Nominate Now for 2005-06 Board of Directors

ACUTA's Nominating Committee has issued the call for nominations for ACUTA's Board of Directors. We are seeking nominations for the positions of President-Elect, Secretary/Treasurer, and two Directors-at-Large.

President-Elect: As stated in the Bylaws (Article III, Sect. A6), “Candidates for the office of President-Elect must have served as a member on the Board of Directors for a minimum of one year, or served as the Chair of a permanent committee for a minimum of one year.” Nominees for this position must also be prepared to serve the following two years as President and Immediate Past President.

Secretary/Treasurer: Carmine Piscopo, Providence College, has served one two-year term as Secretary/Treasurer and is eligible to run for a second term.

Directors-at-Large: Two positions shall be elected each year for two-year terms. The Nominating Committee will assemble a slate of nominees from names submitted by the membership. The two candidates receiving the most votes will be declared the winners. Directors-at-Large whose terms will expire this year are John Bradley, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and Corinne Hoch, Columbia University. Both John and Corinne are eligible to run for a second term as Director-at-Large if they so choose.

Current President Tamara Closs of Georgetown University becomes the Immediate Past President, and President-Elect Patricia Todus of Northwestern University becomes President for ’05-'06.

Directors-at-Large who will serve the second year of their two-year terms are George Denbow of the University of Texas at Austin and Diane McNamara of Union College.

Nominations must be received by 5:00 p.m., EDT, March 18, 2005. Send all nominations to Wally Czerniak, Assoc. Vice President, Information Services, Northern Illinois University, W. Lincoln Hwy, ITS, DeKalb, IL 60115-2854, or e-mail wczerniak@niu.edu. Phone nominations will not be accepted.

In This Issue

1 Nominate for Board of Directors
2 President's Message ........................................... Tamara Closs, Georgetown University
2 FTC Postpones Effective Date of Can-Spam Rule
3 Tech Talk: VoIP Installation Costs Vary Widely .................... Kevin Tanzillo, Dux Public Relations
4 Regional Workshop in Los Angeles
4 Efficiency of National Do-Not-Call List Improved ......................... FCC
4 Thanks to Journal Advertisers for 2004
5 Overheard on the Listserv: Phones in Student Rooms?
5 Board Report ........................................ Carmin Piscopo, Providence College
6 DC Update ........................................ Whitney Johnson, Retired, Northern Michigan Univ.
8 Business Process Improvement .................................. Buck Bayliff, Pinnacle Software/PAETEC
9 Welcome New Members
9 ACUTA Online Press Room
From the President
Tamara J. Closs
Georgetown University
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In Times of Crisis

The need for people to communicate in times of crisis is critical, whether coordinating first responders or facilitating family members' ability to find and comfort each other. The crisis may stem from natural causes such as fire or weather as well as from people involved in hacking, spamming, or terrorist activities. Regardless of the cause, campuses must develop preventive and responsive approaches to protect both voice and data resources in order to maintain the vital communications links for our customers.

Our campuses represent a microcosm of what is occurring on a national and international level. Recently, we have been overwhelmed by the relief efforts in the aftermath of the tsunami and the ongoing war in the Middle East. It is difficult for us to imagine the efforts required to establish and maintain the critical communications services that support these efforts.

Recently a retired colleague contacted me inquiring if I knew of any special programs or services available through communications companies for our troops in Iraq. In an Internetnews article (www.internetnews.com/bus-news/article.php/3452351) I discovered that many telecoms have made, and continue to make, donations. The article highlighted several telecom company efforts including the following:

- Vonage continues to offer military personnel in Afghanistan and Iraq free phone calls to their families in the United States throughout 2005. Soldiers have already made more than 200,000 phone calls totaling more than two million minutes. The phone adapters, which are the same as those sent to Vonage’s residential broadband telephony customers, were sent to bases that already had high-speed access, so no additional equipment was needed.
- AT&T recently donated 10,000 prepaid calling cards to wounded soldiers recuperating at military hospitals in the United States and abroad. The 100-minute cards have a retail value of more than $100,000. The company said it has donated more than 400,000 cards worth more than $6 million over the last three years, most of them in care packages organized by the USO. AT&T has 64 air-conditioned call centers throughout Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kuwait where the cards may be used.
- Verizon has run a similar program, donating hundreds of thousands of cards to all branches of the military and their families during 2004.
- Nextel’s phone-donation program has raised $900,000 for troops since its inception in May 2003.

I am certain that there are other support efforts through our vendor community and our campuses, and I encourage you to share your program by posting a description of your efforts on the ACUTA listserv or sending an e-mail to ACUTA’s Communications Manager, Pat Scott. This will allow us to make the information available to those who can use it and may inspire others to participate.

Technology has created a world in which, in many industrialized areas, we take for granted ubiquitous communications. When disasters happen, either natural or manmade, we realize what a tremendous contribution that technology can make on the most personal of all levels—the safety and well being of those we care about.

FTC Postpones Effective Date of Can-Spam Rule

The FTC has postponed the effective date of rule provisions it adopted Dec. 16, 2004, establishing criteria for determining whether the primary purpose of an e-mail message is commercial.

When the FTC adopted these rule provisions, it determined that they would become effective on Feb. 18, 2005. Recently, however, the Office of Management and Budget’s Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs has determined that the provisions constitute a “major rule” under the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act., 5 U.S.C. Sec. 801-808. Under that Act, a major rule cannot take effect until at least 60 days after it is published in the Federal Register and submitted to Congress. As a result, the Commission has revised the effective date. The revised effective date will be March 28, 2005. The Commission has made no other modifications to the rules.

For more information on the Can-Spam Act, see the January eNews and the ACUTA website.
Regardless of your institution’s timetable for transition to VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol), you probably wouldn’t argue with the observation that this is where we’re all headed in our communications. This applies to both the enterprise side and the public carrier side.

If you were fortunate enough to get to the ACUTA Winter Seminar this week, there were five sessions dedicated to IP topics. So we’re all aware of the technology and the momentum behind its advancement. Some may portray it as a glacier - advancing slowly but eventually covering over everything in its path - but whatever your metaphor, it’s a reality you must deal with.

In light of that, we ran across a very interesting survey regarding the startup costs for a VoIP network installation, and their extreme variation depending on the vendor and the size of the rollout.

The survey was done by Nemertes Research, and it found that the costs varied from $515 per user to a whopping $1,512 per user in the organizations it surveyed. The analyst who authored the survey politely observed that a “significant disparity” exists between vendors in terms of the operational and capital costs of implementing their products.

In companies with 1,000 or more VoIP users, the average expenditure was $525 per user initially. For companies with fewer than 1,000 users, the per-user average cost was $763. These figures encompassed the costs of IP PBXs or switches, handsets, and needed equipment upgrades, along with the network assessment, planning, installation, and startup troubleshooting.

Those of you about to embark on VoIP installations will definitely want to keep an eye on those per-user costs, because when it comes to cost, it’s always better if you’re pulling the industry average down rather than pushing it up.

Respondents to the Nemertes survey also identified the applications that drove them to a VoIP network. Among the applications they named most often were videoconferencing, unified communications, collaborative tools, and call center/computer-telephone integration needs.

Despite the wide per-user cost disparity, which isn’t all that unusual with installations of a relatively new technology architecture, the survey found ample proof of the benefits of converging the networks. For one, the large companies that implemented VoIP were able to reduce their local loop costs by $9,600 to $28,000 annually per site, while mid-sized companies reduced costs by $4,800 to $9,600 annually.

Cabling costs are 20% to 40% lower in new buildings with a converged network architecture, the survey found. It also noted that:

$ Technology, customer service, and the quality of the management tools are the most important criteria when it comes to buying.

$ Most organizations (65%) consider two vendors before buying, although 20 percent consider only one.

$ Organizations tend not to budget for separate VoIP management tools initially, but end up seeking funding for them within a year of the installation.

If you’re interested in learning more about the study and its findings, visit www.nemertes.com.

As always, if there are specific topics you would like to see covered in this space, please let me know via e-mail at kevin@duxpr.com.
ACUTA is offering an exciting new program in Southern California on March 15. In order to serve the educational needs of more members, especially those with limited travel budgets, we are offering a one-day workshop, allowing many attendees the option to drive in and out without an overnight stay. Although the workshops are designed for regional attendance, anyone interested in the topic is welcome to attend.

The location near LAX also makes this an easy program for quick and reasonably-priced flights, with a free shuttle and very affordable room rates at the conference hotel. (Current published air fares from Northern California to LAX are as low as $39 each way!)

The topic will be "Strategic Tradeoffs in Campus Wireless Mobility" and the primary instructor will be Phillip Beidelman (President of WTC) whose educational sessions at ACUTA meetings are always well-received. The workshop will also include a panel of local university representatives, a corporate presentation, and vendor exhibits.

Whether you drive or fly, this program will offer very timely information on a topic of interest to all ACUTA members, along with opportunities to learn and network with your peers.

Please mark your calendar for Tuesday, March 15, for a regional workshop that will be held at the Sheraton Gateway Hotel at LAX in Los Angeles. More detailed descriptions and registration information are now online at http://www.acuta.org/?1287

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Efficiency of National Do-Not-Call List Improved

Washington, DC. Effective January 1, 2005, telemarketers will have to scrub their contact lists against the national do-not-call registry every 31 days, rather than every three months, as had been the case since the do-not-call list was established in 2003.

As a result, the lag time between a consumer’s putting a number on the do-not-call list and cessation of telemarketing calls to that consumer’s number has been cut by two thirds.

The change was adopted in an FCC order released September 21, 2004, and reflects changes also made in the Federal Trade Commission’s rules.

The national do-not-call list has been an overwhelmingly popular initiative with more than 69 million numbers registered since it was instituted in October 2003. Residential and cell numbers must be added by the individual, not the institution. Phone numbers can be added to the do-not-call registry at http://www.donotcall.gov.

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Thanks to Journal Advertisers for 2004

ACUTA thanks the following companies for advertising in our 2004 Journal of Communications Technology in Higher Education. As you choose the companies with which you will do business, we hope you will remember these ACUTA supporters.

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Mark Kendrick (Longwood University: kendrickms@longwood.edu) wrote: I am reviewing the business case on whether to continue to provide phone service to the residence hall room, just to the hallway, or remove it completely and only provide service as requested. The biggest driving force at this time is VoIP migration and whether we continue to provide service. Obviously 911 is the biggest argument to keep services in the room. I am curious to what other universities and colleges have done.

Greg Stahl (St. Lawrence University: greg@stlawu.edu) We are looking at the same thing. We have a student body of 2,100. We only charge for LD calls. We only bill about 1/4 of the student body each month a total of about $4,000. (Back in the good old days—early ’90s—we billed about 98% of the student body as much as $30K per month.) We have decided to pull the plug. This will be the last semester that we offer LD service to the students.

We are going to leave the lines in the rooms and still provide them with voice mail if they want at no charge, so they can use them if they want for incoming calls and local and toll-free calls. If they want LD from their room, they will have to use a calling card or a dial-around.

Barbara Vasbinder (University of Buffalo: bv5@buffalo.edu) Here at the University at Buffalo, we did a survey of students late last year that gave us the following results:

Only about 20% of respondents used the wired line in their residence on a daily basis. About 33% never used the phone line in their residence. The rest were somewhere in between. (We provide a line to the room; the student provides the phone set.)

We held several meetings with the life folks, who determined that even though in-room phones were lightly used, they did not want to remove any possible line of communication with the students. We are also looking to move from a Centrex environment to VoIP. The plan, at this point, is to provide analog service to the students using analog gateways with the IP PBX. This will still save the University money, but also continue to provide a service to the students.

Tom Walsh (University of Miami Ohio: walshth@miami.edu) I'm not sure you can make a business case for phones in the rooms. Obviously, 911 is the biggest issue. However, one concern that I have is that with the student reliance on cell phones, especially ones that they "bring" from home, it may well be a long-distance call for anyone on campus to reach them. Granted, long-distance rates are lower than ever; but will departments be happy about making a long-distance call to reach a student locally? Another concern is the disconnect from student life. The long-distance part is not a problem for many students because that's part of their cell package, but not all have a package that covers long distance. So now you have students on and around campus, and it is a long-distance call for another student to reach them. At least if they have a phone in their room, they are occasionally reachable on a local-call basis.

One other thought, based on a survey of our students that res halls did, one point the students made about having a phone in the room is to make local calls (calling for a pizza delivery) without using up their "peak" minutes on their cell phone.

In any event, I don’t think you can make a business case, but you may be able to make a “quality of campus life” case.

The Board of Directors met on January 6. The Board approved the appointment of Patty Benton of the University of Alabama to the Membership Committee. The Board also approved a proposal from the Program Committee chair that Program Committee members receive a complimentary registration for the Annual Conference only if they moderate or monitor at least eight hours of educational sessions.

The Board approved a proposal from the Publications Committee to publish up to ten white papers per year on the Web. The Board also approved a proposal to make a text-only version of the ACUTA Journal available to members on the Web. All issues of the Journal since 2003 will eventually be available.

The Executive Director reported that as of 12/20/04, a total of 29 institutional membership applications have been received in response to the membership recruitment mailings. All Board-Committee liaisons reported that committees are actively working on developing action items for the new strategic plan.

Respectfully submitted,
Carmine Piscopo, Providence College
Secretary/Treasurer
cpiscopo@providence.edu
FCC Chairman Michael Powell

As noted on the ACUTA listserv and in the media, Chairman Powell intends to step down as Chair of the FCC in March. A replacement has not been identified yet.

VoIP Migration

The *Telecom Manager's Voice Report Online* (VR 12/15/04) featured an article about the problems that show up as an organization begins the plan to move to VoIP in addition to the usual voice service through the PBX. The vendor may be out there trying to sell a new VoIP-quality PBX and new VoIP-related phones at some very high prices.

Most of the PBXs that date from the late 1990s can be used with some fairly cheap enhancements. The old digital phones can be IP-enabled with some adapter cards. New VoIP phones are on the market at a cost of more than $500 each. One university noted in the article was looking at an upgrade at a cost of around $700,000 for the new IP phones and possibly a new IP PBX, but they upgraded for only about $140,000 using some adaptors from Citel Technologies of Seattle. With the new system they were able to link all eight of their main campuses and add 78 other affiliated colleges to the system. All of these campuses are owned by Career Education Corporation, the parent company.

Everyone may not be able to get by with this type of upgrade but most will. The article lists three requirements that need to be met in order to enjoy the lower-cost upgrade.

1) Your data network must be robust enough to handle the load of voice traffic.
2) Your desired IP feature set must be limited.
3) To maximize your savings, you must be invested in a legacy PBX—and the more invested, the better.

Several other companies and universities were noted as having made the move to VoIP using this technology and the transition has been smooth for those noted. If you are making an upgrade to VoIP it may be a good idea for you to find a copy of this issue and go over this 3 page article in detail. (VR 12/15/04)

Internet Access in Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Governor Rendell has signed into law a bill that aims to protect children from pornography and sex offenders by ordering schools and public libraries to come up with methods that would limit access to obscene materials on Internet terminals housed in such locations. The schools and libraries involved have 180 days from the date the bill was signed to be sure they have acceptable-use policies. Users of the equipment in these locations must be prevented from sending, receiving, or viewing objectionable material. Those who do not follow the rules may lose state funding. [Telecommunications Reports (TR 12/15/04)]

The article does not indicate whether this law may apply to the libraries that are on university campuses.

The 2004 VR Survey

There was interesting information listed in VR about PBXs from the survey. The average age of a PBX that was in use at locations responding to their 2004 survey is 9.1 years. Nortel PBXs have been in service the longest with an average of 11.4 years, followed by Siemens with a 9.2 year average, EADS with 8.3 years, Fujitsu with 8.2 years, NEC with 8.0 years and Avaya with a 7.4 year average.

The survey indicated that 14% of those responding did not plan to buy another PBX for at least 10 years. Almost 60% indicated that they had no unplanned downtime in 2004. One responder indicated that she has not “had a single moment of unplanned downtime with her Siemens switch in 18 years.”

The article noted that PBXs are “very stable, well tested, rock solid. But there’s also not a lot that can go wrong with these things, except at the human interface: the wires, the jacks, the cord. That’s where people are pounding and spilling

For More In-Depth Coverage of Legislative & Regulatory Issues:

their Cokes. Otherwise, a PBX is like your TV. When’s the last time your TV repairman had to come to your house?” (VR 1/10/05)

Consumers Union Web Site

The Consumers Union has set up a Web site at <www.HearUsNow.org> that "focuses on Internet and broadband deployment; wireline and wireless phone services, TV, radio, and cable media ownership; and digital content. In addition to providing information on developments in these sectors, the site will serve as a portal to hundreds of community and national groups that focus on telecom and media issues.”

An official from Consumers Union indicated that “This website addresses the explosion of activist groups and energized consumers who are frustrated by the government’s hands-off approach when it comes to dealing with their concerns over higher bills, poorer service, and the fact a handful of companies control their communications.” He also indicated that it is important to “have one place to go where they can understand how policies affect their pocketbook.” The site doesn’t just explain these issues but it gives consumers the tools to fight for their interests.” (TR 1/1/05)

The article did not mention any costs that show up if one goes into the site. It is most likely free to the users.

DNA Damage From Cell Phone Use

A research study that has been going on for the last four years in Europe has reported that radio frequency emissions have damaged DNA in cells during laboratory tests. The European researchers indicated that the study does not link radio frequency emissions to adverse health effects and they are calling for more research to be done.

The study is known as the REFLEX project and has been funded with about 3.1 million Euro that is about $4.2 million compared to our dollars. The funding has come from “the European Union, the Swiss and Finnish governments, and the VERUM Foundation, which coordinated 12 research groups from seven European countries.” (TR 1/1/05)

Fines and Rebates

Lots of companies have had to pay fines or give money back to consumers lately, including the following as reported in Telecommunications Reports (1/1/05):

(1) FCC has canceled a proposed $200,000 fine against Western Wireless Corp. and its WWC Holding Co. The fine related to operation of a 180 foot tower in North Dakota.

(2) AT&T and the FCC’s Enforcement Bureau have entered into a consent decree that AT&T will pay back to customers a total of about $500,000. AT&T erroneously charged a monthly $3.95 basic rate to some AT&T and also some non-AT&T customers beginning Jan. 1, 2004. It is estimated that 1.27 million customers were involved.

(3) LCR Telecommunications LLC has also agreed with the FCC Enforcement Bureau on a $500,000 settlement for making preferred carrier changes on behalf of customers without following FCC verification procedures.

(4) Subscribers of SBC’s “SimpliFive” calling plan in Illinois may get $12 million in refunds. About 500,000 customers who were involved with the plan were victims of misleading marketing practices.

(5) SBC Connecticut will pay $5 million to settle a deceptive marketing lawsuit brought on in 2002 by the state attorney general’s office over the company’s 2001 Fairfield County Yellow Pages directories.

(6) Lucent Enterprises plans to make the last payment of $215 million of a $563 million cash and stock settlement from a class action complaint in 2003.

(7) SBC Settles an investigation of E-rate funds misuse in Connecticut and will pay $500,000 to the U. S. Treasury.

(8) AT&T will pay $100,000 for misuse of the 1,000 number block pooling. (TR 1/1/05)

(9) Warrior Customer Golf is facing a forfeiture of $23,500 from the FCC’s Enforcement Bureau for violation of the statutory prohibition on delivering prerecorded advertisements.

(10) RemoteLink from Naperville, Ill. has been cited for faxing unsolicited advertisements. There was no dollar amount listed but they will have to pay up to $11,000 for each new violation.
Over the last few years, as I have traveled around the country visiting different education, government, and business sites, one theme has stood out everywhere: “Doing more with less.” The question facing all of these administrators or managers is “How?” From my experience, I would offer the following advice: Step back, evaluate your processes, and re-tool. These simple phrases are the basis for what is called Business Process Improvement.

Step Back
In order to see the “big picture” of what your eventual goal should be, you need to step back. For several years, the business driver has been Quality Management. Thousands of training hours and dollars have been poured into quality programs that later fail or are abandoned. The quality trend continues today as we watch funds being invested in ISO certifications and Six Sigma programs.

We could all save our employers time and money if we practiced just two principles that form the basis of these programs: (1) Do it right the first time and (2) Be accountable. If succeeding were as simple as breaking these quality programs down to these two maxims, I could ask that you send me a check for all the money you saved.

Experience, however, has shown me that quality initiatives generally fail because change is never easy. I have seen many situations where a procedure is maintained even though it is not the best for the business and it doesn’t save time or money. It continues to be followed because it is comfortable and easy.

If you want to see improvement, be ready to step back and get uncomfortable, at least for a while.

Evaluate Your Processes
The notion of maintaining what is easy brings us to the next step. As you begin the evaluation process, you should remember to use value propositions. Ask yourself hard and critical questions. In the rush to embrace technology (to make things easier) have you looked for quick results? Have you properly evaluated the programs and trained yourself to take full advantage of their power? How many manuals and tutorials still sit shrinkwrapped on the shelf? Today so many programs are easy to load up and begin using without manuals, but how much underlying power is going unused?

Did you take time to really evaluate the under layers or just go for the glitzy screens? As you look at your processes, have you added so many layers to the procedure (trying to make things easier), that you find yourself in swivel-chair mode trying to complete a task? Peel back the layers to see what really lies beneath. Ask the hard questions and check for integrity. It will not be an easy task.

Then there is the throughput of these procedures. Sure you can print dozens of fancy reports, but can you easily produce the 2 or 4 most important ones to meet management’s needs? The reality is that, generally, only a few critical reports that measure significant data are actually needed.

Look for the value in the processes you use and relate each one to the bottom line. Too many times we are stuck in old processes that are really costing both time and money because “We’ve always done it that way.” Here is something to think about: At Sea World, when the old whales no longer perform well, do you think there is a holding pen out back where they are kept?

Retool
The final step is the point where you turn from analyzing to taking action. Make the investment to retool your procedures. Be prepared to abandon what isn’t working and implement change wherever productivity and efficiency mandate it. If you do it right, you can be accountable to management by delivering solid policies and procedures that will result in cost savings.

Good luck, and stay in touch.
Welcome New Members

Institutional Members

Shaw University, Raleigh, NC. T2
Martel Perry, Exec. Vice President, 919/546-8300 .......... mperry@shaw.edu

Tacoma Community College, Tacoma, WA. T3
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David Kocha, Campus Relations, 703/464-6516

Ruckus offers students thousands of hours of one-click entertainment, national, local, and campus-based programming, opportunities to connect with other students who share their interests, and other features that strengthen your campus community.

ACUTA Online Press Room

The following press releases have been posted to the ACUTA website since the January eNews. We encourage you to visit the ACUTA website (http://www.acuta.org/relatin/downloadfile.cfm?docnum=838) for the latest information from a variety of sources, including our corporate affiliates.

- Bitek Pays Tribute to Duane Newton
- NIU Receives Insight 100 President’s Award
- PAETEC Endorsed by Manufacturing Jewelers and Suppliers of America
- PAETEC to Acquire American Long Lines

In Memory of Duane Newton

ACUTA expresses condolences to friends and family of Bitek president Duane Newton who passed away unexpectedly on October 13, 2004. An active participant in ACUTA for 12 years, Duane was well respected as a man of integrity and compassion. He will be missed by all.

ACUTA NEWS, Vol. 34, No. 2

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