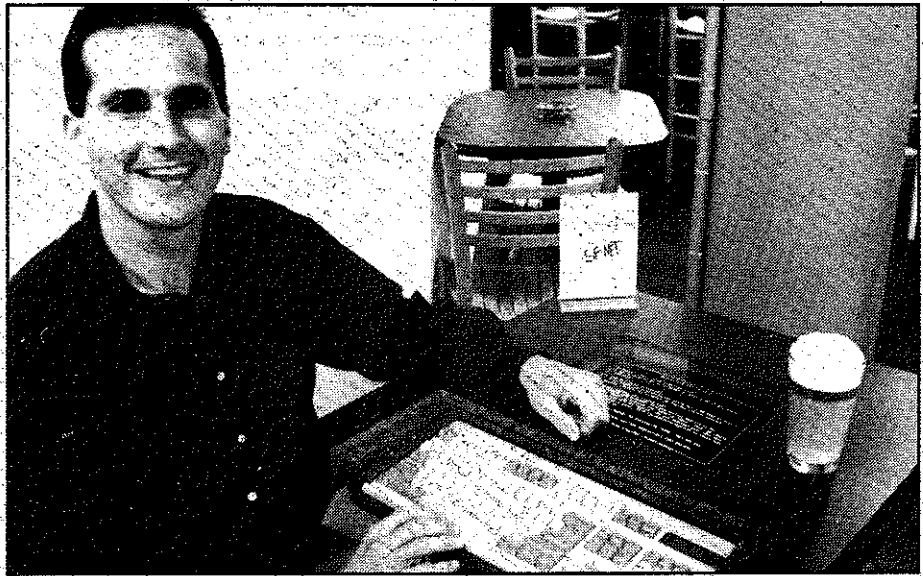


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Online Coffee Bar Network Debuts in San Francisco



Bringing the online communications experience out of the home: SF Net Founder Wayne Gregori.

In a move designed to bring the "online communications experience" out of the home and into the open, an online network called SFNet (San Francisco, Calif.) has announced the placing of a number of its RJ11-Tables, complete with computers and modems, into coffee bars throughout the San Francisco area.

The SF Net service features live roundtable communications, electronic-mail and message boards, featuring such subjects as business, sports, politics, and the environment. Inevitably, there is also a "Love Connection" message area.

Wayne Gregori, SF Net's founder, said that the idea was to "put computers in a place where people can use them."

The RJ-11-Tables come with computer and modem to allow for access to the network. The 14-inch monitor rises out of the top when a lever is activated. The top of the table is flush until the monitor is used, to allow for it to be used as a normal coffee bar table.

The prospective user simply purchases a ticket in the bar containing a special alphanumeric number. Once the number is entered into the computer, the user is given 10 minutes of online time. Although charges are waived initially, the 10-minute tickets will actually cost \$1 each. Callers using a computer from home can connect for \$3 per hour.

Gregori said that the initial menu

displays three choices: "T" for TimeCode, which allows for the entering of the special number; "D" for Dial SFNet; and "I" for Information. At any time during the session, a special function key allows for the input of another purchased number for uninterrupted communications.

Apart from communicating with other coffee-dwellers in the San Francisco area, users will also connect to a proposed national network that hopes to provide international links to similarly equipped coffee bars in such far-flung places as Paris, France.

Gregori said that three more locations are planned for the San Francisco area. The company currently has 12 tables built, and is looking to place the remaining four in the Berkeley, and possibly, the Sausalito areas. Initially, they would have to be within the 12 mile "local" telephone company area for the service to remain financially viable.

Gregori said that it was evident that "every coffee bar has its own personality." What surprised him was the "diversity of ideas" being displayed on the boards.

The five locations currently in San Francisco are Ground Zero, Horseshoe Cafe, La Boheme, Brain Wash, and South Beach Billiards.

For more information, call 415/695-9824.

— Ian Stokell, Newsbytes