

Internet choices for UPEI students

UPEI comes out on top

By **BRODY MORRISON**

The Internet is a powerful tool for the new millennium. Even so, many adults, professors, and leading authorities have no idea how to tap its full potential.

You may also find that Internet service at home saves you considerable time and effort away from the University.

I explored several Internet providers to evaluate which one was the best, and if I have omitted some Internet providers then please let me know. I have gathered information from Island Service Network (ISN), Auracom, Sympatico, and UPEI. That information can be found at the table provided at the bottom of the page.

All of these Internet providers have good offers for their particular rates. However, some have better offers than others.

ISN has more expensive rates, but does not charge for the starter software. They also offer an exclusive student package. In this deal, students receive 80 hours per month for a fee of \$22.50, but it must be

prepaid four months at a time.

In contrast, Auracom offers lower fees, but requires customers to purchase starter software themselves. Auracom also offers what they call "Freezones" which they define as an "offer [of] free access between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 7 a.m., 7 days a week." In addition, these hours are not tabulated in the 60 hours per month rate.

UPEI Computer Services also offers the same type of deal as ISN, except they offer 60 hours per month at a rate of \$20. Payment is on a semester basis, and with tax comes to \$88.

Unlike the other providers, UPEI allows access to the on-line catalogues of the Robinson Library, such as the Humanities Index and the Oxford English Dictionary. The BOBCAT catalogue is also accessible. Although BOBCAT can be used through a widely accessible Tel Net program, the CD ROM feature is exclusive to UPEI.

The CD ROM component of the deal is an extremely interesting selling tool for UPEI. Also, the money that

UPEI receives for the Internet access goes right back to the students in the form of funding for the student help desk at computer services. The money collected also pays for the administrators and technical advice.

It seems that UPEI is not just doing this for profits, and it seems to me that the program is just basically paying for itself. If this is true, then the

services will be directed towards students and not profits, which impressed me very much.

If it seems to you that I am showing more support for the UPEI service than for the other services, you are correct. Although I did not come to this conclusion before I wrote this article. However, it is with my best advice that UPEI maintains the best "bang

for your buck". In fact, I am so sure of recommending UPEI that I might switch from my own Internet service to UPEI's.

Overall, the choice is yours alone, but please remember that picking Internet providers involves an important decision making process these days.

Still, I hope in the future that the University will offer Internet access as an optional charge for students through the regular tuition payment system.

UPEI Computer Services in the AVC -photo by R.Haines



Internet providers available to UPEI students

	Name of Plan	Price	Number of Hrs	Price for each Additional Hrs	Starter Package	Cost of Starter Package
ISN	Emailer	\$15.00	12hrs	\$1.00	Yes	Free
	Networker	\$25.00	70hrs	\$1.25	Yes	Free
	Net Surfer 120	\$29.95	120hrs	\$.95	Yes	Free
	Student Special	\$22.50	80hrs	price not available	Yes	Free
Auracom	Starter Plan	\$9.95	10hrs	\$2.50	Yes	\$29.95
	Auracom Lite	\$24.95	60hrs	\$1.50	Yes	\$29.95
	120 Plus	\$29.95	120hrs	\$1.00	Yes	\$29.95
Sympatico	Occasional	\$9.95	5hrs	\$1.50	Yes	\$29.95
	Regular	\$24.95	60hrs	\$1.50	Yes	\$29.95
UPEI	Regular Rate	\$22.00	60		Yes	Free

Contact: ISN <http://www.isn.net/services.html>

Auracom <http://www.pei.auracom.com/plans>

Sympatico <http://www.pei.sympatico.ca>

UPEI <http://www.upei.ca/~access>