News about information systems throughout MIT

I/S

Volume 11 • Number 8 April 1996

The Web, Politics, and the 1996 Presidential Campaign

Lee Ridgway

One of the tenets of democracy is that ordinary citizens can communicate with their leaders and would-be leaders. With the advent of the Internet and World Wide Web, pundits are touting electronic town halls and forums as a way for people to get more directly involved in the political process.

"Interactive Democracy? The World Wide Web and Campaign 96," a Communications Forum held on April 11, examined how politicians and concerned citizens are using the Web. Presenters included Henry Jenkins, Associate Professor of Literature and Director of Film and Media Studies; John Mallery, Research Scientist at the AI Lab and Director of the Intelligent Information Infrastructure Project, and one of the architects of the White House Web site; and Mark Bonchek, Director of the Political Participation Project, part of Mallery's project.

The Current Campaign

Next fall, Jenkins will teach a new course on the role of the media in presidential politics. For him, the context for what is going on today in American politics harks back to a 1960s student slogan, "Will the revolution be televised?" Then the concern was whether or not the media, controlled by corporations, would allow the messages from student protests to reach mainstream audiences. The need to get those messages out led to the formation of an underground press and "people's radio."

Jenkins has reframed the question: "Will the revolution be digitized?" Much of the rhetoric surrounding activism on the Internet makes reference to revolution, often coming more from the political right than the left.

Jenkins sees the Internet as a new force in the ongoing shift from centralized party politics to a more diffuse, participatory brand of politics. He observes a tremendous desire for direct involvement in selecting candidates and policies, and a growing dissatisfaction with traditional politics. So it's not surprising that networked political communication may be a major force in the current campaign.

Just about all the candidates have Web pages (the Web has become a sort of graveyard for failed campaigns). One can analyze candidates' pages to see whether they understand the new medium as a way to create a virtual community, or are just trying to shoehorn the Web into the old, one-to-many broadcast model.

In addition to political-party and candidate Web sites, major news organizations and political information groups (such as the League of Women Voters) maintain Web presences. At the grassroots level, pages range from the parodic to the highly partisan, adding a new dimension to political participation.

continued on page 2 ▶

The Web and Politics

continued from page 1

The White House Experiment

MIT's AI Lab is developing digital communication technologies and studying how they contribute to organizational and political processes. Mallery gave an account of how a two-week experiment in the 1992 presidential campaign grew into an electronic document distribution system for the White House in 1993. For the first time, the general public could get press releases and surveys directly, and respond via e-mail.

Developed by Mallery and others at the AI Lab in collaboration with the White House, the system tested ways to automate responses to document requests and e-mail correspondence. Later, the White House called on the AI Lab to develop a Web site, which is now a single point of access to the Federal government.

Part of Mallery's research is to solve the problem of how to manage the large amounts of incoming and outgoing information generated by a governmental Web site. Among the challenges are developing automatic techniques to identify and aggregate what comes in; respond appropriately to senders; and summarize the information for officials and policy makers.

Mallery gave several examples of how distributed hypertext technologies might be used in campaigns, among them the "electronic truth squad." Journalists, opposing candidates, or concerned citizens could couple databases and full-text search techniques to a candidate's speeches and press releases, pointing out inconsistencies with previous speeches and other public records, including data on contributions. The resulting annotated information could then be distributed, and responded to, on the network.

Two-Way Internet Flow

Through surveys of those who read and redistribute electronic documents from the White House Web site, Bonchek is testing the hypothesis that the Internet affects political participation. From his and other surveys, he is developing comparative figures about Internet users and their political activity. In one example that looked at the 1994 Congressional elections, Bonchek found that 45% of people who were not on the Internet voted, 52% of those online voted, and 78% of those who retrieved documents from the White House Web site voted.

Bonchek is also interested in how the Internet affects the flow of political information. Currently, such information gets to most citizens through one-way broadcast media: the flow is from leader to media to a very large audience. The main opportunity for direct response from the citizenry is at the ballot box. However, related information moves among citizens through their social networks.

The Internet can play a dual role in the flow of political information. It increases the ability for two-way communication with the government, bypassing the broadcast media. It also facilitates information flow in a variety of social channels, since it is easier to send an e-mail message than it is to pick up the phone or write a letter. This has led to the formation of "virtual" interest groups, not limited by geography.

Bonchek's survey of White House Web users supports this model of two-way flow: 54% of those receiving information send back e-mail, and 68% of those receiving electronic White House documents redistribute them online.

More on the Web

To find out more about the AI Lab projects and to visit some representative political sites on the Web, check out the URLs listed on page 8. ø

Making Things Click: Improved Web Version of Online Directory

The World Wide Web version of the MIT Online Directory has been available for nearly a year. You can get to the MIT Student, Faculty, and Staff Directory page at

`http://web.mit.edu/cwis/www/mitdir/`

or by selecting the *online directory* link from the MIT Home Page at

`http://web.mit.edu/`

Clickable Links

The Web version of the Directory has recently been enhanced – it now has a clickable interface. Let's say you do a search on the last name of a person in the MIT community. When the Directory returns the results of this query, the person's e-mail address appears as a clickable link. If you click on it, your Web browser will launch a mail window in which you can compose a message to this person. Press the send button, and the e-mail is on its way. This saves you from having to launch a separate e-mail program.

Similarly, if a home page URL appears in the results to a query, you can click on that URL and go directly to the person's home page.

Listing Your Home Page

If you've created a personal home page, the best way to get it listed in the MIT Directory is to send your name and URL to <webmaster@mit.edu>. The Student Information Processing Board then adds the URL to its list, and from there it gets loaded into the MIT Directory. Updating of the directory database occurs about once a month.

For more information on getting your home page listed, click on the *How to list your home page URL* link on the MIT Student, Faculty, and Staff Directory page. This page also has a link on how to change your directory information, as well as a link to emergency numbers on campus. ø

MIT Information Systems

Managing Editor
Robyn Fizz

Writer/Editor
Lee Ridgway

i/s is published monthly from September to June. MIT faculty and staff receive copies through campus mail; *i/s* is also available in lobbies around campus. Individuals at MIT may subscribe by contacting the managing editor.

Send comments or subscription requests to:
MIT 11-309, 77 Massachusetts Avenue,
Cambridge, MA 02139-4307
Phone: (617) 253-0540
Electronic mail: <fizz@mit.edu>

i/s is also published online at
`http://web.mit.edu/tps/www/isnews/`
Contact the managing editor if you would like to be notified when new issues are published online.

Articles are also posted in TechInfo. The path is Computing→Publications→Information Systems Publications→i/s Newsletter.

ADSM Backup Software Now Runs on Most Platforms

Mary Ellen Bushnell

You would never guess from its name, ADSTAR Distributed Storage Manager (ADSM), what this powerful program can do for you. IBM's backup and retrieval software – which runs on a host of platforms – offers the easiest, fastest, and most reliable protection against data loss on your computer. It's also a convenient way, when you are setting up a new computer, to transfer files to a new hard drive.

ADSM is client/server software, so you must have a network connection to use it. End-user software on your computer accesses the backup service on a server elsewhere on MITnet. The fact that ADSM backups are stored in a secure place separate from your office gives an added measure of protection.

ADSM has been on campus since 1994, available under a site license to any member of the MIT community who has a connection to MITnet. When ADSM debuted at MIT, IS Client Services distributed kits for Macintosh and Windows, and supplied the software on request for a few other platforms. The latest version of ADSM, 2.1.0.3, can be downloaded over MITnet for most of the platforms in use at MIT.

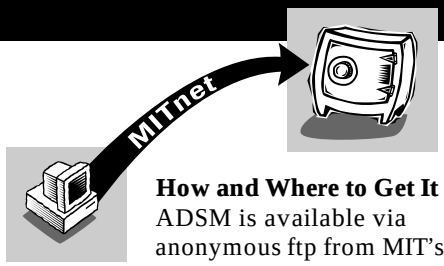
ADSM software is free, and backups are free to those with mainframe accounts. For everyone else, the service costs $5 per month.

Platforms and Requirements

In addition to Macintosh and Windows 3.1, software and support for ADSM at MIT has been extended to the following platforms: AIX, DEC ULTRIX, DOS, HP UNIX, NEC, Novell Netware, OS/2, SCO, SGI, SINIX, Sun OS, Sun Solaris, Windows 95, and Windows NT.

Hardware and system requirements vary by platform. You can find out about requirements for your platform by going to the ADSM home page at `http://web.mit.edu/tps/www/QG/ADSM/ADSM_home.html`

Since requirements change with new system and software releases, you may want to check with the Computing Help Desk at x3-7230 for the latest information.



How and Where to Get It

ADSM is available via anonymous ftp from MIT's software server, net-dist. To get there, start your ftp program (e.g., Fetch or RapidFiler) and enter `net-dist.mit.edu` in the host name field and `anonymous` in the UserID field. Go to the directory `pub/ADSM`. You should see a list of folders for all of the supported platforms.

Be sure to transfer all the contents of the folder for your platform to your hard drive. Besides the ADSM Installer, the folder should contain ReadMe files and an MIT-specific Preferences or Options file.

Setting Up ADSM

Run the ADSM Installer and place the resulting files in whatever location you wish on your computer. Keep in mind that the Options or Preferences file needs to be in the same folder as the ADSM software.

New users need to register with the Computing Help Desk. A consultant will assign you a nodename and temporary password, which you should change immediately. You should also read the MIT ReadMe file, which has instructions for configuring ADSM for use at MIT.

If you're a registered user downloading a more recent version of ADSM, save your existing ADSM Preferences or Options file (on a diskette or elsewhere on your hard disk) to avoid having to reset them and possibly introducing errors. After the new version is installed, copy your old Preferences or Options file into the ADSM folder.

Running ADSM

ADSM is easy to use. When you launch it, the program prompts you for a password and then displays the main screen where you see the volumes (e.g., hard disks) mounted on your desktop. You choose the volumes you want to back up. There are several options, but the incremental backup is the simplest. The first incremental backup copies all your files; subsequent backups copy only new or changed files. ADSM keeps 10 backup copies, one active and nine inactive. The active copy is kept indefinitely.

Once you start a backup, you don't need to be at your computer; the process continues without prompting until it is finished. ADSM then displays an "Incremental backup completed" message. Click OK. This takes you to the Backup Status window. Click Done to return to ADSM's main window, where you can choose to backup another volume or quit the program.

Scheduled Backups

You can schedule an automatic backup to take place off hours or at some other convenient time. To sign up for this, call the Computing Help Desk; a consultant will help you schedule a time.

All you need to do for the backup to take place at the appointed time is to leave your computer on and the ADSM Scheduler running. (The Scheduler is one of the files in the ADSM folder.) Open it and enter your password. If you want to clear your screen of the Scheduler's window, you can "hide" it on a Macintosh, or iconify it in Windows 3.1. Do *not* close the Scheduler's window; if you do, you turn off the Scheduler and your backup will not take place.

Even though you have scheduled automatic backups, you may run ADSM at any time.

ADSM Support

From the ADSM home page, you can link to instructional guides for Macintosh and Windows platforms. You can buy a complete manual, *ADSTAR Distributed Storage Manager: User's Guide and Reference*, from the Graphic Arts Quick Copy Center in 11-004 for a nominal charge. Be sure to ask for the *User's Guide* for your platform.

To find out the latest news about ADSM, open the ADSM home page and click on the *announcements* link.

IS has also established an ADSM Listserv list. It serves as an electronic user group where subscribers can ask and answer questions, get tips, and receive updates on developments in ADSM software. To subscribe, send e-mail to <listserv@mitvma.mit.edu> and in the message area, type `subscribe MIT-ADSM`.

Finally, if you run into a problem while using ADSM, the Computing Help Desk, at x3-7230, is prepared to help you troubleshoot. ø

Resources on Privacy Issues in the Information Age

Joanne Costello

Privacy has been hailed as a major consumer issue of the 1990s. Four out of five respondents to a 1993 Louis Harris poll expressed concern about threats to their personal privacy.

Advances in technology are at the heart of the privacy issue. While we may spend less time in the supermarket line thanks to point-of-sale scanning, those scanners are connected to databases that create personal profiles of our consumer choices. Smart toll booths that pick up radio signals from cards placed on windshields may cut down on driving time, but the same technology can record where we were at a given time.

We are all used to giving out information about ourselves. We have done so for years at the bank, in doctors' offices, and so on. But this data was usually on paper and in scattered locations. Today a vast amount of information about individuals and private groups has been computerized. Many companies are in the business of collecting and reselling this information.

As a result, government agencies, credit unions, credit card companies, and other organizations can accomplish heretofore impossible surveillance of individuals, businesses, and groups by putting together previously scattered data. Information about us moves freely from computer to computer without our consent or even our knowledge.

Legal Issues

There seems to be an explosion of questions today regarding the legal status of information. Who owns your name and address? Your telephone number? Your medical records?

Even more troubling than the issue of who owns information is that the new technologies have given value to previously worthless data. Information that we consider private – such as what videos we rent or where we go out to eat – is being sold on the open market to anyone who thinks they can make a profit from it. The proliferation of junk mail and telemarketing calls is directly connected to new information-gathering technology.

Resources

There are several ways to learn more about the risks to your privacy in the information age and what protections you might have. Some books on the subject include:

- *Privacy for Sale*, Jeffrey Rothfeder, Simon and Schuster, 1992

  This expose of privacy abuse in the information age will give you cause for concern. Learn how easily the author obtained information on various celebrities, and what steps you can take to keep your private life private.

- *Who Owns Information? From Privacy to Public Access*, Anne Wells Branscomb, BasicBooks, 1994, and Alfred A. Knopf, 1995

  This book, written by a communications lawyer, has chapters on ownership of your name, phone number, medical records, photographic image, and electronic messages.

- *The Right to Privacy*, Ellen Alderman and Caroline Kennedy, Alfred A. Knopf, 1995

  Exactly what is our right to privacy? This book examines landmark legal decisions and lesser-known cases, providing a thorough overview of laws relating to privacy.

If you prefer to do your reading online, the Internet privacy forum and Electronic Privacy Information Center are two key resources:

- *Internet Privacy Forum*. This moderated mailing list discusses and analyzes issues relating to personal and collective privacy in the information age. To subscribe, send mail to <privacy-request@vortex.com>. This mailing list is also archived to a Discuss meeting, called privacy, on menelaus.mit.edu.

- *Electronic Privacy Information Center*. EPIC was established in 1994 to focus public attention on emerging privacy issues relating to the National Information Infrastructure, such as the Clipper Chip, the Digital Telephony proposal, medical records privacy, and the sale of consumer data. Its Web page has links to hot topics, assorted privacy resources, and a policy archive. You can access the Web page at `http://www.epic.org/` ø

This column presents news and tips from the consultants who staff the Computing Help Desk, x3-0001. Check out their Web home page at `http://computing-help.mit.edu/`

Q After installing the Eudora e-mail application on my Windows 95 machine, I got an error message about a "missing dll." What is a dll and what does the error mean?

A DLL stands for Dynamically Linked Library. These contain software functions common to more than one program. Eudora uses certain DLLs to test kerberized passwords and to send or receive mail over the network. The "DLL not found" message appears when Eudora tries to use one of the DLLs and can't find it. For example, KClient needs DLLs that it assumes you received with MIT's LAN WorkPlace package.

Here are some tips for troubleshooting the "DLL not found" message:

- "kclient.dll" needs to be in c:\eudora with the Eudora application.
- To use Eudora on a system without LAN WorkPlace, follow the installation instructions for kerberos at

  `http://web.mit.edu/win95/min-kerb.html`

  In particular, "krbv4win.dll" and "wshelper.dll" need to be in c:\net\mit, and c:\net\mit must be in the PATH. You also need to make a c:\tmp directory to store your kerberos tickets.
- The error can also be caused when "winsock.dll" is missing or is an incompatible version. This usually is not the problem with Eudora though.

Q I use Microsoft Excel 5.0. Is there a way to display the formulas in all of the cells?

A Yes. The procedure is the same on Macintosh and Windows. Under the Tools menu, select Options. In Options, select View; in the Window Options section, check Formulas.

It's even faster to use the keyboard shortcut, which toggles between formulas and numbers. The shortcut is Command-‘ (left single quote) on the Macintosh; CTRL-‘ on Windows. ø

Dell Launches New Generation of Latitude Notebook PCs

Ginny Williams

On April 1, Dell Computer added two high-performance notebooks to its Latitude XPi line – the XPi P133ST and XPi P100SD. Powered by the latest Pentium processors, Dell's new notebooks offer outstanding graphics performance, integrated sound, infrared wireless data transfer, and an ergonomic optical trackball. Selected configurations are available now; others are due to be shipped soon.

Standard Configurations

The XPi P133ST has a 133MHz Pentium processor and a 11.3" super VGA active-matrix screen. The Latitude XPi P100SD has a 100MHz Pentium processor and a 10.4" super VGA dual-scan screen. Both systems come with 8MB of RAM, a 540MB hard drive, and a lithium-ion battery. Both are backwards compatible with Dell's docking solutions, and work with Dell's external 4x CD-ROM.

The Finer Features

The new Latitude XPi notebooks offer:

- *High performance levels*. These systems combine the latest Pentium processors with a PCI bus, 256KB Level 2 cache, and EDO memory.
- *Superior battery life*. In independent tests, the XPi P133ST delivered over 5 hours of productivity from a single battery charge, while the XPi P100SD delivered over 4.5 hours from a single charge.
- *Accelerated graphics performance.* A PCI-based, 128-bit NeoMagic video graphics accelerator offers desktop-like performance for MPEG and graphic-intensive applications. This translates into faster video playback for multimedia applications or downloaded video clips.
- *Integrated sound.* A dual-ported speaker at the front of the chassis delivers high-quality 16-bit sound. You can listen to audio or video clips whether the notebook is open or closed.
- *Infrared connectivity*. Infrared wireless technology lets you access networks and exchange files with IrDA-compliant peripherals, such as printers, without cables or adapters.

Pricing

The MCC price for the Latitude XPi P133ST is $3915; the price for the XPi P100SD has not yet been determined. You can buy Dell's external 4x CD-ROM from the MCC for $350.

Service

Dell Latitude notebooks come with a standard three-year warranty that includes next-business-day on-site service for the first year and next-business-day parts service for the second and third years. For information on additional service offerings from Dell, go to

`http://www.us.dell.com/prodinfo/portables/service.html`

Contact Information

The MCC offers Dell bundles and custom configurations. For details, call x3-7686, send e-mail to <mcc@mit.edu>, or visit the MCC web page at

`http://web.mit.edu/mcc/www/` ø

Before SAP Comes Core Computer Training

Jeanne Cavanaugh

On April 16, staff from MIT's Purchasing Department – who will be among the first users on campus of SAP financial software – began their initial round of core computer training. Sessions were held in W89, MIT's new Professional Learning Center. The following day, members of the CAO Office began their core training in W89. In all, 22 3-hour classes will be presented to different groups from these two departments, to help them get acclimated to their new computers, operating systems, and programs.

A team of experienced computer trainers in IS put together a short but comprehensive curriculum. These courses and related training materials were designed for all members of the MIT community who will be making use of SAP, either during Phase 1 (central offices) or Phase 2 (departments, labs, centers) of the SAP rollout.

Core Training

The core training is divided into two 3-hour segments, taught on different days. Day One is an introduction to Windows 3.1 and Netscape, the popular tool for browsing the World Wide Web. Since SAP documentation will be available via the Web, all SAP users need to be familiar with a Web browser.

Day Two is an overview of the MIT computing environment. It covers such topics as MITnet, the campus computer network; moving from the mainframe to a client / server environment; computing resources available on campus and through vendors and service organizations such as the Boston Computer Society; the responsibilities of each computer user; and how to prevent repetitive strain injuries. Day Two ends with a demonstration of the Eudora e-mail program.

Skills Assessment

Before attending core training, participants complete a skills assessment sheet, which asks them to rate their abilities on a variety of topics covered in the sessions. The assessments for each group of students are distributed in advance to the instructors, so that they can adjust the pace and emphasis of the class to match the audience.

The instructors expect to revise and improve the core training over time. Follow-ups with students in the initial classes will help determine the usefulness of the curriculum.

Future Training

Over the next few months, the Management Reporting and Financial Operations Training Group will contact departments that will be using SAP, to discuss their training needs.

In tandem with the free core training being done to help the community prepare for the SAP rollout, IS Training Services will continue to offer a full suite of courses. These include fee-based, hands-on classes on a variety of Macintosh and Windows topics, as well as a series of free Quick Start demonstration classes. ø

For Select Publishing Projects, Reserve the IS Media Station

Debi Fuchs

You're developing a departmental Web page or faculty courseware. You need to scan some photographs, and there are pages of printed material that you'd like to make available online. Maybe the project even involves video. There's just one catch. You don't have the requisite hardware and software in your office.

This is where the IS Media Station comes in. This well-equipped computer can be reserved, for free, for work on faculty projects and MIT Web pages.

Note: If your work doesn't fall into either of these categories, and you need access to a scanner, look into the Media Services facility run by MIT Graphic Arts in 11-004. For information on this fee-based service, call x8-7889 or go to

`http://web.mit.edu/graphic-arts/www/`

and click on the Media Services link.

The Media Station Setup

The IS Media Station is located in E40-360, a large open area that also houses several Athena workstations. The Media Station consists of the following hardware:

- Power Macintosh 8500/120
- Epson ES-1200C color scanner
- 32MB of RAM
- 17" multiscan color monitor
- 1GB hard drive
- 3.25" diskette drive
- Apple CD 300i Plus CD-ROM drive
- Video input and output

The Media Station runs Apple System 7.5 and has many programs installed, from desktop products and network applications to educational software and utilities. While the list of installed software is long, key packages include: Acrobat Pro, BBEdit Lite, ClarisWorks, Excel, GraphicConverter, Netscape, Omnipage Pro, PageMaker, PageMill, Painter, Photoshop, PowerPoint, Premiere, rtftohtml, Scantastic, Word, and WordPerfect.

A Typical Session

The Media Station is intended primarily for the following tasks:

- Scanning photos or illustrations, then cropping and editing them.
- Using the scanner in combination with text recognition software to extract text from printed materials.
- Converting preexisting, formatted files into the portable document format (Acrobat .pdf files), so that they are platform independent.
- Turning conventional videotape into digital format, such as MPEG or QuickTime files, or recording a computer-based presentation onto videotape. (A VCR will soon be added to the Media Station for this type of work.)

These files can then be integrated into Athena courseware, World Wide Web pages, slide presentations, or word processing documents.

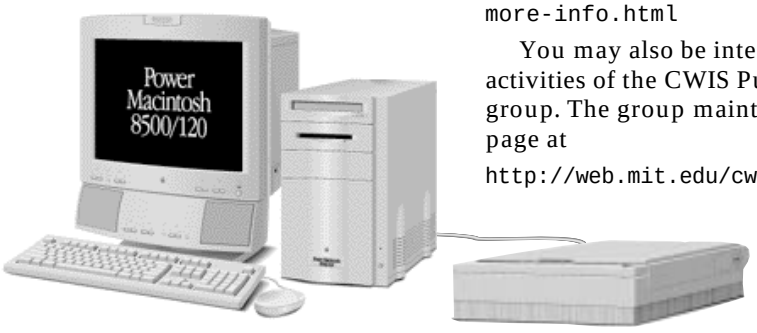
File Transfer and Testing

You can transfer the files you create on the Media Station to Athena lockers, diskettes, or other Macintosh computers on MITnet. In the future, the Media Station will also have an Iomega Zip drive available.

You can test the readability of Web files created on the Media Station by viewing them on one of the Athena workstations in E40-360. You can see how your Web pages look when viewed on Athena via Netscape, Mosaic, or the LYNX text-only browser. (There are currently no PC-compatible computers in the E40-360 test cluster.)

Reserving the Media Station

The Media Station is available *by appointment* during business hours, Monday through Friday. Other time slots may be possible for special cases. You can reserve the Media Station for up to 3 hours at a time. Reservations are made on a first-come, first-serve basis.



There are several ways to sign up for the Media Station. Faculty members and teaching assistants should contact the Faculty Liaison Office at <f_l@mit.edu> or x3-0115. Members of the community working on MIT Web publishing should contact the Campus Wide Information System (CWIS) Support Team at <cwis-help@mit.edu>.

Another option is to fill out the Media Station reservation form at

`http://web.mit.edu/cwis/faq/media-station.html`

To make a reservation, you will need to provide

- Your name and contact information
- Your MIT department, office, or lab
- Your MIT affiliation
- Several choices of date and time

Support

At your first Media Station session, a consultant will help get you started by showing you the available resources and providing you with any manuals you need. You can request a tutorial on scanning images with Photoshop or on using the video digitizer. These tutorials are scheduled between 11:30am and 3pm, Monday through Friday.

If you're working on a courseware project, your guide will be one of the Faculty Liaisons from Academic Computing Support. If you're developing an MIT Web site, a consultant from the CWIS Support Team will help you get started.

More Information

If you have questions about using the Media Station, contact the Faculty Liaison Office or CWIS Support Team, as appropriate. If you prefer, you can fill out a request for more information at

`http://web.mit.edu/cwis/faq/more-info.html`

You may also be interested in the activities of the CWIS Publishers user group. The group maintains a Web page at

`http://web.mit.edu/cwis-pub.html` ø

Revisit Computers, Freedom, and Privacy Conference Online

Robyn Fizz and Susan B. Jones

Electronic money. Cryptography. Crime and law in cyberspace. Copyright and freedom of expression. If these topics prick up your ears, you probably attended, or at least heard about, the Sixth Conference on Computers, Freedom, and Privacy (CFP96). Hosted by MIT and the World Wide Web Consortium, CFP96 was held in late March at the Cambridge Hyatt Regency Hotel.

If you didn't attend the conference, you can still get a good sense of what went on there. The CFP96 home page at

`http://web.mit.edu/cfp96/`

has a hypertext schedule of events. Even better, there are links to daily reports from the conference and to RealAudio recordings of the plenary sessions. If there's a session that piques your interest, you can listen to it from your desktop, as long as you have RealAudio installed on your computer. **Note:** For details about RealAudio, see the January 1996 *i/s*, or go to

`http://www.realaudio.com/`

The Daily News

A group of students – John Dillon, Kevin Fu, Ben Gross, Sam Hartman, and Daniel Stevenson – produced a daily online newsletter that reported on CFP96 sessions. They often worked far into the night to get their reports written and on the Web by the next day. You can read their summaries at

`http://web.mit.edu/~danspot/www/`

A Conference Cross-Section

One thing you may not get from the online CFP96 Newsletter is a sense of the conference's local color. People from the National Security Agency, CIA, and FBI rubbed shoulders with members of the Electronic Freedom Foundation. Developers of public-key encryption software – PGP being the prime example – wrangled with proponents of escrowed encryption – as exemplified by the government's proposed Clipper Chip. In short, hackers and cops and everyone in between came to explore and debate how computer and telecommunications technologies are affecting freedom and privacy.

Here are a few of the conference highlights.

Before the Court

One of the most dramatic sessions, co-sponsored by the American Bar Association, was a moot Supreme Court case. Five federal judges and four advocates for the government and the defense tackled a case related to the Cryptography Control Act of 1995. The key questions raised by the case were:

- Will Americans be prohibited from ensuring the privacy of their communications against government intrusion?
- Will non-escrowed encryption be outlawed, and those who use it subjected to criminal prosecution?

As in a real Supreme Court case, there were no witnesses. Lawyers for both sides presented their arguments and were questioned by the judges. However, in this instance the judges did not rule on the case. (If they express an opinion outside a real courtroom, they disqualify themselves from ruling on such cases later on.) Instead, the verdict was delivered by a shadow panel of regional law school professors.

The shadow panel decided in favor of the defense, but also stated that if the case were tried in the Supreme Court today, it is unlikely that the judges would arrive at the same decision.

Limiting Online Speech on Campus

It's not uncommon to read about flare-ups at colleges that involve the content of messages sent over a campus network. Universities own the wires and feel responsible for protecting their students, employees, and public image. Students value privacy, and some have a penchant for online mischief. In this environment, the limits of free speech are bound to be tested.

Harvard Law professor Arthur Miller, with a panel drawn from the legal, journalistic, and university communities, used the Socratic method to explore some hypothetical situations involving students and online content.

In one scenario, a student intern tells a female TV reporter about a private all-male mailing list that is rating "sexy coeds" online. The intern hacks into the mailing list, so that the reporter can eavesdrop. She does a story on the evening news, naming the men and the student they voted most sexy.

The panelists were asked to consider issues of relationship, responsibility, and civil rights. A lively discussion ensued.

We Know Where You Will Live

Four science fiction writers - Pat Cadigan, Vernor Vinge, Tom Maddox, and Bruce Sterling – were asked to share their impressions at the end of CFP96. Cadigan envisioned a time when we will be taxed at the supermarket checkout for "risks to your health incurred by certain items." She talked about how we confuse information with knowledge, and the mistaken notion that improved surveillance in cyberspace can provide greater protection against terrorism.

Vinge described a post-Orwellian world with ubiquitous law enforcement (ULE), made possible by "fine-grained distributed systems." A portion of every microchip would be mandated for government use. Vinge's examples included "smart" copyright, census-taking and surveillance, tax collection, and routine enforcement of bureaucratic rules. He cautioned that each new generation of microchip would give government new powers and, in the wrong hands, unheard-of control over citizens.

Maddox gave a critique on the "Conference for Computers, Regulation, and Commerce." He felt that on most of the panels, regulators and marketers outnumbered the "rabble" who extend the humanity of cyberspace. He expressed distrust for a government that says "trust us," and displeasure with marketers who want to corral cyberspace by throwing dollars around. His contrary conclusion: We are threatened by government and corporations, not by individuals; by the regulation of speech, not by its existence; and by controls on cryptography, not by cryptography itself.

Sterling wrapped up the conference with an impassioned speech proclaiming disorder as the new world order. He spoke about why Prodigy, with $900 million in backing from IBM and Sears, couldn't compete with the Internet, that "headless breadmold of a network." He characterized 1996 as a time of corporate anorexia, road warriors with laptops, and empty political gestures divorced from reality.

In Sterling's view, social structures are visibly coming apart, while machinery has begun to take on the role of the adult in our society. Will it take a "digital atrocity" to wake us up? Sterling concluded CFP96 by asking, "Where is our future? If you come up with something, send e-mail." ø

Getting Help

If you don't know where to get help for your computer, network, or telephone problems, call the IS Help Line, **x3-2001** – or direct dial one of the help lines listed to the right.

If you prefer to use electronic mail, you can send your questions to the corresponding addresses on the far right. (When logged into Athena, you can also use the `olc` command to send questions to Athena's online consultants.)

For help with...	Dial...	Or send a message to...
Athena Computing Environment	3-4435	olc@mit.edu
Athena hardware repairs	3-1410	hotline@athena.mit.edu
Computer sales	3-7686	mcc@mit.edu
DEC and Sun software	3-6320	help@isis.mit.edu
Disabilities and computing	3-7808	atic@mit.edu
IS mainframes	3-7230	mithelp@mit.edu
Microcomputer and printer repairs	3-0815	pcservice@mit.edu
Microcomputer use	3-0001	micro-help@mit.edu
Networks/MITnet	3-4101	net-help@mit.edu
Telephone repairs	3-4357	5help@mit.edu
Voice mail	3-3677	vmail@mit.edu

Politics on the World Wide Web

Politics is alive and well on the World Wide Web. To the right is a list of Web pages related to projects or ideas mentioned in this month's lead article. The first five URLs refer to the work of Mallery, Bonchek, and others in the AI Lab. The last two are representative of the kinds of political pages being published on the Internet.

Most candidates have Web pages, as do most political parties. While there isn't room to list these pages here, you should be able to find them using a Web search engine.

Intelligent Information Structure Project, White House and Government Projects
`http://www.ai.mit.edu/projects/iiip/experiments.html`

Welcome to the White House
`http://www.whitehouse.gov/`

Political Participation Project
`http://www.ai.mit.edu/projects/ppp/home.html`

Exploring Interactive Democracy
`http://www.ai.mit.edu/projects/iiip/talks/1996/mallerya/`

Politics on the Net
`http://www.ai.mit.edu/projects/iiip/talks/1996/boncheka/`

The Right Side of the Web
`http://www.clark.net:80/pub/jeffd/`

Turn Left
`http://www.cjnetworks.com/~cubsfan/liberal.html`

MIT Information Systems

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage
P A I D
Cambridge, MA
Permit No. 54016

i/s is printed with soy inks on recycled paper, and can be recycled in MIT's "white paper only" bins.