President's Information Technology Advisory Committee

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January 24, 2001

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the members of the President's Information Technology Advisory Committee (PITAC), we congratulate you on becoming the 43rd President of the United States. We look forward to serving you, your Administration, and Congress to help ensure that the Nation's long-term needs in information technology are properly addressed.

PITAC, formerly the Presidential Advisory Committee on High Performance Computing and Communications, Information Technology, and the Next Generation Internet, was chartered by the High Performance Computing Act of 1991 (Public Law 102-194) and the Next Generation Internet Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-305). The committee consists of members from academia, industry, and the nonprofit sector. It is chartered to provide advice and information on high-performance computing and communications, information technology, and the Next Generation Internet.

In February 1999, PITAC published a report, *Information Technology Research: Investing in Our Future*, evaluating the Nation's long-term needs in information technology. The report concluded that research investments in information technology were both insufficient and significantly out of balance in light of their national importance. The information technology industry has accounted for roughly one third of U.S. economic growth over the last decade and has created millions of well paying jobs. Many of the innovations responsible for this economic growth are a result of Government-sponsored research conducted in the 1970's and 1980's. However, in recent years, the Government has not invested nearly enough to ensure a continued flow of good new ideas and trained professionals in information technology. The PITAC report recommended that the Federal Government significantly increase its support for long-term, basic information technology research.

PITAC's findings and recommendations were acted upon by the Administration and by Congress, leading to legislation that significantly increased Federal support for long-term information technology research. The National Science Foundation (NSF) received the largest such budget increase, and initiated the Information Technology Research program, which last year made 231 awards to 92 research institutions located in 35 states. These awards will support

almost 2,000 new graduate students, more than 300 undergraduates, and close to 2,000 postdoctoral Fellows. The research awards support and train this Nation's next generation of information technology professionals.

Last year, PITAC initiated panels to study selected areas that we felt needed further attention, and to produce reports with focused findings and recommendations. In August 2000, PITAC released its report on electronic government, *Transforming Access to Government Through Information Technology*, followed in September 2000 by its report*, Developing Open Source Software to Advance High End Computing*. PITAC, partnering with outside organizations, also released two reports on digital divide issues in 2000, with recommendations aimed at ensuring that the benefits of information technology become available to everyone.

We have proposed a busy agenda for 2001. PITAC's most recently created panels will review: 1) the long-term implications of information technology in national security; 2) issues surrounding individual security, including "identity theft"; 3) wireless communications technologies; and 4) international information technology issues. PITAC will also update its February 1999 report, to take account of technology advances that have occurred since the original study was completed and to assess progress to date on implementing the report's recommendations. PITAC will shortly release its findings and recommendations on transforming learning, digital libraries, and transforming health care.

Mr. President, we believe that information technology will be one of the key factors driving progress in the 21st century, transforming the way we live, learn, work, and play. Much has been achieved so far, but a great deal of work remains to be done so the Nation can continue to reap the benefits of information technology far into the future. We look forward to working with you and your staff to understand the national goals and priorities that will guide your Administration. PITAC stands ready to identify ways in which information technology can be used to achieve them.

Sincerely,

Raj Reddy   Irving Wladawsky-Berger
Co-chair   Co-chair

Enclosure