

# **ICPL-2004 Case Study Role-Play: “Follow the Money”**

## **Setting the Stage**

East Newtonia State University, located in scenic northern New Hampshire, hasn't typically been a hotbed of political activism – but this hasn't been a typical year. Emotions are running high, with vituperative posters and sidewalk chalking extolling one or the other side's favorite candidate and calling into question the opposition's common sense and parentage. No one should have been surprised when the battle moved into Cyberspace, where it's now raging in blogs, mailing lists, newsgroups, and Web pages. Yet even with all the digital rancor, ENSU's CIO Mark Washington was pleased to note that network performance hadn't suffered. It might even have improved. Perhaps politics was diverting people from KaZaA.

By contrast, Charlotte Smith wasn't at all happy. As Chair of the Computer Science Department, Charlotte felt that computers and networks were for research and instruction, and the increasingly disruptive online political debates were a waste of resources. She never approved of ENSU's policy allowing students and staff to make “incidental personal use” of the central campus networks and servers, and announced frequently that her own department's Web servers and e-mail system weren't covered by that policy. She could barely tolerate the mailing lists and Web pages hosted by the department's system for the bridge club, nor the electronic copies of the New York Times and Wall Street Journal delivered on the departmental mail system to so many of her students and staff. Politics was well over the line.

Charlotte might not have noticed the little ad in yesterday's ENSU student newspaper, but the URL immediately caught her eye. The ad was for a Web page called “Follow the Money”, with a URL referencing a directory on her departmental server. The directory account belonged to a student named Stuart Jones, and the page contained a pop-up list of all ENSU faculty and staff. Stuart had scripted the pop-up list so that selecting a name retrieved information from the Federal Election Commission Web site, displaying a report with all of that person's political contributions. Another section of Stuart's page displayed the contributions for all of ENSU's executive officers as well as all members of the ENSU Board of Governors. Charlotte rolled her eyes, sent Stuart an e-mail saying the page was an inappropriate use of the Computer Science Department server, deleted the page, and went back to her research.

CIO Mark Washington hadn't noticed yesterday's ad, but couldn't help noticing the front-page article in today's paper. Quoting Stuart Jones at length and reporting that Charlotte Smith had been “unavailable for comment”, the paper went on and on about the deplorable “censorship” that had descended upon ENSU. Mark felt this was more

than a little exaggerated, especially since the article provided the URL for a replacement “Follow the Money” page. The new page, he saw, was on a central campus server, apparently in the directory of one of his own staff members. That seemed a bit curious, but it was the next paragraph that jolted him to action. The paper said that, in order to direct people to the new FtM page, Stuart had updated his departmental e-mail “.sig” to reference that URL and had prevailed upon a number of his fellow Computer Science students to do the same. In response, according to Stuart, the department had adjusted the spam filters on its mail system so that any incoming or outgoing mail containing that URL would be flagged as spam and discarded.

Mark was reaching for the phone to call Charlotte, but just then his secretary knocked on the door. Charlotte was in the office already, waiting to speak with him. The secretary also handed him two phone messages. One was from the President of the University, who said he was on his way over to the CIO’s office. And the second was from an attorney representing Stuart Jones.

### **Playing the Roles**

What happens next? That’s up to the brave role-players in this unrehearsed exercise. For a few minutes, we will watch and listen as participants portraying the various dramatis personae figure out how to deal with this problem. They will interact with each other and with the audience, both during the exercise and in a general discussion after it’s done.

Our gutsy volunteers are:

CIO Mark Washington – **Lloyd Case**  
Policy Advisor to the CIO – **Linda Enghagen**  
Computer Science Chair Charlotte Smith – **Pat McClary**  
Student Stuart Jones – **Dan Adinolfi**  
University President – **Bret Ingerman**  
University Counsel – **Steve McDonald**  
Attorney for Stuart Jones – **Doris Kirby**

**Steve Worona** will act as moderator and stage manager.