Streaming Video FAQs (Revised)
Education Technology Committee
5/21/2002

1. Who has responsibility (authority) for determining whether videotapes and/or
videostreaming will be made available to students for a particular course?

>   The authority rests with the Course Coordinator in consultation
>   with his/her faculty, consistent with current taping policies. The
>   Course Coordinator is responsible for communicating the course
>   policy to the LRC prior to the start of the semester by submitting
>   the "*Videotaping/Videostreaming Disposition Form for Course
>   Coordinators*" The default is that 'broadcast' courses will be
>   videotaped *for backup only*, and 'non-broadcast' course will *not* be
>   recorded. The policy submitted by the Course Coordinator must
>   be followed on all campuses.

2. If my lectures are recorded and tapes/videostreaming are made available, who
will have access to those tapes/videostreams?

>   Tapes will be made available in the Learning Resources Center (and
>   comparable facilities on remote campuses) on a 'check out' basis requiring
>   a current UT-ID. Videostreaming will be secured behind a UTEID
>   interface that authenticates the students status and that they are registered
>   for the course before access will be allowed.

3. If my class is not normally videotaped, can it be recorded for video streaming?
Specifically, does the class have to be in 3.106 in order to be recorded at the
quality needed?

>   While it is possible to videotape in rooms other than 3.106, please be
>   aware that only 4.114 offers similar functionality. Other tapings will
>   require a relatively simple camera setup that records only the presenter
>   and his/her audio. Furthermore, there will be a lag of a day or two in
>   getting the tape from non-3.106/4.114 recordings encoded and available
>   for streaming.

4. Are their technical limitations to streaming courses to our Cooperative
Program campuses (e.g., would they bog down the server, or would it be so slow
as to be impractical)?

>   Because network congestion can compromise the quality of real-
>   time streaming of video from Austin to other locations, we have
>   purchased video caches for installation in San Antonio and El
>   Paso. We anticipate a third video cache will be installed at UT Pan

American in the future. What the caches do is hold content locally. The morning after a lecture is encoded, it would be "pushed" to the local caches where it would reside. When someone on the El Paso network, for example, asks for the streaming video, their network automatically directs their query to their local cache, and it would be supplied locally. This sort of scheme for content distribution is a very common strategy to reduce the network demands for repetitive or high data-rate content.

5. I am concerned that the unlimited availability of tapes and/or streaming will reduce class attendance. However, I also realize that there are legitimate reasons for students to view a recorded lecture (that's why I currently allow a *limited* number of copies of tapes in the LRC). Can I limit the number of days/weeks that the videostream is made available?

We can definitely time-limit the cached files; that is, make them available only during a prescribed time window It is the Course Coordinator's responsibility to determine (in consultation with the course faculty) how long streaming and/or tapes would be available to the students in a particular class

6. Can I link a recorded stream to my standing webpage or courseware webpage (Blackboard, WebCT)?

Absolutely. Upon request we will supply the appropriate url.

7. Can we log which students view the stream (e.g., in case I make an extra lecture required viewing), and/or the number the times a student views the stream?

Yes, WebCT and Blackboard (to be used as an interface for the streaming server) have the capability of logging course resource use by students enrolled in the class. However, you should also be aware that the College's Educational Technology Committee has expressed serious concerns about the implications of electronically monitoring access to posted materials. This issue is currently under deliberation in that Committee.

8. What's the turn-around time between a lecture being recorded and having it available for streaming?

In Austin, and eventually in El Paso ,San Antonio, and Edinburg, overnight. The stream is encoded in real time but the server must

prepare it ('hint' it for streaming) and add the class title to the menu page. These functions are scheduled to occur the night following the lecture.

9. Can a student view streaming at home on a modem, or would they require DSL/Roadrunner to make this practical?

At present, because of the high data rate, it will not be possible for students to view video via modem (although new technologies such as MPEG-4 should make this feasible). As stated above, RoadRunner and DSL have the theoretical throughput to stream the videos. However, network congestion—outbound from UT Austin or inbound to the student at home—will degrade or potentially eliminate this possibility. For that reason students should always count on viewing the videos in their computer labs or library on campus, where network bandwidth is virtually guaranteed to support the stream.