The Committee on Computing & Communications (COMP) met on Monday, November 22nd, 2004, at 9:30 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
Richard Kern, French
Merrill Shanks, Political Science
Thomas Wickens, Psychology
Aaron Brick, Graduate Student

Moderator: David Messerschmitt

Self-introductions around the table were made due to the presence of guests:
Katherine Mitchell from COrE, Shel Waggener, Director CCS-IST, Jack McCredie, Assoc. Vice Chancellor, IST, and Craig Lant, Campus Security Officer, SNS-IST.

Moving forward with the campus IT strategic plan

Dave asked Jack McCredie to update COMP on the progress made on the IT-SP. Jack outlined the efforts made last year by Ken Goldberg, COMP Chair, and COMP members to develop a proposal for an IT Strategic Plan to accompany the Strategic Academic Plan. The timing seemed appropriate, since it had been five years since the last IT Strategic Plan had been written, and it was felt that the Strategic Academic Plan did not explicitly define plans for IT support. Jack added that the plan would be particularly useful as a document for informing the new Chancellor of needs and goals in this area.

Jack said Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Paul Gray gave Ken and Jack the task of following through on the proposal, after it had been approved by the Academic Senate and forwarded to Paul Gray's office. Ken and Jack met to discuss how to proceed, and decided to ask existing campus IT-related committees to work on plan development rather than set up a new committee. Jack said that Professor Merrill Shanks volunteered to assist COMP with its effort to determine the current status of IT support in academic departments by designing an IT survey which was sent to academic department chairs last spring, and which has provided data that needs to be incorporated into the IT Strategic Plan next steps.

Katherine Mitchell handed out the list of "IT Guiding Principles" developed during the Spring, 2004, and representing the distilled thinking of many cross-campus organizations. The principles were adopted by the e-Berkeley Steering Committee on June 23, 2004. Katherine gave an overview of the IT-SP timelines and expected outcomes for 2004-05, and reviewed the "Critical Issues" identified in the Spring that would be addressed this fall:
1. Teaching and Learning Environment
2. IT Supporting Research
3. Customer Demand for Security, Reliability and Access

Katherine asked the committee to discuss Critical Issue #2, to provide a better understanding of what is needed for IT to support research at UC Berkeley. Jack
added that there is a systemwide concern with support for research; the UC-wide ITLC (Information Technology Leadership Council) will hold a special meeting in January to discuss this topic, and will also meet with the Vice Chancellors of Research at their meeting in February. Ken noted that the work COMP had done with the administrative organization at UC over the past year has been fruitful; the IT-SP has become very large. Ken referred to page 3 of the handout for a definition of the area of research computing under discussion today. Ken stressed that the immediate focus should be on the "research resources" used by all faculty and students working on research programs rather than research on IT. He described what he called the "vanilla standard": uniform computing hardware/software and support to academic departments.

Dave asked Shel and Jack for input on the idea of the "vanilla standard". Shel referred to the work done by the ITAC (Information Technology Architecture Committee) in relation to this topic, and asked for COMP to review and evaluate the three documents available on the website at http://itac.berkeley.edu under the heading "Draft ITAC Critical Issues Documents". Shel would like to know whether anything seems to be missing from these documents. He added that defining the standard is the question, since funding is uneven among departments. Dave questioned whether central funding is the answer. Jack said that establishing a "vanilla standard" would be a major change, and would be good to address before the budget decisions are made this Spring. Jack mentioned that the backup of research data is an important issue as well, and that the new Data Center provides the opportunity to correct the current situation. Dave responded that there seem to be two major issues, (1) what is on the desktop and (2) the larger issue of organizing and preserving research data over long periods of time (which is a larger issue than just backup). He said he is not certain how to move forward. Arthur added that the funding stream for both issues is unclear. Jack said that Paul Gray supports the "vanilla standard" idea, and said that the Spring budget would be a time for making decisions regarding these issues.

Arthur mentioned CAPRA (Academic Planning and Resource Allocation), as a resource. Merrill Shanks remarked that the academic grants are expected to cover research computing, and that funding for research computing is not included in the state budget. Dave said that funding questions are left out of the list on Page 3 of the handout (listing initial issues for IT and research at Berkeley), and Katherine asked Dave, Ken and Arthur to revise the list for future discussions.

Implementation and promulgation of the campus Minimum Security Standards for Networked Devices

Jack also presented background information on the policy regarding security for networked devices, saying that it had previously been brought before COMP during the Spring 2004. He said that a tremendous amount of activity around these issues had been generated on campus lately, and that COMP should be informed of the following events.

A recent incident involving the compromise of a computer containing data on hundreds of California citizens (social security number, medical information, etc.) licensed by the State of California to a visiting professor from Connecticut College, occurred in the Institute of Industrial Relations at UCB. The professor had been informed of the minimum security standards, and the compromise was discovered by those who monitor the network under Craig Lant, Campus Security Officer. The State Department of Social Services has been involved, as well as the FBI, and Jack has met with legislative analysts in...
Sacramento concerning this event. A media alert was issued by the State, and hearings may be held regarding the issue.

Jack said that one important result of the incident is that the Internal Review Board (IRB) for UC Berkeley (the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects), has written their own policy regarding network security. The policy needs input from COMP as it is now in the draft stage and will be passed by the IRB without further approval when finalized. This is a federally-mandated definitive document regarding what is and is not allowed on this campus in the area of online data security, and is more rigorous than the campus Minimum Security Standards for Networked Devices policy. Jack strongly urged COMP to review it and comment as soon as possible. Dave commented that this seems to be part of the data stewardship issue, and needs to be addressed.

Jack continued by saying the second issue he wanted to present today is that another policy will be brought forward at the e-Berkeley Steering Committee meeting on November 23; concerning Basic Standards for Systems that Contain Restricted Data. This policy addresses a higher level of security for those systems with "restricted data" as defined by systemwide policy set forth by UCOP. The policy is one that the CISC (Campus Information Security Committee) has been working on over the past year, and will most likely be approved on an interim basis by the e-Berkeley Steering Committee.

Thirdly, Jack handed out a report he presented to the Chancellor's Cabinet in response to the concern expressed over the incident described above, and the need to know how to ensure that it doesn't happen again. The report outlined Jack's "Recommendations for Increasing the Security of Sensitive Information on the UC Berkeley Campus Network." Jack noted that there is nothing that can be done to ensure that such an incident won't happen again, but things are definitely tightening up.

Arthur asked whether there was a place the visiting professor could have gone to find out what to do to secure the data. Jack said that Craig's unit could have advised her; Craig added that it would be more cost effective to have a secure environment with measures in place. Arthur said the available resources for handling measures described in the handout are not uniform across campus, and he recommended that a "security center" be established to provide service in these areas. Dave agreed, and suggested that this be added to Jack's list of eight measures.

Jack said that he thinks the policy being written by the campus IRB is top priority, and said that the policy is posted on the website http://cphs.berkeley.edu. He urged that COMP contact Director of the IRB to let her know COMP would like to comment on the policy. Dave said he would make contact with the IRB, and asked for comments on the policy from COMP members within a short period of time. Dave will forward COMP's comments to the IRB.

Further review COMP's concerns regarding the Minimum Security Standards policy were postponed to a future meeting due to lack of time. The thirteen points will be discussed with Craig Lant, Security Officer.

Preliminary departmental computing survey results; what can we learn from them?

Merrill reported on the survey results so far. He is still waiting for enough responses to bring the rate up to 70% (31 of 65 departments have responded to date). Merrill presented his results with two caveats, (1) Department Chairs may not know the financial facts asked for in the survey, and (2) Merrill wants to
collect more data, before he produces a final report. He said the current survey results reveal that:

100% of faculty use computers, and network connectivity is at 100%. 37% of the departments surveyed have no IT support, and 67% use outside services for their support. 41% spend nothing on computing, 41% spend up to $10,000, and 19% spend over $10,000 per year.

Dave summarized by saying that access is ubiquitous, but the problem lies in antiquated machines and spotty professional administration and support. He thinks the largest issue is support; Merrill agreed that the Chairs found the lack of support was the major difficulty. Merrill said there is an option, that support is available at a cost from the L&S department (approximately $1200 per year per machine). Merrill said there is also a strategy being discussed involving a standard level of support provided across campus on a uniform level. Dave asked for further discussion of the survey results at the next meeting.

Discussion of report "Systemwide Strategic Directions for Libraries and Scholarly Information at the University of California" from the Advisory Committee on Library and Scholarly Information

Due to lack of time, this agenda item was tabled until the next meeting.

Confirmation of 2003 report from COMP to the Committee on Committees

Dave asked for comments regarding the report written by Ken Goldberg, former COMP Chair, and it was deemed accurate. The report will be forwarded to COMS.

Discussion of the proposed policy and plan on Data Management, Use, and Protection defined by the Data Stewardship Council (Guests: Jill Martin, Helen Norris, Dennis Hengstler)

Helen introduced the topic by stating that the e-Berkeley Steering Committee has approved the DMUP provisionally; the policy is a living document that can incorporate change. COMP had submitted questions regarding the policy to the DSC, and these were addressed.

Dave said the policy is not in a form that can be used, and he recommended that the policy be presented in a role-based form so that users can see the points that apply specifically to them. Jill remarked that a short version summary had been prepared at the request of the e-Berkeley Steering Committee; Thomas replied that summaries could be written as appropriate to certain roles (faculty, staff, students). Helen added that in the coming year the DSC will be working on implementation tools and guidelines. Aaron suggested that a list of references be added, to help users find what they are looking for quickly.

Dennis commented that the policy should be thought of as an educational tool - not an enforceable document. Helen added that no new ground is being broken through this policy; it was written to be used as a resource.

Dave asked whether a general approval would be helpful, with the reservation that more work needs to be done on making the policy actionable. This suggestion was well received by the DSC. Arthur asked about enforcement, and where someone should go for advice regarding the policy requirements. Dave indicated that COMP will make another pass at its comments and forward them to the Data Stewardship Council.
The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.
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December meeting will be held on Thursday, December 16, from 10:00 a.m. - 12 noon in 310 Stephens Hall.

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