This paper provides explanation and guidelines for the mandatory proper use banner message policy applied to each University-owned computer in the College of LSA. Proper Use Banner Messages (AKA ‘Logon Banners’) serve as a Security Measure similar to posting ‘No Trespassing’ Signs on your property – if the signs aren’t there, you cannot prosecute trespassers.
Contents

General Information ........................................................................................................................................... 2
Logon Banners - Deployment ......................................................................................................................... 3
Standard Banners ........................................................................................................................................... 3
Shortened Banners ......................................................................................................................................... 3
UNIX Operating Systems ............................................................................................................................... 4
Exceptions ...................................................................................................................................................... 4
Questions Regarding this Document ........................................................................................................... 4
APPENDIX: Related Links ............................................................................................................................. 5
General Information

Information security policies are often a covert tactic applied after unauthorized intrusion. While such actions may suffice to apply internal disciplinary actions, they often may not withstand legal action during ongoing prosecution of guilty intruders. A computer system that is property of the University of Michigan intended to meet strict business and/or academic requirements should display a warning to all users, authorized and unauthorized, detailing the proper use and treatment of the computer systems. These messages are often referred to as warning or logon “banners” and encapsulate the applicable sections of security policies detailing access and proper use of a system or service/application (such as TELNET or SFTP).

This document intends to assist system administrators and users in configuring their systems properly to display the University of Michigan LSA Security Team’s recommended logon banner prior to or immediately following access to a system.

Many UM College of LSA students, faculty and staff are provided a computer to carry out daily tasks and a network password to protect access to UM/LSA data – some of which can be considered sensitive in nature. Paramount to all usage is the need to keep information secure – assuring confidentiality, data integrity and availability. Additionally, the threat of possible legal repercussions certainly help to discourage misuse.

In response to questions and comments relating to the Banner Message policy, the University Office of General Council has stated: “... this banner message (specifically, the LSA Proper Use Banner Message) does good and needed things for the University legally and needs to be there.” Indeed, University Audits echoes these sentiments. These requirements specify that, for all computers, the computer or service must be configured with a Proper Use Policy Banner Message – AKA, a Logon Banner Message.

Since the computer resources at Uof M have significant value and our students and the citizens of Michigan expect us to be good stewards of these resources, we strive to take all reasonable precautions to protect them. The University’s security guidelines specifically outline Proper Use – see UM Standard Practice Guide 601.11 – (http://www.itcs.umich.edu/itcsdocs/r1103/). One can consider the mandatory Banner Message requirement to be a safety-net to help prevent inappropriate access to your account and the files/data you are permitted to use. It is hard to make a case that the additional time to type one keystroke is an unreasonable burden. Actual Criminal Court Cases have been dismissed because the computer used to perpetrate the crime did NOT have a Proper Use Banner Message displayed.

We recognize that the Banner Message feature introduces a certain level of inconvenience as we interact with computing resources on a daily basis. However, U of M has a very clear policy in this regard. It is prudent that we therefore continue with the implementation of the Proper Use Banner Message mechanism if we are to be in compliance with U of M security standards, recommendations, and best practices.
Logon Banners - Deployment

The LSAIT Systems/RSG teams have long since established a procedure in their automated Windows/OSX installations that configures all LSA computers such that the Standard LSA Banner Message appears at Logon. This step is necessary to protect the critical integrity of the operating system, application programs, and data files. Human Resources Applications such as PeopleSoft, and Wolverine Access, must operate as expected and the data they use must be complete, correct and secure. Otherwise, users lose productivity and may report false information – identity theft and fraud crimes, even stolen research can result from unsecured computers. The guidelines for maintaining the integrity of the system are as follows: Deploying the LSAIT logon banners requires system level changes to be made. Various operating systems and network services offer the banner content in various methods; verify that your operating system or network service type and version prior to implementing the following changes.

Standard Banners

The following banner should be used to display proper access and use of a computer system or service/application.

"University of Michigan - LSA Computer System Usage Policy"

"This is the University of Michigan information technology environment. You MUST be authorized to use these resources. As an authorized user, by your use of these resources, you have implicitly agreed to abide by the highest standards of responsibility to your colleagues, -- the students, faculty, staff, and external users who share this environment. You are required to comply with ALL University policies, state, and federal laws concerning appropriate use of information technology. Non-compliance is considered a serious breach of community standards and may result in disciplinary and/or legal action."

All computers at the College of LSA will be configured such that this Banner Message appears during logon to the computer or any service application requiring user credentials and authentication to that application (SFTP, SSH, Telnet, etc). This Banner Message has been set on LSAIT maintained Windows computers before June 20, 2007. LSAIT will begin enforcing this on supported PCs running Windows Operating Systems on Wednesday, March 19, 2010. People that administer their own computers (including laptops) are expected to comply with these requirements.

Shortened Banners

Where necessary due to system limitations, the following banner should be used to warn of improper system use.

"This is an actively monitored system. Unauthorized access prohibited."
Shortened banners should not be deployed except in the case of system limitations.

**UNIX Operating Systems** (Linux, Mac OSX, SunOS, Solaris, BSD, Irix, HP-UX, AIX, etc)

Under these UNIX operating systems variants, the standard banner should be placed in `/etc/issue`. If that is not possible, other flavors of UNIX systems should retain the banner text in the `/etc/motd` file. This file is displayed as a "message of the day" intended to inform users as to system news.

Under BSD variants the `/etc/gettytab` file is used to distribute logon banners for directly connected terminals such as dialup lines, a console, etc. To display the logon banner, add the banner after each “im” (initial message) to the appropriate stanzas in `/etc/gettytab`.

**Exceptions**

Digital Signage systems.

Also Note: If a Banner message cannot be utilized as part of the logon process, other options must be used to put the message verbiage in front of the computer user. For Example, the desktop or background image can contain the banner message. Or, physical hardcopy signage must be posted on or above/around the area where the computer is located in plain sight of those using the computers. In an open lab environment, if there is some kind of sign in sheet to use the computers there, this Proper Use message can be included on the sign in sheet (and signing the sheet indicates the user’s consent). There may be other solutions to this issue, contact LSA.Security if you cannot use one of the solutions described in this document.

**Questions Regarding this Document**

May be referred to the IT Security Manager for LSA;
Christopher Brenner (cbrenner@umich.edu) 734-647-8213

Email: LSA.Security@umich.edu

LSA.Security’s web site:

[http://www.lsa.umich.edu/Lsait/lsa-sec-itam/security](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/Lsait/lsa-sec-itam/security)
APPENDIX: Related Links

Whitepaper: Login Warning Banners (Radvanovsky) - http://unixworks.net/papers/wp-007.pdf