ACUTA asks reconsideration of 10-XXX decision

"Institutions of higher learning will be required to redirect substantial financial resources away from their primary mission of educating students to replace telecommunications equipment" if they are not exempted from requirements to provide their students with 10-XXX access to long distance carriers and operator services providers.

Record attendance for seminar

Denver seminar best-rated ACUTA event ever held

A record turnout of attendees for a seminar - more than 250 not counting exhibitors - gave the Sept. 15-18 meeting the highest rating ever for an ACUTA event - 8.9 on a scale of 10.0.

More than one/third of the attendees filled out evaluation forms, giving primary speaker Geoff Tritsch 9.18 for knowledge of the subject - Student Services - and 9.21 for presenting information appropriate for the seminar.

Presentations by five ACUTA members earned an average rating of 8.53.

The last time Student Services was an ACUTA seminar topic - Memphis in 1989 - attendance also set a record. That attendance...

Inside this Issue...

- President's message, 3
- Wireless alternative to cable, 4
- AT&T donates computers, 5
- ACUTA budget for 1991-92, 8
- Voice messaging is hit, 9
- Publications Editor profiled, 10

A record attendance for an ACUTA seminar - approximately 250 - filled the meeting hall at the Hyatt Regency Denver. The last time Student Services was a seminar topic - Memphis in 1989 - attendance also set a record.

Services help attract best students

Selling telecommunications services to students involves a series of "decisions within decisions," Geoffry Tritsch explained to the record seminar crowd assembled in Denver to learn more about this ever popular topic.

Every institution is different, he reminded his listeners, and a system must be tailored to meet the needs of a specific campus. Issues in student services are more questions of business rather than questions of technology, he continued. Many colleges look to the business world for management models, which he acknowledged as a good concept. Some colleges, unfortunately, choose the wrong business as a pattern for their telecom operations, he pointed out.

The telecom operation on cam-

(Please turn to page 2)
Student Services

(Continued from page 1)

pus is more like the telecom operation that a large business runs for its own needs than a public telephone company, he declared.

The determining factor in many questions faced by the colleges and universities in the student services business is: How much of the traditional “phone company” operation do you want to run yourself? That question may largely but not entirely be answered with the “bottom line” question: What will be the most valuable to the institution?

In-house operations tend to be more cost effective, he noted. But many institutions employ a combination of in-house and outsourced services and equipment that works best in their situation.

There are 1,457 public telephone companies in the United States, Tritisch noted. There are only 150 in the top 10 percent, however. If your campus system has 7,000 lines or more you would be in that top 10 percent, he informed his listeners.

“Should you become your own telephone company?” Tritisch asked rhetorically. “The answer is a resounding maybe,” he replied.

in true consultant fashion.

For institutions just beginning to offer student telecom services, outsourcing most services, such as using central office switching, relying on service bureaus for call detail or billing might be the prudent course.

“More operations can be shifted in-house as you gain experience, build staff and invest in equipment,” he advised.

In-house and out-sourcing alternatives are available as answers for many of the basic issues, such as switching and long distance service, Tritosch explained.

If you already have PBX services for your faculty and administrative phones, using Centrex for a new student phone system might be the best choice. You can put student services on a separate PBX or enlarge or replace your existing PBX to accommodate the additional lines.

Costs and administrative control will most likely be the determining factors. There are advantages to having separate switching for student services. Perhaps the biggest advantage is fraud prevention.

Billing can be handled by the college or a service bureau. If a service bureau is in charge certain that responsibility for fraud and uncollectable bills is distributed equitably between the college and the service bureau.

If billing is kept on campus, basic phone service can be billed separately or added to the housing contract.

Authorization codes can help prevent fraud, and you may choose the number of digits in the codes and determine whether they will be “station specific.”

Regardless of who is responsible for unpaid bills, call detail records should be monitored at least daily. Requiring deposits and setting up credit limits with automatic cutoffs (Please turn to page 8)

Denver: Largest seminar, best-rated ACUTA event

(Continued from page 1)

was barely surpassed by the 1991 Ft. Lauderdale Winter Seminar.

“I was very impressed with the entire scope of the presentation,” wrote an attendee attending their first ACUTA seminar. Things were on time, the sound system was especially good, and Tritisch did an excellent job.

“T'm from a small institution and especially appreciated Craig Dunton's presentation. Everyone I met at the seminar was very friendly.

“T'm looking forward to attending other ACUTA functions in the future.”

“Seminar was rich with valuable information that I can take back to my campus,” wrote another attendee. “Good insights were provided for both small and large institutions.”

“I was able to glean useful information when the presenters talked about day-to-day problems and resolutions,” added a third attendee.

Exhibits were rated at 7.68, hotel facilities scored 8.66, while social activities were graded 8.94 and the mile-high, Rocky Mountain metropolis rated 9.13 as a location.
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Paula Loendorf,
University of North Dakota

ACUTA was on a Rocky Mountain high in Denver with the largest seminar attendance in its history.

Not only did a record number of registrants for a seminar – nearly 250 – attend the sessions on student services, they gave it the highest rating of any ACUTA event ever – 8.9 on a scale of 10!

Some claim it was the topic that attracted the large numbers, others think it was the mountains and the west, but whatever, the high attendance and positive comments are evidence that ACUTA is strong and well.

Reports on the event are found elsewhere in this newsletter but it is important to recognize the success of this organization in providing worthwhile information to its members.

The work of the Regulatory and Legislative Affairs Committee was a topic of much discussion during the Denver meeting. In addition to a formal presentation by Randy Collett the committee chair, there were numerous small group discussions in informal settings.

Member opinions on the role of ACUTA in the regulatory arena are diverse. Some believe ACUTA should avoid any effort that could be construed as lobbying because it might jeopardize our tax exempt status. Others believe ACUTA should monitor federal legislation and regulations and inform members of their effect on higher education telecom services. Most seem to support the concept of monitoring and informing on most issues combined with taking a more active role in certain, particularly harmful circumstances.

It is important for members to know that the Regulatory and Legislative Affairs Committee and the Strategic Planning Committee will be evaluating ACUTA’s future role in the regulatory arena and making recommendations.

Although ACUTA has secured legal assistance and is working to obtain an exemption from the Operator Services Act for the special needs of colleges and universities, members should not construe this as setting a precedent for future activity. This “aggregator” issue has such an extremely negative effect on higher education that the Board believed it essential to take an active role in fighting these regulations. However, such an active role may not be necessary in all cases.

The Strategic Planning Committee had its first meeting immediately before the Denver seminar. They had an opportunity to work with representatives from Glen H. Tecker, Consultants, the firm which is assisting ACUTA with obtaining member input through focus groups. Fifteen members were randomly selected from the Denver attendees and interviewed by the firm. The Committee intends to proceed with two more focus groups.

The Program Committee was restructured this year and six individuals have agreed to serve on it along with the Program Director Mal Reader. Committee members include: Susan J. Fisher, University of Connecticut; Aaron J. Harris, Memphis State University; Bonnie J. Johnson, University of Kentucky; John Meckle, Yale University; JoEllen Smirit, Carleton College, and Del Combs, ACUTA Executive Director.

This committee has spent considerable time developing outlines for the two concurrent seminars scheduled for Tucson, January 8-11. The topics include “Managing the Telecommunications Resource” as well as “Distance Learning and Video-teleconferencing.” These are shaping up well and you will soon receive the seminar brochures in the mail.

In the last issue, I announced that Florenza Albert-Howard would be ACUTA’s first Publications Director. Unfortunately, she is no longer employed at a university and, therefore, unable to be active in ACUTA. Recognizing the need to get the Publications Committee off to a good, although somewhat late start this year, I have asked Mike Grunder of Yale University, former ACUTA President, to take charge of this important task. Other committee members will be appointed soon. One of my goals is to draw more new people into leadership positions. Mike has been around the track a few times, having served in most every position on the ACUTA board. But when you need someone who can and will step in on short notice to get a program off and running, still sometimes the best decision is to call on an old reliable.

In the future, I hope one of the members appointed to the Publications Committee will be willing to step into the Director’s position.

Each time I write this column I am reminded of the continual change and growth that ACUTA is currently experiencing. It is, indeed, challenging and exciting to be a part of an organization of such vitality!
Cable alternative: Three types of wireless LANs

By John Pryma

There has been considerable discussion in the trade press recently of various types of wireless local area networks. These systems may be grouped into three categories: Infrared, Microwave and Spread Spectrum.

Currently wireless LANs can accommodate data requirements which range from RS-232, operating at 230 Kb/s, to Ethernet at 10 Mb/s and Token Ring at 16 Mb/s.

Wireless is appropriate for those installations where hard wiring is difficult to accomplish or where mobility of the computing equipment is a key consideration. In colleges and universities wireless can solve problems in buildings containing asbestos, allow LAN installations in historic buildings and reach areas of the campus where cableways have been filled.

Selection of the best wireless system for a specific application requires consideration of both data functions and physical topography. A system obviously has to conform to existing data requirements, such as Ethernet or Token Ring, it needs to be cost effective and the topology needs to match the requirements of the facility. The available systems are:

INFRARED is a line-of-sight application which is intended for an open office environment, maximum distances of 80 feet between the transmitter/receiver modules. These modules are normally positioned close to the ceiling so that the light path between them is not interrupted inadvertently. An infrared system can literally be installed in minutes and consists of a base unit, which can accommodate up to six computers operating on a Token Ring network, together with two transmit/receive modules to provide for redundancy in terms of having the system configured into two counter-rotating rings as shown in Figure 1.

MICROWAVE utilizes an 18 Ghz microwave frequency. The service area for an Ethernet network is accomplished by using a microcell approach. Typical range is 40 feet, but the radio frequency can penetrate several office walls so that private offices can be part of this network. Figure 2 shows a microcell.

SPREAD SPECTRUM, another radio technology, operates in the 902-928 MHz band reserved for Industrial, scientific and medical applications. Because the resultant signal is in the noise level, licensing is not required. Indoors, the signal can travel hundreds of feet, while between buildings it can accommodate distances of up to six miles. Current spread spectrum signals can only accommodate RS-232 data rates and can actually go up to about 1 Mb/s. Figure 4 compares spread spectrum to conventional radio and Figure 3 illustrates a network.

As Table 1 (above) shows, the cost of both infrared and microwave approaches for Token Ring and Ethernet systems are, on a per node basis, roughly comparable to those of hard-wired copper systems. Consequently, for installations, which are hard to wire or where there are a lot of moves and changes, wireless is cost effective. Spread spectrum cost is at least three times the cost of the wire, but this technology has some off-setting advantages. Spread spectrum is the only approach that allows for easy mobility so that a device can be mounted on a moveable vehicle, such as a forklift in a warehouse. Because of its greater range, spread spectrum can be used to bridge two networks together. This is especially cost effective where buildings are separated by a thoroughfare, normally requiring the leasing of T-1 lines to accommodate information transfer. Using spread spectrum can result in the equipment paying for itself in several months time. Spread spectrum can transmit 230 Kb/s signals at distances of up to six miles and data rates as high as 1 Mb/s for a distance of one mile.

Table 1

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Fig. 1 - Infrared Token Ring Network

Fig. 2 - Microcell Local Area Network

Fig. 3 - Spread Spectrum Local Area Network

Fig. 4 - Spread Spectrum vs. Conventional Radio

[Please turn to next page]
AT&T gives $1.1 million in computers for education initiative

Eastern Kentucky University has received a $1.1 million gift of computer equipment from AT&T to support the University's efforts to help implement elements of education reform in Kentucky.

The gift to EKU's College of Education will establish computer laboratories at the Laboratory School, the nation's largest and Kentucky's only laboratory school for preparing classroom teachers. The gift also supports a writing laboratory, and an instructional laboratory for the Department of Special Education.

The state-of-the-art computer award from AT&T's University Equipment Donation Program is one of the top awards in the nation this year to a college or university and the only AT&T grant to a Kentucky institution, according to Cyril Matthews, an AT&T UEDP manager.

Matthews said the gift is a continuation of "a long and distinguished partnership" with EKU and is designed to help the university provide leadership in encouraging use of computers in the public schools, as required by the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990. "As Kentucky's largest developer of teachers, Eastern Kentucky University is a natural leader of education reform efforts," Matthews said.

"A significant component of the new state-wide curriculum emphasizes technology in the classroom," he said. "This means that Kentucky schools of tomorrow will increase their reliance upon information technology to assist teachers and students. All new, and current, teachers must have extensive training in the use of computers for these purposes. The AT&T-sponsored project at EKU will use our products to set up computer labs for curriculum development and instructional support," he continued. "This will aid in the College of Education's efforts to be a "rallblazer in Kentucky's use of information technology as a part of tomorrow's day-to-day teaching and learning in public schools." Matthews noted that the gift is "a great investment in our shared tomorrow because it helps public education."

EKU President Hanly Funderburk commended AT&T for its long-standing commitment to education at all levels. He said the gift will enhance the university's efforts to help meet the needs of school personnel throughout Kentucky.

"Certainly, Kentucky has become a national leader in education reform," Dr. Funderburk said, "and helping school teachers and administrators understand and implement elements of reform is a high priority at EKU. This gift from AT&T will be of great value in these efforts, particularly those directed toward encouraging instructional use of technology," he said. "Our partnership with AT&T will benefit our university and laboratory school students, our faculty, and the countless numbers of school teachers and administrators who come to the laboratory school to see innovative programs at work and to learn how to implement them."

Dr. Kenneth Henson, dean of EKU's College of Education - which ranks in the top 5 percent in production of teachers and school administrators among the nation's 1,300 teacher education programs - said the AT&T gift helps Eastern become a leader in all education reform elements.

"This gift will allow us to introduce our students to the latest in computer technology, teach them to use this technology in planning lessons, and allow them to apply these innovations at the laboratory school," Henson said.

"The college and university will be able to help in-service teachers meet the reform goals and also prepare new teachers, counselors, and administrators who will begin their professions skilled in these reform elements.

"With this technology, the College of Education will establish a national data base on school reform, helping schools throughout the nation improve their research and instruction," he said.

"I know of no other program anywhere that will rival the excellence of this program."

EKU's College of Education dean cited the university's involvement in education reform.

* The laboratory school, which serves as a school-based management (school council) and non-graded primary demonstration site for public schools working to comply with KERA.

* The EKU-organized 22-school district educational consortium to provide individualized and coordinated professional development for public school personnel.

* A series of seminars, hosted by the College of Education featuring the nation's leading experts in non-graded primary programs and performance-based student assessment.

Response from school personnel across the state has been "overwhelming." (Please turn to page 6)
10-XXX petition
(Continued from page 1)

simply by reprogramming their equipment must do so by March 16, 1992. Those whose equipment can be modified to process 10-XXX dialing selectively for $15 per line or less have until March 15, 1993, to make the transition. All other aggregators have until April 17, 1997, or upon installation of new equipment to offer the service. (Please see August 1991 ACUTA News.)

Before filing ACUTA's petition, President Paula Loendorf, Executive Director Del Combs and Legislative and Regulatory Affair Committee Chair Randy Collett, accompanied by attorney Anne Jones, held conversations with four of the five Commission members.

Combs, Collett and Jones met with Commissioners Andrew C. Barrett and Ervin S. Duggan on Sept. 6, Combs, Loendorf and Jones met with Commissioners James Quello and Sherrie P. Marshall on Sept. 9. The latter three also met with the senior staff of Commission Chairman Alfred Sikes.

“Those meetings gave the commissioners a chance to hear from university telecommunications administrators just what kind of impact the 10-XXX and other aggregator rules will have on higher education in the United States,” said Combs.

“It was obvious to us that the commissioners found our information enlightening and everyone we talked with at the FCC came to express sympathy for our position. We have reason for cautious optimism, therefore, that the 10-XXX requirement can be lifted.”

Before going any further - especially to remove colleges and universities from the “aggregator” classification - the commissioners want the concurrence of the congressional leaders who pushed through the Operator Services Act, the ACUTA Executive Director pointed out.

On Oct. 5, Combs, Collett and Anne Jones' associate Randy May were joined by Anne Gross of NACUBO (National Association of College and University Business Officers) for meetings with the staff of the House and Senate Subcommittees whichdrafted the operator services legislation.

We have reason for cautious optimism that the 10-XXX requirement can be lifted.

“We had open and frank discussions with the Congressional staff people of the wide variance we found between their position and ours,” Combs reported. “They were very emphatic about ensuring that college students enjoy the benefits of competition in the telecommunications industry such as long distance rates equal to or lower than AT&T's.”

The delegation, which represented the American Council of Education as well as ACUTA and NACUBO, did make progress, however, in explaining the adverse affects, especially the increased costs, that colleges and universities as well as their students will face if higher education is regulated in tandem with the hospitality and transportation industries, Combs added.

“We were able to show that the market place had eliminated most companies that were responsible for the problems and abuses that cropped up shortly after divestiture in the mid-1980s when operator services were opened to competition,” Combs pointed out. “We conceded that some form of consumer protection might be appropriate for student users, and the Congressional staffs conceded that less costly and intrusive regulation might be in order.”

Additional meetings with key people on Capitol Hill are planned. If the 10-XXX petition is successful and enough favorable responses are received from Congressional leaders, ACUTA's attorneys may ask the FCC to re-open the entire question of colleges and universities as aggregators.

ACUTA President Paula Loendorf asked the ACUTA Board to endorse the proposal of ACUTA, NACUBO and ACE to join forces in addressing regulatory issues.

“We are very pleased and encouraged to have ACE, whose membership is made up of college and university presidents, as well as NACUBO add their support to ACUTA's actions in this effort,” Loendorf stated. “ACE and NACUBO, recognizing ACUTA as the institutional experts with the necessary data to substantiate the concerns of higher education, have pledged their substantial support if ACUTA continues to take the lead in this effort. Together, the three organizations represent practically every institution of higher learning in the United States.”

In light of the favorable responses of the commissioners in the September meetings to ACUTA’s explanation of the effect that their latest ruling will have on higher education, the ACUTA Board of

AT&T grant
(Continued from page 5)

- Establishment of an interdisciplinary council of EKU faculty members to help school districts establish Family Resource and Youth Services centers and services.

Specifically, the AT&T gift provides fully equipped computer laboratories including computers, printers, supporting hardware, software, and installation, for the following:

- A laboratory each for Model Laboratory School's elementary, middle, and high school programs.

- A laboratory to be housed in the College of Education to be used by students preparing for careers in education.

- A writing laboratory for university students, housed in the Department of English.

- And a laboratory for the Department of Special Education.

Since 1984, AT&T's University Equipment Donation Program has provided nearly $270 million in computer and data networking products to colleges and universities nationwide. This year, AT&T will award $22 million of equipment to 96 schools, including EKU.
Directors authorized the law firm selected by the Legislative and Regulatory Affairs Committee to petition for exemption of colleges and universities from the 10-XXX requirements.

Attorney Jones, a partner in the Washington/Atlanta firm of Sutherland, Asbill and Brennan, emphasized three main points in ACUTA's petition on behalf of college and university telecommunications operations.

- The Commission failed to recognize adequately that many colleges and universities have private branch exchanges (PBXs) incapable of "reading" or transmitting 10-XXX calls. Substantial and expensive software modifications or total replacement of costly equipment would be required for compliance.

Colorado State University, which would have to replace its PBX, at a cost of $3.5 to $5 million, to make 10-XXX dialing available, was cited as an example. One manufacturer, NEC, reports that two-thirds of its switch models do not have selective 10-XXX screening capabilities, the petition added. These models are considered obsolete and the cost of modification would probably exceed the cost of replacement.

Even some of the most popular equipment manufactured by AT&T, which appears to be the only carrier actively seeking to require unblocking of 10-XXX codes from all locations, simply cannot process 10-XXX calls, the petition noted.

After two years of effort, AT&T was able to produce only a "patchwork" solution to the problem for the University of New Hampshire. Entered as evidence was an August 1991 letter from AT&T informing this ACUTA member that the 10-XXX issue, "a problem for some time . . . is not easily resolved in our present product line."

According to a survey of ACUTA members, 10 percent of those responding will have to replace their entire telecommunications systems to comply. More than one-third of those responding had no idea how much compliance would cost - often because equipment vendors were unable to provide estimates. Of those who could obtain estimates, 14 percent expected costs ranging from $100,000 to $500,000, and six percent predicted costs greater than $500,000.

- By requiring the unblocking of 10-XXX access, the Commission exposed colleges and universities to an undue risk of fraud, something which the Act admonished the FCC to ensure against.

Telephone fraud is already a substantial problem on college and university campuses. Because college students are not transients but long-term users of their universities' phone systems, they have ample time and opportunity to determine how to place fraudulent calls. Sixty percent of those members responding to the ACUTA survey have experienced toll fraud in the past three years. The only reason that many universities do not currently have significant toll fraud problems is that they block 10-XXX access. Local exchange carrier screening and toll restrictors are simply not reliable means of preventing the toll fraud created by 10-XXX access - particularly when access is gained through 10-XXX 0-dialing.

By requiring long distance carriers and operator service providers to establish 800 or 950 access numbers within six months, as the FCC did in its Report and Order 91-35, the agency acknowledged that 800 and 950 access numbers apparently do not create the toll fraud risk associated with 10-XXX dialing sequences. Also, the use of these numbers is widely used and understood. Requiring 10-XXX access in addition is regulatory overkill given the compliance cost and "undue" risk of toll fraud.

- Requiring colleges and universities to use their very limited budgets to replace telecommunications equipment prior to the end of its useful life reduces the resources available to educate students. Such a trade-off is certainly not in the public interest and would hinder the advance of education that President Bush has established as a national priority.

Exempting colleges and universities from the definition of aggregators generally, and from the regulations that will require the unblocking of 10-XXX access codes specifically, would directly and materially aid in efforts to upgrade and expand higher education.

Money that would otherwise be spent on replacing useful telecommunications equipment and paying for unauthorized telephone calls will then be available to educate our youth.
run: 11 percent day, 46 percent evening and 43 percent night/weekend.

Because of the volume of long distance service that a college or university buys, service can be provided to students at rates equal to or even less than AT&T rates while still retaining a margin for the school. "It's truly a win/win proposition," he said.

One major carrier estimates that the average student long distance bill comes to $17.80 with $5.34 of that or 23 percent as gross surplus for the institution.

Long distance as well as local service can be out-sourced with the various options for call accounting, billing and operator services.

"The more functions that the campus telecom department performs itself, the greater the potential for surplus. But the potential for loss rises accordingly," Tritsch pointed out.

The revenue from student resale can augment the campus telecommunications infrastructure so that more advanced educational services, such as data transmission to and from residence hall rooms, can be made available.

Such services also make residence in campus housing more attractive to students and boost your housing department's occupancy rates.

The surplus from student services can make a college telecom department self sustaining, but the real reason for having them is to serve the students. Students are becoming more discriminating buyers, and most students today expect to have telecommunication services available. An institution that can offer telecom services without increasing tuition and fees will have a competitive advantage.

"By contributing to the strategic goals of your institution, your telecom department will be elevated in value and prestige. Administrative and academic computing departments have seen this for years," Tritsch pointed out.

"Everyone on campus will have an eye on your surplus no matter how little it may be," Tritsch cautioned. Get an agreement up front on where the money will go if you realize a surplus. Most of your colleagues on campus won't believe that telecommunications can be a money saver. And it's easier for them to pass up what they doubt will come in."

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**Summary of ACUTA Budget**


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**Seminar tapes available**

tape recordings of the Denver Seminar sessions are available from the ACUTA office for $70 plus shipping. Send written request or purchase order to: Eleanor Smith, ACUTA Business Manager, Lexington Financial Center, Suite 2420, Lexington, KY 40507.
Voice messaging is creating ‘culture change’

Voice messaging is “creating a culture change for the University of Manitoba,” says Donna Wuerch, head of telecommunications and mail services. “And I am talking about people who don’t like ‘talking to machines’ and those who must be persuaded to leave detailed messages.”

Before a three-month trial of voice messaging, Wuerch anticipated that 300 voice mailboxes would be required by the end of the second year of use. Response so far, however, indicates that as many as 1,000 may be needed by the end of 1992.

“Interest has been generated primarily by word of mouth. We didn’t do any advertising or promotion. We didn’t even send out memos to people we thought might be interested.”

Voice messaging became available Aug. 1 to any department/office on the university’s two campuses. Orders are being filled on a first-come, first-serve basis.

The “message” is that our median voice messaging service frees office staff to concentrate on their work without having to answer other people’s telephones, Wuerch explains. Staff calling from home, or any where in the world, with a touch tone phone can access the system at any time. And standard information can be provided by automated attendant.

A caller can leave a message in a voice mailbox, pick up messages from their mailbox, reply to messages and even tag messages to a number of other mailboxes with one call.

Staff in the trial period found that they could reduce the number of “telephone tag” calls with staff who may be teaching class, working in the lab, doing research in the library or are busy with appointments.

With voice messaging, one staff member completed an assignment in one hour that in the past usually spanned three days because of the exchanges and callbacks between departments.

“It is far easier and more efficient to respond to a request that describes fully what is needed so that the answer can be prepared before the call is returned,” staff have found.

We based decision on testimonials of ACUTA colleagues.

Continuing Education has set up an information menu and an RSVP line which gives out an information menu to callers and retains information from them. This is particularly helpful for long distance callers who must call after office hours.

“A lot of service departments on campus have applications that are tailor made for voice mail, because they are constantly giving out the same information,” Wuerch notes. “Rather than allocation staff to answer routine inquiries, budget conscious units have switched to voice information lines and voice information menus.

“Like many other universities, we have faced tremendous budgetary restraints and cut-backs this year,” Wuerch relates. “The dilemma was, ‘how can we justify the expense of the new, yet obviously valuable technology’?

“We took the plunge and acquired the system based in large part on the testimonials of my colleagues in ACUTA who said their staff members would ‘break the legs’ of anyone who took their voice messaging away,” she adds.

Departments who had their phones “cut off” during the summer because of cost have requested voice mail and justified the expense by freeing up staff time.

“I am happy to share this kind of success story with my ACUTA colleagues. Perhaps those who have not been able to justify the expense of a voice messaging system can use this testimonial as a tool for convincing their administration of its value and importance.”

Don’t forget Atlanta Oct. 23-25
‘Understanding Telecommunications’ Workshop

ACUTA Calendar

- Winter Seminar -
  Tucson, AZ
  Jan. 9-11, 1992
  HOTEL: The Westin La Paloma
  TOPICS: (separate, concurrent programs)
  - Managing Telecom Resources
  - Distance Learning/Teleconferencing:
    Technology and Applications

- Spring Seminar -
  Lexington, KY
  April 26-29, 1992
  HOTEL: Radisson Plaza
  TOPIC: Data Communications

- 21st Annual Conference -
  San Francisco
  July 26-30, 1992
  HOTEL: The Hilton on Hilton Square
  TOPICS: Management, Regulatory Issues; Professional Growth, Voice, Data and Video, User Groups, Regional Meetings

- Fall Seminar -
  Hilton Head, SC
  Nov. 1-4, 1992
  HOTEL: Hyatt Regency
  TOPIC: Disaster Planning
Before joining ACUTA in April 1990, Bill Robinson had little knowledge of telecommunications. Having served nearly six years as director of publications for a college, he was fairly well versed in many issues of higher education. "But I wondered just how much could be said about telephone operations."

The opportunity to work for ACUTA was "a big break for me," he says today. "I've found that telecommunications and its application to higher education are very exciting. I've learned more than I ever thought possible in the 18 months I worked for ACUTA - a time which has flown by. "So many venerable fields of work and study have become obsolete, I feel privileged to be learning so much about telecommunications, a discipline that is truly on the cutting edge."

The University of Tennessee graduate was a newspaper man in Tennessee and Kentucky for 11 years prior to joining Berea College. The job of the journalist, he says, is to gather information - often complex data from diverse sources - then put it into an easily understood form for publication.

"Readers of the ACUTA News range from newcomers to veteran professionals," the publications editor notes. "Holding their attention and keeping them well informed is a challenge that I enjoy."

"I have learned a lot from attending ACUTA conferences, seminars and workshops," Robinson added. "If someone as non-technical as I can understand a presentation, then I should be able to write a report that anyone else can understand."

At ACUTA events, "I try to meet as many people as possible and find out what kind of work they do. When I learn about their jobs, I become better informed in telecommunications, and I also discover topics that would make good newsletter or monograph subjects."

While most newsletter articles are supposed to originate from ACUTA members, Robinson has found that some members don't feel comfortable writing or just can't find time to polish an article for publication. "I encourage members to submit rough drafts for me to polish up," he says. "I can return them for the author's approval and then publish them in the newsletter. Writing may not be a telecommunications expert's forte, and I don't know of any college telecom professionals who have a lot of spare time."

"I'm here to help any way I can. I don't mind helping someone with their writing, because they are in turn teaching me more about telecommunications. That's a more than fair exchange," he exclaims.

The Publications Editor is also responsible for material to promote ACUTA events. This includes gathering information and illustrations, such as photos, slides and posters, from convention and tourist bureaus about the meeting location and the attractions it offers.

A brochure is produced for each seminar but two are required for the annual conference - a preliminary brochure for promotion and another to give to members in their portfolios.

There are also numerous smaller publications that must be put together in support of ACUTA events. These include promotional flyers, evaluation forms, updated agendas and participation certificates.

News releases for the telecommunications trade press announcing ACUTA events are followed by summaries of the event proceedings. "We've received several calls already from teleconferencing vendors who have read announcements about our Tucson Winter Seminar in the trade journals," Robinson notes. Several college and industry inquiries also have been generated by reports in Communication News about the Annual Conference in St. Louis.

Thirty-two newsletters and magazines with readership in the telecommunications and higher education communities now receive ACUTA news releases as well as monthly issues of the ACUTA News.

The biggest crash course Robinson has had to take in the past 18 months regards the several aggregator/operator service provider issues.

"I first heard the term 'aggregator' in June 1990 when Ruth Michaleck and Buck Bayliff discussed it at the Understanding Telecommunications Workshop in Greensboro, NC. And I never knew there was such a thing as 10-XXX access until we published ACUTA President Bill Orrick's letter to the FCC in the September 1990 ACUTA News," he explains.

"It's hard to believe that more than a year has passed since I had my first telephone conversation with David Gross of Sutherland, Asbill and Brennan, the law firm now representing ACUTA. I've followed the issue as closely as I can and have written probably a dozen articles. And I've lost count of the telephone conversations I've had with members keeping them updated and helping them understand the issue."

"I was fortunate that Berea College gave me an early start in desktop publishing," the former newspaper editor says. "I had more than four years' experience with the Macintosh hardware and PageMaker software that ACUTA uses when I responded to the announcement that this position was open."

The future is in new technology, Robinson believes, but the "Achilles heel" of technology is the fear it generates and the difficulty that ordinary people have understanding it. "I hope I can help people take advantage of the marvelous things technology has to offer by being a common sense interpreter of technology."

Robinson and his wife, Elizabeth, live in Madison County, Kentucky, just south of Lexington, with their two daughters Emily, age 4, and Paige, 11 months.
From ACUTA Headquarters

Del Combs
Executive Director

As indicated last month, I will spend a few lines on Conference and Seminar Planning. But I want to leave space at the end for some late breaking news this morning - Oct. 8th to be exact - about information services.

As a general overview, especially for our newcomers who may not have attended a seminar or conference yet, conferences and seminars have one major commonality. They start on a Sunday afternoon (except for Tucson in January 1992) with meals and social functions about the same. Conferences are a day longer, ending on Thursday, and a banquet is added to the schedule on Wednesday evening.

Seminars generally cover a single subject in depth. (Here again, Tucson will be different with two concurrent programs running on a trial basis.) Conferences are multi-subject (approximately 30) with most repeated, a deluge of speakers and panelists, plus Regional Meetings, User Groups, Birds of a Feather, Business Meeting and more than 100 exhibit booths.

Planning for these events, especially for the conferences, begins about five or six years out due to several factors.

First, our seminars (fall, winter and spring) and conferences (summer) are only three months apart, which only gives about a 30 day "window" for scheduling an event without crowding another.

That may not be a problem as far as attendees are concerned. But the logistics of planning, publicizing and supporting an event do require a major effort by the staff and some members of the board, especially those involved with the program.

One must remember that attendance for our "seminars" since 1986 has surpassed the attendance of our conferences held prior to 1984. In 1983 the total registered attendance for two seminars and a conference came to approximately 235. Add spouses and guests for something around 300.

Compare that to now when we have three seminars (the winter seminar began in 1986) and a conference with attendance for all four totalling approximately 1,000. If you add spouses, guests and exhibitors from industry, the total comes close to 2,000, or six to seven times as many individuals to plan for than we had a few short years ago.

Now that we have a perspective on "yesterday" and "today," let me address conference planning. To start with there are only 17 cities in the U.S. (I haven't forgotten Canada) that have hotels large enough to accommodate our meeting specifications and requirements for 1996 and beyond. (I am excluding convention centers which would be too big and too costly for ACUTA.)

Yes, just like you have specifications for an RFP, ACUTA, while not nearly as complicated, has requirements for cities and hotels hosting our events.

The first step in planning the conference is a review/awareness of where your previous two or three conferences were held to maintain some continuity in serving the membership demographics. After that consideration, the potential cities in a given geographical location are placed on a short list. From that point, several steps are taken:

1) A review of how we did in those cities if it is a second time around;
2) A call to the convention and tourism centers for information about the cities and their attractions;
3) Ask other meeting planners who have been there before;
4) Consult the Official Meeting Facilities Guide, which lists details on each hotel, conference center, etc., in those cities, and
5) Use contacts and information gained through discussions with corporate hotel representatives at their booths/exhibits at the annual American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) Conference each year.

ASAE is to executive directors and meeting planners what ACUTA is to telecommunications directors.

Due to space limitations, I will stop here, now that we have two or three locations under consideration and we have the resources to come up with a final/first choice city for this conference.

Next month, I'll discuss the determining factors in selecting a hotel.

For Whom the Bells Toll

The bells of the seven regional Bell operating companies chimed an early Santa Claus tune yesterday as the federal appeals court in Washington rang the bell of the $41 billion newspaper industry and other competitors in the information field.

In a 3-0 ruling, the appeals court lifted a "stay" imposed by Federal Judge Harold Green on July 25 when he reluctantly concluded that the Bell companies had the right to expand their information services business. (For additional information, see my column in the August '91 ACUTA News.)

The effect of the order is to free the baby Bells immediately to buy firms in the information services business or to enter a business from which they had been barred under Judge Green's ruling.

(Please turn to back page)
From ACUTA Headquarters

(Continued from page 11)

Previously, the judge had allowed the Bell companies to transmit information services over their phone lines but not to own the content of the information.

The newspaper industry has vowed to continue the fight and to pursue every judicial and legislative option. However, the odds appear against them as the appeals court called Judge Green's stay "an abuse of discretion." The judges added that "the record does not contain sufficient evidence of probability" that they will rule against the Bell companies when the case is tried on its merits.

What does all this mean?

Will the newspaper publishers face more competition from "another view of the news?" Will the baby Bells grow up to be big Bells (again)? Maybe.

Maybe colleges and universities can initiate their own "access charges" to their cable system? Or maybe the telecom director will start his or her own news services for the campus. For whom will your bell toll?

Will telecom directors take the initiative and ring their own bells or will many of them just continue to pay the tolls?

Positions Available

Assistant Director for Data Communications
Univ. of South Florida

Responsibilities: Five-campus, instruction/research university/medical school on Florida west coast undertaking major upgrades of data connectivity in support of mission across large geographic area. Report to Dir. of Telecom; develop strategic/tactical plans for data communications via diverse LANS and SNA connectivity; develop/execute operation plan for same; work with personnel at all levels of university.

Requirements: Bachelor's degree, 5 yrs. technical exp. with Ethernet/Token Ring systems. 3 yrs. mgt. exp.; prefer university mgt.. SNA, TCP/IP, highspeed backbone exp.; written/oral communications skills. Salary commensurate with experience, market factors.

Send cover letter, resume, salary history to: George W. Ellis, Dir., Div. of Telecom.; Univ. of South Florida: 4202 East Fowler Ave., OPM-128; Tampa, FL 33620-7549.

ACUTA welcomes new members

The following joined ACUTA from Aug. 23 to Sept. 30.

Region 1 (Northeast)
Ralph Fasano, College of the Holy Cross
Ted Macey, Bowdoin College

Region 2 (Southeast)
Michael W. Eldridge, Morehead State Univ.
Thomas L. Horne, Univ. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
Dr. Thomas Lindolf, University of Kentucky
Betsy Myatt, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
Dan Schmidt, Liberty University
Martin Speziani, University of Miami

Region 3 (Midwest)
Donald R. Brusk, Cuyahoga Community College
Thomas Gross, Bowling Green State Univ.
Robert J. Hardig, Parkland College
Roscoe E. Labosier, Marietta College
Michael J. Miller, Wilmington College
Kerry L. Neibergall Drake University

Robert Robinson, University of Texas, Austin
Dr. Ted Rohr, St. Louis Community College

Region 4 (West)
Gerry D. McCallum, Seattle University
Joe Vasquez, Stanford University

Region 5 (Canada)
Laval Du Braul, Université du Québec

Corporate Affiliates

BRONZE
Digital Sound Corporation
Sunbelt Business Computers

COPPER
Stevenson-Hayes Co.
Bell Atlantic
ALLTEL Service Corp.
Consolidated Network, Inc.
Eloit & Associates

systems Analyst
Telecom. Data Services
Mississippi State Univ.

Requirements: BS degree in computer science, related field; 8 years exp. in IBM environment (two years working directly with AS/400 or System/38 and applications in native AS/400 of S/38); supervisory experience.

Salary depends on qualifications, experience.

Review of applications begins Nov. 15, continue until filled.

Submit cover letter, resume to: Richard Tollison, Director, Telecom Data Services, PO Box 6090, Mississippi State, MS 39762.

ACUTA and its member institutions are equal opportunity employers.