Caltech to use computer graphics in all academic areas

"Over the next five years, we expect to see a revolution in teaching, with computers used as tools in essentially every academic discipline," said Geoffrey Fox, professor of theoretical physics and dean for educational computing at the California Institute of Technology.

"Caltech has already made considerable progress toward computerizing its courses," said Fox. "Computer courseware is in use or under development in many areas of the institute, particularly in computer science, engineering (including computer-aided design), and physics. Caltech faculty are emphasizing computer graphics in their projects."

Caltech recently announced a three-year major equipment grant from IBM to support the project. IBM will supply several hundred IBM PC workstations, a host processor, and several graphics sub-systems to aid in the development and use of educational software.

A cash grant of $150,000 will accompany the equipment grant so that adapter cards can be purchased to tie the IBM workstations to Caltech's campus-wide high-speed network. An IBM technical support person has also been assigned to the project for three years.

In addition to the IBM grant, Caltech has received pledges of cash and equipment totaling more than $1 million from other computer vendors.

When fully implemented, the system will include over 800 workstations in clusters of 10 to 20 machines in classroom areas, laboratories, the computing center, and libraries. Faculty and teaching assistants will be able to prepare courseware on individual workstations, and students will have network outlets in their dormitories if they wish to use their home computers.

GKS introduced to wider audience

Two independent organizations have announced plans to bring the proposed American National Standards Institute's Graphical Kernel System software standard for computer graphics to the attention of more professionals.

Nova Graphics International Corporation recently announced plans to conduct three two-day educational courses entitled "Introduction to GKS" for designers and developers of computer graphics software, hardware, systems, and applications. In addition to presenting an overview of GKS, its history, significance, and relationship to other standards, the course will cover specific technical features of the proposed standard. The $495 course will be held June 25-26, September 24-25, and November 5-6 in Austin, Texas. For further information, contact Nova at 1015 Bee Cave Woods, Austin, TX 78746; (512) 327-9300.

The Association for Computing Machinery's Special Interest Group on Computer Graphics (Siggraph) has printed copies of the complete GKS document for distribution to 12,000 of its members receiving the February issue of its publication, Computer Graphics. Siggraph's wide distribution was intended to enable as many members as possible to respond to ANSI's July 1, 1984, deadline for evaluation of the proposed standard.