


2004

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The Association for Communications
Technology Professionals in
Higher Education

eNEWS

January, 2004

Vol. 33, No.1

SUPPORTING HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN ACHIEVING OPTIMAL USE OF COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES

ACUTA to Offer Regional Workshops

In an effort to continue to expand services to our members and keep costs as low as possible, ACUTA offered corporate affiliates the opportunity to sponsor the monthly newsletter. Thanks to CCMI for sponsoring the eNews for the entire year of 2004.

Thanks to the sponsor of the January eNews



Negotiate your next telecom contract from a position of strength. CCMI's DealWatch provides instant intelligence on the top three IXC's negotiated telecom deals.

Visit www.ccmi.com/dealwatch.html

ACUTA is offering an exciting new program in 2004. In order to serve the educational needs of more members, especially those with limited travel budgets, we plan to offer two regional workshops. Each event will be one day, allowing most attendees to drive in and out without an overnight stay. To make the workshops financially feasible, we identified regions where we have a significant concentration of members.

If you live in the Mid-Atlantic region, mark your calendar for Wednesday, March 10, for a regional workshop that will be held at the Hilton Pikesville Inn on the outskirts of Baltimore. The topic will be "The Challenges of VoIP." The primary instructor will be Gary Audin, whose educational sessions at ACUTA meetings are always well-received.

In addition to Audin's presentation, a panel of local members will discuss VoIP on their campuses. Vendors are invited to participate in the exhibit hall as well.

Audin's presentation will be repeated later in the spring or early summer in another regional workshop to be held in upstate New York. A different panel of local members will share their experiences, and, again, vendors are expected for the exhibit hall.

"The board and staff have listened to our members' requests to bring top-quality educational seminars closer to home during times of budget and travel restrictions," says ACUTA President Wally Czerniak. "This one-day seminar will reach more members and still provide the quality you expect from ACUTA."

For more information about the agenda or to register for these events, visit the ACUTA website at <http://www.acuta.org>.

ACUTA Events Calendar 2004

Winter Seminars	January 11-14	New Orleans, LA	Sheraton New Orleans
Regional Workshop	March 10	Baltimore, MD	Hilton Pikesville Inn
Spring Seminars	April 18-21	Miami Beach, FL	Wyndham Resort
Annual Conference	August 1-5	Chicago, IL	Sheraton Hotel & Towers
Fall Seminars	October 24-27	St. Louis, MO	Hyatt Regency



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Jeri Semer, CAE
ACUTA Executive Director

**From ACUTA Headquarters
Unauthorized Charges Require
Multi-Pronged Approach**

Unauthorized charges are a time-consuming and potentially expensive source of inconvenience for ACUTA members. Over the past several years, ACUTA has followed a multi-pronged approach to helping reduce the amount of unauthorized charges on institutions' telephone bills.

These efforts, spearheaded by the Legislative/Regulatory Affairs Committee dating back to 1995, have included the following highlights (see <http://www.acuta.org/dynamic/legreg/legreg.cfm> under "Fraud Prevention" for a more complete list):

- Surveying members to determine the extent of the problem, and presenting the results to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at their *pay-per-call* workshop in May 1999;
- Commenting to the FTC on pay-per-call rules, supporting provisions that require authorization from the financially responsible party for charges to telephone bills (see <http://www.acuta.org/relation/downloadfile.cfm?docnum=252>);
- Providing information to members about how to file formal and informal complaints to the FCC regarding unauthorized charges (available at <http://www.acuta.org/relation/downloadfile.cfm?docnum=251>);
- Educating members regarding the FCC's Truth-in-Billing, slamming, cramming, and fraud rules;
- Meeting with carrier representatives to develop solutions, resulting in educational/open forum sessions with carrier and institution representatives at ACUTA seminars;
- Participating in telecom industry organizations including the Ordering and Billing Forum (OBF) to educate the telecom industry about the extent of the problem, and developing ongoing liaison with a broad cross-section of the industry to work on resolving the problem;
- Developing the ACUTA College and University Telephone Number Database, to be used by subscribing companies to identify institutions' phone numbers that are ineligible for miscellaneous charges. (The Database currently contains 3,061 ranges containing 1,917,851 individual numbers from 213 college/universities.)
- Through our liaison with the industry, ACUTA has developed a positive and productive relationship with the organization representing billing clearinghouses. These companies consolidate the charges from various service providers and contract with LECs for those charges to appear on customers' monthly bills.

The organization representing that industry is the Coalition to Ensure Responsible Billing (CERB). More information about CERB is available at <http://www.cerb.org/index.html>. CERB has developed standards of practice for responsible billing practices, and its member companies have implemented various methods of preventing and resolving unauthorized charges. The Chairman of the Board of Directors of CERB served on the task force that developed the ACUTA College and University Telephone Number Database.

One of the most frustrating aspects of resolving unauthorized charges is finding contact information for the various billing companies. The CERB Chairman recently provided a useful contact list for use by ACUTA members, listing the billing clearinghouses, the names under which they do business, and contact persons at each company. That list has been posted on the ACUTA Website, at <http://www.acuta.org/relation/downloadfile.cfm?docnum=844>. Members of CERB have proven to be useful contacts for ACUTA members in resolving unauthorized charges, since they represent 90% of the billing clearinghouse industry.

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From ACUTA Headquarters
Continued from page 2

Based on the reduced number of contacts from members experiencing unauthorized charges, it appears that the multi-pronged approach involving enforcement by regulatory agencies, tools like the ACUTA Telephone Number Database, and voluntary industry efforts may have been successful in reducing the incidence of this problem. ACUTA and its Legislative/Regulatory Affairs Committee will continue its diligent efforts in this area on our members' behalf.

ACUTA Announces Online Press Room

ACUTA is pleased to announce a new benefit of membership: the online Press Room.

The online Press Room provides a location for ACUTA members (both institutions and corporate affiliates) to post press releases and share pertinent information with others. There is no charge for this service.

Has someone been promoted? Have you released a new product? Has your company acquired or been acquired by another? Any information that would be of interest to those who deal with communications technology in higher education may be submitted for posting. Announcements will be available in the Press Room for 60 days, and members are encouraged to visit the site and view the latest information at anytime.

The Press Room is available on the ACUTA website at:

<http://www.acuta.org/relation/downloadfile.cfm?docnum=838>

Before submitting an item for posting, please read the submission policy on the website. Send your press releases to Pat Scott, ACUTA Communications Manager, at pscott@acuta.org or fax to 859/278-3268. (E-mail attachments as Acrobat PDF are preferred.)

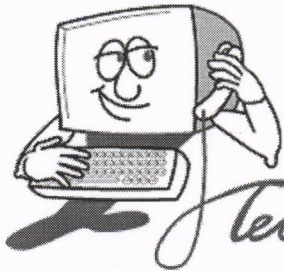
Board Report December

The Board of Directors met by conference call on December 4, 2003.

The Board reviewed and approved the 9/30/03 year-end financial statements, noting that ACUTA had finished the fiscal year with approximately a \$3,000 surplus. The Board also discussed and approved proposed topics for the 2004 Annual Conference pre-conference seminars and approved a Corporate Affiliate member appointment to the Higher Education Advisory Panel.

The Board also agreed to assist with membership retention efforts by contacting non-renewing members, and agreed to actively participate in encouraging nominations for the Institutional Excellence Award and the ACUTA Ruth A. Michalecki Leadership Award.

Respectfully submitted,
Carmine Piscopo, RCDD
Providence College
Secretary/Treasurer



by Kevin Tanzillo
Dux Public Relations

RDMA's Efficiency Boost: Thanks for the Memory

Many of us truly love to read, yet there are still those "required reading" things that fall short of being lovable. Curling up with a good novel on a cold night is a treat, yes, but things such as departmental reports, rambling e-mails, IRS documents, and employee personnel policies never provide much enjoyment.

Suppose you could take one of those dreaded documents, place your hand on it, and without reading it, have the contents immediately transferred into your brain. Wouldn't that save time and energy, not to mention being a great magic trick to perform for friends?

That is the principle—in a roundabout way—behind RDMA, or Remote Direct Memory Access. RDMA is a method of moving data from the memory of one computer across a network and directly into the memory of another computer, with minimal involvement from the CPUs (central processing units) of either machine.

In addition to its inherent efficiency, this is an important process as networks advance in speed. It is fine to talk about moving to a 10-gigabits/second Ethernet network, but if your computers can't handle incoming data at that rate, the value of such ultra-high-speed networks is diminished.

In the typical scenario, my computer sends your computer data across the network, and your computer has to copy data between the kernel (the program's operating system) and the application before placing it in memory. If I keep sending that data to you faster and faster, memory bottlenecks start to gum everything up.

With RDMA on the network interface cards (NICs), however, the incoming data reduces demands on bandwidth and processing power and gets directly into your computer's memory.

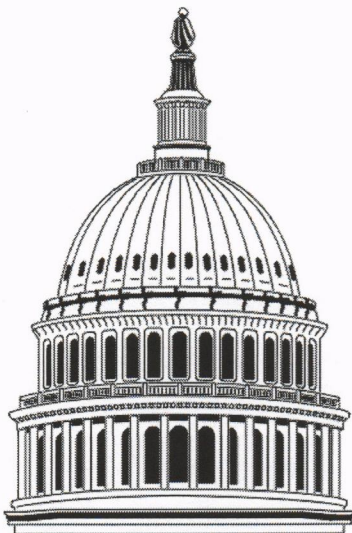
The remote virtual memory address for the operation is carried right inside the RDMA message. Thus there is no need for the remote application to do anything beyond registering the appropriate memory buffer with its local NIC. RDMA supporters note that each incoming network packet contains enough information to allow its data payload to be placed directly into the correct destination memory location, even when those packets arrive out of order.

The greatest benefit of RDMA will be found in computing clusters running distributed applications or in multiprocessor machines. One good example is database software running on clusters, which shows much better scaling and performance with the same number of nodes when RDMA is used.

Bottom line: With data going directly to its final destination, system processors and memory are freed for user applications. The resulting efficiency also provides the opportunity to converge functions in a data center over fewer types of interconnects.

Two years ago, several equipment makers formed the Remote Direct Memory Access Consortium (<http://www.rdmaconsortium.org>) and declared last October that they had completed all the needed specifications for the protocol and could now turn their attention to first-generation implementations. So watch for those RDMA products to be turning up soon.

As always, if there are specific topics you would like to see covered in this space, please let me know via e-mail at kevin@duxpr.com.



DC Update

Whitney Johnson
Northern Michigan University
(Retired)

For More In-Depth Coverage of Legislative & Regulatory Issues:

ACUTA members may read about the latest developments in telecommunications and Internet-related issues in the most recent **Legislative and Regulatory Update**, an electronic newsletter prepared monthly by Wiley, Rein & Fielding. Access this newsletter at <http://www.acuta.org/relationDownloadFile.cfm?docNum=309>

Identity Theft

The Fair Credit Reporting Act has been renewed and signed by President Bush. The renewal includes some strong identity theft provisions. Some of the provisions include free credit reports, a national fraud-alert system, and requirements to omit Social Security or credit card numbers from receipts. If your department or accounting office prints credit card or Social Security numbers on receipts, be sure you make the appropriate changes to the software that does the printing. The complete bill (HR 2622) can be found at <http://thomas.loc.gov>.

USTA-Equipment Maker Dinner

Telecommunications Reports (TR) reported that on October 20 a dinner meeting was hosted by the U. S. Telecom Association and the Bells for equipment suppliers. The event included top management representatives from the ILECs and most of the major equipment suppliers. The meeting "was a direct result of pressure from Capitol Hill on the Bell companies to enlist other industry segments in their campaign for further deregulation."

A memo from the dinner indicated that the discussion had focused on several pending FCC proceedings, including proceedings on broadband deregulation, the Universal Services Fund, and total-element, long-run incremental cost (TELRIC) pricing. The telecom executives proposed that in all cases where competition exists, regulations be lifted. There was also discussion about antitrust issues in the meeting. (TR 11/15/03)

The U. S. Telecom Association (USTA) has put together an advertising "war chest" that already has more than \$20 million, and they are reportedly seeking a total of \$30 to \$40 million for a massive advertising blitz.

The ranking member of the House Judiciary Committee, said following a Nov. 19 hearing on telecom antitrust issues that he expects to formally ask the Justice Department to investigate the Oct. 20 dinner. (TR 12/1/03) Obviously the ILECs would like to see a lot of the regulations that they have to live by removed from consideration. On the other side of the issue is what would they do that would have a costly effect on the consumer base.

Pay Phones

There has been some discussion on the ACUTA listserv about the telecom companies removing pay phones that had been on campus for a number of years.

Some were wondering about other campuses that had taken over the pay phones as part of the campus telephone system. The use of pay phones has gone down a lot due to the expansion of cellphone use by so many customers.

The Bell companies reported that from February 1999 to August 2001 the number of pay phones that they operate was reduced by more than 20%. It was also noted that there was a decline of about 10.5% in the number of independently operated pay phones from 1998 to March 2001.

The FCC has issued a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) "to determine whether to modify the default compensation rate to pay-phone service providers (PSPs) for 'dial-around' calls. The current default rate of 24 cents per call expired Jan. 31, 2002, after being in effect for three years."

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DC Update...

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The FCC would like to know whether the rate should be changed, and if it should be changed, what changes should be made. The NPRM was likely published in the Federal Register in mid November. Comments were due within 30 days and replies within 45 days after publication. (TR 11/15/03)

Fiber to the Premises (FTTP)

Verizon has teamed up with four vendors to provide fiber-optic and electronic equipment. In the November Global Communication Conference in New York a Verizon Vice Chairman indicated that they would be investing in FTTP during the next year, but the investment would not increase the company's overall capital spending. He said, "We are one step closer to beginning deployment of a new technology that will revolutionize this industry, enabling a new broadband economy through the delivery of a vast array of high-speed, high-capacity data service, along with voice and video products to consumers and business customers."

The investment plans will begin to shift from copper to FTTP. They expect to have about a million homes, in at least two communities, connected in 2004, and twice that many more connected in 2005. They do have some policy concerns in spite of the deregulatory steps taken by the FCC in the triennial review order. "It is important to stress that the Federal Communications Commission must further clarify the rules that it recently released," he said. (TR 12/1/03)

FTTP is growing in other ways, also. Cable companies are beginning to expand the fiber network, and some are looking to add voice service. Things are really beginning to change in the telecom market.

Fines

The FCC has proposed to fine SpectraSite Communications, Inc., \$120,000 for violating the FCC's antenna-structure rules. The problem relates to two towers in Richmond, Virginia, where they built the towers and failed to register one of them and light the other one. The one that did not have the lights installed is 313 meters tall which is over 1,000 feet high. The other tower is only 181 meters or about 600 feet high. (TR 11/15/03)

As a private pilot I really understand the problem with a tower more than 1,000 feet high without lights. One thousand feet is a common altitude for a private airplane to fly in many areas. I have often seen the lights flashing to let me know that the tower was there when flying a plane.

The FCC also proposed fining AT&T \$780,000 over *do-not-call* allegations. AT&T was quick to note that the fine was not related to the new nationwide do-not-call list but was based on complaints from consumers who said they were on the company's list but were called anyway. The FCC proposed a forfeiture of \$10,000 for each of 78 violations for calls made to 29 customers. (TR 11/15/03)

Other articles indicate that the FCC and the FTC are working on how best to handle the calls made to people on the new list that are in violation of the do-not-call list plan. It will be interesting to follow and see what happens to those who violate the do-not-call list. Customers who get bad calls should report them to the FCC or the FTC.



Help us grow the ACUTA network—Invite your colleagues at other schools to join ACUTA!

WLNP: Portability Finally Happens

Greg Stahl
St. Lawrence University

Well, it's finally here. Ten years after the FCC first mandated number portability for toll-free numbers, the mandate for wireless phones has arrived.

Some background:

In 1993, the FCC mandated number portability for toll-free numbers. The new regulation enabled users—for the first time—to change carriers while keeping their number. This was viewed by many as a big win for the consumer. Section 251 of the 1996 Telecom Act then mandated the FCC to implement number portability and in doing so, they started with wireline to wireline portability in the top 100 MSAs. This was implemented in 1998 at an estimated cost of \$4 billion. With regard to wireless LNP, the 1996 ruling was ordered to go into effect in June 1999. The order was delayed a few times, and finally went into effect on November 24, 2003.

November 24 brought phase one of WLNP, which requires carriers to port numbers among themselves at the user's request. This applies to wireless-to-wireless and wireless-to-wireline porting within the same geographical area. Phases two and three of WLNP refer to features (phase two) and geographical location (phase three), and will come at a later date.

The wireless-to-wireline/wireline-to-wireless portability was actually a late add-on to the ruling. The LECs felt this was unfair because the technical details of how to make it happen had yet to be worked out. While it appeared that wireline-to-wireless portability could be implemented with reasonable effort, due to technical issues it was estimated that only 1 in 8 wireless-to-wireline portability attempts would be feasible. This goes back to the 1996 Telecom Act which states that carriers are ordered to perform portability requests if "technically feasible."

Wireline carriers such as BellSouth have requested an extension of time to comment on portability due to technical issues. The National Emergency Number Association (NENA) has backed BellSouth's request because of the implications to E911 services.

Phase 3 of the ruling stands to present the most challenging obstacles to the carriers. All of these technical roadblocks will have to be worked out at the cost of the consumer.

Industry analysts estimate that preparation for the current phase of WLNP has cost the carriers \$1 billion. The FCC is allowing carriers to recoup this by charging a porting fee. Interestingly enough, the FCC states that a carrier may not refuse to port a number because a consumer has not paid a porting fee.

When the carrier reps went to work that morning in November, they were inundated with tens of thousands of requests. Being able to switch to another wireless carrier and keep your number sounds great, but is the grass always greener on the other side of the fence? And how long does it take to complete the switch? Some users have reported a rather quick (two hours) and painless transfer, while others waited two weeks or more. AT&T Wireless seems to be one of the carriers reportedly having difficulty porting numbers to other carriers even to the point of being sent a letter by the FCC asking for an explanation of the problems they are having.

So what's the problem? The carriers (wireless and wireline) have had seven years to prepare for this. In the February eNews we will consider the answer to that question.

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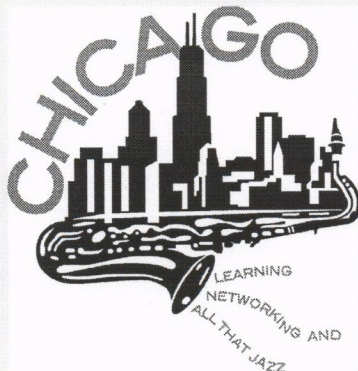
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TeleSym is building software to create and grow the wireless IP telephony market. The company's first product, SymPhone, delivers high-quality voice communications on wireless IP networks, such as 802.11b.

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<http://www.nextgnetworks.net>

Peter Georges, Business Development, 917/566-3917

NextG Networks offers a new solution to the problems associated with increasing coverage and capacity with a protocol-independent network which allows for easy expansion of current voice services and transparent introduction of new data services.



Thanks to Advertisers for '03

ACUTA thanks the following companies for advertising in our 2003 journals. As you choose the companies with which you will do business, we hope you will remember these ACUTA supporters.

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Audio Seminar

Protecting Networks from Worms & Viruses

Wednesday, January 28, 2004

1:30-3:00 p.m. EST

As we have done in the past, ACUTA is offering an audio seminar based on a popular session at the fall seminar. John Denune, Technology Security Officer at San Diego State University, will discuss the types of worms and viruses that have recently plagued campuses and strategies to protect your campus network. He will address how to prevent future attacks through technology and policy, what to do when machines are infected, how to block at the router and firewall levels, and how to deal with department and residence hall machines as well as laptops and home computers that are connected to the campus network.

Registration fee: \$69 members/\$109 nonmembers

Register online at <http://www.acuta.org> or call Lori Dodson at 859/278-3338.