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TELECOMMUNICATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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ANNUAL REPORT

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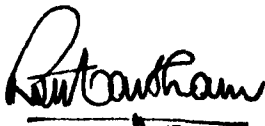
Telecommunications Advisory Committee

June 1988

Mr. R. Stursberg
Assistant Deputy Minister
Telecommunications and Technology
Communications Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
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Sir:

On behalf of the members of the Telecommunications Advisory Committee, we are pleased to submit the Annual Report of the Committee for fiscal year 1987/88.



Roger Marsham
Chairman



Roger Beauparlant
Secretary

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BACKGROUND	1
1987/88 ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS	3
OCCUPATIONAL ANALYSIS	3
TRAINING	3
POLICIES FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT	4
■ Information Technology and Systems Plan (ITSP)	4
■ Government Contracts Regulations	4
■ Information Technology Policy	4
NEW OR PROPOSED SERVICES	5
■ Government Inter-city Digital Network Architecture	5
■ Voice Messaging	5
■ Government Electronic Messaging and Document Exchange Service	5
■ Government Secure Telephone Network	5
■ Government Packet Network	5
■ Government Thin-Route Satellite Service	5
■ Telecommunications Services Electronic Ordering	5
■ Electronic Directory	6
ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS	6
■ Bell Canada Billing	6
■ Corporation for Open Systems	6
■ Distribution of GTA Documentation	6
■ Federal Sales Tax	6
■ Impact of CRTC Decision on Resale and Sharing	7
REGIONAL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES	9
■ Pacific Region	9
■ Central Region	9
■ Atlantic Region	9
CONCLUSION	11
TERMS OF REFERENCE	13

BACKGROUND

The Telecommunications Advisory Committee (TAC) was established by the Treasury Board in 1976 to advise and assist DOC in the long-range planning and coordination of the use of telecommunications on a government-wide basis. The Committee acts as a forum in which telecommunications users can discuss mutual problems and suggest appropriate courses of action on matters such as the need for new systems and services, the cost and effectiveness of existing services, and administrative policy changes, including telecommunications personnel issues.

Membership on the Committee comprises representatives of departments and agencies which are major users of telecommunications in the government and which are selected by TBS. In 1987/88, member departments were:

- Department of Communications
- Employment and Immigration Canada
- Energy, Mines and Resources Canada
- Environment Canada
- External Affairs Canada
- Government Telecommunications Agency
- Health and Welfare Canada
- Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
- National Library of Canada
- National Research Council Canada
- Public Works Canada
- Revenue Canada, Customs and Excise
- Revenue Canada, Taxation
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- Supply and Services Canada
- Transport Canada
- Treasury Board Canada Secretariat

In May 1987, as a result of recognition by TBS of the role of the TAC, the Committee voted in favour of a motion that the Chair be appointed for a term of two years, with an option to leave after one year. Mr. Roger Marsham, Assistant Deputy Minister, Finance and Administration, ExtAff, was therefore elected as Chair for a second year. The TAC Secretariat is provided by the Government Telecommunications Agency (GTA).

The bulk of the work of the TAC is carried out by working groups selected and tasked by the Committee. The Working Group on Telecommunications Planning (WGTP), chaired by DOC/GTA, is tasked with providing support to the TAC in telecommunications planning. Its membership includes representatives of the following departments:

- Employment and Immigration Canada
- Energy, Mines and Resources Canada
- Government Telecommunications Agency
- National Defence
- Public Works Canada
- Revenue Canada, Taxation
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- Transport Canada
- Treasury Board Canada Secretariat

The Working Group on Telecommunications Training (WGTT) was created to provide advice on common training and information-sharing mechanisms for telecommunications personnel in both the short and long terms, and to organize and conduct training courses and seminars. Chaired by DOC/GTA, the group includes representatives of the following departments:

Department of Communications
Employment and Immigration Canada
Energy, Mines and Resources Canada
Government Telecommunications Agency
National Archives/Library of Canada
National Capital Commission
National Gallery of Canada
Public Service Commission of Canada
Public Works Canada
Statistics Canada

Linkage also exists to regional consultative committees, which refer to the TAC issues that need to be addressed at the national level.

1987/88 ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The TAC held five meetings in 1987/88, while the WGTP (together with its sub-groups on Government Contracts Regulations, the Information Technology and Systems Plan, and Federal Sales Tax) held ten and the WGTT one. There were also two meetings of the Training Steering Committee.

OCCUPATIONAL ANALYSIS

The top priority for TAC during the period under review was the occupational analysis (OA) of the telecommunications management function in the government, which was initiated in the fall of 1987 following consultation with TBS and PSC. The Committee was briefed by PSC staff members on the OA process.

Direction is being provided to the OA team by the TAC Training Steering Committee which reviewed the Project Directive and made adjustments to clarify the aim, scope, objective, methodology and coordination of the project. The output of the study will be combined with other studies in the area of information technology to provide, initially, a training framework for information technology management.

At the end of the fiscal year, the OA team had completed the necessary research, conducted interviews in a number of departments to get a feel for such things as organizational structure, and produced a task inventory which will form the basis of the questionnaire. The TAC, as sponsor of the study, is working closely through its Training Steering Committee with the OA team in developing the survey, and is giving careful thought to how the study output can best be used.

TRAINING

In the area of human resources, another topic occupying the Committee's attention was training.

The third annual government telecommunications study session, Teleforum '87, was held on June 3-4, 1987. The session, sponsored by Transport Canada, had as its theme "Sharing Solutions", and provided an insight into the technology, systems and issues facing the telecommunications manager at all levels of government. The session was opened with a keynote address by the Honourable Flora MacDonald, Minister of Communications. Speakers included representatives of federal, provincial and U.S. governments as well as private industry and a Canadian university. The session drew 191 participants from all parts of the country.

At year end, planning for Teleforum '88, sponsored by DOC, was underway. The theme of the fourth annual session will be "Sharing the Future".

As part of the series of seminars on specific technological subjects, a one-day session on Information Technology Security was held on November 3, 1987. Its aim was to familiarize personnel who are involved in the management, administration or implementation of telecommunications, information processing or office systems with the physical, technological and administrative issues involved in the security of information. Information on the session was distributed not only to the telecommunications community, but also to EDP and security personnel. Owing to the degree of interest shown, a second session on the topic was held on March 22, 1988. Videotapes of the session are available from GTA.

Another major step in the plan to establish training for telecommunications personnel in the government was taken by a sub-group of the WGTT which produced a training matrix for telecommunications services officers.

A Government Telecommunications Training Catalogue was published in the spring of 1987, and distributed to the government telecommunications community. A Supplement was issued in the fall. The purpose of the catalogue is to allow for coordinated acquisition of courses to meet common needs, with resulting economies of scale. The Catalogue is available from GTA.

POLICIES FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

■ Information Technology and Systems Plan (ITSP)

In accordance with TBS's plans to revise the ITSP instructions to reflect the new relationship between TBS and departments resulting from the philosophy of Increased Ministerial Authority and Accountability (IMAA), TAC was asked to undertake a review of the telecommunications section of the ITSP instructions for 1989.

Following extensive discussion over a number of meetings, the sub-group of the WGTP created to study the ITSP decided to use the report of the ACIM working group on the ITSP as a basis for its report rather than generate a separate report. The group found itself in general agreement with the five recommendations of the ACIM working group, with some additions to reflect the telecommunications perspective. The report from TAC was therefore forwarded to ACIM with the request that it be appended to theirs.

In essence, the report recommends replacing the ITSP with a departmental Information Management Plan (IMP); integrating telecommunications planning with the overall departmental planning process; and standardizing, simplifying and clarifying many aspects of the planning, reporting and approval system currently in place.

■ Government Contracts Regulations

In view of the revision by TBS of the Government Contracts Regulations and the fact that the draft document did not address the telecommunications aspect, TAC requested the opportunity to submit its recommendations. Accordingly, a drafting group was set up within the WGTP.

The group reviewed and proposed changes to the exceptional contracting limits and the limits for non-consulting service contracts such that GTA would have the same limits as SSC for the supply of common services. The TAC Chair advised the Assistant Deputy Minister, Telecommunications and Technology, DOC, to instruct GTA to forward the recommendations to TBS.

■ Information Technology Policy

The Committee was briefed by TBS on the status of the implementation of the Information Technology Policy (TB 1987-47). Members were encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Treasury Board Information Technology Standards (TBITS) thus far prepared, and to indicate other standards priorities to TBS through TAC or their departmental standards spokespersons.

NEW OR PROPOSED SERVICES

Presentations were given to the TAC and the WGTP on a number of new or proposed services.

■ **Government Inter-city Digital Network Architecture**

A presentation by GTA provided an overview of the evolving government network architecture, the plans for a government digital inter-city network, and the strategy and plans that have been put in place. GTA believes that integration of voice and data and other forms of communication, together with the economies of a large network configuration, will offer communication services at a much lower cost than would otherwise be possible. The Committee ratified the strategic direction that GTA intends to take.

■ **Voice Messaging**

GTA outlined the findings resulting from the two trials with which it had been involved, and described the plans for the development of a new common service.

■ **Government Electronic Messaging and Document Exchange Service**

GTA outlined its plans for introducing this service, and informed the Committee of the major challenges it faced.

■ **Government Secure Telephone Network**

The Communications Security Establishment (CSE) gave a presentation on the third generation secure telephone unit (STU-III) covering project schedules, features of the various STU-III models and prices. The risk of compromise with STU-III telephones is expected to be lower than it is for STU-II due to the strong key management inherent with STU-III and the state-of-the-art cryptography employed.

■ **Government Packet Network**

GTA gave a presentation on the status of the network which was inaugurated in September 1987, and encouraged active participation by departments so that the maximum discount can be realized as soon as possible.

■ **Government Thin-Route Satellite Service**

GTA gave a presentation on the proposed service with the objective of ascertaining whether it was acceptable to client departments. Following the evaluation process, GTA had concluded that the introduction of VSAT technology and the resulting drop in price for terminals, combined with the requirements for communications to remote areas, would render such a service economically viable. GTA's plans were endorsed.

■ **Telecommunications Services Electronic Ordering**

As a result of discussion by the WGTP, GTA undertook to explore with the telecommunications carriers the possibility of developing an appropriate standard for the purpose of electronic ordering. GTA invited departments to specify their needs, particularly with regard to inventory requirements.

■ Electronic Directory

The Committee was given a briefing on the history and current status of directory operations. Members were informed that GTA is considering the use of a PC-based directory updating program. The software was tested with the January 1988 NCR directory and DOC's internal directory. The new system is expected to provide cost savings in the directory production process, as well as later deadlines for input to GTA and more control on the part of departments.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

■ Bell Canada Billing

As a result of concerns expressed by TAC members over the difficulty of verifying chargeable calls under the new invoicing system, GTA was asked to take up the matter with Bell Canada on behalf of the federal government. Following negotiations, GTA reported that most departments would receive their bills in the original format.

In a related matter which had also caused some concern - integrated billing for voice and data services, GTA was able to inform the Committee after discussion with Bell Canada that Bell has no intention of integrating its billing.

■ Corporation for Open Systems

Reference was made to letters being received by departments inviting them to become members of the Corporation for Open Systems (COS). The Committee consensus, however, was that it was not worthwhile for individual departments to join COS as TBS would be monitoring COS activity through its OSI Implementation Committee which would serve as the liaison between the government and COS. In addition, it was noted that a Canadian Interest Group on Open Systems (CIGOS) had been formed by the private sector, with CSA as a secretariat.

■ Distribution of GTA Documentation

In view of the fact that a survey carried out under the auspices of GTA which indicated that some problems were being encountered with non-receipt of amendments to the Telecommunications Management Manual and GTA Circular Letters, discussion took place on whether GTA should undertake direct distribution of Agency documents rather than distributing them through telecommunications coordinators. It was recommended, however, that GTA maintain the status quo as, in certain cases, departments have to ensure that guidelines issued by GTA are consistent with their own departmental policies before distributing them to end users.

■ Federal Sales Tax

At its February 1988 meeting, the Committee was briefed by a representative of the Tax Interpretation Branch of RC-CE on the federal sales tax on telecommunications which came into effect on January 1, 1988. The WGTP was asked to study the effects of the tax on telecommunications within the government. The WGTP study identified many instances of inconsistent application of the tax by carriers, as well as the inequality of the tax burden on PBX and Centrex service users. RC-CE and Telecom Canada officials were alerted and have taken steps to resolve the problems.

■ Impact of CRTC Decision on Resale and Sharing

Following the CRTC Decision on Resale and Sharing, new Bell and CNCP tariffs came into effect. GTA was asked to provide departments with information on the impact of the tariff changes. The Committee was informed that the new tariffs were taken into account in the GTA inter-city network rates for part of 1987/88, and would be fully reflected in the rates for 1988/89. It was pointed out that the Agency is examining ways of reducing the impact of rate increases for basic services through the use of technologies such as T1 networking. Members were also assured that the increases would not result in a corresponding increase in GTA overhead.

REGIONAL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES

■ Pacific Region

The Telecommunications User Study Group in Vancouver held three meetings during the year. As expected, expansion of shared services continued to be the principal focus of the group's attention. Other topics included in discussions were training, the competitive procurement process, federal sales tax, and delinquent accounts. Guest speakers addressed the group on the subject of ISDN and proposed GTA services.

■ Central Region

Three meetings of the Winnipeg group were held during the period, with an average attendance of 35 people. A broad range of subjects was covered, and each meeting included a major presentation by a guest speaker. Presentation topics included database services, teleconference services and federal sales tax.

■ Atlantic Region

N.B./P.E.I.: The committee held two meetings. Highlights included presentations on voice messaging, line load control and emergency telecommunications, and GTA invoicing practices. An evaluation of the value and effectiveness of the committee was conducted and indicated satisfaction on the part of the members.

N.S.: The two meetings held during the year included discussions on the voice messaging service trial, GTA invoicing and the federal sales tax. Maritime Tel and Tel provided presentations on its services at each session.

Newfoundland: The committee met twice. Topics covered included the introduction of an out-WATS service for departments located in St. John's, and GTA invoicing procedures, billing and services.

CONCLUSION

During the period under review, the TAC was active in the revision of administrative policies for information technology management, and followed closely the development of plans for a government digital backbone network and various enhanced services. Its top priority, however, remained the occupational analysis of the telecommunications management function in the government.

Given the potential impact of this study on the future of the government's ability to manage telecommunications, the topic will continue to be the primary object of the Committee's attention in the immediate future. Committee members were urged to provide all possible support to the OA team and were asked to sensitize their senior departmental management to the study.

In addition to the occupational analysis, participation in the development of information technology standards which will facilitate the most cost-effective application interworking for the government is expected to assume increased importance for the Committee in the coming year.

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)

■ Overall Goal

The Telecommunications Advisory Committee advises and assists the Department of Communications (DOC) in the long-range planning and co-ordination of the use of telecommunications on a government-wide basis.

■ Advisory Role

The Telecommunications Advisory Committee acts as a forum for the telecommunications users to discuss mutual problems and to provide, at a senior level, advice to DOC on such matters as:

- a) long-range planning needs;
- b) the demand for new services and the need for the development of new systems;
- c) means of satisfying user requirements.

■ Supportive Role

The Telecommunications Advisory Committee, through the individual experience of member departments, creates feedback at a senior level by:

- a) providing a forum for members to exchange information concerning the cost and effectiveness of services received from the Government Telecommunications Agency (GTA) and other sources;
- b) providing a forum for the discussion of major issues and problems affecting telecommunications, and for suggesting possible courses of action;
- c) encouraging the evaluation of major telecommunications systems in the government and the evaluation of present co-ordinating mechanisms in government;
- d) providing a forum for the discussion of proposals for changes in administrative policy, directives and guidelines regarding the planning, co-ordination, acquisition, operation, and evaluation of telecommunications systems in government.

■ Committee Membership and Meetings

Membership on the Committee is at a senior level and includes members of departments and agencies which are normally major users of telecommunications in the government and which are selected by the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS).

The Chairperson of the Committee is elected by the members, while GTA provides the secretariat for the Committee on an ongoing basis. The Committee normally meets quarterly; additional meetings may be called by the Chairperson or DOC, as required. Requests to hold a meeting or place items on the agenda may originate from any member. The Committee also recognizes issues presented to it by the Regional Telecommunications Consultative Committees.

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