

## Is big brother watching?

The truth about Internet privacy in the workplace

by Stephanie Ernst

**D**id you know that 63 percent of major U.S. companies monitor their employees' Internet connections?

This is according to the New York City-based American Management Association, which recently surveyed 1,627 large and mid-sized U.S. firms on their monitoring and surveillance practices.

Privacy in the workplace has certainly decreased in recent years as organizations have grown more and more dependent on the Web and networked computing resources to get their jobs done. This dependency is one of the reasons why the Management Council approved the IEEE Electronic Information Systems Security Policy in May.

All staff were asked to read the policy, which plainly states that the "IEEE reserves the right to limit personal privacy rights in the use of these resources." Further, "IEEE monitors and logs all Internet accesses by individuals and reserves the right to access and report on this information."

So, is big brother really watching at the IEEE?

"The IEEE reserves the right to monitor," says Rob Jones, IT. "Does this mean that we actively go out and monitor individual Internet use? No."

What it does mean is that the IEEE monitors gross levels of staff Internet activity. And, if Internet usage is substantially higher than normal within a particular department for several days, it may be worth looking into and asking why.

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## Benefits at work: Flex benefits arrive at the IEEE

by Stephanie Ernst

**B**efore the end of the year, eligible IEEE staff will be able to tailor their IEEE benefits more closely to their specific needs thanks to the new IEEE Flexible Benefit Plan.

### How it works

Flexible benefits work on a credit system, allowing staff to decide which options and how much coverage to purchase, based on each individual's needs. Eligible employees will receive flexible benefit credits determined by their marital and dependent status.

The IEEE Flexible Benefit Plan will enable employees to maintain their current level of medical and dental coverage, or elect a different level and purchase additional benefits.

Employees who choose to change the status of their benefits coverage, or qualify to waive coverage altogether, will be able to apply the cash value of the remaining credits toward the purchase of other benefit options. (Staff may not opt to waive their IEEE medical coverage unless they are covered under another employer-sponsored group medical plan.)

These new benefit options include:

#### ■ Additional Life Insurance Coverage

Staff may purchase additional life insurance coverage worth one, two or three times their annual base salary.

#### ■ Group Legal Service Plan

This new benefit will provide staff with quick access to legal assistance on adoption, child custody, child support, debt collection, real estate matters, wills and trusts, and other services.

#### ■ Dependent Life Insurance

Employees may purchase dependent life insurance coverage for their spouse in bands of US\$10,000, up to a maximum of US\$100,000. Coverage for eligible dependent children is available up to US\$5,000 per child.

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## Benefits at work continued from page 1

### ■ Long Term Disability (LTD) Taxability of Benefits Option

This option allows any benefit under the LTD plan to be designated taxable or non-taxable.

### ■ Extended Vision

An annual eye exam is provided for all full- and part-time employees and their eligible dependents. Coverage for eyewear may be purchased for staff and their covered dependents.

In addition, the cash allowance of the flexible benefit credits also can be

- applied to IEEE Flexible Spending Accounts for reimbursement of health care, dependent care, mass transit and parking expenses; or
- received by staff as taxable income in their biweekly paychecks.

### Why it works

Flexible benefit plans are becoming more common with many large and mid-size U.S.-based employers now offering them. ◆

"This program will make it possible for the IEEE to attract and retain qualified employees while remaining competitive with other companies," says Victor Siuzdak, Benefits.

"Our goal is to offer employees choice," he adds. "We feel this program is an important step toward accomplishing that goal."

The IEEE Flexible Benefit Plan goes into effect on 1 Jan. Within the next few months, meetings will be held to provide staff with further details, as well as enrollment kits. Staff should watch *Circuit Board* for additional information. ◆

## Big Brother

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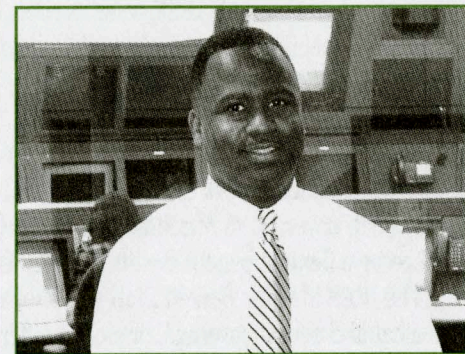
After all, there's only so much Internet capacity available to go around.

"We're responsible for providing quality service to all visitors of our Web site," Rob says. "This includes members and customers, as well as staff who need the Internet to do their jobs."

Since maintaining this level of service is important, the IEEE is going to increase its current amount of Web capacity. Nonetheless, sensible use must remain a priority.

"When people start using the Internet in ways that aren't business-related, a lot becomes a little — really fast," Rob explains.

Take, for example, audio and video Internet connections. These connections slow access to servers, IEEE Web pages and other Internet services, such as email. A single connection to a radio station can consume a



Rob Jones, IT, was a key player in instituting the IEEE Electronic Information Systems Security Policy. He is seen here in front of the new Operations Center data center.

considerable amount of the available bandwidth for all IEEE electronic services.

The new policy does not prohibit personal use of the Internet, but says it should be limited and "must never impact the normal traffic flow of business-related Internet traffic."

If personal Internet use does begin to

interfere with IEEE business, the activity can be traced back to a particular machine and to the staff member using it. The individual will then be told that what they are doing is impacting business use, according to Rob. And, he says, in most cases, the situation usually rectifies itself from there.

"We're not saying that these resources can't be used. But, if they're being misused, it's going to impact people," Rob says.

"Periodic checks help us ensure that our resources are being used appropriately."

The IEEE plans to offer workshops in the coming months to increase staff awareness of the new policy and various security issues. "We have no intention of being secretive about this. We're not big brother," Rob says. "It's simply our responsibility to make sure that the resources we manage are used according to the best interests of the business of the IEEE." ◆

## The IEEE Job Site: the "new" kid on the block

by Sharon Richardson

In June, the vast market of online employment services — populated by Monster.com, Headhunter.com, Dice.com and Fedworld.com — faced a new competitor: the IEEE Job Site, sponsored by *IEEE Spectrum* and IEEE-USA.

The IEEE Job Site? Something new at the IEEE? Well, it may be surprising to note that the IEEE isn't new to the online employment service market. In fact, IEEE-USA's Job Listing Service was developed in the early 1990s and quickly took off as a small business that continued to soar.

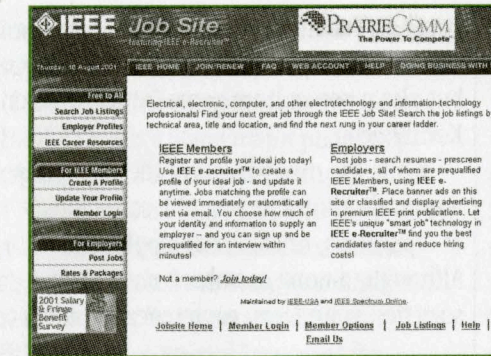
By 2000, IEEE-USA thought it was time to rethink its strategy for handling its heavy volume of clients, staying competitive and offering the same quality service. It was decided that a leading technology partner was needed.

Meanwhile, *IEEE Spectrum* was looking to conduct a revamp of its own. Since 1996, *IEEE Spectrum* Online had a profitable classified and recruitment advertisement program running on its pages. But it realized that the online job market had matured and it needed to keep up. In particular, its job listings needed a fully searchable and interactive database.

Publications staff members Tony Durniak, Scott MacFarland, Jim Vick, Mike Buryk and Steven Cherry began meeting with IEEE-USA's Chris Currie and Scott Grayson. Chris and Scott were already in negotiations with Hire.com, an application service provider that markets a job board technology solution called e-Recruiter.™

Since both groups felt that participating in an IEEE-wide online recruitment service would allow them to reach the widest audience of potential employers and offer the largest candidate pool, they decided that teaming up made the most sense.

"The Job Site was developed in an effort to give employers one



central location to match jobs with IEEE members," Chris says.

IEEE e-Recruiter enables job seekers worldwide to access the site and search its job posting database using various criteria, such as education, expertise, location, salary, experience, job type and the amount of travel required.

"While adjusting to the Hire.com software was a significant effort, it

offered unique capabilities that would allow the Job Site to not only catch up to its competition, but exceed it," Mike says.

The service is free to all job seekers, but the job matching, resume posting and pre-qualification functions are reserved for IEEE members only. Unlike most job boards, which just post positions for candidates to search, IEEE's site allows members to create and submit a personal profile describing the characteristics they'd like in a new job. The service then scours its extensive database for matching positions.

When a match is found, the job seeker is immediately notified via email and may be sent a pre-qualification test. The candidate will then know minutes later whether he or she has the opportunity for a personal interview, without providing a resume or even a name. One unique feature of the site is the high degree of control it gives to job seekers, even allowing them to remain anonymous, if desired.

Further, the site will continue searching as new jobs are posted and will alert the seeker for as long as he or she prefers.

Staff from Customer Service, IT, Member Services, Corporate Communications and Sales & Marketing all worked diligently with *IEEE Spectrum* and IEEE-USA to prepare for the site's initial launch. Today, staff from many of these areas continue working together to keep things running smoothly — and with great success. The site already has close to 800 employers on board and about 4,000 registered members.

So check out the "new" kid on the block. Visit the IEEE Job Site at <http://www.ieee.org/jobs>. ◆

## Oops!

by Stephanie Ernst

Have you ever accidentally typed ".com" at the end of a URL, when the correct Web address ends with ".gov" or ".org"? And, instead of receiving a message indicating that the page cannot be found, watched helplessly as an endless stream of offensive material covered your monitor?

In the workplace, incidents like this can certainly cause embarrassment — especially if a co-worker, or your boss, were to walk by at that very moment. But, even if nobody was there to see it happen, one thought would inevitably creep into your mind: does anyone know I did that?

The good news is that IEEE staff need not panic over the occasional Web error. Although the IEEE reserves the right to monitor Internet connections (see full

story on page 1), only usage levels are normally observed, unless a sufficient reason prompts further investigation. In other words, sirens will not immediately sound in the event of an unfortunate mistake.

"It has to be what's viewed as a sustained behavior before we'd look into it," says Rob Jones, IT. "Stumbling across something on the Internet means that you maybe stayed on the site for a minute — not hours." ◆

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## Oops!

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Some staff also have fallen victim to unsolicited email messages, containing anything from special online credit card offers to pornographic material. These messages usually come in droves and can be rather difficult to stop.

The IEEE is well aware of this problem. And, although it's tempting to open

the messages and look for instructions on how to unsubscribe, Rob suggests simply deleting them and moving on.

"Responding often validates your email address as live," he explains. "The sender then retains the address for use from another originating location, or email domain."

The IEEE actively blocks email from known spam locations, but this offers staff limited protection, according to

Rob. "We are careful not to simply add a domain to the list of blocked domains, because there may be legitimate email from the domain that is destined for IEEE recipients," he says.

According to Rob, the IEEE will be moving toward technology that does more screening for unsolicited email messages. Efforts will be made to make staff aware of these activities as they happen. ◆

## Six degrees of the IEEE

by Stephanie Ernst

The phrase “six degrees of separation” refers to the theory that every person is separated from every other person by only six people or less. As confusing as that may sound, it also probably sounds

familiar. The idea spawned not only a play and movie adaptation with the same title, but also a pop-culture game involving actor Kevin Bacon.

While the many facets of the IEEE may appear disjointed at first, the same theory of separation, or closeness, applies. Although, among members, customers, societies, volunteers, conferences, publica-

tions and numerous acronyms, it's sometimes hard to recognize.

Yet, it's the teamwork that occurs across departmental lines and throughout the organization that enables the IEEE to function as a whole. There are some departments that we all work with in one way or another. Through them, we can trace how we inevitably all work together. For example:

- The **IEEE Communications Society** works with the **Asia Pacific Operations Center**, while the **IEEE Computer Society** works with the **European Operations Center**, to serve their local members.
- Both the **Asia Pacific & European Operations Centers** hold regular teleconference meetings with **Regional Activities** to update one another on recent developments.
- The **Membership** team in **Regional Activities** processes new member and affiliate applications and grade elevations, responds to member requests about reinstating lapsed memberships and interacts with new **members**.
- **Members**, as well as volunteers, submit contracts for conference arrangements that exceed US\$25,000 to **In-House Investing & Procurement**.
- Under **In-House Investing & Procurement** is the **Procurement** office.
- **Procurement** works with **you**. The department is responsible for ordering your PC, software, furniture and equipment, and provides direction on where to order the office supplies you use.

- **Sales & Marketing** handles the promotion of **IEEE Xplore™**.
- **IEEE Xplore** users send their inquiries to **Customer Service**.
- **Customer Service** works with the **Research** team within Corporate Strategy and Communications to administer the annual Customer Satisfaction Survey.
- **Research** works with **you**. Research reviews any survey produced by staff and plays an active role in the analysis of the Member, Volunteer, Customer and Staff Satisfaction surveys, the results of which comprise part of your annual Success Sharing check.

- **Standards** clarifies the specifics of IEEE Standards for **Publications** before the information is printed in various articles in IEEE magazines or journals.
- **Publications** handles the production of **IEEE Spectrum**.
- **IEEE Spectrum** maintains **IEEE Spectrum Online** which receives weekly updates for its “This Week in Electrical History” section from the **IEEE History Center**.
- The **History Center** supplies a regular column to **IEEE-USA's Today's Engineer** Webzine.
- **IEEE-USA** collaborates with the **Corporate Communications** office on answering media inquiries.
- **Corporate Communications** works with **you** by disseminating employee news via *Circuit Board* and *Network News*, overseeing the external IEEE Web site, maintaining the homepage of the staff Web, and advising and consulting on constituent communications and IEEE Master Brand issues.

- The **IEEE Foundation** is supported by the **Development Office**.
- The **Development Office** assists **Awards** staff in obtaining sponsors for the annual awards program.
- **Awards** works closely with **Meeting Planning Services** on the annual Honors ceremony.
- **Meeting Planning Services** helps many IEEE **members** coordinate their organizational unit meetings.
- Many IEEE **members** renew their IEEE memberships online via the Web renewal, maintained by **IT**.
- **IT** works with **you** by operating the Help Desk, installing and upgrading company software and Web applications, fixing various network glitches and keeping IEEE information systems and business resources running smoothly.

While these are just a few examples, the possibilities are endless. Although at times it may seem that there is a wide separation among departments and tasks, we are all not that far apart on this IEEE team. . . and probably closer than we think. ♦

## Setting the standard

by Lynn Murison

The first time I walked into a store and saw ‘IEEE’ on a product tag, I got so excited,” says Jodi Haasz, Standards Activities. But why is the IEEE name on computer printer cables and networking wires, or associated with wireless phones, computer microprocessors, and overhead and underground power lines, when the organization doesn't manufacture them?

The IEEE name assures the public that the item they're using meets specific requirements — or standards. A standard is a technical document that represents a consensus of opinion on best engineering practices in a given field. Standards ensure that materials, products, methods and services meet their purpose and consistently perform according to their intended use. They establish specifications for compatibility and function as a technical common denominator.

In other words, you can use your hair dryer in Tampa, Fla., the same way you would in Laramie, Wyo., because the plug on the hair dryer and the socket in the wall were both built according to the same standard.

Standards are primarily industry driven, since they can reduce production costs and satisfy universal needs. They are developed for various items that span numerous

industries. For instance, IEEE 802.11 is a standard for wireless local area networks (LANs) that link computer systems. And IEEE P1363 is a standard for public key cryptography for computer security.

Yet, it isn't all high-tech and gloss. When asked about the most unusual standard she'd ever worked on, Mary Lynne Nielsen, Standards, replied without hesitation. “The IEEE Guide for Animal Deterrents for Electric Power Supply Substations,” she said. This created protection for small power substations from animals that would slip inside and cause power failures.

### More than standard support

Some organizations, such as Microsoft Corp., define and establish their own standards. The IEEE operates differently by conducting an open standards process; there are no closed-door sessions or secret ballots. And the IEEE Standards department has 47 staff members who support both the efforts of more than 400 standards development groups, called working groups, and the business operation of the IEEE standards program.

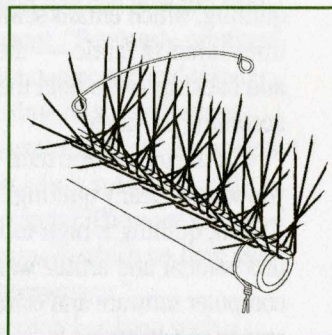
They support working group members at every stage of standards development; assist with the submission of new projects; remain alert to possible conflicts of interest among the working group participants; and make sure the balloting groups — which vote for

or against a particular standard — are balanced between the needs of end users, industry and the general public.

At other times, they attend working group meetings, give presentations on the standards development process and relating procedures, and provide personal guidance and training to working group participants. Some staffers are dedicated to editorial development and publishing services. Others support the governing bodies of the IEEE Standards Association (IEEE-SA). And others offer unique support to very specific standards-related programs and services.

Working for the public good in such a richly varied, intellectually satisfying and sometimes quirky environment has kept more than a quarter of the staff with the department for over 10 years.

“It's very satisfying to start on a project and then see it through until it's published,” says Trish Gerdon, Standards Activities. ♦



One IEEE standard mentions this device, which safely repels animals that can slip inside power substations and cause power failures.

## Quilting — a high-tech craft?

by Laura Durrett

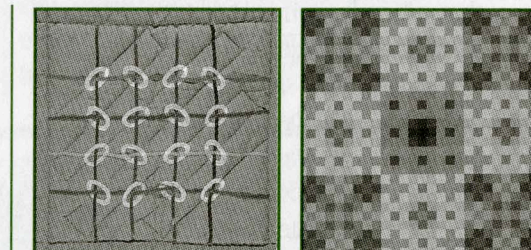
Although creativity in engineering takes many different forms, quilting isn't one that normally comes to mind. Nonetheless, *IEEE Spectrum* receives an average of 50 entries each year from around the world for its Quilt Block Contest.

If you're asking yourself why *IEEE Spectrum*, the IEEE's flagship publication that explores trends in engineering and new technologies, sponsors a Quilt Block Contest, you're probably not alone. But quilting, at its most basic level, relies heavily on something near and dear to engineers: math.

In fact, many math teachers use quilting to teach students geometry, dimension, symmetry, perspective and problem solving. Mathematical equations are integral to many facets of quilt design, even in determining how much fabric must be used.

“The design process, with or without the aid of a computer, is what seems to interest most engineers, and math is certainly a part of it,” says Nancy Hantman, *IEEE Spectrum*. “Other engineers enjoy the contrast of a high-touch craft with a high-tech profession.”

The contest does not require entrants to be engineers or IEEE members. Nor does it call for actual quilting.



Left: Judy Newman won second place in the Electron Devices Category in 1998 for her design “Core Memory.” The design now hangs in the IEEE Spectrum office in New York City.

Right: “Interior” by IEEE Member Lawrence J. Thaden received special recognition in the Electron Devices category in 1999. It currently hangs in the IEEE Spectrum office in New York City.

A quilt is usually composed of multiple blocks, each of which may mirror the same

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design, or pattern. Contestants are charged with submitting an original block design that reflects a specific theme in engineering. Past themes have included electric vehicles, electron devices and high-definition television. This year, the themes are communications, computers, devices and history.

The designs can be sent electronically or on paper, in lieu of a sewn fabric block. But, several entrants have done actual quilting, which entails sewing through three layers of fabric — the top, batting, and backing — to hold them together, according to Nancy.

"In the past, if you didn't do it by hand, you weren't really quilting," she adds. "Today, quilting is high-tech with beautiful, professional and artistic work created with computer software and computerized sewing machines."

Nancy, a dedicated quilter in her spare time, originally suggested the first contest back in 1996. This marks *IEEE Spectrum's* fifth competition.

Nancy takes an active role as the contest organizer, handling all announcements, publicity and entry receipts. She also sets up the judging panel, notifies the winners and writes a follow-up article for *IEEE Spectrum* about the contest results.

In addition, Nancy has taken many of the previously submitted designs and turned them into actual quilts. They've been displayed at quilting shows hosted by her guild and at the *IEEE Spectrum* office in New York City, where framed design blocks from the 1999 contest also hang.

This year's contest winners will be announced in the December issue of *IEEE Spectrum*. Prizes include fabric, for those winners who submit fabric blocks, and quilting computer software, for those who submit paper designs.

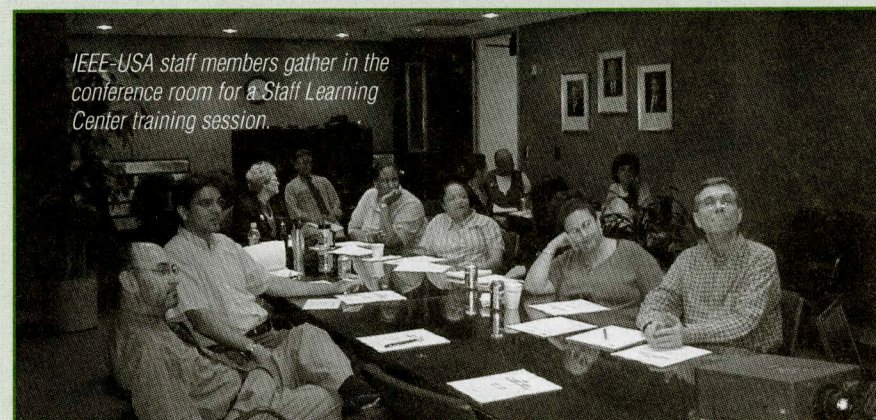
For more information on the *IEEE Spectrum* Quilt Block Contest, visit <http://sphinx4.ieee.org/quilts/index.html>. ♦

## A closer look at IEEE-USA

For those staff members who haven't had the opportunity to visit the IEEE-USA office in Washington, D.C., here's a glimpse of where your colleagues work each day. ♦



IEEE-USA staffers occupy space on the 12th floor of this building, located at 1828 L Street NW.



IEEE-USA staff members gather in the conference room for a Staff Learning Center training session.

## You must have been a beautiful baby!

Who did this cuddly tot grow up to be? (Clue: This New York employee perfected her interviewing skills early on.)

Email your answer to Stephanie Ernst at [s.ernst@ieee.org](mailto:s.ernst@ieee.org). But do it fast! All correct entries **received within one week of this issue's distribution** will be placed in a drawing; one winner will be selected. Prior contest winners are ineligible. The employee's identity and the winner will be announced in *Circuit Board*. Good luck! ♦



## Automated job scheduling saves time and money

by Debra Schiff

Earlier this year, IT staff found a way to save the IEEE over US\$118,000 in costs, reduce system downtime and increase productivity. How? By implementing a software application by AppWorx Corp. to help expedite the nightly processing routine.

### The problem

Each night, IT data center operators are responsible for processing more than 80 jobs on the Oracle database, such as new member applications, renewal applications, change-of-contact information, add services and others. Previously, the majority of these jobs had to be submitted by hand and few were able to run simultaneously.

Constant operator supervision was required and delays frequently impinged upon morning operations. This was partly because Oracle's built-in job scheduler isn't designed to account for interdependencies among the applications. Simply put, if one job in a series fails, the rest of the jobs are stopped, significantly delaying the process.

"One of our most important duties is determining that all the prerequisite jobs have completed successfully before running the next job," says Data Center Operator Joseph Hale.

For example, in the case of the termination program, which deletes memberships that haven't been renewed, the latest mem-

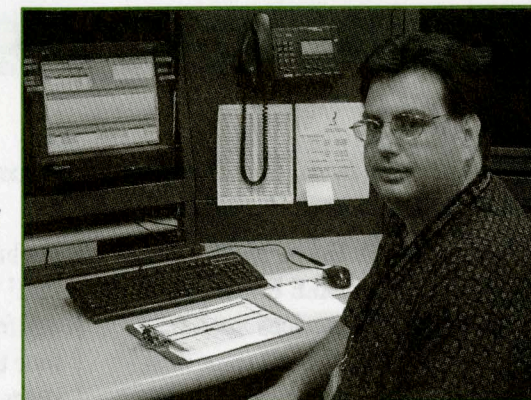
bership renewals must be updated before the program is run. If a job failed, and the operator didn't notice and ran the next one, the data records were often corrupted. Consequently, the operator had to call a programmer to fix the problem.

The IEEE lost up to three minutes per job while operators made these checks. As a result of these delays, staff members were faced with scheduling decisions, such as which job to sacrifice in order to finish on time.

The operators also are responsible for manually printing, sorting and delivering a substantial number of reports to nearly 30 staff members throughout the IEEE. This was time consuming as the operator had to remain at his or her work station and manually run each job. If the operator happened to be at the copier when a job finished, the next one would not start running until he or she returned. This caused additional delays.

### The solution

IT staff implemented the AppWorx Enterprise Job Scheduler to address these challenges. The AppWorx program can automatically run almost every processing job while tracking dependencies. The dependency control means that when a job fails to run, the problem doesn't go any further. Rather than starting any jobs that are dependent on the first program, the AppWorx scheduler immediately fires off a message to the operator to fix the problem.



Data Center Operator Joseph Hale demonstrates the AppWorx scheduler on his PC.

Joseph says certain jobs can now run without an operator present. "Previously, printing and delivering statistics reports could take up to a week from the time we start refreshing databases," Joseph explains. "Now, the process of running statistics jobs is automatic, with an overnight turn-around. There are several other large job streams in which we have seen similar levels of improvement."

The implementation has been such a success for the IEEE that IT plans to expand its use of automated scheduling by adding jobs that run monthly, quarterly and yearly.

"Automating the scheduling process has provided substantial time and cost savings," Joseph says. "The night operators spend far less time monitoring jobs, and the scheduler automatically emails the proper reports to the designated person. The result is that the night operator can devote substantially more time to other tasks, and there is much less opportunity for operator error." ♦

## IEEE Enabling Culture Principles

- ★ Member Number 1 & Customer Focus
- ★ Respect for the Employee and Volunteer
- ★ Teamwork
- ★ Lead by Example
- ★ Participatory Management
- ★ Accountability & Our Word is Our Bond
- ★ Innovation & Continuous Improvement
- ★ Open Honest Communication and Feedback

## Write in & win!



List three examples of how three different IEEE Enabling Culture Principles were demonstrated by staff in this issue of *Network News* and you could win a special prize!

Email your answer to Stephanie Ernst at [s.ernst@ieee.org](mailto:s.ernst@ieee.org). But do it fast! Only correct entries **received within one week of this issue's distribution** will be placed in a drawing. Five winners will be selected; their names will be announced in *Circuit Board*. Good luck!

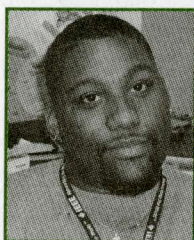
## Packing it in

*Different jobs in different departments call for different workloads and different schedules. How do you decide when to call it a day?*



**Gregg Mariconda,**  
**IEEE Electron**  
**Devices Society:**

"When I come in at 7:30 a.m., I do my best to leave as close to 4 p.m. as possible. I try to take care of my most important responsibilities as soon as I arrive. If I have 15 - 30 minutes before quitting time, I will take care of my less time-consuming tasks. There will always be times when staying late is necessary, but good time management is key to keeping that to a minimum. Typically, if you give yourself ample time to work on a job — provided you can afford it — you won't need the extra time at the end of the day to complete it."



**Jason Marsh,**  
**Member & Customer**  
**Service:**

"Well, it depends on how busy our department is. During our 'normal' season, I usually pack it in after eight hours. I say normal, because our busy season is from September to April. In Membership Renewal, we usually work overtime during these months so we don't get too far behind. Our goal is to process work within three days of receiving it. So, during

the busy season I usually don't pack it in until 7 p.m., which makes it a 12-hour day for me. Sometimes I will also work four to five hours on Saturdays. Of course, this is my own personal preference, not only for the overtime, but because I enjoy the work that I do. We try to work as a team to reach our goals — which can be very challenging from September to April!"



**Timothy Sotomayor,**  
**Human Resources:**

"I call it a day when I feel that I have done everything I set out to do, regarding my projects and daily duties. If I feel that I'm at a good starting point for the next workday, I feel satisfied that I can leave. If I'm still not done with what I set out to do, I stay until I am."



**Kathy Worthman,**  
**IEEE Communi-**  
**cations Society:**

"This is easy. I have two-year-old twins who, when I'm working, are looked after by family members. Once my set quitting time hits, I start closing down for two reasons. First, I can't wait to see my boys! Second, I don't

want to take advantage of my family members by getting home late. Also, I'm involved in a softball league and must leave on time if I want to pick up my boys and make it to the field on time." ♦

## NetworkNews

EDITOR  
**Stephanie Ernst**

REVIEW BOARD  
**Sonny Barber**  
**Don Curtis**  
**Marsha Longshore**  
**Vic Siuzdak**

LAYOUT  
**Jackie Parker**

STAFF CONTRIBUTORS

TO THIS ISSUE:  
**Laura Durrett**  
**Gregg Mariconda**  
**Jason Marsh**  
**Lynn Murison**  
**Sharon Richardson**  
**Debra Schiff**  
**Timothy Sotomayor**  
**Kathy Worthman**

*Network News* is published quarterly for IEEE employees, their families and friends. Comments, questions or story suggestions may be sent to Stephanie Ernst at [s.ernst@ieee.org](mailto:s.ernst@ieee.org) or P.O. Box 1331, Piscataway, NJ 08855-1331.

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