

Y2K Fears Prompt Better Systems

Computer experts say the lack of nationwide Y2K problems comes from early and extensive preparations.

By JESSICA CHISM AND KIMBERLY GRABINER
Staff Writers

Intense preparations for the Year 2000 computer bug greatly enhanced the computer systems of universities across the country.

Universities explored options to alleviate any potential difficulties during the rollover.

Some hired additional staff specifically to focus on Y2K, while others purchased updated hardware and software packages.

The result was that the potentially disastrous computer virus turned out to be more of a blessing than a burden for universities nationwide.

Stephen Weiss, chairman of the UNC computer science department, said UNC did not experience any complications concerning Y2K.

"Preparing for Y2K was kind of like a spring cleaning exercise," he said. "It brought us more up-to-date. It was a use-

ful exercise."

Scott Ridenour, computer facilities manager at Duke University, expressed similar sentiments about the Y2K situation.

"We weren't too concerned with Y2K bug to begin with," he said.

"Basically we just made sure all of our operating systems were current."

Early recognition of the Y2K problem left many universities better prepared to handle the much-anticipated rollover.

The University of Michigan began researching the problem in the late 1980s.

"We did extensive amounts of preparation for Y2K, starting in late 1980s," said Y2K Project Manager Gloria Hauck/Thiele.

"We did a lot of testing and picked up most of the problems before the rollover."

"This complete analysis of the campus left us better prepared for any problems."

As early as March 1998, UMICH began conducting campuswide aware-

ness campaigns focusing on the university community concerning Y2K, said Wanda Monroe, media relations specialist for the office of chief information officer.

The University of Texas at Austin also began early Y2K preparations.

Officials started working on the Y2K issue after the state passed legislation for university state agencies to plan for the year 2000, said Bill Bard, director of telecommunication services at UT-Austin.

"I think that we were fortunate," he said.

"This is something we envisioned. A lot of things could have experienced problems but didn't."

Officials decided not to hire any additional personnel but instead used existing staff and gave them different tasks in correcting the school's computer problems, Bard said.

"The consensus among many universities was that the financial investments of Y2K preparations reaped the future benefits."

"Clearly I think the cost effect was a positive thing," Bard said.

"The amount of staff time probably ran into a couple of million dollars."

Thiele also said he believed that the preparations at UMICH were cost effective.

"Cost analysis found that 90 percent of resources utilized in preparation had long-term gains," Thiele said.

"Therefore, only 10 percent of the expenditures were short-term."

Although the year 2000 is well under way, project leaders still explore the possibility of unique dates presenting problems.

Thiele, along with other officials, conducted tests to ensure that the leap year date, Feb. 29, would not create further complications with universities' computer systems.

"I am confident that there should be no problems," Thiele said.

Duke University and UNC officials were also confident that the leap year would not present any problems whatsoever.

"We are not concerned with the leap year at all," Ridenour said.

"We haven't given it much thought."

The State & National Editor can be reached at stntdesk@unc.edu.

"This complete analysis of the campus left us better prepared for any problems."

GLORIA HAUCK THIELE
University of Michigan Y2K Project Manager

Protests Continue After Diallo Verdict

Associated Press

NEW YORK - New demands for social justice, law enforcement reforms and a federal inquiry echoed from pulpits and city streets on Sunday in the aftermath of the acquittal of four police officers in the shooting death of Amadou Diallo.

More than 1,000 people joined a peaceful prayer vigil outside the United Nations, where activist the Rev. Al Sharpton hoped to bring the Diallo case to international attention.

The shooting victim "could have been one of these ambassadors," said Sharpton, who also said he was "calling for another jury to hear evidence" on the policies of New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani.

"Come November, the jury is going to render its decision," he said, referring to Giuliani's probable run for the U.S. Senate against first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Some in the crowd wore signs reading: "Go ahead and shoot. I'm black so it must be justified."

In what was billed as a day of prayer, political leaders and activists joined Sharpton in criticizing the verdicts as inappropriate for a case in which police fired 41 bullets and hit the West African immigrant 19 times, only to discover afterward that he was completely unarmed.

The four officers, acquitted of second-degree murder and lesser charges by a

jury in Albany on Friday, still face a departmental inquiry and possibly federal charges if Attorney General Janet Reno finds evidence that Diallo's civil rights were violated.

Sharpton's National Action Network is investigating which companies contribute money to the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association, which helped finance the defense of the four officers in the case.

Later this week, Sharpton will release names of the companies and will ask citizens to boycott the firms, said his spokeswoman, Rachel Noerdlinger.

At St. Patrick's Cathedral, Auxiliary Bishop James McCarthy, filling in for an ailing Cardinal John O'Connor, told parishioners Diallo's death should cause people to "re-examine our own tendencies toward violence, toward fear and perhaps toward prejudice - racial prejudice at that."

City Council Speaker Peter Vallone, speaking at Harlem's Bethel AME church, said that to make sure Diallo's death was not in vain, the police department needed to continue to make "fundamental, meaningful change, so that people aren't afraid that the police are going to shoot them."

Norman Siegel, executive director of the New York Civil Liberties Union, told 200 parishioners at a Congregational church in Queens that the Diallo case was giving new impetus to his group's proposals for police misconduct reform.

SWEATSHOPS

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companies, allowing them to make perfunctory cleanups.

But Pharis Harvey, director of the International Labor Rights Fund, a group that belongs to the FLA, said companies that are part of the FLA are subjecting themselves to complete monitoring.

"(Companies) are finding that it is in their best interest to have stable relationships with factories," Harvey said.

The FLA developed out of the Apparel Industry Partnership, a com-

mittee established by President Clinton early in 1996.

The FLA's board consists of six industry representatives, including Levi Strauss, Nike and Reebok, as well as six public interest groups and one delegate representing the 132 universities that have signed on to the group, Harvey said.

Roeper said WRC's board would be established at the founding conference to be held in April.

She said the consortium would have more international groups on its board and would give universities a more representative voice than the FLA.

While Harvey said he was continuing

to urge students and the WRC into discussions with the FLA, the two groups do not seem able to see eye-to-eye.

"Unfortunately there is a lot of miscommunication that has created a level of suspicion in the student movement," Harvey said.

Pugatch said the differences between the two groups might be irreconcilable.

"I don't think the two systems can work together," he said. "The contradictions are too stark. One system is built around worker empowerment, and one isn't."

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VIGIL

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row the focus of the vigil's discussion, she said talk could center around hate crimes mentioned by the speakers.

"We're trying to make it a general topic," she said.

The vigil will end with a candle-lighting ceremony accompanied by a moment of silence. Crespo said, "We're trying to make a general statement on our own - remembering and reflecting."

The University Editor can be reached at udesk@unc.edu.

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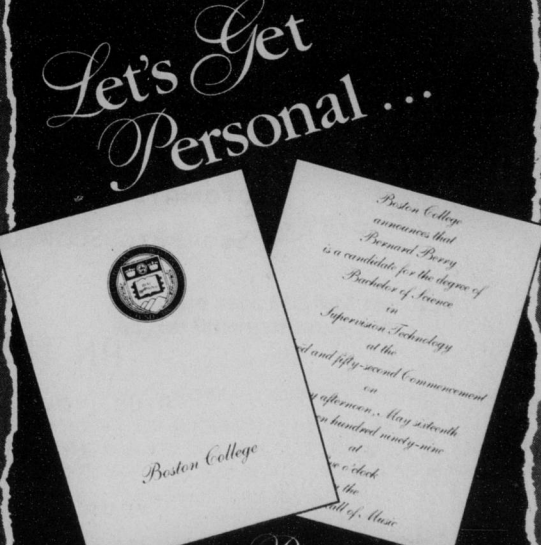
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