

REPORT ON "NETWORKSHOP '91"

by

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The seventh Australian Networkshop "Networkshop '91" was held at the University of Tasmania at Hobart from 2 - 4 December 1991. "Networkshop '91" was the annual national workshop of the Australian academic and research networking community and attracted over 230 participants from all over Australia and New Zealand.

The conference was sponsored by the Australian Academic and Research Network (AARNet). A significant component of the conference related to the ongoing management and usage of AARNet, which has been in operation since early 1990. The improved communications between universities, and the facilitation of international communication through the network has rapidly produced benefits for teaching and research.

"Networkshop'91" focussed on several major issues:

- the progress on currently funded AARNet projects, including the X.500 project centred at the University of Queensland. This project aims to construct and maintain universal electronic directories of network users, similar in function to telephone directories.
- current developments in the connection of library on-line public access catalogues to AARNet, and the increasing provision of library-based textual information in electronic form via networks.
- various technical and engineering problems, including the maintenance of security, and the management of heterogeneous networked systems

One of the key speakers at the conference was Peter Deutsch of McGill University in Canada who spoke on the Archie project, which endeavours to maintain directory information on the many hundreds of publicly available databases accessible through international networks .

"Networkshop'91" attracted a greater diversity of participants than previous workshops in this series. This reflects increasing levels of interest in electronic networks, and the greater realisation of their potential uses. While the presentations at the workshop covered many topics, there were several common threads which can be drawn from the case studies and problems discussed.

The current level of tools provided for users to interact with most electronic networks is primitive. Several speakers mentioned that the degree of sophistication of the TCP/IP-based user interface to AARNet is not only limiting, but does nothing to encourage the adoption of this technology by potential new users. Much research and development still needs to be

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undertaken on the human-computer interface provided for electronic network applications.

Distinct development groups are addressing similar problems in networking, but without the benefit of their combined knowledge and resources. A particular example of this involves the X.500 directory projects, where network programmers are addressing information retrieval problems, which are well known to library and information scientists .

While faced with the current engineering, technical, managerial and economic problems of network development and expansion, it is relatively easy to consider only the immediate, localised or small-scale problems, and lose sight of the greater potential impact of electronic communications in our society and work-places. "Networkshop'91" marked a transition point in the development of AARNet. Previous conferences have concentrated on technical and engineering issues. In future the workshops need to address the wider issues of making such networks accessible and relevant to the general academic and research community. The increasing cost of networking will threaten their existence and accessibility unless the real benefits of this technology begin to be realised.

Some of the papers presented at "Networkshop'91" are available via anonymous FTP from the directory 'pub/networkshop', at the site:

ftp.utas.edu.au

Planning of "Networkshop'92" is now underway and further information can be obtained from:

"Networkshop '92"

Prentice Computer Centre

University of Queensland

Queensland Aust 4072

VIRUS BULLETIN
SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 1992
2 September 1992 - 3 September 1992

at
The Sheraton Hotel
Edinburgh
Scotland
United Kingdom

Main Theme
The Computer Virus Threat

**Combating computer viruses, corporate strategies and
technical developments**

This Conference will address the computer virus threat primarily from the perspective of large computer-using organisations. One of the most common complaints from the corporate sector is that developers of anti-virus products fail to understand corporate needs. The practicalities of running a business often make the more contrived defensive software and hardware solutions completely unworkable. Anti-virus procedures are proving difficult to implement and maintain.

VB '92 will provide a forum for corporate computer security managers to exchange experiences and to debate strategies, tactics and the merits of different anti-virus tools with the world's leading authorities on computer viruses.

For further details contact:

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