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2005 Digital Library Colloquium Series

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Colloquium: Hermann Mauer
Dean, Faculty of Computer Science
Director, Institute for Hypermedia Systems

University of Technology, Austria

“Can We Avoid Catastrophic Failures of Computer Networks?”

Thursday, March 24, 2005

**Presentation - 3:30 - 4:30pm, Rangos Hall 1, University Center
Carnegie Mellon University**

Abstract: The number of viruses and other computer threatening software is increasing at alarming speed. Even if we act decisively, (which we don't) the likelihood of a large scale and long-term failure of all computers, computer networks and information systems is high. Drawing on examples of critical digital databases and federated libraries, we see that the consequences of a serious failure are catastrophic. Such failure will not be caused by some super-hacker, but rather by a well-planned cyber-attack. Since our dependency on computers and computer networks is steadily increasing, consequences will be worse the later such a breakdown occurs! In this talk we argue why a failure is likely and what it will cause if we do not take precautions that involve technical, economical and political decisions that are fairly far-reaching.

Speaker Bio: Born in Vienna, Austria, Maurer studied mathematics and computer science at the Universities of Vienna and Calgary, and was Assistant and later Associate Professor for Computer Science at the University of Calgary 1966-1971. He then took on various positions as full professor at a number of universities, and is now at the Graz University of Technology specializing in networked multimedia systems and their applications to knowledge management, learning, digital libraries, museums, and societal implications of new developments in computers. As hobby he is writing a series of Science Fiction novels.