

Campus computing in the slow lane

by Colin Mac Donald

In the basement of the Killam Library on any given day, students can be seen poking their heads into the different rooms looking for an available computer.

Whether they are looking to connect to the undergraduate computer, the VAX 4500, or to type out a paper, computer space in the basement of the Killam Library is tight to say the least.

Beep-Beep-Beep... This sound torments all users of Dalhousie's dial-in lines. Most users have experienced this at least once during their time here. The sound means every one of the seventy-two available phone lines for connecting to the Dalhousie computer system is currently in use.

If one is lucky enough to get a connection, the user had best not ask to connect to the VAX 4500, otherwise known as DAL1. If so, one

can expect to wait from 15 to 20 seconds, up to two minutes or even more before getting a prompt. On the VAX, a busy time is just about every minute of every day during the school year. Once a user is logged on, a new "suggestion" is in place that asks a person to use "the VAX 4500 and dial-in lines only for work directly related to your studies or research" especially during the aforementioned busy periods.

The situation on the UG machine is not quite as bad as on the VAX, but according to David Trueman, the UG system manager, it soon could be.

He said that with only 23 machines in the Killam, plus nine more in the basement of the Chase Building, "access to the UG machine is a problem."

Besides the lack of computers, disk space is also quite a problem. Despite most people having a disk quota of only two megabytes, some users still cannot save programs right away.

According to one student, "Disk space is always being taken up," and his quota of 10 megabytes doesn't have a hope of being approached.

The lack of funding that has hit most departments has also hit the Computing Science department. Until a few years ago, the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC) gave funding to Dalhousie usually earmarked for computer hardware and software purchasing, as well as administrative costs. Lately, this money has gone towards paying off departmental debts and being diverted to the library.

Luckily, Sun Microsystems has donated processors and a few colour terminals for the UG system. With enrollment in the computer science program expected to increase by 30

per cent, if these donations don't continue more money will have to be made available or the UG system will start to look more and more like the VAX.

Techno

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mands and Apple's unique windows, this computer is one of the most user-friendly machines in the room. When we tested it by asking the time, it did not reply due to lots of background noise.

In conclusion, the computer fair did not introduce anything spectacular but it was entertaining. I found some of the representatives were more eager to make a sale than to advertise their product. No new technological advancements in the industry caught the crowds. The Occupational Therapy display was very informative and Medical Services demonstrated a great utility. Let's hope Dalhousie can purchase some of these new computers, I think we are due for some new ones!

POINTLESS PONDERABLES


Answer:

Getting the answer to this problem can be tricky. The first mistake that can be made is to work directly with the seven minutes the clock loses every hour. That approach results in an answer of two days, which was sent in by a number of people. Similarly, while the times may be equal at around the two-day mark (and several other days too), the problem said the occurrence happened on the hour. The best method is to work with the 53 minutes the clock moves forward every hour, ensuring that you get the correct answer of 17 days 3 hours. The first correct answer of 17 days was sent in by Marc Robichaud of NSCAD, with Andrew Pickett of Dal (who included an incredible proof) right behind him.


Question:

We felt generous this month, so here's one that we hope a multitude of people can solve. You're playing darts at a local pub, aiming for the bullseye. On your first throw the dart goes wide and misses. The second throw misses by even more. On your third throw then, what is the probability of your dart landing even farther from the bullseye than the first two? Assume constant skill.


Please send answers c/o the Gazette, room 312 SUB, or by email to Gazette@ac.dal.ca. Entries must be received by Monday 4:00 pm at the latest.



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ORIENTATION

GENERAL MEETING

All students interested in participating in the 1994 Frosh Orientation Week are asked to attend the following meetings:



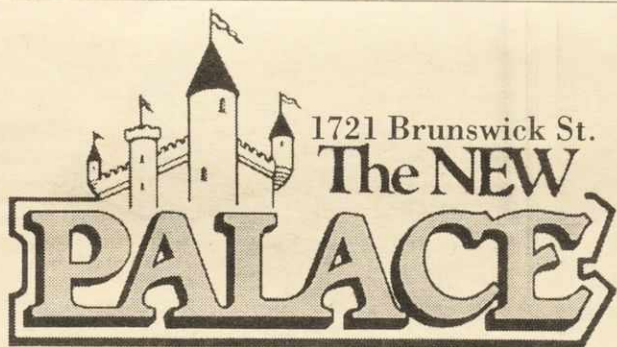
March 15 & 17
12:30 pm. Room 307
Dal S.U.B.

Positions available:
Vice Chairperson*
Committee Heads

or you can pick up an application at the S.U.B. Enquiry Desk & the Student Employment Centre.



* Honorarium provided.



Mon - Sun: I.C.U. with Pandora's Box
next week: Boys Gone Wild

Wednesday March 30th 1 night only!

GOWAN

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10am - closing at the Palace Box Office

EVERY SUNDAY IS KARAOKE NIGHT Be there
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LOONIES NIGHT!

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7pm - midnight
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