipment
- DSS cannot be relied upon to be application experts for applications in a department that fall outside the NUNet suite, or outside standard business operating systems or software (see above). Should this service be requested anyway for such software, industry standard best practices will be used to troubleshoot problems.

DSS will not provide support or administration for networking services that are the proper responsibility of other units within NUIT (DHCP services for example) nor will it deploy services that are contrary to standards defined by NUIT Telecommunications and Network Services.

DSS will generally not provide support for small-population software or hardware. DSS can be contracted to provide best-effort service on such items, for example, one-time consulting along with a third-party vendor to install a lab-specific
hardware item. But the client should recognize that, in these situations, DSS cannot guarantee the success of such service.

DSS will not provide any service that violates any IT policy or guideline.

DSS reserves the right to refer any service to a third-party provider.

Preferred service (with a signed agreement)

A Preferred service agreement is signed between the customer and DSS for the term of 1-year, as agreed upon by both parties.

- Service response is guaranteed in under 4-hours. (Please note that this is “response” time and not time to completion).
- 4-hour response time via the web is dependant upon the user choosing the correct department on the web form (this will generate a page to the primary consultant for preferred service customers)
- Service is still ad-hoc, as needed
- A primary consultant as well as a back-up consultant will be assigned to the customer. These individuals will be responsible for knowledge of and familiarity with the environment
- The charge for a visit is $45 an hour, with a 1-hour minimum charge
- An example of a generic service agreement for a Preferred customer is attached (title General Preferred Service Agreement)
- Services that are available at the hourly charge are:
  - Assistance with inventory management
  - Consulting services for software licensing/purchases
  - Consulting services for hardware purchases
  - Once a quarter, the designated customer contact and appropriate DSS staff will meet briefly to discuss planning, prioritization, or other coordination issues that define the customer objectives and how these objectives are being met.
  - All other services outlined in the “Specific Ad-Hoc services provided by DSS” section above.

Preferred Plus service (with signed agreement)

A Preferred Plus service agreement is signed between the customer and DSS for the term of 1-year, as agreed upon by both parties.

- A primary consultant as well as a back-up consultant will be assigned to the customer. These individuals will be responsible for knowledge of and familiarity with the environment and will report to the customer location on a regular basis for a specified, minimum amount of hours per week (15 hours per week minimum)
- Preset times for service will be agreed upon, for example, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 9am to 2pm
- The charge, per hour, for this service is $45 per hour
- Service response outside of the dedicated hours is guaranteed in under 4-hours. (Please note that this is “response” time and not time to
completion). If a ticket is entered into the web system after 5pm, the 24-hour response time will begin at the start of the following business day

- 4-hour response time via the web is dependant upon the user choosing the correct department on the web form (this will generate a page to the primary consultant for preferred service customers)
- Should the work necessitate hours beyond the agreed-upon minimum, the additional hours will be approved by the customer in advance and will be charged at the rate of $45 per hour, with a 1-hour minimum
- An example of a generic service agreement for a Preferred Plus customer is attached (title General Preferred Plus Service Agreement)
- Services will include:
  - A regular visit to each user on an agreed-upon basis to discover issues and needs
  - Assistance with maintenance of virus definitions on all desktop machines
  - Setup of regularly scheduled, automatic maintenance on machines where applicable (scandisk, Norton Utilities, etc.)
  - Setup of new machines as needed
  - Ongoing maintenance of NUIT suite of applications, including upgrading when necessary
  - Consulting services for software licensing/purchasing including maintenance of licensing database, etc.
  - Consulting services for hardware purchases including maintenance of hardware inventory database, etc. (hardware inventory is currently limited to desktop CPU information and printers if requested).
  - Proactive recommendations with regards to the previously outlined consulting services: i.e. timely suggestions with regards to when to upgrade software and hardware as well as specific suggestions as to what choices to make
  - Once a month, a report will be provided outlining the work performed from the previous month. An example of this report can be provided upon request.
  - Once a month, the designated customer contact and appropriate DSS staff will meet briefly to discuss planning, prioritization, or other coordination issues that define the customer’s objectives and how these objectives are being met.

DSS Partner service (with signed agreement)

A DSS Partner service agreement is signed between the department/lab, unit, or school, and DSS for the term of 1-year, as agreed upon by both parties.

- The department will receive as many dedicated resources as contracted for in the initial agreement, therefore the cost for this service is specific to the agreement with each department
- A back-up consultant(s) will be assigned to the customer for sick days, etc. taken by the dedicated resource(s). This/these individual(s) will be responsible for knowledge of and familiarity with the environment of the customer
• Dedicated resources work 30 hours a week at the department's work and the remaining 7.5 hours a week completing DSS tasks, training, etc.
• Dedicated resources work 8:30am to 5pm except during special projects that may require overtime
• Should the work necessitate hours beyond the agreed-upon 30-hours per dedicated resource, the additional hours will be approved by the customer in advance and will be charged accordingly.
• Service response outside of the dedicated hours is guaranteed in under 4-hours. (Please note that this is “response” time and not time to completion). If a ticket is entered into the web system after 5pm, the 24-hour response time will begin at the start of the following business day
• 4-hour response time via the web is dependant upon the user choosing the correct department on the web form (this will generate a page to the primary consultant for preferred service customers)
• A customer oriented website will be provided by DSS with information specific to the customer, such as recommendations for hardware and software purchases as well as informational one-sheets about customer specific issues
• An example of a generic service agreement for a DSS Partner is attached (title General DSS Partner Service Agreement)
• Services will include:
  o Assistance with maintenance of virus definitions on all desktop machines
  o Setup of regularly scheduled, automatic maintenance on machines where applicable (scandisk, Norton Utilities, etc.)
  o Setup of new machines as needed
  o Ongoing maintenance of NUIT suite of applications, including upgrading when necessary
  o Consulting services for software licensing/purchasing including maintenance of licensing database, etc.
  o Consulting services for hardware purchases including maintenance of hardware inventory database, etc. (hardware inventory is currently limited to desktop CPU information and printers if requested).
  o Proactive recommendations with regards to the previously outlined consulting services: i.e. timely suggestions with regards to when to upgrade software and hardware as well as specific suggestions as to what choices to make (in addition to the information posted to the department-specific website
  o Once a month, a report will be provided outlining the work performed from the previous month. An example of this report can be provided upon request.
  o Every two weeks, the designated customer contact and appropriate DSS staff will meet briefly to discuss planning, prioritization, or other coordination issues that define the customers objectives and how these objectives are being met
Software Licensing

Software License purchasing (Microsoft Select agreement and others)

NUIT makes certain software available for purchase at a discounted, group rate. Departments within the University can choose to purchase software outside of these agreements, but costs are usually substantially cheaper through the NUIT programs. For example, Microsoft Office and the Microsoft Operating systems are both offered by NUIT at discounts that are substantially less than those offered by other distributors.

DSS administers the process, purchase and ongoing record-keeping for all software purchased through these programs. Purchases can be made and additional information can be found at the following link:

http://software.northwestern.edu

File and Print Services

Northwestern University File and Print services (NUFP)

Description of Service:

DSS offers server-based file storage and print services for Northwestern University business, to those departments that do not have their own servers. This service is provided on a per-user charge basis.

A sample contract is available on the TSS website (link is below, or search under “contract file and print services”

http://www.tss.northwestern.edu/DSS/contracts/NUFP_fileprint_services_contract.doc

Joining NUFP:

Please contact:
Charles Jensen
Manager, Distributed Support Services
Phone:(847) 467-2224

Support for existing users of NUFP:

Please contact:
Distributed Support Services
Phone: (847) 467-7911
http://www.tss.northwestern.edu/DSS/Help/
dss@northwestern.edu