

**INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTER INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY BUSINESS REQUIREMENTS
Addendum to the IRC Leadership Conference: Findings and
Recommendations Report of July 2003**

INTRODUCTION

Information technology requirements of IRCs are unique and are of crucial importance to our work. As it is the nature of IRC work to have contact with large numbers of people, through the web sites, electronic outreach and other types of programs, and reference work, IRCs need to be able to access, download, send and receive large chunks of information quickly, efficiently and freely. There can be no question that any loss of IT tools and support would diminish, if not devastate, our ability to operate at current levels. At present, IT support is frequently inadequate and is inconsistent among posts. Additionally, the news of the impending loss of PDNet, a less restrictive IT environment than OpenNet Plus, raises fears of diminished IT capabilities and tools overall.

The newly announced possibility of an "IRC" or "web development" local area network is a promising development as, at the very least, it reflects IIP's understanding of the unique role and requirements that IRCs in the field have in web development, electronic outreach, reference and programming work. However, such a separate LAN for web developers and/or IRC staff is undefined and the needs of IRC staff must be considered in shaping such a LAN.

In order to fulfill our mandate, IRCs require an IT environment that allows for flexibility and innovation. IRCs are shaped by IT and IRCs use IT intensively to work effectively and efficiently. Since the proposed IRC/web development network is not linked to a global, or Washington-based network and therefore less of a security concern to Departmental interests, IRCs should be allowed full administrative rights to such a network.

IRC IT BUSINESS REQUIREMENTS

I. Retain Features Available via PDNet on an "enhanced" OpenNet+.

- fast and reliable Internet access
- access to a wide variety of news, information, and research sites
- ability to download software applications for testing their applicability for IRC uses, subject to LCCB approval
- ability to use software, particularly graphic design software, for creating or repackaging IIP products for use in the host country
- remote access to e-mail accounts
- ability to receive and send large email attachments
- anonymous email accounts for communication with the public
- ability to troubleshoot web functions (e.g. trsccert, traceroute, ping)

- ability to use peripherals (e.g. PDAs, digital cameras, CD burners, scanners, dedicated fax machines or copiers)
- OS in local language
- ability to install and use Goldmine or other contact managements systems
- latest versions of frequently used software, for example: MS Office Suite
- ability to enable signed, and to initialize and script ActiveX controls not necessarily marked as safe (reference database requirement)

II. Develop a new local network of PCs used for web development purposes which would include unimpeded internet access and:

- full administrative rights to download files/programs as necessary for web development work
- FTP capability
- off-site web editing capability
- local control of firewall

III. Clearer Definition of IMO responsibilities vis-à-vis PA/IRC computer responsibilities and mandated IRC director or delegate representation on the Local Configuration Control Board.

IV. Ability to transfer data from one network to another electronically, that is, using diskettes/CDs/e-mail.

V. Contact management Systems

- ability to choose CMS system most appropriate for individual posts' changing demands and for current events
- IMO technical support for selected system
- alternatively, ability to manipulate source code of centrally prescribed systems for individual post requirements
- connection to e-mail to ensure electronic outreach functions are not lost

VI. Mechanisms for streamlining two way communication between IT sections within IIP and the field [Note: IRCs are impacted by and impact the work of several different IIP offices but don't always know, or are able to identify, which and shouldn't have to communicate with each separately. A new listserv, which ALL and ANY IIP office with an interest in supporting IRC work must belong, would serve this purpose.]