Washington Hotline

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Add "NREN" (pronounced en-ren) to your list of acronyms. While the proposed National Research and Education Network is an idea with a considerable history behind it, interest has recently intensified at the federal policy level. The goal of the NREN "is to enhance national competitiveness and productivity through a high-speed, high-quality network infrastructure which supports a broad set of applications and network services for the research and instructional community," according to EDUCOM, an organization of higher education computing experts which supports its development.

The NREN would upgrade and expand the existing interconnected array of mostly scientific research networks, such as the national NSFNET and ARPANET and the regional networks such as NYSERNET and SURANET, known collectively as the internet. The expansion of the concept from supporting "research" to the broader "research and education" is a recent development due at least partly to the involvement of the library community, especially the Library of Congress Network Advisory Committee, with EDUCOM.

Earlier this year, Sen. Albert Gore (D-TN) reintroduced his National High-Performance Computer Technology Act (S. 1067), which would include an NREN to link government, industry, and higher education, as well as development of a digital library of databases and knowledge banks accessible through the network. More recently, Rep. Doug Walgren (D-PA) introduced an identical bill, HR 3131. On September 8, President Bush's new science adviser, D. Allan Bromley, Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, issued *The Federal High Performance Computing Network*, developed by the Federal Coordinating Council for Science, Engineering, and Technology (FCCSET) Committee on Computer Research and Applications. This report says the U.S. "must develop a National Research and Education Network (NREN) to support communication between persons and organizations involved in open research and scholarly pursuits in the United States." It describes three stages from 1989-96:

First stage: an upgrade of the existing internet to 1.5 megabit-per-second trunks (already underway);

Second stage: upgraded network services to 200-300 research installations, using a shared backbone network with 45 megabit-per-second capacity; and

Third stage: 1-3 gigabit-per-second networking service to selected research facilities, and 45 megabit-per-second networking to approximately 1,000 sites nationwide.

Universities are key players in advanced network technology, according to the report. While most improvements in communications technology have come from industry, most important networking technologies have been developed by universities, which are also the primary users of networking.

The five-year price tag for the NREN component is about $400 million in both the HPC Program and the Gore/Walgren bills; and both foresee eventual commercialization of the network. The full HPC Program involves four components—high performance computing systems, advanced software technology and algorithms, the NREN, and basic research and human resources—and would cost almost $2 billion. However, Dr. Bromley indicated in congressional testimony on October 3 that the Administration does not want legislation, but prefers to proceed through administrative action. Funding would have to come from the budgets of the federal agencies involved. Issuance of the report prompted a series of congressional hearings on the HPC Program and the legislation. Sen. Gore chairs the Science, Technology, and Space Subcommittee, which held a hearing September 15. Witnesses included Librarian of Congress James Billington who said that high-capacity data networks could allow LC to become a "library without walls," providing scholars nationwide with access to its material, and expanding far beyond its traditional role of providing bibliographic information.

Rep. Walgren chairs the Science, Research and Technology Subcommittee, which held a hearing on October 3, followed the next day by a hearing in the Telecommunications and Finance Subcommittee, chaired by Rep. Edward Markey (D-MA), a cosponsor of HR 3131. Witnesses from academia at the various hearings included Joe Wyatt of Vanderbilt University, Joseph Traub of Columbia University, Gary Augustson of Pennsylvania State University, Richard Mandelbaum of the University of Rochester, and Russell Neuman of MIT. Other witnesses were from government agencies and private industry.

No serious opposition to the legislation (except for the Administration's preference for administrative actions) surfaced at the hearings. Industry representatives welcomed the promise of a stimulus to the wideband marketplace, assistance in developing a network infrastructure, a forum for solving common problems and developing standards, and a commitment to commercialization. Gary Augustson for EDUCOM emphasized that federal funding would be highly leveraged because the states and institutions will make the major investments required to realize the NREN. Major federal agency players expressed commitment to the concept and willingness to coordinate, but warned of budget constraints.

A related report issued in September by the congressional Office of Technology Assessment, *High Performance Computing and Networking for Science—Background Paper* (OTA-BP-CIT-59, GPO), summarizes well many of the issues and questions which came up at the hearings. Who would have access to the NREN and for what purposes? How would the network be managed? Who would pay and how much? Rep. Markey and his subcommittee members were concerned that the NREN sounded as though it were geared to an information elite. How could it be broadened to include smaller colleges, hospitals, and businesses?

While the outcome of the National High-Performance Computer Technology Act is not certain, and the Administration's commitment does not seem to include funding, high-capacity computing power and the broadband telecommunications highway to carry it are clearly seen by all parties as infrastructure issues just as crucial and just as deserving of a federal stimulus as highways and railroads have been in the past. Finally, another acronym—Alan Chynoweth of Bellcore said the NREN would help speed the transition from POTS to TINS, that is from Plain Old Telephone Service to Total Information Networking Services.

Refugee and Immigrant Resource Directory 1990–1991

By Alan Edward Schorr. Essay by Refugee Policy Group. Forewords by Congressman Stephen Solarz and Hans Thoolen. 350 pages. ISBN 0–938737–19–8. Appendices. Indices. $37.50. January, 1990.

This is a greatly enhanced version of *Directory of Services for Refugees and Immigrants* (Spring, 1987) which was critically acclaimed by *CHOICE, WLB, LJ,* ARBA, *RBB* as well as the refugee literature. According to *GPR,* " . . . Schorr's book is an outstanding resource and a pioneer in its field." *RIRD* includes detailed information on 1,000 organizations, associations, agencies, academic programs, research centers, museums and other groups in the U.S. that offer services to or provide information/policy analysis about refugees and immigrants. The main section is arranged by state and includes six indices and forty sub-indices. Contains a lengthy essay on U.S. immigration and refugee policy by the leading national authority. Appendices include documents, chronologies, glossary, as well as extensive statistical tables and charts. Remains the single most comprehensive & authoritative source. Schorr is the former Dean of Libraries at the California State University, Fullerton and author of 10 books and over 200 articles, essays and reviews.

Native American Reader: Stories, Speeches and Poems

Edited and commentary by Dr. Jerry D. Blanche. Forewords by Tom Foley, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives and LaDonna Harris, President, Americans for Indian Opportunity. 300 pages. ISBN 0–938737–20–1. Bibliog. $25. January, 1990.

The stories, speeches and poems in this book are *pure* Native American. They are fully documented, accurate, authentic. The 100 contributions represent over 70 authors from nearly 30 tribes, from the Southeast U.S. to Alaska. *NAR* is an excellent teaching aid for both Indian and non-Indian, and it can be effectively used from kindergarten through university. Dr. Blanche's analysis of these contributions presents a framework to better understand the rich tradition of the Native American. As LaDonna Harris noted, this book " . . . conveys the complex realities of Tribal America." Jerry D. Blanche, Oklahoma Choctaw, received his Ph.D. in Speech Education and was a high school teacher, university professor, Manager of Communications for the Spokane Public Schools and is currently a communications and public relations consultant. For his contributions to public education and the preservation of Choctaw culture, Dr. Blanche received the Choctaw Nation Award of Honor.

Hispanic Resource Directory

By Alan Edward Schorr. Foreword by Roger Mahony, Archbishop of Los Angeles. 347 pages. ISBN 938737–15–5. Appendices. Indices. $37.50. Dec. 1988.

Remains the only comprehensive directory of resources about Hispanics. Detailed information on 951 local, regional and national groups, additional information on 1,300 Hispanic colleges, publishers, migrant health, bilingual education, etc., as well as extensive statistical data. Critically acclaimed in Hispanic and library press. *LJ* called it "a virtual *Encyclopedia of Associations* for . . . organizations serving the Spanish-speaking."

Survivors: Jewish Refugees in Birmingham, 1933–1945

By Joe Josephs. 217 pages. ISBN 1–869922–02–6. December, 1988. Index. $25.

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By Francois Lafitte. Preface to this new edition by the Author. 260 pages. Cloth. ISBN 1–870352–55–6. April, 1989. Index. $37.50

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