

## PRENTICE CENTRE

PRENTICE BUILDING  
ST LUCIA CAMPUS



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Fri, Dec 13, 1991

FAXED: 13 Dec/91

No.: 216

## Facsimile Message

To: Mr I. Hunter, Director, Computer Centre, James Cook Univ.

FAX Nr: 077- 796371 Nr of Pages (including this one): 4

From: Maxwell J. Norris

Time / Date: 7:00 AM Friday, December 13, 1991

(Please telephone (07) 365 4111 or Fax if you don't receive all pages)

Ian.

Please find attached a copy of my revamped letter for your information.

I have made changes to my responses for Paragraphs 3 & 5 as detailed below.

Para 3. I read this believing he was complaining about link cut over coordination for QUT where as he was, I believe at least now after reading with a "cooler mind", aiming at a higher level of coordination. I have changed my response to this paragraph with this in mind.

Para 5. I had incorrectly stated that Geoff. Huston had Emailed me on the morning of the 11th on Nov 1991 where as it was in fact the afternoon of the 8th of Nov 1991. I have corrected this error and fixed a minor typo.

I really believe that Mullarvey's letter is an attempt to try and point score over very very picky issues! Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Regards  
Maxwell Norris  
Network Manager

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Thu, Dec 12, 1991

To  
Alan Coulter,  
Director,  
Prentice Centre,  
The University of Queensland.

### Comments on letter from T.J. Mullarvey to A.V.C.C. Qld.

Dear Alan

Please find listed below any comments I can make regarding the letter from T.J. Mullarvey of the AVCC to the Queensland Vice-Chancellors dated 9 Dec 1991.

**Paragraph 3.** If there were contractual obligations, no amount of co-ordination would have altered this position. I do not consider this contractual position was due to any fault of the Queensland Hub Management.

**Paragraph 4.** I have no knowledge of what is being referred to in the second last sentence but all other information is correct.

**Paragraph 5.** Graham Rees specifically requested that I keep Geoff. Huston advised as to the progress of the installation of the 2 Meg links and the Maxima equipment for UCQ, JCU and USQ. Telecom had problems installing the 2 Meg links to UCQ, JCU and later for USQ so I had delayed giving Geoff Huston any piecemeal information about the installation of the links until I had a firm delivery date for the 2 Meg link from Telecom. On the afternoon of the 8th of November, when Geoff Huston sent his caustic Email regarding clarification as to what was happening with the 2 Meg links to UCQ and JCU (copy attached), I had only just been advised by Telecom, at approx. 11am, that the 2 Meg links to UCQ and JCU had passed their Telecom acceptance tests. If it was not for pressing problems elsewhere on the network I would have informed Geoff. Huston at 11am of the planned network change-over for the links to UCQ and JCU. While I acknowledge that only 3 days notice is not desirable it did not affect the operation of the network or the installation of the new equipment in any way. All coordination and work for the 2 Meg links was being performed by QUESTnet member

institutions. All concerned QUESTnet institutions were happy with the arrangement as made. While it is acknowledge that Geoff. Huston, as Technical Manager of AARNet, should be kept informed of all AARNet developments, in this case he had no (and indeed could not have had any) operational role in the installation.

The Telecom links were tested by Telecom before acceptance by Questnet. The Maxima equipment was to be commissioned and tested by a representative from Scitec on the day of the cut-over of each institution to ensure that commissioning/cut-over problems for each of the remote sites could be dealt with by a Scitec technician. Consideration had to be given to the fact that QUESTnet had to pay for travelling time, air fares and accommodation for the Scitec technician to install/commission the equipment and the additional expense for a Scitec technician to revisit any/all of the sites to rectify cut-over problems that could be dealt with in the one site visit.

While it is true that while there were no "documented operational procedures" to cover unforeseen instabilities in the new equipment configuration until the 30th Nov. 1991 it must be pointed out that

(a) A complete set of spare cards and power supplies had been purchased to ensure that ALL sites were covered in the case of a hardware failure and to ensure minimal recurrent costs for each QUESTnet institution!

(b) A very high level of rapport exists between ALL QUESTnet institutions! In the event of a failure of any of the links or equipment the involved institutions would liaise on the phone with Prentice Centre staff to resolve ALL difficulties that may have arisen. The staff at The University of Queensland have been dealing with operational problems with 2 Meg links and bandwidth management equipment for well over 2 years and therefore have the required expertise to support all the QUESTnet institutions in time of crisis with the 2 Meg links and the Scitec Maxima Bandwidth Management Equipment.

(c) A proposed formal Maxima maintenance procedure was posted to "aarnet-contacts-qld" on the 30th Nov. 1991. This Email also contained an official notice of a Maxima training course to be held at The University of Queensland on the 3rd and 4th of February 1992 (copy of Email attached) to support the technical staff at each of the relevant institutions. This course was the result of on going liaison with all the QUESTnet institutions that now have Scitec Maxima Bandwidth Management Equipment.

(d) In any event operational procedures for QUESTnet as upgraded will not diverge from present AARNet operational procedures in any significant way.

(e) Advice from AARNet network engineering staff had not been requested as it was not required to configure/install the proposed network infrastructure. The AARNet staff were informed of the initial proposed network reconfiguration! The only changes made to the initial configuration was to run a 2 Meg link from UofQ to UCQ and from UCQ to JCU because there were insufficient funds available to install direct 2 Meg links from UofQ to UCQ and JCU. This configuration change resulted in an effective drop in throughput from 2 Meg to 1 Meg for UCQ and JCU and did not affect the operation of the link in any other way.

**Paragraph 6.** The first sentence of this paragraph is correct in essence but it should be remembered that

(a) The University of Queensland has the required engineering expertise to ensure all correct practices are observed!

(b) The AARNet office in Canberra is staffed by programmers and not by qualified engineers.

The second sentence is an extreme over statement!

**Paragraph 7.** I can make no comment regarding funding issues for these links.

**Paragraph 8.** The only suggestion I can make to this regards is that in future any liaison between the AARNet staff and UofQ staff be done via Email, copied to "aarnet-contacts-qld", to ensure that no claims or counter claims can be made as to the dissemination of information. The organisation of a large installation such as the QUESTnet upgrade on top of existing commitments to normal network responsibilities is difficult and a certain amount of tolerance on the part of the AARNet staff would have been appreciated!

**Paragraph 9.** A face to face meeting may be useful! Staff here at the Prentice Centre and representatives of all the QUESTnet institutions could exchange views with Geoff. Huston on matters relating to the letter from T.J. Mullarvey. ALL attending the meeting must be prepared to listen others points of view. I am of the opinion, from this and other divisive issues raised on the network, that there is some hidden agenda or ill feeling behind this stirring, and whatever the problem is it needs to be solved quickly to ensure that the level of cooperation that has existed between all QUESTnet institutions and the institutions connected to AARNet does not falter!

Regards

Maxwell Norris  
Network Manager