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**ITV Insight**

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# *ITV Insight*

Volume 1, Issue 2

## Supporting the 2-year College Interactive Video Community

### **Summer has arrived and we are back with more news!**

Summer is turning out to be a long, dry season here in the Olympia area and just as you had begun to think this newsletter was also in a prolonged dry spell, here we are with updated information about the K-20 network and ITV issues.

### **How are the new MCUs settling into their roles in the K-20 network?**

The two MGC100 MCUs continue to be tested, training has been conducted for those involved in the implementation and scheduling aspects of the MCU project, and everything is on track for the new MGCs to be in production mode in time for Fall quarter. In fact, MCU Scheduling is already using the new MCUs on a limited basis, including our weekly K-20 Operations meetings, so here at the State Board we have had the opportunity to participate in calls using the new units. There are a couple of differences you will notice when participating in events that are assigned to the new MCUs. For one thing, all ISDN calls will be profile 7 calls. Also, the entire group of ISDN sites in an event may have the same call-in number, and that extends to audio-only ports that are added to the event as

well. Currently, the MCU IDs for the Lucent/Avaya units consist of a number with no prefix or a prefix of 2-, and the IDs for the MGCs begin with 3- and 4-. These are points we wanted to let you know about so you won't be surprised when you see some differences in the KORRS event status pages and wonder what is going on with the numbers. The Lucent/Avaya MCUs will probably be around for some time, primarily due to the need for Profile 9 calling at some sites. Please feel free to give us a call or send us an email if you have additional questions or concerns about the ongoing MCU project.

### **Additional sites added to the IP Pilot Project in Eastern Washington**

The number of sites accessing K-20 through Ethernet connectivity continues to increase, and the total has grown to 29 locations. Although wideband IP access is currently limited to the Eastern side of the state, in the future you can expect to see these services being rolled out in other areas.

### **An Upgrade to KORRS is in Progress!**

A major upgrade to the K-20 Online Resource Reservation System (KORRS) is now underway, and

we wanted to give you a brief update on that. The list of changes was developed based upon questions and input received from a range of sources including the KORRS helpdesk, end-users, and members of the K-20 Cooperative. A couple of examples of new features you can expect to see are easier scheduling/confirming of recurring events and a change to the Event Services drop-down list that will show only the events waiting to be confirmed by the logged-in scheduler rather than every scheduled event that has not yet taken place. Look for Version 4 of KORRS to be online sometime in the Fall of 2004.

### **August Tech Tip**

We all know that K-20 has a wide range of ITV equipment in use within the network. Most of the gear people are buying today is made by Polycom, but there are many legacy ITV systems in place that need to co-exist with the newer systems and sometimes the old and the new have a bit of trouble getting along. Our instructor addressed this topic when we attended H.323/IP training recently, and we thought the information he shared with us was worth passing on to all of you. One factor that can lead to failed call setup is the inability of an older system to handle the capabilities (caps) exchange information being sent to it by a newer system. Often the older system will respond to a newer system's call setup requests in unpredictable ways, causing a call setup failure. The rule of thumb in this situation is to have the older ITV system call the newer one rather than the other way around. Allowing the older system to set the terms of the information exchange increases the chance of creating a successful connection. Sometimes when people are able to place a call through the MCU, yet are unable to get point-to-point calling to work, caps exchange is likely to be the culprit. The MCU may be masking the problem because it is creating and maintaining independent connections for each endpoint.

### **More News about Polycom systems**

You will recall that in our first issue we reported some issues with the new VSX-7000 to aid you in deciding whether or not the system is worth considering if you are in the market for a new ITV system. Since that time, we have learned that at least one member of the CTC group encountered issues with connecting calls between a VSX-7000 and an older Zydacron system. Based on the article above you are probably thinking "How about the caps exchange?" The vendor soon released an updated version of the software and explained to us that they had made some changes in the caps

exchange section of the operating system. At this time, we not seen first-hand verification of the effectiveness of this update, but we would recommend you ask the vendor for information on the status of the VSX software before purchasing this system.

At present, the systems we can recommend without any reservations are the FX and the VS-4000. Both of these units are available with an interface that can connect directly to the K-20 T-1, both support the latest H.264 and IP features with a software update, and both have been in use in the K-20 network for several years. **Last minute update:** Just before sending this out, we learned that the VSX-7000 is now available with the T-1 interface option. Also, we read the release notes for the new software release – version 5.1 – but the notes do not mention enhancements to the caps exchange features of the system, so the change is undocumented, as far as we can tell.

### **Can you help?**

We've received an inquiry about the availability of two pieces of equipment as follows:

Walla Walla Community College is looking for an Ascend Multiband Plus. The college is also looking for a document camera with a composite or S-Video output for use with a Polycom. If you have either or both on-hand and are ready to send the part or parts to a new home, please call Joe Small at 509-526-6432. Thanks!