



Minutes of the Computing Advisory Committee

December 15, 1998

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Those attending: Al Allen, Ruth Bernhardt, David Blakesley, Jim Duggan, J-P Dunn, Skip Hardenburg, Duke Koch, Dennis Leitner, Susan Logue (for Carolyn Snyder), Geoff Nathan (Chair), Brad Wilcke, Michael Wainer, Mary Wallace

1. Al announced that the weekend of December 19-22 would see some service interruptions as the University changed its internet connections to the new ISBE pipeline recently installed in the Student Center.
2. Geoff summarized some of the issues that had arisen with respect to a plan to continuously upgrade computers on faculty desktops, issues which had been discussed on the committee's website. Some of these include a proposal to divide all computers on campus into three groups, based on their age. The newest ones would be upgraded first, with those passing down to the owners of the oldest ones immediately, and the middle group getting upgrades in the second year of the plan.
Susan pointed out that the Library has a 'food chain' plan, but there are problems involved in backing up old machines. She noted that most people are happy to get 'new' old computers, however.

Al asked about the issue of software licenses as machines move from desk to desk. Should software purchased with a computer remain with it, or remain in the department which purchased the computer? Others raised the question of software supplied without the distribution media (as is often the case nowadays). This would require a sophisticated tracking plan to keep track of software licenses across campus, a daunting task.

Al wondered what had happened to the idea of a computer store in the Student Center. They might be able to deal with the problem if they kept a centralized data base, as well as coordinating the computer food chain. They could serve as a centralized service to pick up, restore and then redistribute old computers.

Skip pointed out that such a service was extremely labor intensive, and consequently very expensive. He wasn't sure it was cost-effective, and thought it would take a very long time to set up.

Duke pointed out that it would make a very good student work job. He also wondered whether it might be possible to get an exemption to state surplus property regulations and auction obsolete computers. Susan said that there was some kind of mechanism for on-site sales.

- The question of leasing was raised next. Some expressed the opinion that it was relatively expensive, and pointed out that leasing often made sense for private businesses that could take advantage of tax rules, which would not be relevant for the University. Skip suggested perhaps leasing some computers (say those in public access areas).

Mary pointed out that a campus-wide survey would be sent out shortly, polling Deans, chairs and directors. In addition, a survey from the Oracle office would be going out to all financial units asking

about hardware, software and training.

The lack of network connectivity for existing, adequate computers was also raised again, without suggestions for solutions.

- Skip raised the issue of setting minimum software and hardware standards, and issue that the Oracle group is dealing with. The new purchasing regulations have caused problems that will be ongoing, because low-bid companies are supplying machines that are not good enough to meet university needs. Al suggested keeping records of vendors that supply inferior machines so that Purchasing can be notified to stay away from them.
- Al brought up the issue of Y2K compliance on campus desktops. Edwardsville is inventorying all computers on campus to check for compliance and he wondered what we should do in Carbondale. It was pointed out that Edwardsville has a much more centralized structure. Brad suggested enlisting RSO's and the USG technology commissioners and use student volunteers. Al said we could get student volunteers to inventory all the machines on campus, using a single disk which could check for Y2K compliance and define the kind of computer involved. This raised a number of questions, including privacy issues. It was proposed that a committee consisting of Mary Wallace, Brad Wilcke, Geoff, Duke, a Library representative and an Oracle rep. It was suggested that the members of the committee conduct a pilot study by themselves. Another suggestion involved taking the inventory information and placing it at the disposal of the help desk to assist them in their work.

The next meeting will be held during the second week of classes, on January 26, a Tuesday, at 3:30 P.M.

Minutes Prepared by Geoffrey Nathan

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