

Networking at UPEI



by Jim Hancock

Current status, problems and solutions, and active plans for Networking Personal Computers on the UPEI campus.

Current Status

Most of the more than 500 terminals and microcomputers on campus are connected to the campus "network". These connections are mainly by means of "telephone" wire strung through

the tunnel system. It allows users to connect to the VAX computers and beyond the campus to NetNorth. While the existing network works well for terminals, its relatively slow speed is of less advantage to microcomputers for sending, receiving and printing files. What is needed is a higher speed network to connect importantly, anyone can use any

package without having to have it on their machine or "borrowing" a copy. Of course, faculty will be able to have their own "personal" software on their hard drive if they so choose. There are very obvious savings possible in that users will not have to upgrade to larger hard disks and fewer copies of software will need to be purchased because of sharing.

Using the Novell network, print files can be sent over the network to a department laser printer allowing better sharing of that resource.

One of the reasons that we can now proceed with upgrading the speed of the Network is the recent availability of Ethernet over twisted pair (ie telephone type) wiring and the decrease in cost of Ethernet components. However, the distance that Ethernet signals can travel over twisted-pair is only about 100 metres. While this is alright within a building, between buildings fibre-optic cable will be required to span the longer distances. We are starting in the AVC building because the building is wired, it is close to the Computer Centre which will help in getting the problems worked out and we have a small budget for the project. Planning for the rest of the campus is already under way but many hurdles remain.

What will it cost?

Networking is not inexpensive but costs have and will continue to drop. The cost of networking will be offset by savings in the cost of larger hard disks and software purchases as well as the availability of new services not possible with the existing network. To set up the AVC network will cost about 1000per PC; interestingly, 10year ago this is how much it cost to connect a terminal to the VAX. Users will be expected to pay most

of this cost, mainly to cover the Ethernet card which must be installed in the PC. AVC users can be connected to the Novell Network by sending a purchase requisition for \$500 to the Computer Centre.

How will it work?

When you turn on your PC it will function as it always has. To run a program stored on the Network server you will issue a command to connect to the network and then run the program. Although a small amount of user data may be kept on the server, in general users are expected to keep their data on their own hard disk and on floppies. Programs that departments want to share can be placed on the server.

When will it be available?

By the time you read this article the Novell server for the AVC building should be installed and running. Although we have experience with the Novell network in Kelley we expect faculty needs to differ from those of the micro-lab. It will no doubt take us a few months to get this AVC segment of the network shaken down and problems resolved. Already we have several questions which the vendor is trying to answer for us. Your patience, as always, will make our job easier.

This is our first small step in moving toward a high-speed campus-wide network. It will eventually be part of the larger regional, national and world-wide networks that are evolving. For all of us involved with knowledge and information these are very exciting and challenging times.

National Student Day Let's have Fun!!

Wednesday, Oct 18th

Students in Canada have been working together around issues such as, funding, tuition fees, employment and student aid for over 60 years. The Canadian student movement today represents hundreds of thousands of students at universities and colleges throughout the Canadian Federation of Students.

Celebrating over 60 years of Canadian student movement, the University of Prince Edward Island Student Union will be joining with over 400,000 post-secondary students across Canada on October 18, 1989 as part of the Canadian Federation of Students campaign to celebrate Na-

tional Student Day highlighting issues affecting post-secondary students.

The UPEI Student Union in conjunction with its CFS committee and help from student saver discounters, has included a wide variety of special events throughout the day to mark this occasion. All day, Smitty's Restaurant will be offering students 50% off all menu items, as well as 5% all day savings at Save Easy. The day will be highlighted by the 2nd Annual Student Soccer Match where students are invited to play soccer against varsity teams, taking place at 4 pm at MacAdam Field. Following the march, cake and hot chocolate, will be served at the Student

Union Barn, by the UPEI Hockey team members. The day will finish with a special film presentation, "Woodstock - the movie" followed with a wet/dry pub, featuring Mike Woods, with prizes drawn for participants in the day's activities.

The events co-ordinator and CFS committee chair person, Cathy Campbell commented, "considering the success of last year's events, this year's shall be at least equally exciting with the great line-up of activities and enthusiasm in this event." She also noted that the UPEI/CFS committee is always looking for student participation and interest in various activities, issues and con-



cerns with the Canadian Federation of Students, and strongly urge any interested students to contact the CFS committee through the UPEI Student Union.

For more information contact the UPEI SU
UPEI SU is a member of the

Canadian Federation of Students. The Federation is Canada's national student organization and represents over 400,000 post-secondary students. The Federation is concerned with the improvement of, accessibility to, and quality of post-secondary education and quality of student life.

