Project Status Report

To: Prof. C. Gibson, Allison Dolan, Evan Mamas
From: John Cloutier, Jennifer Peng
Re: Project Randomize VoIP status report
Date: March 31, 2005

The VoIP at MIT research project has had quite a few bumps in the last few weeks. Since the loss of one of the team members, we have had a week long break during which little progress could be made. Upon returning from break, one of the remaining team members, John Cloutier, had medical problems to address which hindered work on the project. The dashboard light is currently yellow.

Accomplishments
The final version of the project proposal including all scope changes has been reviewed by both remaining team members, Allison, Professor Gibson and Evan. Now that the roadmap has been reset, we can begin to progress toward completing required tasks.

Despite the temporary setback, we have not missed too many deadlines. By this date we were supposed to:

- Everyone to review literature of evolution of VoIP, especially the pros and cons regarding the reliability and maintenance (3/27)
- (all) determine the student representation we would like to see in the focus groups (3/27)
- (all) determine the administration representation we would like to see in the focus groups (3/27)
- (open) gather information on how the development of VoIP has been carried out at other colleges and universities (University of Michigan, Dartmouth) (3/30)

We have reviewed some of the VoIP literature Allison has so graciously offered to us. We have also determined the student representation of our focus group to consist of a cross section of the undergraduate population, with greater emphasis on Simmons residents. John was in the process of obtaining a list of administrators to include in our focus group.

On Tuesday, Jennifer presented an overview of the VoIP project to the class. She discussed the motivation and goals for the project as well as the progress that has been made so far. The feedback from the class was extremely helpful in creating questions for the surveys and provided valuable leads for our project. The thoughts that were shared by the class are immediately relevant because they came from students who will likely be directly affected by a VoIP solution.

Jennifer completed surveys for the three groups that need to be interviewed, other universities, students and administrators. These surveys were recently sent to Professor Gibson, Evan, Allison and John for additional feedback, therefore the last deadline to contact other colleges and universities will not met in time. Once these surveys are complete they can be distributed in order to begin collecting our data.

Issues
There has been slow progress since the last status report. This isn't a failure per se and is mostly the result of spring break taking everyone away from the project. Now that school has begun again, work can continue in earnest.

John Cloutier was injured during spring break and has therefore not been able to help with the project since the beginning of this week. John hopes that most of the hospital visits are over and that his recovery will be speedy so he can get back to work.

Actions to be Taken
Several tasks will be undertaken shortly. First, the surveys will be completed and distributed to our contacts on campus and at other schools. This will be a huge source of information for our project and will greatly effect the conclusions that are reached.

Allison was also able to provide us with contact information for some key administrators who we will interview. We need to gather background information about the status of data and voice service as well as plans for future upgrades on campus.

Recent changes to dorm phone service have created a stir in the in undergraduate population. We will be looking into the possibility of integrating this change into the project. Allison has warned against falling into a debate on the issue of charging for dorm phone service and as of yet we don't know exactly how or if we will include this subject as part of the project. We will need to be careful on this issue.

Reflections and Learning
It is always difficult to accept that a project is being hindered by unforeseen events. At first when Jose was having medical problems we assumed that the two remaining group members would be able to fill in while he was gone and that the project wouldn't be drastically effected. In the beginning, we felt that this type of information gathering project didn't really have too many opportunities for unforeseen problems getting in the way. Since then we've seen that anything can happen. The article *Managing Project Uncertainty: from variation to chaos* was an important one. Even a seemingly simple project can be turned on its head by uncertainty.

Our team is continuing to learn a valuable lesson about being flexible. Our small group has been set back several times by busy schedules and unexpected events from UA elections to medical problems. We have had more challenges than the other two groups combined, but we have been able to work well with each other and stay focused on the project. We've learned that being a solid team is the most important aspect of a project. It appears there is a light at the end of the tunnel and work should be progressing smoothly in the near future.