

SIGNET NEWS

THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY NEWSLETTER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Do You Need to Exchange E-Mail with the Internet? Here's How

This information updates the article, "Using SIGNET to Communicate with the Outside World," which was attached to Panorama of August 15, 1994.

Did you know that you can now exchange e-mail with clients and colleagues who are on the Internet? Thanks to SIGNET's link to the Government Message Handling System (which, in turn, is indirectly connected to the Internet), every SIGNET client can now correspond with the some 20 million other people connected to the Internet.¹

It is not difficult to send e-mail to the Internet from ICONDESK. You simply type in the right address in the right format (we'll show you how).

Recipients can normally reply to your messages by using the REPLY function of their e-mail program. Until recently, however, the extremely long address required for someone to initially send you e-mail presented a problem. Now that the addressing problem has been overcome, we all have real Internet addresses. For Donald Cameron (SEATL) and others, particularly our colleagues in the Asia Pacific Branch, we are pleased to hear that this improvement will make your business life much easier.

Shortcomings

The Internet is a useful tool in certain circumstances. You should, however, be aware of its important limitations.

1. No Privacy
Internet e-mail may follow a very convoluted route with opportunities for eavesdropping. You should have no expectation of privacy and, therefore, should NOT conduct business that is in any way sensitive. In other words, **send only unclassified information** to the Internet.

Also keep in mind that your correspondence can be further circulated by one of the intermediaries (or the recipient) in its original OR an altered form — there is no way of knowing if someone changed your message along the way.

2. No Guarantees
There is no guarantee when and if

Continued on page 3

What Can the SIGNET Client Services Division Do for You?

"The people who should be driving the development of new software products and the refinement of current products are those who use them."

-Doug Rosenthal
Director
SIGNET Client Services
Division (STC)

It is almost commonplace to say that advanced telecommunications have changed the face of diplomacy. Compose an e-mail message in ICONDESK, hit the Send Mail button and poof!, the message can be sent to almost any of our 112 official missions

around the world. These and other minor miracles of technology occur daily on our desktops to enable the quick responses demanded in the 1990s.

Our peers in government acknowledge that the Department is at the cutting edge of technology. But has the convenience and potential of such technology really led us to abandon all fear of computers and eagerly embrace the latest technology? Do we have the tools to perform our jobs effectively? Have we been trained properly and are we comfortable with

the technology we've got? The changes taking place on our desktops can lead us to overlook these fundamental questions which are central to making our adjustment to technology a relatively smooth one. And, if you agree with Doug Rosenthal, they lead us to ask what client support should mean to SIGNET users in 1995 and beyond.

"I think the Information Systems Bureau (STD) recognizes that it has to look at a new way of doing things now

Continued on page 2