MU loses power for about 40 minutes
Monday, January 12, 2015 | 4:14 p.m. CST; updated 6:19 p.m. CST, Monday, January 12, 2015
BY AILIN LI

COLUMBIA — An electrical problem cut electricity and Internet service to MU for about 40 minutes Monday afternoon.

Karlan Seville, interim sustainability coordinator of Campus Facilities, said in an email that power to the campus was lost at 2:23 p.m. due to an electrical short circuit on the campus distribution system.

The campus interconnection with the national electrical grid tripped open as a result of the short circuit, resulting in a full-campus outage, Seville said.

Backup generators at University Hospital kicked in immediately, and there was no interruption in service, hospital spokesman Derek Thompson said.

The power was restored to all campus buildings by about 3 p.m.

The reason for the short circuit was being investigated.

Declining the AAU Survey

January 13, 2015
NO MENTION

More than a dozen of the nation’s top research universities have declined an offer by the Association of American Universities to anonymously survey their students about the prevalence of sexual assault on campus.

Fifteen of the AAU’s 60 U.S. members told Inside Higher Ed on Monday that they had decided against participating in the association’s survey project, which some victims’ advocates and sexual violence researchers had criticized.

The universities gave various reasons for not participating, and several said that they would be designing and conducting their own surveys.

The AAU announced in November that it was contracting with a research firm, Westat, to develop and implement a campus “climate survey” for any of its members institutions that wanted to participate. The association said that one goal of the project was to fend off Congressional efforts to require universities to annually survey their students about the prevalence of sexual assault. And one reason that some in Congress have pushed for broad surveys -- as opposed to the campus-by-campus approach some AAU members are now embracing -- is to allow for comparisons of how institutions are doing.

Universities had to decide within the past several weeks whether they wanted to pay about $85,000 to participate.

The AAU’s survey had been criticized by several dozen scholars who study sexual violence as well as some victims’ advocates for, among other things, not pledging to release campus-by-campus data, but to share only aggregate data. Critics also said the process lacked transparency and input from enough scientists who study sexual assaults on campuses.

Princeton University is one of the institutions that declined to participate. The decision was made by President Christopher Eisgruber following the unanimous recommendation of a university sexual misconduct committee and it was first reported by The Daily Princetonian.

But that recommendation was not motivated by some of the criticisms of the survey, according to Michelle Minter, Princeton’s vice provost for institutional equity and diversity, who co-chaired the committee.

Minter said in an interview that the committee was mostly concerned that the university was required to tell the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights about its plans to conduct a climate survey by this week. Federal officials required last year that Princeton conduct a survey after finding that the university violated Title IX in mishandling sexual assault cases.

“There were too many remaining unknowns of how the AAU effort was likely to unfold,” Minter said. “We believe it is likely to unfold well, but we didn’t have quite enough information at this point.”
She added that the university may participate in subsequent years and believes that “peer comparisons would be very helpful for the long term.”

Several other institutions, like the University of Rochester, said that they were opting out but still planned to do their own survey.

“We are designing our own survey so that we can tailor the questions to our own needs,” Sara Miller, a spokeswoman for the University of Rochester, said in an email.

Penn State declined to participate in the AAU survey but a university spokeswoman, Lisa M. Powers, said that it was eyeing its own survey for this spring as well as collaboration with other universities.

Among the other universities not participating in the survey are: Boston University, Emory University, Johns Hopkins University, Duke University, Georgia Tech, Rutgers, Northwestern University, the State University of New York at Buffalo and Stony Brook, the University of California at Irvine, Vanderbilt University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the University of Chicago.

Not all of the group’s members responded immediately on Monday to a request for comment about the status of their participation.

Barry Toiv, spokesman for the Association of American Universities, said that the group had not yet released a complete list of which universities were on board because some were still finalizing their agreements to participate.

“A number of institutions are electing not to participate,” he said. “But we’ve got a broad cross section of our universities. We’re in good shape. The survey development is on schedule.”

The surveys, Toiv said, will begin at participating universities in April. Although the AAU plans to release the aggregate data collected from all campuses, it will be up to individual universities to decide whether they make public their own survey results.

Several universities who have decided to take part in the initiative said they weren’t sure exactly which information they would release.

"It's fully our intention to make known what that climate survey finds," said Jason Cody, a spokesman for Michigan State University. But, he said, the university had not decided whether it will publish the data from each question or summaries of them.

A spokesman for the University of Pennsylvania, Ron Ozio, said that institution would “make data public in a way that secures the anonymity of the respondents.”

Among the other universities that said they planned to participate in the surveys were Iowa State University, Texas A&M University, and the University of Wisconsin at Madison. The University of Michigan is also on board, according to The Detroit News. And Harvard University planned to participate as well, according to a November report in The Crimson.
Our iPhones, Ourselves: Cellphone Separation Anxiety Is Real, Study Finds

BY ZOË SCHLANGER 1/12/15 AT 12:54 PM

Yes, your iPhone may be exposing you to more radiation than anyone would like to think about. But is it also priming you for separation anxiety? A new study out of the University of Missouri says yes, yes it is. When researchers separated people from their iPhones, the poor phone-deprived souls performed worse on cognitive tasks.

What's more, if participants' iPhones rang while they were in another room and were therefore unable to answer, participants' heart rates and blood pressure levels increased, they underperformed on simple word-search puzzles, and they reported feeling anxious and "unpleasant," according to the study.

"Our findings suggest that iPhone separation can negatively impact performance on mental tasks," Russell Clayton, a doctoral candidate at the MU School of Journalism and lead author of the study, said in a statement. "Additionally, the results from our study suggest that iPhones are capable of becoming an extension of ourselves such that when separated, we experience a lessening of 'self' and a negative physiological state."

To come to this conclusion, the researchers told participants that they were testing the reliability of a new wireless blood pressure cuff. They asked participants to complete a word search puzzle while they took readings of the participants' heart rates and blood pressure levels. Then, they took their iPhones away, telling the participants that the phones were causing "Bluetooth interference" with the wireless blood pressure cuff. The iPhones were placed in a nearby room while participants completed a second word-search puzzle. Researchers again recorded their heart rates and blood pressure levels, according to the study.

While participants were working their way through the second puzzle, the researchers called the participants' iPhones. The participants, unable to answer, were clearly vexed: They had significantly higher heart rates and blood pressure levels after the ringing stopped, and were significantly less adept at solving the word-search puzzles. They also reported higher levels of anxiety and feeling higher levels of "unpleasantness" than when they were completing puzzles with their iPhones in their possession, though they were not asked to clarify what aspect of the situation contributed to this feeling.

But the research, published Friday in the Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, opens a whole new can of worms about how closely we associate our cellphones with ourselves. As the study puts it,
the findings show that people are “capable of perceiving their iPhone as an object of their extended self, which can be negatively impacted (i.e., lessening of self) during separation.”

“This finding alone calls for future research on whether other technological devices are capable of becoming incorporated into the extended self,” the authors write.

Little other research exists on the psychological effects of temporary technology deprivation, but as computers and phones become ever more attached to our every action—and in some cases literally strapped to our wrists—this field of inquiry will likely expand.

**The Telegraph**

**It's official: iPhone withdrawal anxiety exists and it will make you bad at work**

By Lauren Davidson

Do you feel anxious and tetchy when you’re separated from your phone? Do you feel like a part of you is missing? You are not alone, a new study shows.

Researchers found that iPhone users who are unable to answer their phone experience a faster heart rate, increased blood pressure, higher levels of anxiety and unpleasantness and even a lower sense of self, all of which decreases their ability to perform thinking tasks.

For the experiment, 40 iPhone users were asked to complete two five-minute word search puzzles, one with their phone next to them and one with their phone in a cubby hole four feet away. During the third minute of the task where the user and the phone were separated, the researchers called the participants’ phones and let them ring for 20 seconds.

The study, which was published in the Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, discovered that the participants identified fewer words in the puzzle when they were pining for their phone, and they reported stronger feelings of anxiety and unpleasantness, which was corroborated by physiological evidence of increased blood pressure and heart rate.

The researchers -- the University of Missouri's Russell B.Clayton, the University of Oklahoma’s Glenn Leshner and Indiana University's Anthony Almond -- pointed to the increasing physical and emotional attachments that humans have with their mobile phones.

Psychiatrists have even coined a new term for this discomfort disorder: Nomophobia, a portmanteau of “no mobile phone” and phobia, which is believed to affect two-thirds of people in the UK and as many as 77pc of 18 to 24 year olds, according to a 2012 report.
The researchers cited a previous study by James Harkin, who proposed that mobile phones have become embedded in modern people’s sense of self because they “function as comfort objects, antidotes to the hostile terrain of wider society,” and have become entities so intimately a part of us that they are capable of representing “an extension of our physical selves – an umbilical cord, anchoring the information society's digital infrastructure to our very bodies.”

When that umbilical cord is cut, even momentarily, the level of psychological and physiological distress is strong enough to kill a person’s concentration and inhibit their ability to work.

It might be worth keeping this on file for the next time your boss tells you off for being on your phone at work.

The Boston Globe

iPhone Obsession Is Ruining Our Ability to Deal

By Rachel Raczka

A study out of the University of Missouri tested a theory that we’ve all been in denial over: Just how bad is our iPhone dependency, anyway?

Turns out it’s pretty darn bad, and the psychological and physiological effects of our separation anxiety when we’re left iPhone-less are detrimental on our ability to perform and function.

In the study, researchers asked iPhone-using test subjects (no word on how Android users fared, as they were not included in this study) to sit in a cubicle and complete two word puzzles. In one test group, participants were able to keep their iPhones while completing the first puzzle. The second group had to hand their iPhones over. For the second puzzle, the first group lost their iPhones and the second group got theirs back.

When participants were separated from their phones, researchers placed a call. Subjects were able to hear their phones ringing, but not to answer them. They were then polled on levels of discomfort and anxiety.

Not only did participants’ heart rates and blood pressure “dramatically increase” when they were left iPhone-solated, but they also reported high levels of anxiety and actually demonstrated poor “puzzle performance.” In other words, life itself will be brought to its knees when we can’t answer our iPhones, and don’t even bother asking us to do a word puzzle. Or as the researchers hypothesize: Without our phones, we reach peak-FoMO, or as they reported, we view technology as “an extension of our physical selves – an umbilical cord, anchoring the information society’s digital infrastructure to our very bodies.”
Doctoral candidate and study author Russell Clayton also shared this ominous tidbit with Science Daily: “[The] results from our study suggest that iPhones are capable of becoming an extension of our selves such that when separated, we experience a lessening of ‘self’ and a negative physiological state.”

So next time you get caught playing Candy Crush during a meeting, you can say you’re just trying to improve your job performance.

KRCG-TV (CBS) – Jefferson City, Mo. - University of Missouri researchers found that iPhone users tasked with solving a series of puzzles did better when they had their phones with them. When they were separated from their iPhones, they experienced an elevated heart rate and blood pressure along with anxiety. The study’s author says that “iPhones are capable of becoming an extension of our selves such that when separated, we experience a lessening of ‘self’ and a negative physiological state.”

Link to video: http://mms.tveys.com/Transcript.asp?StationID=3170&DateTime=1%2F13%2F2015+5%3A12%3A26+AM&Term=%22university+of+missouri%22+-%22st%2E+louis%22+-%22kansas+city%22&PlayClip=TRUE

KRCG-TV (CBS) – Jefferson City, Mo. The MU fire and rescue training institute provides continuing professional education to Missouri fire service and emergency response people. Each
year, more than 150 adjunct instructors train more than 10,000 fire and emergency service first responders.

Link to video: 
http://mms.tveys.com/Transcript.asp?StationID=3170&DateTime=1%2F12%2F2015+6%3A09%3A55+PM&Term=MU&PlayClip=TRUE

Presidential Panel on College Sports?

January 13, 2015

By Jake New

NO MU MENTION

At a forum sponsored by the Big 12 Conference in October, Tom McMillen, a retired professional basketball player and former member of Congress, warned the gathering of college sports professionals that they would soon face "a day of reckoning."

McMillen was referring to legislation -- later introduced by Rep. Jim Moran, a Virginia Democrat, during a lame duck session -- that would create a presidential commission on college athletics. While the bill itself was largely symbolic, support for such a commission and federal oversight of college sports has grown throughout the last year. The idea may move closer to a reality this week, as college leaders and executives of the National Collegiate Athletic Association are expected to attend a meeting at the White House.

The discussion will likely include the creation of a presidential commission focused on the direction of college athletics, USA Today reported. The White House did not respond to multiple requests for comment on Monday.

"It's in Congress's and the administration's best interest to really study the issue of what's going on in college sports and whether or not it's best for higher education," said Gerald Gurney, president of the
Drake Group and former president of the National Association of Academic Advisors for Athletics. "And the NCAA needs to be part of that discussion."

What exactly would result from creating such a commission is unclear, with speculation ranging from replacing the NCAA with a new governing body to scrapping the association's long-held belief that college athletes should be treated like amateurs. A likelier, though still complicated, scenario would be for the federal government to offer the NCAA a partial antitrust exemption -- as both an incentive to reform how college sports operate and as a means for the association to achieve some of those reforms.

“There is some dangling of the reality that in order to control athletics, a conditional, limited antitrust exemption needs to be on the table,” Gurney said.

While the exemption would help the NCAA preserve its theoretical -- and increasingly maligned -- model of amateurism, it would also allow the NCAA to prevent coaches from profiting so heavily off athletes' work by allowing colleges to agree to set limits on compensation. (The last time the NCAA tried to limit the salaries of coaches, in the 1990s, the regulation was challenged on antitrust grounds and the NCAA wound up paying $54.5 million to settle the case.) Making salary constraints possible would, in theory, help drive down overall spending on big-time college sports, said Andrew Zimbalist, a sports economist and professor at Smith College.

Between 2005 and 2012, according to the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, football salaries grew 60 percent among the 25 programs with the largest athletic budgets. During the same time period, academic spending decreased 2 percent.

Under the Sherman Antitrust Act, it would currently be illegal for the NCAA to force universities to cap any person's salaries. The NCAA has sought an exemption in the past, though primarily as a means to prevent sharing revenue with athletes. Some critics say the exemption would serve as a bailout for the association, allowing colleges to successfully appeal the O'Bannon lawsuit, for example, and not pay athletes even for the use of their likeness.

Donna Lopiano, founder of Sports Management Resources, a consulting firm, said if Congress and the White House wish to rein in the college athletics arms race, a partial antitrust exemption may be necessary.

“The NCAA is expected to be a national governing organization that can control costs, but that puts it directly in conflict with antitrust laws,” Lopiano said. “So really there’s got to be some kind of exemption. But you can’t just give it to the NCAA. There has to be insurance that if the NCAA is exempt, it will really start controlling costs, that it will really explore the possibility of setting caps on operating expenses and salaries, and not just use it to avoid paying athletes.”

In discussing his bill, Moran has also said antitrust protection “clearly has to be addressed,” and the sports economist Andrew Zimbalist has repeatedly called for an exemption. Zimbalist and Moran, along with Lopiano and Gurney, were among a number of college sports experts and members of Congress
who met with Arne Duncan, the U.S. secretary of education, last month to also discuss the creation of a presidential commission.

“Basically, we were talking about the need for a comprehensive approach to the reform of college sports, rather than have a piecemeal approach where one piece of legislation is created to fix a small problem, then another for another problem,” Zimbalist said. “I think most of us felt it was a complicated issue and if we were going to get Congress to take it seriously, the best way to do it would be to have a high level commission of experts to really take a look at it.”

Those who were at the meeting declined to offer more specific details about what was discussed, but Moran’s legislation listed a number of issues beyond just controlling spending that a commission would examine. Those included graduation rates of athletes; eligibility standards for athletes; NCAA transfer rules; health and safety protections (particularly in relation to concussions); and the extent to which college sports have affected academic integrity.

Lopiano said the meeting in December revealed that there was considerable bipartisan support for a commission, and the White House’s invitation to meet with the NCAA this week was likely made with the same hope of keeping the conversation civil so the commission could work with the NCAA and its members rather than in opposition to them.

“The White House really doesn’t want a fight,” she said.

The NCAA, which declined to comment or confirm that the meeting will take place, spent $470,000 on lobbying efforts in the first three fiscal quarters of last year. That’s nearly as much as the association spent in the last three years combined.

Zimbalist said he’d also like to see the commission address the “structural problems” facing the NCAA, creating a regulatory body to oversee how it’s organized.

“Athletic directors, conference commissioners, and coaches have taken over the NCAA,” he said. “It’s controlled by Division I, which is controlled by the Football Bow Subdivision, which is controlled by the elite five conferences, who say you either go along with us or we leave. Nobody has ever called their bluff.”

Lopiano and others who argue for replacing the NCAA admit that while it’s their preferred solution, it’s not currently a likely scenario. It may not yet be the reckoning foretold by McMillen, but the commission could still result in substantial changes to how college sports operate, she said.

Like many supporters of the commission, Lopiano said the Amateur Sports Act of 1978, which established the United States Olympic Committee and provided legal protections to athletes, has set a precedent for how the process could work.

“The Olympic sports in the 1970s were wholly a mess,” Lopiano said. “A presidential commission worked for three years, but it eventually came up with the Amateur Sports Act. At the time, nobody thought reform was possible there, either.”
Proposed Missouri tax credits aimed at enlisting new farmers

JEFFERSON CITY, MO.

State Sen. Brian Munzlinger announced legislation Monday that would create tax incentives for Missouri landowners to work with beginning farmers, an effort he says could help attract a younger generation to agriculture.

The legislation would create a similar program with the University of Missouri's extension program.

The Republican lawmaker from Williamstown said he worries it's too expensive for some young farmers to start out in the state, where the average age for farmers and ranchers is 56.

Missouri Cattlemen's Association Executive Vice President Mike Deering said the state faces losing a generation of farmers at a time when demand for food production is increasing.

"It's important not only to protect our agriculture production industry, but to continue to grow Missouri's No. 1 industry," said Munzlinger, who chairs a Senate committee on agriculture and has sponsored numerous bills related to the industry.
Most of Munzlinger's bill focuses on incentives for established farmers to help out younger workers about to start their career in agriculture.

The legislation would allow up to $12 million a year in tax credits for property owners who lease land or contract to have part of their land farmed by beginning farmers. Landowners would qualify for tax credits worth 7 percent of what a beginning farmer pays to lease land or 7 percent of what landowners pay those farmers to cultivate on their property.

Missourians who have not operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 years would qualify. Those with farms or ranches larger than 30 percent of the county average wouldn't be eligible.

Other provisions in the bill would give tax incentives to landowners who sell property to new farmers.

Ryan Messner, a member of the Missouri Cattlemen's Association from Stanberry, said he found few resources in Missouri to help him when he first tried to start his career in agriculture. He said he struggled to compete to lease land while others laid stake to close to 30,000 acres in his area.

"I started looking to possibly move from Missouri," Messner said, "just so I could do what I love."

Part of Munzlinger's bill is modeled after Iowa State University's Beginning Farming Center, which provides workshops on taking over a family farm and other resources.

City prepares for major infrastructure projects
By ANDREW DENNEY
This year, the major infrastructure projects the city plans to tackle include the third phase of improvements to Scott Boulevard in west Columbia, improvements to College Avenue and Providence Road near the University of Missouri campus and finalizing plans for the construction of new electric transmission lines in south Columbia.

According to the annual infrastructure report presented to the Columbia City Council last week, the Public Works Department will also begin construction this year on new sanitary sewer lines in the Flat Branch creek watershed to better serve new growth in the downtown area.

Phase III of the Scott Boulevard improvements is an estimated $10.9 million project that includes the construction of a bridge over Mill Creek and design work that would eventually allow the road to expand to five lanes. Work had been scheduled to kick off in 2016 but has been moved up a year to finish at least a substantial portion of the project before a new elementary school opens up in August 2016 at Scott’s intersection with Route KK.

Steve Sapp, a spokesman for Public Works, said the department plans to keep Scott Boulevard partially open to through traffic during the construction of Phase III. While crews were working through last year to complete Phase II, a section of Scott Boulevard — one of a few north-south arterial roads in the city — near its intersection with Vawter School Road was closed off, causing motorists to look for new routes.

“There’s going to be a little more pain while we construct Phase III,” Sapp said.

Construction of a new electric substation and transmission lines — projects that the city’s Water and Light Department has been planning for several years to keep the electric utility in line with federal regulations — is expected to cost about $36 million. Water and Light wants to cover those costs with a $63.1 million bond issue that would need voter approval. The council is scheduled at its Jan. 20 regular meeting to take a final vote on a bill to put the bond issue on the April 7 ballot.

Also, Water and Light will continue to seek additional sources of renewable energy to keep the city ahead of the goals in its renewable energy ordinance that voters initially approved in 2004. The council voted to update the ordinance one year ago, ahead of new emissions requirements from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for the Municipal Power Plant, which contains coal-fired units that were installed in 1957 and 1965.

In 2013, just less than 7 percent of the city’s electricity was generated from renewable sources, and that percentage is not expected to be much different for 2014, though Water and Light’s renewable energy report is not due for about another month.
For 2015, the only project on the horizon that will boost renewable energy numbers is the $600,000 construction of a solar array with an estimated capacity of 11 kilowatts at Water and Light’s West Ash pump station at Bernadette Drive and Tiger Lane in west Columbia.

Tina Worley, utility services manager for Water and Light, said the “aggressive” timeline for constructing the solar array would be for installation of the solar panels to begin in late spring or early summer.

In planning for the project, Water and Light officials had discussed allowing residents to participate in the array in some fashion, such as by leasing out panels, but Worley said the city’s legal staff is still reviewing the issue to determine what level of participation is allowed by state and federal regulations.

“There are some hurdles we need to get over regarding what a municipality can do,” Worley said. She said Water and Light also plans to hold a test burn of biomass at the Municipal Power Plant to determine whether biomass pellets could replace coal in the plant’s coal-fired units.

Water and Light had planned to hold the test burn last year, but Worley said the purchase order for the burn was postponed as staff focused on regulatory issues.