PRENTICE BULLETIN

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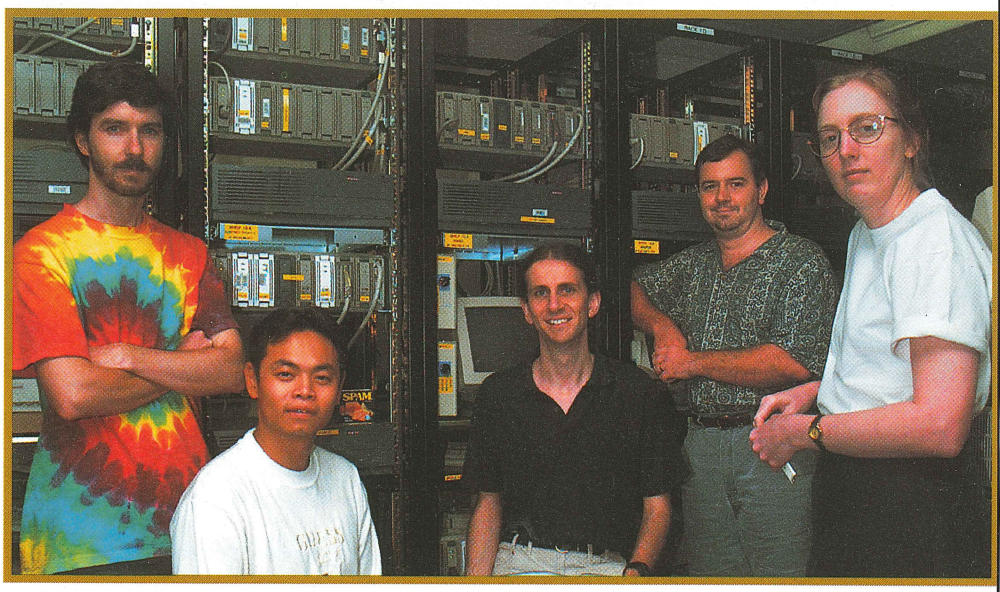
Team tackles technology challenges across the vast University network



Facing a tough challenge are, from left, Acting Manager Chris Teakle, Assistant Systems Programmer Sam Lor, Andrew Smith (Senior Systems Programmer), Systems Programmer Matthew Vanden Berg and Julianne Weekers, Senior Systems Programmer.

By any standard the UQ computer network is huge - about 40,000 computers connected directly or via the dial-up facilities.

But for Prentice Centre Network Development acting manager Chris Teakle, who is responsible for maintaining a fair slice of the network, the challenges are met.

"With 30,000 accounts, including 17,000 students, 6,000 staff and post-graduates and 7,000 external clients, it gets pretty busy," he said.

The tasks performed by Network Development range from managing the nameservers, hostmaster, email accounts, proxy servers, mailing lists to news servers, virtual web and mail servers and anti-Spam strategies.

"Basically, Spam is junk email or bulk commercial email and it just clogs up the system," Mr Teakle said.

"Spammers try to send junk email to our users and also try to use our servers to send Spam to other Internet sites."

Network Development has developed systems to help block Spam before it arrives in users' mailboxes.

But some Spam does still get through.

"It's a bit of an arms' race," he said.

"The systems used by Spammers are evolving in an effort to defeat anti-Spam measures such as those we have taken.

"We need to respond by further developing our anti-Spam measures."

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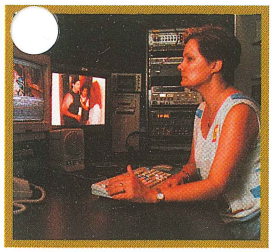

NEED TO PROMOTE YOUR ORGANISATION? VIDEOVISION CAN HELP.
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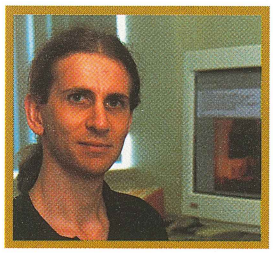

UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND CHAT GROUPS OPEN UP NEW HORIZONS.
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PRENTICE CD SYSTEM PRESERVES SLIDES FOR THE FUTURE.
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Enquiries and mailing list amendments contact:
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Telephone (07) 3365 4400
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Email info@prentice.uq.edu.au

VideoVision melds art and science to create cutting edge productions

As one of the producers at Prentice Centre VideoVision Triny Roe has one of the best jobs at UQ.

Triny Roe at work in Prentice Centre's VideoVision unit.

Triny has brought together her two passions - science and film-making - in a rare blend of skills which gives VideoVision the competitive edge.

"I enjoy learning, which is handy, because in this age of information technology we are using more and more computers in our work," Triny said.

An agricultural science and film and television graduate, Triny says her science background gives her an advantage in understanding the technical nature of many of the productions she is involved with.

"Our jobs are as varied as the departments at the University.

"One day it's Anthropology, the next it's Zoology."

Their projects include videos dealing with fire management and traditional Aboriginal hunting, clinical reasoning and communications skills for medical students and the childcare problems for refugee children.

"VideoVision is a one-stop production house for educational and promotional videos," she said.

The unit takes a project from concept to completion and works closely with clients to achieve a high level of customer satisfaction.

Services include scripting, studio or location recording, editing, generation of pict files and Quicktime movies for interactive CDROM productions or the internet and computer graphics and animations.

VideoVision also operates a video conference unit.

"At VideoVision the work is very `hands on' and calls for multiple skills, although my special interests are writing and editing.

"You can't just be a video producer any more - you also need to be a camera operator, production accountant, lighting and sound technician and to know your way around computers."

For further information, contact VideoVision on 3365 7069.

TEAM TAKES ON TECHNOLOGY

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Network Development is also responsible for the 'dingo' and 'student' email servers.

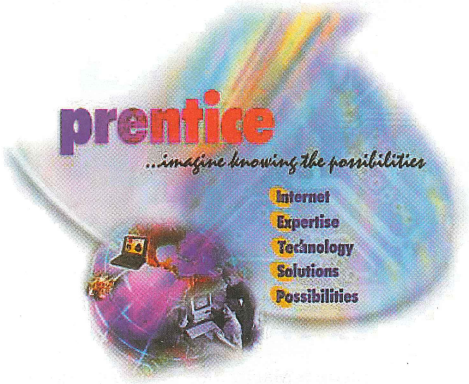
"Dingo, which is the email address for staff, handles about 40,000 emails and 75,000 web page accesses a day and there are about 20,000 emails and 25,000 web page accesses a day on the student system."

Reliability of Network Development's services is high on his list of priorities.

"We aim for 99.9 per cent availability of our services, which is equivalent to 45 minutes downtime per month," he said.

"Over the past few months we have achieved that with most of our services."

More information about Network Development's efforts to block Spam is available at http://www.uq.edu.au/uqnet/spam1.html.



BOOKMARK THIS HANDY SITE

Lost the contact details you're sure you placed on your desk?

University of Queensland's web site has all the details you need.

The site is located at: http://www.uq.edu.au/contacts.html or click on contacts at the bottom of the UQ home page.

Save your time and money with new chat groups

Internet discussion groups have opened the world to an informal global talk show but their proliferation has created problems for users.

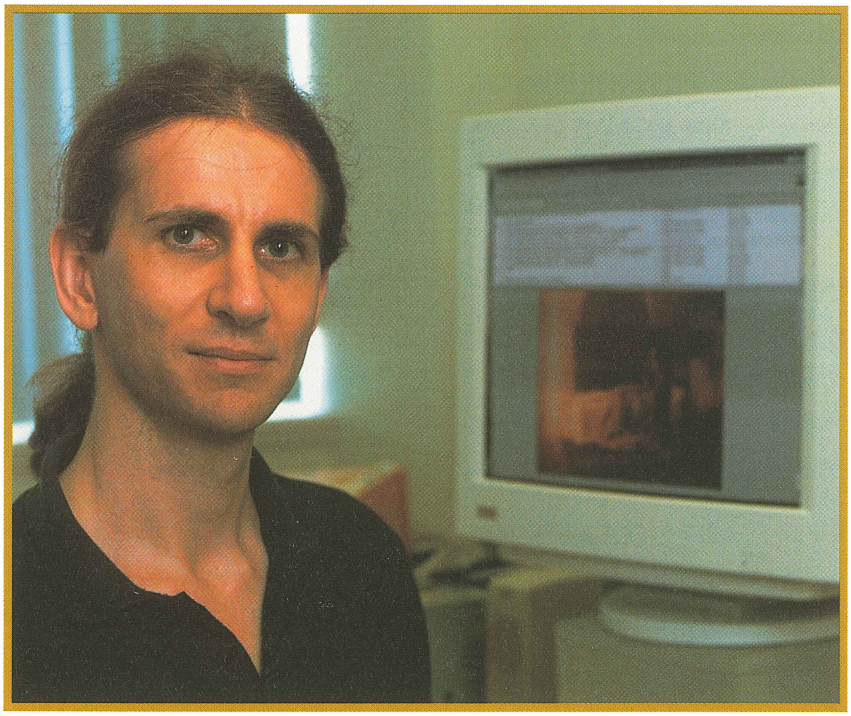
Prentice senior systems programmer Andrew Smith and the Network Development team have come up with an alternative for University of Queensland-based students and staff.

"The problem with email-based discussion groups is that you have no control over what is posted to your email and your in-box tends to fill-up pretty quickly," Dr Smith said.

Anyone connected to the UQ system can now access a range of internal news groups at no charge from the server news.uq.edu.au.

"Once you have internet access and an account at UQ, this service is free," he said.

There are already 17 UQ-based discussions groups ranging from accommodation and events groups to research and departmental groups.



Prentice Centre's senior systems programmer Dr Andrew Smith.

These groups have names that begin with 'uq', such as uq.dialin where modem dialin problems are discussed.

"The good thing about this system is that there is no extra costs and no extra traffic charges," he said.

The UQ news groups can be a better way of communicating than a mailing list because they are free and user privacy is better protected.

Email news@prentice.uq.edu.au to discuss an internal news group.

Computer repairs

Prentice Centre offers technical services in:

Repairs: MacIntosh, IBM compatibles, printers, monitors.

Upgrades: motherboards, memory, hard drives, CDROMS, sound cards.

Parts supply: hard and floppy drives, CDROMS, memory, motherboards, add-on cards.

Prentice Centre is an authorised service provider for Apple computers, Canon printers and IBM compatible repairs.

Contact Trevor Brennan on 3365 3938 or email t.brennan@prentice.uq.edu.au.

DID YOU KNOW?

Frustrated by a mutinous Mac? Try these handy hints for getting the most out of your Macintosh computer.

1. Keep at least one backup of software and preferably three copies of important files and applications.

2. Use your special menu's shutdown item to shut down your Macintosh.

3. Deactivate unused system software extensions.

4. Run virus protection software.

5. Occasionally run the correct version of Apple Disk First Aid.

6. Move or organise unused files off the hard drive to free-up hard drive space.

7. Rebuild the desktop. If generic icons are used for files or folders, hold down the command and option keys during startup.

8. Check for updates to software applications - web sites usually have the latest updates.

9. Remove unused aliases to servers, files and folders on the hard drive.

10. Call the experts at Facility Management at itfm@prentice.uq.edu.au or phone 3365 4936.

(Upgrading and Repairing Your Mac by Lisa Lee, 1995)

CD know-how preserves your slides for the future

Because colour film slides have a finite life due to deterioration from normal chemical degradation, types of storage, damage from use and actual loss, their long-term preservation has been a difficult problem to solve.

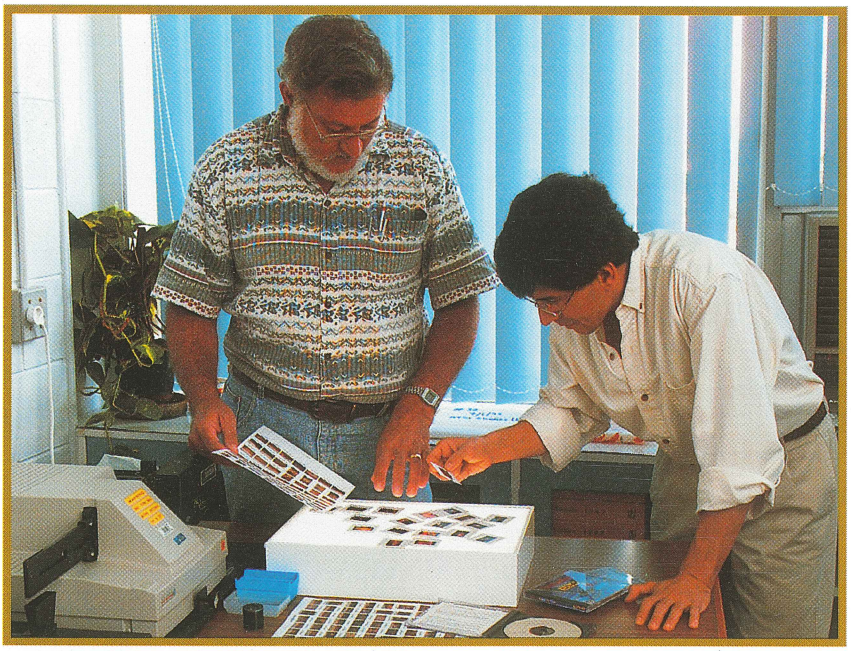
Now Prentice Centre can scan all those invaluable slides onto CDs or other media for archival storage and immediate retrieval for publications, presentations, colour prints and 35m slides.

Cliff Leigh at Prentice Multimedia Design said the CD can be configured to incorporate a data base linked to the images.

"The real beauty of this system is that not only are the film slides preserved but the client gets a greater flexibility in using them," he said.

Scanning slides four or five at a time is not new, but the Prentice Maron Stacker in conjunction with the scanner can scan up to 300 slides in a single session.

The images, suitable for either Mac or PC, are scanned at up to 2,000 dpi - a resolution above that of standard colour film resulting in a digital image equal in quality to the original slide.



Prentice Multimedia Design's Cliff Leigh examines slides to be preserved with Earth Sciences' Dr Paulo Vasconcelos..

Priced about $3-4 per slide, depending on quantity, the standard service provides four sets of images: at 2000dpi, 500dpi, 250dpi and a thumbnail image at 75dpi.

"Included in the service are two tapes of the images, one stored at Prentice and the other off-site for security, so if the CD is damaged or lost the client knows the images are available here," he said.

Already Architecture, Earth Sciences and Vet Science are using the service to store and upgrade their slides .

Contact Multimedia Design on 3365 4110 or email c.leigh@prentice.uq.edu.au.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT PROVIDER

If you are in the market to buy dialin internet access, consider the following criteria from Internet Service Providers (ISPs).

Accessibility: Are you able to log on when you want? Try to determine congestion levels which will result in engaged signals on your modem.

Prentice displays a congestion management web page which indicates the best time to dial in. Along with our unique modem congestion distribution system, we have a competitive modem-to-user ratio which means we are providing some of the best connectivity rates in the country.

Support: What level of technical support will they provide? If you can't set up your modem - who will assist and at what cost?

With every fee-paying client, Prentice offers support in the form of telephone support, email support and Internet Access Clinics. You can book up to two free sessions with our modem staff to ensure you have your computer/modem configured correctly.

Value for money: Compare packages and whether the options are flexible to suit your usage.

We aim to provide the highest quality dialin service, inexpensively. For example, $25 per month buys you 100 hours of connect time. If you visit this website that outlines ISP products and services, you'll find the Prentice options are among the best: http://www.cynosure.com.au/isp/location/brisbane.

If you would like to purchase an account or find out more, please contact Prentice Client Service on ext. 54400 or visit our web site http://prentice.uq.edu.au.