



ICASIT

INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR APPLIED STUDIES IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

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- Todd Kelly - co-manager
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- Kim Hansen
- Keith Housey
- 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 will be sent out once per semester, should be helpful.



Stephen Ruth

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 twelve months. Please come and visit us in 1998.

Stephen Ruth
 Professor of Decision Sciences /MIS
 Director of ICASIT

ICASIT Brings the Internet to Romania

The Internet was just an intangible among Romania's academic elite before ICASIT came on the scene in the early 1990s. The country's prestigious Academy of Sciences had produced many distinguished scientists, but its researchers had never accessed the information superhighway in any significant way.

Now, thanks to an Internet School developed by ICASIT director Stephen Ruth and his staff, as part of a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Internet is a critical tool for

Romanian scientists in accessing software and research papers, networking with peers and improving the quality of academic research.

"ICASIT's Internet School is the first and only opportunity for most academy researchers to learn and use Internet technologies," says Bryan Harter, co-manager of ICASIT who spent a week at the Bucharest center this summer. "We start with basic Internet concepts, then work with applications -- e-mail, gopher, World Wide Web, Harvest and Java." Harter has set up a web site with more information about the Internet School at <http://icasit.gmu.edu/romania/index.html>

Internet access providers, though available in Romania, are quite expensive, especially in areas with a high rate of inflation, says Harter. ICASIT provides more than half of the computer terminals available to academy members. A donation from Sun Microsystems, a U.S. company that supplies workstations to scientists around the world, doubled Ruth's investment, adding five computers and making the center accessible to more scientists.

ICASIT's efforts have not gone unnoticed. A survey of Internet School participants revealed that the Internet is now the most important tool for progress within their respective disciplines -- mainly because of access to up-to-date information, the ability to collaborate and expand professional networks, and the timeliness and reliability of communications.

Elena Barbre □

ICASIT Manages Cable Modem Study

ICASIT has been selected to conduct a study to report the impact of Media General Cable's (MGC) pilot Internet access service that uses a high speed technology, the cable modem. The project is funded by The Potomac Knowledge Way and Virginia's Center for Innovative Technology.

The cable modem transmits data 100 times faster than a standard 28.8 kbps modem that most home computer systems use. It also provides other benefits, such as always having an Internet connection and eliminating the use of a telephone line to transmit the data.

Media General, the cable provider in Fairfax County and the fifth-largest in the United States, is considering the Internet access service because the

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cable modem uses the same cable wiring that 270,000 MGC subscribers in the county use for its current cable television service. Subscribers consist of small office and home office workers -- a target audience Media General believes will perceive the most value from the service located in the City of Fairfax. The 30 participants range from small start-up high technology businesses to corporate workers who work part-time from the home.

Joe Saunders, former ICASIT co-manager, and Dr. Ruth were the initial project leaders for the study. Todd Kelly, current leader of the study, and Asmita Runge have been responsible for gathering the data to assess the participants' use of the cable modem as well as writing the components of the final report and presentation to CIT. □

ICASIT Goes to Africa

The summer of 1997 took ICASIT team member Todd Kelly to Africa for two different projects. First, Todd visited Uganda where ICASIT had funded an Internet Cache Memory System in collaboration with Makerere University in Kampala.

Charles Musisi, now of the East Africa Help Desk, demonstrated how ICASIT's funding had provided for Internet connectivity solutions for a metropolis where telephone systems and technology are scarce.

With the help of ICASIT funding, Musisi created a system whereby he cached some frequently visited Internet sites into memory so that users could access the site's information without having to address the problems with connection. As of August 1997, less than one per cent of the homes in Uganda had a telephone connection. Todd met with the Office of the Minister of Privatization and Finance as well as the only Internet service provider in Kampala, Starcom, to gain an insight into the changes predicted through this project.

The second phase of the Africa research took Todd to South Africa where he collaborated with other universities on their Distance Learning efforts. First, Todd visited Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa where he met with the Director of Information Systems. Rhodes University had created solutions through video conferencing employing the use of Sun Octane Systems to disseminate lectures to neighboring

communities. Todd learned more on the creation of the Center for Multimedia Excellence that employed such technologies as virtual modeling for tours of Grahamstown. Todd also visited The University of South Africa (UNISA) which is a Distance Education facility of over 120,000 students. Todd was able to talk first hand with professors and students and get their perspectives on what has made their program a success. □

New SOM Website

**COMING SOON TO A PC NEAR YOU...
The New & Enhanced
School of Management Website**

When: January, 1998

Where: www.som.gmu.edu

In January 1998, a new and improved School of Management (SOM) website will be launched. Throughout the Fall semester, Kim Hansen, Keith Housey, Marnie Montgomery, and the rest of the ICASIT team worked with Dean Domzal and others throughout SOM to develop a website aimed at presenting the faculty, staff, programs, and students of SOM to a wide audience. "The former web site had been the first contact with SOM for about a third of the students who were accepted into the graduate program--so SOM values the WWW as a way to create student linkages", says Professor Steve Ruth. The site will also serve as a resource for DC area cultural activities, SOM news & events, and research links to sites ranging from the International Business Resource to the Library of Congress.

Visit SOM's new website in late January
www.som.gmu.edu □

GRA Positions at ICASIT

ICASIT is supported primarily from grants and contracts and some GRA positions open up each year. Candidates for these positions should contact Professor Ruth, ICASIT director. The ideal candidate would be customer-oriented and have excellent IT skills, especially in WWW-related tasks, and a proven ability to complete projects, including writing and documentation, on time and independently. ICASIT team members typically are graduate students in SOM, SITE, Arts and Sciences or School of Health Sciences. Work is difficult and demanding. □

ICASIT Highlights

International Projects

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

- a population and demographics research center in Mali, Africa
- Population Institute, Mexico City, Mexico
- 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.

SOM Kiosk

A multimedia version of the School of Management web site will be placed in Enterprise Hall for current and prospective students, faculty, staff, and employers to obtain information about GMU's business school.

Voice Recognition Software

ICASIT has been evaluating and using voice recognition software to several practical tests. The software is able to handle as many as 100 words per minute and several ICASIT members use the system successfully in dictation of letters or articles. One article in this issue was dictated on Naturally Speaking, a product of Dragon Systems, Inc.

CAPBUILD System

The CAPBUILD system, designed in a joint effort between ICASIT and Redmon Group, Inc., is intended to be the first in a series of computerized project design assistants designed to improve the quality of capacity-building projects for the United Nations.

Bread for the World

ICASIT works closely with Bread for the World, a national hunger lobbying organization based in Silver Spring, MD, on a number of technology issues including HTML development, systems integration, and hardware procurement.

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.

*Editors: Jennifer Mattingly
Asmita Runge
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