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Navigating the Seas of Change: 2008 CISOA and RP Group Conference



Community colleges throughout the state of California were represented at the 5th annual joint conference of the California Community College (CCC) Chief Information Systems Officers Association (CISOA) and The Research and Planning Group (RP), held March 16-19 at the Hyatt Regency in Monterey.

The joint conference and exhibit provided an opportunity for networking, information exchange and learning. About 200 deans, vice chancellors, MIS

directors, research and planning directors, vice presidents, IT directors and others from the community college arena attended, including many representatives from the CCC System Office. They were joined by more than 60 IT vendors.

Conference events included a golf tournament, stand up from a world-famous comedian and a fun run/walk. There was also time for business: CISOA held its annual business meeting while RP took the opportunity to convene its board. <>

>> See pages 6-7 for photos from the 2008 CISOA/RP Conference.>>

CAHSEE Recognized as Network Innovator

by Janis Cortese,
Publicity & Communications Manager, CENIC

Four innovative, cutting-edge educational and research projects in the state of California and the Governor's leadership on broadband access for all Californians have been recognized by the Corporation for Education Network Initiatives in California (CENIC) as Innovations in Networking Award Winners for 2008. Awards were presented in March at CENIC's twelfth annual conference, "CENIC 08: Lightpath to the Stars."

CENIC owns, operates and manages the California Research and Education

Network (CalREN), a state-spanning high-performance Internet network consisting of 2,500 miles of optical fiber to which K-20 schools, colleges, universities and other educational and research sites in all 58 of California's counties connect.

The most advanced such network in the nation, CalREN serves up to 9.5 million Californians every day and links hundreds of educational and research sites to one another and to colleagues nationally and internationally.

The California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) represents the state's most

>> more: CAHSEE, page 3



From left: Rudy Rizo, Los Angeles Unified School District; Stephanie Couch, CENIC and K-20CETC; and Doug Cremer, CCC Technology Center at Butte College, accept a 2008 Innovations in Networking award on behalf of the CAHSEE: Stepping Into Your Future initiative from Doug Hartline of UC, Santa Cruz, the CENIC 2008 conference chair.

NOTE: Current TechEDge style uses 'System Office' to refer to the state agency also known as the CCC 'Chancellor's Office.'

TechEDge is published quarterly, with additional special issues published throughout the year. It is distributed to distance educators, information systems officers, business leaders, the California legislature and other interested parties. A current editorial calendar is available at <http://www.ccctechedge.com>.

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TechEDge welcomes relevant submissions and feedback, and we will gladly add you to our mailing list by request. Direct all correspondence to the TechEDge managing editor, Sandoval Chagoya, at:

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Tracking Technology:

From the System Office

Keeping the System Office Afloat

With the recent budgetary downturn playing out, one possible scenario facing the System Office is that of a 10 percent cut to the general fund in the agency. The agency's total budget is some \$20 million. Half of that is general fund, so really we are talking about potentially reducing by \$1 million. Oh yes, and let us not forget, about 90 percent of the agency's budget is personnel. So the task really becomes this: how and where do we find \$1 million while preserving all of our human resources? The number of allocated positions in the System Office was already cut in half in the early 2000s.

Recently the MIS Division came up with some innovative ideas that actually save a big chunk of money and create a better operating environment ... the ultimate win-win.

We had been forced by the State's Office of Information Technology to use Teradata, a data warehousing platform at Teale Data Center that had its roots back to the late 1980s. We were actually the last user of the platform in the State, and as such were paying full freight on the product licensing and service. The platform had continued to work well for us throughout the years as our primary offsite master, but the cost structure had become a burden. We had already mirrored the MIS database on an inexpensive MS-SQL server in-house and built all the applications we have today on that platform. As timing would have it, the licensing agreement with Teradata was due this year. In the past year, the State had consolidated data centers, combining both Teale and the Health and Welfare data centers into one, so we were also beginning negotiations with them on an ongoing contract. The current annual cost for Teradata on Teale/HWDC was \$400,000.

The first move was to replace the Teradata platform with another SQL server and mirror the two. The true workload here was rewriting and editing more than ten years of Teradata-SQL into MS-SQL, a process that was tedious and took the better part of six months. However, the major benefit of this conversion was that supporting a MS-SQL machine at Teale/HWDC now only cost \$120,000 per year to support: a savings of \$280,000 to the agency budget.

Negotiations with the data center agency ensued, and what we found was a newly-merged agency which seemed to be struggling internally. Things we had been doing for years—opening specific ports on machines, transferring data at certain times—were now suddenly "under review" with the frequent response "we can't allow you to do that."



Photo by John Grigg

More thought ensued and another plan was envisioned. Our internal server room was due for a major overhaul of its cooling system, at a potential cost of \$300,000, which would have come from building tenant improvements and possibly the agency budget. We decided to not renegotiate our agreement with Teale/HWDC at all, saving another \$120,000 annually, and move the MS-SQL database and all our internal racks to a 24/7 facility seven blocks from our office. Total annual cost for this: about \$60,000.

There are some tremendous advantages to this. First, we have cut agency expenditures potentially \$340,000 per year with a significant portion of that counting towards solving the agency's budget crisis. Second, we avoid having to expend \$300,000 on building upgrades, as the existing cooling should handle the few remaining servers left. Third, the servers moved will have 24/7 infrastructure, a better scenario than we currently have for both us and the field. Fourth, we will have no future costs associated with buying new racks or individual backup power supplies as these are now provided. If all goes well, we should have all this up and running by July, and the process to the field will be seamless (knock on wood).

In my prior column, I spoke of finding the efficiencies necessary when the chips get low (necessity is the mother of invention). This is a classic example of some great work by the MIS staff that shows a great deal of creativity, planning and execution, and they should be commended for it.

Patrick Perry

Patrick Perry
Vice Chancellor,
Technology, Research & Information Systems,
California Community Colleges System Office



Conference Calendar

2008 Online Teaching Conference

Oceanside, California June 5-6, 2008

There's still time to register!

Combine work and pleasure by attending the Online Teaching Conference in beautiful Oceanside, California. Bring your loved ones to enjoy nearby beaches and the many attractions of San Diego County. For more information, check the Web site at <http://www.ccone.org/08Conference> or contact Marti Atkinson: matkinson@ccone.org.

EDUCAUSE Institute Leadership Program 2008

Boulder, Colorado June 22-26, 2008

Leadership Program Web site:

<http://www.educause.edu/L081com>

37th Annual ACUTA Conference & Exhibition: Everybody Wins in Vegas

Las Vegas, Nevada July 13-17, 2008

The Association for Communications Technology Professionals in Higher Education Event Web site: http://www.acuta.org/events/annual_conference/sce08.cfm

Bb World '08:

Educate. Innovate. Everywhere.

Las Vegas, Nevada July 15-17, 2008

Conference Web site:

<http://www.blackboard.com/company/events/bbworld08>

2008 MERLOT International Conference: Still Blazing the Trail and Meeting New Challenges in the Digital Age

Minneapolis, Minnesota August 7-10, 2008

Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching International Conference Web site: <http://conference.merlot.org/2008/>

CAPED: The Golden Gate to Success

San Francisco, California October 7-11, 2008

California Association for Postsecondary Education and Disability Convention Web site: <http://www.caped.net/convention/index.html>

League for Innovation in the Community College: 2008 Conference on Information Technology

Salt Lake City, Utah October 19-22, 2008

League for Innovation in the Community College Conference site: <http://www.league.org/2008cit/>

CCC Confer Honored by Center of Excellence

Adapted from the Elluminate Web site by Jennifer Gednalske, Editor, CCC TechEDge

The Elluminate Center of Excellence program showcases organizations using Elluminate technology in innovative and creative ways to transform teaching, learning and the business of education.

In 2007, CCC Confer replaced its existing Web conferencing tool with Elluminate Live! to take advantage of the virtual classroom's high-quality participant experience, ease of use, ADA compliance, session archiving and audio capabilities that include VoIP as well as support for a phone bridge and teleconferencing.

CCC Confer is unique in its delivery of free e-conferencing services to the world's largest higher education system. Services are delivered through a common, automated interface and a highly efficient human support organization.

Seamlessly integrated into the CCC Confer portal, Elluminate Live! is used to facilitate virtual meeting, training and tutoring; provide online student services and library services; and add synchronous content to a wide variety of online classes.



The CCC Confer leads are, from left, Michelle Taramasco, Client Services Manager; Catherine McKenzie, Project Monitor, CCC System Office; and Blaine Morrow, Project Director.

CCC Confer Project Director, Blaine Morrow, said, "When we make an education technology decision for an entire system, we almost never know whether it's going to work. This is one technology investment that does. It saves an incredible amount of money and time, it's used and it grows faster than bread mold. No one college could experience the same benefit doing it alone. If you are a college it's a great investment. If you are a system of colleges, this is a tremendous investment."<>

CAHSEE: [from page 1](#) >>

recent attempt to improve education by tying graduation to a single standardized measure of competency. Statewide, approximately 48,000 students in the Class of 2006 found themselves unable to get a diploma due to the need to pass one or both portions of the exit exam (mathematics and/or English language arts), and controversy ensued.

In response, the state legislature made block grants available through the California Community Colleges System Office to local colleges that wanted to serve this population of students. The Butte-Glenn and Lake Tahoe Community College districts independently applied for grants, and finding they shared a common vision on how students should be served, they entered into a partnership, planting the seed that would become the statewide CAHSEE: Stepping into Your Future initiative.

Given limited funds, students in roughly 40 counties were not going to be able to be served by grant-funded community

college programs. Even if sufficient funds were available to offer programs in every county, many 18- and 19-year old students would not be able to participate due to the need to work or the demands of parenting or both. That reality drove the Butte-Glenn CCD, the Lake Tahoe CCD and their partners to the conclusion that online opportunities for students were sorely needed.

Teachers, faculty and staff from the state's K-20 education community, public libraries and nonprofit community technology centers have worked together to develop two highly engaging hybrid courses that prepare students across the state for the CAHSEE. This CalREN-enabled program includes online interactive exercises as well as "face time" with instructors via Web-based collaboration tools and/or videoconferencing.

Other awardees included Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's California Broadband Task Force, the Pac-10 Internet Video Exchange, the CineGrid digital media project and the UltraLight high-energy physics collaboration.<>

Faces of Technology

Bina Isaac

Dean and Chief Technology Officer,
College of the Desert

by Jennifer Gednalske, Editor, CCC TechEDge



Bina Susan Isaac is Dean and Chief Technology Officer (CTO) for the Desert Community College District (DCCD), located at the College of the Desert in Palm Desert. As the Dean and CTO, she provides leadership for all the operational functions of the district's information systems, academic computing, technology training, media technology, web enhanced technology, smart classroom support and Web development.

Bina has directed many successful technology expansion projects during an impressive career in the field of information systems and educational technology. With extensive experience across a spectrum of educational environments, Bina's love of technology and education has left a positive impact on the communities where she works. Bina began her own education in an all-girl school in India. Her environment and background has been one of pioneering and diversity.

Today in southeastern India, the state of Tamil Nadu, where Bina grew up is one of the largest global centers for engineering and Information Technology (IT). Thirty years ago, however, there were few opportunities for computer science education. Bina majored in the English language and literature at Sarah Tucker College, one of the first women's colleges established in South India. She then earned her Master of Arts from Madurai University, now recognized as a pioneering institution of distance education in India.

In 1980, Bina and her husband moved to Ohio so that he could continue his doctorate in Higher Education Administration. It was then that she had the opportunity to pursue her true interest: educational technology.

"Higher education programs in computers and educational technology were something we didn't have in India at the time, especially in 1980. It was a new field and I always wanted to be in computers and technology," Bina said. "It was challenging and an exciting time to be learning technology." She attended the University of Toledo, earning a Master of Education degree in Educational Technology followed by a Master of Business Administration degree with dual majors in Computer Systems and Operations Management.

After graduating from the University of Toledo, Bina took a position at Lourdes College, a private four-year Catholic institution in Sylvania, Ohio, a suburb of Toledo. She started as a computer instructor and coordinator for computer services and computer labs, and within a year became Director of Information Technology Services and Center. Bina literally built the Lourdes College IT Department from the ground up.

In her twelve years at Lourdes College, Bina was instrumental in developing a computer services operation from its infancy to a full-fledged IT division that effectively served both the academic and administrative computing needs of a rapidly growing four-year institution. Her duties included institutional research, media services, training faculty and staff, implementing network capabilities and coordinating the distance learning program.

Under her leadership, Lourdes College received a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant for establishing Internet access. Her proposal and execution of the grant was used as a model by the NSF. She was also honored three times for her excellence in teaching at the College.

In 1997, Bina and her husband decided to seek warmer climates than what Ohio offered; so, they packed up the family and moved west to Southern California.

Bina's combination of experience and education made her a perfect fit for the unique needs of the College of the Desert in the Palm Springs area. Prior to her arrival, the Desert Community College District (DCCD) had contracted with a private vendor to provide the district with limited computing services. As the first in-house Chief Information Systems Officer for the DCCD, Bina was once again tasked with building an entire IT division.

Her task went beyond simply buying and installing computers and setting up a network. Bina was responsible for developing the Technology Master Plan for the district, as well as hiring the new department's staff, training staff and faculty, and ascertaining the IT needs of the District. The effort included designing the college's first Web site, developing network connections between sites, setting up labs for student use and developing technology standardizations and technical help services for the campus. Bina's team maintained all of these new services and provided extensive training for faculty and staff. A daunting task but one that Bina was well capable of completing.

In 2002, after researching and evaluating many systems, Bina and her department implemented the Datatel System and provided extensive training sessions for the staff. The project was implemented smoothly.

"We heard a lot of stories about how hard it was to keep up with the updates when the system was set up," Bina said, "so our mantra was Keep it Plain Vanilla." There were no major setbacks and the implementation was completed well before deadline and under budget. Bina also acknowledged both Mount San Jacinto College and El Camino College for providing great help in the quick implementation.

Bina has also been integral to overcoming the district's once-limited Internet bandwidth. In 2006 the Corporation for Education Network Initiatives in California (CENIC) extended the California Research and Education Network (CalREN) backbone through the Coachella Valley. Through a grant from the Berger Foundation, College of the Desert became the second California community college to have access to the network with one Gigabit connection. The connection provides increased accessibility thus allowing better information exchange with audio streaming, video-on-demand capabilities and wireless access.



Bina's eleven years of planning and building the district's technology infrastructure positioned the district to make best use of this valuable, expanded technology capability. The connection provides substantially more speed and bandwidth, compared to the previous T1 connection, which was overloaded and slow. The new capability allows the district to stretch far beyond its previous offerings and bring new educational technologies to its students, faculty and staff.

"The students want information. We want to provide students with information anytime, anywhere, all the time, at their convenience. That's something the Berger Foundation grant enabled us to do," Bina said. The College of the Desert now has campuswide wireless, video streaming and faster connectivity.

A local bond approval and the generosity of the Alumni and the College of the Desert Foundation have helped Bina and the district to design and plan new buildings that will be fitted with cutting-edge technology capability. Three buildings are currently under construction and as many as nine more are planned.

Another important change for the campus and a large project stemming from the bond issue was the campuswide Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). Approximately four years ago, Bina and her staff integrated VoIP into the entire campus, offering Enhanced 911, an emergency calling system that automatically relays the caller's physical location based on the phone number to the 911 operator.

The integrated paging system also helps in campuswide emergencies by allowing all phones to become a speaker system for announcements. The team further connected large external speakers in the campus center that can broadcast announcements to the entire campus.

Among Bina's most important accomplishments on campus has been to ensure

that staff and faculty is current and well trained in order to get the most out of the new technology. Twice a year DCCD holds a Classified Technology Institute and a Faculty Technology Institute. These institutes offer technical training and information sessions, and present technology speakers and vendors who discuss and demonstrate the latest in trends and services.

Although Bina's work with DCCD is in some ways similar to her work for Lourdes College, she has noticed several important differences that have made her experience with the California Community Colleges more fulfilling. The pace for seeing new technology programs to fruition moves much slower in the community colleges, but the projects require more depth analysis and wider participation in order to meet the unique needs of community college students versus those at the private school.

"I find the challenge of providing top quality service to such a diverse student body with a wide-range of needs to be truly gratifying. At DCCD you see students, who really want to go back to school to fulfill their dreams," Bina said.

In her spare time Bina enjoys playing the piano and reading. She also loves to travel, especially to visit family in Australia. Bina's husband of 28 years, Dr. Matthew Isaac, is the Executive

Director of Economic Development and Corporate Training at the San Bernardino Community College District. Their daughter Sonya, 24, is a UC, Los Angeles graduate and is currently attending first-year medical school. Their son Shawn, 18, is in his final year of high school and will be attending UC Irvine in the fall to study Business Administration. He has recently been offered a music contract with a major production company.<>

"Faces of Technology" is a regular feature of TechEDGE newsletter. Each issue it will highlight an individual making contributions to technology in the California Community Colleges.



The Isaacs, left to right: Michael, Bina, Shawn, Sonya



Sonya and Shawn

The H.N. and Frances C. Berger Foundation

The Corporation for Education Network Initiatives in California (CENIC) was created with the goal of bringing all of California's K-20 institutions cost-effective, high-bandwidth networking. To help meet this goal they developed and operate the California Research and Education Network (CalREN). CalREN is a high-bandwidth, high-capacity Internet network specifically designed to meet the needs of the K-20 community.

In 2004, the CalREN backbone stretched from San Diego north to Corning. The backbone consisted of essentially two major arteries, one running through the valley and one along the coast. While this covered many of California's most populated areas, places such as the Coachella Valley, located outside the reach of the backbone, were not connected.

The H.N. and Frances C. Berger Foundation intervened in September 2004 with a \$3.4 million dollar grant to extend the optical fiber backbone through the Coachella Valley. The CalREN extension, completed in 2006, provided more than 400 miles of new optical fiber connecting College of the Desert; CSU, San

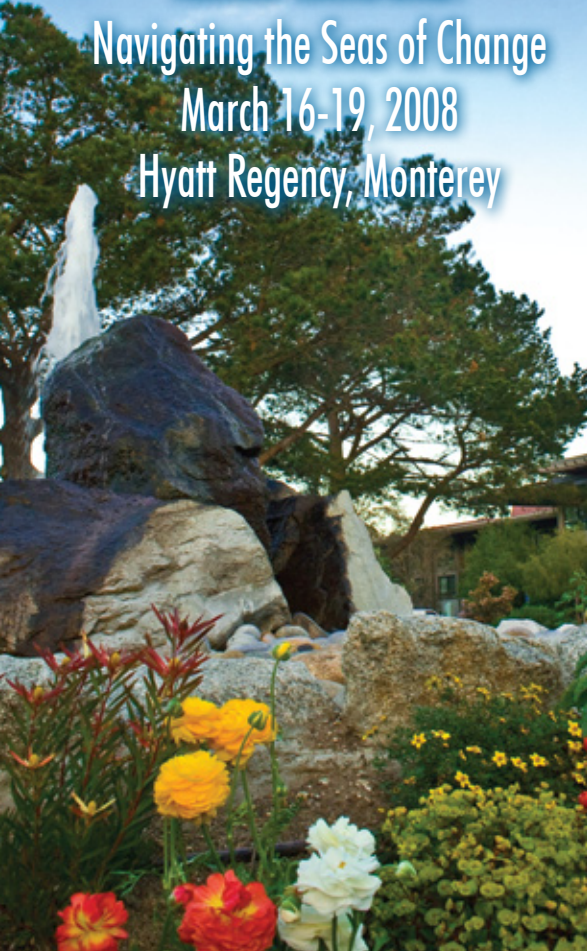
Bernadino's Palm Desert Campus and UC, Riverside's Palm Desert Graduate Center to new opportunities.

With the 1 Gigabit Ethernet connection, Coachella Valley schools are able function more smoothly, employ new technologies and connect to new resources. Videoconferencing, enterprise applications, podcasting, wireless access and integrated distance learning with audio/video instruction are just a few of the new possibilities for the area's schools due to the Berger Foundation grant.

The H.N. and Frances C. Berger Foundation of Palm Desert, California was founded in 1961. Their primary focus is supporting educational and charitable projects through generous donations. As of 2005, the Berger Foundation has contributed more than \$155 million dollars to charities throughout Southern California and the United States.

Aside from the grant to connect Coachella Valley to CalREN, the Berger Foundation has supported a variety of projects to improve life in the Coachella Valley and around the country. In 2005 they encouraged private citizens to help out by promising \$5 million matching donations for Hurricane Katrina survivors. Again in 2006, a \$1 million matching donation campaign for the Childrens Hospital Los Angeles raised nearly \$4 million.<>

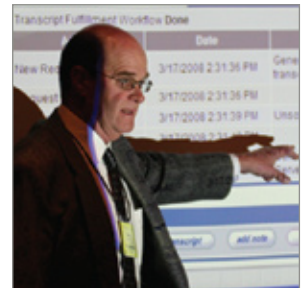
2008 CISOA and RP Group Annual Conference: Navigating the Seas of Change March 16-19, 2008 Hyatt Regency, Monterey



CISOA President Fred Sherman, left, Chief Technology Officer and Vice Chancellor, Foothill-De Anza Community College District, introduces the CISOA keynote speaker. Michael Zastrocky, right, Vice President and Research Director, Academic Strategies, Gartner Inc., spoke about IT Leadership and the Role of the CIO in Higher Education.



Robert Gabriner, left, Vice Chancellor, Institutional Advancement, City College of San Francisco and RP Group Information Officer introduces the RP Group keynote speaker. Davis Jenkins, a Senior Researcher at Columbia University's Community College Research Center spoke about "Creating a Culture of Evidence in Community Colleges to Increase Student Success."



Tim Calhoun, left and center, Director, CCC Technology Center and Lenny Robison, right, Project Manager, demonstrate CCTran, an electronic transcript exchange system connecting CCC, CSU, UC and private colleges statewide.



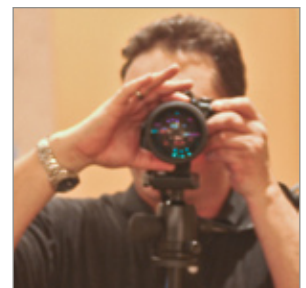
Catherine McKenzie, left, Director, Technology Unit, CCC System Office; Allan MacDougall, IT Director, South Orange Community College District; and John Wagstaff, right, Chief Technology Officer, El Camino Community College District deliver an overview of the Technology III Plan. The plan was developed through consultation with CCC technology leaders statewide, and it provides a strategic vision and framework for IT stewardship systemwide. It also presents CCC system solutions for system-level problems through five initiatives that respond to the system's top IT issues.



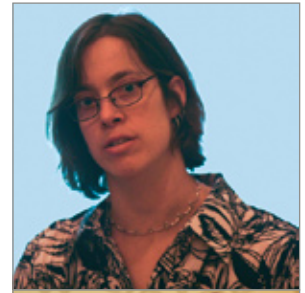
@ONE Training:
2008 Security Trends



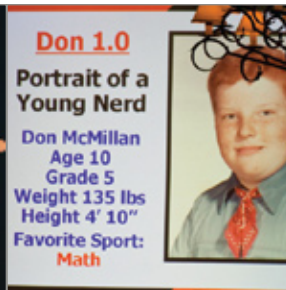
"Can You Hear Me Now: Best Practices for Contacting Students," presented by Deborah Ludford, left, Director of Information Systems, North Orange County Community College District, and Bob Hughes, Applications Support Manager, NOCCD at right.



Photos by Sandoval Chagoya.



“Academic and Career Technical Education Transfers: Statewide and National Research of Effective Practices,” presented by Robert Gabriner, top left, Vice Chancellor, Institutional Advancement, City College of San Francisco; Andrea Serban, above, Vice Chancellor of Technology and Learning Services, South Orange Community College District; Pamela Mery, top right, Research Analyst, City College of San Francisco; Craig Hayward, left, Director of Planning, Research and Knowledge Systems, Cabrillo College; and Robert Pacheco, right, Coordinator of Learning and Support, Barstow College.



Don McMillan, the ONLY comedian working in PowerPoint, brought the house down after dinner on Monday night. For more about Don visit: <http://www.technicallyfunny.com>.



The vendor community returned in force this year. The conference featured more than 60 unique exhibitors and sponsors. Above, left to right: Prize drawing at the WTC booth, the crowd in the exhibit hall, the CCCTran booth, a drawing at the LANDesk booth and the Foundation for California Community Colleges provides Internet access and information to attendees.



Patrick Perry, Vice Chancellor of the Technology, Research and Information Systems Division, CCC System Office.

“There is a good synergy between the two groups in a conference setting. I see a lot of collaborating going on with both groups, and the combined interests of both constituencies overlap well in the presentation formats. It’s certainly the highlight conference of the year for me personally.” -Vice Chancellor Patrick Perry



See you next year:
Granlibakken, Lake Tahoe
April 26-29, 2009

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