



# E-Briefs

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## NEWS BRIEFS

### Gunman Slays 6 at Northern Illinois University

Six students were killed and 15 were injured when a gunman opened fire in a Northern Illinois University classroom Thursday afternoon. Witnesses said that a man dressed in black clothing stepped onto the stage of the lecture hall and began firing a shotgun. Five students were killed immediately, and another later died at a nearby hospital. The gunman, who police described as a former NIU graduate student, died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound. Police officials said they found two handguns and a shotgun in his possession. The first shots rang out at 3 p.m., and campus police arrived at the scene within two minutes. NIU officials immediately put a detailed response plan into effect that was created in response to last year's shooting at Virginia Tech that killed 32 people. At 3:07 p.m., the campus was ordered into a lockdown, with an email alert sent to all members of the campus community at 3:20 p.m. asking them to stay in a safe area. The lockdown was lifted at 4:14 p.m. after police determined that there had only been one gunman involved in the incident. "This is a tragedy, but from all indications we did everything we could when we found out," said NIU President John Peters. School officials canceled classes scheduled for Thursday night and Friday, and counselors have been made available. Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich declared a state of emergency and offered the university state emergency resources.

### Travelers to Europe May Face Fingerprinting

The European Commission will propose a new travel security measure on Feb. 13 similar to one already in place in the United States, which would require all foreign travelers entering and exiting Europe to submit biometric information. If approved, airport officials would take fingerprints and possibly photo IDs of international passengers and add them to an international database that could be accessed by the United States and other friendly governments. The United States and Japan both currently take fingerprints of foreign travelers as they disembark but do not identify passengers as they leave. Under the European Union's proposed travel package, the entry and exit system would let officials know exactly who is in Europe, and would ease restrictions on travelers in good standing. Some European officials question the measure's effects on citizens' security and privacy, but the Department of Homeland Security says the Commission's proposal is a necessary step toward making all parts of the world safer. "Measures like fingerprint and passenger-data collection can disrupt the ability of terrorists to move easily across international borders. They also serve to protect American citizens traveling overseas," says DHS spokesman Russ Knocke.

### Human Error Tops the List of Security Threats

Most companies cite human error as their prime security concern, reveals a Deloitte survey. Human error was ranked by 75 percent of media, technology, and telecommunications businesses surveyed as the culprit for security vulnerabilities. Over 90 percent attributed on-the-job misconduct as another factor hampering security controls, while about one-third credited third parties with security failures. The survey also found that management executives are not usually notified about security issues and most companies still designate their IT sectors with being accountable for protecting information security. Almost half of the respondents stated that flawed operations and technology weakened overall security. "A prerequisite for effective information security is the implementation of a proactive information security strategy that is closely linked to the company's overall business strategy, business requirements, and key business drivers," says Deloitte's Rena Mears. Deloitte advises companies to incorporate security initiatives into their overall business plans and that continual security training and evaluation should be implemented.

## NEWS YOU CAN USE

### Expiration Nears for Surveillance Law

With a deadline looming, President Bush and congressional Democrats are locked in a standoff over the government's authority to spy on foreign phone calls and e-mails that pass through the United States. A temporary law that makes it easier to carry out that spying expires Saturday night at midnight, and Bush and his top intelligence officials say the consequences are dire. Al-Qaeda, Bush says, is "thinking about hurting the American people again," and would be helped if U.S. eavesdropping is hampered. The Democrats are equally adamant. Bush has all the authority he needs to intercept terrorist communications, even if the law expires, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Thursday. The congressional majority is simply trying to balance concerns about civil liberties against the government's spy powers, and needs time to do it, she said. The expiration would likely be temporary, while the House and Senate negotiate a final, permanent measure. House Democrats say they can come to agreement within 21 days. National-security observers say the possible hindrance to intelligence capabilities is far smaller than it was in August, when Congress passed the temporary surveillance measure. The intelligence gaps the law was designed to address have been filled with new surveillance orders that will continue after the law expires, administration officials have acknowledged. Additionally, the government is now better positioned to process new secret-warrant requests quickly because it has eliminated its backlog of requests.

## ALERTS



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