Keynote speech to address networking in education

By FELISA NEURINGER
Assistant Managing Editor

Kenneth King, president of EDU-COM, will kick off this year's CompuFest Thursday with a keynote address on computer networking and the scholarly community.

"Networking is a mechanism whereby scholars all over the world can communicate with each other electronically," King said in an interview. "It will eliminate barriers in space and time in research."

Now almost 1,000 colleges and universities around the world are linked together by low-speed connections, enabling professors to send electronic mail and messages to each other, he said. Within three to four years, high-speed networks will be the newest technology, allowing many of these scholars to send pictures and digitized voice messages through the computer system as well.

Saving time won't be the only benefit of high-speed networking. "Scholars at remote institutions can become a part of the research community . . . by being able to collaborate with scholars at bigger institutions," King said.

The networking also will enhance research productivity because people can find everything known on one subject in one central electronic resource, he added.

EDUCOM is a non-profit consortium of 550 colleges and universities and 100 corporate associates founded in 1964. The organization, which helps the institutions use and manage information technology, also serves as a link to the worldwide network.

William Graves, UNC professor of mathematics and special assistant to the provost, said EDUCOM is the country's leading academic computing organization.

Graves said the planners of CompuFest asked King to be the keynote speaker because of his experience in the field of academic computing.

"In his position as president (of EDUCOM), he has a real overview of what's going on all over the country, and he'll be able to share that with us," Graves said. "He's the right man. We couldn't have done any better in selecting the speaker."

King became president of Washington, D.C.-based EDUCOM in September 1987. Before taking his post at EDUCOM, he was vice provost for computer systems at Cornell University, starting in 1980. There, King was instrumental in developing the Cornell National Supercomputer Center project, one of the nation's university-based supercomputing centers started by the National Science Foundation.

Before going to Cornell, he worked for the City University of New York for nine years where he eventually became vice chancellor for university systems. From 1962 to 1970, King was director of the Columbia University Computer Center.

In 1962, he received his doctorate in theoretical physics from Columbia, and in 1951, he received his bachelor's degree in physics from Reed College.

King will speak Thursday, Sept. 29, at 12:30 p.m. in the Carolina Union Auditorium.

Information technology undergoes revolution

By THOM SOLOMON
Staff Writer

Easier, quicker and cheaper.

That is what consumers can expect from the computer and information technology industry in the future, say several area computer and information technology experts.

Evelyn Daniel, dean of the School of Library Science, prefers to call the computer industry information technology.

"It is the computers combined with telecommunications that have made the revolution," Daniel said.

The industry is on an upward curve in several areas, Daniel said. One is the amount of memory a system can store.

Students have access to more information than they can process, so they should strengthen research skills to accommodate this advance in technology, she said.

Information technology today is cheaper, faster and more specialized, Daniel said. For instance, information is becoming transferable and portable.

"Instructors will be able to send assignments to students, check them and send them back electronically," Daniel said.

Carole Page, outreach coordinator for the Microcomputer Support Center, said speed and networking was the focus of new technology.

Networking is the ability to communicate from one machine to another machine, whether it is across the room or across the nation, Page said.

"It (having computers) will be just like having a telephone," Page said.

Networking allows for convenient and fast communication, she said.

"Imagine not standing in line for hours waiting for concert tickets, but instead ordering by computer," she said.

The technology needed to communicate this way is available, but people need to be educated, and machines need to be more available, she said.

"No matter who you are or what you do, everyone will use computers," Page said.

Networking also requires various systems to be interchangeable. Michelle Zedick, purchasing manager for Carolina Computer Stores, said computer program developers recognize this.

"They are trying to make things more compatible," Zedick said. "I do not think any system wants to stand alone; they all want to work together."

Zedick said the more someone knows about computers, the better off he will be.

Libby Evans, education coordinator for the Office of Information Systems in the UNC School of Medicine, agreed, but said there are ways consumers can prepare for the future of computing.

Many people do not use computers simply because they do not type, Evans said. Future developments include voice-activated computers that would eliminate the need for typing skills, but until then typing skills are essential, she said.

Computers are not just a replacement for typewriters, Evans said. Consumers should not be afraid to explore computers' other possibilities.

The prices of computers may not reflect that the cost is decreasing, Evans said. Although the prices are not lower, the technology is improving, she said.

"In other words, you are getting more for your money," Evans said. "I would not buy the same system that I would have bought three years ago because technology has changed, although that same system is probably cheaper."

Visitors to CompuFest can win prizes — including computers

By JO LEE CREDLE
Staff Writer

Prizes! Prizes! Prizes!

Everyone who shows up for this year's CompuFest in the Union is eligible for a wealth of prizes.

Computers may not interest you in the least, but it is hard to deny that they are the up-and-coming wave of the future here at your fingertips. CompuFest not only demonstrates to students, faculty and staff the world of knowledge and fun available through computers, but it offers free advice, free information and best of all, free computers to a lucky few.

All students, faculty, staff, hospital workers and anyone else associated with the University have received a bright pink card in the mail with information about this year's CompuFest.

"We sent out approximately 32,000 invitations to CompuFest, and each one is a potential winner in the drawing for the computers and other prizes," said John Gorsuch, one of the main coordinators of the festival.

By walking into the Great Hall Sept. 29 through Oct. 1 and dropping that pink card into a drawing box, a person is automatically registered for the drawing.

The main prizes that will be given away include an Apple Macintosh Plus, and IBM PS/2 and a Zenith EaZy PC. "These companies donated these computers when they heard what we were doing here at CompuFest," Gorsuch said.

IBM is also giving away a bicycle worth over $400. And MacIntosh has donated three compact disc players for the drawing.

Jerry Heald, a work-station marketing representative from IBM, said IBM will also be giving away six $50 gift certificates to local popular restaurants. At the IBM booth, students can receive free pens, T-shirts and caps promoting the new IBM PS/2 system.

Each person is allowed to enter only once. If a card is drawn, that person must be able to prove affiliation with the University.

If a person should happen to forget his card or lose it, he can fill out a white card that enables him to register for drawings for the bicycle, the CD players and the other giveaways, but not for the three computers.

CompuFest is sponsored by representatives from many departments around the University, including Academic Computing Services, Center for Teaching and Learning, Institute for Research in Social Science, the Microcomputing Support Center and UNC Student Stores.

Each of the computer companies represented at CompuFest will have a booth set up if you need information or have any questions.

CompuFest representatives will be giving away free visors to the first 1,000 people who come into the Great Hall. CompuFest T-shirts are also available for $8, and some will be given away as prizes.

Even if computing is not your bag, or if you are an experienced computer whiz, come check out CompuFest in the Great Hall Thursday through Saturday for a chance at some great prizes and for a look at the world of computers at your fingertips.