

From vietnamstudies-owner Sat Nov 16 19:17:54 1996
Received: from localhost by t
with SMTP id TAA07934 for < >
19:17:52 -0800
Date: Sat, 16 Nov 1996 19:17:52 -0800 (PST)
From: "Intl. VIETNAM Area Studies"
To: vn studies
Subject: Rob Hurle (fwd)
Message-ID:
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: TEXT/PLAIN; charset=US-ASCII
Status: 0
X-Status:

NOV

FILE	SUBJ
DATE	SUB-CAT
1996	8.7.6/8.6.12
	; Sat, 16 Nov 199

Australia Vietnam Science-Technology Link
>>AVSL back postings on searchable WAIS database:
>>URL: <http://coombs.anu.edu.au/~vern/avsl.html>

Rob Hurle has taken early retirement from the ANU, after a long series of skirmishes with IT administrators that left him convinced there were better things in life. Fortunately for anyone concerned about IT links with Vietnam, he will remain involved as a consultant and visitor within the Division of Pacific and Asian History, ANU. At the moment Rob is enroute to Hanoi at the invitation of the Institute for Information Technology (IOIT), to take part in their 20th anniversary celebrations and talk about the future.

Rob is more responsible for establishment and early development of the email connection with Vietnam than anyone else in the world. Working closely with friends at the IOIT, he devised a whole series of ingenious solutions to technical problems that enabled Vietnamese institutions and foreign NGOs to plug into the Internet three or four times a day via the Coombs computer at the ANU. For those of us who remember the days of heavy dependence on travellers to Vietnam to carry a stack of letters to colleagues, and then hope for replies weeks or months later via outgoing visitors, usually posted from Bangkok, Paris or Moscow, this year a communications revolution. Our objective thus became the expansion of this electronic link to as many Vietnamese researchers and university teachers as possible. In the first stage, this meant IOIT staff hopping on bicycles to deliver email printouts around Hanoi, and accepting messages for transmission via Canberra to the world.

Many bureaucratic, security and pecuniary obstacles have prevented the Vietnam email connection from becoming a 24-hour service, much less moving to the stage where Vietnamese researchers can routinely access global databases. The basic email connection has been sabotaged

repeatedly, with IOIT and ANU personnel spending a lot of time and effort jury-rigging solutions, but it has never been shut down. Meanwhile, more and more Vietnamese return from overseas study 'email literate' and eager to keep in touch with the world. Their lobbying, combined with elderly leadership awareness that Vietnam cannot afford not to take advantage of the communications information revolution, will ensure that 24-hour service comes soon, probably in the form of several commercial joint ventures.

Meanwhile, ANU attention is shifting to intellectual content -- participation in development of electronic databases of value to people in Vietnam and people studying Vietnam anywhere. Rob will be in the middle of this new effort, learning Vietnamese and contributing his talents and experience to the cause. He can't read this message until he gets to Hanoi, but I think I speak for hundreds of other individuals committed to that same cause, and even thousands who use the email connection without having the foggiest idea about its origins, in thanking Rob for all he has done.

David Marr

Sent to AVSL-L by: David Marr