

Privacy a roadblock

Pulling strings shouldn't be necessary

Every day we're reminded of just how public every aspect of our life is becoming. We're all quite certain that anyone with any computer savvy can call up our credit card numbers, shoe sizes and sexual preferences with a few clicks of the mouse.

Given this, it's not surprising that we tend to hold what little privacy we have close and tight—a bit too tight, sometimes.

Times staff writers had an interesting and unexpected experience last week when they planned a page about clubs at Algonquin.

They could not be given names, telephone numbers or e-mail addresses for any club by Students' Association staff, which made compiling information and doing interviews almost impossible.

Policy dictates that students who want to check out or join a club must leave their personal info in the club's mailbox at the SA office. When someone checks the box, the students are contacted.

Colleges used to have club days, with booths and displays set up in the gym, so students could learn what clubs were offering, and speak with club members. It didn't cost anyone anything, and it was an up-close-and-personal way for students to explore their interests and plan their year's social activities.

Times staff writers met their deadline with the help of SA marketing co-ordinator Jay Mahoney, who got in touch with club spokespersons and encouraged them to contact *Times* staff.

But do average students know which string to pull to get such personal assistance? And if students just want to ask someone a quick question about a club, without giving out their own personal info, should they have to make the effort to find that string?

We all know that telephone numbers and e-mail addresses in the wrong hands can make someone's life miserable. We all understand that in this increasingly intrusive world, privacy is paramount.

It's a shame we live in a world that necessitates making it this hard to get some first-hand information about a college club.

Slow boat to China

Algonquin shrugs off PR opportunity

At the 1997 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) conference held in Ottawa two weeks ago, more than 1,000 delegates from 18 countries listened to 110 speakers promoting and sharing the success of their small and medium businesses.

The APEC conference trade show featured booths sponsored by Carleton University and the University of Ottawa, and George Brown, Mount Royal and Seneca Colleges.

Algonquin did not have a booth at the trade show. In the Congress Centre. Here in Ottawa.

Pacific Rim countries represent a burgeoning market for Canadian businesses. And that market is crying not just for financial investment, but for people — designers, writers, builders, managers, teachers. You name the field and position; they're hiring.

As well, many of the company representatives at the show expressed interest in developing corporate sponsorships/mentorships/advisory committees with Canadian colleges and universities, according to booth staff.

Algonquin was present through the Association of Canadian Community Colleges booth. Fifteen APEC delegates toured selected buildings and program areas at Woodroffe campus. The remaining 985 or more delegates heard rave reviews of Algonquin from tour members, but made little contact with students and instructors, received limited information about programs and alumni, and weren't wowed by our skills and innovations the way they could have been, should have been.

A missed opportunity.