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Internet: An Indispensable Research Tool at HKUST

A research project in the Physics Department of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology was successfully completed by using a super-computer nearly halfway around the world, through Internet.

Last year, Dr P W Leung collaborated with researchers at Florida State University on a project in quantum physics which required the deployment of a large memory super-computer. "Without using Internet to access the CM/2 super-computer in Florida, it would have been impossible to carry out such a large scale computation in Hong Kong," says Dr Leung.

Internet is a global network which glues together all the diverse computer networks - from corporate networks connecting personal computers in offices, to networks that span continents with fibre-optic cables and satellite links. It is estimated that Internet has already linked up 1.7 million computers in about 50 countries.

Through the efforts of computer experts at HKUST, all computers on the University's network can now reach out to tap the various computing resources available on Internet. Through Internet, researchers at HKUST can access a super-computer, a remote database or the library catalogue of another institution thousands of miles away.

Another application possible on Internet is the distribution of academic journals in electronic form. This can significantly reduce the long delays and high costs associated with traditional publishing because articles can now be sent out as soon as they have been edited and reviewed.

Internet also provides a platform for electronic conferences. Users can initiate or take part in discussions by posting messages to newsgroups within the network. Currently there are over 2,000 newsgroups covering topics in various academic disciplines, social and cultural issues, computing and many more.

(For information please call the Office of Public Affairs at 3586307 or pager 1163388 call 2652)