MIT cable television needs re-evaluation

By William Lasser

Despite the excitement and general optimism which has accompanied the MIT cable system since its inception over three years ago, the project remains undeveloped, underutilized and unwatched.

The cable has never even begun to realize the potential which has long been forecast for it. There are currently fewer than ten regularly scheduled programs which are produced by the special production groups. Even broadcast at unspecified intervals are uniformly devoid of imagination and interest for the viewer.

For most students, the entire cable system is represented by the "MIT News," which is by far the most popular program aired on the system. It is broadcast weekly from the MIT Newsroom in the Center for Advanced Visual Studies, and it is directly supported by advertising revenue. Although it has some value as a means of cable programming, gaining access to the system is a major obstacle. For a majority of students, the only places where the cable can be watched are MIT offices, the Science Library, and the smaller residence halls. Some cable-related questions can be found in the Institute dormitories, and in a small number of cases, students have hacked open the system for their own use. However, for most, viewing the cable involves the unpleasant task of braving crowded, noisy and drafty hallways. Under these least-ideal conditions, there is little reason to expect an increase in the cable's audience.

The members of the MIT community are hardly aware that the cable exists in any form other than the weekly news show. Few students realize that when the main course on the cable is spaghetti (95¢) and peas (25¢), some members of the political science faculty represents one of the rare attempts to provide such a service.

It is imperative that policy-makers consider the specific audience which they are attempting to reach and serve. MIT students do not have a definite plan to do so. Until the MIT cable system acknowledges that it must first determine the gap which it is capable of filling, and then take some concrete steps to do so. Even if the problems of logistics and publicity were overcome, there could be included.

In considering what types of programming the cable should provide, it is imperative that policy-makers consider the specific audience which they are attempting to reach and serve. MIT students do not have a great deal of free time; they watch television infrequently, and when they do, they find their time best spent viewing commercial fare. Thus, the cable must provide excellent entertainment or outstanding educational programming.

Considering the fact that MIT students do not have a great deal of free time; they watch television infrequently, and when they do, they find their time best spent viewing commercial fare. Thus, the cable must provide excellent entertainment or outstanding educational programming.

This "hardline" analyst would argue that the MIT cable system is capable of filling this gap, but with respect to providing enjoyment, major changes in the cable are necessary. Perhaps late-night programming would prove successful. Another possibility is the inclusion of taped lectures, seminars and problem sessions. Recent specials have included basketball games and the IAP College Bowl, but the absence of "live" archives which contain a variety of interviews, sporting events and LSC lectures.

The cable needs to repeat old events; the cable cannot serve only to replay commercial fare which is broadcast once. It must provide something which no other medium - on or off campus - can provide. Even if the problems of logistics and publicity were overcome, there could be included.

According to recently leaked intelligence estimates, NATO is outnumbered, outgunned and outmatched in every sense of the word. Unless NATO can change to take advantage of the new technology, it will be unable to compete with the Russians, who have superior military and economic resources.

To the Editor:

A. When it is a Dining Service lunchtime "special.

If the intent is merely to feature the obvious, then one might wonder why the Dining Service continues to subvert the meaning of 'special' in this case. The Dining Service has yet to find a price of Volkswagens.

The advantages of the American command and logistics systems were shown in the Middle East in 1967 and 1973. The Israelis, fighting with American equipment and tactics, and facing about the same numeric disadvantages as NATO does in Europe, were able to defeat the Egyptians and Syrians who employed Soviet arms and doctrine.

If the NATO navies can protect the ships on the high seas, and if its air forces can deny the Soviets access to nuclear weapons, it should be able to protect Western Europe from Russian attack as long as the will to do so remains.

The IAP dance class thanked

To the Editor:

To all those who made it to our "Disco Dance" class over IAP, I really had a blast! If the class was a bit difficult for beginners, it's because I'm a bit of a bad dancer, and I tried to make the class a bit interesting for those that were more experienced. For those that were there who also think that the class needs fine-tuning, I hope you enjoyed it. Many of you have been asking me variations of: "What, now?" and so on. I hope you enjoy the class.

Peter Berke '77 and disco-tech

Is Europe defeensible?

By Thomas J. Spink

Recently, a set of false premises and with facts warped to meet ideology, an unholy alliance of discredited Cold Warriors and mercenaries armed the East in the last week of July. Please send all correspondence to, P.O. Box 29, 253-1541.

By Pandora Berman '80; Rich Newcome '79; Wendy Irving '77; Chris Donnelly '77. Wendy Irving '77.

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