

INTERFACE

SUMMER 1994

Industry Canada — Information Management Newsletter

Implementing the IMC Workplan for Industry Canada

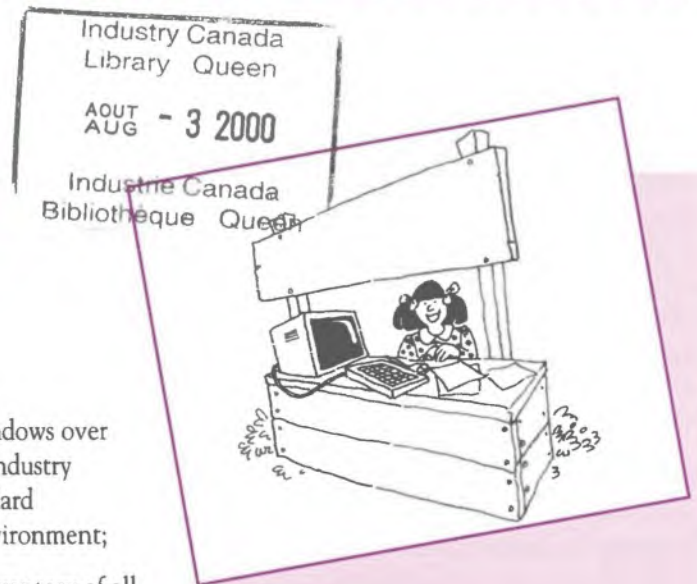
This year will be a very busy one for the Information Management Branch (IMB) as its staff work to implement the Information Management Committee's (IMC) workplan for the new department.

Managing information is a key part of Industry Canada's responsibilities, and the IMC workplan will allow IMB to deliver services to help program areas reach their goals, says IMB Director General Grant Westcott. "These initiatives will put our clients in a position where their needs will drive our business — where our focus will be on lowering costs to our customers while enhancing the value of the services they provide to Canadian industry and the public."

Here are some of the major initiatives in the plan:

- "Connecting Industry Canada" by providing a structure of operating systems, hardware and software that will include a common local area network (LAN) operating system, a single wide area network (WAN), and a common electronic mail (E-mail) system;

- adopting Windows over DOS as the Industry Canada standard operating environment;
- making an inventory of all work stations at Industry Canada and, where necessary, upgrading this hardware to handle the Windows environment;
- adapting the Informatics Resourcing Strategy (IRS) Fund established by Treasury Board for the former department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs;
- taking advantage of opportunities offered by information technology to broaden the access to the information available through library services — for users from both within and outside the department. ■



NAME THAT 'TOON

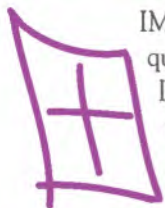
Send us your ideas for a caption for this cartoon. Last issue's winning caption is on page 6.

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PREPARING FOR WINDOWS



IMB is moving ahead quickly to provide Industry Canada staff with the tools they need to take full advantage of Microsoft Windows.

Now that the Information Management Committee has approved the use of Windows as the standard operating environment for the department, there are two major areas in which action is required — upgrading equipment and purchasing new software. Containing costs will be a major priority for any hardware or software purchases that are made.

The Windows environment requires more memory and faster computers. For this reason, a minimum hardware standard for existing computers — a 386 DX central processing unit and eight megabytes of RAM (random access memory) — has been established. Desktop computers not meeting this standard will be replaced during 1994, and the used equipment will be donated through the Computers for Schools program.

Any new computers will have to meet a minimum standard of a 486 central processing unit and 16 megabytes of RAM.

Industry Canada is also studying the purchase of desktop tools, such as word-processing, spreadsheet and presentation programs, for use with Windows. Vendors will be asked to present proposals for the department to evaluate against its business needs. ■

Potpourri

Industry Canada has purchased asset management software to maintain an inventory of all informatics equipment and software.

The program, Frye's LAN Directory, enables the department to prepare a very accurate and up-to-date inventory of software and hardware for senior management to use in planning future acquisitions. It is being installed on selected servers throughout the department. It can read all servers and determine basic hardware information and keep track of some 4 000 software programs.

Industry Canada and Government Telecommunications and Informatics Services (GTIS) are working together to develop a wide area network to connect the Canada Business Service Centres (CBSC).

The majority of the components necessary to link the CSBCs together have been ordered and received. Industry Canada will be working with GTIS to determine the full details of the pilot test. A major consideration is the need to integrate information from several departments.

Industry Canada recently purchased a corporate licence for Norton Anti-Virus Software. The software, which was selected after a technical evaluation of a number of similar products, automatically scans all files at the desktop level for the presence of computer viruses.

Viruses can easily be passed from one computer to another — from a shared game program on a home computer, from a service organization, or from a consultant's diskette. Because viruses are hard to detect, they can be passed along without anyone realizing it.

The anti-virus software will scan all disks and alert users to the presence of viruses before they can infect departmental computers.

LAN administrators will inform employees in their areas when the software has been installed.

Peter St. Germain, IMB's new Director of Sectoral and Regional Services, arrived on July 4. Peter comes from Government Telecommunications and Informatics Services, Public Works and Government Services Canada, where he served as Director, Infrastructure Readiness and Rollout.

WORTH REPEATING

"I think there is a world market for about five computers."

Tom Watson
Founder of IBM, speaking in 1948

CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS AND SERVICE KEY TO IMB'S EFFORTS



IMB Director General Grant Westcott

There is a lot more to IMB's services than hardware and software, says Director General Grant Westcott.

The branch provides technological solutions, but it is relationships with clients that really drive its business, he explains. "To be effective in the modern government environment, we must be more than technical specialists; we must also be able to

understand, interpret and anticipate our clients' needs, problems and opportunities."

The technological solutions that IMB delivers are the end product, but other, less obvious, aspects of its business are the key to the success of those applications. "Technology cannot be evaluated in isolation, because it is the people issues associated with technological change that determine how successful a particular systems application will be," he explains.

The first step in supporting clients who are exploring the use of technology to provide better, more cost-effective client services is ensuring that IMB staff fully understand their needs, says Grant. "We must ensure that our staff work closely with clients to determine why individual technologies are being implemented, how they will be used, and what kinds of benefits are expected."

"We see four key factors for our success," says Grant. "They are our people, our business environment, information and technology. It is essential that we work just as hard

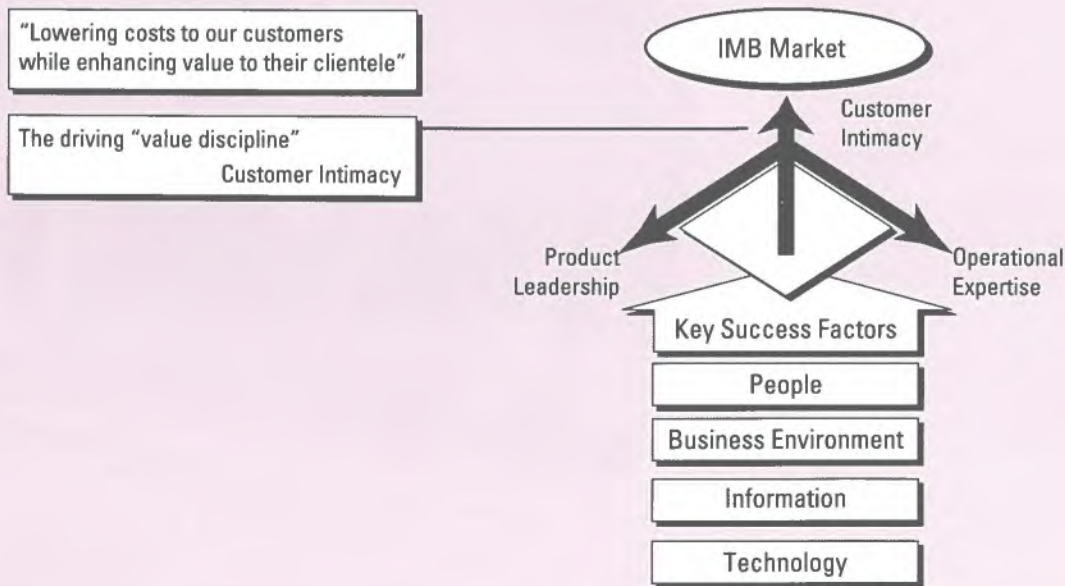
developing the first three areas as on technology."

The branch has set up a program to improve all areas that affect customer service. Some examples of immediate efforts include:

- establishing service improvement teams at IMB;
- identifying initial service levels;
- developing service improvement programs; and
- setting up memorandums of understanding (MOUs) to deliver support services throughout Industry Canada.

These initiatives will help IMB deliver a lot more than technology to its clients, says Grant. "We are in business to help customers achieve their goals. That means a lot more than delivering state-of-the-art systems, because those systems are of limited value without highly skilled people to operate and maintain them." ■

IMB STRATEGIC POSTURE



IMPROVING INTERNET ACCESS

A number of initiatives are under way to improve access to Internet for departmental employees.

The number of questions and requests IMB gets about Internet is overwhelming, says Linda Bloskie of IMB. "A lot of employees are already using this resource and many more want to be able to use it."

Internet is by far the largest computer network in the world — it connects more than 20 million computers on more than 30 000 on-line networks worldwide. Originally set up by the U.S. military, the network has expanded rapidly to include universities and, more recently, business users.

Within Industry Canada, the Communications Research Centre (CRC) has extensive experience with this network. For that reason, CRC has been asked to lend their expertise to the rest of the department. Possible contributions include supporting the Internet gateway as well as network facilities and services.

Other initiatives include the following:

- consolidating the department's many Internet IP addresses and registering them under one domain;
- structuring network addressing for easy management;
- creating a single Internet gateway; and
- establishing and implementing security standards for Internet access on network communications devices.

The Library has also acquired several books of varying complexity about Internet for employees who would like to learn more about using this resource. ■

Electronic forms and electronic signatures coming

In the future, Industry Canada employees will be able to complete some transactions without printing a single document.

IMB is working on new electronic forms that will be sent over E-mail and will be linked to data bases to provide accountability and a proper audit trail for electronic signatures. "After successfully implementing the E-forms we know today — that is, printing a paper form from a WordPerfect template — it is time to move onward and upward," says Daniel Gagnon, Director of Information Services.

A team working under John Newman, Chief of Forms Management, is working with a new Canadian product called FormFlow to evaluate what is needed to put a system into place. "By the end of August 1994, we will be trained to design new electronic forms, identify work flow processes, ensure proper tracking and implement all of the above with internal resources," says John. The team will also gain experience loading information into data bases.

Work is under way to establish the infrastructure that will allow the E-forms to be used. IMB plans to have the work completed by the end of the fiscal year and, if a pilot now under way is successful, between 10 and 25 forms could be implemented by that time, says Paul Duval, Manager, Information Automated Systems. Information related to the use of the forms will be available on-line — for example, staff filling out travel authorization forms would have access to the Air Canada schedule and hotel and car rental directories. ■



E-Form team: From left Richard Lachaine; John Newman; Micheline Proulx; Mike Damiano
Absent: Christine Kollmann

CONNECTING INDUSTRY CANADA

IMB is working to establish an information management infrastructure to allow more flexibility for information sharing at Industry Canada.

"The project, Connecting Industry Canada, will put some of the basic information technology components in place to form the infrastructure within which we can deliver services to satisfy our clients' business needs," says Guy Vales of IMB.

There are three major components to the project: establishing a standard operating system for use on departmental LANs; moving to a common E-mail system; and establishing a single wide area network (WAN) for the department.

For the first initiative, the Technology Advisory Committee (TAC) established a working group with representatives from across the department. In addition, a consulting firm was also asked to study the issue.

Both groups produced reports recommending the adoption of Novell NetWare as the common network operating system, and IMC unanimously approved that recommendation. The department will begin migrating to the new system according to a plan now being developed, says Guy. "Beginning with areas currently using Banyan systems, all areas of the department will be operating on the common system by the end of the 1997 calendar year and possibly even before that."

Industry Canada is also looking into acquiring a master licensing agreement for Novell NetWare and some related products to reduce the costs of establishing the new system in the department.

A common E-mail system, Microsoft Mail, has been approved by TAC and IMC for Industry Canada. Pilot sites using the system at the Corporations office in Hull, in the Library and in the Materiel Management area proved successful and have now been fully implemented.

The planning to convert Industry Canada to a common electronic mail system is now taking place. This includes the following:

- contacting all informatics representatives to determine the best transition approach for their areas;
- converting the Microsoft Mail environment at the former Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada;
- putting a plan to connect Macintosh and UNIX environments into place; and
- implementing the Automated Directory Synchronization and Extended Templates for the former ISTC.

Documents will be available to assist both the technical and user communities through the transition. These include LAN administrators E-mail guides for Novell, Banyan and LANMAN/X; *Microsoft Mail User's Guide*; *X.400 User's Guide* and an Internet E-mail user's guide for both DOS and Windows.

The final initiative in the project will establish a common WAN for the entire department. "The founding departments had all developed some WAN connections, but a common system will have many advantages over what is currently in place," explains Linda Bloskie of IMB. "This will make a huge difference. For example, it will give all areas in the department access to the CD-ROMS on the Corporate Information System, and it will enable Industry Canada to develop and deploy distributed client-server systems."

Beginning with the Pacific Region, all areas will be hooked up to a single WAN by March 1995, says Linda. The connection of the Pacific Region was completed June 30. An implementation plan for the rest of the sites in the department will be prepared for the end of August, with the remaining work beginning in the fall. ■

Group Recommends Using Technology to Improve Library Service

In a report to IMC, a working group has recommended that Industry Canada increase the use of information technology in its libraries.

The Working Group on the Re-organization of Industry Canada Libraries and their Automation looked at how the libraries could improve services to clients, says Claire Renaud-Frigon, Director, Library Services. "The libraries' major contribution is the support we give to clients," she explains. "Information technology will improve our ability to give our clientele the information they want, when they want it and in the form they want it. Our services are moving from just-in-case collections development to just-in-time document delivery."

Any changes in the libraries will be coordinated with other departmental efforts to manage information, says Claire. "We do not

work in isolation, and any initiatives we undertake will be in the broader context of departmental information management in partnership with groups responsible for strategic and corporate information."

A general thrust of the working group's recommendations is for the department to move towards producing a virtual library service, says Claire. "We are moving away from the limited notion of the library as a collection in a physical location towards the idea of a library as a gateway to external worldwide information sources."

Providing a flexible service over a network is a major advantage of moving towards a virtual library, adds Claire. "For example, we would be able to provide significantly better services in the regions than we can now. It would also allow us to deliver more documents electronically."

Library Services staff have identified three immediate objectives based on the report, and will present a business case to IMC. The objectives are:

- to acquire an integrated library system;
- to provide more electronic information sources and services; and
- to make more of the libraries' resources available over networks.

The integrated library system is essential for all other goals, says Claire. This system, in conjunction with an electronic document delivery system, will provide equal access to all Industry Canada collections from employees' desktops and other locations. ■

IRS GENERATES INTEREST

The Informatics Resourcing Strategy (IRS) Fund has generated a lot of interest in its first year at Industry Canada.

More than 65 proposals for funding to develop new computer systems were received by the IRS Committee before the application deadline in May. "IRS is proving to be a valuable forum for bringing together ideas to develop systems and evaluating them against the business needs of the department," says Vern McCaul, Chairperson of the IRS Committee.

IRS is a single fund for projects meeting departmental objectives. This approach creates a central framework for evaluating costs and benefits of all proposed systems rather than approaching each one individually, explains Vern. "IRS is, in effect, an investment fund for creative entrepreneurs within the department who have proposals to develop systems to deliver more efficient services at Industry Canada," he adds.

The IRS Fund was originally established in 1990 by Treasury Board for Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada. When that department became one of the founding members of Industry Canada, the IRS Fund was adapted for use by the new department.

The fund has been very successful in the past. One example of a project funded through IRS is the IMPACT Information System developed by the Bankruptcy Branch (see "New system to handle bankruptcy cases," in the *Interface* of January/February 1994).

Several groups advancing proposals discovered that others shared their goals, says Vern. "Of the original proposals, the committee found that many overlapped, and in some cases duplicated, one another. One of the unanticipated benefits has been that we have been able to bring together people to develop solutions to their shared needs."

Contest Winner!



Congratulations to Zaki Muscati of the Communications Research Centre for suggesting the winning caption.

"This is guaranteed to do all your Mousework."

An honourable mention goes to Jim Barr of St. John's, Nfld.

WORKING TO DELIVER BETTER NETWORK SERVICES

Network specialists from the regions and headquarters met early this summer to determine how they can best work together.

Sectoral and regional LAN managers and IMB staff held a symposium June 2 and 3 to discuss the implementation of Industry Canada's informatics workplan and to determine how service levels can be improved at lower costs.

Setting up and managing a network in a way that allows for information management responsibilities to be distributed throughout an organization is a new kind of challenge, explained IMB Director General Grant Westcott during his introductory remarks. "It is impossible for one person to know everything about a distributed network — teamwork and communication are the only way to succeed."

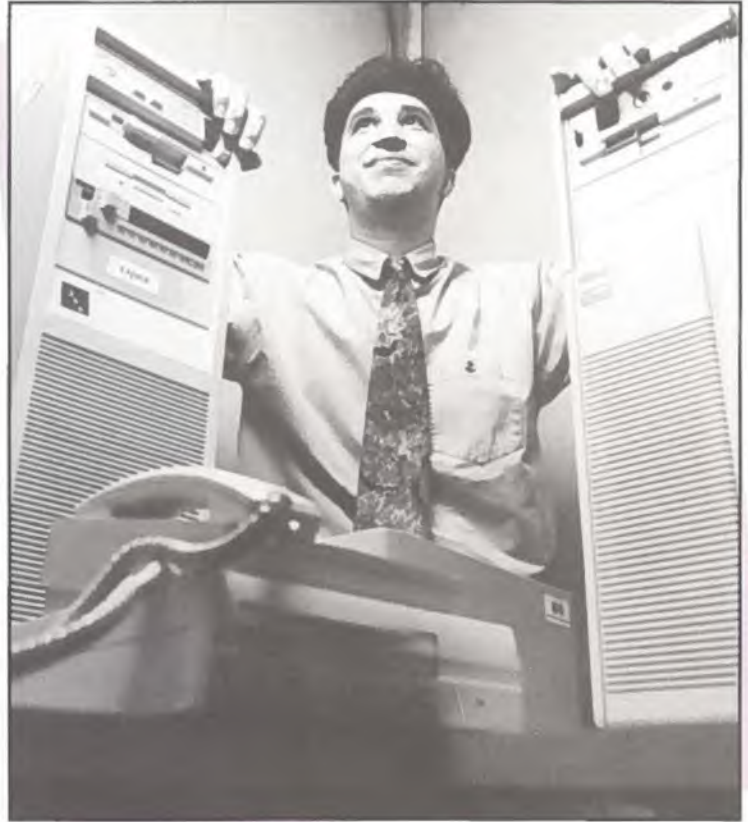
Setting up a team to deliver network support is as much of a challenge as any technical issues, says Al Laschinger of IMB. "There was much more than technical talk on the agenda. The work environment at Industry Canada and the sorts of careers it will offer was a major discussion topic."

Technical issues discussed included the workplan outlined by the Information Management Committee, standards for LAN support, issues arising from increased use of Internet and the new human resources system. The participants also discussed setting up a technology forum to provide an opportunity for network managers to continue the information sharing begun with the symposium. AI has drafted proposed terms of reference based on suggestions made during the symposium and these are currently being circulated for comments.

The symposium was only a first step, adds Al. "During the symposium, we asked LAN managers to make a commitment to a certain vision," he explains. "In return, LAN managers are now expecting to see us take the lead on many of the initiatives discussed." ■

CREATING HIS OWN FUTURE

Léo Lavoie of Industry Canada's Patents Informatics Centre has completed two university-level courses — one in organizational dynamics and the other in project management — at the Institute for Government Informatics Professionals in Hull.



The Institute's program of professional and technical education is available to all federal government information technology specialists interested in expanding their skills and knowledge base. It is run as a joint venture by the federal government and three Canadian universities. For more information about the Institute for Government Informatics Professionals, call (819) 956-4259. ■

IMB's Focus Day



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