



Senior Hannah Seckington uses the computer on the first floor of Pickler Memorial Library late Monday morning. Truman students and faculty don't encounter censorship at Pickler, with ITS or at tables on the Quad. The librarians base their book selection on faculty members' suggestions.

Erin Lee Givarz/Index

# Campus remains uncensored

BY JENIFER CALANDRA  
Index Staff

Big Brother isn't watching, and the University isn't censoring.

Students can access any information they need or want through Internet use, library books, periodicals and media, as well as through coordinated events and information tables on the Mall and the Quad without University interference.

The Truman Internet network does not block or filter Web sites and information available to University students, said Matt Farwell, assistant director of information technology.

"The two functions of [Cisco] Clean Access are to authenticate you to the network ... and check to see if your machine is up to date," Farwell said.

Farwell said Clean Access does not filter any Web sites to students or faculty because there is no reason to block content.

He said ITS does not trace Web sites students visit on the network either.

"There's no Big Brother here," he said.

The Barracuda spam blocker has the potential to block certain legitimate non-spam e-mails students receive to their TruView accounts, Farwell said.

Students can fix this problem by changing their block score settings at barracuda.truman.edu. Farwell said the higher a student sets his or her block score, the more likely he or she will receive spam.

Students can choose to opt out of spam filtering, he said. They can view any message that Barracuda blocks, which helps students avoid missing important e-mails, Farwell said.

The University does not watch stu-

dents who choose to download music, Farwell said. Instead, the Recording Industry Association of America monitors file-sharing and contacts Truman to report illegal sharing of copyrighted content. Farwell said the RIAA can take legal action against University students caught downloading illegally, but it never has.

"They may send a notice to you and ask us to shut you off," Farwell said. "There's a substantial fee [if the RIAA chooses to take legal action]."

The last student Farwell dealt with after the RIAA contacted him had shared only one song, he said.

Although sharing copyrighted electronic information can lead to trouble, sharing information or promoting events at the University usually does not.

Linda Yager, scheduling coordinator of the Student Union Building, said organizations wishing to have a table on the Quad, on the Mall or in the SUB rarely have trouble getting their endeavors approved.

"[Those applying for a table or event] have to be a student organization [on file] with the Center for Student Involvement and have turned in required paperwork," Yager said. "A table with information or to promote an event is generally not a problem."

Yager said members of the organizations fill out an online form complete with an explanation of the nature of their event and the name of the organization's adviser. Approval for the

event or information table must be granted by the adviser, the Physical Plant and the Department of Public Safety, she said.

Generally, the only events that require special permission and more careful consideration are bonfires, Yager said.

Although campus organizations provide information about their causes, University students can turn to the library to access information for classes and personal curiosity.

Richard Coughlin, chief information officer and dean of the library and museums, said the library staff does not censor books, periodicals or media. Coughlin said he considers censorship of materials to be vandalism.

"We have had materials here where students cut out what they felt was objectionable material," Coughlin said.

This student censorship has not been a big problem at the University, but the library staff still checks all returned materials to ensure that they have not been cut up or excessively written on, he said. Books or other materials that have been vandalized usually are replaced, Coughlin said.

Materials purchased for the library are reviewed by both librarians and faculty, Coughlin said. Each librarian is assigned a certain subject area and works closely with faculty of the same subject area to select academic interest books.

Librarians also do collection devel-

opment activities, review curriculum and observe student needs by working at the reference desks, Coughlin said.

In the media library, the media librarian also works with faculty to get recommendations.

"[The media librarian] makes a lot of recommendations based on what she sees [students and professors use]," Coughlin said.

Librarians select scholarly journals with the same criteria as other library materials, but only the library can order so many subscriptions can be ordered because the cost can increase dramatically from year to year, Coughlin said.

The library's overall goal is to support curriculum at the University, he said.

"Very few decisions are made on what is appropriate or not appropriate," Coughlin said. "It's possible some things [are not purchased because they] are very expensive or very specialized and won't see [very much use here]."

Coughlin said the librarians take suggestions from anyone with ideas about how to improve the collections.

"We don't get as many suggestions from students as we would like," he said.

Junior Sammy Ghormley said that she has never had any trouble finding information she needs at the library or on the Internet on campus. Ghormley does not think she has ever been involved in anything potentially controversial, she said.

Sophomore Sam Neudecker has never experienced blocked Web sites or difficulty finding research materials, but he said he does feel restricted by quiet hours in the residence halls.

"Maybe they should start at midnight," he said.

**"We have had materials here where students cut out what they felt was objectionable material."**

**Matt Farwell**  
Assistant Director of Information Technology

# Iowa caucus campaigns attract pet owners' vote

BY PHIL JARRETT  
Index Staff

Jake is seven dog-years old. A hyperactive Akita-Husky mix-breed, he has a passion for hunting squirrels on campus. He also is a Democrat.

Barring unlikely and radical new legislation, Jake will not partake in general elections next November, nor will he be choosing candidates in the Missouri Primary on Feb. 5. But Jake is eligible to vote in one precinct: a cyber panacea for politics and pet lovers alike called myPoliticalPet.com.

Although the combination of house pets and pundits is odd enough on the Internet, it is perhaps even stranger when seen in first person.

As demure old ladies and their farmer husbands filled the folding chairs in a small conference room in Grinnell, Iowa, presidential hopeful Mike Huckabee pushed his way past a torrent of reporters to reach a podium in clear sight of a woman in a dog costume sitting in the front row. The politician was unphased despite the elaborate costume version of Uncle Sam in a patriotic jumpsuit with a matching stars-and-bars top hat. At the mascot's side were two la-

dies, each with her own small, clothed pooch sitting quietly as if nothing out of the ordinary were going on.

At a first glance, it seemed as though Huckabee had won the dog-lover vote. After all, the Arkansas governor was touring the state with his wife and dogs. Janet Huckabee even introduced the Index to her pets: "This little one is Sonic, the big lab is Jet, and then this one's Toby."

However, the myPoliticalPet trio was spotted later in the evening when an energetic Barack Obama stirred a giant auditorium of supporters in Des Moines after winning the Democratic nomination. Among the sea of cheering heads and political signs was an island — a goofy dog head with a colorful top hat.

After the event, the group distributed cards that read, "My Dog Believes in Universal Healthcare," urging the recipients to register their pets to vote. The idea was strange and the tactics perhaps even

stranger, but to date nearly 170 pet owners have registered their pets to vote online.

The Web site allows visitors to see all the presidential candidates, their stances on various issues, as well as pet political biographies and information on animal rights issues. Visitors are encouraged to donate to the site with all proceeds going to the CenTex Humane Society, which sponsors the only no-kill animal shelter in central Texas.

Back in Kirksville, pet lovers such as junior Sean Lowery, Jake's owner, are trying to determine the political affiliations of their pets. Lowery said he initially suspected his dog was a Republican because of his tendency to torment smaller animals.

"I think that is just a stereotype," Lowery said. "I am going to give my dog the benefit of the doubt. I say that he is loyal to his master and is going to vote for Barack Obama."

Senior Sam Pounders, owner of two cats, Dave and Geronimo, said she thinks her cats have de-



Promoters of Web site myPoliticalPet.com join the supporters at the Iowa Caucus campaigns with their mascots to creatively encourage people to vote in the upcoming election.

Phil Jarrett/Index

veloped different political identities despite being litter-mates with humble beginnings. Dave, who Pounders describes as laid back and likely to roll with the punches, is apolitical. However, Geronimo likely is a wing-nut

Republican — she acts independent but often begs.

Both Pounders and Lowery said the political views of their pets did not alter their perceptions of them, and they plan on taking care of their pets despite affilia-

tions with any given candidate.

"The way I see it, my dog is entitled to his own opinion," Lowery said.

Jake, Dave, Geronimo and staff of the myPoliticalPet.com were not available for comment.

## UFO | Enthusiasts have new reason to search the skies

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This caused people to further blow their claims of sightings out of proportion because they feared that the government was keeping the truth a secret. He said that with the addition of the UFO pop culture that had been blooming in comic books and science fiction since the 1930s, the "UFO movement" spread.

In recent years, sightings have decreased and abduction claims have taken their place, Edis said. He said these claims generate from pop culture and should not be considered as a phenomenon to explore scientifically.

"The fact that there's this kind of residue of unexplained cases is not any more significant than the fact that there's always a certain percentage of murders unsolved," Edis said. "We don't assume that because there are murders unsolved that there are aliens coming down and slitting people's throats."

Mark Rodeghier, scientific director at the Center for UFO Studies in Chicago, seems to think otherwise.

The Center for UFO Studies, started in 1973 by Ohio State University astronomy professor Dr. J. Allen Hynek, collects information from phone calls or e-mails written by people claiming to have experienced some type of UFO encounter. The center hopes to solve the unexplained cases by making the media and scientific community more aware of the ongoing UFO problem.

"If there's strange things flying around in the sky, why should we be ignoring them?" Rodeghier said. "Tax dollars are wasted because there's an incredible bias against UFOs being something worthy of study."

Rodeghier said their team of academics, librarians and other volunteers does not investigate every case, especially if it's an incident that gives no further assistance to their research.

"But of the ones remaining — certainly a fraction of these — I would say there's some other intelligence here, floating around in our skies," Rodeghier said. "I've obviously, for years, thought about alternative explanations, and I can't find any that are as viable."

Kirksville Regional Airport has handled a handful of calls about local sightings in the past years that are always investigated and have easy, natural explanations, airport operator Rusty Milburn said. Sergeant Brent Bernhardt of the State Highway Patrol said he and his colleagues also have to take their UFO sighting calls seriously.

"We've had people report suspicious sightings," he said. "In the 17 years I've been in the highway patrol ... there are two such incidents that I personally have knowledge about. One of them was an aircraft, and the other was a meteor shower."

Meanwhile, UFO supporters and researchers have to come up with their own explanations for the strange shapes in the skies. Rodeghier said he believes that recent scientific developments could point to reasons for assumed spacecraft.

"Physicists today talk about extra dimensions in space," he said. "We could be visited, not by aliens 50 light years away, but by aliens from other universes even. That's what I think could be happening. It would be nice to know."