

University Computing Standards Committee Meeting
9:30 a.m. Wednesday, April 11, 2001
Faculty Senate Conference Room, D.H. Hill Library

Steve Keto, Sam Averitt, co-chairs

Voting members present:

Arnold Bell, Shawn Dunning (Substitute for Perry Grady), Baran Erkel, Joe Flowers, John Isenhour, Ernie Knowles, Rick Liston, Betsy Mebane, Harriet Mermes, Tom Miller, Scott Payne, Alan Schueler (substitute for Barbara Kirby), Bill Scott, Dan Steen (substitute for Frank Buckless), John Tector, Gail Wilkerson

Technical advisors present:

Mardecia Bell, Greg Buol, Alan Galloway, Gwen Hazlehurst, Sid Holmes, Charles Hunt, Carl Malstrom, Stan North Martin, Joe McCoy, Bill Padgett, Cheri Renninger, Jennifer Van Horn

Welcome:

Steve Keto called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes

The Committee unanimously approved the minutes from the March 14th, 2001 meeting.

Agenda:

Campus IT Presentations

John Streck, Associate Director in ComTech, gave a presentation on wireless computing at NC State. The entire document can be found at http://www.fis.ncsu.edu/standards_minutes. NC State Communication Technologies and the University Computing Standards Committee are developing the document. ComTech, as part of its Wireless Initiative project, will assist in the initial design and layout of wireless access points in campus buildings. It will also revisit a building if layout problems occur or additional wireless nodes are needed for broader coverage or higher client density. The Wireless Initiative is part of the larger more global ComTech Nomadic Computing project. Nomadic computing, as it is being implemented at NC State, allows any member of the NC State community with an active university computing account to log onto the campus network from anywhere on campus. The nomadic computing architecture accommodates either wired or wireless connections. During this presentation, Streck addressed two general topics related to wireless computing. They were the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) for wireless on campus and ComTech Wireless Network Design, Installation and Maintenance Procedures.

Ernie Knowles asked how confident John was that the wireless technology in the new constructions on campus wouldn't be replaced within the next three years.

John replied that within the last two years, there was a 50/50 chance that one would have had to pull it out. With new technology, the University is okay right now.

Ernie asked if there were enough nodes in the College of Physical and Mathematical Sciences and in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. John said the nodes were fine.

John Tector asked if whether Lucent and Cisco, vendors of networks cards, were platform determinant. John said ComTech chose the cards and that there are drivers to support at least three operating systems: Linux, Windows 2000 and Apple OS. The operating systems were selected because they support the majority of users on campus.

Betsy Mebane asked if the airport cards and bases would be supported. John said the airport base stations would be, but the cards would not be supported.

Betsy wanted to know where her unit was on the list. John said he's going to startup a listserve for individuals on campus who are doing wireless. This should indicate the status.

Tom Miller asked John how would he know if a lease wasn't working. John said the machine stops working.

Tom also inquired about the encryption levels. John said there were two levels - a 40 byte and a 128 byte. The University predominantly uses 40-byte cards.

Tom remarked that it looks like ComTech is going to have a very strong role in defining the plans and the designs for all of the buildings. His question was how many people will be devoted to this project. John said ComTech is training folks on wireless and he's also working with Ed Rogers, who is also conducting training.

John Tector said wireless is the agenda and this is an incredible opportunity in older buildings. He said he wanted to underline the importance of wireless as a potential replacement for wired infrastructure in new and older buildings, particularly older buildings.

John said wireless is a way to get nomadic. Nomadic and wireless are used interchangeably but they are not the same.

John Tector asked if there was a time frame as to when things would roll out. John said those who have wireless should send him a note to jps@ncstate.net. ComTech is dealing with immediate requests; however funding to perform the projects is also a consideration.

Malstrom said he wanted to take exception to an earlier statement by John Tector. He said he doesn't think that wireless should be looked as a replacement for wired networking on campus but as a complement.

Shawn Dunning asked how the placement of access points was determined. John said ComTech based it on statistical averaging.

Baran Erkel asked how were the hours determined for faculty (4 hours) and students (2 hours). John said the hours were used to start off as a rule for nomadic. The average class time lasted one hour to one and a half hours. Baran remarked that faculty and student should receive notification of a disconnection while they are working on line.

Scott Payne said the Bookstore needs to be contacted to make sure students will have the products.

Jennifer Van Horn asked the Committee to review what ComTech had presented and she thanked the Committee members involved in the formation of the document. She asked that comments be sent to her prior to the next Standards meeting or that they are brought to the next meeting. A final document will be presented to Steve and Sam so they can take it forward for approval.

Ernie asked if colleges would be responsible for technical maintenance of access points. John said ComTech would be responsible for maintaining the access points because they are extensions of the wireless network.

Stan North Martin wanted to clarify that ComTech is not providing technical support for the cards. John said ComTech will provide two client network cards but it will be up to the clients to figure out why the configuration doesn't work if the approved cards can attach without problems.

Betsy asked if ComTech is going to zone areas with access. John said the current implementation does not allow cell to cell hopping and there will be areas of dead spots. He said Betsy could suggest that ComTech place signs in areas where nomadic is supported.

Betsy also suggested that the definitions of terms that are included in the appendix of the report be included on a web page for people to review. She encouraged him to add to the list of terms.

Committee Reports

Steve remarked that the old data and data access and single user authentication items have been combined into one single item.

Security and Disaster Recovery: Mardecia Bell

Mardecia reported that access to the Financials application as well as other minor enhancements have been added to the new version of the Automated Security Access Process (ASAP). ASAP is scheduled to go live on April 16. Various campus customers and business officers are in the process of testing ASAP. Mardecia also reported that ASAP training would be held in May. Details are forthcoming in this week's Human Resources and Financials systems update.

Mardecia also reported that Administrative Computing Services would be distributing

next week the Security Profile Reports to deans, vice chancellors and department heads along with appropriate University Business Officers. The profiles will have the current access for Human Resources, Financials, Mainframe and Sybase applications. Any changes or deletions to the reports should be made via ASAP. The reports will have detail instructions on how to request a deletion.

Steve said he has reported to the Deans this week that the security reports are forthcoming. His guess is that they will need some help in interpreting what it is that they are receiving.

Disaster Recovery: Sid Holmes, Disaster Recovery Coordinator

Sid gave an update on the initial focus points that disaster recovery consultant Loren Allston presented at the March 14th University Computing Standards Committee meeting. Sid reported that the University's primary focus was to develop a disaster recovery strategy and to have it accepted and that has happened. The strategy is to establish a secondary site on campus for disaster recovery. He reported that the Oversight Committee chose a site to recommend yesterday. The Committee was unable to identify an existing building so it employed a secondary strategy, which was to identify a site to locate a mobile facility (a modular facility). The recommended site is Varsity Drive. The Committee will now go through a process of identifying funding for this initiative and draft a proposal for the Space Planning Committee. The site will be a minimum of 3,500 square feet.

The next focus point was to develop a business continuity plan for mission-critical business units within the University. The Oversight Committee identified those units. Twenty-eight business impact questionnaires were sent out and 25 were returned. Those questionnaires will be turned into a draft of the business continuity plan and sent back to the business units with recommendations of where more details are necessary. The return plan will be the final plan. Sid said eight draft plans have been sent back. One plan has been completed. He anticipates that all plans will be completed by the end of April. On the overall schedule, the Committee has tentatively scheduled to start the process of drafting business continuity plans for the remaining campus units including the academic units on July 15.

Sid said the most important focus point was the drafting of the University's response to the audit findings. The final draft is completed and will be reviewed with Internal Audit this week.

He also reported that the combined disaster recovery plan is in its initial draft stage and is under review. The Committee has sent out requests for information to vendors and that information is due by April 16. The Committee asked what is available to the University in the areas of payroll software and office configurations and what is available as far as modular units. Sid said he has already started to get responses to those requests.

Sid also reported that the Disaster Recovery Committee has met with individuals from Environment Health and Public Safety. EHPS is interested in reviving its Disaster

Recovery efforts. Both groups will meet to determine the overall plan for the University.

He also reported that a web site is being developed for Disaster Recovery and that it should be available by the end of the month. The web site will detail what the Disaster Recovery Committee is doing and what it is planning to do. The Committee is also looking to put software on the web that will allow business units to update their plans.

John Tector said he hopes that the University does not put up something cheap and ugly. He hopes that the University works with the campus architect and that it selects something appropriate that would be a contribution to the neighbors rather than something the University has to be embarrassed about.

Sid responded that the campus architect is a part of the Site Selection Committee and will remain on it.

Mardecia said the site would go through the design processing approval. Mardecia said the University is also working on a permanent site and trying to make the Varsity Drive site a temporary position. She said temporary is three to five years.

Harriet Mermes asked if the University has looked into placing the site into one of the new buildings on campus. Sid said the University had to take care of a short-term situation and it had to have a site in place within a year. The Site Selection Committee has attempted to identify space in both existing buildings and in new constructions and all space is accounted for at this point.

Communications and Networking: Jennifer Van Horn

Jennifer presented to the Committee a proposed tentative list of where the University is with wiring and where the University wants to go in the next fiscal years. The list is based on the condition of the wiring in the buildings on the list and the availability of funds. She asked the Committee to review the list and send any comments to her. She is trying to create another subcommittee of various campus representation to deal with wiring issues. The Committee will come up with recommendations for wiring for campus buildings as well as switches and switch upgrades. She will ask for volunteers at the next University Computing Standards Committee meeting.

Ernie Knowles noted that there are quite a few buildings that are not on the list. Jennifer said some buildings are already at Category 5. She said ComTech is looking at buildings that are not wired or at a lower level like Category 3.

Electronic Mail, Directory Services, Calendaring: Alan Galloway

Alan reported that the subcommittee is in the process of gathering information for email. He also reported that the subcommittee is creating a technical group to look at directory services and what the needs are. It will probably be approximately three weeks before the group has any information to report. He reported that the subcommittee would deal with calendaring after email and directory services and that hopefully the issue of directory services will tie in the email and calendaring issues.

PeopleSoft Implementation: Gwen Halzehurst

Gwen reported that the Cashiers Office rolled out the Student Account Inquiry web page. The Team also migrated a performance enhancement to decrease the time to perform billing runs. The Team is in the process of writing off accounts that were past due to the University. Those accounts were submitted to the Attorney General Office. She also reported that Administrative Computing Services has completed the PeopleSoft sizing project. Process changes have been made to Accounts Payable and Payroll processes to adhere to the new Office of State Controller cash regulation guidelines. She reported that Financials training is in full swing and anyone needing training should go out to the Financials website. She reported that PeopleTools 7.06 would be implemented at the end of May and the upgrade will allow the use of Office and Windows 2000 but support will not be available until the fall. The Team is also focusing on year-end processes.

Gwen also reported that PF2 and PF3 reports would be available shortly in the Financials environment via nVision. Changes have been made to the Project Attributes. They will now start in Financials and span out into FAS and Human Resources. This is part of the decommission of FAS. The changes should be rolled out in the next few days. She also reported that the Team experienced problems with denormalized tables in Human Resources and initial pay approval reports. The problems were referred to the Performance Team, which came back with a solution that would require a massive QA effort. She was not sure if there were sufficient resources to undertake the QA effort so there is no date for the release of the denormalized tables and additional pay reports. The Team is working on the SPA and the EPA legislative increases. She reported that there is no due date for the Home Project or the graduate student employment validation. The Team is also working on the non-resident alien project and is very close to rolling it out. The Team is also finalizing mass OUC changes and making modifications to TEARS and Reallocation.

Ernie asked what are the University's plans if PeopleSoft files for bankruptcy.

Gwen said the latest reports state that PeopleSoft is strong in the market. Gwen said the University has not made any contingency plans but if PeopleSoft were to file for bankruptcy the University would look for a replacement immediately. Gwen said Financials is not supported by PeopleSoft and has not been supported by PeopleSoft in months.

Tom Miller said he understands that the University can not use Sybase with PeopleSoft. Gwen remarked that PeopleSoft would not support Sybase for HRSA Version 8.0 or later. The University is at version 7.02. If the University stays with the HRSA package, it would have to convert to Oracle or DB2. However, there is a HRMS package, which is just Human Resources, and that is supported through Version 8. The University is looking to convert to HRMS anyway. On the Financials side, she is unsure as to when or if PeopleSoft will discontinue Sybase support.

Discussion and New

Open Discussion: Bill Padgett

Bill reported that about three or four weeks ago, the University decided not to use the Smart Force CBT because it cost 25% more than what Chapel Hill was paying and there were questions about its usability on campus. Since that time, the University has met with Smart Force representatives and they have dropped their cost to where it is equal to Chapel Hill's cost. They also have added 50 additional titles to the 300 already available. The University has the opportunity to swap out courses twice a year. SmartForce is also offering its services via the web and will host the titles on their site. The company is also offering a mentor program that is being extended to faculty and staff members.

Bill said there are several issues that need to be addressed. One is the cost. Bill said SmartForce is asking \$67,600 a year as proposed to \$40,000 a year over the last three years. There are also some technical issues that involve authentication, MAC usability and the speed of web site. SmartForce is also moving to modularizing its courses. Out of the 1500 SmartForce titles, the University will have access to 350. Bill said IT and DELTA have committed to the project. ACS and NCS are reviewing it. He said he's also looking at the colleges to contribute \$2,500 each and he's looking at Human Resources, the First Year College and several other groups. He said he thinks that additional funding will come out of the Student Government Recommendations on the Tuition Fee Increase. Bill said the University is paying one-fifth to one-fourth the cost of what other institutions outside the UNC System are paying. While the cost is reasonable, Bill said the University has failed to integrate the courses into the curriculum and professional advancement of faculty and staff members. He said the College of Natural Resources has integrated the courses into its program successfully. Bill said Phase I of the project would be to ask colleges and various units to contribute to the program for the next three years. That is being done parallel to addressing technical concerns. The third part is to pool efforts to inform students that the courses are available.

Betsy Mebane asked if there was a place to go to view the classes. Bill said SmartForce's website is <http://www.smartforce.com>.

Scott Payne asked if SmartForce provided competency testing for students. Bill said SmartForce offers modular and the competency tests are available within the modulars. What the University is looking at is taking those modular courses and developing its own competency tests. User stats will also be available. Bill also stated that he would be contacting colleges in the next week or so.

Next Meeting

Campus Presentations

Steve remarked that a presentation about NC State's home page is tentatively scheduled for the next meeting. A representative from the Office of Public Affairs and home page Web Development Group is scheduled to attend.

John Isenhour from the Libraries will also present at the next meeting.

Ernie also suggested that David Drooz give a presentation on the University policy to

retain email for four years. He also suggested a presentation on technical support for student laptops.

The next meeting will be held at 9:30 a.m. on May 9, 2001 in the Faculty Senate Conference Room of D.H. Hill Library.