

# Academic Senate Committee on Computing and Communications

## *Minutes of December 16, 2004 meeting*

The Committee on Computing & Communications (COMP) met on Thursday, December 16, 2004, at 10:00 a.m. in 310 Stephens Hall. Co-Chairs Dave Messerschmitt and Arthur Ogus presided.

### IN ATTENDANCE:

Dave Messerschmitt, IEOR, EECS, Co-chair  
Arthur Ogus, Math, Co-chair  
Ken Goldberg, IEOR/EECS  
Richard Kern, French  
Nipam Patel, Int Biology  
Merrill Shanks, Political Science  
Thomas Wickens, Psychology  
Aaron Brick, Graduate Student

Moderator: David Messerschmitt

Guests: Jack McCredie, Assoc. Vice Chancellor, IST, and Craig Lant, Campus Security Officer, SNS-IST, Tessa Michaels, Chief Technology Officer, Business and Administrative Services.

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### IT Strategic Planning

Dave announced that Jack would be available for discussion of this topic during the first hour of the meeting. Jack introduced Tessa Michaels, explaining her role on campus and as Chair of the ITAC (Information Technology Architecture Committee), and said that her comments would add value to the discussion.

Dave, Arthur and Merrill prepared and handed out a list to use for discussion of the faculty desktop environment (so-called "vanilla environment"). Dave said the discussion should result in formulating input from COMP for incorporation in the IT Strategic Plan. The list outlined the following areas, and Dave commented on each point:

#### Scope in terms of roles

Faculty, student instructors, other

#### Goals

Boost the minimum capability  
Reduce overall costs  
Improve security

#### Capability

Instruction rate, memory, storage  
Bundled software

#### Acceptable constraints and concessions

Super-user privileges

Self-installed software

Uniformity vs user choice

Requiring users to change environment

Costs of software licensing and administration

General services vvs local services

Responsiveness

Cost effectiveness

Size of unit

Money in lieu of services

Local choice and control

Service level agreements

Incident response time

Waiting time for routine services

Backup and data security

Restoration

Jack McCredie addressed the topic of central vs local service, and money in lieu of service. Jack said that the Committee should focus at this time on the overall goal rather than implementation. He said it is important to identify what needs to be changed and communicate that to campus administration. He gave examples such as the critical need for the wired network 10 years ago, and the need for the campus Data Center five years later. He said that the policy of benign neglect of the faculty desktop environment has created an inequity in computing among departments, resulting in an unacceptable environment, and that this should be articulated. Dave added that the level of support needed is also a high priority, and Jack said the technical support for classrooms is another issue. He added that the Chancellor's Cabinet will tour the classrooms next week and will see both good and bad. Jack feels that these concerns stand a good chance of becoming high priority for campus administration. Tessa added that it is crucial to determine where teaching sees technology going; that will drive these goals. Arthur asked how these big issues fit into budget planning. He said that no change will take place under the decentralized funding model. Jack replied that the spring budget discussions will define areas that need to be tackled.

The "vanilla" environment operating system was discussed. Arthur said it that there were several systems used on campus, and he thinks that some people will not want restrictions placed on the operating system they use. Aaron said he understands that such limitations would only apply to those who conformed to the standard. Dave asked what implications the "vanilla" standard had for security; that is, is it necessary to have the latest version of operating system, or is there one type of OS that is desirable from the security point of view? Craig Lant replied that more diversity in computing requires more support, and added that the software used needs to be new enough to be supported by vendors.

Dave requested that COMP members define four areas they see as top priorities; Arthur said he feels that desktop computing and data storage are very important. Aaron said that high performance computing is already provided and shouldn't be included. Ken added that uniformity and stewardship of research data are appealing. Tom added that a definition of a standard will encourage more uniform selection of equipment, and Dave proposed a "core principle" that the university should provide a certain set of software to all instructors and that in

particular disciplines appropriate software should be provided to instructors. Dave noted that the issue of security is not tied to the "vanilla" standard. Craig said that from the security standpoint support would be provided to a standard setup. Dave volunteered to put together with Arthur's help a one-page outline of this topic for the next meeting.

Tom added that the budgetary constraints on department computing could be eased if a minimum amount was provided for hardware/software, and those who wanted to purchase a higher level of equipment use their own money. Arthur suggested "user convenience" be added to the goals section of the list.

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#### IT minimum standards for security

Dave expressed COMP's concerns regarding the education of the campus community on the IT minimum standards, and the deadline for compliance with the standards. A list was prepared for purposes of the discussion with Craig Lant. Jack McCredie gave some background on the most recent SB1386 incident involving a laptop computer owned by a visiting Professor, and Craig Lant said that this incident will be used to publicize the need for the standards. Craig added that as of February 1st, SNS will scan systems across campus and assess the status of departmental compliance, and departments will be notified of their status. Training will be offered as needed. Craig said the dorms are doing well, and that a pamphlet for students had been prepared. Dave said the compliance deadline is vague; Craig answered that May 1, 2005 has been set, but stressed that SNS wants to identify problems - not take people off the network.

Arthur said that there should be a list of acceptable software for firewalls, and Craig replied that there is one at <http://software.berkeley.edu>. Dave said he thinks there should be a link on the UC Berkeley home page to a page with standards and downloads. There should be explicit definitions of what is acceptable and what is not. Aaron added that there should be a means of testing a computer, such as a download to check for appropriate software.

Another concern has been system administrator support in departments to determine whether computers are compliant. Craig replied that each department will be asked to assign a security contact, not necessarily a technician, who can investigate problems when notified by System and Network Security (SNS). Craig said that help is available at <http://security.berkeley.edu>, and also said he would present COMP's concerns at the Campus Information Security Committee (CISC) meeting. Dave asked Craig about security at the labs; Craig said that he thinks they are in pretty good shape. He said there were procedures in place to assign temporary Calnet ID's for visitors, and to scan computers connecting to the network for serious security problems.

Jack complimented COMP on the paper developed from their input, titled "Comments on CPHS Draft Policy on Human Subjects' Data", which addresses the security policy drafted by the campus IRB.

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Systemwide Strategic Directions for Libraries and Scholarly Information at the University of California from the Systemwide Advisory Committee on Library and Scholarly Information: comments expected by DIVCO to include in their report (not discussed at this meeting)

The meeting was adjourned at 12 noon.

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Recorder: [spress@berkeley.edu](mailto:spress@berkeley.edu)  
Committee Web Page: <http://www.eecs.berkeley.edu/~messer/Campus/COMP/>