

ETC Education Telecommunications Council

NOTES
DECEMBER 17, 1999

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The December 17, 1999, meeting of the Education Telecommunications Council was held at Iowa Public Television. The following members were present: Robert Barak (Regents); Al Bode (ISEA); Paul Bowers (IAICU); Gene Gardner (IACCT); Ron Ellis for John Hartung (IAICU); Gary Hayden (AEA Boards); David Montgomery (DE/CIANS); Kathryn O'Shaughnessy (ISEA); Pam Pfitzenmaier (IPTV); Kay Runge (DE/Libraries); Mick Starcevich (SAI); Gail Sullivan (DE); Mary Travillian (AEA Boards); and Rich Gross (DE/Exofficio). Dean Borg (IASB); Connie Maxson (SAI); and Emmett Vaughan (Regents) were absent.

The following guests were also present at this meeting: John Haack (RTC 10); Mike Bacino, Tommy Thompson, and Kathy Williams (ICN); Kathy Borlin and Deb Fiscus (IPTV); Joan Ketels (RTC 7); Buddy Sherbet (Scheduler/UNI); Ellen Kabat (RTC 9); Ken Colwell (Scheduler/St. Ambrose); Chuck Chrisman (Scheduler/Region 16); Darlas Shockley (RTC 15); Roger Rezabek (RTC 7); Winston Black and Jane Herrmann (RTC 11); Kathy Guilgot (RTC 1); Rich Varn (ITS); and Marlene McComas (RTC 5).

II. ISSUES

IIA. Overview of Core Group Meeting

Pam Pfitzenmaier provided an overview of the December 13th ETC core group meeting. The Core Group meetings are held on a monthly basis and attendees include ETC Executive Committee members, RTC representatives, educational scheduling representatives and ICN staff. At the December Core Group meeting, attendees agreed upon the following: 1) The educational community and ICN staff agree that we all want the ICN services to meet the educational needs and quality standards that have been established. 2) The educational community and the ICN staff agree that ICN services have not been up to the desired level of quality in recent months. There was discussion concerning the appropriate roles of the ETC, RTC, ICN and vendors at the Core Group meeting and further at the ETC meeting.

The roles of the ETC, RTCs and the ICN staff were further clarified on a continuum (see document Attachment A). In the January Core Group meeting, it is expected that the issues of MPEG2 codec testing and "in advance" scheduling software will be placed on the continuum so that communication about "where we are" with implementing new software, hardware and procedures can be better understood by all.

II.B. ETC Members and ICN Staff Discussion re: Next Steps

Pam Pfitzenmaier provided an update on the role of the ETC Technical Advisory Committee (TIE group). This committee is made up of regional and higher ed video technical support staff statewide. The ETC Core Group recommended that the TIE group be requested to work with the ICN and IPTV engineers to evaluate the MPEG2 codecs that are currently being

tested in region 14.

Pam also highlighted the technical update listserv that will be started by Rich Gross. On an "as needed basis," Rich will provide reports and updates on the latest technical information concerning the ICN and "what's going on."

Another communication mechanism that was discussed is a trouble ticket system that can help the ICN and IPTV technical staff carry out the technical support work in a timely manner. Currently the IPTV video classroom engineers and the TIE group members utilize an electronic trouble ticket system to track and communicate video classroom equipment status. It was discussed that this trouble ticket system is web-based and may soon be accessible for educational schedulers and RTC coordinators for "view only" purposes.

Tommy Thompson stated that Mike Bacino and Tony Crandell will be active with the RTCs by attending RTC meetings, to hear first hand any issues unique to their area, and to give them the personal attention needed to handle the problems and concerns brought out in these discussions.

Discussion followed.

II.C. Update From ICN Staff -- Tommy Thompson, Kathy Williams

Tommy Thompson updated the members concerning Internet connectivity, VOSS software, and ATM/MPEG 2. He explained the reasons and steps taken to update the ICN in these areas, and Kathy Williams provided information on the latest developments concerning the VOSS scheduling and switching software modifications. ICN has established a January 15, 2000, deadline that TODD is to conclude the major "fixes" to the scheduling software. She also updated members concerning the in-advance scheduling model being produced by TODD. TODD has committed to complete the in-advance scheduling software model by January 14. Five educational schedulers are testing the "in advance" components prior to more expanded off-line testing by all educational schedulers. Mike Bacino provided an update on the ICN billing issue.

Discussion followed.

II.D. ETC Operations Subcommittee Report - Paul Bowers

Paul Bowers opened discussion on the current "On Demand Scheduling Policy" and ICN Credit Request Policy" concerning the terminology used in both documents--2 working days vs. 48 hours. There was discussion among the members and the following motion was made:

MOTION 1

Paul Bowers suggested a committee motion to change the phrase "2 working days" to "48 hours not including Saturday/Sunday" on the On-Demand guidelines. Second not required

with this motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Kathy Williams assured members that she will provide the clarification to the Todd staff and will notify schedulers when the necessary changes are made to the VOSS scheduling software to accommodate the changes.

Concerning the "ICN Credit Request Policy," Paul recommended that the Operations Committee work with Mike Bacino of the ICN to further research how this policy is currently operating within the ICN and the impact it has on the end user. At a future ETC meeting, recommended changes may be proposed to this policy (established by the ITTC).

III. UPDATES

III.A. Schools Update

Pam Pfitzenmaier provided an update on the upcoming Star Schools grant that begins October 1, 2000. This \$4 million earmarked grant will focus on the needs of Iowa elementary schools for telecommunications.

III.B. Update on New and Emerging Technologies

Rich Gross opened discussion with the question: "Listening to educators: What are the telecommunications needs of Iowa elementary and middle schools." As related to the upcoming Star Schools grant, it was suggested that the ETC do a needs assessment of elementary and middle schools so that a). the grant is tailored to the unique elementary needs and b). next steps for telecommunications/technology needs can be communicated to ICN and ITS staff members.

This will assist the ETC in articulating upcoming K-8 telecommunications plans. It was decided to pull together an ETC sub-committee to follow-up on this question. Members will be solicited via listserv and a committee will be formed prior to the January ETC meeting.

III.C. E-Rate Update

Pam Pfitzenmaier updated members on the status of E-rate program, Year 3. Applications for discounts for the period of July 1, 2000 through June 30, 2001 are due January 19, 2000. The participation in the program by Iowa schools has increased in Year 2 and expanded participation is expected in Year 3.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

The December 17 meeting of the Education Telecommunications Council adjourned at 11:45 a.m. The next meeting of the ETC is January 21, 2000, at Iowa Public Television.

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