

Maine



Technology



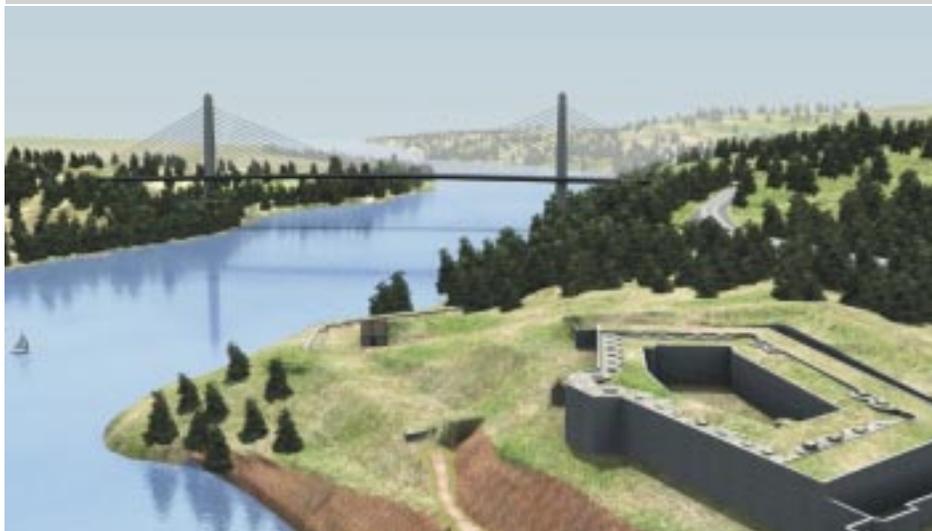
A publication featuring the Information Services technology of Maine State Government

3-D Graphic Imagery Increases Success of Public Involvement Process

When the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) engineers began the task of designing and building a replacement for the Waldo-Hancock Bridge last summer, they faced several major hurdles. One of the biggest was time. Because a routine rehabilitation had uncovered unexpected levels of cable corrosion on the historic old bridge, the department had to move fast to get new construction underway. But the Waldo-Hancock was an icon for the region, which meant the community was deeply interested in all the details of its replacement. Helping them to understand what a new bridge would look like was key.

Click www.waldohancockbridge.com

and follow the links to view the drive and fly over computer simulations.



The MaineDOT had engaged Figg Engineering Group (FIGG) to design the new bridge, and FIGG's computer-generated graphics were a highlight of the public meetings. The continuing advancement of graphic technology has enhanced public involvement in the design process. Three-dimensional renderings increase the public's ability to be engaged by providing true-form visual imagery of aesthetic options.

For example, during the process of developing bridge concepts, several different structural options were presented to the local communities. Before this technology was available, two-dimensional drawings and hand-

drawn sketches were the best way to portray the appearance of a given option. This was good, but didn't give the public the sense of how a three-dimensional structure would actually appear. With current graphic capabilities, the public can be presented with three-dimensional computer-generated models of the proposed structure, set into photographs of the actual site. This is further enhanced with "fly-by" and "drive-through" movies that allow viewers to experience the structure from different perspectives and vantage points. Often, the animations and still images are so detailed that it is difficult to determine if the movie is a completed project or simply a concept.

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Volunteer Service Sites Update Their Look and Accessibility

By **KIM GODING**

In today's fast paced, technologically driven society, Maine's citizens are now more than ever connecting to their communities through their computers. High speed internet, DSL and wireless connections have made it possible for us to renew our vehicle registration on-line, reserve a hotel 3,000 miles away, utilize job telecommuting, and much more.

Foreseeing this technological advancement and realizing its potential, the Maine Commission for Community Service has recently updated its two web sites to not only bring Maine citizens and non-profit agencies together, but also to advance the way the Commission and its members do business. One of Maine's few state agencies primarily operating their business through the internet, the commission has made the commitment to move forward with the times.

A quick glance at their new site www.mainecommunityservice.com and the average visitor would think of it as your ordinary web page, but, if you are a member of the Commission, it is any-

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3-D Graphic Imagery, cont.

During the workshop sessions for the new Penobscot River Crossing, community members were asked to comment on a variety of cable-stay bridge styles, including single and double-plane versions. But simply looking at a two-dimensional rendering of a bridge cannot communicate the experience of driving through different cable arrangements. "People's opinions were significantly influenced by how they felt about the complexity or simplicity of the cable arrangements as they 'drove over' the bridge," said Bruce Van Note, deputy commissioner of MaineDOT. "In the end, it was the desire for simplicity – reinforced by the computer simulation of the bridge and the observatory concept – that attracted them to the single-pylon option."

Based on the MaineDOT's experience, the advantages of using computer imagery in the public involvement process are clear. Seeing a graphic image removes the doubt from people's minds about the project's appearance or integration into the site. Images can be developed from prominent vantage points or other points of interest specific to the project. The public can experience the project at an early stage and provide valuable feedback regarding design options at a time when it can be cost-effectively incorporated into the project.

Questions? Contact Carol Morris by calling Garrand & Co 207-772-3119 x21.

Interested in watching the progress of the Waldo-Hancock bridge replacement project?

If so, keep an eye on this web site – which sports two web cams (for each side of the Penobscot River) www.waldohancockbridge.com Web cam photos are updated every two minutes. The site also contains still photographs, news and information, citizen comments etc.

Volunteer Services, cont.

thing but ordinary. As part of their duties, Commission members and staff are responsible for logging into the site and posting much of its content. All members have remote access to post minutes, upload reports from meetings, and maintain designated pages. All it takes is an internet connection. "Using the web to do our business is truly an innovative idea that has ultimately changed the way the commission operates as a whole. Because board members are from all over the state, using our web site has allowed us to communicate more effectively not only with members, but also with the public. We can now do our business all of the time rather than just at monthly board meetings," remarks Maryalice Crofton, the Executive Director of the Commission.

Log into their web site and you will also quickly realize that volunteerism in Maine is alive and well. Along with the Commission's updates, recent news releases, and links to Maine's major volunteer agencies are just some of the materials offered by the Commission's web page. Perhaps one of the most interesting and useful links is to the Commission's VolunteerME site at www.volunteer_maine.gov where Maine's citizens can go to look for community service opportunities and where non-profit agencies seek volunteers. It has become a recruiting station for Maine's volunteer sector. "The main goal of the Commission and its VolunteerME site is to serve as an intermediary between Maine's citizens and agencies seeking volunteers. We bring together those persons wanting to give to their communities and those in need of service," Crofton says.

Another unique aspect of both the www.maineservicecommission.gov and www.volunteermaine.com web-sites are that they also provide on-line resources to volunteer agencies. Providing assistance on volunteer training, staff management, finance, and much more, the sites serve as an operational guide—a

virtual library for Maine's volunteer sector.

The Maine Commission for Community Service's new web site and its transfer to e-business, allows the commission to efficiently serve the people of Maine and their communities in new and exciting

ways. The Commission continues to look forward to changing the course of how state services are offered to Maine citizens.

To learn more about the Maine Commission for Community Service visit our web site at <http://www.maineservicecommission.gov> or contact the Maine Commission for Community Service at 287-8931 or service.commission@maine.gov.

Questions? Contact Kim M.Goding, the Commission's Public Relations Representative by calling 207-287-8933 or e-mailing kim.goding@maine.gov. Kim is a new member of the commission staff. Prior to joining the Commission for Community Service, she served as the Governor's scheduler for his first year in office as well as during his gubernatorial campaign. Goding graduated from Bates College in 2001 with a B.A. in Sociology and Criminology and currently resides in Mexico, Maine with her husband, Eric, and two children, Megan and Colby.



NexTalk

By KATHY RECORD



The State of Maine has been a model for other states in providing access to departments and agencies for all citizens including the deaf, hard of hearing, and speech impaired. Most often citizens make initial contact with the state by phone or, in the case of the deaf or hard of hearing by TTY. Implementing NexTalk is the next step to advance the communications technology.

To understand NexTalk, an understanding of TTY communications is necessary. The TTY is a communication device used by deaf or hard-of-hearing people which connects to the standard phone line and consists of a keyboard and a small display to view the scrolling text of the conversation. The person responding to the TTY call must be trained in the technology as well. State government has approximately 165 TTY's in service. The Division of Deafness¹ makes test calls on a regular basis to ensure that people are responding to the calls.



<http://www.nextalk.net/>

The results of the testing showed that only 42% of the calls made from a TTY device are answered. Jan DeVinney, Director of the Division of Deafness, addressed this serious deficiency with a two pronged approach. The first was to improve the TTY system. A process was developed to identify the TTY's and locations with a low response rate, and offer training and technical assistance to all involved users. Additionally, a letter was sent to all Commissioners from Dick Thompson, CIO, requesting that each department review their utilization of TTY's. Numbers were identified that should be de-listed either because the assigned number is not being used, or the TTY at that number is used so little it serves no purpose. Jan's second initiative was to partner with the State's Information Technology Accessibility Committee in recommending an alternative

to the present TTY system. The suggested replacement was NexTalk.

What is NexTalk? NexTalk is a network based system with special provisions for the communication needs of the deaf and hard of hearing, but with advanced communications and messaging features. It is a blending of telephone and computer technologies which links TTY callers with every NexTalk personal computer user on the local and wide area networks. With NexTalk, any TTY call can be answered and then transferred to another NexTalk user or group of users (department). This system is currently used successfully by the US Department of Education.

Once the decision was made to implement this new software, Lisa Thompson of the Bureau of Information Services, agreed to lead the project team. At this time, the server installation and administrative setup is completed to the point where testing has begun. Working closely with Jan DeVinney and Nancy Melanson, Lisa has successfully completed calls to/from TTY's and client, and client to client. The next step is to expand testing by having the testing volunteers download the NexTalk client software to their personal computers and participate in more comprehensive testing.

We expect that NexTalk will increase the rate of successful TTY communications, and the elimination of the unused TTY's will reduce the State's costs. The team feels confident that TTY to NexTalk calls will work successfully and that the State of Maine will, once again, be a pioneer and role model in using technology to increase accessibility.

Kathy Record is an IT Management Analyst in the office of the Chief Information Officer. She may be reached with questions by e-mailing kathy.record@maine.gov.

¹ <http://www.maine.gov/rehab/dod/>

From Our Readers

Sent: Thursday, May 06, 2004
To: mary.cloutier@maine.gov;
Subject: Newsletter - Training Needs Survey

Dear Mary:

I found the following Training Needs Survey on the Maine IS Technology website: http://www.state.me.us/newsletter/may2002/training_needs_assessment_survey.htm. Our group is planning to evaluate the training needs of the housing and dining staff here at Stanford University. The survey I found at your site would make a great foundation for the assessment we plan.

We would consider it a great favor if we could have your permission to use the skill list and format of your survey in our assessment.

If you have any questions, please contact me at the number below. Thank you.

Best regards,
Evelyn Yoder

Manager, Department Readiness
Information Systems
Residential & Dining Enterprises
Stanford University



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tel: 650-723-7153
IM (AOL & Yahoo): eyodertw
<http://myRDE.stanford.edu/>

RESPONSE SENT LATER THAT DAY:

Evelyn, all the articles posted on the State of Maine's MIST web site are public information, and you are free to use it. Please credit the source (May 2002 issue of the Maine IS Technology Newsletter) when reusing this information. The survey was done for the implementation of the Bureau of Accounts and Controls' MS-Tams project, and I'm sure either Bureau Deputy Terry Brann or Manager Betty Everatt could address any follow up questions you may have.

Best wishes with your needs assessment.

Mary N. Cloutier
MIST Editor

Audio and Web Conferencing – Less Travel, More Productivity

By MARY N. CLOUTIER

3/17/04 Governor Baldacci signed an executive order¹, which requires, in part:

“By July 1, 2004 the Department of Administrative and Financial Services shall develop information describing the availability and use of audio-, web- and video- conferencing equipment for state offices. Agency and department heads will encourage the use of technologies that reduce state employee vehicle miles traveled.”

The Bureau of Information Services (BIS) has contracted with Premiere to provide audio and web conferencing services to all state agencies. Access for audio is .08 per minute per line, with no setup fee. Premiere also offers the opportunity to use toll-free numbers as well as direct dial, and web conferencing solutions to provide sharing of documentation, training classes, web seminars and presentations. To better understand these services visit Premiere’s web site, <http://preconf.com/us>, where you can watch a demo video which describes how to use both the audio and web services.

I recently conducted a brief survey of State personnel who have used Premiere’s services this spring. All have found it convenient and easy to use. Here are a few of their comments . . .

Jen Chisum, Maine Department of Transportation (DOT)

We had a conference call with MaineDOT management and a team of consultants in Britain, New York City, Virginia, and Florida to conduct system stress testing with MaineDOT staff throughout the State - 7 divisions and 2 Augusta locations.

On a set schedule, pools of up to 40 people potentially (depending on availability) phoned in simultaneously and were walked through a series of tests of new software. If anything went wrong, or performance was bad, they could speak up. At that point one of our roving Desktop Support technicians would be sent to that person, while our Network person could do diagnosis work at the server while connected to the call. This was an extremely difficult kind of test to perform before conference calling...we usually used one floor and yelled!

Stacy Hyde, Caribou office of the Department of the Attorney General

We’ve used Premier Conferencing approximately five times for various conference calls with the judge and also once for an entire case management conference with a judge in a court several hours away.

I believe that the conference calls have saved not only our agency time and money, but have also saved money for the courts and private attorneys as well. The attorneys (and the judge in one instance) that have taken part in the conference calls or case management conference did not have to travel to/from court for the conference. Most of the attorneys that we deal with are court appointed and are paid by the court/state.

Scott Rollins, Land Use Regulation Commission (LURC)

We use the audio and/or web conferencing on a weekly basis for regular staff meetings of the LURC Permitting and Compliance Division. These meetings run typically two hours, and consist of discussions on individual projects, rule interpretation, training, and any other issues that need attention.

This service is extremely beneficial to our Division since only I and a Supervisor are located in Augusta, while the rest of the staff is located in regional offices throughout the State (Rangeley, Greenville, East Millinocket, Cherryfield, and Ashland). A regular face-to-face weekly meeting would not only create many additional vehicle miles traveled, but also be very inefficient since the rest of the day would be spent by staff traveling as opposed to being at their workstation prior to, and after, the conference. If it were not for the audio and web conferencing we just could not be meeting as regularly to discuss our issues.

Depending on what we have to discuss, we may use the audio portion only or use the total package including web conferencing. The web conferencing has proven very valuable when a staff member has a question regarding a site plan. With the web conferencing tools, all of the staff can review and annotate or make comments on the plan while we are discussing possible scenarios. This is extremely beneficial, especially to our new employees, who need to understand and be consistent with our interpretations.

If we had done these meetings the old fashioned face-to-face way it would have cost us the following per meeting:

- Time: For our 12 staff we save a total combined amount of almost 40 hours of productive time in traveling both ways.
- Vehicle miles traveled: Even with full carpooling we save about 1000 miles of travel per meeting.
- The biggest savings is what we save for the public that we serve. Without the cost and time savings of the web and audio conferencing there is no way we could regularly meet and train our people while minimizing downtime.

Staff meetings, software troubleshooting, and judicial conferences are surely not the only uses for audio and web conferencing in Maine State government. Would your productivity be enhanced, by speaking to your remote colleagues while simultaneously reviewing documents via the web at your work station? Want to sign up your agency? Please go to <http://inet.state.me.us/bis/services/index.html> to review the information under the Communications heading. Many agencies already have an account administrator.

Don’t forget, reducing state employees’ miles traveled not only saves money - it also helps protect our precious environment, which is the goal of Governor Baldacci’s executive order.

¹ <http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/news/executive-orders/>

Distance Delivery and Learning – How Might It Be Used?

BY DR. SUSAN N. DONAR

Recently, Governor Baldacci put forth an Executive Order promoting the “Use of Audio-, Web-, and Video-Conference Technologies” challenging state agencies to better utilize these technologies and reduce travel expenses when attending meetings, trainings, etc.

For those of you deciding how to put this Executive Order into action, I would like to share a current list of State of Maine Distance Learning Projects currently in place with the USM Muskie School of Public Service:

State Department	Project
Behavioral and Developmental Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confidentiality Training Documentation Training (coming soon)
Department of Human Services, Bureau of Health	WIC Web Education
Department of Labor	Ladder Safety
Department of Human Services, Bureau of Elder and Adult Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certified Residential Medication Aide Curriculum Consent Decree Video (coming soon)
Department of Human Services, Bureau of Family Independence	General Assistance Video
Behavioral and Developmental Services Department of Human Services Department of Labor Maine's Hospitals VISTA	Variety of web-based Database Projects including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HIV WIC Web Ed VISTA Communities for Children AMHI Treatment Mall Impact Outreach and Migration Maine Youth Suicide Prevention Program Childcare Database Ladder Safety Training Needs Survey Center for Disease Control Infectious Disease Database



For those of you who would like to see some examples of these projects and how some of our state departments are using distance technologies, visit the USM Muskie School of Public Service, Institute for Public Sector Innovation Distance Delivery Office at www.ipsitech.org/dd to address the Governor's Executive Order and to reduce and/or eliminate distance issues.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Susan N. Donar, USM Muskie School IPSI Distance Delivery Coordinator at 207-626-5203 or susan.donar@maine.gov.

What Is All This Talk of Security?

BY GINNIE RICKER

In December 2002, the Information Services Policy Board adopted a uniform set of information technology security policies, standards and general guidelines for every state department, agency, board, bureau, commission, and authority. These policies are intended to raise awareness of potential risk associated with security breaches.

Although the first thought is that the policy only pertains to technology systems, this is not necessarily the policy's intent. The State of Maine's policy was based upon the ISO17799 security standards (International Security Standards). This document is a “comprehensive set of controls comprising best practices in information security”.¹ “The ISO 17799 was developed to serve as a single reference point for identifying a range of controls needed for most situations where information systems are used in industry and commerce”²

Each State of Maine agency will be responsible for developing a detailed policy plan to meet the security policies and standards. The plan will be a guide for agencies to perform and be measured against. Most agencies have identified an individual or group to work on the final plan, which is due to the Chief Information Officer by September 2004.

As a reminder of how important information security is and what it really encompasses, a few items are listed below: **E-mail Security** is significant to any organization and having firewalls and anti-virus programs in place are a must. Employees should not:

- transmit confidential or sensitive information or
- open e-mails or attached files without ensuring the content is genuine.

Employees should also be aware of their agencies policies and practices with regard to saving, storing, and archiving of e-mail.

Information Security Coordination Each agency will have an appointed Information Security Officer, who is responsible for formulation, review, and approval of security procedures, oversight into investigations of computer security related incidents, development and testing of Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery planning, and oversight of business issues regarding information technology security initiatives.

Risk is the possibility of suffering harm or loss. With regard to information, risk includes the possibility of suffering a loss of any kind, due to disclosure, destruction, modification, or denial of access. A risk that occurs can violate the confidentiality, integrity, or availability of information.

Please look for more Customer Service articles regarding Information Security over the next few months. Ginnie Ricker has been tasked as Project Manager for the Department of Administrative and Financial Services' Information Technology Security Policy Project. She may be reached with questions by e-mailing ginnie.ricker@maine.gov.

¹ <http://www.iso17799software.com/presentation/sld002.htm>

² <http://www.iso17799software.com/presentation/sld003.htm>

GIS Common Editing Environment

By DAVID KIROUAC

The Maine Office of Geographic Information Systems (MEGIS), the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IF&W) are currently developing a common editing environment for maintenance of the state's GIS hydrography database.

Over the years the state has collected a lot of information relating to hydrography, including GIS data. The collection, maintenance, and updating of hydrography GIS data continues by several agencies on various versions of the hydrography database, and in different environments. MEGIS has been working with the GIS Executive Council to develop a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for agencies to consolidate efforts for maintaining and updating GIS data in a common editing environment.

The SOP for the common editing environment contains an agreement between the participating agencies that is signed by the GIS Executive Council representative from each agency. The SOP also details the people at each agency who are responsible for the updates and the responsibilities of each participant. The first common editing environment will be tested and developed for the hydrography GIS database.

In the initial development of the hydrography common editing environment the goal of the GIS Executive Council and the participating agencies is to get the updates from all three agencies into one common database, so that everyone benefits by having access to one database that contains all of the updates from IF&W, DEP, and MEGIS. The longer term goal is to get all of the available hydrography information within state government into one common database, and one common editing environment.

MEGIS, DEP, and IF&W have been working together over the past few months to consolidate their hydrography data into one database. The consolidated data has been loaded into the MEGIS ArcSDE Oracle database and the three agencies are currently testing a common editing environment of ArcSDE and ArcMap to update the hydrography database. Each agency is responsible for updating different aspects of the database so that the updates by each agency are complementary to each other. Technical

issues and processes still need to be worked out during the testing phase before the concept is put into production.

It is anticipated that custom programs will need to be developed to help standardize the update processes. If the common editing environment is successful then MEGIS will work with the GIS Executive Council to use the hydrography common editing environment as a template for furthering the use of the common editing environment for other GIS databases.

Even though representatives from DEP, IF&W, and MEGIS have incorporated a lot of hydrography information into one database it is believed that there is probably a lot more hydrography information within state government that could also be incorporated into the hydrography common editing environment as the project progresses. If you want more information about the common editing environment or the SOP contact David Kirouac at *David.Kirouac@maine.gov*.

David Kirouac is a Senior Programmer Analyst at the Maine Office of GIS where he is responsible for the GIS database.

From The Editor

Thanks to those of you who took the time to respond to my query – “How am I doing with the MIST ?” which was published in last month's issue. (http://www.maine.gov/newsletter/may2004/how_am_i_doing_with_the_mist.htm) I was encouraged by your positive comments, and will strive to publish articles on the topics you suggested.

Creating substantive issues has always been a particular challenge in late summer, and through the November/December holidays. Therefore, since fewer authors are able to contribute during these periods, and in an effort to reduce expenses in these times of austerity, this newsletter's publication schedule will be changed. Starting next month, we will publish a combined July/August issue in the mid-July timeframe. Thereafter the first-of-the-month schedule will resume, until mid November, when the combined November/December issue will be released.

Thank you for your on-going support. I appreciate your contributions.

Mary N. Cloutier
mary.cloutier@maine.gov
Editor

Planning to travel in Maine? Take a look before you arrive! Here are links to a few web cams around our state.

- Mt. Desert: “ <http://hazecam.net/ACADIA.HTM> and Geddy's <http://www.geddys.com/geddycams/harborcam/>
- <http://www.maineharbors.com/camindex.htm> - a “window on the weather.” The cams listed on this site, most with a salt water orientation, are arranged geographically north to south. The sponsoring home page is given below the cam name along with a brief description of the view in Bath, Belfast, Boothbay Harbor (Department of Marine Resources' cam), Camden, Cape Elizabeth, Damariscotta, Portland, Rockland, Wells etc.
- Houlton <http://www.houltonlive.com/> (with a link to Presque Isle's cam) and Fort Kent (sjv.net)
- Ellsworth City Hall and Main Street: <http://w5.downeast.net/cam/>
- Castine, Maine Maritime Academy: <http://209.222.220.16/mma/WaterfrontCam.html>
- Sunday River, Sugarloaf and Mt. Abrams RSN cam: http://www.rsn.com/cams/welcome.html?segment_type=mtn
- Kennebunkport Conservation Trust <http://65.108.19.134/webcam.html>
- Sebago Lake: <http://sebagocam.com/>
- Greater Portland - WGME 13 Sky Cam: <http://www.wgme13.com/> and WCSH 6, two Portland area cams plus links to the five southern Maine Turnpike cams: <http://wcsh6.com/weathercams/default.asp>



How to Make Better Decisions

OPINION BY SUE YOUNG

Your subordinate approaches you with an idea and your immediate reaction is that it's a waste of time and won't work. But a colleague points out that a slight variation of the idea will save weeks of work and make your systems more user-friendly. Why does one person perceive opportunity where another doesn't? How can you keep yourself in a position to take

advantage of the opportunities in front of you?

Understand that your perception can become distorted. Whenever your mind is agitated — when you're worried, stressed, overworked, frustrated, angry or otherwise upset — you no longer perceive life directly, but through a glass colored darkly.

Instead of taking in information fully and accurately, you put up filters like "Avoid anything that might create more work!" With these filters in place, you can't make cognitive connections that would otherwise be obvious. But if you know that your perceptions can get distorted, you'll also know when to step back and clear your mind before making a decision.

For instance, what do you do when your manager blames you for the network being down, when he was the one who inadvertently disconnected the network interface card while trying to unplug the mouse so the cleaning staff couldn't use the server to check e-mail? Do you explode in anger — or do you laugh? The minor disasters we deal with on a daily basis usually have a comical element. But how often do we have the mental clarity to recognize what's funny in a "crisis"?

So how do you clear your mind, especially if you're overworked and overstressed, as many IT folks are? Here's a short list of reminders to keep at the ready:

1. Check for humor. What humor can you find in the situation? I'm not talking about the type of humor that puts people down, but the ability to laugh at the fact that we humans are downright ridiculous creatures. As in "You want it when?!" A good laugh clears the mind and the air so we can look at the situation realistically.

2. Expect ups and downs. Too often we get caught in the moment and act as if the current state will last forever. By remembering that everything goes through cycles, from better to worse and down to up, we can find stability amid change.

3. Turn a problem into an adventure. We need challenges to grow. Without them, we stagnate and life becomes boring. When the CIO leaves the organization, the CFO puts all new IT projects on hold, and everything's in chaos. It's up to us to bring a sense of adventure and challenge into the mundane and chaotic mess. What can we do with what we've got? How well can we do it? How fast? How creatively? How much fun can we make it? Let's create the finest possible result when we're understaffed, overworked, backlogged and given impossible conditions! If it were easy, it wouldn't be any fun.

4. Refocus on the organization's goals. When we're stressed out, we tend to put our own needs first. One of the easiest ways to clear your mind is to do something for someone else: make their job easier, highlight a colleague's success or just hold a meeting outside in the sun for a change. The point is to get your mind off yourself. The act of thinking about what you could do for others — that also furthers your organization's goals — calms your mind and opens you to new possibilities.

5. Remember that it's a game. If you were fired today, wouldn't the things at work that seem so important to you now just fade away? You'd be looking for another job, sitting on the beach or doing volunteer work. You'd be playing another game. This job is the game you're playing now. Play it with as much skill, style, enthusiasm and humor as you can. But remember, it's just a game that will evaporate when you leave the company and start to play another game.

All we can do is the best we can do in this moment. By accepting ourselves, our current limitations and the sometimes chaotic nature of IT, we create a degree of peace and mental freedom from which we can perceive opportunities and make better IT decisions.

Sue Young is CEO of ANDA Consulting in Williston, Vt., where she specializes in data modeling and ensuring successful IT projects. You can reach her at sue@andaconsulting.com.

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Challenge

BY LESTER DICKEY

Marie doesn't like to reveal her age so, when she is asked, she tells people she is 21. She feels she doesn't age on the weekend. What is Marie's real age? (if no one gets the right answer, I get the free pizza.)

For more of a challenge but no pizza, try this one. There are several words that are spelled the same but are pronounced differently, depending on their meaning. These are a special class of homograph. For example: read (pronounced "reed" or "red," depending on context) and sow (mother pig or spread seeds). I have a list of 8 words like this. Can you find some I don't have?

Please e-mail **Lester Dickey** with your answer and your name, phone number, and the organization for which you work. Or call **Barbara Buck** at **624-9501**. The winner will be drawn from all the correct entries and will receive a **FREE** donated pizza, either from **CJ's Pizza** or from the **EDOC Cafeteria**. All answers must be in no later than the **14th** of the month.

Last month's challenge brought 84 submissions, with 74 having correct answers. The winner, chosen by random drawing, is **Terry Hathaway** of **Bureau of Labor Standards**.

The answers to last month's Challenge: a) WOMEN = 231513514 b) 666.67 mph.

A Leaf on the Branch of a Tree . . . Genealogy Research on the Internet

Have you ever wondered about your ancestors, such as where they came from or where they lived? I come from a small family, but have learned I have an abundance of ancestors and cousins.

My interest began when my grandfather was given his family's Bible after his older sister died. I was amazed with its listings of family names and dates, and how well preserved this 1850 book was. (It also included an original 1800 news article documenting George Washington's funeral). When I first went on-line, I was surprised at the number of genealogy web sites listed, and I started organizing family names. My current database now contains around 1,100 names (including marriages and their links).

You don't need lots of computer skills to begin, just a list of names and patience. The most popular Internet sites include www.Ancestry.com, www.Genealogy.com, www.MyTrees.com, www.RAOGK.com, www.LDS.org, www.myfamilysearch.org and www.EllisIsland.com. There are many others, but these sites have helped me. Some sites have paid subscriptions, which can be worth the fee. For instance, [Ancestry.com](http://www.Ancestry.com) has census records which may be downloaded, so you can view the actual handwritten records. Some records are indexed and others are not, so if you know a general area where the person lived, you may get lucky. The State of Maine also has a nice section with genealogy links; go to www.maine.gov, choose the *Facts & History* tab and then the *Genealogy Resources* link.

The State of Maine Archives Services is a great source of information for Maine ancestors. They have reels of microfilm listing birth, marriage and death records, listed by year and last name. By law, Archives only have a certain number of years available to the public (I believe they range from 1892-1957). For example, census records can only be made available after 72 years; the latest released were the 1930 censuses in 2002. Census records list head of household, spouse, children and other people in that household. It also lists their age, sometimes birth date, occupation, place of birth and where parents were born.

You can write to other states requesting family information. It is best to look for vital records and see what that state's guidelines are; some have downloadable forms you can complete and submit with a fee. Some require proof you are a family member and are obtaining information for genealogy purposes only. Other states require you have to wait a number of years after a death before requesting information. Cem-

eteries are another information source, although not always reliable. I recently received photos of gravestones in New York of a whole branch of family members, which provided names and dates.

Another information source is your local or state library, where you can look up old obituary and marriage notices in newspapers on microfilm. You can also visit a Latter-day Saints Church, some of which are equipped with microfilm machines and microfiche from other states and countries. You do not need to be a member of the church to use their facility.

The best way to start is to gather names and dates. Question family members, and start with one branch, such as your father's side, then research his mother's side, etc. Once you have established a line, you will be surprised at how many names you can link, and will learn useful tips as you plug away. I luckily connected with people who shared information – some info going back 14 generations - what a hit!

Shortly after I started my research, I "found" a fourth cousin on-line who happened to be researching the same name. We met six months later, along with an aunt, who is one of the "last members" with that family name. We have made tentative plans to travel to Germany to conduct further research, as our US branch has ended. I also solved two mysteries concerning missing family members.

If you start, you will get addicted, especially when you find pieces that fit your puzzle. Of course, there are many more sites available on-line that I have not listed and other ways to research your family information. I am just another Weed looking for her roots... 

Sonya works as an Income Tax Examiner for Maine Revenue Services. She has worked for state government for 17 years and recently earned a degree in business administration through UMA. She started genealogy research about seven years ago and volunteers to help people from other states research their Maine ancestors. She welcomes any comments or suggestions; you can email her at sonya.weed-berry@maine.gov.



BY **SONYA WEED-BERRY**



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