

Dalhousie goes from VAX to UNIX

by Steve Tonner

At least one thing on campus has sped up.

Dalhousie recently purchased a brand-new computer, on which students will be able to get accounts, and through it, access to the Internet, the world's largest computer network. And they won't have to deal with the problem of the slow speed associated with the current machine, the VAX 4500.

The new machine, an IBM RS/6000, is currently up and running. It should be stressed that the new machine, which runs IBM's AIX (a UNIX-type operating system), will not be replacing the VAX, which students used last year. Instead, the new UNIX machine, or Internet Services (IS for short), will be providing only internet-related services, like e-mail, news, goopher, and so on. The VAX will still be operating, but will only be providing non-internet related services, such as compiling and statistical work for stu-

dents who can demonstrate a need for such services.

Randy Barkhouse of the University Computing and Information Services stated the reason for the addition of the new host was "because the VAX was heavily overloaded. The system manager, Aidan Evans, determined that electronic mail administration was about 50% of the load. So we hypothesized that that would only increase, because of the current trend of Internet popularity. We looked at various alternatives over the summer, and came to the decision to buy a small UNIX box."

The IS machine, which was purchased for one-eighth of the cost, has been rated at three times the CPU speed of the VAX, which itself is only a few years old.

The IS machine was purchased in August, and administrators have been busily working since then to get it running. There were some small hardware difficulties that IBM had to render support on, but applica-

tions are now being accepted for new and renewed accounts on the new machine.

The trend of increasing use of the Internet has become worldwide. With 20 million already online, some experts estimate the internet is growing at a rate of 10% a year.

On Dal campus alone, there were

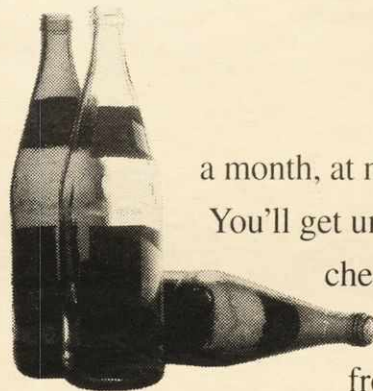
approximately 2,600 students with accounts on the VAX. This year, there have already been 1,000 new accounts applied for in the first week. It is estimated that this year's total could jump up to over 3,500, one-third of the total student population of Dalhousie.

Barkhouse points out that Dal

has "one of the highest modem to student ratios, providing dial-in service of any campus that we know of. Many larger universities in the U.S. don't provide as many dial-up lines as we do. So, we know that Dalhousie students are actually being quite well provided for, both off-campus, as well as on campus."

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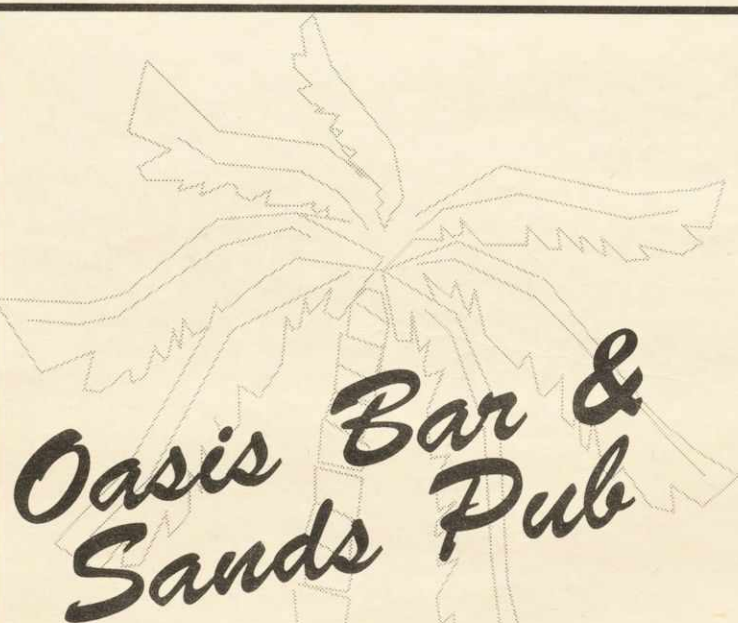
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Have a great year students, hope to see you soon