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ABSTRACT
        The University of Wisconsin-Madison began to offer computer
conferencing as a service to the campus for the fall 1995 semester. The
university's End User Computing Group developed a set of policies to address
such questions as: who is eligible to use the service; the Division of
Information Technology's responsibilities; customer responsibilities; network
usage policy; and fees. This paper presents a discussion of the evolution of
policies and faculty responsibilities, followed by an outline of records and
information management issues in terms of the following categories: (1)
access to personal data, including security/privacy issues; (2) appropriate
use; (3) authentication; (4) retention and disposition; and (5) preservation
for archival purposes. (AEF)

Creating Service Policies for Computer Conferencing

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In the Beginning . . .

We had no policies for computer conferencing. University of Wisconsin-Madison piloted computer conferencing during the Spring, 1995 semester. The pilot was collaboratively offered by two groups of our Division of Information Technology (DoIT). The Learning Technology Department worked with faculty on how best to incorporate the computer conferencing technology into their curriculum. The Personal Communication Technology Group supported the system and users, and acted as a liaison between DoIT and the vendor. We used the FirstClass software by SoftArc, Inc., chosen for its ease of use, graphical interface, cross-platform capability, and TCP/IP accessibility. Four faculty members and about 200 students participated in the pilot. Because it was a pilot, we allowed any interested parties to view the conferences and content.

We began to offer computer conferencing as a service to the campus for the Fall, 1995 semester. As service provider, and in anticipation of faculty interest, our End User Computing Group developed our first set of policies to address such questions as who is eligible to use the service, DoIT's responsibilities, the customer's responsibilities, and fees. The customer's responsibilities were developed in conjunction with our Registrar's Office, who is considered the owner of campus student data.

Below are listed some important points from the various guidelines:

❖ **Who is eligible:** Conference owner must be a UW-Madison faculty or staff member, including affiliated UW-Madison individuals, (e.g., System Administration, UW-Extension).

❖ **DoIT's responsibilities:**
  ● Consult with conference owner on how to best set up their conference.
  ● Set up accounts.
  ● Provide conference owner with participant packets that include: information on where to obtain software and how to install it; usage guide; where to call for help; list of customer responsibilities; policy governing use of networks at UW-Madison.

❖ **Customer responsibilities:**
  ● Conference must fall within the UW-Madison mission.
  ● Learn how the software works.
  ● Advise students that any information posted to their class conference is public and shared information for education purposes.
  ● Hand-out participant packets.

❖ **Network usage policy:**
  • The networks are to be used primarily for purposes of fulfilling the university's mission of teaching, research and public service.
  • No user may allow anyone else to use their account.
  • All UW-Madison network users must comply with the university's network usage policy.

❖ **Fees:**
  • $50 per semester per timetable class.
  • $50 per semester plus $20 per participant for any non-timetable conference.

Some points to keep in mind: At this time, the pilot conferences were still open for viewing, based on our policy that "any information posted to their class conference is public and shared information for education purposes." A person who initiates a conference has been labelled conference owner. Although some funding of the service does come from a student tuition tax for technology, we decided to charge a nominal fee to help cover administrative and system costs. Since the student tax is for technology services for students, we decided to charge more for anybody that was using the system for a non-timetable conference, e.g., a continuing education discussion for professionals.

During the Fall, 1995 semester, a student participant in the pilot brought to our attention that their conference contributions should be private to their class, and not available for open viewing. This triggered the re-thinking of our service policies, especially for the conference owner responsibilities. One issue we grappled with is what should be publicly available for education purposes. Based on the fact that e-mail copyright belongs to the author, and that in a "live" classroom, only attendees are privy to the discussion, we decided to make all conferences accessible only to the participants of that conference. The following are some important points from the next policy draft:

Faculty Responsibilities as a Conference Owner Regarding the Use of FirstClass Conferencing
    1a. The faculty will advise students that the class conference is PRIVATE, accessible to only the conference owner(s) and student participants registered for the class. The FirstClass system administrator will have access for administrative purposes only.
    1b. Prior permission from the conference owner must be obtained before anyone not affiliated with the class can participate in or be an observer of the conference. The conference owner must inform students of any non-affiliated individuals granted access to the class conference.
    1c. Prior permission (via signed paper forms or electronic forms) must be obtained from the conference owner and student participants before anyone can conduct educational research on the electronic class conference (i.e., conference structure, conference content, conferencing as a learning tool).
    1d. The faculty should be aware that electronic conversation is different than verbal conversation because it retains the identity of the student participant. It is imperative that student privacy be maintained if conference information is shared.

These policies greatly protected the privacy of the student and their submissions, even for the purpose of information sharing. We also included some standard guidelines regarding

the conducting of research. Note that we are still referring to Faculty Responsibilities and Conference Owner.

In August 1996, we made a slight revision to the Faculty Responsibilities, adding:
The faculty will be responsible for obtaining permission to use any copyrighted material posted in the conference. They should also remind participants that they need permission to use any copyrighted material posted in the conference.

The Evolution Continues . . .

As of 1996, our policies were not only printed for faculty distribution, but were also posted in our FirstClass Help conference and on our FirstClass web site (www.wisc.edu/firstclass/). Although our revisions were small for the 1996/1997 school year, our thoughts were churning. Conference owners wanted to retain their conferences in whole, including class materials and student contributions. A new issue was: Who actually owned the conference content? After attending a workshop on Intellectual Property and Copyright, and since we had developed our policies without any legal guidance, we decided to pay a visit to the University's Legal Services. Our goal was to improve the wording of the policies, and to bring to their attention issues regarding conference ownership, intellectual property and copyright, records retention, network usage, research, non-UW-Madison participants. In addressing these issues, legal advisors first look to the paper world for answers. We determined that the conference leader does not own the whole conference and its content. The conference leader does own the conference structure and any of their contributions, such as their syllabus, and their messages. Conference participants own their contributions, including any assignment submissions. If any conference leader or conference participant wants to use any content of the conference that is not their own for educational or research purposes, they need to obtain permission from the conference participants. Note that we are now referring to the conference leader, rather than conference owner. We also changed the wording to more strongly put the burden of conference responsibilities onto the conference leader's shoulders. Our current policies now state:

> 1a. The conference leader will advise participants that the conference is PRIVATE, accessible to only the conference leader(s) and participants. The FirstClass system administrator will have access for administrative purposes only.
>
> 1b. The conference leader must inform participants of any non-affiliated individuals granted access to the conference. Before anyone not affiliated with the conference can participate in or be an observer of the conference, he or she must obtain prior permission from the conference leader.
>
> 1c. Before anyone conducts educational research on the electronic conference (i.e., conference structure, conference content, conferencing as a learning tool), he or she must obtain prior written permission (via signed paper forms or electronic forms) from the conference leader and participants.
>
> 1d. The conference leader is advised that electronic conversation is different from verbal conversation because it retains the identity of the participant. It is imperative that privacy be maintained if conference information is shared. Participants must agree in advance that conference information can be shared for educational purposes.
>
> 1e. The conference leader will be responsible for obtaining permission to use any copyrighted material he or she may post in the conference. The conference leader

will remind participants that they need permission to use any copyrighted material the participants may post in the conference.

We've Got Policies, but . . .

We still have several open issues. After attending an E-Mail Management Workshop that also included records retention, we started wondering how records management and retention policy applied to conferencing. This line of thinking led us to meet with the University's Records Management Officer. We are now in the process of developing guidelines in the area of Records and Information Management Issues. One of the first questions we are asking is: What is the definition of a record, and does any conferencing content fall under this definition? We have also divided records and information management issues into the following categories:

❖ **Access to personal data, including security/privacy:** Federal and state law forbids disclosure of student record information without the student's written consent. Personal identifiable data is also protected. The issue is how best to inform conference leaders that student data is confidential, and to make sure that programs used address this issue.

❖ **Appropriate use:** This involves two concepts: Identifying the right technology tools to support a specified need; limiting the use of technology tools to those purposes that support the mission of the University. Conference leaders, system administrators, technologists and instructional designers need to be made aware that the least possible amount of student information should be collected to meet a legitimate institutional purpose, and that any program used must follow this principle.

❖ **Authentication:** Authentication addresses the questions of, "how do I know what I really have," and "how do I know what I have received electronically is coming from the person they say they are?" This area relates closely to security, access and privacy issues. In multi-user workstation scenarios (i.e. computer labs), it is very important to be able to authenticate per work session, per person.

❖ **Retention and disposition:** Once it is determined which content of computer conferencing is considered public record, it must then be decided which existing retention and disposition policies apply, or if additional policies need to be developed.

❖ **Preservation:** What information needs to be kept for archival purposes?

Other issues that are on a more global level are: How best to accommodate leaders and participants from other institutions; whose policies are they obligated to follow, i.e., their home institution, or those of the institution sponsoring the conference; what recourse do you take if policies are not observed.

We're Still Evolving

As we have implied throughout this talk, developing policies is a matter of constant revising and tweaking, and working with many experts and references. Several steps are involved: Defining the issue; researching the issue; talking with experts in the appropriate fields;

5

creating the policies; implementing the programs and procedures that follow the guidelines; and publicizing the guidelines. As we move towards web-based learning systems, ownership of on-line courses is a big issue. We are very interested in learning what are your policies for computer conferencing and computer-based course delivery, how these policies evolved. Feel free to contact us at conf-policy@doit.wisc.edu with your input or questions.

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Autobiographical Sketches

Hildy Feen has over fifteen years of broad, hands-on experience in the personal computer industry. As a technologist for the Division of Information Technology of the UW-Madison campus, Hildy has been working with groupware, including computer-mediated conferencing as a learning tool. Besides researching and evaluating various course delivery tools, most recently web-based tools, she has been the technologist for a FirstClass system at UW-Madison. She has also participated in classes and discussions via computer conferencing, including using FirstClass, Nicenet, Allaire Forums, listserves.

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Judy Brickner has been providing user software support and customer service support for the past fifteen years. As a member of the department of End User computing for the Division of Information Technology on the UW-Madison campus, Judy serves as the project leader for mass communication initiatives. She not only administers the computer conferencing system, but is also the listserver manager, coordinates mass emailings to faculty/staff/student audiences, and provides email directory support.

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