UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

Computer Centre

NEWSLETTER

authorization: Director of the Computer Centre

1   SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

PERIOD FOR JANUARY 1974

USEFUL TIME	318	84.35%
GOOD TIME	323	85.67%
ON TIME	377	100%
NO OF CRASHES		9
TIME BETWEEN CRASHES		35.93 HRS

We hope our users have been pleased with the reliability of the system over recent months. So what happened on the 19th and 20th February? Briefly, there was an intermittant fault in the C.P.U. Rather than keep the machine up with frequent crashes until the fault developed, we decided to keep the machine down until we could track the fault through. It was an elusive fault but it was found. On the 25th February, another problem occurred in the C.P.U. We apologise for any inconvenience suffered by our users.

2   STAFF

The following appointments have been made to vacancies on the Centre staff:

Mr Doug Lennox has been appointed as a Senior Programmer. Doug holds a Masters Degree in Computer Science from Essex University which, incidentally, is also a PDP-10 installation. He has significant experience in software development. His current project is the development of a file migration system to provide users with public offline file storage facilities and allow increased storage allocation in the online area.

Mr Graham Rees has also been appointed as Senior Programmer. Graham is a graduate in Electrical Engineering from the University of Queensland and has a number of years experience covering both hardware and software development. He brings to the Centre particular experience in communications hardware and software and mini-computer technology.

Mr Robert Crago, a B.A. (Major in Mathematics), has been appointed as a Programmer following four years programming experience at The Australian National University. He will be generally involved with the development of systems programs and has particular experience in the application of computing techniques in the social science areas.

Arthur Hartwig and Lisha Kayrooz have been appointed as Graduate Assistants (Trainee Programmers). As well as assisting with developmental projects, they will have particular responsibility in improving the Centre's program library and documentation procedures.

Technical and programming staff of the Centre:

Director	Alan Coulter
Senior Systems Analyst	John Noad
Senior Engineer	Jim Sokoll
Operations Manager	Chris de Voil
Operations Supervisor	John Jauncey
Senior Programmers	Doug Lennox
	Graham Rees
Programmers	Sarah Barry
	Ian Burgess
	Bob Christiansen
	Robert Crago
	Maarten Semmelink
Trainees	Arthur Hartwig
	Lisha Kayrooz
Senior Technician	Graham Jerrard

3   MANUALS

The Systems Users Guide is now obsolete and will be replaced by:

MNT-1   General Information Manual

MNT-2   Using the U.Q. PDP-10 System

MNT-1 provides an overview of the services and facilities offered and the administrative arrangements necessary to make use of the Centre. This manual will be supplied free of charge.

MNT-2 is a technical introduction on how to use the U.Q. PDP-10 system. The cost of this manual will be $3.50.

Unfortunately, there have been some production delays and the manuals are not yet available. Further advice will be provided when they are.

4   CORE STORAGE

In January this year the Centre installed an additional 64K module of core storage bringing the total to 176Kwords. As a result, user core limits have been revised as follows:

0800 - 1800 hours	32K core
1800 - 2400 hours	64K core

5   ACCOUSTIC COUPLED TERMINAL

As from Monday, 4th March, the Centre can make available an accoustic coupled terminal for use on the system for temporary connections only. With this terminal, connection is made to the Centre via a normal telephone handset which is placed in a cradle on the terminal. Thus the Centre can provide a temporary service anywhere there is a telephone service.

It will be appreciated that being a portable terminal, the depreciation factor will be high and a hire rate that will permit replacement will be necessary. The interim rates for internal users will be:

(a)   The normal 60¢ per hour public terminal connection fee, plus

(b)   A hire rate for time the terminal is absent from the Centre of

   (i) $1.50 per hour or part thereof with a maximum rate of $10 per 24 hour day ceasing at 0830 hours;

   (ii)   An overnight rate of $5 from 1830 hours until 0830 hours the following morning.

The Centre is anxious that academic departments exploit the use of the accoustic terminal for teaching purposes and, as far as possible, preference in bookings will be given for use of the terminal in classwork. It would be appreciated if as much advance notice as possible could be given for these bookings.

For external users, the hire rates will be twice those which apply to internal users. To allow academic departments of the University to arrange bookings to meet teaching needs, the service will not be generally available to external users until 1st April.

No privately owned accoustic coupled devices are permitted connection to the Centre.

Bookings may be made through the Operations Supervisor, Mr John Jauncey (telephone extension 6471).

6   CARD READING PROBLEMS

With the exceptionally moist conditions we have been having recently,
problems have been experienced in reading cards that have not been stored
in an airconditioned environment. Cards will absorb moisture and it is
recommended that users should attempt to keep their cards under airconditioning
for 24 hours prior to submission to the Centre for processing.

We are attempting by inserting a small error label to indicate the card which
causes card motion errors in the deck returned to users. Users are requested
to check their output to ascertain whether a card has been omitted near the
point indicated, or possibly a card read twice.

7   DEVICE CONNECT TIMES

On the 10th January, a new version of the monitor and associated programs
became operational. It's purpose is to charge automatically for device
connect times. Previously this was done manually.

The cost derived from connect times will be included in the cost as specified
during LOGOUT or in a .COST command. An indication of the connect times is
also included in the LOGOUT time.

Connect time charges are $4.00 ($8.00 external) per hour for disk, and $3.00
($6.00 external) for Magtape and DECtape. Mount charges (not included in the
LOGOUT line or .COST command) are $1.00 ($2.00 external) per disk pack and
40¢ (80¢ external) for Magtape and DECtape mounts. Above charges are for
standard priority, so that actual cost is subject to the priority of the job.

This version of the monitor also corrects earlier undercharging for Magtape I/O.

8   AUSTRALIAN POST OFFICE POLICY ON MODEMS

Last year, the Australian Post Office altered its policy on use of DC modems
and, as from the 1st July 1973, became the sole supplier of DC modems required
for the transmission of digital data over APO lines. The implications to the
University are that, for new terminal connections to the Computer Centre up
to 300 bits per second, a cost of $150 per annum will be payable to the APO
for a modem pair. Higher modem costs apply to higher speed transmission.
This policy applies to new connections to on-campus lines as these lines are
maintained by the APO and, therefore, can have only APO permitted attachments
terminated to them.

The APO also initially required that our 41 existing DC line drivers be modified to meet APO specifications and then be maintained at a cost by the APO.   This would have involved considerable expense to the University and representations were made both to the State and Central Administrations of the APO. As a result, the University will now be permitted to retain and maintain its existing privately owned modems located on the St. Lucia campus. Clients now connected to external circuits will be required to replace existing Computer Centre modems with APO modems. This will be arranged by the Computer Centre.

9   STATISTICAL PACKAGE FOR THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Errors have been encountered in the use of the RECODE (CONVERT) statement in the current version of SPSS.   As a new version is to be installed shortly, no attempt will be made to correct the problem at this time.

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