

## Internet education crucial to students

Student access to the information superhighway will take a step forward this summer when the University switches from Gopher, a text-based information system, to the World Wide Web, a graphical interface with futuristic sound and multimedia capabilities.

The University will convert its Gopher servers to the World Wide Web technology Aug. 31.

It's encouraging that the University is taking the initiative to use money from the Technology Resource Fee. However, just because the World Wide Web is available doesn't mean that everyone knows how to use it. Many students aren't aware of the resources available on the Web, or, for that matter, much of the Internet.

As far as some students are concerned, the Internet is a vast unknown that somehow allows students to e-mail each other. Many don't understand the numerous resources available to them.

Students need to be educated more about the Internet and its resources.

Some departments on campus offer classes that teach students about the Internet. The Knight Library offers a variety of workshops on its programs and services. Help is also available in the Computing Center.

**J**ust like Writing 121, learning about the Internet is essential because it is knowledge that is increasingly required of University students.

However, this isn't enough. More needs to be done to make Internet education available to students.

More classes should be offered to students. If the library or Computing Center expanded the number of workshops, students would have more opportunities to learn about the Internet. However, the library is only open for a limited number of hours. Even if the library dedicated its computer lab solely to teaching students, it is unlikely that the demand for classes would be met.

The University could establish a course that explores all aspects of the "Net." The course, which would be hands-on and required for first-year students, could teach students about the programs available to them. Just like Writing 121, learning about the Internet is essential because it is knowledge that is increasingly required of University students.

Technically, students have access to a plethora of computer resources at the University. For that alone, University students have more opportunities than many other Oregonians. However, if students don't know how to use a system, they are effectively denied access to it. Not learning the value of the information superhighway puts anyone entering the job market at a terrible disadvantage. Employers are looking for people who can master today's technology.

Students will benefit from the upgrade to the World Wide Web — but only if they know how to use it.



### LETTERS

#### Hatfield good

Oregon's senior Sen. Mark O. Hatfield is to be commended for his commitment to higher education and the leadership that he demonstrated opposing the Balanced Budget Amendment.

Despite intense political pressure, he refused to vote for an amendment that was not the answer to our federal-deficit problem. In addition, he understood that passage of that amendment would have threatened all of the student-aid programs that make it possible for the neediest students to get a post-secondary education.

When members of our organization met with Sen. Hatfield on March 20, as part of the United States Student Association's annual legislative conference, he reaffirmed his long-standing commitment to higher education by promising to vote against cuts to campus-based aid programs and the Stafford Loan program. Sen. Hatfield also promised to vote against a recession bill that would roll back funding for student-aid programs — money which has already been appropriated for the 1995 fiscal year.

Oregon's senior senator should be commended for this commitment and dedication to post-secondary education and to his principles.

The rest of the states should be so lucky.

**Jon Isaacs**  
Chair of the Board  
**Robert Nosse**  
Executive Director  
Oregon Student Lobby

#### Overrated

Brian Womack seems to think that a system of moral absolutism would solve every problem in the U.S. today (ODE, March 30). His logic seems to be a bit lacking, however.

Mr. Womack conveniently forgets that every legal system throughout time has been built on moral relativism and intuitively this is what we would expect: "a poor father stealing bread for his hungry child should not be punished as severely as a rich adolescent stealing to impress his friends." Or maybe closer to home: "killing someone is morally wrong, but using the death penalty is not" (?). So who

are you to say that your system of moral relativism is better than anyone else's?

Mr. Womack goes on to say that Christianity would be the solution to all of our problems. Frankly, I think he is overrating Christianity. If you look at the Scandinavian countries, they probably have the lowest rate of professed Christians in any so-called Christian country; they also have the highest population of atheists and agnostics in the world. Still, the number of murders, violent crimes, divorce, teen suicide, etc. is very small compared to the U.S.

On the other hand, we can all recall the Inquisition, the burning of witches and now the killing of doctors and persecution of gays — all done by self-professed Christians.

I think Pat Robertson said it best when he was commenting on the aftermath of the Kobe earthquake: "It's amazing that there hasn't been any looting and it's not even a Christian country!" Gives you something to think about, doesn't it?

**Bjorn Pettersen**  
Computer and Information  
Science

#### Sell Amazon

I am writing to ask that the University seriously consider selling the Amazon housing project to the coalition to be rehabilitated and maintained as low-income housing to meet the needs of students.

It was such housing on the Midway at the University of Chicago at the close of World War II that provided a home for us while my husband continued his studies. I see Amazon as offering such a supportive community here.

This is a difficult time. Help for students such as what Amazon can offer must have high priority.

**Claire Trotter**  
Eugene

#### Headache

I can throw away my watch now. The University has chosen to buy one for me.

Instead of the incredibly painful act of looking down at my

arm to see the time, I can now listen to the \$10,000 ringing in my ears four times an hour. In fact, because the bells will be playing 12 hours a day, that will work out to 48 ringing noises in my head, everyone's head, every day, for the rest of the year. Am I paying for my own headache?

As I see it, they had two other feasible choices: tell everyone that if they wanted to know the time, get a watch, or buy a 386 desktop computer (\$1500), some recording software (\$50), speaker wires (\$20) and 300 watt speakers (\$400). I believe that comes out to a \$2,000 solution. This will recreate a tradition that the University might also learn to enjoy.

**Peter Feld**  
Psychology

#### Guns 'n grease

What sort of a country is America? We paint ourselves as the world's most advanced democracy and yet look at our exports! As number one we excel in arms exports to any and all who'll buy them. This is our best money maker. Next, there are other "bests" this country has to offer: Coca Cola, McDonald's, Kentucky Fried Chicken and cigarettes. None of these are recommended by dietitians or doctors, yet these are the first exports we force upon other nations.

Now, the whole world is armed to the teeth (friends today and foes tomorrow?) and continually waging one war or another and we have a bloody hand in all of them while holding "peace talks"! We export expensive, empty-calorie, fattening food to people who have healthier diets and better teeth than people in the U.S. (Japan, Pacific Islanders, Southeast Asia) just to make them over in "our image." If we had given up smoking, recognizing its toxicity, the Chinese or Indians have yet to find out. To me, this amounts to an overfed, gross, arms-toting image which is anything but democratic or sympathetic but plain greedy. How can we change the world into a peaceful planet with a hope for the future as long as we capitalize on ugly exports to enrich a few and kill many?

**Hilde K. Cherry**  
Eugene

## Oregon Daily Emerald

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