

Getting More with Less

an increase *in* bandwidth equals an increase *in* telecommunications capabilities

Charles Spiers, Deputy Director of Network Systems (SXTM), has a poster outside his office of a skier navigating a hill full of moguls. The caption reads: "Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your mind off your goals." When Mr. Spiers re-negotiated the Department's contracts with its international telecommunications carriers in order to reflect current data and voice requirements, he must have felt like that skier.

"It was a real challenge," admits Mr. Spiers, "to conclude the negotiations given the constraints we were working with. We were required to quadruple the existing bandwidth¹ to certain missions and double it to a large number of others – but without increasing costs." The results of these efforts, which SXD Director General Rick Kohler characterized as "exceptional" and "having a profound and positive effect on the way the Department communicates," earned Charles a Merit Award last month.²

Approximately one-half of the Department's 8,000 employees are located at over 150 missions around the world. Reliable and cost effective telecommunications have always been important to the Department. And given its growing telecommunications requirements in this electronic age, it came as a surprise to no one that the Department needed to significantly increase bandwidth in order to accommodate the increase in e-mail traffic, to provide missions with links to the Intranet/Internet, and to make more telephone lines available worldwide. "The more bandwidth we have available, the better the services we can offer through SIGNET," says Mr. Spiers. As of October 30, bandwidth will have been quadrupled to Rome, Geneva, Brussels, and Bonn and doubled to 65 of our largest missions, which represents 89.5% of our population. There will also be a 50% increase in the number of available voice circuits to those missions. Desktop

access to the Internet/Intranet will be a reality – and users won't have to wait as long to place a call from HQ to a mission and back.

If all this sounds pretty impressive, just think about this: according to Mr. Spiers, by 1999, we will have to double the current bandwidth capacity.

¹ Underlying all of what we can do with our computers is the amount of bandwidth that is available to carry messages, transfer data, etc. Bandwidth is the size of the electronic pipe that carries the signals; the more we have available, the greater the services we can offer through SIGNET.

² see *Panorama*, September 16, 1996, Number 38, p. 1.

HQ readers, are you looking for *Connexions* on the Intranet? Look no further. To access the newsletter, open Netscape in Network Applications. The list of recent additions found in the What's New section of the DFAIT Intranet Home Page¹ links directly to the *Connexions* page.

¹ The Intranet Home Page is presently under construction to make it easier for the user to find his/her way around the Web. We'll keep you informed as to when the re-design is completed and where to find what.