Making Your Plans for Chicago in 2001?  
“Blowing the IT Career Blues Away”  

By Kevin Jetton, AITP Director-at-Large, 2000  
AITP Secretary/Treasurer & AITP National  
Collegiate Conference Coordinator

The excitement is building as we get closer to the 6th  
annual AITP National Collegiate Conference next spring  
in Chicago, Illinois. Although we can’t announce any  
confirmed keynoters or sponsors at this moment, major efforts  
are underway to close many deals that are in the works!  
Additionally, if you have contacts or alumni at organizations  
that would consider sponsoring, exhibiting or speaking at the  
conference, let us know by sending all the contact information  
to KJetton@compuserve.com.

How can you get the latest conference information you ask?  
It is simple:

1. Check www.aitp.org frequently  
2. Subscribe to the AITP student list server

On the web site, you will find information about the conference  
schedule, lodging and travel discounts. Soon, contest information  
will be published, as well as speakers, sponsors and keynoters once they are confirmed.

Five Strategies for the Hunt

by Morton M. Rumberg, Ed.D

Uh, oh. It’s that time again, when you need to dust off the old  
resume and start pounding the pavement. Perhaps we should say, pounding the keyboard. If you haven’t been  
job hunting recently, you’ll find that job hunting techniques and strategies have changed. While resumes are still required, and local want ads are still a good source, more and more frequently smart candidates go on-line to look for positions. It’s a very competitive market in all professional categories, and you need to use the best resources to accomplish your objective. The following strategies should help you compete more effectively and efficiently.

Strategy One: Use the Internet to make best use of your time.

Most companies have web pages and often post job openings, but that means you must go to that specific site for details. Smart companies will also post openings on major job database sites on the web, increasing their opportunities for recruitment visibility, as well as posting them on their local sites. For example, if you wanted

Nanosecond and Information Executive on the Web

At meetings held with AITP student chapter members at the Collegiate Conference in Tampa, many students told AITP that they prefer to get the Nanosecond electronically. As a result of input from you, the student members of AITP, Nanosecond is now accessible only on the AITP website www.aitp.org. The student input is important to AITP and AITP will continue to listen to the student members and their ideas as their role in AITP continues to grow.

With this new opportunity of The Nanosecond on the website will come quicker access to the top IT college and university Collegiate Conference information; quicker access to “Ask The Experts” information dealing with finding the best IT job for you; and quicker access to the top IT technical articles as requested by you, the AITP student member.

As you go to the AITP website, you also now, for the very first time, have complete access to Information Executive, the IT magazine for the IT professional. View the 10 issues per year of this highly rated IT magazine on the website along with The Nanosecond. Find out what the hot IT topics are for the current IT professional.

As AITP moves in the direction of more electronic communication, it becomes critical to stay in touch with the valuable and evergrowing student members. Update your email address on the AITP website so that you can be notified when The Nanosecond has been posted to the AITP website.
Leadership Skills Lead to Leadership Positions

One of the many pieces of advice offered to students gearing up to enter the world of commerce, or to professionals looking to change jobs, is to join their professional association. Membership in an association offers networking opportunities, continuing education and shows a potential employer that you are serious about continuing to grow in your profession. But simply joining an organization, attending a few meetings and throwing its name on your resume is not enough. Professional associations offer you the opportunity to truly acquire skills that cannot be obtained elsewhere particularly leadership skills.

Volunteerism is a great way for people to obtain leadership positions not available elsewhere. That is a large factor for many people joining organizations, whether professional or personal. Your AITP Student Chapter offers you the opportunity to get involved in positions of leadership even before graduating from college. Committee and chapter chairmanships are open to any student member willing to put in a little extra effort. And take it from one who has been there, the extra effort is well worth it.

Leadership skills obtained through volunteerism will lead to leadership positions elsewhere. One of the best things you can do for yourself, and your future, is to gain all the experience you can from the opportunities that life puts before you. Leadership positions also allow you to effect change in ways that simple membership cannot. In this edition of Nanosecond you will find an article detailing a roundtable discussion with student chapter officers that took place at the Collegiate Conference last spring. Throughout the roundtable, students offered ideas and suggestions of ways in which membership with AITP could be enhanced. They not only participated in a process that will effect change in their organization, but in doing so, they increased their own skills in the areas of negotiation, group dynamics and brainstorming. These are skills that cannot be taught in a classroom, and translate well to the paying position. It is no secret that recruiters and human resource specialists look for this kind of experience.

Don’t let opportunities to improve your future go to someone else. Get involved with your chapter. Volunteer.

Chicago 2001

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The conference chair, Astrit Mehmeti with DeVry Chicago, and the student chapter are already hard at work making sure the conference is on track. A nationwide committee of volunteers is also hard at work securing sponsors, career fair exhibitors and speakers plus tending to the details of the programming contest events.

NOTE: The tentative schedule has both the JAVA and Systems Analysis & Design contest events on Thursday evening, so arrive early enough to not miss these events!
an information technology job specifically with USi, you would query www.usi.net. Similarly, for positions with Lockheed Martin, you’d surf to www.lmcjobs.com. You may also find these same available openings listed on major sites such as careerbuilder.com or hotjobs.com. Major job sites are listed at the end of this article, as well as sites and associations that primarily target minorities.

Kevin Dorward, a manager with Booz-Allen & Hamilton Inc., Information Resource Center in McLean, Virginia, said, “We definitely make good use of our on-line job center. It’s an effective way for people to review our openings and get contact information.”

A savvy candidate will also use e-mail or fax to electronically send his or her resume to a site. The resume will be posted for recruiters to view.

Dorward also emphasized that electronically transmitted resumes still need to be error-free. “A sloppy resume may mean that the candidate won’t take the time to do a careful job. We can usually find someone else who is careful and has the same qualifications.”

Strategy Two: Confidentiality and privacy. Sending a resume electronically can cause confidentiality and privacy concerns. You may jeopardize your privacy by sending resumes and posting them electronically. Your name will be on your resume and it is possible that your current employer may see it. Therefore, if privacy is important, you should consider using only web sites that protect your confidentiality.

As long as your employer is paying you, that’s where your loyalty should be. Do not abuse this trust by spending all day surfing the net job hunting. Do that on your own time.

As a further caution, you should be aware that the American Management Association reported 27 percent of U.S. companies monitored employee e-mail use in 1998. Don’t abuse the company’s trust.

Strategy Three: Surf the net. Visit and become familiar with sites specializing in the employment process. See what each offers and what their differences are. Keep a list of the recruiting capability. “While we like the face-to-face contact, our on-line recruiting job board is a good place for candidates to start.”

Strategy Four: Read the literature on job hunting, resumes, and interviewing techniques. The literature is constantly changing and so are job characteristics. You need to be aware of the latest trends. While resume formats have remained constant over the years, you need to move away from the generic resume (one-size-fits-all, shotgun approach) and develop your resume to target specific companies (the rifle approach). Don’t simply supply a laundry list of things you’ve done. Show how your qualifications and successes will meet the company’s needs.

Proofread your resume carefully, and practice, practice, practice interviewing with friends. Identify the flaws in your job hunt and take steps to eliminate these flaws. Dorward emphasized his concern with typos in resumes: “Errors in a resume will cause it to be set aside.”

Keyser likewise agreed that, “Unless there is some compelling reason, we do not spend much time on resumes with errors.”

Strategy Five: Network. Do not neglect your personal contacts - it’s called networking. It is a truism that it is easier to get a job when you have one, and it is also true that most jobs are obtained through personal contacts. Make a list of everyone you know and contact them. Ask if they would act as a reference for you - and by the way, do they know of any openings? It’s a start.

One of the best places to build a network of contacts is through membership in a professional association. Most people attending professional association meetings are employed and serious about their profession. That’s why they take a little extra time to attend the monthly meetings. Take advantage of this opportunity. You will find it well worth your time, and many employers reimburse the cost of membership. AITP offers graduating student members the Interim Membership, essentially a professional reduced rate.

These are well-stated to job hunting. nd determine which are best for you.
Five Strategies

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acinet.org
Overview of the job market, occupation statistics, job profiles, qualifications, average wages
bloomberg.com/life/jobs/html
For Financial Administration and Accounting
careermosaic.com
Resources for recruiters, lists resumes
careerpath.com
Newspaper ads, lists resumes
careerbuilder.com
Listing of jobs/ads
cooljobs.com
Unusual jobs (want work aboard a cruise ship? In a circus?)
consultlink.com
High-Tech contractors and consulting
classifieds.yahoo.com/employment.html
Job postings and resume scanning
dice.com
For Information Technology professionals
executnet.com
Senior level positions, $100K+
 fjn.com
Financial Job Network
headhunter.net
Tracks talent for you, lists resumes
hoovers.com
Info on thousands of companies, financials and products
hotjobs.com
Job postings and resume searching, lists resumes
jobbankusa.com
Automatic broadcasting of resumes
jobsearch.org
Department of Labor site, lists resumes
jobstar.org
California Job Search, latest salary surveys
jobtrak.com
Partners with colleges, recruiters, lists resumes
jobweb.org
College career services, provides company profiles
monster.com
List of jobs around the US, lists resumes
nationjob.com
Matches jobs with employment you're looking for
netshare.com
Senior level positions, $100K+
rileyguide.com
Directs you to the best places to post resumes
technes.com
For Information Technology professionals

Minority Networking Groups (Note: There are many more groups and associations; search the web for those that meet your needs and objectives):

Web address (Precede with www.)
awcncc.org
awcncc.org
Black Data Processing Associates
bdpa.org
bdpa.org
Black Geeks Online
blackgeeks.net
http://tangle.seas.gwu.edu/~cahsee/homepage.html (www. not needed)

nabtp.org
nabtp.org
National Association of Black Telecommunications Professionals, Inc.
nsbe.org
nsbe.org
National Society of Black Engineers
shpe.net
shpe.net
Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers
tamu.edu/maes
tamu.edu/maes
Society of Mexican American Engineers and Scientists
Share YOUR AITP Student Chapter Ideas & Success Stories!

We are always looking for good ideas to share with all of our AITP student chapters. If you have a unique community project and/or fundraising project that your student chapter has initiated, please share it with your fellow student chapters by writing a brief article. Every student chapter is always interested in learning tips for securing increased levels of interest, awareness, support and sponsorships from area businesses and organizations, especially where graduates are employed.

Also — consider being an AITP National Collegiate Conference breakout speaker showcasing the efforts and ideas of your AITP student chapter with chapters all over the country. For details, simply contact Kevin Jetton at KJetton@compuserve.com.

AITP Interim Membership Program is available to all graduating AITP Student Chapter members and it is an excellent opportunity for you to continue your career as part of the professional membership of AITP. Being a professional member offers the following benefits to Interim Members:

1. A forum for members to meet others in the "IT field and to share experiences.
2. An opportunity to hear industry professionals discuss the latest topics of interest.
3. An opportunity to attend Chapter sponsored company tours.
4. An opportunity to attend Chapter, Region and Association seminars and conferences at member and not guest cost.
5. Monthly receipt of Chapter Newsletters at your home or business.
6. Monthly receipt of Information Executive at your home or business.
8. An opportunity to participate in the leadership of the Chapter and thereby open new doors to personal and professional excellence.
9. Get the Recognition, Appreciation, Representation and Networking opportunities you have been missing.
10. Reach peers, the public and legislators through a unified voice.
11. All other benefits that they receive such as:
   • Group Insurance Plans
   • MNBA Financial Services
   • Travel and Car Rental discounts
   • Magazine Subscription discounts
   • Participation in the AITP Lending Library

All these benefits are available for the same cost as a student membership plus any chapter fee (usually $10–$40) for the first year after graduation. The Association portion rises from $25 to $35 in the 2nd year and $60 in the 3rd year. Also the first time member fee of $15 is waived.

Further information about AITP can be obtained by going to www.aitp.org.

As a warm-up event for 2001 AITP National Collegiate Conference
You are invited to the:

15th Annual Tarleton State University AITP Student Programming Contest & Symposium

You are invited to the Tarleton State University campus in Stephenville, Texas, about an hour south of Forth Worth, Texas, for our 15th annual AITP student programming contest and symposium.

The event dates are Friday, 2/16/2001 through Saturday, 2/17/2001 and will include contest events in VisualBasic, C/C++, COBOL and Web Design along with guest speakers and an awards luncheon.

For additional information, contact us at aitp@tarleton.edu or visit www.tarleton.edu/~aitp.
How Bad Can It Be If The Lights Go Out?

by Dr. Stephen E. Lunce, C.C.P.
Associate Professor of Information Systems

At the end of the 1990s, businesses and governments prepared for an information technology disaster of catastrophic proportions; known in the popular media as the Y2K or Millennium Bug, the potential failure of date-based systems did not produce the dramatic headlines that were anticipated. As clocks around the world reached midnight on December 31, 1999, power grids did not fail, tracks did not stop, airplanes did not fall from the sky, and the world’s economy did not crumble. According to reports in leading trade publications, governments and businesses spent in excess of $114 billion U.S. dollars to ensure that none of the potential disasters became reality. International Data Corporation (IDC) estimates that spending in the U.S. “will hit $121 billion, while more than $296 billion will be spent worldwide.” However, these organizations did not simply throw money at a problem, there was a systematic method to avoid the potentially devastating end of the year. What many doomsayers failed to realize is that the process of contingency planning is merely one of the routine activities of professional information technology managers.

While expenditures, possibly in excess of $290 billion may seem disconcerting, the results were remarkable. Those results could have been significantly different without an understanding of contingency planning and disaster recovery, and more importantly without an intimate insight into business recovery planning (BRP) and a plan to make recovery possible. There are three (3) important factors that organizations must understand: [1] the financial and functional impact of a system failure; [2] the importance of contingency planning; and [3] the process of business recovery planning. Thorough understanding will provide an environment wherein multi-billion dollar investments are justified and multi-trillion dollar failures are avoided.

Significant empirical studies of the impacts of the loss or failure of information systems have been conducted since 1978; however, they all dealt with a potential threat and the impact of that threat becoming reality. The Y2K event was not a potential threat, rather it was inevitable; how the IS community prepared for the arrival of the last year of the twenty-first century may be an indicator of a dramatic change in perceptions from those reported in previous studies. These studies all suggested that the loss of a mission-critical information system would be detrimental to the financial well being and stability of an organization. In fact, the studies suggest that if a firm is dependant upon an information system for revenue production (such as a bank’s network of ATMs), and if that system is out of service for as long as five working days, there is a greater than 90% probability that the firm will be forced into bankruptcy within 24 months of the failure.

A manager who is aware of the threat has developed a perceptual awareness. With this perception, the decision maker can begin to execute the managerial responsibilities of protecting and preserving the organization’s assets. If the threat has been identified and the manager determines that a significant threat exists, the action must be taken to protect the system that is at risk. Failure to take protective action will either violate legislative requirements, such as the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, or will provide evidence that the decision maker does not regard the threat as serious enough to merit preemptive action.

The premise that threats exist for systems in general is universally accepted, and these threats to the security of systems have been demonstrated to be isomorphic across systems. The issue that this acceptance presents is, if threats are real, and if threats are perceived by decision makers, how does this perception effect the way in which decision makers go about their decision-making process in relation to the potential development of disaster recovery plans. How the organization responds to these threats is a reflection of the decision maker’s perception of the significance of the threat. If the decision maker perceives a serious risk, one that if incurred would result in significant damage to the organization, some action will be initiated by the perception. There will be evidence of this perception in a specific subset of the security measures implemented by the organization. That subset is the organization’s contingency plan.

Threats might appear in one of two forms. They will either be natural events that might impact the organization, or they will be the result of some human activity. For example, storms such as hurricanes and tornadoes would be included in the category of natural threats. Deliberate or accidental destruction or corruption of a database would be considered within the category of the man-made threats. The Y2K problem falls into this later category, and it resulted from a supposedly rational a priori decision to save space in computer storage devices.

There appears to be no commonly accepted and used decision algorithm for making a decision to insure against the possibility of earnings loss based on system failure. Any rational decision regarding such insurance, however, should be based on cost-benefit analysis, resulting in minimized cost to the business. Two major elements should be considered in making such a decision: the probability, or risk, of a system failure occurring and an estimate of earnings loss that would be incurred should such a failure occur.

The perceived size of the potential loss is reflected in the sophistication of the contingency plan and the quality of the exercise of the plan, as the model illustrates. The greater the possible loss, the more sophisticated will be the steps taken by the rational decision maker to insure that if the threat is actualized, the damage has been mitigated. The more of the plan that can be practiced, the more employee familiarity will
Great Ideas for Student Chapter Members Result from Brainstorming Session

by Stephen Flowers, Student Chapter Liaison
North-Central Florida Chapter

Student members from across the nation participated in a spirited, emotionally charged and stimulating two-hour brainstorming session with faculty advisors and association staff during the Association of Information Technology Professional's Annual National Collegiate Conference in Tampa, Florida on April 1.

Determined to elicit honest and compelling ideas, Association President Donny Wall skillfully led the roundtable discussion. The purpose of the meeting was to gather ideas for improving and expanding the relationship between Professional and Student Chapters.

Mr. Wall focused on a rapid-fire, yet thorough, delineation of the present and future course of AITP and its relationship with those preparing to enter the IT workforce. He didn’t have to wait long for the responses.

The discussion focused on jobs, meeting attendance, goals, speakers, student relationships with the professional chapters and National, membership, fundraising, and sponsorships.

JOBS

One central issue was ways in which AITP could assist students with finding jobs. Local chapter contacts were considered important. One suggestion was to find a way for AITP to encourage students to develop skills considered most marketable. Other suggestions included organizing certification study groups, working in conjunction with the career resource center of each institution, student internships through local AITP members and other area businesses, and contacting recruiters to work with AITP on student placements.

A suggestion was made for students to hone interview and resume writing skills through role-playing exercises. School support of these efforts was considered essential.

Work is being conducted to increase the name recognition of AITP. The association is “the best-kept secret there is,” according to Mr. Wall. Membership in AITP can help in interviews. In addition, the student chapters could run Junior-Senior Banquets in the fall featuring company-sponsored tables, speakers and dinners, along with Job Fairs and Career Fairs.

Networking (the idea that it’s not what you know, but who you know) is crucial at both professional and peer levels. One suggestion to broaden the base of contacts included establishing a National Database of professional contacts in various cities of all sizes, and local chapter contests with judging by professionals in the local IT community.

Some student chapters have compiled a Resume Book—both web-based and printed—sent to recruiters...300–400 every semester.

Other chapters post an online job board, a list of AITP-friendly companies, and use commercial services such as monster.com and dice.com. Promoting a User-Group atmosphere leads to people sending in emails. They can see what’s out there, what they want, and organize a student forum.

MEETING ATTENDANCE

Ideas about how to increase the percentage of members attending meetings ran the gamut from the obvious, such as compelling speakers and topics, to free food (a big draw). “What’s in it for me?” is a question many student members ask. Although participation looks good on a resume, that’s not enough.

Companies recruiting are interested in the extent of a member’s involvement with the organization.

“People who put in, get out,” Mr. Wall said. And the leadership skills, technical knowledge and contacts made with AITP can even help students find another position in the future.

Some chapters meet for lunch; others for dinner (free pizza). Meeting frequency and attendance norms vary. A majority has more than one meeting per month, some last more than an hour. Some chapters’ coordinate with evening class times.

A related concern was burnout. Active members are active people, and it is important to structure and schedule meetings so that conflicts with class schedules, spring break and other activities are eliminated.

To foster interdependence, it is important to distinguish AITP from other similar groups on campus. Chat Rooms and other online meetings can broaden the reach of the association. In Georgia, student members receive Elective Credit for membership. Some student governments pay student activity fees to support the chapter. To increase visibility, t-shirts and signs can be used. And the chapter can help set up university sponsored labs, mentoring and tutoring.

PARENT CHAPTER AND NATIONAL SUPPORT

A number of students wanted more information on National. Donny Wall pointed out some of the things National does:

1. Organizes, promotes and hosts an Annual National Collegiate Conference. “We try to put a vehicle in place to provide jobs, contacts, knowledge, bucks, and content,” Mr. Wall said.

2. Nanosecond

3. Administration: Help with dues, collections.

4. Foster the relationship between student chapters and the professional chapters.

5. Networking: Professional Chapter members will talk to you, an intangible but important value.

6. Interim Memberships provide all the privileges and benefits of a professional membership at reduced cost for three years following graduation and entry into the workforce.

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How Bad Could It Be?

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be developed. As familiarity increases, the possibility of unforeseen occurrences in the actual execution of the plan will decrease. A plan that is very sophisticated, e.g. hot site contract plus accommodations for personnel, etc., may not be as effective a recovery tool as a less sophisticated plan that has been well rehearsed. If personnel know how to respond and know precisely who is responsible for which activities, the recovery window will be reduced. This reduction may mean the difference in survival of the organization at a level that resembles the pre-actualization of the threat, and the failure of the organization to survive for an extended period of time in the post-incident environment.

REFERENCES


Great Ideas

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7. What does AITP do for you professionally? It is the voice for IT industry. It promotes Legislative activities and develops opinion on topics such as spam, email, privacy issues and policy development.

8. Hosts the Annual Conference and Meeting.


ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

Information on the organization and staff contacts are available on the website, as are chapter publications, sample bylaws, and references. Problems student members may face with dues information, and processing and tabulating should be brought to the attention of the Membership Department at 1-800-224-9371.

Mr. Wall told students that AITP can solve problems “if we know we have them.” Students were asked to be specific and document any concerns.

Several students called for more intensive involvement in AITP. They suggested that student volunteers could be an invaluable resource. Some want to publish ideas in Nanosecond and use it for communicating among chapters. Linda Clark urged students to forward ideas, articles, and questions to her. As Donny Wall stated, “One of our major strengths is volunteers — all of us…One of our major weaknesses is volunteers — all of us.”

A few students complained of weak professional chapter support. Mr. Wall suggested that the sponsoring chapter could be substituted with another via a formal request process. Some problems are strictly logistical. He even suggested that Interim Members can be professional chapter board members, and could take over a chapter’s professional board if it doesn’t perform.

Students want standardization of forms and complained that the organization is too paper-intensive. In response, Wall said that many professional chapters are testing the use of electronic reports to stop paper shuffling and their results will be studied to streamline reporting.

A few students were critical of their Faculty Advisors. Mr. Wall said that if the advisor is ill informed or non-participating, it is the right of the students to replace him or her. The Faculty Advisor must be a member of the professional chapter. He/she is the main link between students and professionals.

A strong spirit of community involvement also was apparent. Besides working with National, students can work off-line as programmers and developers of an Online Survey. In order to gain visibility, support and real-world experience, students can help Senior Citizens in their community by tutoring, setting up labs, participating in the Regional Conference for Aging and in Community Centers. Other organizations including Big Brothers/Big Sisters welcome student help. Local chapters can help wire a school for the Internet, perhaps garnering press exposure and real hands-on training. Commercial computer services can be done for a fee to support chapter finances. To raise funds, students have run flea-markets featuring used systems.

The roundtable discussion ended with Donny Wall thanking the participants for their many ideas and enthusiasm and urged them to incorporate these values when they return to campus.