

What is lost-contact.mit.edu and why are people complaining about it?

Q: What is lost-contact.mit.edu and why are people complaining about it?

a.k.a. "Help, MIT is publishing my confidential information!"

Answer

lost-contact.mit.edu is a SIPB server that, among other things, serves AFS over the web. Frequently, we will get complaints from people at other schools saying that MIT is publishing their "confidential information", and will list a URL that begins with "http://lost-contact.mit.edu". What is actually happening is that their information is stored in AFS with incorrect permissions, so that anyone can see the file in AFS.

Please stress to the user that MIT does not actually have any copies of the files. The files themselves likely reside on servers at the user's college, and are being made available to anyone on AFS, including web servers that might serve AFS. The user should contact their local IT support to determine how best to make the files private.

If Google has cached any files, the user can go read Google's stock answer on how to remove the cached data:
<http://www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=156412>

There's really nothing that we can do for them, since the data is not at MIT.

If users require further information, they can be directed to sipb@mit.edu or stuffmaster@mit.edu