International dialogue

Any Conference the size of NCC attracts specialists from all over the world. Indeed scattered in the various technical sessions are contributions from people in Japan, Canada, England, Germany, France, and Brazil. In addition to this individual participation, there is a set of four sessions focusing on topics that were found to be of special interest to non-U.S. participants. They are standardization, especially the computer connection to communication networks, but also for input/output and software. We have arranged four sessions, with significant non-U.S. participation to articulate these areas.

The initial session (#44) provides a status report on public packet switching networks. In the last decade, packet switching has grown from an experimental idea to a commercially viable communication medium. The emergence of the value added carriers in the U.S. and of packet switched public nets in other countries, underlines this development. The panel will explore some of the technical, political, and economic issues facing these new carriers, as viewed by those who are supplying the service. Of special interest is the interconnection issue, particularly in an international context.

The next session (#50) turns to the policy questions that arise. The quality and reliability of existing telecommunication services will have to improve to meet the new needs, and policies concerning interconnection, sharing, tariffs, regulation, and balance of payments, to name a few, may have to change too. Even our institutional organizations may be affected by the need to cope with a vastly improved and more interconnected world wide telecommunications system. This panel will explore some of the short and long term policy issues which must be resolved before international data communication becomes as accessible as voice communication is today.

The third session (#56) turns to the economics of interface standards. Computer interface standards have been supported by many manufacturers and users as the means of reducing system cost and increasing flexibility. Others claim that standards will increase costs and damage the computer industry. This panel of independent U.S. manufacturers and users will discuss some problems and benefits of interface standardization.

The final session (#63) will extend the discussion of interface standards to the international arena by including panelists from Western Europe and Japan. They will also include some discussion on software standards to round out the day.