The Committee on Computing & Communications (COMP) met on Thursday, October 14, 2004, at 10:00 a.m. in 3401 Dwinelle Hall. Co-Chairs Dave Messerschmitt and Arthur Ogus presided.

IN ATTENDANCE:
Dave Messerschmitt, IEOR, EECS, Co-chair
Arthur Ogus, Math, Co-chair
Ken Goldberg, IEOR/EECS
Terrence Hendershott, Business Administration
Ethan Ligon, ARE
Nipam Patel, Integrative Biology
Merrill Shanks, Political Science
Thomas Wickens, Psychology
Aaron Brick, Graduate Student
Matthew Bunch, Undergraduate Student

Moderator: Arthur Ogus

Self-introductions around the table were made, due to new members being present. Dave asked for any comments on the minutes from the meeting of September 13, and Merrill moved they be approved; all agreed.

Review of the proposed policy and plan on Data Management, Use, and Protection defined by the Data Stewardship Council

Arthur opened the discussion on the 21-page policy, which was attached to the meeting agenda. He said the Data Stewardship Council has volunteered to come to a COMP meeting to discuss the policy. Dave added that the policy is meant to serve the purpose of managing campus data, and urged COMP members to review the policy due to there being some areas of concern such as the Sponsored Research data section, the Survey data section, and the Violation of Policy and Misuse of Data.

Arthur asked about issues involving student data, such as grades. He said it is important to be able to share such data over the network with TA’s etc., yet it is probably in violation of the policy. Dave said that the campus is developing the Gradebook, in order to manage and share this data in a secure way.

Dave also said he thinks the whole policy document is not going to be read by everyone, for example, Teaching Assistants. Ethan added that it would be best to break down the rules according to who has particular responsibilities, with specific instructions on what to do. Ethan also said he is unclear as to what data is included in the section on Survey Data.
There are several questions that need to be answered. Ken referred to page 11, item 13 "do not email restricted data, either in the body of an email or as an attachment", noting the fact that there are many examples of sending data via e-mail, and that sometimes it is necessary. Tom remarked that instructions are needed for data encryption, and Dave agreed that some mechanism should be provided by campus. He also said that campus should technically support the Data Management policy just as it should support the Minimum Security Standards policy by providing appropriate software and assistance first, then defining appropriate sanctions for those who don't comply. Terrence objected to an administrative body dictating how faculty should handle research data.

Dave remarked that the policy is called "provisional", so that it is still open to modification. Dave said the DSC asked to have someone from COMP attend their meetings, but no one had volunteered. Merrill noted that the DSC had visited COMP last year, and that he sees that some of the academic concerns are reflected in the policy. He recommended that DSC be invited back. He also volunteered to attend the Data Stewardship Council meetings as COMP's representative.

Dave said he would write up the concerns, and invite the DSC to the next meeting. He said EVC Paul Gray had asked for comments from COMP, and that he would wait to write these until after the next meeting.

Arthur asked who would now attend the Educational Technology Committee, and after discussion it was decided that Ethan would represent COMP at ETC.

Challenges in the implementation and promulgation of the campus Minimum Security Standards for Networked Devices

Arthur had prepared written comments on the campus minimum security standards, and said he discussed the standards with colleagues, most of who feel that expense and hand-holding are going to be required. The comments were well received. Arthur asked what other COMP members want to say about the standards. Ethan said that CNR colleagues are concerned about old hardware, and also the absence of standards for PDA's or other devices. Ethan thinks there should be sanctions against those individuals who cause problems on the network.

Dave questioned how the standards will be disseminated, and Tom remarked that departments should have someone assigned to make sure the department is in compliance. Some departments don't have system administrators, and it seems that a security coordinator would be required. Merrill suggested the problem be addressed at the college level, and Dave added that there should be a chain of responsibility leading back to IS&T.

Ken remarked that there should be a digital hotline for emergency use, someone who can pick up the phone and help when there is a problem such as a visiting professor who can't access the network. Matthew said that communication about these standards is very important, particularly for students, many of whom don't know about security patches or resources. Merrill suggested that this information be included in a registration message to all students, and Dave recommended a web page to give information and links to security software downloads.

Arthur said that someone must represent the users, and that COMP should invite Craig Lant, Campus IT Security Officer and Cliff Frost, Director of
Communication and Network Services to a future meeting to express some of the questions and doubts raised with regard to implementing these standards.

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Possible privacy concerns and issues regarding public access and control of Webcams on campus

Ken reported on the project he had initiated as an Artist/Professor of Engineering, called "Demonstrate", involving the use of a robotic web camera set up to view Sproul Plaza, and controlled by those who signed on to a website. Ken said the camera will soon be shut down, since the project will be finished October 15. The project raised a number of important questions about privacy in public spaces, including discomfort about being viewed and the possibility of eavesdropping, and gave the campus a glimpse of future technology in this area.

Ken said the project demonstrated that this kind of technology exists. Ken will meet with his Advisory Committee on Vision and Privacy in the near future to discuss policy. Some discussion was held about the possible benefits of being able to use surveillance, and the fact that signs are usually posted where surveillance cameras are installed. Ken said that he had hoped for different use of the camera, such as for public demonstrations. It was agreed that any further discussion of this topic would be deferred until after Ken's advisory committee had met.

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Conducting Senate business electronically

Dave prepared a draft response to the request from the Senate for comments on conducting Senate business electronically, and handed out copies to the committee for review. The request included two areas of investigation (1) technical aspects of conducting secure Senate voting on-line, and (2) conducting secure discussions of Senate issues on-line.

With regard to on-line discussions, Dave's paper recommended that this be encouraged in order to increase participation, yet be used to supplement for face-to-face meetings. He further added that no special equipment or software needs to be purchased by individual faculty (although it would be acquired or installed by the Senate or campus on behalf of the Senate), nor would special skills be needed by Senate members in order to conduct business on-line. Arthur mentioned videoconferencing as an alternative, as well. Ken mentioned that UCOP has a particular interest in this as well, due to the difficulty of having meetings involving people spread out over the system.

The issue of security and confidentiality was addressed at length, with the caveat that 100% security is not possible, particularly via email. To maximize security, two base elements would be required, an SSL-enabled web browser, and CalNet ID authentication, a campus-wide means of securing web transmission of data. Dave said that security can only be evaluated in the context of particular context and consequence, and Tom added that decisions could be made based on the sensitivity of the information involved.

The recommendation was made that the Senate Chair, Robert Knapp contact IS&T to request a study be made of simple, useable web-based discussion/collaboration software, and COMP can review the proposals. Tom recommended that the issue of ongoing software maintenance be taken into consideration. Arthur said he felt the first sentence of the memo was too strong, and asked that it be changed. The
committee agreed that one more pass be taken over the memo before forwarding it to the Senate.

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Item 5 of the agenda, Preliminary Departmental computing survey results, was held over to the next meeting.

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Areas of focus and methodology for gathering best practices in Departmental computing

Dave introduced a list of "areas of focus" representing varied points of departure from which to investigate best practices.

These include:
Faculty governance of departmental computing
Funding models for departmental computing
Scope of departmental computing services and support
Campus vs departmental partitioning of services and support

Dave said that when the survey was done it was thought that the second priority after strategic planning was to gather data on best practices for academic departments' computing. It seems that there were several aspects to this pursuit, representing a very large scope. Dave suggested that it would be best to prioritize these aspects and choose a more focused direction to follow initially.

Ken said some departments' computing services and support are exemplary, which was revealed by Merrill's survey, and it would be important to see what they do. He recommended talking to ITAC, Information Technology Architecture Committee, about hardware and software standards, services and support. Dave said that faculty should also be interviewed regarding governance.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

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November meeting will be held on Monday, November 22, from 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. in 3401 Dwinelle Hall.

December meeting will be held on Thursday, December 16, from 10:00 a.m. - 12 noon in 310 Stephens Hall.

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Committee Web Page: http://www.eecs.berkeley.edu/~messer/Campus/COMP/