ICASIT

INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR APPLIED STUDIES IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
School of Management, George Mason University

Fall 1998   *Volume I, Issue 3*

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- **Kimberly Stewart, Co-Manager**
- **Virgil Frizzell**
- **Marnie Montgomery**
- **Jeff Theobald**
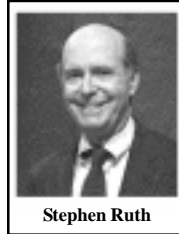
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OR

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

What's New at ICASIT?

This is the third edition of the newsletter. A lot has happened since the spring edition. First of all, we have a number of new partners -- companies and organizations that we're working with to help bring the best possible deliverables to our students and customers. Among these organizations are Computer Science Corporation, the World Bank, American Management Systems Inc., the GMU Entrepreneurship Center, the Potomac Knowledge Way, Mobil Oil, Unilever, VSE, Inc., Century Club and GMU's Internet Multimedia Center. We're also working with local organizations, such as the City of Fairfax Board of Education, and will be starting some student internships soon. As our projects increase in number, we continue to need undergraduate and graduate students with good computer and customer service skills -- please see the notice elsewhere in this newsletter.

Stephen Ruth

The two research thrusts that will predominate for us during the academic year are Knowledge Management (KM) and Economics of Distance Learning. We have grants for both and welcome the opportunity to work with GMU faculty and staff. Knowledge Management is really about a new paradigm in Information Technology. It focuses on the complex problems that confront managers who do not get enough value from traditional approaches to database management. Knowledge is far more valuable than information since it forms the basis of the firm's core competency -- so we're finding a lot of organizations that are interested in KM practices. We already have extensive KM resources, a major web site, a graduate course in the School of Management, and plans are underway to set up a KM round table for the Chief Knowledge Officers in our region.

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awarded us a grant of $390,000 last year to examine and support courses that make economic use of IT resources—courses that really leverage technology. About a dozen GMU faculty members have already participated—from SITE, SOM and CAS. The typical summer award is full (33%) or partial support for faculty to upgrade and enhance an existing course plus funds for travel, GRA's and equipment. Courses involved so far include Statistics, MIS, English, Astronomy, History, Geography, and Computer Science. You can find out more at ICASIT's web site under the tab "Education Innovations" or call me at (703) 993-1789.

Stephen Ruth
Professor of Decision Sciences /MIS
Director of ICASIT
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ICASIT Named Research Partner in $2 Million Award for Virginia-based Internet Technology Innovation Center

On August 13th Barry DuVal, the Secretary of Commerce and Trade for the Commonwealth of Virginia, announced an initiative aimed at assisting Virginia's newest emerging industry -- Internet-related businesses. The Internet Technology Innovation Center (ITIC) is a partnership among research centers at four Virginia universities. Partners include the University of Virginia, George Mason University, Christopher Newport University, and Virginia Tech. Dr. Robert Templin Jr., president of the Virginia's Center for Innovative Technology, said "we congratulate these centers for collaborating and sharing our vision to maintain Virginia's economic prosperity."

ICASIT and GMU's Internet Multimedia Center (IMC) were selected in a competitive process which considered twelve other proposals. Dr. Alf Weaver of the University of Virginia is the Director of the ITIC, and Professor Steve Ruth, ICASIT's director, is ITIC's associate director. Ruth will assume the ITIC directorship in the year 2000, according to the plan recently approved by CIT.

ICASIT is particularly well-suited to work in this partnership since it is the only one of the centers associated with a university business school and already has many ongoing projects with businesses. Dr. Ruth and Dr. Weaver have already begun contacting businesses in Northern Virginia to begin a process of connecting them to university-based Internet research projects. The aim is to leverage the initial $2 million investment over five years into major contracts between businesses and Virginia universities. "We're hoping to leverage the Commonwealth's investment many times over," says Ruth.

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Internet Connectivity in Tanzania

ICASIT has completed a project in Tanzania connecting the Center for Studies of Forced Migration in dar es Salaam to the Internet. Professor Ruth worked out this project with Dr. Bonaventure Rutinwa at a meeting at Oxford earlier in the year. The Tanzania center is now able to share data on regional refugee movements with centers worldwide.

New Project with Mobil Corporation

ICASIT is in the process of arranging a working agreement to help facilitate Mobil's knowledge management initiatives. The project entails developing Lotus Notes databases which provide information to, and encourage discussions between, users around the world. The Mobil Intranet will be intregrated with other Mobil databases to enhance their knowledge management network. ICASIT is working with Mobil's Global Security group.

Entrepreneurship Center Works with ICASIT

The Entrepreneurship Center has an agreement with ICASIT to restructure the EC web site to reflect the abundance of resources, services, and training for small businesses in the Northern Virginia area. Upon completion, the Entrepreneurship Center's web site will be interactive and coded so that search engines such as Yahoo and Infoseek find it in their searches.

New Team Members

ICASIT welcomes Mr. Jeff Theobald and Dr. Virgil Frizzell. Jeff received his Bachelor's degree from Virginia Tech and was employed by Schlumberger in the oilfield services industry for 3 1/2 years. Before joining ICASIT as a knowledge management consultant, Dr. Frizzell served as a change advocate and organizational liaison with a major federal agency. ICASIT is pleased to have both on the team!

Knowledge Management Has High Priority

Knowledge Management is an innovative process whereby companies gain a competitive advantage by effectively marshalling their data, information, knowledge and corporate wisdom to the benefit of their existing or expanding business interests and marketplaces. ICASIT has embarked on a broadly focused plan to help organizations benefit by implementing KM programs.

The initial activities include initiating an active dialog with Chief Knowledge Officers leading KM efforts in Northern Virginia firms. Dialog with this group should enable ICASIT to begin to understand best implementation practices for KM programs. ICASIT's new KM resource can be found at http://www.icasit.org/km/index3.htm.

Joint Project in Ecuador with University of North Carolina

ICASIT recently established a joint project with University of North Carolina to facilitate Internet connectivity for a large science center in Ecuador. Fundacion Ecuatoriano de Estudios Ecologicos or ECOciencia has responsibility for demographic studies in Ecuador. ECOciencia's president Danilo Silva determined that his organization needed improved Internet connectivity and contacted Dr. Richard Billsboro of the University of North Carolina's Population Study Center and Dr. Amy Tsui, the Center's director. With ICASIT, they worked out the details of the project with Silva. Results have been encouraging and, according to Silva, the multiplexer line and other hardware have enabled about thirty of the Center's researchers to gain full Internet access and use of the World Wide Web. This project represents the fifteenth developing nation in which ICASIT has delivered technological solutions for science centers connected to US universities.

~ Editors ~
Jennifer Mattingly
Kimberly Stewart

Snapshots

International Projects

ICASIT is providing Internet connectivity assistance for fifteen countries around the world. Examples of current projects:
- Tanzania's Center for Studies of Forced Migration in dar es Salaam
- Institute for Population Research, Mahidol University, Thailand
- ECOciencia in Ecquador

ICASIT Partners & Clients

ICASIT teams with many organizations, companies, and universities throughout the World. Examples: World Bank, Lockheed Martin, Unilever, University of North Carolina Demography Center, Computer Sciences Corporation, Mobil, Virginia Center for Innovative Technology, Christopher Newport University, VSE, Inc., American Management Systems, United Nations Development Program.

ICASIT's New Managers for Academic Year 1998-1999

Professor Ruth announced that Jennifer Mattingly and Kimberly Stewart are the co-managers of ICASIT in the '98-'99 academic year. They take over from Todd Kelly and Bryan Harter.

High School Interns

Professor Ruth is working with Fairfax High School and other local high schools to develop a cadre of students with good IT skills - he will select a small group of these students as paid interns to work with ICASIT team members on projects.

Looking for a Job?

ICASIT is interviewing candidates for special projects. Significant technology experience, especially on WWW-based research and HTML is required. Contact Professor Ruth via email (ruth@osf1.gmu.edu).

We've Moved!

ICASIT has moved offices from Enterprise Hall to the GMU Entrepreneurship Center (EC) 4031 University Drive, in Fairfax. The new facilities are shared with federal telecommuters and other Fairfax small businesses. EC has excellent equipment including state of the art facilities for offering telecourses.