

IRM Incident Communication and Response Plan

I. Purpose

A crisis communication plan provides policies and procedures for the communication of IT service interruption within the university.

The goal of this communication plan is to establish guidelines for dealing with a variety of situations, and to ensure that the FAU community is aware of the problem and knows when to expect its resolution.

II. Plan Objectives

1. Assess the situation factually and determine whether the university community needs to be informed.
2. Assemble a team that will make recommendations on appropriate responses.
3. Implement immediate action to
 - Identify constituencies that should be informed about the situation.
 - Communicate facts about the crisis.
 - Minimize rumors.

III. Procedures

Internal Communication – All service interruptions are not created equally so not all service interruptions need to be communicated to the university community. However, all service interruptions should be communicated internally via e-mail to irminfo-l@wise.fau.edu. If e-mail is not available, the directors should be notified by phone so they can notify their staff as deemed necessary.

Crisis Team – Composition of the crisis team should include at least the following:

- CIO
- Director of the group responsible for the service that has been interrupted
- Individuals who manage the service
- Director of OCS
- Representative from the help desk
- Other members of IRM with knowledge of the service

IV. Response

The Core Crisis Team will first assess the nature and scope of the situation:

- How was the service interruption identified?
- How long prior to identification was the service interrupted?
- To what extent is the university's business hampered by the interruption?

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- Who is affected by it?
- Do we know the cause?
- Do we know what must be done to fix it?
- How long do we anticipate the service to be unavailable?

Once these questions are answered, the team will develop a plan for remedying the issue as well as a communication plan along the following guidelines:

1. Draft a fact sheet. The fact sheet should contain a summary statement of the situation including all known details in terms of impact of service interruption, causes, and remedies. This information should be made available to the CIO and analyzed with respect to the university community's need to know. Effective communications will help quell rumors, maintain morale, and protect IRM's credibility.

2. Identify key constituencies that need to be informed. This decision will be based on who is affected by the service outage. Keep in mind that those affected may include people who do not necessarily use the service directly but work with people who do (Blackberry is an example of such a situation). If e-mail is interrupted, the CIO should contact top administrators.

3. Assign members of the Crisis Team to communicate the facts of the situation (contained in the fact sheet) and to determine the appropriate method of communication:

- If e-mail is available, send e-mail messages via MyFAU to students, faculty, and/or staff as deemed necessary.
- If e-mail is not functioning, contact CSI to have a broadcast phone message sent to all campus phones. Note, however, this method will not necessarily get to students in general or to faculty/staff who are off campus. The MyFAU announcement feature should also be considered.
- If the general public should know of the issue, the Office of Communications should be consulted about putting a message on the FAU homepage. However, this method is not useful in reaching the university community and also risks "airing dirty laundry in public."
- In addition to notifying users directly, the system status webpage and phone message should be updated by the help desk.

V. Procedures During the Crisis

If the situation changes, such as the estimated time of resolution, the system status website and phone message should be updated. If the situation change will dramatically impact users, the communication process outlined above should be followed to notify them of the new status.

Take notes during crisis to be reviewed and used to improve future crisis response.

VI. Aftermath

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Communication

- When the situation is resolved, the university community should be notified.
- It is not unreasonable to expect that rumors will follow a severe service outage. Rumors can be combated via e-mail communication, IRM website, and system status line.

Root Cause Analysis

- Once the situation is resolved, a post mortem review should be conducted to assess cause of the situation, method of responding, and lessons learned.

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Post Mortem Checklist

Was this review done within 48 hours of the event being evaluated:

Yes No Unknown

Date event occurred:

Start Time:

Stop Time:

Description of event:

Communication

Were the system status website and phone message initiated and updated in a timely manner?

Was a message sent to irminfo-l or phone calls made to IRM directors?

Was the estimated down time communicated to appropriate people within IRM and in the FAU community?

Was notification of the event timely?

Were the correct people notified?

Were the correct people kept up to date?

Were outside agencies involved? If so, was communication effective?

Do changes need to be made in contact lists?

Response

How was event identified?

Was event identification timely? If not, why?

Was initial diagnosis correct? If not, why?

Were the tools used for identification of a problem adequate? If not, are adequate tools available?

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Was initial response to the event correct?

How could we have done it better?

Overall

What was the overall impact on FAU and its users?

What was the cost of repair/rollout?

What caused the event to happen?

Could we have anticipated the event?

Could we have prevented the event?

Were there warning signs that we missed?

Summary

List the lessons learned and action items generated from the above discussion:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

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1. Incident discovered
2. Helpdesk notified; System status website and phone message activated. Message sent to irminfo-1 if possible.
3. Crisis team formed
4. Team assesses nature and scope of problem.
5. Team drafts fact sheet.
6. Team defines key constituencies affected and determines communication plan. If e-mail is interrupted CIO notifies top administrators.
7. Communication plan implemented.
8. If situation changes, users are updated, system status and phone message updated.
9. When problem resolved, users are notified as deemed appropriate. Help desk is notified and updates system status and phone message. Message sent to irminfo-1.
10. Post mortem review when dust settles.