UNIDATA NEWSLETTER #1
14 December 1984

Formal notification was received today from the National Science Foundation, that a grant has been approved for UCAR's UNIDATA Phase II Project, the funds to be transferred to UCAR through the NCAR contract.

Based on informal notification, actual work started on 19-20 November when the UNIDATA Steering Committee met at UCAR, along with a number of participants from university groups that are conducting activities related to the Phase II project. As a result of those discussions, a number of decisions were made and work is under way on several topics. The following summarizes these activities as well as providing an update on the overall UNIDATA Program status.

The UNIDATA Program

At its meeting in October, the UCAR Board of Trustees affirmed that a long-range UNIDATA program is needed by the community. Phase I provided a good reading of community needs and ambitions; Phase II offers the opportunity to assess the state of existing systems, to develop a comprehensive, long-term system design, and perhaps to gain some experience with candidate system components. It is likely that there will be a continuing need for expertise within UCAR to help the community keep up with the technological developments in hardware, software, and communications, and to provide a centralized source of advice for introducing UNIDATA-related technology to universities and colleges not presently involved in such work. It was decided that the UNIDATA Steering Committee will act in accordance with this view of UCAR's role vis-a-vis the community in the long-term UNIDATA program.

The UNIDATA Project Office

David Fulker has been named Project Manager for the Phase II UNIDATA effort, and is setting up operations under the UCAR Projects Office in Boulder. Dave has been with NCAR's scientific computing program for nearly 19 years, and many of you may know him through his various roles in supporting users, developing algorithms, and providing remote access. His latest NCAR work included provision of computer access via UNINET (a nation-wide packet switching network) and planning a pilot program for high-speed access using satellite communications technology. The latter program is expected to play a key role in the UNIDATA communications subsystem.

Christopher Cooper is with the project until late April, working full time on communications. Chris was one of the architects and principal players in Project Universe, an endeavor which connected local area networks at various sites in the UK via high-speed satellite links. A brief interruption in Universe funding permitted UCAR to engage Chris for a six-month period with UNIDATA, but he will be returning to the UK to take part in the Universe successor, Project Unison. We intend to continue an active liaison between the USA UNIDATA and the UK Unison efforts.
Page 2 of the December 1984 Newsletter is missing due to an apparent double-siding to single-siding problem.
efforts are directed toward convergence with the long-term design objectives.

Community Assistance - Phone calls are beginning to come in asking, for example, what hardware to buy that will be compatible with UNIDATA. While it seems early to set up a UNIDATA information service, our UNIDATA Office (Dave Fulker, 303/497-8696) will be as helpful as possible. If he can, Dave will answer the query himself; if not he may direct you to one of the Working Groups or to some expert in the community. Eventually, we see the UNIDATA Office evolving to provide the long-term UCAR/UNIDATA support discussed earlier.

On-line UNIDATA Information - We are planning to establish electronic mail and conferencing for the UNIDATA management committee and working groups. It is intended that this evolve into an on-line information system for the entire UNIDATA community. In addition to facilitating the exchange of ideas, problems, and solutions among researchers and system developers, such a system could provide ready access to a body of UNIDATA documentation on technical and scientific issues.

Please let us know if you already have one or more electronic addresses and whether you are interested in participating in such an information system.

Upcoming Activities

The occasion of the Symposium on Interactive Data Processing for Meteorology, AMS Annual Meeting, Los Angeles, 7-11 January, will provide an opportunity for much UNIDATA activity. Rollie Hauser, California State College at Chico, is considering whether community software can be brought to LA and tested on systems that the industry will have on display. We are trying to arrange for a UNIDATA HQ room at the hotel; two working groups plan to meet and others can use it for discussions. The Phase II Project Management Committee will meet on Wednesday. Please look for announcements.

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