Athena's inequities must be changed

Gene is a Project Athena student staff employee. He has an account on every Project Athena VAX. When Gene starts to write a paper, he scans every cluster and finds the one VAX with the lowest load and uses it for his editing. Gene keeps everything he has written for the past two years on different Athena VAXes. Although his tree space on any one machine is limited, accounts on every machine means that Gene effectively has unlimited storage.

Gene and Cathy are representative of two classes of users that Project Athena has created with the "cluster concept." Briefly, every Athena user is given an account on one or more VAXes. Each VAX resides in a cluster. A terminal in one cluster can be used to connect to any computer in that cluster. Terminals are restricted, however, from connecting to computers in other clusters unless the user has an account in both clusters. This restriction is anathema to the philosophy of Project Athena staff.

Project Athena staff imposed this restriction to prevent students in Athena clusters from monopolizing every terminal in the Athena system — instead, they restricted the terminals in one cluster.

At the time, those implementing the restriction decided against the alternative solution: simply restricting the total number of users allowed to log onto each VAX at once. Although the complexity of the two solutions was roughly equivalent, Athena staff decided for the solution which prevented users from using terminals in clusters in which they didn't have accounts.

It is important to understand that the original hindrances to Athena accounts assigned to a particular cluster are a result of strategy for managing resource.

To the Editor:

The issue of studying anything but engineering or science at MIT is not a new one. Every once in a while someone will write a letter to The Tech, or some committee will propose something that might improve the quality of education for MIT students. Such was the case in the April 11 issue of The Tech in the article entitled "Committee warns new grad students.

Again, the purpose of the Committee is to provide a well-rounded education for all students and engineers. This is all fine and good, but it is arbitrary, the result of an easy solution policy decision by Project Athena staff.

I applied the efforts of the Committee to give people the opportunity to receive a combined degree, a Bachelor of Science and the Arts. But, as someone not interested in majoring in science, I don't feel that the Committee can help but feel overlooked and ignored by the Institute's desire to improve its quality of education.

Perhaps the administration and the science and engineering faculty do not realize it, but in my opinion, the Institute needs to improve the quality of life for those who are not majoring in science or engineering. Now what do I mean by "life?"

Professor Stressil suggested to me to design an Integrated General Arts and Sciences Curriculum in the Liberal Arts, stated in the article, "pure liberal arts might not go over at MIT." He continued with "I think subtle social pressures inhibit the exploration of ones scientific curiosity?" Would society value the scientist more if he or she went to a public high school in the same high neighborhood, but one incident would be different here. After all, it was not long ago when highly educated and cultured people did their own scientific experiments for their own pleasure. They were not entertained and amazed by the accepted experimental techniques. Whatever the reason, I feel sad people seem to have lost their fascination with the stars.

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