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Minutes of Computing Advisory Committee Meeting  
January 26, 1999

Present: JP Dunn, Larry Schilling, Pierre Barrette, Ruth Bernhardt, Brad Wilcke, Al Allen, Jim Duggan, David Blakesley, Michael Wainer, Duke Koch, Carolyn Snyder, Geoff Nathan (recorder)

First, the regular meeting time has been changed to 3 to 4 on Tuesdays. The next meeting will be on February 9 at 3 P.M. in the Library Dean's conference room.

1. Al Allen presented plans that he was planning to bring to the Chancellor's Budget and Planning Council for spending funds on upgrading file servers at CLC's, new computers in CLC 2 (in the Tech Building), and network infrastructure for Trueblood and Grinnell, as well as the replacement of the 14.4 modems with 56K modems.

The new connection from the Campus Area Network to the rest of the world through the Illinois State Board of Education pipeline in the Student Center is working quite well, but some administrative details still remain to be worked out.

2. Al and Geoff discussed a proposal that has been received from Midwest Internet to provide a discounted dialup program for SIU students and faculty/staff. This program would cost roughly \$15 for students, \$17 for others (although he believes a uniform price may be negotiable). It would include an e-mail account and 5 meg. of space for a personal web page. The price includes 200 hours per month of access. The major strong point of the proposal is the fact that local access phone numbers are provided for a large number of Southern Illinois towns (especially the larger ones, such as Marion, Anna-Jonesboro etc.) A number of issues still need to be worked out, including questions of secure access to restricted sites on the SIUC campus.

The hope is that this will greatly reduce the busy-signal problem found on the free modems, but there are apparently still difficulties getting full 56K access, probably due to the state of Southern Illinois copper. Al stated that there might also be possibilities of negotiating DSL connections and other more advanced technologies. SIUC's involvement is limited to publicizing this offer, and facilitating access to the campus, consistent with security and access problems getting worked out.

Pierre raised a number of questions, based in part on a survey he had done of a number of faculty. All of them opposed the idea if IT intended to withdraw support for the free dialup

modems that they currently support, and emphasized that IT needs to make it clear that it does not intend to eliminate the free modems. Some of his correspondents suggested bringing in consultants to see if this was the best way to offer supplementary service.

Carolyn noted that some units on campus provide their own dialup services at the moment, and may well not be afflicted with the 'busy signal' problem. David suggested that only those already paying for services might switch to the slightly cheaper discounted Midwest Internet plan. Duke seconded this thought, wondering how many would now sign up if they weren't willing to do so for roughly \$19 per month.

Pierre noted that we would need to make clear that marketing was Midwest Internet's job. In response to a question AI stated that the contract would be renegotiated every July. JP reiterated that it must be made clear that this is an option, to be offered in addition the currently existing 180 modems

The question of what other campuses are doing was raised, and AI stated that Edwardsville plans to keep its current free modem pool, but that in the St. Louis area there are many more options for paid dialup plans. U of I has both a free and a paid plan available. [I just checked the U of I site and you can read about the \$15/month plan at <http://www-commeng.cso.uiuc.edu/termserv/premier> incidentally].

In response to a question AI estimated that putting in 96 new modems would cost roughly \$132,000. Pierre suggested the possibility of tying in with other corporations to help supply modem pools, and getting outside consultants to help with planning. AI noted that Southern Illinois faces the general problem of a small population and relatively small bandwidth needs, which makes it unattractive for competing ISP's to set up shop here.

Pierre raised the general philosophical question of whether faculty should be required to pay for net access to develop course material.

In a slight detour from the topic, discussion of the Student Technology fee began. AI wondered how students who don't use public access machines would benefit from the fee, and Carolyn reminded the committee that at IU the fee is administered heavily by the students themselves.

At this point the proposal is waiting for endorsement, at which point Vice Chancellor Tweedy will take it to Vice President Don Wilson for further negotiation and action.

At this point the following resolution was moved by Carolyn and seconded by Pierre:

- *The Committee recommends that the University pursue negotiations on the proposal received from Midwest Internet as presented to the Committee. However, the Committee also recommends that the University recognize the continuing need to upgrade the existing modem pool, and to increase the number of modems available.*
- *The Committee will be recommending a plan for the upgrading of the modem pool in the near future. This recommendation will include a recommended ratio of ports to subscribers.*

This resolution passed unanimously. Geoff will write up the resolution and pass it on to Vice Chancellor Tweedy.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15, and the next meeting will be on February 9 at 3 P.M. in the Library Dean's conference room. Replacement plans for desktop computers will be discussed.

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*Minutes Prepared by Geoffrey Nathan*  
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