

Moving to Electronic Game Capture

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I. Proposal

To put forth a motion to authorize the following:

To purchase 6 MonRoi game entry units and associated hardware and software to allow the weekly capturing of 12 games a week from club play and make these games available on the website and archived in our club Games directory. Estimated cost is \$1,947 not including shipping and taxes.

See the MonRoi site to familiarize yourself with its features and functions:

- <http://monroi.com/products/professional-chess-tournament-manager.html>

II. Grass Roots enthusiasm

Currently, 4 club members during the month of April 2009 have expressed to me that they would be willing to donate between \$250 and \$500 each for the club to purchase units. This represents \$1000 at the low end and \$2000 at the high end.

Some of the expressed reasons for their willingness to spend out of their own pockets are:

- It is a shame to not capture the games being played on the top boards
- For the top boards they would like to see the entire game and not just parts of it
- Fascinating positions occur that they catch glimpses of on the top boards that they would like to see later to analyze
- Because they are playing their own games, the opportunity to see what is happening on the top boards is not available to them

III. Overview

In November of 2006 the club looked into the idea of purchasing the MonRoi game recording system. At that time no action was taken for the following reasons:

- It was unclear if this system would become widely adopted
- As new digital devices were appearing at a fast rate at that time, it was unclear if an alternative cheaper and possibly more effective system might appear in the near future.
- There was no strong motivation for the club to invest in such a system. Game collection was being done via the more traditional route of asking for score sheets. At that time it was felt that game scores needed to be annotated to be of general interest to club members. Annotation of games was something that came and went depending on who made themselves available for such a task. The collecting of more games or even specific games was not valued.

Compared to the 2006 evaluation, the needs and even the social environment of the club have change such that a reconsideration of a purchase seemed warranted. As noted elsewhere in this document, members have come forward to request we do something about capturing the top boards. Some of the things that are different now are:

- We have a much larger pool of Masters and Experts playing regularly at the club.
- The re-booting of the Championship series several years ago has caught the attention of many players at the club. As each year progresses there is a high interest and speculation made about who will or will not qualify for the events.
- There has been a growing desire by the rank and file for games from the top boards to be made available.

Purchasing a system now would make significant progress towards the following goals:

- The collection games played by the top players at the club for historical purposes and interest.
- The reliable collection of all the games from our Championship events
- The revitalization of our club games archive collection
- Creating a greater sense of community by the collection and sharing of games played at the club.

IV. Terminology.

- PCM - Personal Chess Manager - The handheld units to enter moves
- PTM - The hub which collects the game data from devices, wirelessly. Must be within 200 feet.
- PC Software: Software for the PC to interface to the Hub (PTM)

Important Notes:

- The PCMs that an individual purchases is different from those sold to clubs. Each individual "club" PCM has the ability to be changed from player to player each game whereas a user owned PCM cannot change its profile name once plugged in.
- To load the PCMs with things like the pairings, you need the software and the hub. You do not need a PCM for this purpose.

V. Pricing

Most of the pricing information and deals available come from area Tournament Director, Chris Bird, who while not affiliated with MonRoi is a strong advocate for the system and uses it extensively.

- A single PCM costs: \$359
- MonRoi recently had a special deal of:
 - 2 PCMs, 1 PTM (Hub) plus software - \$649

Back in 2006 their deal was to buy 10 PCMs and they would give a hub and software for free.

A deal Chris Bird had worked out for Bill Goichberg recently was \$329 for each PCM when buying 10 of them, but no hub !

VI. Recurring Costs

Back in 2006 there was going to be a \$129/year cost for renewing the software license.

Chris Bird says that he has never paid an annual fee and nobody he knows that owns the software has!

After he spoke with MonRoi a while back, they said that this was just something they were going to do but it seemed it would not be very popular so they have not done anything with it and don't intend to. Chris mentions that as of today, it seems they have now removed this annual fee from their website.

VII. Website Posting

There is no charge to view the games at the MonRoi site.

MonRoi provides code on their web site to allow you to view it on your own site

One concern you may think of is that we often don't have a reliable internet connection at the club. While this may put a crimp in plans to broadcast the games live, it will not hinder our ability to capture the games and then post them.

VIII. Analysis of how we might choose to deploy the system.

Some data points:

- We currently have a pool of 7 masters who regularly play at the club.
- You may wish to look at the overall player list on the club site, "Who's playing" link
- http://www.metrowestchess.org/Automated/ASP/MCC/Mcc_Active_Players.asp
- We probably average 4 masters per event though this certainly goes up and down.
- Between 1/3rd and 1/2 the players that make up the average 80 players per month play in the middle to sections. Competition in the Under 2000 section is usually tough and the players there take a lot of interest in whom they might be playing.

With these main thoughts in mind, if we were to assume for that moment that we would be limited in how many boards we could provide units to record games with, the following is a proposed plan for deployment:

Units	Sections and Boards we would deploy units to			Game collected per 4 week month
1	Open - board 1			8
2	Open - boards 1, 2			16
3	Open - boards 1, 2	U2000 - board 1	Open Champ games	24
4	Open - boards 1, 2, 3	U2000 - board 1		32
5	Open - boards 1, 2, 3	U2000 - boards 1, 2		40
6	Open - boards 1, 2, 3, 4	U2000 - boards 1, 2	Open & Class Champ games	48
7	Open - boards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	U2000 - boards 1, 2		56
8	Open - boards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	U2000 - boards 1, 2, 3		64
9	Open - boards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	U2000 - boards 1, 2, 3		72
10	Open - boards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	U2000 - boards 1, 2, 3, 4		80

In my opinion, 6 units hits the "sweet spot". With six units we capture most of the Master games, have enough for the championships and we capture two boards of the U2000

IX. Affected Policy and Procedures

Some Policy and Procedures for the Monthly event will need to be created to support the use and provide enforcement of our deployment of the PCMs. It is not the intent to address these issues here but to acknowledge the types of issues and rules that will need to be addressed. Example content:

- One player will be required at each designated board to use the PCM.
- If the designated PCM using player is deemed physically handicapped from effectively using the unit, the other player if possible shall be required to use the unit.
- By default the lower rated player will be the default user of the PCM.

X. How we might proceed

Based on the current information about what deals there are then:

- If we got the deal that Goichberg did, it would be \$329 per PCM.
- If the 2 PCMs, 1 PTM (hub) and free software deal still is valid, the cost per PCM is basically \$325. This is less than what Goichberg paid. We end up with extra Hubs but that's as it gives us backup hubs should one ever fail.

Using the Pricing deal that we are currently aware of then, since we would be getting two PCMs at a time, we see the following options

Units	Price
2	\$649
4	\$1,298
6	\$1,947

XI. Philosophy, Finances and Vision

A question we need to ask ourselves is, if this is truly something of value to the club, shouldn't the club pick up the cost and not depend on the good will of its members?

From a financial point of view, in my opinion, the club could easily afford the cost of 6 units. Capital expenses of up to \$2000 a year have been planned for and still bank money into our savings. Most years we spend almost none of that money and it goes directly to savings. The most recent capital expenses were Club Key chains about 3 years ago and a button maker last year. Both of these were in the \$500 range of expense. The next planned expense is a new pc for the club, approximately \$400.

On several occasions I researched what I would call the predecessor system of electronic boards with clocks recording to a PC. This technology has advanced to use wireless connectivity to the PC but it still appears to have logistical problems not yet resolved. The main issue in my opinion is the management of the physical items and getting them deployed each week and then stored. This system is much more manually intensive than the deployment of six hand held MonRoi units and their collection at the end of the evening. In addition, I see the increased use of the MonRoi system and even less use of this other system.

Prior to the system mentioned above, I had previously researched having Fritz games posted live to the website. The technology was not robust enough for this back at that time and this, as an approach has not manifested as a viable thing.

From a visionary point of view, it was my desire back in 2004 to be one of the first if not the first club to post games live to the internet. This would be both a feature for members and fans of the MCC as well as yet another accomplishment we as a club could take pride in.

XII. Recommendation by Author

- I feel that the club should purchase the six units and not impart cost to our members.
- I feel that a greater sense of community will be achieved by the fact that we are capturing these games and making them available.