PRENTICE BULLETIN

THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

Number 73 December 1997

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Funding boosts new technology

The University of Queensland has allocated funds to support new technology being trialled by the Prentice Centre.

VideoWeb, believed to be an Australian first, is web-driven, video-on-demand technology that delivers broadcast quality video to the lecture theatre.

Developed by Prentice Centre and Sun Microsystems, with assistance from Bay Networks, VideoWeb means the sky is the limit in teaching techniques.

The power of VideoWeb was recently demonstrated when four University of Queensland lecturers demonstrated the technology to teaching staff.

VideoWeb allows web pages, real time video and audio to be displayed on huge lecture theatre screens.

Staff are able to create media-rich web pages in their office or from home and call up web page links and video links during lectures.

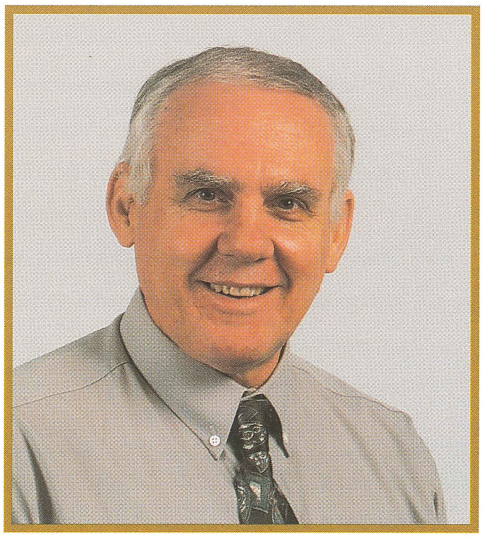
Presentations can contain text, graphics, images and high quality broadcast video and audio segments.

Prentice Centre joint director Graham Rees said the University funded the development because flexible delivery of teaching was the way of the future.

"The lecturer will not need much training to use the system," Mr Rees said.

"They can create their own text or video on a web page or give it to us and we will prepare it."

Equine Medicine Associate Professor Chris Pollitt used a live cross to Gatton campus to demonstrate the endoscopic examination of a horse's throat and trachea.



Prentice Centre Joint Director Graham Rees.

"Instead of silent pictures and attendant description, (VideoWeb) can bring my students not only the dynamics of clinical science but the sounds as well from a site anywhere in the world to any number of students," Dr Pollitt said.

"With this high quality broadcast, we can now pause the video, talk about it, rewind, connect to a remote location and bring up the web - all in the lecture theatre."

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Marketers target net surfers

Internet users should be aware their use of a web site could be recorded and used for marketing purposes.

But Australian Computer Emergency Response Team (AUSCERT) Technical Director Danny Smith said net users should not become too concerned.

"There is a difference between what is possible and what is probable," he said.

He said while privacy issues were important, an alarmist attitude did not help: "It comes down to a realistic use of the information."

Mr Smith said some organisations' web sites may use tools which monitor usage patterns once someone visited their site.

"Access logs, cookies and some browser features are all possible sources of information about users' behaviour," he said.

"It's possible to scan a web server's access logs for an IP address to see if it has visited a particular page on that web site."

Mr Smith said this could tell the marketer something about the user's current information preferences.

"Cookies contain data sent by the web server which may be retrieved at a later date," he said.

"This could be used, for example, to collate information on how many times you logged in, how long ago and what you did the last time you were there."

He said marketers could use this information to target campaigns and to personalise promotions.

Many browsers now provide users with a choice. Different levels of security can be chosen, including the ability to disable cookies, Java, JavaScript and ActiveX.

GIVE YOUR WORK THE RIGHT TOUCH

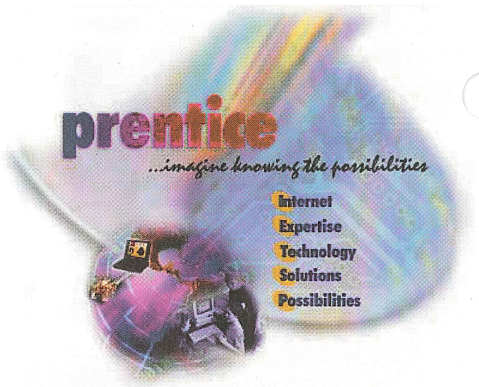
Researchers and students can now preserve and present their documents at an affordable price.

Prentice Centre offers small-scale document preparation services for jobs requiring a professional touch, but not the cost of professional printing.

Prentice Centre's Operations Group printing and copying service now has a CD ROM burner, colour laser printer and copier to add to its support services. Document heat-binding from 1-150 pages, text and image scanning, MCQ exam marking, are among the services already available.

You can also use Prentice's Computer Lab to create your documentation, on a wide range of popular software packages.

Gatton staff and students can contact Client Services on (07) 5460 1044 for the cost of a local call or email to oper@brolga.uq.edu.au.



http://www.prentice.uq.edu.au

Having trouble connecting to the net?

Why not attend one of Prentice Centre's dial-in modem access clinics?

Internet Service clients can now book in advance for a consultation at our Internet Access Clinics.

During a 45-minute session, our staff will answer your questions and show you how to get connected.

By the time you leave, your system will be configured to access the internet and you will be ready to start surfing.

So, if you have an account with us and you can't get connected - or, if you just don't know where to begin - call client service.

Appointments are available from 9am to 4pm weekdays.

Phone ext 54400.

FUNDING BOOSTS TECHNOLOGY

(from page 1)

Journalism Assoc Prof Bruce Grundy said he was seen on screen in the lecture theatre while he operated a television editing suite from the other side of the campus.

"The opportunities for us in Journalism are potentially enormous," he said.

Biochemistry's Assoc Prof Susan Hamilton, who used animated graphics to show cell formation, said VideoWeb made it "simple" to put together video clips, still images and access the web.

Dr Dale Spender also presented at the demonstration and highlighted some of the copyright issues that would need to be addressed.

Using the process of preparing a VideoWeb presentation as an example, Dr Spender revealed experiences of the copyright permission process.

SITES ATTRACT

Weekly access to Prentice Centre's web pages has increased 14 times in the past two years and almost doubled in the past year.

There were 1,089 accesses in the first week of November 1995, 8,984 in the same week in 1996 and 14,144 this year.

The top site is http://www.uq.edu.au/pcc/services/uqnet/mquota with 3,485 accesses.

Journalism web pages recorded 7,864 accesses in one week in June.

The top site was http://www.uq.edu.au/jrn/coco.html with 696 accesses.

High performance computer gives university edge

A $2.1 million upgrade of The University of Queensland's high performance computer, OZONE, has given the University Australia's third most powerful computer.

Housed at Prentice Centre, the 32CPU Silicon Graphics computer is available free to University researchers.

Super Computing manager Wilfred Brimblecombe said OZONE was 60-100 times faster than a high end pentium PC.

He said each CPU in OZONE was at least three times faster than a high end pentium CPU.

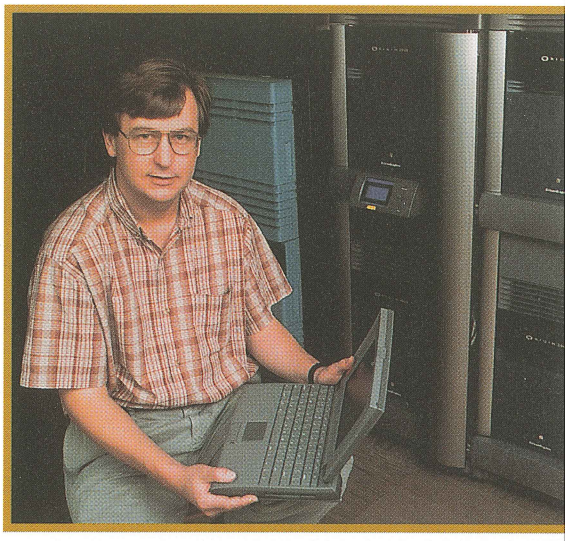
"Well balanced supporting hardware around the 32 high performance CPUs and professional scientific software and compilers means OZONE can deliver much more than 100 pentium based PCs could," he said.

"This computer allows you to calculate very big problems that need large memory requirements and large data inputs.

"In the past, researchers would have to go to the US to get this computing performance."

Mr Brimblecombe said SGI ORIGIN 2000 systems similar to OZONE were being used in research centres around the world to investigate the effects of global warming and ozone depletion.

Jointly owned by various University entities and operated and managed by Prentice Centre, Mr Brimblecombe said OZONE had three major applications - fluid flow and thermo dynamics, finite element analysis and chemical modelling.



Super Computing manager Wilfred Brimblecombe demonstrates the power of OZONE.

"OZONE allows researchers to do expensive chemical experiments in the computer before they do them in the lab, which is a huge cost saving," he said.

Other current projects include solar car aerodynamics (Mechanical Engineering), and a seismic waves site effects study (Centre for Earthquake Sites).

Prentice Centre joint director Graham Rees said students who used HPCs in their studies would be well equipped to be tomorrow's corporate leaders.

"We want to encourage corporations to use HPCs and, as that demand grows, this University will be well placed to offer the corporate sector more services," he said.

Account applications are available through Prentice Client Services.

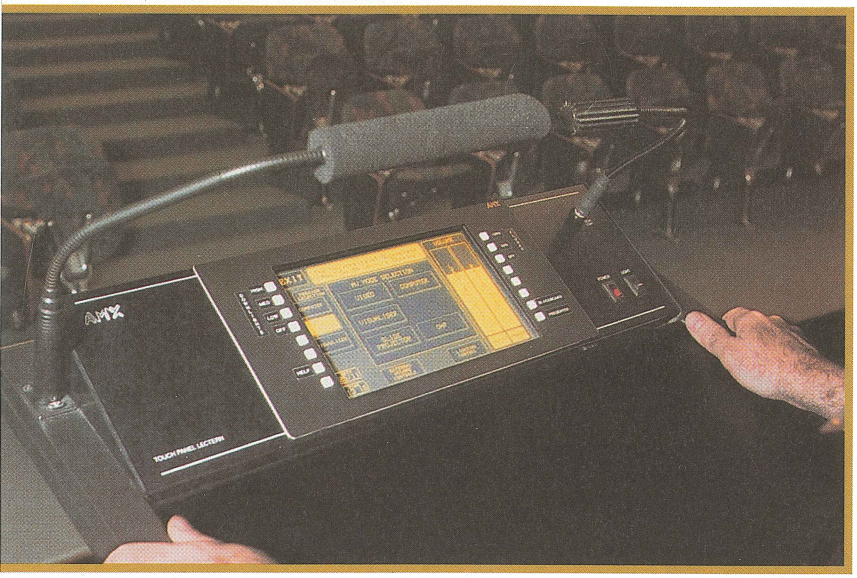
Net address - ozone.hpcu.uq.edu.au

Touch-button technology makes lecturing easier

Prentice Centre has pioneered new lecture theatre technology with user-friendly touch controls for lectures or conferences.

No more fumbling for dials and switches.

Audiovisual and Conference Services coordinator Kevin Dalton said the touch-screen panels gave lecturers and presenters instant control to audio visual aids.



The University of Queensland is the first organisation to use the AMX touch screens in a conference environment.

"These new AMX panels allow the speaker to control the presentation of slides, videos, 3-D overheads, computers, cassettes and volume by the touch screen," he said.

Mr Dalton said the simplicity of the technology turned amateurs into professionals: "For someone who is using AV equipment only rarely, this is probably as user-friendly as you can get."

The panels and associated electronics have been installed in nine lecture theatres at The University of Queensland, including Abel Smith, Hawken and at the Gatton campus.

Overhead, data and 35mm projectors, video systems, radio mics, PA systems and amplifiers are among the AV equipment available through Prentice Centre.

If you want to know more about what AV equipment exists in campus lecture theatres, check out the Prentice Web site http://www.prentice.uq.edu.au/AudioVisual/index.asp?theatre=yes. Phone Kevin Dalton on ext 54057 for details.

Christmas greetings

As this is the final Prentice Bulletin for the year, we would like to take the opportunity to wish our clients and their families a safe and happy Christmas.

We thank you for the chance to work for you this year, and wish you a prosperous, successful and enjoyable 1998.

Jennie Perry Smith & Graham Rees
Prentice Centre Directors

UNIVERSITY TECHNOLOGY SHOP CLOSES

By now, most of you are aware the University Technology Shop has closed.

The decision was made by the Vice Chancellor after consultation with his senior executives. His decision was a response to a report from the directors of Prentice Centre.

This closure is not the result of poor performance by Technology Shop staff. We believe Stephen Atherton and his team have worked assiduously within a highly competitive environment and within a complex University policy framework.

Unfortunately, there will be job losses as a result of the closure. All Technology Shop contract staff have been offered Voluntary Separation Agreements. All current orders and warranties will be honoured.

Technical Services (repairs etc), Client Services and Software Licensing are not affected by the closure.

We would like to thank all those who sent their best wishes to those affected, and appreciate the support of the University community.

Jennie Perry Smith & Graham Rees

Inquiries Client Service on ext 54400.