



Technology Services

Logging on to the Internet at Burke Library

As the use of personal computers with modems, fax machines and voice mail systems has expanded at home, at work, and in schools, Alexandrians have come to expect easy access to information resources, including information about their City government and its services. The City has made significant progress in addressing these expectations:

- The City is working with Jones Intercable, Inc., the City's cable operator, to construct an institutional network (I-Net) based on fiber optic technology connecting all major City government facilities. Other local area networks being built by the Alexandria Library and the Alexandria City Public Schools will eventually be transferred to the I-Net. As envisioned, these local networks can also provide links to neighboring jurisdictions, State government, businesses, and other information providers. The I-Net, which is limited by federal law for government use only, is scheduled to be in service by mid-1996.
- In October 1994, the City joined [CapAccess](#), the Washington area's public access information service. Using a personal computer with a modem, citizens can dial up information about City services 24-hours a day, seven days a week, without cost. In addition, private services, such as Digital Ink, The Washington Post subsidiary, download City information from CapAccess for their subscribers.
- In October 1994, City Council established the Ad Hoc Task Force on Information and Communication Technology to solicit ideas from the public. The Task Force, co-chaired by Council Members Pepper and Walker, made its report to Council in June. (The full text is posted on CapAccess.)
- As recommended by the Task Force, the City in July established an electronic mail address (CityMail@alexandriava.gov) to which citizens can direct questions and comments to the City through CapAccess, America On-line, CompuServe, Prodigy, or any of the other private services offering E-mail.
- The Task Force also recommended establishing a City presence on the Internet. The City will soon select a vendor to set up and maintain a "[City page](#)" on the World Wide Web.
- The newly renovated Barrett Library on Queen Street will have four computers with access to the

Internet through a connection provided by Jones Intercable. An additional computer is in operation at the Burke Branch on Seminary Road. Citizens can use these computers to gain access to information resources available through the Internet.

- The Library has also installed a new computer system that allows library users, working in the libraries, to check on the availability of library books and materials and gain access to reference databases. By the summer of 1996, these services will be available to citizens who dial in to the Library from their personal computers at home or at work.
- In 1994, City Council approved a 15-year renewal of its cable television franchise with Jones Intercable. As called for in that agreement, Jones is rebuilding its local system with 216 miles of fiber optic cable. This upgrade will allow many more channels and other telecommunication services, while increasing reliability. Jones plans to offer telephone services in competition with Bell Atlantic, the local telephone company. In the future, Bell Atlantic may offer cable services.

Through the combined use of personal computers and the telecommunications systems of both cable and telephone companies, citizens will be able to obtain City services more conveniently, while reducing the City's cost of delivering such services.

Technology Facts

Computer Users

Households with computer (est.) - 26,600 (47%)

Households on the Internet (est.) - 10,000 (18%)

Households with cable connections - 38,000 (67%)

CapAccess

Alexandria users (est. weekly average) - 250

City E-mail address - CityMail@alexandriava.gov

Dial-up number - 202-785-1523

Log-on - guest

Password - visitor

Sources: Jones Intercable Marketing Survey, spring 1995; Department of Management Information Services; Alexandria Library; and CapAccess.