NSF funds Blacksburg Electronic Village study

By Susan Trulove

Researchers at Virginia Tech’s Center for Human-Computer Interaction have won a two-year, $458,165 grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to investigate the use and social impacts of the Blacksburg Electronic Village (BEV), one of the prominent American community networking projects of the 1990s.

The principal investigators for the project are John M. Carroll and Mary Beth Rosson. Carroll and Rosson’s “learning in a networked community” (LiNC) project has collaborated on several previous BEV projects, including the NSF-sponsored BEV includes faculty investigators from Stanford University, the University of Illinois, the Open University in the United Kingdom, Blacksburg Electronic Village, and Carnegie Mellon University, as well as Virginia Tech.

The project will employ several methods, including community surveys, detailed interviews, session logging, a participatory evaluation forum, and a variety of psychological scales. It will address key issues about communities and community networks such as who participates in community networks, what are the networks used for, how are local business activities and opportunities changed, and what does access to local government information, or to public decision-making change.

Other issues include the consequences for community life, and for community health and well-being, how participation in community life is greater or more diverse, do people feel safer in a community networking context than in the general Internet context, and whether the social capital of the Blacksburg community has increased as a consequence of the BEV.

Researchers on the project include Daniel HistoryBase, Nostalgia—a joint project with Sanjay Jacobs, who was such a successful employee. Jacob said, “The organization is well known and offered a chance to learn in class and to learn new skills and how U.S. business is conducted. “I also had the opportunity to work with people from different countries—Iran, England, and China, as well as the United States.”

For an undergraduate student, the co-op program adds one year of work in area of study between freshman and senior years. Graduate students may work one semester or up to a full year once they register for three hours of research. In either case, employment must be full time and the job must be related to the student’s field of study.

Graduate-student participation in the co-op program is coordinated by Don McKeon, director of ESL and GTA training, and immigration advisor in the Graduate School, since most of the graduate students taking jobs through the co-op program are international students.

Jacob, a graduate student in computer science who is from Bombay, is a good example of the demand for skilled students. He received his undergraduate degree in electrical engineering and worked for a year in information technology at Citi Corp in India before coming to Virginia Tech last fall. When he signed up for the co-op program with Career Services, he had a number of offers. After interviewing with several companies, he chose Merrill Lynch in New York City.

“I want to get into banking technology and Merrill Lynch offered an extension of what I had been doing previously,” Jacob said. “The organization is well known and offered a chance to enhance my skills in banking technology.” He developed financial software and did functional analysis of the huge company’s systems.

Like Vaghela, Jacob says the experience

Students discovering advantages of co-op experience

By Susan Trulove

Nishant Vaghela, a graduate student in industrial systems engineering, received his bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering and worked for two years in India before coming to Virginia Tech in the fall of 1999. Facing his first summer in the United States, he decided to find a job that would give him experience in a U.S. work environment, and in a big American city.

Working with Virginia Tech’s cooperative-education program, Vaghela went to work for Freddie Mac in McLean, in the Office of Human Resources at Penn State University.

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President’s Remarks

For the complete text of President Charles Steger’s remarks at Wednesday’s Fall Convocation, visit his home page at url http://www.unirel.vt.edu/president/index.html.

Tech sponsors capital-access forum

Lou Dobbs, former executive with CNN and CNNfn, will be the keynote speaker at a capital access forum hosted by Virginia Tech in October. “Virginia Technology Capital Access Forum” will be held October 19-20 at the Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center.

“The purpose of the forum is to provide an opportunity for high-technology companies to network, solicit investments, and acquire knowledge about accessing capital for their companies,” said John Phillips, economic-development officer at Virginia Tech. “Entrepreneurs will learn directly from some of Virginia’s leading professionals about the process and expectations for raising outside capital for their growing companies.”

The conference is geared toward technology entrepreneurs, venture-capital professionals, angel investors, investment bankers, and business-service providers.

The first day of the conference will be an entrepreneurs’ symposium consisting of three tracks. Track one, “Getting Started,” is designed to provide entrepreneurs in the seed stage of development and includes insight about how to transform their ideas into a business. Workshops cover topics on business organization, drafting a business plan, and locating the first round of capital.

Track two, “Establishing a Business,” provides entrepreneurs with the tools to take the next step in business development and covers issues such as intellectual property protection, business-development assistance, and obtaining the second round of capital. The third track, “Raising Private Capital,” is aimed at established business owners who are looking to increase their capital.

The first day’s events also include a kick-off address by Mark Warner, managing director of Alexandria-based Columbia Capital Corporation, the largest technology-focused venture capital fund in the mid-Atlantic region.

Susan Hardwicke, founder of eduTest.com, the first comprehensive online...
Events

Saturday, 23
University Open House, Surplus Auction, 9 a.m., Surplus Warehouse. YMCA Hike, 9 a.m., Lancaster House parking lot. Museum of Natural History Program, 11 a.m. 1-3001 to pre-register.

Sunday, 24
University Open House, Deaf Awareness Week Begins (Through 9-30).

Monday, 25
Deaf Awareness Week Activity, 6-8 p.m., Squires Black Cultural Center: 1-4499 for information.

Tuesday, 26
Family/Work/Life Resources Program, noon-1 p.m., DBHCC, Conference Room A. CEUT, 12:30-2 p.m., Hilcrest large conference room: 1-6995 for information. Deaf Awareness Week Activity, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Squires information booth: 1-4499 for information. Hispanic Heritage Program, 4 p.m., Squires Black Cultural Center: 1-3787/TDD 1-3718 for information. Engineering Expo, noon-5 p.m., Squires, Owens.

Wednesday, 27
VTU Lively Arts, 7:30 p.m., Burrus auditorium: Jekyll and Hyde. Engineering Expo, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Squires, Owens.

Thursday, 28
DBHCC Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., A Taste of China Buffet: 1-5632 for reservations. YMCA Slide Show, 453 Center: Henry Bauer. Deaf Awareness Week Activity, 6-8 p.m., Squires Black Cultural Center: 1-4499 for information. TA-UT Production, 8 p.m., Squires Studio Theatre: Sabbath Night in the Church of the Piranha.

Friday, 29

Saturday, 30
CommonHealth medical screenings in October

11 a.m. - 4 p.m., Squires Black Cultural Center: 1-4499 for information.

Medical screenings identify lifestyle-related health risks and consist of two parts: a confidential lifestyle questionnaire and a medical-screening appointment. Screening appointments will be offered in various locations on campus. To request a registration form, contact 1-7810. The cost is $5 per person, or $7 per household. The lifestyle questionnaire will be mailed to participants upon receipt of their registration forms.

Wood-Related event offered

The College of Natural Resources is hosting a one-day event to provide information about a range of wood-related topics on Wednesday, Oct. 1 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Activities include speakers, breakfast and lunch, and two local tours. Sample topics include Virginia’s non-timber forest products and wood-plastic composites in our daily lives. RSVP by Monday, 25.

Bulleted List

**ACTIVITIES**

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- Rosh Hashanah Begins, (Sundown).
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HISPANIC

Continued from 2

The featured event during the month-long celebration, which began September 15 and ends October 15, will be the keynote address by Pablo Davis, UVA’s first Hispanic student affairs dean. Davis, who has taught the history and culture of Latin America and comparative history of the Americas at several colleges and universities, will speak on “Not on the Margins: Latino/Hispanic Culture as World Civilization” on October 10 at 7:30 p.m. in Squires Hamrey Theatre.

An informal discussion will precede the presentation at 4 p.m. in the Black Cultural Center, 126 Squires. A reception will follow the presentation at 8:30 p.m. in the Black Cultural Center. The address and name of the director, which is free and open to the public, are sponsored by the Hispanic Heritage Month Steering Committee.

For additional information, call 1-3787.

Events during Hispanic Heritage Month include the following, which are free except where noted.

September 26: Ray Plaza, residence director, and the Virginia Tech Lambda Chi Pi Chapter of Sigma Delta Pi, National Hispanic Society, will co-host a discussion about the book Like Water for Chocolate, written by Laura Esquivel.

The 4 p.m. discussion will be held in the Black Cultural Center. For additional information, call the Dean of Students Office, which sponsors the event, at 1-3787/TDD 1-8718.

October 9: Soup and Substance will feature “The Second Wave: Hispanic Immigration—Where Are We Headed? Your Casa Is Not My Casa!”

October 10: Dietrick Dining Center will feature authentic cuisine in Coppocana Night Dining and Dining from 4:30-7 p.m. The meal is hosted and sponsored by Residential and Dining Programs. For more information, call Ray Plaza at 1-3787.

Hispanic Heritage Month was initiated by the United States Congress as Hispanic Heritage Week in 1968 and expanded to a month in 1989. It was designed to encourage a wider appreciation of Hispanic culture among all United States citizens.

Members of the steering committee for the month-long celebration at Virginia Tech include Edwin L. Lamy, chair; Michael Vignoli, student co-chair; Ray Plaza; Alicia Cohen; Peter McCourt; Iris Andino, and Kimberly Philpott. Student Affairs grants have provided funding support.

For the latest updates, call the Dean of Students Office at 1-3787/TDD 1-8718.

GREENWAYS

Continued from 2

Recreation, Virginia Department of Forestry, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), the College of Natural Resources at Virginia Tech, and the Virginia Tech Division of Continuing Education are sponsoring the event.

Conference speakers will include nationally recognized greenway experts, Dave Crockett, director of the Appalachian Institute for Sustainability, and Mark Fenton, editor-at-large of Walking magazine; Randall Arndt, director of Natural Lands Trust; and Peter Labor, director of North Carolina Greenways.

The conference will highlight the importance of greenways and how to create them. A greenway is “an on-ground connector linking greenways, parks, nature reserves, cultural feature, or historic sites with other entities and with peripheral areas,” according to Charles E. Little in “Greenways for America.”

Greenways help to preserve the biological diversity of plant and animal species and other natural resources by providing a buffer between the developed environment and the natural landscape.

The conference is open to the public. For more information and on-line registration go to http://www.vt.edu/greenways.htm, or call 1-3237.
Sumner named head of food science and technology; Vinson leaving dairy science

By Stewart MacInnis

Susan Sumner, a faculty member in the Department of Food Science and Technology for four years, has been named head of that department.

Andy Swiger, dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS), announced the appointment September 15 following a national search for a new department head. The post has been vacant since July 1, when Cameron Hackney left the position to become dean of agriculture at West Virginia University.

“Dr. Sumner has impressed both the faculty and people in the food-processing industry across the state with her knowledge and ability,” Swiger said. “She has been an extremely productive faculty member, and she has the leadership skills and vision to carry the department forward on many fronts over the next few years.”

Sumner has a program of research, Extension, and teaching in food microbiology. Since joining the Virginia Tech faculty she has conducted research into edible films as microbial barriers and the decontamination of pathogenic microorganisms on fresh produce and poultry. Her Extension efforts have focused on food-safety education for the food industry. She has been the Extension project leader for the department for the last three years.

Sumner earned her bachelor’s degree from North Carolina State University, another master’s and doctoral degrees from the University of Wisconsin. Before coming to Virginia Tech, she worked for the National Food Processors’ Association and was a faculty member at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln.

Merle Pierson, professor of food science and technology, has been acting head of the department since Hackney stepped down. Sumner’s appointment takes effect October 1. In other CALS news, W.E. Vinson, head of the Dairy Science Department, has announced that he will step down from that position November 1 to take up duties as associate dean for research at the College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Consumer Sciences at West Virginia University. Vinson was appointed department head in 1986, and was subsequently appointed to the position permanently. He joined the faculty at Virginia Tech in 1971.

“Dr. Vinson has made many important contributions to our dairy science program,” Swiger said. “He certainly will provide important attributes as the research leader for the programs at West Virginia University.”

Charles Stallings, a dairy science professor, will succeed Vinson as acting department head while a national search is conducted for a permanent replacement.

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MENTORING

Continued from 1

The mentoring program picked-up its 2000-01 initiatives with a luncheon on August 9. That event targeted those mentors identified by membership in the Office Managers Development Group (OMDG), attendees of the June 13 Mentoring Evaluation Program, and prospective mentors, yielding 12 mentees and 21 mentors. Any additional classified employees interested in joining the program or a mentor or mentee should contact Robin Atkins at atkinsw@vt.edu or 1-8280 today.

In addition to Casey’s talk, this year’s conference includes morning and afternoon workshops in a variety of genres with workshop leaders Diane Dawson Hearn, Laurie Kutchins, Simone Pontier-Bures, Hope Miller, and board members Katherine Neville and Don Sceaste.

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Hearn, from Blacksburg, has been writing stories and creating pictures for them ever since her childhood in Montclair, N.J. Her books include Dad’s Dinosaur Day, Bad Luck Boswell, and Anna in the Garden. She will lead workshop sessions on writing and illustrating children’s books.

The conference begins at 9:30 a.m. with a welcome by this year’s president, Ann Goette, and is followed by a panel discussion led by the workshop speakers on “How I got my first book published.”

Registration costs $60 ($30 for full-time students) and includes morning refreshments, lunch, and attendance at all sessions.

Persons interested in attending can register on line at http://www.conted.vt.edu/vtcap.htm or call the conference registrar at 1-5182. For more information, call Beverly Turner at 1-2188.

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WRITERS

Continued from 2

A MacArthur Grant in 1992. His most recent novel is The Half Life of Happiness. He resides in Charlottesville, where he is professor of English literature at the University of Virginia. Casey will lead writing workshops for fiction.

Eric Mendelsohn also will be in the audience with the Falco family. Mendelsohn’s short film Through an Open Window won universal acclaim at various international film festivals, including the Gold Hugo prize for Best Dramatic Short at the 1992 Chicago International Film Festival and the 1992 Cine Golden Eagle. The Virginia Tech Department of Theatre Arts will produce Ed Falco’s play September 28-30 and October 3-7 at 8 p.m., and October 1 at 2 p.m. David Johnson will direct, with Susan Rinehart of the Theatre Arts Department in the lead. Edie Falco and Mendelsohn will conduct a forum for Greater Arts Department Friday, Sept. 29, at 3:30 in the Studio Theater.

For information about Falco’s play or the forum for the theater arts department, call the Theatre Arts Management Office at 1-7623. For information about the reception, call the Donaldson Brown Hotel and Conference Center at 1-6795.