



NOTES
September 23, 2002

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The September 23, 2002, meeting of the Education Telecommunications Council was held at Iowa Public Television and various ICN sites. The following members were present: Chet Rzonka for Robert Barak, Board of Regents; Al Bode, ISEA; James Bodensteiner, Board of Regents; Paul Bowers, IAICU; Bruce McKee for Merv Cronbaugh, IACCT; Greg Davis, IASB; Robert Busch for Ed Gambs, SAI; Mary Gannon, IASB; Ellen Kabat Lensch, IACCT; David Montgomer, DE/CIANS; Kathryn O'Shaughnessy, ISEA; Pam Pfitzenmaier, IPTV; Kay Runge, DE/Libraries; Mick Starcevich, SAI; Mary Travillian, AEA Boards; and Robert Vittengl, AEA Boards. John Hartung, IAICU; and Gail Sullivan DE, were absent.

The following visitors were also present: Mike Bacino and Kay Bolton, ICN; Kathy Guilgot, RTC 1; Theresa Ziegler, RTC 3; Julie Thomas, RTC 6; Roger Rezabek, RTC 7; John Haack, RTC 10; Pat Thieben, RTC 11; Pam Southworth, RTC 13; Darlas Shockley and Linda Abel, RTC 15; Bob Hardman, ITTC; Kathy Goebel, Region 5 ICN Scheduler; Vickie Myron, Spencer Public Library (ETC Alternate); Shelly Goergen, AEA 11; Robin Madison, Legislative Fiscal Bureau; Judy Jones, State Library; and Gwen Nagel, Kathy Borlin, and Debbie Fiscus, IPTV.

II. ISSUES

II.A. Video Cancellation Policy

Paul Bowers provided an overview of the video cancellation policy that has been in effect since 1996, explaining the desire that the policy coincide with the 48 hour on-demand policy in effect at this time. The on-demand policy allows for ICN sites to be added within 48 hours of a session when the site in question has been contacted for approval. Discussion followed.

Pam Pfitzenmaier opened the discussion with an explanation of why the cancellation policy was submitted and approved by the ITTC in 1997. She stated that most Part III sites were not online as yet and there were fewer ICN sites to work with. There was no good history for requesting sites for meetings or classes and there were some instances of people overbooking and trying to cancel classes/meetings at the last minute. Pam expressed that she has not seen cancellation abuses and thinks that the ETC could recommend a more user friendly policy to the ITTC. Pam asked that Mike Bacino address this issue from the ICN perspective.

Mike Bacino explained that the ITTC policy was put in place for a two-fold reason: first, adequate notice to cancel a video session so requesters weren't unnecessarily tying up sites and second, in a lot of cases there is a room use fee and people have made arrangements for off duty personnel to come in and to open the room. Mike mentioned that he worked closely with Kay Bolton to track abuse and did not notice any abuse. Mike further expressed that if the ETC believes that the policy should be modified, he will volunteer to work with members to advance a modification to the ITTC.

Pam asked if it was possible to have the cancellation policy consistent with the on-demand policy, to follow the same procedure found there--to cancel a site within the 48 hour window, the burden rests on the requester to contact the site(s) in question, the same as it does to add a site to a session.

Paul Bowers said the records show that in March 2002 the ETC voted and recommended to move to some sort of parallel policy, without specifying the details of that policy. Mike Bacino stated he saw no operational drawbacks to modifying the policy, and would agree to a 12:00 noon on Friday deadline to cancel a site in a Saturday session.

Paul Bowers said that no further voting action was needed by the ETC to move forward with this issue. The ETC will work with Mike Bacino and ICN staff to craft a cancellation policy that coincides with the on-demand policy. Mike suggested that administrative schedulers be involved in the process also because the policy that the ITTC sets will govern all.

MOTION 1

Kay Runge moved that the ETC vote electronically on a proposed cancellation policy drafted by a sub-committee of the ETC. Pam Pfitzenmaier seconded. Discussion followed.

Mary Gannon stated that open meeting laws won't allow for voting via email communication, but will allow for a conference call vote.

Ayes--15; Nays--0; Not voting--0; Absent--3. Motion passed.

The following members volunteered for this sub-committee to draft a cancellation policy--Pam Pfitzenmaier, Paul Bowers, Ellen Kabat Lensch, and Kathryn O'Shaughnessy. Mike Bacino suggested that Jane Ginapp, chair of the ATAC council, be asked to participate, as well as other schedulers. Paul stated that the administrative and educational scheduler groups would be solicited for feedback once the draft is completed.

II.B. Video Classroom No Transmit Policy

Paul Bowers provided an overview of the no-transmit policy that has been in effect since 1996. Pam Pfitzenmaier presented data concerning the current use of no-transmits as concerns Parts I, II, and III, that were paid for through state expense. The ETC no-transmit policy basically leaves the decision to the site. The policy leaves flexibility to the sites to accommodate those schools that do not have facilities that they can dedicate as exclusively an ICN room during the school hours.

Based upon current policy, Pam pulled together a sampling from this fall showing K-12s use of the no-transmit policy. There were 24 K-12 sites that have utilized the no-transmit option, either for a partial time during the day or a full day. Only a few K-12 sites utilized the no-transmit option from 7:30am-3:30pm. One such event was for a remodeling project where the classroom had a no-transmit for the entire day. There was only one site that utilized the no-transmit option beyond the 3:30pm time and it went until 5:00pm. There were no high school sites utilizing the no-transmit option in the evening. With information from this data sampling from an entire week in September, there was no abuse found. Discussion followed.

Pam recommended that there be no changes made in the current policy. If a site has a no-transmit in place and decides that they want their students involved in an event, they release the room for use.

Discussion ensued with a number of ETC members pointing out various instances of problems or issues with no transmits and the difficulties it can present for scheduling. Others also discussed some challenges K-12 schools face as well as other instances where no transmit might be necessary.

Following comments received about the no-transmit policy, Paul Bowers suggested that there are possibly four courses of action that can be taken. One would be to do a better job of defining both the pattern and the scope of the problem, suggesting the gathering of more data. The second would be to clarify guidelines so that RTCs could communicate better and more consistently as to how K-12 no-transmits should and should not be utilized. The third action would be to revise the policy, and the last possible action would be to take no action at all. Paul asked for recommendations from the ETC members.

(The no-transmit policy does not affect 2nd classrooms or those that are approval required sites.)

Paul Bowers suggested having an ICN meeting with educational schedulers, RTC representatives, and ETC members, to discuss and to clarify the existing no-transmit policy. Pam Pfitzenmaier will schedule the ICN session. Any recommendations that would come from the meeting will be taken the ETC meeting in December.

II.C.1. ITTC Action on 2003-2004 Rate Increase

Pam Pfitzenmaier reported on the outcome of the ITTC meeting held September 12th especially the video rate increase for the 03-04 school year. It was noted that the ITTC received little communications from educational users--a recommendation was received from the ETC and another from the Board of Regents.

The ITTC followed one of two recommendations submitted to them by the ETC which was to put the video rates for regents/independent colleges in line with video rates of community colleges.

The second recommendation that the ETC submitted (to not increase video rates) was not followed and educational video rates were raised 5% effective July 1, 2003, except for the regents/independent colleges which will remain at the same level as the current school year.

Mike Bacino noted that not all educational agencies presented data regarding rate increases in response to the ITTC rate proposals and that more data from educational users might affect ITTC decision-making.

Following a lengthy discussion, this motion was made:

MOTION 2

Pam Pfitzenmaier moved that the ETC send a letter to the ITTC asking for reconsideration at the November meeting and encourage constituents to submit written materials 10-14 days in advance of the ITTC meeting in November. Mary Gannon seconded.

Ayes--14; Nays--2; Not voting--0; Absent--2. Motion passed.

II.C.2. Increasing Video Utilization of the Network

Paul Bowers brought up another issue related to the video rate discussion--the desire by the ITTC to increase video utilization of the network. The question Mike presented was how the ETC respond to that particular analysis by the ICN staff.

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding various strategies for increasing overall ICN usage, including opening up the network to additional authorized users.

Pam stated that when people talk about the network not being used by K-12s, they are talking video exclusively. She emphasized that K-12s are using the network extensively for Internet and it is important to make it affordable for them to do so.

The general discussion focused on the need to broaden the general conception of ICN usage to include all potential levels of use, not just interactive video services. Members stressed that the goal should be to develop strategies and policies that encourage overall increased usage of ICN services.

Paul asked Bob Hardman if a sit-down meeting with the commissioners would be a good idea to clarify that the ICN usage is more than just interactive video and is expanding quickly in the IP area. Bob agreed that such a meeting would be beneficial. Paul asked if Mike Bacino should set up a meeting with the commission, to which Mike agreed. Paul suggested an open meeting with as many members of the ETC and ITTC that could be brought together.

II.D. RTC Funding Recommendation for FY 04

Pam Pfitzenmaier stated that it is time once again for the ETC to make a recommendation to the Iowa Public Broadcasting Board regarding the RTC funding to be requested for FY 04. After a short discussion, this motion was made:

MOTION 3

Al Bode moved to recommend to the Iowa Public Broadcasting Board that RTC funding level for FY 04 remain status quo at the '03 funding level. Ellen Kabat Lensch seconded. Discussion followed.

Bruce McKee offered a friendly amendment to request that the RTC funding level for FY 04 be at the FY 02 funding level instead. Al and Ellen agreed to the friendly amendment.

The motion as amended:

Al Bode moved to recommend to the Iowa Public Broadcasting Board to seek RTC funding for FY04 at the FY02 funding level. Ellen Kabat Lensch seconded.

Ayes--13; Nays--0; Not voting--0; Absent--5. Motion passed.

II.E. ICN Video Event Site Selection and Communication

Paul Bowers opened this discussion with an issue that was raised in recent weeks where ICN events have been scheduled and end users wished to be added to the session only to find that it isn't possible to do so, even though their site is available. The question educators often asked was how a session get scheduled, who receives the communication regarding the session, and why can't a site be added at the request of the user?

Pam Pfitzenmaier gave an example of this issue--The DE was having a session with 10 or 12 sites included, and a K-12 administrator wanted his site to be included. Adding more sites seemed to be a three-fold issue--1. Many ICN session sponsors, such as the DE, don't have a mechanism to take requests from the field from those who wish to be added; they don't have the staff to be able to handle that volume of requests; 2. A lot of times, the requester has a set budget that only allows for a certain number of sites to be included, even if the site in question is willing to pay, they don't have a mechanism in place to send a bill out to folks for \$5.25 when it will cost them \$8 to send the bill; 3. Sometimes the session sponsor wants a session with a lot of interaction. They don't want 80 sites, they want 10 sites. It was suggested by members that if session interactivity is desired, a description on the scheduling request should explain the reason for the low number of sites..."this is an interactive session; we want to take Q & A, therefore our sites are limited."

Pam recommended that the ETC ask the ICN if they can be of any assistance in these circumstances to handle the scheduling of additional requests and rebilling. In order to communicate to others that the session will have limited sites for interactivity, Paul recommended that the meeting in December with RTC coordinators and schedulers address the third issue.

Paul stated that this item will put back on the agenda for the December meeting.

III. UPDATES

III.A. ICN Update

Mike Bacino distributed a document that provided an update on the network upgrade. All 232 codecs installed in both rings 1 and 5 in western Iowa. Installation and testing went fine. Two technical issues remain and ICN staff are working with Terrawave's engineering staff to get a patch in place.

Span turnups from each EON node, rings 1, 5, and 4 have been turned up and are in the process of turning up the backbones of each of those three rings. ICN will start with ring 4 then move into ring 3 and 5. The next piece is the engineering department needs to engineer all the

circuits that are on the other pair of fiber in rings 1, 5, and 4 and move those across to the new pair of fiber. That includes all the video, all the data, and the voice traffic. A very tedious process but one that provides us an opportunity to both purify the engineering database and the billing database.

The other codecs were received last week. ICN will now commence installing those codecs in the eastern side of the state starting with ring 4 then move into ring 3 and 2 simultaneously. The prediction at this point, by the time all the codecs are installed, will probably be the end of March, early April. In addition to those changes, ICN will also be upgrading the open-view circuit management system that is about a \$750K project.

Another area that ICN has been working on is with Todd Communications on video scheduling and switching software. Initial beta-testing over the summer was not successful. Another round of development is ongoing. The hope is to have new software on the network in the Thanksgiving and Christmas time periods. The ICN will not rollout new software until rigorous testing is complete to minimize potential disruptions to operations and scheduling.

III.B. Executive Board Open Position--Nominations

Paul Bowers has appointed Ed Gambs, Kathryn O'Shaughnessy, and Ellen Kabat Lensch to the ETC Executive Committee. Mary Travillian and Bob Barak serve in the standing positions, as does Paul. Pam serves as the ex-officio person who provides staff support. That leaves one open position. Paul sent out a call and had received no volunteers, so he opened the floor for nominations for the last position on the Executive Committee.

MOTION 4

Al Bode nominated Mary Gannon to fill the 7th position on the ETC Executive Committee. Pam Pfitzenmaier seconded.

Ayes--12; Nays--0; Not Voting--0; Absent--6. Motion passed.

III.C. Virtual Academy Update

Pam Pfitzenmaier provided a brief update on the Iowa Virtual Academy project. It is intended to bring access to classes for schools to provide to students that they couldn't otherwise have. The Iowa Virtual Academy is envisioned to be a combination of ICN video classes, web based courses, hybrid classes that combine various technologies. Advisory committees from IASB, SAI, ISEA, and AEAs have been established. The current school year is a pilot with plans for full implementation next school year.

III.D. E-rate

Pam Pfitzenmaier informed members that the State of Iowa did receive approval of E-rate funding for ICN interactive video.

The E-rate funding process application for next year will be starting shortly and Pam will be holding training sessions for schools in completing the application forms.

IV. ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM THE FLOOR

IV.A Schedulers are being notified when new rooms are added, but not when they are modified or upgraded from a receive-only site to a fully interactive site. The schedulers would like to receive that information also. Paul said he would pass that request on to the ICN.

IV.B. Roger Rezabek reminded RTC members that following the ETC meeting, the RTCs will meet in the conference room at the other IPTV building across the street.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The September 23, 2002, meeting of the Education Telecommunications Council adjourned at 11:55am. The next meeting of the ETC will be held December 16, 2002, at Iowa Public Television.

3182.doc