

COMPUTER BYTES

Providing Computer Solutions for Educators

N O R T H E A S T E R N R E G I O N A L I N F O R M A T I O N C E N T E R

NERIC Implements **ATM**

ASYNCHRONOUS TRANSFER MODE

By Stephen Yankowski

The NERIC Data Center has started the implementation of an ATM network (asynchronous transfer mode) which will be used to carry data traffic (Internet/email) as well as distance learning network traffic (voice/video). The NERIC connection will operate at OC3 speed (155Mbps), and all sites connecting to this network will operate at speeds ranging from T1 (1.544Mbps) up to DS3 (45Mbps). The speeds of these circuits will be dependent on the applications of the school districts and the types of traffic the ATM network needs to carry.

There are many reasons why the NERIC network will begin the migration of customers using different types of technologies (frame relay, point to point T1, etc.) to the ATM network. The main reason is that ATM offers the ability to provide a single network for all types of network traffic, including voice, video, and data. The ATM network will allow NERIC to provide a medium to carry distance learning audio and video traffic, as well as offering the capacity to offer data bandwidth larger than T1 speeds. This capability offers the opportunity to get increased network speeds to the NERIC Data

Center, and out to the Internet. The increased speeds will also offer the ability to implement new types of network traffic like multimedia and videoconferencing. The ATM standard will also offer the opportunity to merge Local Area Network (LAN) traffic and Wide Area Network (WAN) traffic into a seamless network running both technologies. In most instances, separate networks are used to carry voice, video, and data because these traffic types have different characteristics. Data traffic tends to be bursty, and voice/video traffic is very sensitive in what order the information arrives. ATM has been designed to accommodate simultaneous transmission of data, voice, and video, and is available to offer speeds from Megabits to Gigabit.

Upon the writing of this article, NERIC presently has four sites connected to the ATM network running data traffic. These sites are Granville, Gouverneur, Bethlehem, and Catskill. There are over twenty Capital Region distance learning sites expected to have data running over this network by the beginning of October, with the video traffic expected to be cutover during Regents week in January, 2003.

If anyone has questions on this new network and how it can benefit their network or customers, please call me at 518-456-9047 or e-mail me anytime at syankows@mum.neric.org.



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CIPA Update *By Ira Goldstein*

On May 31, 2002 the three-judge panel sitting in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania ruled on the case of American Library Association, Inc. and Multnomah County Public Library v. United States. The panel held that "we are constrained to conclude that the library plaintiffs must prevail in their contention that CIPA requires them to violate the First Amendment rights of their patrons, and accordingly is facially invalid"; the three-judge panel ruled Sections 1712(a)(2) and 1721(b) of the Children's Internet Protection Act to be

facially invalid under the First Amendment and permanently enjoined the government from enforcing those provisions. This decision applies solely to public libraries and does not remove or reduce CIPA's requirements for schools.

On June 28, 2002, in response to the court ruling in ALA vs. U.S., the FCC has issued a ruling suspending enforcement of the requirement that public libraries purchase filtering software, pending review by the U.S. Supreme Court. The other portions of CIPA

remain in effect for libraries, and all portions of CIPA remain in effect for schools.

The full text of ALA and Multnomah County Public Library vs. U.S. decision can be found at <http://www.paed.uscourts.gov/documents/opinions/02D0415P.HTM> and the FCC ruling can be viewed at http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-02-196A1.pdf.

Ira Goldstein can be reached at igoldste@gw.neric.org or at 518-456-9266.



Sponsored Curriculum Offerings from CISCO *By Robin Blackburn*



Cisco has announced six new Sponsored Curriculum offerings available to local school districts. The Cisco Academy Training Center located at Schenectady High School began training instructors on these new courses this past summer.

Sun Microsystems is sponsoring Fundamentals of Java Programming Language. This class teaches students the use of Java language's object-oriented tech-

nologies. Fundamentals of Unix, also from Sun Microsystems, teaches entry level UNIX operator skills and UNIX operating system commands. The third class to be offered is Fundamentals of Voice and Data Cabling, sponsored by Panduit. This course focuses on the many cabling issues related to voice and data connection.

Fundamentals of Web Design provides students with the skills to produce web sites. This course is sponsored by Adobe Systems, Inc. and involves the entire line of Adobe products. IT Essentials 1: PC Hardware and Software and IT Essentials 2: Network Operating Systems are the final courses being offered. These courses are sponsored by Hewlett-Packard and prepare students for the CompTIA A+ and Server+ Certification Exams.

These courses will make wonderful additions to a school's technology curriculum. They will keep students current with the skills needed to work in the Information Technology industry by providing the needed hands-on training that the field requires.

Video Creation for the PC using Pinnacle Studio 7

By Steve Janover

The NERIC will offer a full-day training session on creating videos for the PC using Pinnacle Studio 7 on November 8, 2002, 9-4 pm, at the NERIC in training room 1.

Pinnacle Studio is a modestly priced, easy-to-use package for creating and editing videos on the PC platform. This full-day workshop will cover the fundamentals of using the package. Topics covered will include: system requirements, using the interface, editing fundamentals, incorporating music, sounds, titles, transitions, still photos, capturing video, supported file formats and making your movie. This session will emphasize creating videos that will enhance and support the classroom curriculum.

Participants are welcome to bring a Firewire equipped digital video camera with footage and/or still photos on floppy disk for video creation. Session time will also include independent project creation and hands-on time with provided digital video cameras. Practice video clips will also be supplied.

For more information see the Fall/Winter 2002 Instructional Training Calendar (<http://www2.neric.org/training.htm>) or contact Steve Janover at 518-456-9217 or via sjanover@mum.neric.org.



How Did You Spend Your Summer Vacation?

By Kim Greiner

Summer is an especially busy time for the Instructional Unit. When teachers, administrators and support staff have a short reprieve from their every day student responsibilities, they use the time to brush up or learn new technology skills. This summer was no exception. We've offered 14 classes in the Centralized Training catalog and over 40 workshops for the Model Schools Program. A weeklong Instructional and Assistive Technology Summer Camp was held as a collaborative effort between NERIC and the TRE Center. The weeklong Bethlehem Technology Summer Camp offered many opportunities to learn new applications, new hardware and their integration into the classroom to over 100 teachers. We offered our training services in the Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery BOCES region for more than a dozen different workshops. We provided a three-day institute for the Warren-Washington-Saratoga-Hamilton-Essex BOCES where the teachers created on-line course modules to support their classroom instruction using the Blackboard 5 interface. A four-day e-learning institute was offered to teachers in the Schenectady CSD utilizing Blackboard as well. Check out <http://www2.neric.org/training.htm> for the fall professional development opportunities or call 518-456-9233 to have some classes customized for your district or staff.

EMAP

By Bob Christy

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome back Colton-Pierrepont Central School to our EMAP family. After a one-year hiatus, they have come back to the reliable service and support of the EMAP software.

There is an EMAP user group meeting planned for the middle of October 2002. Exact date, place and time will be announced shortly.

The meeting will open with a question and answer segment. Following that, Dr. Robert Edwards will present a demonstration on the portion of EMAP that has been converted to a graphic user interface.

EMAP is migrating to an ODBC Data Base Application which will give the user capability to access, read or write data to and from EMAP files with any Windows-based ODBC client enabled application such as Microsoft Excel, Lotus 1-2-3, Crystal Reports and more.

There will be a notice sent out to let users know the date, time and location of the October 2002 meeting.



Staff STUFF

By Elaine Banach

New Staff:



Robin Blackburn
Instructional Coordinator



Mary McGeoch
Medicaid Coordinator



Donald Groff
DDP Coordinator



Gail Newcomb
Senior Typist –
Instructional Services



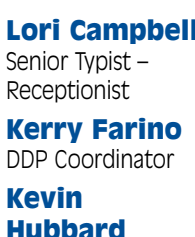
Robert Lanoue
Distance Learning
Coordinator



Gerald Reusch
DDP Coordinator at
St. Johnsville CSD



Don Marino
DDP Specialist at
Catskill CSD



Lori Campbell
Senior Typist –
Receptionist

Jamie Steenberge
Administrative
Specialist at Saranac
CSD



Kerry Farino
DDP Coordinator

Kevin Hubbard
Administrative
Coordinator at the
Harrisville CSD

Lucas Wisniewski
Administrative
Specialist at Moriah
CSD and Ausable
Valley CSD

Promotions:

Ming Chen
Administrative Coordinator

Leah Christoff
DDP Specialist

Bill Colgan
Managing Coordinator – Student Services

Pat Gangl
Student Services Coordinator

Kim Greiner
Managing Coordinator – Instructional
Services

Mike Ippolito
Systems Administrator II

Patty MacDormand
Senior Account Clerk II

Joanne Trischetta
Financial Services Coordinator

★ 20 Yr. Service Recipients: ★

NERIC staff members **Ira Goldstein** and **Jim Jarrard** were recognized at the Capital Region BOCES Opening Day on September 3, 2002 for dedicating 20 years of service to BOCES. Ira is a Managing Coordinator at the Albany Center. Jim is the Assistant Director for the NERIC's North Country Center.

Retirement:

The NERIC staff wish Sue & Donna each a great retirement.

Sue Barber retired from her position of Coordinator – Special Projects with the NERIC on January 28, 2002. Sue joined the Washington-Saratoga BOCES in 1968. When the Saratoga Regional Computer Center merged with the Albany Regional Information Center in 1988, Sue became a staff member of the NERIC. She worked out of the Saratoga office and was responsible for supporting student services, particularly WISDIM, and the day-to-day administration of the Saratoga office.

Sue was very involved in the continued effort to further improve the WISDIM system. Her knowledge of the WISDIM system, across several computer platforms, is extensive and respected among staff and district users. Sue was known at the NERIC for her reliability and always following through with any project she was involved with.

Donna Daggett retired from her position of Coordinator – Administrative Services with the NERIC on

August 31, 2002. Donna joined the NERIC in 1990 and was located at our Saratoga office. She excelled at providing support and training to school districts in transportation software management. She went to extra-ordinary lengths to provide information to administrators for use in decisions on re-districting, new school openings, changes in admission and dismissal times, as well as updates to the Board of Educations regarding implementation of the systems and future requirements.

★ Employee of the Month ★

W I N N E R S

November 2001

Neil Waldbillig

DDP Coordinator

December 2001

Kevin McConville

LAN Coordinator



February 2002

Bill Adam

Testing Coordinator



March 2002

Penny Roberts

Customer & Planning Services Coordinator



April 2002

Lisa Schaeffer

Secretary to Director



May 2002

Kim Greiner

Managing Coordinator, Instructional Services



June 2002

Lynda Clute

DDP Coordinator



July 2002

Melinda Deering

LAN Coordinator



August 2002

Shawn Connors

Applications Analyst



Avoiding Computer Eye Strain

Staring at a computer monitor for hours on end can cause serious eye strain. Here are some suggestions for reducing the problem from Dr. Jeffrey R. Anshel:

Position the center of the screen 7 to 10 inches below your horizontal line of sight.

Reduce glare with an anti-glare screen and position your monitor away from the windows to avoid reflections.

Blink frequently to rest and re-wet your eyes.

Take breaks: Look away for 10 seconds every 10 minutes or so. Every hour, get up and stretch. And every few hours, take a longer break, say for a beverage or lunch.

Get your eyes checked regularly: you may need glasses for computer work. If you already have glasses, you may need a special prescription for this purpose.

F Y I

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North Country Center Fax:	518-563-1569
Saratoga Center:	518-584-3580
Saratoga Center Fax:	518-584-7360
Home Page:	http://www.neric.org



FM2000

BUDGET MANAGER

By Tom McKeown

Finance Manager released its newest graphical module, Budget Manager, early in the Fall of 2001. This module includes an interface to Microsoft Excel that provides for a direct export out of Budget Manager and a direct import back into Budget Manager of selected data by budget account code. The advantages of the export are numerous, but most notable is the ability to manipulate the budget with full Excel functionality.

Once in Excel, the administrator can now sort the budget any way needed. The administrator can add subtotals, perform budget analysis as compared to prior year budgets or even create Board reports and graphs. When every-

thing is processed, the administrator can then bring the projected budget back into Budget Manager. Approved Budget data is transferred electronically to the Accounting Manager module to start the new year.

The Microsoft Interface is just one of many new features offered in Budget Manager. The administrator also now has the ability to load projected salary data straight into the Budget module, saving valuable time and eliminating duplicate data entry.

These are just a few of the newest features in FM2000 Budget. For more information,



please feel free to contact Tom McKeown at 518-456-6543 or by email at tmckeown@gw.neric.org. For a demo of FM2000, please feel free to contact Marlene Howe, Managing Coordinator of Financial Services at 518-456-9886 or by email at mhowe@gw.neric.org.

Instructional Unit Available to Assist School Districts

By Kim Greiner

For the first time in several years, NERIC's Instructional Unit has a full complement of staff to provide professional development and instructional support to school districts and other units and divisions.

Steve Janover, a long-standing member of the team, supports school districts in many areas, but focuses on supporting the development for and use of the Internet. Steve is currently developing new applications with digital video editing and online learning modules.

Beth Cash is the Model Schools Program Coordinator and works in Cobleskill-Richmondville several days per week helping teachers integrate technology in their classrooms.

Hilary Delavare is the Instructional Coordinator for Guidance and Career Planning Services. Hilary is completing her degree in Guidance and Counseling.

Robin Blackburn is the newest member of the team and supports the Integrated Learning Systems packages. She is a former French teacher.

Two catalogs of course offerings are available to school districts and BOCES staff. They can be found by clicking on the TRAINING button on the NERIC homepage (<http://neric.org>). NERIC has three new labs of equipment to provide the latest and greatest applications to our customers. Customized, at-your-site training is also available. Contact Kim Greiner at 456-9233 or kgreiner@gw.neric.org for more information.

The Training-Lab HUNTER

By Eileen Easterly



What's better than getting a brand-new scrub python for your birthday? Coming to the NERIC for training! Crikey, if you haven't taken a training session at NERIC recently, you have been missing out!

NERIC offers two great services for the training of school district staff – Office Automation for Administrative staff, and Model Schools for Faculty. Both of these services can be offered at your site, but many schools send their staff to be trained at the NERIC training rooms instead.

Once bitten, twice shy

It's not easy for staff to get time in the training labs in their own district. Computer labs are generally in use all day by students. Likewise, one-on-one training at a desk is not always practical or desirable (is that my phone again or a herd of stampeding visitors?). Or perhaps your labs don't offer the type of equipment you need to use to learn that new application? You know you need training, but you've been bitten by this type of problem before.

No (more) hunting

We completely refurbished the NERIC computer training rooms recently, and added a new one as well. Training Room 1 is a PC (Windows) lab, sporting up-to-date computers and seating for 10. The room is outfitted with Compaq DeskPros with 17 inch display monitors, integrated digital audio and a Tektronix color laser printer. These computers are

ready for digital video editing using FireWire technology.

Training Room 2 is a fully equipped Mac lab. All the machines have three different operating systems installed: Mac OS X, Mac OS 9, and Virtual PC running Windows 98. These Macs take advantage of new wireless technology to access the network. Also, with built-in FireWire, CD-RW drives, stereo speakers, and Apple's free iMovie pre-installed, they are ideal for digital video editing. The room also has a Tektronix color laser printer. Training 2 can accommodate 10 participants.

Training Room 3, our newest and most exciting training center, is a state-of-the-art Distance Learning lab.

Training 3 is designed for Video conferencing (using TCPIP, ISDN, and multipoint available through our NERIC Video Services). It's also

superb for local presentations, with an ELMO document camera and a scan converter for sending images from PC screens. It also has two cameras (one group and one instructor camera), a high-resolution SONY LCD projector and two monitors for near/far end viewing.

The glass-topped PC Workstations in the room have recessed monitors and video conferencing microphones. The training room has a high-quality sound system with ceiling mounted speakers, and a Tektronix color laser printer. Training 3 has workstations for 12 students and an instructor.

The fearless training staff at NERIC is friendly and experienced. Come see us and our rooms!

For other training survival tips, please contact Eileen Easterly at 518-456-9283 or eeasterl@gw.neric.org.

NERIC Receives Grant from Microsoft *By Kim Greiner*

As a member of the Association of Educational Service Agencies (AESA), the Northeastern Regional Information Center was eligible to apply for a Microsoft Software Grant. Over 40 entities comprising more than 125 educational service agencies competed for the newest productivity and curriculum software programs and suites. These grants are only available to institutions that provide training for educators. NERIC will receive over \$10,000 in software to outfit the training labs at the Albany Center to be used during professional development activities involving technology integration for teachers and other educators. Thank you, Steven Janover, for completing the application and writing such a compelling narrative. NERIC will be able to maintain leading edge technology to enhance the teaching and learning environment for the entire region.



NERIC's Consortium E-rate Application - What We Need From You

By Elaine Banach

If your district purchases Internet access or telecommunications through the NERIC we can add those expenses to the consortium application the NERIC submits each year. However, we need several pieces of documentation related to that funding year from your district. These pieces are:

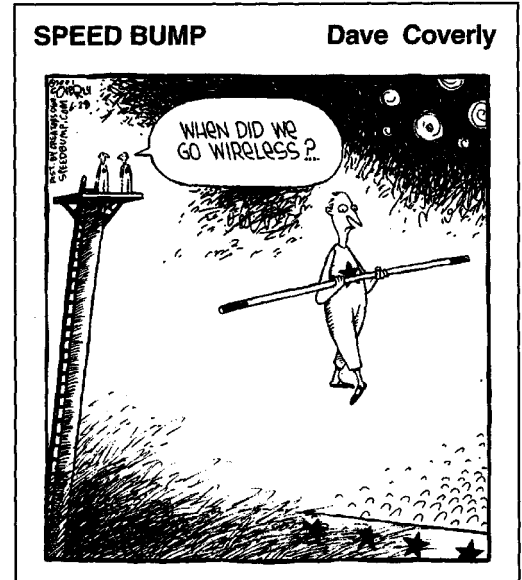
- Technology Plan Approval Letter
- Letter of Agency
- Form 479 for CIPA Compliance

Districts should submit their Technology Plans to the NERIC for review. Each Technology Plan needs to include the following 5 sections: Mission & Goals, Staff Development, Budget, Inventory, and Evaluation. Official approval letters are sent to the district and NERIC from SED.

A Letter of Agency is a document that basically states the district approves of the NERIC adding them to the consortium application. Each year a Letter of Agency is sent to your district for signature.

The Form 479 is required before the NERIC can submit BEAR forms for e-rate eligible expenses of your district. This form is used to certify the CIPA status of the district. Each year a Form 479 is sent to your district for completion and signature.

We realize the e-rate process is very bureaucratic and confusing. If you want to find out if the



NERIC has all the documentation we need to add you to the NERIC's consortium application for 2003/2004, please contact Elaine Banach at 518-456-9256 or email to ebanach@gw.neric.org

New Users of Neric Services

AIMS

Gouverneur
North Colonie

Choices

Cohoes
Corinth
Hoosic Valley
Mohonasen
Ravena-Coeymans-Selkirk
Stillwater
Voorheesville

E-rate Program Support

Glens Falls City
Moriah

Finance Manager

Greenville

Internet Access

Guilderland
Lisbon

Internet Domain Name Registration

Albany City
Ballston Spa
Catskill
Granville
Guilderland

Microcheck

Brushton-Moira

My Learning Plan

Gouverneur

Part 200

Peru

Project Lead the Way

Canton
Colton-Pierrepont
Massena

Shared Learning Objectives

Northeastern Clinton

StarBase

Franklin BOCES

Tax Billing

Troy City
Voorheesville

Video Conferencing

Burnt Hills
Saratoga City

WinSchool

Glens Falls Common
Voorheesville



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Protecting Your Network *by Ira Goldstein*



Connecting your school's network to the Internet can, and should, be a concern to anyone responsible for ensuring the privacy and integrity of a district's student and financial data. While there are few who enjoy documentation, detailing the access rights for each device in your infrastructure from the perspective of staff, students, business partners and the public should take place before attempting to secure your network.

A good place to begin is by identifying what information and resources you are trying to provide on your network. This should include not only your servers, but also items such as printers, videoconferencing stations, switches and routers that require access. This needs to be a detailed analysis and any device that provides a service on your network should be included.

Once you have a list of what needs to be made available, you need to identify all potential groups who need access to any of the resources (think of them as stakeholders). This should include both internal users (faculty, administration, students) as well as external users (NERIC, parents, general public).

Now create a matrix listing the resources against the users. In each cell state the locations from where the access may come. Do not be surprised if many of the cells have entries of "none" or "nowhere".

Once this analysis is completed you will be ready to start configuring your firewall, routers, switches and servers. Why is this activity necessary? Without proper analysis you may wind up with:

- District Office staff not being able to process payroll
- NERIC staff blocked from supported applications

- Videoconferencing stations unable to connect to conferences
- Confidential data accessible via the Internet

Ira Goldstein is the manager for Emerging Technologies at NERIC and can be reached at igoldste@gw.neric.org or 518-456-9266. He and his staff are available to help you secure your network.

Security tip: Turn off extraneous services that may be running on your servers. Plenty of tools are available to provide you with a list of services that are accessible on your servers, so get one (my favorite is Nmap <http://www.insecure.org/nmap>) and run it against the servers that make up your infrastructure.

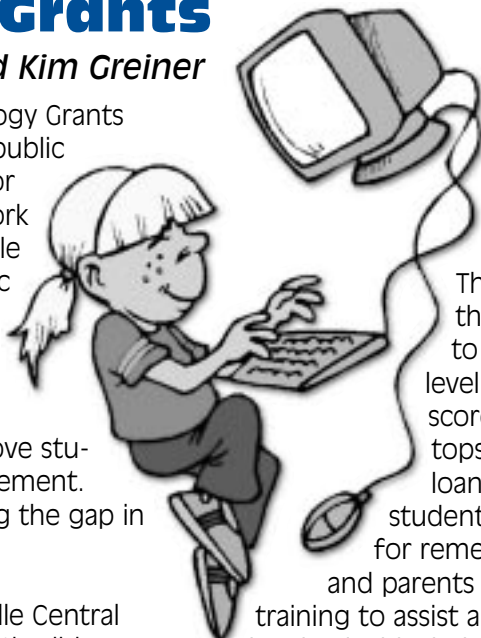
Additional security information can be found at <http://security.neric.org>.

Capital Region Receives Several Grants

By Beth Cash and Kim Greiner

Learning Technology Grants are awarded to public school districts or BOCES in New York State. The funds enable a consortium of public and non-public schools to build capacity in their efforts to integrate technology and improve student academic achievement. The focus is on closing the gap in literacy skills.

Cobleskill-Richmondville Central School District and Faith Bible Academy received an award. The project integrates laptop computers into their Grade 8 English,



Science, Math, and Social Studies classes.

The goal of the project is to raise ELA 8 level 1 and 2 scores. The laptops will be loaned out to students identified for remediation,

and parents will receive training to assist and be involved with their children's learning. The teachers are enthusiastic and eager to bring technology into their classrooms.

Duanesburg Elementary School, Christ The King School and Saint Madeleine-Sophie School are collaborating to improve the writing skills of fourth graders. Students will use Inspiration and PowerPoint to create electronic books to be shared with students in all three schools. Learning Experiences the teachers create will be posted on the NERIC Shared Learning Objectives web site so that other teachers may replicate the fine work done by these educators.

NERIC Instructional staff will be instrumental in implementing the grant by providing software training and support, staff development, parent training, and on-site classroom assistance.



IP Telephony *By Doug Sheldon*



IP Telephony (IPT), also known as voice-over-Internet Protocol (VoIP), uses the Internet to send audio between two or more devices in real time, so the users can converse. Beginning with the first form of IPT, in early 1995, the evolution of IP Telephony has driven development of applications and devices that utilize the Internet and local area networks as their transport. PC based applications which utilize the sound card were the first to use this technology. Newer appliance type systems, which closely resemble our typical phone systems, have become more usable and stable over the years. These systems are more commonly used today.

Many people ask if IP Telephony is a good solution for them. There really is no correct answer to that. Just as some older telephone systems are good for one solution and not another, so too are IP

Telephony solutions. IP Telephony may not be the best solution at all. Some companies find that continuing to use their current phone system may be the best decision.

There are many factors to consider when deciding whether to implement an IPT solution. When devices are attached to the local network and managed by network administrators rather than the telephone company, you have much more control over the behavior of your phone systems. IPT can also save districts money in some scenarios.

However, there are also many new obstacles to overcome. Ensuring the quality of this media is becoming one of the biggest issues in IP Telephony today. Another thing that needs to be considered is support. We are typically accustomed to calling the

phone company for phone problems. Bringing the call processing in-house places more of the support burden on the network administrators.

The most important thing is to make an educated decision, so don't be afraid to ask questions.

Dug would be more than happy to share his IPT experiences and can be contacted at dsheldon@gw.neric.org or 518-456-7173.

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The compliance officer for Title IX and Section 504 is Barbara Nagler. She is available from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays at the above listed address. Her phone number is (518) 456-9215.

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