

# Netcon...

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University of Moratuwa, spoke on the importance of E-Mail as a communication tool and on Dial-up Networking. On the latter topic, he pointed out the merits and drawbacks of using the public telephone system for computer networking and explained the practical issues involved. Mr Dias stated in conclusion that Dial-up Networking



Mr. Roban W. Wijeratne, IT Consultant to the Ministry of Science, Technology & Human Resource Development, & IT advisor to the Ministry of Defence, addresses the gathering.

would be an important aspect of the networking strategy for small organisations and individuals, by virtue of its ready availability and low operating costs.

The subject of Wide Area Networks (WANs) was covered by Mr Graham Cope of the Dept of Computer Science & Engineering. Mr Cope gave an introduction to WANs and spoke on the options available when designing one. Speaking on Local Area Networks (LANs) and Internetworking, Dr Aruna Seneviratne from the University of Technology, Sydney, discussed the various LAN topologies such as CSMA/CD and Token Bus/Ring giving an overview of the various design issues involved. He also talked about the devices used for internetworking, such as routers, bridges and their application.

The second component of the conference was devoted to discussing the subject of Internet Services. Dr Lalith Gamage from the Dept of Electrical Engineering, University of

Moratuwa, gave an introduction to Gopher, a user-friendly Internet information retrieval tool. He explained the mechanics of Gopher and gave an on-site demonstration by connecting to the Internet and attempting to retrieve information on Sri Lanka, available on the Internet through Gopher. Unfortunately it yielded very little data on Sri Lanka, except for a brief reference to the University of Colombo.

Dr Ruwan Weerasinghe from the University of Colombo gave a presentation on the con-

cept of hyper media/hyper text on which the World Wide Web (WWW), the most powerful Internet navigating tool is based. He gave an insight to the huge web of on-line documents comprising text, images and even voice, sound and video, all linked to each other through hypertext links. Mr C W Adams of the UNDP, Colombo, spoke on USENET, the Internet news system spreading to over 18,000 sites around the world.

At the end of the third session, Dr Induruwa gave a summary on Sri Lankan initiatives in Networking and discussed the issues relating to the implementation of networks of the scale of LEARN. He expressed the hope that problems of island wide connectivity will be solved soon and that he will be able to expand LEARN to connect all Universities, Postgraduate Institutes, Research Centres and Documentation Centres in the country, thereby giving universal access to computing



Metropolitan Computers Ltd, in collaboration with Onward Novell of India, donate a Novell ver 4.01 package to the Dept. of Computer Science & Engineering, University of Moratuwa.

resources and information services. Speaking on on-line connectivity to the Internet, Dr Induruwa stated that this would be possible in the near future with the commissioning of the SEAMEWE II optical fibre with a 560 Mbps capacity. He suggested that the government should consider allocating a 2 Mbps channel, a fraction of the total capacity, for use by LEARN which basically supports the academic and research sector in Sri Lanka. He acknowledged the support received from the University of Moratuwa, the University Grants Commission and the Computer & Information

LEARN for almost five years gave presentations based on their experiences. In a bid to build confidence among the participants of NETCON 95. These included presentations on e-mail in the medical field, networks as a productivity tool, timely access to trade information, e-mail in the protection of the environment, etc. LEARNmail is presently made available to more than 50 sites in Sri Lanka.

The final session was devoted entirely to presentations by network product and services suppliers. Four leading vendors namely, Lanka Communication Services (Datatnet), Lanka



Presentations at the exhibition, held on the final day of NetCon 95.

Technology Council (CINTEC) in the implementation of LEARN and expressed his hope that the same enthusiastic support would continue in the future. He thanked LACNet, a US-based non profit organisation for taking the initiative to fund the international e-mail exchange.

The third day of the conference was devoted mainly to the presentation of case studies by Sri Lankan users. Several speakers who were using the LEARNmail e-mail service of

Internet Services Ltd, Maharaja Telecommunication Networks Ltd and Metropolitan Computers Ltd outlined their development strategies in the short and long terms, giving their assurance that users will soon have access to services and products at very competitive prices.

The NETCON 95 exhibition provided the opportunity for conference participants to see the state of art technologies and to interact and discuss their specific networking problems with the technical support experts. ■

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