

PROJECT: The SciTech BBS/ISP

In 1993 a group of faculty and staff recognized a need for student access and experience on the contemporary electronic technology that was available in the workplace. Multi-platform products were examined through a cooperative venture with software vendors. The evaluations, including trials student testing and faculty development, culminated in a NECC 94 paper on the integration of BBS's in a college curriculum. Consequently, the BBS platform, based on Galacticomm's software, was initiated to address the needs of both faculty and students in the Environmental Technology program at Mount Royal College.

With the assistance of the then Dean of Science and Technology, Dr. Gordon Williams, the BBS services were made available to everyone in the faculty of Science and Technology to determine the ultimate expansion capability of the system. This resulted in the initiation of SciTech BBS in September of 1994, with file transfer, teleconferencing, and e-mail over a telephone based network. As additional needs evolved, the SciTech BBS was expanded to its current Worldgroup configuration in response to requests from faculty and students. Table 1 identifies the configuration and date the components were added to the SciTech system. In its current configuration, it is a fully operational web BBS / ISP, which has dialup, LAN, and Internet connections.

The SciTech ISP has a user group exceeding 800 while handling over 43,000 dial-ups since its inception. The Worldgroup technology utilizes an Intel 486 microcomputer with modem/lan/internet hardware connections while functioning reliably 24 hours a day all year, save for auto-cleanups and housekeeping. The SciTech ISP is run out of Labstores, of the Faculty of Science and Technology, and is built into the activities of staff without requiring additional support.

In addition the Worldgroup software has been a development platform for distance learning in Post Basic Mental Health program of the Faculty Nursing, and the Faculty of Economics and Political Science. Students have used the SCITECH ISP locally and as far away as Malaysia.

Table 1: Overview of Activation Dates for Services and Courseware (converted spreadsheet)

SciTech ISP			Courses made available to students in Mount Royal College:									DEVELOPERS		
SOFTWARE VENDOR / SERVER	SERVICES	DATE ONLINE	NTSC1112 / ENVI1110 / ENVI1240	ENVI 1214	ENVI1223 / ENVI1236	BIOL1219 / BIOL 1210	BIOL 1214	CHEM 2209 / CHEM 3350	CHEM 2210 / CHEM 2211	GEOL 2209 / GEOL 3391	NURSE PBMH	ECON POLI	SCI	
Digital Dynamics / Synchronet Multimode BBS	(*1 = dial-up, E-Mail, Files, Forums, Teleconference, ANSI, security, accounting)	Sep-93	█											
Galacticomm / Major BBS	(*2 = *1 + registry, languages, RIP)	Jan-94		█										
	NOVELL LAN	Oct-94												
	18 user Node Addon													
	Mountain Mail, CD-ROM LAN													
	Internet - FTP, Telnet, WWW													
	Flowershop													
	Keyrack, Headline News, Gate Keeper, Auto Validator, Chatter Box													
	Dual 14.4kbps data dial-up													
	LXRTEST, interactive testing	Apr-95												
	Spanish Language	May-95												
Galacticomm / Worldgroup 1	(*3 = *2 + Client / Server)													
	Fax Online	Jul-95												
	Worldgroup Statistics	Aug-95												
	Worldgroup Companion													
	Community Calendar													
	Doorway Programs	Jan-96												
Galacticomm / Worldgroup 2	(*4 = *3 + IRC, Web Plug-in)	Feb-96												
	Omni-Mail													
	Multimedia Teleconference													
Galacticomm / Worldgroup 3	(*5 = *4 + enhanced messaging & ActiveX control)	Apr-96												
	Macintosh Client	Dec-96												
	Weblines (Active HTML)	Jan-97												
	Webmagic (multi-homepage)	Feb-97												
	Mountain Mail Client/Server (listserv, infoserv, distribution)	Apr-97												