

## Science and Tech eyes the Internet

The Faculty of Science and Technology is paving the way for electronic communication among Mount Royal College, its students and the world.

At present, the Faculty is testing a new "Internet module" on its computer bulletin board system (BBS), affording access to the global information highway.

According to Steve Swettenham, Instructional Assistant in Lab Stores and Assistant Manager, an Internet link is a logical evolution of the Faculty of Science and Technology BBS in its goal to supply instructors and students with information and a means of communicating locally and globally. What started as the Enviro BBS quickly caught on with members of related departments and has now become integral to the Faculty's operation, thanks to the collaborative vision of Bruce Horrey, Dennis Leask, Dr. Tom MacAlister, Ray Sloan and Dr. Gordon Williams. Instructors can make use of the system via the LAN or by the phone system using a modem.

The Faculty of Science and Technology BBS, like dozens of other BBSs in Calgary, can be reached by anyone with a computer, a modem and communication software. While other BBSs focus on entertainment or social exchange, the Science and Technology BBS is academic in nature, focusing on areas like environmental studies, chemistry, biology, aviation and computer science. By dialling 240-6785 or 240-6786 from their computers, community members can explore its most general levels. But the sys-

tem's real vision lies in student-instructor communication from anywhere in Calgary or the world, twenty-four hours a day, all year round.

"It's an all-in-one package for e-mail, file transfer, teleconference as well as many on-line applications," said Swettenham, who set up the system and operates it. Students can actually "upload" their assignments to an instructor's account on the BBS from home, and can complete questionnaires or exams.

With the proposed Internet module on the BBS, the Faculty's students will have access to the Internet and its wealth of scientific information. As well, the new module offers the potential of virtual toll-free access to the BBS, via "telnet" on the Internet, from anywhere in the world.

Extending a portion of the College onto the Internet represents a bold step toward the future of educational and its delivery, said Swettenham. The move is a deliberately cautious one. Co-operation within the College is central to the system's feasibility, he said, involving input from Information Systems and the Academic Development Centre, for example. The success of the new module will depend upon the test results, technical realities and decisions about student use of MRC's Internet link.

"It's a new avenue we're about to explore, one step at a time. The gradual development of the system maintains its integrity."

Swettenham said the BBS provides his Faculty with "extended contact. Now we have community contact, and soon, world contact".

PH



**Steve Swettenham runs ...** the Faculty of Science and Technology BBS using donated software called *The Major BBS*, a program chosen for its flexibility, ease of use and powerful capabilities afforded by a modular design. The BBS runs on a standard 486 PC (left), with a parallel system (right) used for education, development and backup. Two modems provide the off-campus link, allowing 20 individuals to use the system at once. The BBS also features "key test generating" software and self-contained electronic "books" to support student learning on the Internet.



**Gingerbread houses ...** and Christmas go hand-in-hand. Here are two examples of the Parade of Neo-Gingerbread Showhomes—MRC's Interior Design Student Society and Interior Design Advisory Committee's joint fund-raising venture. The houses are currently on display at the north end of Banker's Hall on the Plus 15 and Plus-30 levels until Dec. 17. A silent auction of the houses will be held throughout the display with a final "active" bidding hour from 1 to 2 p.m. on Dec. 17. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year."

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