

# ICASIT

INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR APPLIED STUDIES IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

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## In This Issue...

- ▮ What is ICASIT?
- ▮ Soros Grant to ICASIT
- ▮ ICASIT Goes to Mali
- ▮ ICASIT in Mexico
- ▮ ICASIT Partners with IMC
- ▮ SOM Website update
- ▮ ICASIT in Tanzania
- ▮ Highlights

## ICASIT Staff..

- ▮ Bryan Harter - co-manager
- ▮ Todd Kelly - co-manager
- ▮ Mona Arora
- ▮ Bhaskar Choudhury
- ▮ Kim Hansen
- ▮ Jennifer Mattingly
- ▮ Marnie Montgomery
- ▮ Asmita Runge

Check out the ICASIT web site to learn more about ICASIT projects.

## Visit ICASIT..

<http://www.icasit.org>

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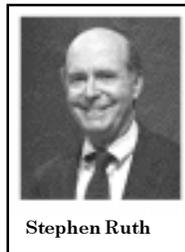
## What is ICASIT?

ICASIT is many things. It is a concept -- that information technology needs to satisfy a client or customer at a low unit cost. It is also a place, or really many places, where our colleagues and partners do their work. ICASIT, located in the School of Management, has a long history at the university -- in fact, this summer we celebrate our tenth anniversary. Since some of the GMU community may not be aware of what ICASIT is about, this newsletter, which is sent out once per semester, should be helpful.

We work on projects throughout the campus -- SOM, Arts and Sciences, TIPP, engineering, etc. We also have close partnerships with many local companies like BTG, VSE, AMS, Lockheed Martin, Learning Tree International, Bell Atlantic and many more. Yet our largest projects are outside the U.S. We have technology transfer responsibilities in nearly twenty countries -- in Africa, Europe, Asia, and South America.

ICASIT has received over \$3 million in grants and contracts in the 90's -- including \$1 million during the past eighteen months. Please come and visit.

Stephen Ruth  
Professor of Decision Sciences /MIS  
Director of ICASIT



Stephen Ruth

## Soros Grant to ICASIT

Billionaire George Soros' Open Society foundation awarded ICASIT a \$10,000 grant in December to further the Romanian Internet Academy, started by ICASIT through a Mellon Foundation grant in 1996. Every two weeks twenty Romanian professors receive a rigorous three days of training in leveraging the Internet and the World Wide Web in their research. A recent study of the program's graduates indicated that the training has resulted in many positive outcomes relating to research and career advancement. Most professors are from liberal arts disciplines, a group sometimes ignored in Internet training overseas. Sun Microsystems has also made a substantial grant to the school and Professor Tecuci, of GMU's

CS Department, a member of the Romanian Science Academy, has coordinated other grants. □

## ICASIT Goes to Mali

As part of her work at ICASIT, Asmita Runge had the opportunity to visit CERPOD (Center for Applied Research on Population and Development) in Bamako, Mali in the Spring of 1998. Asmita met with several CERPOD officials, including the Director of the center, to discuss the implementation of Internet technology at CERPOD. Some of the factors constraining Internet in Mali include the cost of telephone calls, access to computers, and cultural barriers. Currently at CERPOD there is one facility available for e-mail, accessible through only one computer. The slow download of data from the Internet does not justify the cost of the telephone connection. With the help of the Mellon Foundation, ICASIT is providing new computers, modems, and Internet access for a few months as well as HTML training for CERPOD members.

There are currently 4 ISPs in Mali, with plans for two more. There are 1000 accounts (an estimated 4000 users) in Mali from a population of 9.3 million. With increased awareness of the Internet among educational institutions, small businesses, government, and NGOs, the Internet is close to becoming an accepted phenomenon. The stable political government provides a favorable climate for new enterprise. Additionally, the vast expanse of the country creates a need for increased communications between the different regions. In 1991 Mali had only 4 radio stations but has about 70 today; similarly, the Internet has the potential for rapid growth by reaching out to even the most isolated areas. □

## ICASIT in Mexico

While on a study abroad trip this Winter break in Mexico (sponsored by GMU's Center for Global Education), students Jennifer Mattingly and Bryan Harter visited CONOPO as part of their work for Dr. Stephen Ruth at ICASIT. Based in Mexico City, CONOPO is the government organization responsible for compiling

census data and controlling population growth and distribution in the country of Mexico. The President of CONOPO is Mexico's Interior Minister. With funds from the Mellon Foundation, American Association for the Advancement of Science, LASPAU, and World Bank, ICASIT has provided support throughout Central and South America. Examples are Argentina, Peru, Costa Rica, Chile, Ecuador, and Brazil.

Jennifer and Bryan met with CONOPO officials to discuss the implementation of technology made possible with funding from ICASIT. One of the biggest challenges facing CONOPO is its coordination with satellite branches located in Mexico's 32 states. Traditionally, communicating important census data and administrative information between CONOPO and the 32 states has been a manual, time consuming, and frustrating process. ICASIT's funding is helping to improve communications and the exchange of information by supporting the purchase of new computers and Internet access for both CONOPO and the state offices. "I was impressed by CONOPO's organizational vision and its commitment to implementing the technology necessary to make its operations more efficient", said Mattingly. However, with only five of the 32 states connected, CONOPO still has a long way to go. "Provided they [CONOPO] demonstrate the effectiveness of these implementations, ICASIT is likely to continue to support CONOPO's goal of connecting the remaining 27 states", stated Harter, co-manager of ICASIT. □

## ICASIT Partners with IMC

We are pleased to announce that ICASIT and the Internet Multimedia Center (IMC) will be working in collaboration on a number of projects throughout this semester.

The IMC made its public debut in January of 1998, presenting state-of-the-art animation and multimedia to Governor Gilmore during his visit to George Mason University.

The Center grew out of the vision of Scott Martin, Director, who is also the director of the Visual Information Technologies division of the Institute of the Arts. Its mission is to assist

*Editors: Mona Arora  
Kimberly Hansen*

Virginia's high technology companies with training, design, and development of innovative multimedia and Internet-based products, applications and services. By forging relationships between university and business, the IMC provides an opportunity for graduate and undergraduate students to apply their skills in real world situations. At the same time, companies are able to explore new technologies while enhancing the abilities of their staff.

Composed of representatives from Internet-multimedia business, CIT, GMU Faculty and Administration, legal firms specializing in intellectual property, and the GMU Century Club, the IMC's Board of Advisors is a key asset. Through partnerships with such corporations as Silicon Graphics, Inc., Alias/Wavefront, Microsoft, and Adobe, the IMC is uniquely equipped to offer state-of-the-art resources to clients and students. □

## SOM Website Update

In mid February, ICASIT completed the SOM web site, a major collection of information and resources about the new School of Management. The site is modeled on the top sites in US business schools and has many advanced features. The demo site is at <http://www.icasit.gmu/som/index.htm>. The site has been turned over to the Redmon Group, who will manage and enhance it over the coming months. Special thanks to the ICASIT team that worked on this project: Kim Hansen, Marnie Montgomery, Bryan Harter, Keith Housey, and Todd Kelly. □

## ICASIT in Tanzania

Professor Ruth has arranged for Internet connectivity between the Center for Studies of Forced Migration in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and its worldwide colleagues. On a visit to the Forced Migration Study Center at Oxford in January Ruth arranged with Dr. Bonaventure Rutinwa to set up full Internet connectivity. The service was activated in mid March. □

## Highlights

### International Projects

ICASIT is providing Internet connectivity assistance for twenty countries around the world. Examples of current projects:

- a population and demographics research center in Mali
- Population Institute, Mexico City
- Institute for Population Research, Mahidol University, Thailand.

### ICASIT Partners with Redmon

ICASIT has been a significant developer of state-of-the-art information kiosks. Over the past three years ICASIT has been in a partnership with Fairfax County and Redmon Group to develop full capability (information, hard copy, bill paying, etc.) multimedia kiosks throughout Fairfax County and the City of Fairfax.

### CIT Database

The Center for Innovative Technology requested ICASIT to research and evaluate on-line software and technology training programs. The evaluation criteria included: visual appeal, user friendliness, content breadth, and content depth. The team developed a database with over 100 of these evaluated programs.

### Web Site Development

ICASIT has developed and maintained web sites for numerous SOM courses and student organizations. Professors use these web sites to electronically distribute course materials to supplement the traditional classroom.

### ICASIT Welcomes . . .

Bhaskar Choudhury who joined ICASIT in January 1998. Bhaskar has helped the team in Web development, Lotus Notes database management, and class support for Dr. Ruth's Tech. Management class.

### ICASIT says Goodbye to . . .

Mona Arora  
Bhaskar Choudhury  
Bryan Harter  
Todd Kelly  
Asmita Runge

*We wish all of our graduating team members the best of luck in their future endeavors!*