

GLOBALIZATION OF INDUSTRY AND ACADEMIA

The turn of the millennium is witnessing an accelerated globalization process both in industry and, in some ways, also in academia. Major companies have expanded their manufacturing and R&D divisions throughout the world, chasing affordable labor and local talent. Universities have intensified their recruiting of students from faraway places, and industries depend on a supply of engineers from the opposite side of the globe.

Corporations in the United States and in Europe serve as home for various ethnic clubs (mostly manifesting themselves at tongue-twisting lunch tables and picnic ball games, and otherwise completely integrated). Similarly, Far East companies host alumni clubs from all major R&D labs that used to represent signature R&D organizations in other parts of the world. While academic institutions in the United States and Europe keep acquiring Asian talent, universities in the Asia Pacific region aggressively repatriate some of the best known names in the West.

This mobility of industry talent calls for portability of ComSoc services. The content provided by our society may be sufficiently portable, but we are also in the business of operation and maintenance of human networks. This component presents a somewhat tougher problem.

Managing mobile and distributed communities requires special mechanisms, and the aggressive portal project we are engaged in has this element as one of its key features. It is also geared to support distributed applications that assist in the administration of ComSoc processes.

NEW PLAYERS — NEW CONSTITUENCY FOR COMSOC

The Internet revolution has redefined our industry. It has also fragmented our constituency by reducing the relative content "weight" contributed by major R&D labs and diluting relevant R&D activities into numerous and distributed startups.

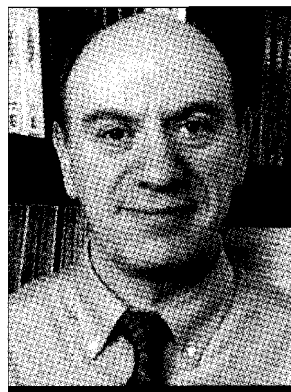
New communications scenarios and new applications from home networking to 3G have brought new players into the picture. Wideband Internet access by way of cable modems and satellite, data/video over DSL, datacasting over terrestrial television, heterogeneous home networking, voice and video over IP, and wearable networks are phenomena based on a fusion of disciplines and industries.

In the past most of these industries were not among our membership's employer pool. Acquiring them presents an interesting problem. Part of the solution may be due to migration of our dedicated members, but for the most part we still need to prove to these new communications companies the value of their employees' membership in ComSoc. For this reason the Board of Governors is considering introducing a new position in charge of industrial relations.



Roberto de Marca

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Alex Gelman

IP over everything can be considered a favorable phenomenon for our traditional industry, since it increases demand for the communications and networking infrastructure. On the other hand, on the service side, everything over IP presents a tough challenge to our traditional constituency by diluting traditional lucrative businesses such as voice and leased lines. These services dominated the telecommunications market and were the major cash cows for the industry. One way or another they helped a significant part of core ComSoc members for decades to pay mortgages and send kids to college. Most of our RBOC patrons found themselves in a sling: on one side bound by regulatory problems, on the other squeezed by the newcomers into the business: (A-Z)SPs.

The new IP-based infrastructure is being developed. Various new, more complex, value chain structures and new business models are already in place. The new infrastructure also brought new suppliers into the picture.

Entropy grew significantly in the supplier community. Challenges to bridge the digital divide, and demands for mass market information networking and home information infrastructure increased the role of consumer-oriented suppliers. Their R&D professionals have never been among our membership to any significant degree. But these are the industries that are in a position to significantly narrow the gap between the information haves and have nots. These new service providers and suppliers are the potential employers of our new members.

CLIMBING THE PROTOCOL STACK

The new infrastructure and more complex communications scenarios can support sophisticated multimedia applications and require sophisticated management schemes. Higher-layer protocols and applications middleware have become increasingly important. Various industry fora were born designed to create specifications for these new protocols. OSGi, HAVi, UPnP, and MeXE are few examples.

This indicates the necessity for our Society to get into new "softer" areas. This can be done by either expanding the membership demographics or partnering with relevant societies. Both approaches are viable and are being implemented.

Climbing the protocol stack presents a difficult task not only for ComSoc's Marketing and Society Relations areas, but most of all requires an increase in cultural diversity. Soft sciences representatives must feel at home within ComSoc.

TIME-TO-MARKET CYCLES

ComSoc is a learned society and has traditionally been in the content business related to precompetitive research. The

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CONFERENCE CALENDAR

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Multiservice Networks - 8-10 April
CREF, Colmar, France. Info Pascal Lorenz, Univ. of Haute Alsace, IUT-Dept. GTR, 34 rue du Grillenbreit, 68008 Colmar, France. Tel: +33-0-389202366; fax: +33-0-389202359; mobile: +33-0-603658042; e-mail: pascal.lorenz@colmar.uha.fr; http://iutsun1.colmar.uha.fr/ECUMN02.html

■ **NOMS 2002 - IEEE/IFIP Network Operations and Management Symposium - 15-19 April**

Florence, Italy. Info: Gayle Weisman. Tel: +1-212-705-8941; fax: +1-212-705-8999; e-mail: g.weisman@comsoc.org

■ **ICC 2002 - IEEE Int'l. Conference on Communications - 28 April-2 May**

New York, NY. Info: Debora Kingston. Tel: +1-212-705-8942; fax: +1-212-705-8999; e-mail: d.kingston@comsoc.org; http://www.icc2002.com

MAY

HPSR 2002 - 2002 IEEE Workshop

on High Performance Switching and Routing - 26-29 May

Kobe, Japan. Info: e-mail: hpsr2002@lab.ntt.co.jp

3Gwireless 2002 - 2002 Int'l.

Conference on Third Generation Wireless and Beyond - 28-31 May

San Francisco, CA. Info: E-mail: wwlu@ieee.org; http://WirelessCongress.com

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *from page 9*

Internet world dynamic is such that the intellectual property value chain exhibits much shorter time-to-market cycles, and there is a need to adapt to this environment. One of the paths that can be explored is the launching of publications and the organization of technical meetings in collaboration with various industry specifications and standardization fora and associated supporting organizations. One such initiative was the IPv6 workshop held in conjunction with GLOBECOM 2000 which was a joint venture of ComSoc

and the Internet Society (ISOC). In October 2001 the International Workshop on Networked Appliances (IWNA-4) will be technically co-sponsored by NIST.

CONCLUSION

ComSoc evolution thus must proceed in different dimensions. The geographical component will expand the demographics of our membership. The technical component should broaden its scope, bringing in a new constituency that is nontraditional but extremely relevant to communications and networking. We must depart from a traditional two-layer society and climb the protocol stack as far as it takes in order to cover the entire dynamic range of modern communications and networking scenarios. Recognizing this new reality, the Board of Governors, at its Helsinki meeting, initiated the process of updating ComSoc's official field of interest, which is part of our Constitution and Bylaws. Finally, we have to embrace cultural diversity in order to make sure that newcomers consider COMSOC and its communities a comfortable home.

ComSoc Industry News Cache (INC)

www.comsoc.org/inc

The ComSoc Industry News Cache (INC) -

A free weekly electronic news service consisting of 15-25 global news items culled from worldwide communication technology information sources and summarized specifically for the Communications Society. Summaries focus on current communications technology news in the telecommunications and data communications and their convergence, including market trends, research intelligence, hot technologies, international items, standards and compliance issues.



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