

AWE

AARNet Structure

Basically leave the structure of AARNet as it is with Full Members (the owners) and Affiliate Members (qualified users with no voting or management rights).

Regions can be represented by, eg, AARNet Queensland Regional Advisory Board. Membership of the board cc-directors and csiro representative of the region.

Funding - leave as funded by subscription from members and affiliates but change the formula to include a volume charge. The volume should be averaged over a period of time - use a figure which can be easily obtained from the routers. Why do this? It is fair that users pay. But I think it should be done on an institutional basis. Some institutions have "affiliates" which AARNet does not see and hence are missing charging. For example, business and research associates of an institution. This volume parameter easily picks up revenue for AARNet which it is correctly entitled to.

The subscription should be charged on the basis of aarnet providing some basic speed of service depending on traffic say. Any higher speed paid for by the institution is fine and the responsibility of the institution or region - the same as it is now.

Why Leave AARNet as it is?

I agree with Alan's and John's comments about the value we have had from the present structure of AARNet. (Yes I have changed my mind since the first days of AARNet.) The reasons are:

I think Australia has benefited greatly from having central control of engineering and operational standards of the network.

Via AARNet Australia has been able to have representation of the IETF - this is essential for our input to the future development of The Internet and for early information about Internet trends and engineering. AARNet should support this activity more and perhaps have other than just GH going to these meetings. (I do think AARNet should be disseminating more of this information via aarnet-contacts etc to keep the community informed.)

Australia is a geographically large country with a small number of experts in any area. Keeping AARNet as a cohesive single network is the only way to hit critical mass in many areas. It is absolutely vital to keep this close cooperation within the community. This needs further encouragement by AARNet. Examples are Directory Services, Archie, VAT, SERT.

Should AARNet go commercial?

I guess if The Internet goes commercial then we will follow but personally I don't think we should go any further with commercialism than we are at present. Why?

I think it essential that "we" retain control of the network. Mind you when one thinks about who actually owns the Internet its a bit mind blowing - but this is the charm and the reason that this network has developed like it is - because its NOT commercial.

Our community has benefited enormously from "free" software. Would this be available if the the Internet was totally commercial? NO

OK so some people, like archie developers, are complaining about lack of money for further development - at least they were when I heard them at Interop. But look at the history of the development of archie. WE all have money problems but I think it would destroy the Internet to go commercial merely to fund the development of some projects.

What's the real value of AARNET. It's certainly not as an IP network. (This is the part that could go commercial but why bother? and if someone else does ever offer commercial IP services maybe we can buy some cheap bandwidth or IP carrier services.) This is not the value of aarnet. The value is the people and information accessible through aarnet. And the fact that we can do development like vat and if the network falls over occasionally then its no real problem. Its the information available through archie, WWW, WAIS and gophers, email and ftp that is the real value.

If the Internet went commercial I believe it would inhibit and maybe stop some development altogether. What if Peter Kirstein, UCL, stopped putting up all the free software they develop and the many other people. Personally I think much of the shareware should not charged - some people are just plain greedy!

The "commercial" part of aarnet I believe should be for Continuing Professional Education and professional services. That is making the network available (for money) to professional people in the commercial world - the Vets, economists (they need it), health workers

QUESTnet

OK so where does this leave QUESTnet?

Leave QUESTnet as whatever it needs to be to cater for Queensland regional issues. There is no doubt that some regions do have different political, geographical, economic and industrial interests and these can be catered for with QUESTnet operating as it is now.

QUESTnet would have a wider membership (that the regional advisory board) on its committee and would provide advice etc to the the AARNET regional advisory board

I don't think QUESTnet should be an affiliate of AARNet unless there is a specific business reason and a separate connection to aarnet for that business is required. Any increase in traffic due to QUESTnet will result in increase revenue for AARNet through the volume parameter in its charging formula.