

News Digest

TELECOM

MCK funding a boon to telecommuters

MCK Communications Inc., a small but mighty telecommunications firm in Newton, will take the \$5 million in investment capital it received last week and use it to get call center operators out of the office. Page 4

MTC pitches at the minors

Gina Tzivas was hired by the Massachusetts Telecommunications Council just last month to tell high school and college students about the jobs the telecom industry has to offer. Page 5



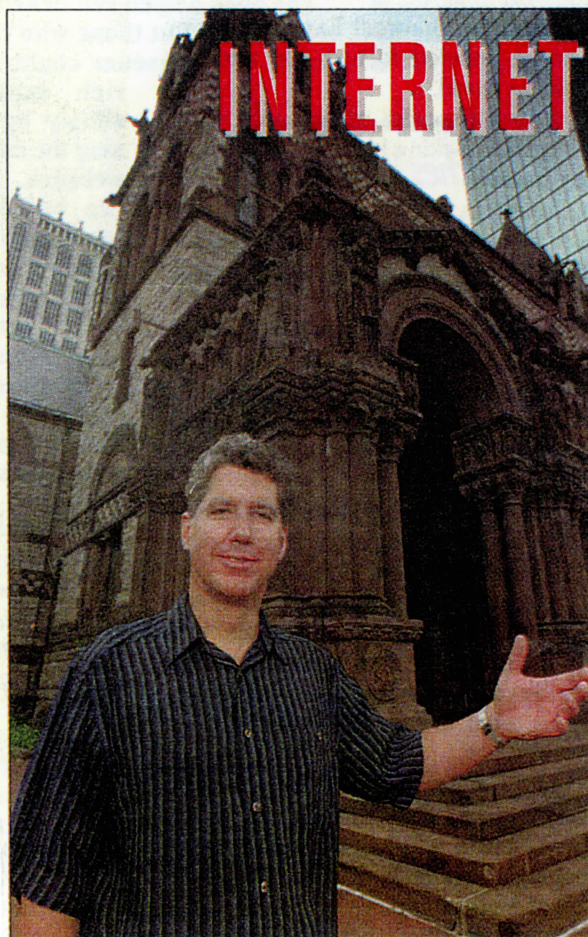
INTERNET

RCN swallows JavaNet

JavaNet, an ISP and cappuccino cafe based in Springfield, sold out last month to RCN Corp. for \$15.8 million in cash and stock. According to an RCN spokesperson, the acquisition of JavaNet will make RCN the nation's first and largest single-source, facilities-based provider of telecommunications services to the residential market, and the largest regional Internet service provider (ISP) in the Northeast. Page 7

MASS High Tech

THE JOURNAL OF NEW ENGLAND TECHNOLOGY



STUART GARFIELD PHOTO

Art Stewart's company, Reputation Management, is busy revamping the Episcopal Church's website.

NON-COMMERCE

Not-for-profit organizations aware of Web's potential

By DYKE HENDRICKSON
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

When the hierarchy of the Episcopal Church chose a strategic consultant to help it relaunch its website, it settled on an aptly named firm: Reputation Management.

The company is located in Cambridge, and its task is to redevelop the site administered by the national offices of the Episcopal Church in the United States. The organization is based in New York, but officials are reaching to the Boston area to use Reputation Management's expertise.

The Episcopal Church was actually an early adopter of an on-line presence. But like many not-for-profit groups, the organization wants to develop a more robust site that can provide added information and additional services for its 2.5 million members.

"The challenge is to get the right mix," said Art Stewart, principal and senior counsel of Reputation Management. "We want to advance the agenda of the church [leaders], but we want to provide useful information to newcomers who don't know much

FROM PAGE 1

Nonprofit: Churches, other organizations are using the Web without e-commerce

about the church.

"The site is not an evangelical tool, but we do want to provide information about the mission, values and qualities of the church."

The church's relaunch is noteworthy because it underscores the fact that thousands of non-profits are grappling with the question of how to make best use of the Internet.

Stewart said that the church has taken the Net seriously. He said that site offerings will include calendars, news updates, and position papers by ecclesiastical officials. Church leaders are considering new functions such as chat, posting and e-mail alerts.

It is located at www.dfms.org. (DFMS stands for Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, which is a program of the church. Officials are considering whether to keep this esoteric address, or change it to a name that might be more easily remembered.)

"They want the site to be interactive," Stewart said. "Just how that is developed is something we're discussing now."

The planning that the Episcopal Church is carrying out is typical of the work that is going on among many not-for-profit institutions in the Boston area. Organizations are realizing that they must have a website to remain competitive in areas such as membership and fund-raising.

"Having a good website helps level the playing field between large organizations and small ones," said Charlotte Kahn, head of the technical services committee at the Boston Foundation. The Boston Foundation is an umbrella group for 250 not-for-profit agencies in the city, and is the largest such foundation in New England. Its address is www.tbf.org.

"Some organizations have been faster than others in adapting, but most are now realizing it can be an important tool for reaching into the community with news of your organization."

Kahn said organizations that have created effective sites include the Dudley Street Neighborhood Virtual Village, the Boston University School of Public Health, and the city of Boston.

Brian Worobey, vice president of the information technology department at the Museum of Science, said his organization's Internet site has been helpful in publicizing major events at the museum.

He said that the museum is also using its Net presence as a means of communication. The organization developed extensive sites for recent projects, including exhibits on Leonardo daVinci and Mount Everest.

The sites helped sell tickets to the exhibitions. But those who couldn't get to the museum could have a

rich experience simply by accessing the museum's websites. Its site can be found at www.mos.org.

The Museum of Science uses its Net presence not only to send out information, but to respond to e-mails that are sent by members and ticket buyers.

"We are a learning organization," said Worobey, "and want to use our site to raise awareness in the larger community."

"We are constantly discussing how far out of the walls we can go with information and interactive communication. Donors and friends are the crown jewels of an organization such as ours, and we want

to stay in close touch."

Creating closer relations with members is also a goal for Stewart, the consultant for the Episcopal Church's site. The Net is one segment of the organization's increasing effort to reach out to its constituency.

He noted that last January the church's media team provided coverage of the installation of the church's presiding bishop. The event took place in the National Cathedral in Washington.

The IT team created a satellite-based feed for closed-circuit television. It also provided text and digital photos for its Internet site.

Church officials say that the Net will play an increasing role in their effort to spread their message.

Because many individual religious institutions also have their own websites, there could be a time when each congregation's service is videostreamed to members who do not attend the service.

Creating relationships with present — or potential — members appears to be a great benefit of the Net.

"The techniques of how organizations get members have been turned upside down in recent years," said Stewart. "Churches have to readdress how they communicate in an open marketplace, and how they can attract new members."

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