Incident Report - August 27th, 2015
Incident #2015-101

Summary
On August 27th, 2015 at 12:00 pm a domain name server (DNS) in our production datacentre was accidentally turned off. This caused a widespread outage of our enterprise services during the lunch hour. After investigation the services were fully restored by 1:15 pm.

Impact
All production enterprise services were affected. They were either inaccessible or sluggish.
These services included, but were not limited to, SOLUS, PeopleSoft Finance and Human Resources, MyQueensU, the Queen’s University website (www.queensu.ca), Moodle and Single Sign-on.

Root Cause
An administrator intended to shut down a virtual machine running DNS on a test system but accidently selected a production system. Due to a failure in our load balancing configuration, the secondary DNS service was not accessible.

Resolution
The virtual server was turned back on. The load balancing configuration was also corrected to ensure that a single DNS server failure would no longer cause widespread outages.

Communications (Internal)
A small team of ITS Admins assembled to determine root cause of the issue.

ITSPP Communications (External)
A notice was posted after the event at 1:49 pm.

“IT Services experienced multiple service interruptions today between 12:00pm and 1:15pm. It was determined the outage was caused by a non-functioning DNS server.

The problem has been fixed and a solution for the root cause is being put in place.”

Lessons Learned
- More diligence is required when shutting down virtual machines
- DNS load balancing must be considered high priority