Libraries go techno

SSI Micro prepares librarians for new computer programs

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FORT PROVIDENCE (Mar 26/99) - When it comes to creating Web pages and communicating with other libraries, librarians in the Northwest Territories are now going to be near the top of the technology ladder.

Twenty-four NWT Public Library Services librarians gathered in Fort Providence Tuesday through Friday of last week for a computer training workshop held at SSI Micro. There, they learned all about the "Net-it" program, which makes creating Web pages a cinch, and how resource sharing will become more simplistic with help from a computer program.

Barb Leuze, the librarian in Fort Providence, was able to provide a testimonial about the effectiveness of the Net-it program.

"It was really amazing to see how easy it was...it was quite something," she said, adding that she had recently spent hours learning about how to create a Web page through the old HTML system.

Training service manager Craig Broddy started off the training sessions with the very basics, from the parts of the computer, how to set up, terminology and CD Roms. He then moved into e-mail and Internet searches.

"We've got so much information coming at us now, it's great...(but) it's like driving a car, you've got to get to know the vehicle," Broddy said of the many search engines in existence.

Jeff Philipp, owner of SSI Micro, guided the librarians through the new programs they'll be using to keep library services flowing smoothly on-line. He said it generally takes SSI Micro a week to 10 days to prepare for a course like the one held last week. Philipp inevitably puts in some extra hours during the course as well.

"I spent Thursday night from about 10 o'clock until Friday at six o'clock in the morning putting together that final CD so that they could have it before they left," he said of the disk which contained the various programs and a multitude of photos taken over the four days of training.

This was the second round of training that NWT Public Library Services has held through SSI Micro in Fort Providence. Suliang Feng, territorial librarian, said the consensus among the librarians during the initial session was that the instruction provided was very professional and easy to comprehend.

"They do a really good job in terms of technical support," he said of SSI Micro's staff, adding that their skill level is beyond what he originally imagined.

Philipp said custom-training workshops, like the one SSI Micro hosted for the librarians, only accounts for a fraction of the business the company does. They are also involved in a satellite network design for a company in South Africa, as well as a "complete turn-key Internet solution for them," he said. There are discussions under way with a group from Somalia and a businessman in Egypt to equip them with a similar system, in addition to a wireless phone system, he said.

"So that takes up quite a bit of our time as far as the corporate-wide networking aspect," Philipp said, adding that SSI Micro also provides technical support and expertise to the NWT Power Corporation and various GNWT departments.

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