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To MR T J MULLARVEY, DEPUTY SECRETARY	Date 16 / 4 / 91
DEPUTY SECRETARY, AVCC	Time 4.55 pm
Fax No. 06 285 8211	Initials CRJ
From Ms M-J Mahony, UNE-OAC and Mr B Wilks, UNE-NR	Page 1 of 4 pages

Subject

AARNet Project Plan   *AARNet PROJECT SUBMISSION*

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Message

Mr Mullarvey, herein the Project Plan I spoke to you about on
Monday, April 15, 1991.

Carmen Jones

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AARNet Project Plan

Novice User Interface

1. Summary

The usual user interface to AARNet requires considerable computer knowledge to operate. This is a proposal to develop an interface and its documentation for novice computer users particularly those remote from AARNET sites.

2. Aim

The main aim of this proposal is to provide an interface to AARNET which is usable by people with little, if any, computer knowledge. This user group particularly includes:

o   external students

Many external students would have minimal experience with computers. Most external students would not have access to local support. The pattern of external study also suggests that most would be trying to use the system out of normal help desk hours.

o   academic staff

Many academic staff have minimal experience with computers. This sets up a barrier to their use of AARNET for communication with students (particularly external students) as well as their use of AARNet for research and academic networking.

This project recognises that once-off, intensive training sessions can be valuable, but are often insufficient for many novice users to acquire the necessary confidence and skills to access and use an electronic network of the complexity of AARNet on a continuing basis.

3. Objectives

The specific objectives of the project are to produce training and trouble-shooting aids for novice users. These would include:

a.   Comprehensive user documentation written by instructional design experts for novice computer users.

b.   Menu based interface to AARNet facilities.

c.   Comprehensive on-line help.

4. Deliverables

4.1 Documentation

This will consist of a set of 3 components:

1. AARNet: general overview of facilities
2. AARNet: tutorial for beginners
3. AARNet: reference manual

Both the overview and tutorial manual would be produced by non-technical personnel who have considerable network experience and have instructional design skills. The reference manual would be produced as a joint effort between technical and instructional designers with the content determined by technical people and the text written by instructional designers.

4.2 Menu Based Interface

The menu based interface will be developed as an extension of a network interface currently under development at The University of New England - Northern Rivers. That network is being developed as an Open Learning network and provides for efficient telnet, Austpac and modem access for novice computer users such as external students and non computer experienced academics. The University has committed directly in excess of $20,000 to the development of that network.

Part of this network design is an extensive on-line help system which provides context sensitive help messages at all prompts and a jargon dictionary. The help information will partly consist of the Reference Manual material described above.

5. Budget

There is no additional equipment to be acquired as computer facilities at The University of New England - Northern Rivers would be used for software development.

Staffing costs would be as follows:

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Instructional design	$3,000
Technical writer	$5,000
Programmer	$5,000

Administrative costs such as communications between project team members would be funded by the University.

In addition there would be printing costs associated with manuals which could be recovered by charging for them. This would also be the preferable form for distribution to external students and novice computer users.

To ease this cost the latest version of the manuals would be available for FTP transfer to interested institutions so internal printing or perhaps local modification could be done.

6. Project Team Leaders

Barry Wilks, Director, Northern Rivers Technology and Information Centre, University of New England - Northern Rivers

Mary Jane Mahony, Senior Lecturer/Instructional Designer, University of New England-Orange Agricultural College