



THE NETWORKER

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS INFORMATION EXCHANGE BULLETIN FOR
THE HECSA INFORMATION MANAGEMENT OFFICE

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Why (Why) 2 K???

Because we're moving to Another Century

The HECSA-IM was tasked to take appropriate measures to ensure that all Information Technology (IT) that may, can, or will be effected by the new millennium are addressed, resolved, and/or corrected for HQUSACE, and HECSA. This included identifying all IT that was: not **Y2K** compliant, mission essential, and the impact if unable to resolve those issues by **Y2K**. Develop a plan to resolve **Y2K** IT that is not "Essential". Take necessary steps to guarantee that all HQUSACE/HECSA "Mission Related Activities" are not impacted by the **Y2K** date change. Jeane D. Williams, of HECSAIM was assigned to be the HQUSACE/HECSA, **Y2K** Project Manager. The **Y2K** team of Signal contractors, has broadened it's support to include Co-Workers, "Help Desk" Contractors, DIM, and CEHEC-L. The HQUSACE Operations Center Staff, and the 249 Engineer Battalion Assessment Team are providing assistance in identifying requirements for the HQUSACE and HECSA Contingency and Continuity Plans which will ensure that the UOC remains operational in the event of a **Y2K** failure. **Y2K** is beyond the control of HQUSACE and the Pulaski Building. **I THINK WE HAD BETTER PLAN FOR THE WORST and HOPE FOR THE BEST.**

HQUSACE and HECSA...Moving in the Right Direction towards 2000

Did you know...HQUSACE/HECSA Y2K Team has:

Tested 1914 Personal Computers
155 Laptops, 232 HUBS, 35 Servers

Validated: 197 facsimile machines,
1674 telephones

Validated: 130 copiers

To date there has been 4596 HQUSACE/HECSA Information Technology items tested/validated for **Y2K** compliance.

87% of the items tested have been compliant.

13% of the items tested have been identified as non-compliant.

Check It Out

Have you ever been at a "check-out Counter" at the Safeway or Giant supermarket when the cash register went down, or the register lost power? Tell me, was the cashier able to process your groceries manually? Better yet, was she/he able to open the cash register? Did time just stand still while you waited to purchase groceries that you couldn't buy. Are you thinkingOr have you thought about it..Hummmm?? We could just blame it

on **Y2K**.

New Year's Eve of 1998 a doctor called in a prescription for a patient to the Pharmacist. The system was down, and because the information could not be processed through the computer it would cost \$187.00 for the medication, that normally would have cost \$12.00 if the system had been up. Are you ready for this????

Our computers and software will be compliant but we won't have any electricity. Or perhaps we will have brownouts or reduction in power. What stays up, and what is shutdown? Perhaps we might have our computers, software, and electricity working but.... Some of our Communication lines are down. Perhaps the commercial Voice lines are down... or maybe the Commercial lines are up but the Data lines are down... Well maybe not all of them. Take your pick. We now have the Commercial lines Up, Data Lines Down and 911 down...

Y2K is the BIG BLACK HOLE that: encompasses, and overpowers everything, or eventually everything/ everyone falls or jumps into. Are you ready for that LEAP???

The Helpdesk Operations

Beginning in November, 1997, the Headquarters initiated the LAN Centralization Project, designed to consolidate all HQUSACE computer resources and technical support personnel into one HECSA-IM managed

team. Some twenty-five separately maintained networks were consolidated in a phased approach which mirrored the migration from Novell Groupwise Email to Microsoft Exchange & Outlook Email. HECSA-IM contracted with Quality Technology, Inc., to create a centralized technical support Helpdesk to serve as a "one-stop-shop" for all information resource maintenance and administration in the Headquarters. The contractor staff has more than 100 years of Corps support experience. All PC hardware (desktop, laptop, etc.) and software (applications, connectivity, etc.), LAN infrastructure (cables, routers, etc.), and LAN servers (Email, Applications, Data storage, etc.) are supported through one telephone number (761-1904) for the Pulaski Building, Kingman Building, Casey Building, Hyattsville Depot, Pentagon, and Ft. Belvoir sites supported by HECSA-IM. In November, 1998, the USACE Operations Center (formerly Emergency Operations Center) began to receive their graphics, mapping (GIS), Web, and technical support through the same centralized contract vehicle.

The HECSA-IM Helpdesk operates from 0600-1800, Monday through Friday, in support of HQUSACE elements. Kingman/Casey HECSA elements, as well as the ISC, are supported between the hours of 0700-1700, Monday through Friday. On-Call Pager support (800-7859-8888, PIN # 2023124) is provided for Headquarters elements only, outside of normal Helpdesk operating hours. There are approximately 1200 users in the Pulaski Building and several hundred more at the other HECSA-IM supported locations. More than 1500 network nodes (desktops, laptops, network printers, conference rooms,

etc.), more than 100 servers, and several hundred network devices (hubs, routers, etc.) are supported in these environments.

Currently, the technical support team is migrating all Pulaski users to a Common Operating Environment (COE).

Scheduled to be completed in late July, the COE migration will provide a standard application suite (MS Office 97--SR2, MS Outlook 98 for DMS, Adobe Acrobat, Formflow 2.2, etc.) to all users. All desktops will be Win98 or NT Workstation, unless legacy applications cannot be made compatible with one of these operating systems. Also, all "departmental" servers and other NT security domains are being consolidated into the centralized HQ data and application servers (HQUSACE Domain), and all Novell servers are being retired and their functions moved to NT servers in the Computer Room. All desktops and servers will be patched for Y2K compliance and all 486 desktops will be replaced with Pentium desktops from the HECSA-IM ADP Store, when available. Once the Pulaski migration is complete, other environments will follow.

Finally, significant upgrades are being made to the HECSA-IM Computer Room at the HECSA Pulaski Building and the centralized server environment. Once electrical power upgrades are completed, three new uninterruptible power supplies (UPS) will be installed to support upgraded email servers. The existing Compaq 5000 (Dual Pentium Pro 200mhz) email servers will be replaced with Compaq 7000 (Dual Pentium II Xeon 450mhz) servers. Centralized data servers will be upgraded to accommodate as much as three times the existing available disk

space, and centralized print servers will be upgraded with the Compaq 5000 servers being replaced. To accommodate the larger servers and new UPS, the Computer Room itself will be reconfigured to better utilize the existing space and server racks.

The Helpdesk maintains an internal web site (<http://hqhelp.hq.usace.army.mil>) to provide antivirus software downloads, to give end users helpful technical information, and to provide information about the engineers providing support to HQUSACE and HECSA. Feedback is always welcome either through the HQHELP web site's "feedback" tool, via email to the contract COR, Dave Walton (Walton, David HQ02), or to the Helpdesk itself (HELPDESK-HQ HQ02).

The Computer Store

Recently, the HQUSACE instituted a new policy regarding excess equipment. Previously, we would send old (excess) equipment to local schools or to GSA for resale or disposal. The new policy allows us to evaluate, refurbish, and redistribute suitable pieces of the old equipment. The ADP Store receives office automation equipment from Directorates in the Headquarters, evaluates that equipment, refurbishes those components that are usable, and disposes of the rest. Mr. David Butler, the ADP Store manager, has all types of computer equipment looking for a new home. He has replacement computers, mice, printers, and monitors for immediate delivery to any Headquarters office. We swap machines out on an as needed one to one basis. The ADP Store hours of operation are 8:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. Monday through Friday. The ADP Store is located in room 4215.

If you find what you may need in the ADP Store, all you need do is fill out and sign a Form 4900 with the correct name, serial number, and bar code for the equipment. Then, your office hand receipt holder must sign as the gaining office. Finally, you need to bring the Form 4900 to the ADP Store and pick up your equipment. The store has been in operation for (5) five Months. Since opening, the store has placed over 100 pieces of equipment back into service at the Headquarters.

Visual Information Branch Operations

General Information

The Humphreys Engineer Center Support Activity (HECSA), Information Management Office, Automation Support Branch, Visual Information Services (CEHEC-IM-PV) offers graphics, photography, audio-visual (AV), and video support services to USACE elements. *Visual Information Services is committed to supporting all requirements, regardless of deadlines.*

Cost of Visual Information Services

For, the most part, work completed in-house there are no chargeback costs to the customer. However, the customer is charged for all work which is sent to commercial vendors. Certain kinds of work are routinely contracted out because CEHEC-IM-PV does not have the equipment necessary to perform the job. In other cases, work is contracted out in order to accommodate deadlines. *Commercial jobs which require quick turnaround can incur a surcharge of up to 100%.*

Graphic Support

Provides graphic assistance to Headquarters in the preparation of design of posters, flyers, certificates,

name tents and badges, pamphlets, plaques, briefing materials, 35mm slides, and vu-graphs. We also provide consultation concerning computer graphics related problems or guidance as to a suitable approach to a project.

Photography Service

The Photography Section can provide your office with 'one-stop shopping' for all your Photographic needs. We provide: formal portraiture, passport/ Visa, awards/ceremony coverage, project documentation, small object (table top) photography, and editorial photography. This visual support can be done in either 'wet' (traditional) or digital photography.

We can scan images, and assist in getting the best results for POWER POINT presentations. If you bring the HESCA Photo Team into the loop early on your projects we can assist with planning your photographic needs/requirements.

AV Equipment Loans

AV equipment is available on loan for in-house and offsite use. Equipment includes projectors: video/data, 35mm slide and overhead, VCR playback, cassette recorders, table-top PA system, video camcorder. Requestors are responsible for equipment and transportation to use site.

Audio and Video Tape Duplication

CEHEC-IM-PV offers duplication of both audio and video tapes (VHS). For large duplication jobs or tapes in other formats, we will contract out these services.

Videotape/AV Production

Visual Information Services assists in the development and presentation of command briefings for important visitors

and the design of AV/video presentations in support of the Corps mission.

Briefing and Presentation Support Services

CEHEC-IM-PV is available on request to setup and operate the AV equipment in the Chief of Engineers Conference Room 8222D. The conference room can show two rear screen images simultaneously. An in-house computer is available for user control of PowerPoint presentations or two computers can be hooked up and operated in the conference room. Video and TV playback and slide and overhead projectors are also available. A built-in audio system can record the proceedings or be used for audio conferencing.

Video Teleconferencing (VTC) Services

VTCs among Corps of Engineers sites and other compatible government locations may be arranged through Visual Information Services. A maximum of 14 sites may be connected during a teleconference. Conference of 8+ sites may need 2-4 weeks for reserving through FTS-2000 bridging services.

Cost of Teleconferencing: For estimating purposes, the cost of teleconferencing is \$60 per hour per site. For example, a one hour call among three sites would cost \$180.

The Customer Service Department

As you may know, HECSA provides the support services for all of the office automation (computer) products, the LAN, and telephone services. We also provide audiovisual support, personnel

services, library staffing, and facilities management. If you feel that you are not getting the support that you deserve, we would like to know about it. If you feel that the support that you received is excellent, we would like to know about that too. Please send your comments to me in an e-mail message at david.j.walton@usace.army.mil or you may call me at (202) 761-1070.

The Net Operations

We hear so much about the Internet. What is it? Where did it come from? The Internet is a global computer network made up of hundreds of smaller computer networks linked together by the telephone system. The Internet connects millions of computers around the world and is the largest computer network in the world. The Internet was developed as a system to allow some form of communications in the event that the United States came under nuclear attack.

The Internet is an international warehouse stuffed full of information. It is a store where you can buy anything that you can find at the local stores and quite a few things that you cannot find locally. The Internet is beginning to defy description.

The Internet is one of the most popular ways to use the computer. The Internet (net) allows the computer to become an even more powerful tool than it is. The net allows us to shop, play games, read the news, and talk or e-mail friends. Much of the office automation technology being developed is done so with the net in mind. Each month, we hope to keep you informed of how the

net can enhance your work efforts and your life in general. This month, I have included a short article on search engines. The article is not all-inclusive.

Search Engines

Did you ever hear anyone say, "I'll look for it on the web?" How do they find things on the Web? What is it that they use to find those fantastic auctions? How do they know exactly where to go to find all that good information?

Answer. Most of the time, people find pertinent information by using search engines. What is a search engine? A search engine is what the name indicates. It is a vehicle that searches the net or web for whatever you specify. If you need information concerning computer auctions, it is easiest to find several auctions using the web. How many search engines are available? There are too many engines available to name. Some of the most popular search engines are:

<http://www.altavista.com>,
<http://www.webcrawler.com>,
<http://www.directhit.com>
<http://www.infoseek.com> &
<http://www.yahoo.com>

How accurate are the search engines? Most will bombard you with garbage. Some will give you more specific information. If you are looking for information about XYZ brand computer sales, you will do well to write that in the search engine dialog box. If you are less specific, you will have to wade through a lot of trash to get to whatever it is you are looking for. Search engines are tools. If you use them properly, you will enhance your journey across the Internet description.

PC Prices

A lot of us have machines at home that perform a variety of tasks including telecommuting. We need general use systems. We also need state of the art systems so that we don't have to wait all day for the last e-mail message to pop up on the screen. Also, the kids in the household want something that screams so that they may play blast 'em at the speed of light.

The bad thing about any computer is the cost. Last year, I paid a little too much for a computer. You say that you have had the same problem in the not too distant past. Don't worry. There is a large group of other people singing in the same choir. Why am I reminding you of that unpleasantness? Well, I guess that misery loves company. And, I have been watching computer prices closely. I have good news. If you buy a new machine today, you are less likely to pay too much for it. Prices for really powerful boxes are low. The lower pricing is the direct result of competition in the marketplace. Chips makers are fighting for market share and have been lowering prices. Peripheral makers and board makers are competing for your business and have lowered their prices. Which makes the computer increasingly more affordable. (Now, we have to get the car makers to do the same thing.)

I recently read in **PC WORLD** online that \$1,000.00 super computers will be here within eighteen months. Can't wait eighteen months? There are a lot of strong general use machines available for less than \$900.00 today. If you need a stronger machine or a machine structured to perform a specific task such as graphics, you can still save a lot

of money. The price reductions have made these machines real user friendly. Some marketing type coined the term user friendly to make us think that computers are much easier to co-exist with now than they were in the past. Don't believe it. You still need a degree in computer science to get past the word processor. At least, the price is getting to be pocket friendlier.

Contributions

Any good publication needs and solicits support from the readers. We are no different. We need your feedback. Please tell us what you would like to see in The Networker. We know that many of you have good ideas about how we use technology. If you wish to share that knowledge by writing an article, please contact me david.j.walton@usace.army.mil or you may call me at (202) 761-1070. We need your support to make The Networker a success. Please send in your articles and ideas so that we may incorporate them in this newsletter.