

Peter Kirstein

2003 Postel Service Award Winner

- Professor University College London
- Early network pioneer
- First international node on the Arpanet
- Recently award Commander, British Empire
- Tireless work in international networking for 30 years

The Background to the UK link

www.cs.ucl.ac.uk/staff/p.kirstein/

- By 1970 there were 20 Arpanet nodes in the U.S.
- ARPA interest in linking to the U.K.
- A 2.4 Kbps U.S.-Norway seismic array link existed
- Interest in connecting the array into the Arpanet
- NPL offered an Arpanet connection if NPL would connect to Norway
- In 1971 Europe was good, US bad; NPL could not consider the offer
- Davies at NPL agreed Kirstein should propose the link

The British Initial Reaction

- Davies agreed to provide £5000, and BT to fund a 9.6 Kbps Norway line for 12 months
- The SERC refused to fund proposal
- DTI required industrial interest from ICT
 - Even moral support was not forthcoming
- No other support was available, but they went forward anyway

The Pesky VAT

- The TIP arrived in July 1973.
 - UK Treasury issued a £5K VAT bill
 - Kirstein promised to pay subject to appeal 😊
- Arpanet demonstrated publicly in September
- In 1975, Treasury decided VAT was payable
 - **Could be reversed only by political decision**
- After much more argument, Treasury agreed to my arguments and stated:
 - ***“All present and future imports under this project would be free of VAT and Duty”***
- Project survived