



# INTERFACE

NOVEMBER 1991

ISTC INFORMATION MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

## ISTC AND THE PIPS!

In the October issue of *Interface* we described a CIP. In this issue, we'll talk about a PIP, and no, it is not someone who sings backup for Gladys Knight.

A PIP is a Project Initiation Proposal — a communication tool used to develop, approve and implement informatics projects and activities in ISTC. PIPs are also used to discuss major purchases of information technology.

Some may consider the PIP process like a "bureaucratic big brother" exercise. But PIPs allow responsibility centres (RCs) to benefit from the experience of others. With PIPs, RCs can compare similar experiences, point out pitfalls, offer software already developed or just give advice. Or maybe someone else wants to build the same type of system as you, and is willing to share costs and expertise. Without a PIP, you may never know.

During PIP consultations, Human Resources and Information Management branches make sure that official languages, training and staff relations implications are considered, and that security requirements are addressed. A PIP can also determine whether a project will affect other systems.

A review by the departmental Information Management Advisory Committee makes sure all RCs' points of view are considered in the process. PIPs prepared for projects that can affect other areas of the department also require approval by the ADM-level Information Management Committee.

The following describe some recent PIPs:

- The Comptroller's Branch project to evaluate the pilot system for the Strategic Technologies Program (STP). STP uses cooperative process-

ing techniques to capture data locally and transfer specific fields to the corporate database.

- A joint venture of the Comptroller's Branch and Information Technologies Industry Branch to add financial information to the STP pilot system. This will allow officers to enter, store, update and upload forecast cash flows through RAMS to the corporate database.
- Administrative Services Branch's initiative to install a Technology-Based Automated Procurement System (TAPS). Software meeting ISTC's needs was developed by another department and obtained free through the DSS Software Exchange Service.
- A Human Resources Branch review of the department's human resources information requirements. Eventually a system will be bought or developed to make this data easily accessible to all sectors and regions.

For more information on PIPs, contact your Information Centre Coordinator or call the IMB Information Centre at (613) 954-2634.

*Interface* will keep you posted on other PIPs as they are approved. ■



### NAME THAT 'TOON

Send us your ideas for a caption for this cartoon. Last month's winning caption is on page 2.



## WORTH REPEATING

*In the 1980s, we attempted to automate to achieve productivity, but we were wrong. The fundamental error was believing we could use electronics and machines to pave over processes that were fundamentally flawed and work cultures that were disappointingly unproductive. . . . We found that the human element was, in fact, the fountainhead of creativity and productivity that we were searching for.*

*Dennis K. Williams, Chairman and CEO,  
General Electric Canada Inc., 1990.  
Consultation paper on Prosperity  
Through Competitiveness.*

## POTPOURRI

- The Information Management Advisory Committee, the Information Management Committee and the Informatics Managers Technology Coordination Group plan to meet in January. Send your comments on the work of these committees to your local Informatics Coordinator. For more information on what these organizations do and what they are up to, stay tuned to *Interface*.
- ISTC's annual planning process is about to get underway. This departmental exercise includes developing business plans and the three functional plans — information management, communications and human resources. Planning is expected to start in mid-December and be completed by the end of this fiscal year. The Information Management Plan (IMP) provides details on informatics projects and activities, and associated costs, conducted during the year. For more information or for a copy of this year's IMP, contact the Informatics Coordinator for your sector or regional office. A list of coordinators is available from *Interface*.
- Did you know your laser printer may be emitting damaging ozone? To reduce this health hazard,

you can use a filter. The first non-removable filters were used in the Hewlett-Packard Series II laserjet printers to trap ozone and change its chemical composition to oxygen. Later printers included a removable filter that should be changed every three to four years or after printing 50,000 single-sided pages, because they get clogged with dust particles and are less effective. Filters that are not changed smell. The IIP, IIIP, and IIISI printers do not require filters.

- By now you should have received your new ISTC telephone directory. Many computer users in the department can easily access an electronic version of the yellow pages. One software package, Hotline, lists simple commands on the bottom of the screen to help you tap into departmental and branch numbers, or your own private telephone list.
- Each year, IMB helps keep kids out of the cold by contributing to the Snowsuit Fund. Last year, the branch raised \$1004. For the scoop on this year's fund-raising activities, contact IMB's Administration Unit at (613) 954-2643.
- Communications Branch is developing an application that will provide easy access to success stories on Canadian companies, institutions and individuals. A database of pre-packaged success stories will be available to sectors and regions to use as communications vehicles. IMB has been helping **Sheila Watkins**, a liaison officer for Communications Branch, to research options for recording, storing and using this information. The "full story" will be available in an upcoming edition of **Précis**. For more information, call Sheila Watkins at (613) 995-8900. ■

## NAME THAT 'TOON:

The hardest part of this contest is picking one winner — your entries are so creative! To see the entries we received, contact *Interface* by VAX or send your request to the editor, room 342F, headquarters. Congratulations to this month's winner, **Tom Rath** of Tourism Canada for "Old McDonald had a Fully-Automated-Resource-Management System . . ."



Honourable mentions go to all, but especially to: **Doug Lambe**, Surface Transportation and Machinery Branch for "Are you sure he said, 'We must get back to the LAN?'" and **Sylvie Ethier**, Office of the ADM, FPA, for "Hey, if you can do it, ZOO can we!" ■

## TECHIE TALK

There are two ways to build a communications network — hierarchical architecture and peer-to-peer architecture.

In a hierarchical network, a minicomputer acts as a “middleman” when you send information from one LAN to another. For example, ISTC’s textcom e-mail network is hierarchical — mail sent from one LAN to another must go through the VAX minicomputer located in Ottawa. The VAX then sends the message to the specified LAN.

In a peer-to-peer network, mail messages go directly from one LAN to another. Getting rid of the middleman means messages get through more quickly.

ISTC will be implementing peer-to-peer e-mail as part of the corporate network project, which will be completed in March. ■

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### DEAR LANlord:

**Q:** Is there an easy way to automatically “CC” myself when I send an e-mail message?

**A:** If you don’t save a copy of the message before you press SEND, the only way to get a copy is to ask the recipient to send it back to you. But you can automatically CC yourself each time you send a message.

While in 3+Mail, you can use a simple text editor like EDLIN or SideKick to edit the MAIL.MFI file located in the INBOX subdirectory of your home directory. Change the line that reads “SETTINGS CCSELF=OFF” to “SETTINGS CCSELF=ON”. Save the file. Now when you compose a message, your name is automatically entered in the CC field after you fill in the “To” field and press Enter. If you don’t want a copy of a certain message, press Escape and your name disappears.

For Network Courier users, select OPTIONS, CONFIGURE, LOG, FOLDER, COMPOSE-MESSAGES. Determine which folder will contain your messages by selecting an existing folder or by pressing the Insert key to create a new folder. Answer “Y” to AUTO LOG. A copy of each message will now be sent to the selected folder. ■

## CORPORATE NETWORK CONTEST

The official name of the corporate network will be BAZNET — the most popular name, according to contest entrants. This name honours Serge Bazinet, who received awards for his work on this network. The corporate network will be fully operational by April 1, 1992. ■

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## SOFTWARE EXCHANGE SERVICE

The Software Exchange Service (SES) is a free service run by Supply and Services Canada. SES encourages departments, governments, and Crown corporations and agencies to share applications software and related documentation, and to meet and exchange ideas.

Software application developers, or “donors”, can use SES to share information with new users in areas like finance, personnel, materiel and property management, and office administration and management support.

Donors can expose more people to their software, and get valuable feedback from new users, who often suggest ways to improve the design.

New users also learn about quick, proven, free or low-cost solutions to software problems.

Recently, **Frank Arecchi** of Administrative Services Branch (ASB) submitted a project initiation proposal to look at a technology-based automated procurement system (TAPS), which is available through SES and is used in many other government departments. ASB will evaluate the possibility of using this system against the departmental requirements for the procurement process.

For more information on SES, contact your Information Centre Coordinator or call the IMB Information Centre at (613) 954-2634. ■

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## A FOND FAREWELL

We are sad to report that **Jean-Paul Bertrand** passed away, following a courageous battle with cancer, on Thursday November 21.

Jean-Paul recently won the Exemplary Contribution Award for his exceptional service and dedication and was featured in *Interface*. J.P.’s public service career began at age 17 in 1960. He held various administrative jobs, but eventually found his niche with computers. His irrepressible good nature and kindness will be fondly remembered.

He will be missed by his many friends and colleagues in ISTC. ■



Jean-Paul Bertrand

## ONTARIO REGIONAL INSTALLATION

*The following article is based on a series of interviews with Bob Chandler, Director, Finance and Administration, Toronto.*

Supported today by a LAN made up of more than 100 microcomputers and 4 servers, staff in the Ontario Regional Office have seen great changes to their work environment in the past two years. The installation in 1989 of the current LAN replaced a system that operated with fewer than 20 micros and was used for the Departmental Regional Download System (DRDS) and the Company Client System.



*Hon Leung (standing) and Eric Silver (seated) ready for action.*

Good planning ensured the conversion was carried out with few difficulties. Five crucial factors helped make the transition as painless as possible for the Ontario staff:

- **User priorities were established and agreed on.** A consultant was hired to develop a conversion plan, in cooperation with users. A LAN design was also drafted, based on the organization, work processes and relationships in the office.
- **A strategy for introducing the new technology was established.** This involved two levels of training: a three-day WordPerfect training



*Jane Adams (left) and Diana Dudman (right).*

course for secretaries and a one-day overview of the capabilities of the LAN and WordPerfect for other staff. While the secretaries were at the course, the old AES equipment was removed and new microcomputers were installed.

- **WordPerfect standards were formulated.** A working group developed macros for common WordPerfect applications. The group continues to identify solutions to user difficulties by applying many of the more sophisticated WordPerfect functions.
- **Ongoing WordPerfect support was provided.** Jane Adams and Diana Dudman conducted on-site, problem-solving WordPerfect tutorials. They established a WordPerfect Users Group that meets weekly to discuss common problems users run into.
- **A stable operating environment was created.** Eric Silver and Hon Leung make sure there are minimum interruptions to LAN operations. A comprehensive plan keeps the maximum break in LAN service at four hours. During downtime, staff can still use WordPerfect on their computers since they can also run as stand-alone workstations.

Toronto's LAN has become a key resource for office work. E-mail links are now established with the provincial Ministry of Trade and Technology (MITT). An indirect post office is also used to link Ottawa's Information Technologies Industries Branch with MITT. Employees can also dial in to communicate with the LAN while away from the office. ■

***Send your Interface mail through the VAX (INTERFACE) or by mail, addressed to the Interface Editor, Room 342F, ISTC Headquarters.***

*Some of the opinions expressed in this publication do not represent the official views of IMB. Thanks to all who contributed to this issue.*