Technology Liaison’s Meeting—December 11

Present: Dave Rawson; Jerry Sorge; Maureen Power; Ramsay MacInnes; Susan Rezen; Tony Tan; June Allard; Ken Garello; Hemant Pendharkar

Summary: The purpose of this meeting was to review departmental software planning and development strategies and to discuss general parameters and policies for individual network data storage.

I. Departmental Software Planning and Development Strategies

- Information Technologies recommends that academic departments submit their lab software requests by no later than January 6 so that lab machines can be updated.
- The liaison group reviewed IT’s Software Development and Planning Checklist (http://wwwfac.worcester.edu/it/policies/pdf/hardware_software_development1.pdf)
  - IT explained how software is installed and maintained in computing labs.
  - IT emphasized that the large number of labs on campus (36) necessitates automated maintenance.
  - Each lab has a software image that’s copied to each machine.
  - Deviations from a lab’s standard image are possible, though this creates a significant increase in labor.
- IT will develop a central database to help academic departments coordinate discipline-specific software record keeping.
- Academic departments are encouraged to consult with Information Technologies early in their software planning processes to ensure timely service.
  - IT emphasized that it’s important that they receive fully function copies of software for testing purposes before it is purchased to ensure that the software will be compatible with the campus’ infrastructure.
  - Faculty/academic departments are encouraged to consider student versions of discipline specific software to better manage costs and to increase accessibility.
  - Academic departments are encouraged to work together in specifying common software. This will yield more consistent student expectations and better leverage financial/computing resources. Information Technologies will help identify similar software requirements and assist in brokering relationships between academic departments.

II. Network Data Storage

- Information Technologies reviewed recent infrastructure upgrades that enable network data storage for faculty, staff, and students.
- The advantage of network data storage is that it permits users to access their data from any computer connected to the campus network; additionally, faculty and staff data stored on the campus network will be backed up daily.
- Because so few users rely on network data storage, no formal policy governing its use is in place at this time.
- Network data storage is a numbers game; there are approximately 400 faculty/staff accounts and approximately 6000 student accounts. Any storage quotas must take into account these multipliers.
- At this time, there are a small number of users who consume a disproportionate amount of network data storage resources.
- Additionally, the College could have potential legal exposure if pirated or illegal materials are stored on its network.
Consensus was reached among the meeting attendees on the following issues:
- that network data storage is a shared community resource that has specific limitations;
- that network data storage be considered appropriate for high use and highly critical files;
- that network data storage be used for activities directly associated with college and professional responsibilities;
- that a hard quota of 150 mb of data storage be allocated for each faculty and staff member;
- that Information Technologies will provide additional network storage space/opportunities for clear cases of demonstrated need;
- that Information Technologies will assist faculty and staff members in managing their network data space and assist them in developing local data storage options for data in excess of 150 mb;
- that students would receive 40 mb of network data storage;
- that student data stored on the network would not be backed up, though student data accounts will be maintained for an entire academic year.

Based on this feedback, Information Technologies will revise its draft of a network data storage policy and will publish it in advance of any infrastructure modifications. Information Technologies anticipated being able to implement universal network data storage by the first week of February, 2003.

The next meeting will be scheduled during the first week of February, 2003.