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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 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.

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 Dave Barta, University of Oregon, and Mary L. Pretz-Lawson, Carnegie Mellon University. Dave has served two terms and, therefore, will not be eligible to run for Director-at-Large in this election. Mary L. may run for a second term if she so chooses.

Current President Walter Czerniak of Northern Illinois University becomes the Immediate Past President, and President-Elect Tamara Cross of Georgetown University becomes President for '04-'05.

The position of Secretary/Treasurer, currently held by Carmine Piscopo, Providence College, was made a two-year term last year. Directors-at-Large who will serve the second year of their two-year terms are John Bradley, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and Corinne Hoch, Columbia University.

Nominations must be received by 5:00 p.m., EDT, (March 29, 2004). Send all nominations to Jeanne Jansenius, Director of Telecommunications, University of the South, 735 University Ave., Sewanee, TN 37383, or e-mail jjansenius@sewanee.edu. Phone nominations will not be accepted.

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The New Year is here, the parties are over, students are back, and winter is in full swing. Spending a few warm days at the ACUTA Winter Seminars in New Orleans was a great way to start the New Year, with some very interesting and informative sessions and excellent attendance. The number of schools implementing or considering voice over IP was significant. The sessions on Student Telecom Services dealt with many of the newer services such as cellular, WIFI, security, and cable. If you could not attend, the handouts can be purchased at the e-store on the ACUTA website.

I am extremely gratified by how well ACUTA has survived and prospered during the travel problems of the post-9/11 era. Attendance at recent seminars has been very strong, which seems a little at odds with the state of affairs in Illinois—our governor continues to bash the administration of the state’s school systems. (Interpret: Budget cuts continue.)

This begs the question: What do good leaders do in times of budgets cuts? They develop plans to spend new money! History makes it clear; budget cuts are followed by budget increases. Smart leaders use the down time to plan the next major projects and prepare several new requests to have ready when money becomes available. The cycles are short, and those who are not prepared are left behind.

Another great activity during budget downturns is reorganization. When people leave and vacancies are left open, it is a great time to look at what people are really doing and what they should be doing. At NIU we had a modem pool of more than 450 modems and a full-time technical support person. With the advent of DSL and cable modems, the usage of the modem pool dropped by 75 percent. The tech support person was assigned to eliminate and reduce modems and lines and then retrained to support the network.

Another great project at NIU was the telephone audit. NIUtel bills for all services provided. At the start of the budget downturn they implemented a "customer partner program" where the telecom service analysts visited with each department on campus and helped them audit their phone bill and services, pointing out places where they could eliminate telecom services. At first everyone was concerned that the telephone office would lose more money. As it turned out the departments were grateful and used the money for new services from telecom. Even though many of our organizations bill for services, our mission is not to make money, but to provide the best telecom products at the lowest cost to the university. Removing unused services is good for all.

If the New Year hasn’t brought relief to your campus yet, don’t despair. Plan now to be one of the big winners waiting in the wings when the purse strings are loosened a bit. Your day will come. Include attendance at ACUTA events and involvement in the ACUTA organization a part of your plans for 2004, too. It’s an investment that will net you impressive gains, for your campus and for your own professional growth.

Board Report
January

The ACUTA Board of Directors did not meet in January. Look for minutes from the February meeting next month.
When doing studies of coverage for wireless phone service on campus, it is critical to understand what you are measuring and where you are measuring it. Many different methods of measuring signal strength are available commercially, the simplest of these being a feature included in every cell phone that keeps track of the signal strength received by the phone. This is the software in the phone that calculates how many "bars" show up on the display. On most phones, the numbers used to determine which bars to show on the display can be accessed by pressing some unique sequence of keys. Alternately, you can find out the threshold numbers that cause the signal bars to activate.

Most cell phones are rated to work down to about -85dB, but having a signal stronger than -75dB (smaller absolute value means stronger signals) is more reasonable for acceptable service. Note that if you are running near the limit, if you turn your head, thereby putting it between the phone and the cell, you will push the phone over the limit and call quality will degrade.

In the demo phase of a project, a salesperson will most likely show you how well things work outdoors. A "good" salesman will even find some of the best spots on campus to demo and stay away from problem areas. If you get -75dB outdoors, you are likely to go down a minimum of 12dB when you go inside—more depending on construction and on how far inside you are. Each wall costs some signal strength; floors (particularly reinforced concrete) cost more. If the provider tries to cover campus from a single cell, the indoor case will also apply to cases where you are in shadows of buildings, with the signal blocked by concrete and steel. In this case, the phone will look for another cell, but there may not be others nearby to connect.

Another item to verify with the provider is the number of calls that they can carry simultaneously. A single cell can handle 50 or more calls, depending on the equipment installed. More equipment and more T1 backhaul to the carrier’s switch will deliver more simultaneous calls—no different from PBX trunking. If a provider talks about unlimited plans (or thousands of included minutes, which amounts to the same thing) but only puts in 50 channels worth of infrastructure, then the service is likely to be poor even if the signal is strong.

Any discussion with a carrier should include both signal strength and channel capacity as the carriers are likely to deploy for peak charging periods and then talk a lot about thousands of off-peak minutes.

*Howie Frisch is director, NA Sales, at UT Starcom and a frequent contributor to the ACUTA listserv. Contact Howie at hfrisch@utstar.com.*
Your various data applications may, in the not-so-distant future, get their own "bus pass" in a technology trend that is designed to make everything work more smoothly together.

Speaking of buses, I still get a chill when I recall those February days in the early 1970s, waiting for the Michigan State University buses each day. MSU had a good bus system, but hey, it was the middle of winter in Lansing, Michigan, and man, it was cold. Minutes seemed like hours at the bus stop, I'll tell you that.

But I digress. The bus that is our topic this month is not the MSU bus but the Enterprise Service Bus, or ESB for short. It is an architecture designed to conquer interoperability problems in a low-cost way. Essentially, it allows existing applications, services, and other data sources to simply plug into the bus—the channel that connects to all the devices—to communicate.

Continuing the vehicle analogy, think of a network in which each application, in effect, drives its own car. You know how competitive those applications can be--each one wanting a bigger, fancier car than the other ones. Traffic could become a problem, and that's not good. But if each application simply hops on the bus, commuting is easier, plus it's all more egalitarian.

So our ESB functions as a standards-based, Web service-focused backbone to connect all the various application endpoints. To assure that the applications interact well, it combines messaging, Web services, data transformation and management, and XML, or extensible markup language.

ESB is built on a model of collaborating service nodes that are deployed in "service containers" (please note this is THEIR term). These service containers are located in specific parts of the network, relative to application endpoints and the location of integration services. The applications communicate through XML messages which pass through the service containers, blissfully unaware of underlying protocols or physical location. To the messages, the containers are nothing more than in- and out-boxes.

ESB does take off in a different direction from the application server approach. An application server uses a hub-and-spoke architecture that can be subject to bottlenecking in the face of high data volumes and can create the dreaded Single Point of Failure.

The ESB structure makes it possible to upgrade, move, or replace services without having to disrupt existing systems or modify your applications. It has the benefits of numerous options for handling existing applications, a common directory, and the treatment of all applications as services, no matter how they are linked to the bus. This allows an organization to migrate at its own pace to a web service-oriented architecture.

The respected analyst organization IDC looks at the ESB as "disruptive technology" that "will revolutionize IT and enable flexible and scalable distributed computing for generations to come." Pretty bold stuff, eh? Another high-profile analyst firm, Gartner, predicts that ESB will be running in a majority of companies by 2005. So depending on whether your institution is a leading-edger or a wait-and-seer, you may be hearing much more about ESB in the coming months.

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.
More Job Cuts

According to *Telecommunications Reports* (TR 12/15/03) Sprint was to deliver pink slips to approximately 2,000 of its employees in the fourth quarter or 2003, representing 2.9% of the company's work force, which numbers about 68,000. Sprint is working toward a leaner structure and plans to increase its focus on the business and consumer markets rather than the wireline and wireless service provider groups.

The *Telecom Manager's Voice Report* (VR 12/15/03) also noted some job cuts, reporting that SBC would cut 3,000 to 4,000 jobs before the end of the year. The cuts, representing about 1.7 to 2.3% of its work force, are part of a continuing plan to cut staff and costs through employee buyouts and attrition, the company said.

During the 4Q03 Verizon reduced the work force by more than 21,000 under a voluntary separation plan. That’s nearly 10% of the 221,000 employees that Verizon reported on its payroll as of September 30. Verizon hopes to realize about $1 billion in annual cost savings as a result of the job cuts. (TR 1/1/04)

We have all seen in the news lately that the economy is on the up way. That does not seem to be the way things are going in the telecom industry as yet.

**Universal Service Fund**

The USF contribution factor has gone down again. For the first quarter in 2004 the factor will be 8.7%. During the third quarter of 2003 the factor was 9.5% and it dropped to 9.2% for the fourth quarter. Earlier in 2003 there were fears that the factor would crest above 10%. In October, Chairman Powell said the Commission's "stepped-up enforcement efforts" had led to the decline. The conventional wisdom is a low USF factor means less pressure on the Commission to undertake aggressive USF reform. (TR 12/15/03)

The FCC Enforcement Bureau is examining contributors to the USF for possible rule violations and looking for "delinquent payers," according to the Bureau chief. They have already taken enforcement action against one company for failing to pay into the fund. He also indicated that the Universal Service Administrative Co. has seen a dramatic increase in paying on time since the enforcement action began. These improved payments have helped to lower the contribution factor. (TR 12/15/03)

The FCC has taken additional steps to fight E-rate fraud. The FCC's Office of Inspector General, the FBI, and the Department of Justice have launched investigations into the E-rate. Some of the rules that the schools and libraries must follow to receive E-rate funding are under consideration in an effort to tighten the process and reduce fraud and abuse. These problems are also getting consideration at the congressional level. (TR 1/1/04)

The House Energy and Commerce Committee has been probing waste, fraud, and abuse in the E-rate system. SBC has been working with the Chicago Public School system, and a spokesman for the committee has stated, "It's troublesome to us that $5 million of equipment is sitting unused in a warehouse gathering dust. I'm sure ratepayers would like to have that money back." Some of the equipment that has been purchased and
stored dates back to 1999—a violation of the E-rate rules which require that equipment must be delivered and installed in the same year it is purchased. (ChicagoBusiness.com 1/16/04)

**Senate Retiree, a Potential Blow for Bells**

Senator John Breaux (D., La.) has announced that he will retire at the end of this congressional session. He is a senior member of the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee and the cosponsor of the Breaux-Nickles broadband parity bill in the 107th Congress. His retirement will be a loss for the Bell companies because he is among the biggest Bell supporters on the commerce committee. A CLEC representative also indicated that a couple of other retirements that might take place could be good news for the CLECs. (TR 1/1/04)

**Former FCC Chairman Hunt**

You may recall that Reed E. Hunt spent a few years on the FCC and ended up as Chairman in the early years of the Clinton administration. He was not asked to speak at the FCC’s VoIP forum on December 1, 2003. He indicated at a luncheon put on by the New America Foundation that he “was distressed at the views that were being expressed as the Commission began its VoIP debate.”

“Things don’t fall apart necessarily if you use enough baling wire and chewing gum,” he said. “That’s how I read the Dec. 1 forum, which is how can we get baling wire and chewing gum and hold this whole thing together for another 10 or 20 years until the careers of all of us have moved into retirement. … Nobody said that, and I don’t think they necessarily think it, but that’s the way they were acting.” (TR 1/1/04)

**Spam**

The New York Attorney General has filed a lawsuit targeting some of the world’s largest "spammers" for allegedly sending unsolicited e-mails to consumers while hiding behind fake identities, forged e-mail addresses, and a worldwide network of more than 500 computers. The AG says that spam "has crossed the threshold from a mere annoyance sent by small-time junk peddlers to a large financial burden on e-commerce sent by technologically sophisticated groups with international sources.” He also said, “Consumers are fed up, and we will continue to fight this fraud.” (TR 1/1/04)

President Bush signed anti-spam legislation into law, creating criminal penalties for fraudulent spam and giving the FTC the authority to create a do-not-spam list. The chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, Rep. Tauzin (R., La.), said, "Although the Internet has given us abilities beyond our wildest dreams, it has also produced endless headaches with all of the crippling congestion spam causes to computers everyday throughout the country…. This new law will end all of that nonsense and bring peace of mind back to everyone who sends and receives e-mail.” (TR 1/1/04)

We all sure hope Mr. Tauzin is right and that the FTC gets the list going soon.

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**Be a Panelist at a Regional Workshop**

ACUTA is looking for panelists for the two regional workshops that will be offered in 2004. At each workshop, we plan to offer a one-hour panel discussion with three institutional panelists discussing VoIP projects on their campuses.

If you would like to speak either at the Mid-Atlantic workshop that will be held Wednesday, March 10, at the Hilton Pikesville near Baltimore or the New York State workshop that will be held Thursday, June 17, at the Hudson Valley Resort and Spa in the Catskills, please contact Donna Hall, ACUTA’s Manager of Professional Development, via e-mail at dhall@acuta.org.

Each of the two workshops will also include a three-hour presentation by Gary Audin on "The Challenges of VoIP," lunch, and exhibits. Detailed information about both workshops is currently on the ACUTA website at http://www.acuta.org.
Wireless Local Number Portability (WLNP) allows a consumer to change wireless carriers within the same local area while keeping the same number. Wireless carriers were required to implement WLNP in the 100 largest metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) beginning November 24, 2003. This sounds straightforward enough, but has been a difficult process to implement. What follows is a summary of our experience at The Ohio State University.

The Ohio State University offers cellular service through contracts with two wireless carriers to students, faculty, and staff. The university currently manages more than 2,300 active accounts and provides all aspects of customer support. Since the university is located in one of the 100 largest MSAs, there was concern regarding how WLNP would impact service to the university and ultimately to our customers.

With WLNP, the actual porting of numbers takes place between carriers. Since our customers contact us directly for all changes, it was unclear how we would need to initiate requests for our customers and how smoothly the process would go.

We began discussions with our two carriers as to their state of readiness well in advance of the November 24 deadline. Although both carriers frequently mentioned WLNP in meetings, we were unable to confirm implementation details until the carriers themselves were trained, which occurred close to the deadline.

In the meantime, we attended an independently sponsored WLNP overview in October 2003. While the content focused on carriers, it represented a way for us to gain information on the process. The overview did provide some insights into the complexity of WLNP. For example, we learned that the process would require an independent troubleshooting group to resolve problems, somewhat like a clearinghouse. We also learned there was the possibility of a substantial impact on customer service, such as the inability to adequately address the demand.

Subsequently, we requested clarification from our carriers on the following concerns:

1) Who should initiate the requests and how?
2) What guidelines are available to help address frequently asked questions?
3) What training is available for our staff?
4) What are the potential billing implications?

Both carriers addressed our requests to varying degrees before the deadline. However, we were left to work out the remaining details with the carriers as requests came through on a case-by-case basis.

As the implementation date neared, we made the decision to direct all porting requests directly to a manager in our department. This removed the request from the normal service workflow and allowed the manager to coordinate details, confer with carrier representatives, and modify procedures. Each situation has had its own unique challenges, such as eligibility of the number, which forms are required, the relationships between accounts and carriers, and the verification of billing information. Working together, we were able to sort through the details, eliminate some unnecessary steps, and begin to process requests.

Actual results on the part of the carriers have been mixed and are probably representative of what has taken place in the marketplace. Porting requests have not been numerous, but have required an inordinate amount of time from both the university and the carriers. Since November 24, there have been a total of 10 requests, two leaving the university and eight coming into the university. These WLNP's have taken place

*continued on page 8*
between university carriers and between university carriers and outside carriers. The challenges have ranged from difficulties in matching billing information between carriers to technical bugs that were neither completely explained nor understood. Of the ten accounts mentioned, nine have been completed, but outside of the expected industry time line of two-and-one-half hours. Actual time has been in terms of days or weeks. One account is still pending, cannot be activated, and has been elevated to higher support levels within the carrier hierarchy. In the meantime, the old service is still active and waiting to be ported.

In addition to the ten requests already mentioned, one university number was unintentionally ported from one university carrier to another, and the carriers are still working through this. In the interim, they are making certain accommodations to minimize inconvenience to the customer.

The common theme, as previously mentioned, is the unique aspect of each request. From lessons learned thus far, we offer two additional situations to keep in mind. First, when a number is ported out, it may be moved temporarily from the university’s account to the original carrier’s retail side before being ported to the new carrier. The potential billing impact of this is that the customer may be billed retail service charges from the carrier.

Secondly, the carriers involved must still accommodate the porting process, although the customer making the request may owe termination fees and other outstanding charges. However, the new carrier may require the customer to pay an additional deposit before accepting their request.

Today we continue to work with our carriers to fine tune the processes and accommodate porting requests between carriers in a timely manner. With each new request received, however, new issues arise that need to be addressed. The bottom line is, the process takes considerable more time to complete and may be more costly than originally anticipated. Our responsibility is to make sure customers initiating WLNP requests are aware of this.

Upload Documents to the ACUTA Resource Library

A new feature has been added to the "MY ACUTA" portion of the ACUTA portal/Web page which will allow online uploading of documents being contributed to the ACUTA Resource Library. This feature is accessible to anyone who has registered their login and password for the portal and can be accessed by clicking on "My ACUTA" in the upper right corner of the Web page.

If you are not sure you have a Web preferences account, use the URL: http://www.acuta.org/myacuta.

Now when someone on the listserv asks you for a document and several other people say they’d like it as well, you have the option of posting it to the Resource Library and referring everyone to it there. It will also stay there for others who may need it later. Submitted documents will be reviewed by ACUTA staff for appropriate content and then posted, generally within 24 hours.

The Resource Library currently contains 114 documents including 47 RFPs, 22 position descriptions, 7 campus directory samples, and 38 documents of general interest. They can be listed by these categories or searched by keyword. All have been contributed by ACUTA members. Access the library and the document-upload feature by going to the URL: http://www.acuta.org/Dynamic/Library/index.cfm.

Enabling electronic submission of Resource Library documents was an action item in the ACUTA strategic plan. It is one part of the ongoing effort to improve and enhance core resources available to ACUTA members.
New Safeguards Against ID Theft

According to a report released by the FTC in January, Internet-related fraud accounted for 55 percent of the consumer fraud complaints filed in 2003, and identity theft topped the list for the fourth year in a row. Last fall, the FTC reported that 9.9 million Americans were victims of identity theft in 2003.

Responding to this epidemic of crime, Congress has renewed the Fair Credit Reporting Act and included strong identity-theft provisions. Free credit reports, a national fraud-alert system, and requirements to omit Social Security or credit card numbers from receipts were among the revisions to the legislation. (View the bill by searching for HR.2622 at http://thomas.loc.gov.)

In addition, the Financial Services Roundtable, which represents 100 institutions handling about 70 percent of the economy's financial transactions, has designed an Identity Theft Assistance Center. Beginning May 1, 2004, victims of identity theft may make one phone call to their local bank, which will set in motion a series of alerts and verification procedures.

Certain provisions of the revised legislation may affect procedures on your campus. ACUTA's Legislative and Regulatory Affairs Committee recommends that you check out the website or pass the information along to your legal department to be sure your campus business transactions and data management policies are in compliance.

Institutional Excellence Award Deadline Is February 6

Has your campus undertaken a project that you feel exemplifies excellence in communications technology and deserves special recognition? If so, you should enter the competition for the ACUTA Institutional Excellence Award, ACUTA's most prestigious award, recognizing communications technology excellence and professionalism.

This award is presented each year to as many as three universities and colleges in each of three enrollment categories: Category 1, fewer than 5,000 students; Category 2, 5,000-15,000 students; Category 3, more than 15,000 students.

Winners are announced at a special luncheon at the Annual Conference, and each is presented with an exquisite piece of crystal and two complimentary registrations for an ACUTA Annual Conference.

Please take a few minutes and fill out the application form available at http://www.acuta.org/relation/downloadfile.cfm?docnum=437.

Post Jobs Online

Does your department have a position available? ACUTA members are a great resource. Finding qualified applicants has been a tradition at ACUTA events for more than 30 years, and posting those positions online just got easier. See for yourself! Post your available positions or read current job listings at: http://www.acuta.org/Dynamic/ Jobs/index.cfm

Corporate affiliates may also post positions that specifically require experience in communications technology in higher education.

There is no charge for this member-only service.
Welcome New Members

Institutional Member
Livingstone College, Salisbury, NC. T1
http://www.livingstone.edu
Stanley Bryant, Asst. VP IET, Dir. of Telecom. 704/216-6037

University of Wisconsin, River Falls, WI. T2
http://www.uwrf.edu
Jason Winget, Student Services IT Manager, 715/425-4663

Associate Member
Catholic Health System/Sisters of Charity Hospital, Buffalo, NY
Douglas Torre, Dir., Networking & Technical Services, 716/862-1779

Corporate Affiliate Member

Copper Member
5G-Wireless Communications, Inc., Charlotte, NC
http://www.5GWireless.com
Matthew Bradbury, Director, East Coast, 704/814-0190

5G-Wireless produces next-generation wireless technology that cost-effectively and securely extends the distance, user capacity, and non-line-of-sight (NLOS) connectivity of your campus network. 5G's long-range-NLOS roaming to 802.11 PCMCIA cards reduces most deployment costs by 55%.

Register for Regional Workshops

Topic: The Challenges of VoIP
Presenter: Gary Audin, Delphi, Inc.

In addition to Audin's presentation, a panel of local members will discuss VoIP on their campuses. Vendors are invited to participate in the exhibit hall as well.

Mid-Atlantic Region
Date: Wednesday, March 10
Location: Hilton Pikesville, Baltimore

New York State
Date: Thursday, June 17
Location: Hudson Valley Resort & Spa, Kerhonkson

Audin's presentation will be repeated, a different panel of local members will share their experiences, and, again, vendors are expected for the exhibit hall.

For more information about the agenda or to register for these events, visit the ACUTA website at http://www.acuta.org.