World Wide Web access

Each computer was configured to access the Internet and World Wide Web using the Netscape browser. This provided participants with simple to use, fast access to information resources stored on Internet computers around the world.

The installed Netscape Browser allowed participants to navigate the Virtual Summit web site and other Internet resources using a Point and click" technique on a clearly designed graphical user interface.

The computers were configured to have a "home" screen set to the Virtual Summit Web page. This made conference details, schedule, daily communiqués and most other Summit information regularly requested by participants readily available to Web Cafe users with the minimum level of computer and Internet skills.

Email access for Summit participants was provided at the Web Cafe in four ways. Netscape mail was enabled on the terminals so that those without an email address anywhere could send mail from a temporary conference address.

Those with an email address elsewhere, and who use a Netscape type of mail system were able, with a minimum of configuration, to pick up their mail and store it on the terminal for processing and replies.

Vancouver CommunityNet accounts were set up and enabled for participants who wished to get an affordable permanent or temporary address and wished to use a text interface. Volunteers were able to help participants register and validated the accounts on the spot so that they were enabled by the following day.

A large number of participants had email and Internet accounts elsewhere but did not use Netscape type of email. A simple Telnet program with a button on the front screen was provided so that these participants were able to access the resources of their own server and account.

Support and Training

Between the hours of 9 am. and 5 pm. volunteer support and help was available for participants to enable their effective use of the equipment and solve any problems as they arose. After the first day of the Summit the terminals were left active throughout the day and night to meet the demand of participants for Internet access in the early mornings and evening.

Training took place on an ad hoc one-to-one basis or in small groups. Training needs varied greatly from one group or individual to another. In general participants were more interested in a very specific skill set to get the job at hand done rather than more general and structured training in using components of the Internet.