The course discussion forum is a particularly important component of this course for distance learning students. Internet security is very much in the news and a portion of class time each week will be devoted to discussion of student experiences and current events. Each DL student is expected to contribute to this on-going discussion by making a substantive posting to the course discussion forum twice per week. A posting may introduce a new topic or it may be a follow-up to an existing discussion thread. A substantive posting is not simply a URL pointing to a news article or web site of interest. A substantive posting should include commentary that makes connections between current events and the topics of the course. If it poses a question, it should be one whose answer enhances our understanding of e-commerce and security.

Non-substantive posting:

From CNN/Technology: Oct. 16, 2003

Microsoft Corp. disclosed plans Thursday to update its flagship Windows operating systems early in 2004 to make consumers less vulnerable to hackers. Like Better Memory Protection etc...

This posting merely reiterates a news item. It does not describe its connection to the topics of the course or pose a question with an interesting answer.

Substantive posting:

I've been reading articles saying many Anti-SPAM list companies have been hit by distributed denial of service attacks (DDoS) from zombie computers, hijacked by a virus after a virus attack. They are thinking spammers are leading these attacks against them.

In class, we talked about how hard it is to defend against DDoS, but the articles quoted people at smaller companies saying that they don't have the money to upgrade their system/software to protect themselves from such attacks.

What kinds of upgrades would protect against DDoS? How do they work?