



## NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

*R. Scott Ralls, Ph.D.*

*President*

November 24, 2009

### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Select CCLINC Community College Presidents  
Select Business Officers  
Select Library Directors  
Select Registrars  
Select System and Network Administrators

**FROM:** Sandra W. Williams, Senior Vice President  
Technology and Workforce Development

**SUBJECT:** Library Server Security Breach

The purpose of this memo is 1) to inform you of an information security breach that involves your college; 2) to inform you of the corrective actions that have taken place to remedy the current breach; 3) to inform you of the actions that have taken place to prevent future incidents of this type; and 4) to inform you of the actions required from you and your college.

On August 23, 2009, the System Office experienced a compromise of its production Sirsi library server. The library server provides a data entry system for cataloging and tracking library materials for 46 community college libraries. The server is accessed by 270,000+ patrons.

The system was accessed by unauthorized users. The attempt was discovered the next morning, August 24, 2009, by the server administrator while performing daily administrative tasks. Steps were taken immediately following the incident to remedy the issue. At this time, it appears that the compromise was limited to the operating system and the installation of "chat" software. There is no evidence that any data was accessed. The data is stored in an obscure database which the unauthorized user would have to know the structure of the database to piece the information together to match the person's name with other personally identifiable information (PII). Examples of PII are Social Security Numbers and Driver's Licenses. As required by the State's Information Technology Services (ITS); an incident report was submitted to ITS.

**S09-001**

### **Corrective Actions**

Once the ticket was submitted, ITS reviewed the history and consulted with the Attorney General's Office. Although it does not appear the data was accessed, the Attorney General's recommendation is that it must be treated as such. Since some driver's licenses were contained on the server, the AG stated that we are to follow the General Statutes: G.S. §132-1.10(c1) & G.S. §75-65 for notifying the patrons.

On December 5, 2005, the CCLINC Steering Committee recommended that all colleges be required to remove all Social Security Numbers from the server to comply with the North Carolina Identity Theft and Protection Act. The Steering Committee passed the recommendation and was noted in the minutes of the December 6, 2005 meeting which was communicated to the 46 participating colleges. On page four of the minutes, the Steering Committee approved 1) that the use of Social Security Numbers be stopped and 2) the Social Security Numbers are removed by July 1, 2007. At the time the action did not address Driver's Licenses and the General Counsel at the System Office approved the colleges to continue to collect the Driver's Licenses. Since 2005, Driver's Licenses have been added as protected information. There were 19 colleges that stored approximately 9000 patrons' Driver's Licenses in the database.

Therefore, the 9,000 patrons must be notified in writing of the incident. The System Office will take on the responsibility of notifying the 9,000 patrons and bear the associated costs. The System Office will also address any inquiries from the patrons regarding the incident.

The CCLINC Steering Committee has subsequently approved a policy prohibiting the storage and collection of Driver's Licenses, State identification cards, or passport numbers. All Social Security Numbers and Drivers' Licenses must be removed from the system by Monday, January 4, 2010. Each college is responsible for ensuring that this information is removed and no longer collected.

Additionally, the System Office's Information Services Group has taken corrective actions to prevent further unauthorized access to the server and continues to monitor the server for malicious activity.

The System Office will also conduct periodic reviews of the database to ensure that no personally identifiable information is being stored.

### **Additional Findings**

As the System Office has reviewed the data stored on the library server, approximately 42,500 Social Security Numbers were found in use by 12 colleges. This is in direct violation of the policy approved by the Steering Committee in December of 2005 and in violation of General Statutes G.S. §132-1.10(c1). As such, these colleges will be responsible for notifying their patrons along with the associated costs. The System Office will provide a list of the patrons for notification for each college.

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A conference call with the Library Directors of the 12 affected colleges was held on Monday, November 23, 2009. This call was used to communicate background information, next steps, and answer any questions. The 12 affected colleges required to attend this meeting were notified directly by the System Office via phone.

### **Actions Required by Your College**

In order to notify all patrons with Driver's License or Social Security Numbers that were stored in the Patron Database, the System Office and colleges will mail the notification letters out on or about **Monday, December 23** to maintain consistency. An example letter will also be provided for your use.

Each of the 12 CCLINC College Presidents that are affected must acknowledge this notification and certify that their college will notify their patrons. The System Office will send these 12 Presidents and their Library Directors the certification letter separately. Certification letters can be faxed to (919) 807-7164.

If you have any questions, please contact Jason Godfrey at (919) 807-7054 or [godfreyj@nccommunitycolleges.edu](mailto:godfreyj@nccommunitycolleges.edu).

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance in this matter.

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c: Dr. R. Scott Ralls  
Mr. Kennon Briggs  
Ms. Q. Shante Martin  
Ms. Ruth Bryan  
Mr. Jason Godfrey