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PANEL 17 INTERNET AND BEYOND: BUILDING PUBLIC DATA INFRASTRUCTURES

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PANEL 17

INTERNET AND BEYOND: BUILDING PUBLIC DATA INFRASTRUCTURES

Panel Chair: Ajit Kambil, New York University

Panelists: Brian Kahin, Harvard University
Brewster Kahle, President, WAIS, Inc.

Internet provides a national and international data communications and information infrastructure to support research, education and technology transfer. Today, Internet has over one million host computers with ten million users making it the largest de facto client server computing environment in the world. The rapid growth of Internet and new information technologies give rise to new technical, policy and commercial opportunities and challenges in advancing this public infrastructure. The increased privatization, commercialization and expansion of public access to Internet promises to make it an increasingly important topic of study to the MIS community.

This panel examines the key technical, policy and business issues in further development and use of Internet and identifies key MIS research issues in relation to Internet.

INTERNET OVERVIEW — Ajit Kambil

The Internet overview presents a brief summary of the current organization, operations and use of the network. Current technical initiatives to expand and upgrade the network to support emerging multimedia and high bandwidth applications are also considered.

USER APPLICATIONS AND COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES — Brewster Kahle

The Wide Area Information Services Project is used as an example of an innovative user application, as a model for distributed electronic publishing, and as a commercial product that evolved from experiments on Internet. Current trends in the design of other information services, user applications and commercial opportunities presented by Internet are also considered.

BUILDING THE PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE — Brian Kahin

Internet provides a unique, decentralized environment for accommodating public and private investment in data communications infrastructure. However, new policy models are required for network expansion as Internet increases in use, access and functionality. Competing policy models (including those of the new Clinton-Gore administration) are summarized, and their implications for the development of a universal broadband infrastructure are considered.

DISCUSSION OF MIS RESEARCH AND INTERNET — Moderated by Ajit Kambil

Discussion between the panel and the audience to identify the key IS research issues in relation to Internet.