

From: UQVAX::CCCOUTLER 16-APR-1993 15:07:46.36
To: IN%"ccdirectors-qld@aarnet.edu.au"
CC: G.REES,CCCOUTLER
Subj: QUESTNET/AARNet Organisation

John Mullarvey would like the following on the QUESTNET May 13 meeting agenda - "The Relationship between State Networks and AARNet".

I think we need to share some ideas on this so that we arrive at a considered view and one that would be supported by our Universities.

The State Government paper on High Performance Computing would seem to reflect a mood of the State Government that there is value in combining the resources of the departments of government and the universities to provide supercomputer facilities at national if not international standard. In this paper, there was also reference to the value of QUESTNET, the State Government's investment in it, and a passing comment re other State Government initiatives in networking through IIB with perhaps the requirements being met through an expansion of QUESTNET.

At the last meeting of the QUESTNET Management Committee, we discussed the desirability of the expansion of QUESTNET through greater distribution to regional areas, particularly having regard to current and projected distance education needs of Universities, rural health programmes, TAFE requirements and Universities' Continuing Education Programs in primary industry, mining engineering, education, veterinary medicine, regional research stations, etc.

All of these applications have a strong teaching/research bias and would probably fall correctly within the QUESTNET/AARNet common interest charter. I have some doubt if industry development through the IIB would meet this test unless joint research with a University is involved.

The CSIRO is not a public authority of the State of Queensland so that there would need to be special considerations in how the needs and governance of CSIRO could be linked into a State Network if necessary. I am unsure if Bond University which was established under an Act of the State of Queensland is regarded as a public authority of the State for certain purposes.

ON THE OTHER HAND it must be said that the present organisation of AARNet has served us well. We probably have one of the most reliable nets in the world with access to all world wide services. Central control of the engineering of the network and standards will remain a prerequisite to future developments that meets the same quality as in the past. There are certain national services e.g. Archie, Directory Services and SERT that should be common for the whole "au" domain. The ownership of AARNet by AVCC Inc ensures that all of the major stake holders are represented through their chief executives.

So what is needed is a structure that gives us the best of both worlds. My early thoughts are that AARNet should remain much the same as it is organisationally with institutions contributing funds on whatever basis is decided (traffic or AVCC formulae or a combination). There would be a regional AARNet Management Advisory Committee with Directors only. QUESTNET would become the regional distribution network for education in Queensland and would link to the Queensland AARNet spine. It would have much wider representation on its management committee. QUESTNET would become an affiliate of AARNet.

The purpose of this is to start thinking and discussion rather than representing my locked-in views on the matter.

We have little time to put this together before 13 May. Please note, at this stage, I have limited this message to ccdirectors-qld@aarnet.edu.au rather than the full committee of QUESTNET.

Alan Coulter

File QUESTNET

Alan W. Coulter	Phone: 61 7 365 3521
Director, Prentice Centre	Fax: 61 7 365 4477
The University of Queensland	
Queensland 4072 AUSTRALIA	Internet: a.coulter@cc.uq.edu.au