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University of Ottawa Wireless VPN

The University of Ottawa uses a Cisco VPN for its wireless services on campus. This is NOT a very satisfactory implementation. There is support for Windows users, claimed support for Macintosh, and Linux users are offered a “take it as is” tarball download of a very ancient RedHat client. These notes (by NashJc on Dec 4, 2007) will likely be outdated by April/May 2008 when a new system is supposed to be implemented. In the meantime, I hope they are helpful in allowing Linux users to connect on Campus.

For Ubuntu users, I found that the most helpful (and simple) solution was based on information from the University of Minnesota: http://www.cs.umn.edu/help/offsite/vpn.php and the University of Florida Statistics Department http://www.stat.ufl.edu/system/vpn.shtml.

I still needed the VPN configuration information, which for U of O is as follows:

IPSec gateway mobilevpn.uottawa.ca IPSec ID DockWireless IPSec secret UOmobile1 Xauth username <your InfoWeb name, in my case nashjc>

Note that I had to use the site http://www.unix-ag.uni-kl.de/~massar/bin/cisco-decode

to “decode” the encoded group password from the Cisco PCF file for the UO VPN; the encoded pw was

enc_GroupPwd=EC7C14AFFD9BB30BBB5772AB74D5DA2C7D1929805DD47848492944220397B5BCADE119A34D65C10F748DF64BABFC6FB8A038DA3F2FC35A1E

On Ubuntu, I was able to set the information in a dialog by clicking on the 2-screen mini-icon for connections that is on the Gnome task bar. Then I selected VPN Connections and chose Configure VPN and added my connection. As I recall, I was prompted for the group pw which was then saved. I chose to open “optional” on the connection configuration and “Override user name” to put in my own user name. This means I now only have to enter my Infoweb password.

On the Asus Eee PC, I created a uo.conf in /etc/vpnc/ following the example.conf. I then start wireless as follows:

I choose Internet/Network and select the UO wireless that is strongest. Then I open a terminal (“Home”-T). sudo su (that gives me superuser rights) vpnc-connect uo.conf

This gives a text welcome banner, but I then discovered that a browser still goes to the CCS “You need a VPN client” page. It turns out the wireless DHCP adds a fake DNS to the /etc/resolv.conf file. The vpnc-connect adds 2 more true DNS nameserver lines. So ignoring the “Do not edit” cautions, I put a “#” in front of the first nameserver entry. Then things work. (I do this with joe, but that does require a separate install. You could use nano i.e., nano /etc/resolv.conf).

Hope this is helpful. JN