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Computer Use in Social Services Network Vol. 7 No. 2 Summer 1987

Networking: The Linking of People, Resources and Ideas

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About the Network

Computer Use in Social Services (CUSS) Network is a nonprofit association of professionals interested in exchanging information and experiences on using computers in the human services. Members participate in the Network by:

- Sending materials for the CUSSN Newsletter, such as: member needs, interests, hardware/software use, activities, resources, ideas, experiences, computer applications, and events.
- Participating in the electronic network, skills bank, software clearinghouse and subgroups.
- Distributing Newletters at workshops and conferences. (I will send newsletters to distribute or place on a resource table.)
- Referring vendors to advertise their services and products through the CUSSN.
- Holding local CUSSN meetings. Local meetings in Dallas/Ft. Worth, Chicago, Baltimore and Australia have been successful.

Network Dues: $10 individuals, $15 institutions (payable in U.S. Funds). Contact Dick Schoech, Associate Professor, School of Social Work, The University of Texas at Arlington, Box 19129, Arlington, TX 76019.

The Newsletter is published approximately 4 times a year and is sent free to all network members. Back issues $5 each.

The Electronic Network (CUSSnet) establishes local bulletin boards, national and local mail and file transfer, downloading of public domain software, and access to numerous repositories of electronically available information on human service computing. CUSSnet builds on FIDONET, approximately 900 microcomputer-based local bulletin boards across the U.S. and in 9 continents. Contact Dick Schoech for your local node, or call 817-273-3966 and type the file in the HELP file area called FIDOLIST.80. Communications are at 300-2400 baud, 8 data bits, 1 stop bit and no parity. Almost any computer or terminal and modem will work.

The Skills Bank allows members to locate or share specific knowledge, skills and experiences for providing information about yourself. Contact Gunther R. Geiss, Adelphi U., School of Social Work, Garden City, NY 11530.

The Software Clearinghouse offers a computerized inventory of commercial and public domain available human service software, a software review file, and a software exchange. Contact Walter LaMendola, Professor, School of Social Work, U. of Denver, Denver, CO 80208.

Special Interest Group (SIGs) are subgroups where significant networking is occuring on a special topic.

Educators SIG, write Wallace Gingerich, School of Social Welfare, U of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI 53201.

Hospital Social Services SIG, write Mike King, Director of Social Work and Discharge Planning, Saint Francis Hospital, 100 Port Washington Blvd, Roslyn, NY 11576.

Area Groups:

Baltimore, MD, contact Bob Elkin Professor, U of Maryland, School of Social Work and Community Planning, 525 W. Redwood Street, Baltimore, MD 21201

California, James M. Gardner, Department of Developmental Services, Fairview State Hospital, 2501 Harbor Boulevard, Costa Mesa, CA 92626

Australia, Floyd Bolitho, La Trobe U., School of Social Work, Bundoora Victoria, Australia, 3083.

Israel, Menachem Monnickendam, School of Social Work, Bar Ilan University, Ramat Gan, 52100, Israel.

CUSS Electronic Network

Overview:

The electronic component of the Computer Use in Social services Network (CUSSnet) establishes local bulletin boards, local & international mail and file transfer, and repositories of electronically available information.

CUSSnet builds on FIDONET, 1700 nodes (local BBSs (bulletin boards) across the world. These nodes automatically connect nightly to exchange mail and files. Most local FIDONET BBSs are free with the exception of a small fee for electronically sending mail. CUSSnet nodes perform functions such as:

- Maintaining a bulletin board (messages/files) for local users;
- Maintain a local message area for international mail & conferencing;
- Exchange weekly specialty information/files with other CUSSnet nodes;

CUSSnet Nodes (echo specialty means it only carries the CUSSnet conference)

To Use CUSSnet

If a CUSSnet node is in your city, you're in luck. Simply dial it up using your computer and a modem and follow the directions. If no CUSSnet node exists in your city, you can call long distance to any CUSSnet node listed below (you can learn to use FIDO BBS software by calling a local node. To locate a local FIDOnet nodes, ask your local microcomputer dealer or call any CUSSnet node and type find the nodelist in the file area. You can use a local FIDOnet node to send mail and pick up whatever CUSSnet information your local BBS operator will get for you. You may have to pay a small deposit to your local FIDO. Communications are at 300-2400 baud, 8 data bits, 1 stop bit and no parity. Almost any computer or terminal and modem will work. Steve Ice (below) can provide assistance.

Examples of Message and File Areas on CUSSnet

Message Areas: Local messages, Local NEWS, FIDONET mail, National ECHOMAIL conference, and Resources (books, announcements, software).

File Areas: Files related to mental health, developmental disabilities, welfare, health, training, games, and utilities.

City & State	Net/Node	Phone #	Operator	Specialty Focus
Arlington TX	130/5	817 273-3966	D. Schoech	Recent Publications
St. Louis MO	100/999	314 889-4696	B. Butterfield	Biblio. Info.
Murray KY	11/301	502 762-3140	B. Allbritten	Handicap Info.
Denver CO	104/614	303 871 2912	W. LaMendola	Software Info.
Milwaukee WI	139/450	414 963-4515	W. Gingerich	Curriculum Info.
New York, NY	107/37	212 532-2278	G. Hoffman	Training Info.
Raleigh, NC	158/101	919 851-6806	M. Bowen	Handicap Info.
Seattle WA	138/35	206 442-8127	S. Ice	Federal Info.12pm+
Garden City NY	107/240	516 228-7938	G. Geiss	Skills Bank
Arlington TX	130/10	817 649 2857	C. Brown	Disabilities Info.
Tempe AZ	114/23	602 965 1588	W. Hudson	Research papers
New Hampshire	132/111	603 798 4028	D. Hall	General
Phoenix AZ	114/15	602 235 9653	D. Dodall	Disabilities
Las Cruces, NM	15/4	505 646 2868	M. Connealy	NASW NM State info
Washington	109/672	202 775 1940	B. Straugham	Community agencies
Cardiff, Wales	510/43	0222 704739	W. Davidson	General
Wigan, U.K.	510/64	0942 722984	D. McKendrick	Health Information
Oxford, U.K.	503/46	882872	N. Middleton	Echo
Netherlands	508/14	+31837615363	M. Mazeland	General
Detroit, MI	to be added		L. Renaud	Residential Serv.
Indy, IN	11/207	?	?	
Israel	to be added		Monnickendam	General

To start a CUSSnet Node, call Steve Ice in Seattle at 206 442-2430

Description of New CUSSnet Nodes

Net/Node: 508/14
Board #: +31837615363
Sysop: Marko Mazeland, EDP Manager, FIRA, Remmerden Holland
Description:

I am working as EDP-manager in Amsterdam at FIRA (the Dutch Association of Citizens Advize Bureaux). In our computer-project we try to combine three activities:

1. Building a (Videotex-) information system in Dutch Prestel with so called social information both for the social advisor and other workers in the welfare area, and for the layman;
2. Integrating the use of (micro-) computers in the daily work of our workers in the local branches, including information retrieval and storage, and the more general functions like word processing and so on (we try to do this by doing research on the actual need, training of local staff and provision of hard- and (specialized) software);
3. Stimulating the development of very much needed specialized software by skilled organizations, concerning our (complicated) tax-system, social security system and other applications that can free our local staff from a lot of arithmic and paper work for the clients. I hope to engage the discussion on one of the 3 subjects in the CUSSecho area.

Services Available

Vendor/Consultant	Contact Person	Services
Illinois		
OUTP ST, Inc. Drawer CNC6 119 Wilson St., Park Forest, IL 60466	F. Dean Luse, Ph.D., CSW, President (312) 748-3854	Consultation on feasibility and information system planning. Provides help with accountability, forms & report design, decision support systems, database development, software selection & evaluation, training your staff to use computer systems Extensive micro and mainframe computer experience.
Synergistic Office Systems (SOS) 438 Peterson Road Libertyville, IL 60048	Joseph Zefran, MSW (312) 680-8383 (312) 275-3747	The SOS team of human service/computer professionals help you with ready-to-use SOFTWARE exclusively for nonprofits - Fund Accounting, Donor/Fun Raising, Client Service/Receivables - and a full range of SERVICES - feasibility studies, programming, training, and support.
Florida		
Community Service Council of Broward County, Inc. 1300 S. Andrews Avenue P.O. Box 22877 Fort Lauderdale, FL 33335	Susan K. Buza, Executive Director (305) 524-8371	Full range of consulting and technical support in the automation of Social and Human Services. Systems include Agency Inventory/Directory Production, Information & Referral, Client Case Management, Mental Health Client Tracking, Statewide Networking, Transportation Scheduling, Carpool Matching.
Maryland		
KBL Group, Inc. 'Knowledge Based Living' 808 Pershing Drive #100 Silver Springs, MD 20910	Karen Levitan, Ph.D., President, (301) 588-4633	Services to help you use information, technology, and systems as professional resources. We work for you; we work with you; we help you do it yourself.
Michigan		
ON-SITE 2955 Jackson Blvd. Highland, MI 48031	Larry J. Renaud (313) 887-2119 after 6:00 (313) 846-7020	ON-SITE offers consultation; information system planning; training; workshops; hardware and software evaulation.
New York		
King Associates, LTD. 215 Shoreward Drive Great Neck, N.Y. 11021	Michael A. King, D.S.W. (516) 487-5995	Producers of AMIS — flexible off-the-shelf software for hospital social work and discharge planning departments. Customized programs are also available.
North Carolina		
National Collegiate Software Clearinghouse School of Humanities and Social Sciences Box 8101, North Carolina State University Raleigh, N.C. 27695	G. David Garson Director (919) 737-3067 (919) 737-2468	A non-profit, educational, software service of North Carolina State University, the Clearinghous develops and distributes low-cost, programs for both IBM and Apple formats. Offerings include A-Stat, a full featured statistical package and Community Mental Health Simulation. Write or call for a free catalog.
Rhode Island		
Applied Innovations, Inc. South Kingstown Office Park Wakefield, R.I. 02879	800-272-2250 401-789-5081	A developer and manufacturer of numerous software programs designed to operate on popular microcomputers. The programs are fully supported, documented and operational in hundreds of locations. Programs assist with Psychological testing (eg MMPI) office management (eg billing/insurance forms) or Assessment (eg psychosocial histories).
Australia		
Human Services Information Systems 6 Chapman Blvd Glen Waverly Victoria 3150	Floyd Bolitho, Ph.D., (03) 687-6790, (03) 459-1806	Consultation for Human Services, feasibility studies, training, systems design and implementation. Software Development and hardware vendor.

The above paid advertisements represent no endorsement or favorable review by CUSS. When choosing a consultant, remember the standard advice: (1) talk to more than one consultant, (2) obtain several comparable bids, and (3) ask for several recent clients and talk to them about their satifaction.

Service Listing Announcements: Interested vendors/consultants should send payment along with their description. Rates are as follows.

Description length	Rate per issue	Rate per year (4 issues)
under 15 words	$ 5	$18
under 30 words	$ 8	$28
under 45 words	$10	$34
under 60 words	$12	$40

Space Advertisements: Advertising space is available in the CUSS Newsletter at the following rates:

one eighth page in one issue = $15 — one half page in one issue = $45 — one full page in one issue = $75
one fourth page in one issue = $25 — three fourths page in one issue = $60 — two full pages in one issue = $120

Advertisers must furnish a copy ready ad. If the ad will be run for four issues, a 25% reduction in cost is granted.

Mailing Labels: Mailing labels are available at the cost of 5 cents per label.

Articles, Reviews and Reports

Human Service Computing in several countries–A tourist perspective by Dick Schoech, CUSSN Newsletter Editor.

Throughout this year, Stuart Toole (the U.K. chair of the HUSITA conference) and I visited computer applications in several countries. The intent of the visit was to contact those interested in human service computing and to promote their participation in CUSS and the Human Service Information Technology Application (HUSITA) conference to be held in Birmingham, September 7-11, 1987. Since this was unfunded research, we had to economize whenever possible and we wish to again thank our hosts for their generosity. Luckily, the language of computing is English and the standard in Micros is IBM and MS-DOS. It was nice to visit a foreign country, stick in our MS-DOS disk and demonstrate human service software without problems. Below are my observations.

Netherlands:

Hein de Graaf, the Research Director of a federally funded, but independent research center, had arranged the agenda for our Sep 86 visit. Hein has since changed jobs. He can be contacted via the Dutch node of CUSSnet (508/14) or at Charlotte de Bourbonlaan 5 – 2341, VC Oegstgeest, Netherlands. I also got a chance to meet Albert Visser, the Netherlands CUSSN coordinator (see back cover) who has been working on curriculum issues with his colleagues.

General Impression: The people we met 86 in Amsterdam were fairly sophisticated with microcomputers and immediately wanted to know what software we brought with us. They seemed to have Dutch IBM compatibles which were not quite as expensive as similar machines in the United Kingdom, but more expensive than the U.S. Tom Tossijn, a journalist for several local social work papers who put us up for our stay, was an avid computer user and had the latest in public domain software. Tom's address is: Van Ostadestraat 186, 1072 TH Amsterdam, Netherlands

The first major obvious problem with computing in another country is language. Often keys (such as the dollar sign) are programmed for special purposes in the local language. Even though many people in Amsterdam read English, it is not their first language and writing is usually in Dutch. Application software, such as dBase menus, must be written in Dutch to be used in most human service agencies, especially those in non-urban areas. And some programs are more culturally dependent than I had envisioned. For example, Mind Prober by Human Edge asks the user to agree or disagree with 100 adjectives. Many of these adjectives were unfamiliar to those we demonstrated the program to.

Another observation concerns the entrepreneurial attitudes of those in the human service computing field. Those working closely with computers had seen the power of the computer and were seeing the obvious need for software, training and support. Their newly developed skills, the future need for computer system development and training, the increasing cuts in social work services resulted in this entrepreneurial spirit.

The issues of security and privacy were important to the Dutch, since manual databases played a role during the occupation in WW II. In fact, security and privacy was the most important human service computing issue we encountered.

Amsterdam was especially interested in CUSSnet. Many of the human service people were familiar with FIDOnet. The local FIDOnet system is sponsored by a micro club with thousands of Dutch members. Establishing a CUSSnet section of the local FIDOnet was seen as a next step to get them connected. The node is now operational as 508/14. We visited several application.

Videotext System: The first was a videotext system at the FDIR, a government research and demonstration organization. This videotext system is similar to videotext in other countries in that it allowed people in their homes to use a public access channel to look at a series of menus which present information on a variety of subjects. The FDIR had set up a separate videotext section for the human services. Users could also send their questions through the system. Eventually, they hope to be able to have users send mail to agencies. The greatest use of the videotext system to date has been agencies updating themselves on the latest news and regulations and agencies using the electronic mail portion of the system to send messages to other agencies. The system is considered successful, but it seems that the funding which started the project may be channeled through more traditional agencies and the system incorporated in a governmental department which is responsible for media. With the system a success, the developers are out of a job.

Multiagency Data Collection System: Hans de Jong and some agency personnel illustrated the multi-information system he was in charge of. It was operated by a umbrella agency which was called The Joint. The system collected selected information from approximately 180 agencies and presented statistical reports back. The system seemed similar to systems that local United Ways may have in the U.S. However, the Joint does not control funding as United Way often does. The system was running on an IBM AT.

The observation was made that many government cuts were made in social work services, because agencies did not have good information to document the need and the effectiveness of their services. The cuts in social work are drastic in Holland, up to 50% in some areas. The computer was seen as one way to help social work document its case and survive.

What the project at the Joint has done is to educate agencies about the potential of computers. One agency director had set up his own system with the help of the joint to collect more detailed service data. He felt that other agencies would be able to use the system he set up. The joint wisely was not trying to control local agency computing, but saw its future role as providing training, technical assistance and data coordination.

Belgium:

We were taken to Antwarp Belgium to see a large IBM mainframe social services benefits system developed by Professor Eric Van Hove, U. of Antwerp, Dept of Political Science, Universiteitsplein 1, Antwerpen, Belgium. It was a traditional top down, IBM type operation. In the afternoon session with the students of Professor Hove, we found many students were working with agencies on more micro based systems. The students were aware of FIDOnet and were very interested in Husita and CUSSnet. Hopefully, the HUSITA conference will be a good meeting place for students of all countries to exchange ideas. Students seem to be the only ones with the time and energy to develop systems and possibly software without outside funding.

West Berlin:

Professor Dr. Fritz Grundger, of the Evangelische Fachhochschule Berlin, Reinerzstrabe 40-41, 1000 Berlin 33 arranged our stay in West Berlin. Fritz teaches in a private School of Social Work. Our visit involved our presentations on 'Computing in the U.K and U.S.' and on 'expert systems' followed by discussions with faculty of the public and private schools of social work. While University education seemed much more traditional in Berlin than in the U.S., both private and public social work schools had excellent computer labs. The problems are not in getting hardware and software, but in

how to use the excellent hardware (AT network) which existed. Some were using the AT as a dumb terminal for running SPSS on the mainframe. They did not have a micro statistical package at present, but were very interested in getting some.

Language was much more of a problem in Berlin than in Countries like Amsterdam. Many of the Professors spoke English, but not as proficiently as the Dutch. Mind Prober was harder to translate into local terms and the narrative was less understood. This is no criticism, because neither Stuart or myself spoke German. This did have its drawbacks when we were on our own. For example, we once ordered the 'casa plata' for two in a restaurant thinking it was the house plate or specialty of the day. What we got was enough cheese for a week, casa meaning cheese not house. And, to make matters worse, Stuart does not eat cheese!

My overall impression is that the Germans are extremely interested in human service computing and will make great strides forward in the next few years. The issues of privacy and security of data were extremely important to them. They seemed eager to participate in the HUSITA conference, but were not familiar with FIDOnet. Their assets are their industriousness and efficiency and their country's eagerness to supply hardware and training. The drawbacks may be that computing may require many changes in their traditional systems.

For a city by city account of human service computing in West Germany, see the report by Ursula Koch in this issue.

Great Britain:

General Impressions: The first thing you notice about microcomputing in the U.K. is that prices can be almost double that in the U.S. For example, at a local office supply store here in Cardiff, the Capitol of Wales, 3M brand floppy disks were over $4 each. Rock bottom prices were over one dollar per disk, which is over four times the U.S. price. No local discount stores exist which put together cheap clones. Electronic imports seem to be heavily taxed, or for some other reason the prices are high. This seems to have resulted in a substantial lack of development, especially at the hobbyist or home computer level. For example, in Cardiff, a metropolitan area of 750,000, population, there are only three or so computer stores and primitive by U.S. standards. I don't know why things are so expensive, only that the microcomputer revolution has not quite reached Wales. Luckily, Cardiff has Walt Davidson, who set up an excellent FIDOnet node during my stay.

Despite the costs and the primitive support system, some interesting applications exist. I somewhat agree with Stuart Toole's observation that there is a tendency for people in the U.K. to develop applications that are ahead of their time. When they find out that an application is possible, they move on to something else. It takes the U.S. or Japan to translate what the British have demonstrated into consumable products.

Most social service personnel do not have the entrepreneurial spirit I found in Holland and the U.S. However, the U.K. has too much going on to summarize in a brief report. See the Activities Section in this newsletter for more details of U.K. projects.

Austria:

Stuart Toole and I met with many organizations in Austria in March 1987. To save money, we booked a special tour called a 'romantic 5 day visit for 2 to Vienna'. It wasn't romantic; we had a meeting packed 4 day visit and it was cold and snowing. The only relief from work and the cold was in the pubs, restaurants and coffee houses. We can report back that the food, beer, and coffee in Vienna are excellent, but expensive.

Our meeting was coordinated by Vera Mehta, the Secretary General of the International Association of Social Workers (IASSW), Palais Palffy, Josefs Platz 6, A-1010 Vienna, Austria and Monika Vyslovzil (see activities section of this issue). The IASSW was extremely interested in working on curriculum content and issues related to computing and is presently in the process of computerizing many office functions.

We found much interest in the United Nations especially in software for social development in third world countries (c/o Bernard Mossaz, Chief, Relief Services Division, UN Relief and Works Agency, VIC-POB 700, A-1400, Vienna, Austria). The location of the U.N. in Vienna along with other international associations has resulted in many taking an international perspective on human service computing. Two other international bodies are the European Centre for Social Welfare Research & Training (c/o Helmut Wintersberger Berggasse 17, 1090 Vienna) and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (c/o Vera Mehta, Secretary-General, IASSW, Palais Palffy, Josefs Platz 6, A-1010 Vienna). Both of these organizations realize the importance of computers to their work and to the profession. The European Center has sponsored a series of workshops on computer related topics.

We made a presentation to the faculty of several local schools of social work and were well received, even though the audience was rather small (under 15 persons). However, the talk was at 6:00 pm and the weather was cold -5 Celsius and snowing. Austria, as some other European countries suffers from their organization of social work and other human service professions as a non-college course of study. Social workers take a variety of courses from other professions, but the social work core is seen as technical training. The credentials are not necessarily based on University teaching. Given this situation, it is hard for academics interested in teaching human service computing to conduct research and to get the hardware and software for teaching. Several attending our talk had personal IBM PCs or compatibles, but the costs were very high compared to the U.S. and this equipment represented a large personal commitment for them. The international bodies may have an influence on the use of computers in human services locally, but this infusion of interest and ideas is only just beginning.

We did stumble upon a free IBM exhibit on Sunday morning in front of one of the local museums. Inside the temporary building were young trained presenters dressed in white coats who were explaining to the crowds what computers were all about. All the basic hardware and software was on display, including networks, robots and expert systems. The crowds were enthusiastic. At times people waited about 30 minutes in the cold to see the exhibit.

In regards to electronic communications, the telephone system in Austria is on a timed rate basis and costs are high. No FIDOnet node existed in Austria. We forget in the U.S. that many other countries, (including the U.K.) pay for local calls by the minute. Every telephone bill is a negative reinforcer when using electronic communications.

We left many brochures, pamphlets and some public domain software. The central and strategic location of Vienna should see things change rather rapidly in regards to human service computing.

Israel:

In Israel, our visit was coordinated by Menachem Monnickendam of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and Bar Ilan University, School of Social Work. Menachem is the Israel CUSSN Coordinator (see back page) and many are aware of some of the activities in Israel due to reports by Menachem. A new brief summary of Israel activities appears in this issue.

Two things are important to note in Israel. It is a very small country which is more similar to a state or large city. Therefore, smaller systems, often microcomputer based, can play an important role nationwide. The second point is that Menachem and colleagues have prepared themselves for the task of building human service computing systems. Within the last several years, they have visited many of the best

applications in the U.K. and the U.S. seeing first hand what has worked and what has failed.

They also have problems in Israel, some unique and some common. One big problem is developing the user interface in Hebrew, which has a separate character set. For Hebrew versions of software, they must either go with local software or wait until foreign vendors develop a Hebrew translation. This can take a year or more with popular microcomputer software, such as dBase III. We saw many systems. Most were not sophisticated, but were well designed and performing basic tasks. Given that the systems are small, the expertise level is high, and many basic systems are in place. expect to see some good research and new systems development coming out of Israel over the next several years. Their major problem is a lack of money. Israel will hopefully be hooking into CUSSnet this Fall.

Czechoslovakia:

Czechoslovakia is a small country of about 15 million people. Human service computing is presently hampered by the lack of good reliable hardware. The problems with language also exist since much of the population does not speak English--although they many speak other languages. They humorously stated that some Czechs were bi-lingual, since they could speak Czech and BASIC.

The psychiatric and psychological professions are in the forefront of information system development. Social work in Czechoslovakia is not a University trained profession but consists of paraprofessionals with on the job training. The expertise level of the peoplę I met was good. They are avid readers and have read about much of what was happening in the East and West. They were interested in an setting up a CUSSnet electronic node, but have no MS-DOS clone with which to begin exploring the feasibility of such a node. The microcomputer revolution has yet to come in Czechoslovakia, but the Czechs have a long of history of being in the forefront of mechanical technology. They seem eager to join the electronics revolution.

Summary:

When people interested in human service computing get together, they talk about similar problems no matter what part of the world they are in. We had some conversations which were almost identical in every country we visited. Countries do have special problems, such as language, funding, or unique ways that bureaucracies operate. Most professionals were in the phase of desperately trying to find the money to get good hardware and software. This situation is comparable to the U.S. several years ago. The problems with the availability of good hardware and software will soon be inconsequential compared to the problems involved in creating more sophisticated and complex decision support systems or expert systems at the practitioner level. Here almost all professionals in the countries we visited are struggling with the knowledge engineering problems of what information is important for what decisions and how to best represent that information in a computer so that it is most useful to practitioners and clients. When researching these problems, it is important to take an international perspective, so that one's research is relevant in other countries. For example, in constructing a knowledge base, it may be important to structure the knowledge to make it as culturally independent as possible. This may be difficult to do, but we need to be thinking in those terms to aid technology transfer. Also, when developing new systems, it would be nice to be able to learn of similar work that is going on in other countries.

The HUSITA International Conference and the International Association which will be founded at HUSITA could not have come at a more important time. We all seem to face similar problems.

COMPUTER USE IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION IN WEST GERMAN AND BERLIN SCHOOLS OF SOCIAL WORK, by

Ursula Koch, Fachhochschule Ostfriesland, Germany, 2970 Emden.

German Schools of Social Work hesitantly, but steadily participate in the effort to introduce social Work students into professional use of high technology. Initiated more or less by the International Conference December 1983 'Social Change through Information Technology' organized by the Berlin Schools of Social Work, and gathering participants from many countries, schools started recognizing a gap between social work practice, and education.

While more and more social administration agencies in the highly legalized, bureaucratized social welfare system use computers for client recording, benefit issuing, educators at the professional schools hesitated for a long time to even consider computer use.

Most heard of objections were the ever important question of data protection, of the quasi-authoring of a print-out, of the loss of personal touch between workers and clients. The situation has changed somewhat with more and more educators using word processing software and thus demystifying the machine.

A group of interested social work educators was founded to deal nationwide with questions and problems of computer use in social work. They found that only 5 of 50 schools have an adequate number of computers installed. Reasons for resistance against high tech are found in the quite often destructive consequences of the introduction of new technologies (unemployment, more control); other reasons are the incompatibility of social work and computers under professional and ethical aspects. The group, however, encourages social work educators to take part in the use of computers, and above all, not to let other professions with no understanding of social work objectives supply the tools.

In the following I will give some detailed information and contact addresses, starting in the geographical North of Germany.

Berlin: From this biggest school of social work many impulses went out, initiated by Prof. Jochen Brauns and Prof. David Kramer, the former president and co-president of the school. They organized the 1983 conference. Berlin was the first school to have their own 12 IBM-PC-AT for education and continuing education courses. Contact: Fachhochschule Fur Sozialarbeit und Sozialpadagogik Berlin, Der Rektor, Karl-Schrader-Str. 6, 1000 Berlin 30.

Hamburg: W. Maschewsky, a sociologist recently got interest ed in the field and would like to continue cooperation with other schools. This school has a computer facility. Contact: Prof. Dr. Werner Maschewsky, Fachhochschule Hamburg, Saarlandstr. 30, D-2000 Hamburg 60. Germany.

Emden: As a sociologist with SPSS experience, I have held courses in information Technology in social work for students of all levels, including little exercises on our 10 Apple II, that are replaced now by 10 new IBM-PC-ATs. One or two more colleagues are gradually getting interested. Contact: Prof. Dr. Ursula Koch, Fachhochschule Ostfriesland, Constantiaplatz 4, D-2970 Emden, Germany.

Hagen: D. Hasenritter at the Hagen school of public administration has developed a software (prosoz) to calculate social aid benefits. The program is being tested in a 3-year-study in the social service administration at Bremen. Contact Prof. Dr. Hasenritter, Fachhochschule fur offentliche Verwaltugn, Eilper Str. 62, D-5800 Hagen; or contact Jurgen Schmidt, Gesamtpersonalrat Land und Stadtgemeinde Bremen, Knochenhauerstr. 20/25, D-2800 Bremen.

Frankfurt: Faculty members of the Frankfurt school of social work are developing social aid software that is meant to counterbalance institutional influence, and strengthen the position of those that so far had to pay the 'social cost' for

technical, economic and social change. B. Kirchlechner, A. Hofmann, and U. Stascheit developed the software (SOLDI) especially for social workers, clients, and students. The program does not keep information, it only gives out information. There is no network intended. Contact: Prof. Dr. Berndt Kirchlechner, Fachhochschule Frankfurt/M., Fachbereich Sozialpadagogik, Limescorso 9, D-6000, Frankfurt/Main, Germany.

Reutlingen: Extremely negative reactions against computers or curricular efforts to introduce computers are reported by w. Schmidt-Hackenberg. Contact: Prof. W. Schmidt-Hackenberg, Teckstr. 31, D-7410 Reutlingen 17.

Bern (Switzerland): R. Brack from the Bern School of Social Work organizes continuing education programs for social workers on computers. Mrs. Brack is already a member of CUSSN. She works on a MacIntosh 512, and mentioned ThinkTank and TackFinder for her planned resources documentation. Contact: Ruth Brack, VSSA, Falkenplatz 24, CH-3012 Bern, Switzerland.

Current Developments in Israel, by

Menachem Monnickendam Phd., School of Social Work, Bar Ilan University, Ramat Gan 52100, ISRAEL

Computerisation in the Social Services here is steadily expanding. We are witnessing a diverse development: both batch and interactive systems, and micro and mainframe based systems. Most in the Case Management field. Systems could be classified into 4 types.

1. Micro batch
2. Mainframe batch
3. Micro interactive
4. Mainframe interactive

The Probation Service is currently finalizing a type 2 system. It provides the Probation Officer with comprehensive data including: past offences, judges decisions and previous probation officers recomendations.

A type 3 system is the decision support system of the youth probation. It matches between client characteristics and past recomendations. It presents the youth probation officer with a listing of the preferred recomendations for the current case. It is operating now on a day to day basis.

Type 2 is with the Institute of National insurance which is steadily expanding its system for the Rehabilitation Service. Another type 3 system is the development of a micro-computer based integraed case management and administration model for the Social Service Bureaux (SSB) of the local government. The pre prototype has been completed, software has been chosen (magicII), and hardware is being aquired for the test sites (IBM). Data entry and retrieval will be by front line workers themselves, hands-on, without any go- betweens.

The department of Mental Health in the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) has completed the trial runs of its system which since 1-11- 1986 runs on an operational basis. This system includes data that relate to types of contact, client assessment, services recommended, services provided and type of treatment. Detailed single client reports are available to front line mentla health officers and agregated reports to higher echelons. This system is a combination of type 2 and 4.

Educational activities are increasing. The Bar Ilan and Tel Aviv University schools of Social Work are both offering graduate level courses in the use of Computer Applications in Social Work. at Bar Ilan University a new micro computer lab is being installed so that we will soon be able to develop our own educational software. In the programs of continuing education for social workers several courses in the subject are being offered.

The Israeli branch of CUSSN was recently established. We didn't have the faintest idea how many people were interested in the topic but were pleaseantly surprised by the 45 people who showed up. We are establishing special interest groups in areas such as data protection.

To conclude: the future looks exiting.

A Microcomputer-Based Cognitive Rehabilitation Programme for the Severely Head-Injured by Seldon H. Curry, Ph.D.

Research Neuropsychologist, Burden Neurological Institute, Stoke Lane, Stapleton, Bristol, England, BS16 1QT

Note: This work is being supported by the Frances and Augustus Newman Foundation and the Head Injury Recovery Trust (H.I.R.T.)

A microcomputer-based cognitive rehabilitation programme has been developed to assist the severely head-injured patient to make as full and – if intervention begins shortly after trauma – as rapid a cognitive recovery as possible. Patients enter the programme either as soon as possible after the trauma (usually upon emergence from a post-traumatic amnesia (PTA) of at least a week) or after several years of recovery. The basic idea of the cognitive rehabilitation is the provision of a structured and progressive set of stimulating and intellectually challenging material designed to exercise the more general areas of cognitive impairment subsequent to cerebral trauma (attention span, attentional control, impoverished memory, slowness, logical problem solving ...). Because of a large number of factors – both theoretical and economic – it was decided that the material should be presented by a small, relatively inexpensive microcomputer.

One of the primary factors influencing this decision was the desire to design a rehabilitation programme that could be primarily home-based. In this programme the patients have, purchase or are loaned a relatively inexpensive microcomputer (Acorn BBC Model B or its replacement, the Master) and the necessary peripheral equipment (a high resolution colour monitor and a MODEM). A network system has been developed that allows each of the remote machines (in the patient's home) to be linked to a central computer at the Institute using modems over the standard telephone lines. The network system provides both continuous control over the patient's rehabilitation programme and complete monitoring of the patient's performance. The system is designed so that the telephone link is only connected for the transmission of programs and the receipt of results. This ensures that telephone charges do not become unreasonable – for even quite remote users. (In the U.K. telephone costs are calculated according to timea as well as distance).

The 'cognitive rehabilitation' programme developed as a more or less direct result of a large clinical research project on the electrophysiology of closed head injury. These series of investigations began in 1977 and are still continuing at present. One of the outcomes of the electrophysiological research has been the development of a set of tools that can be used to provide an objective and meaningful assessment of different aspects of brain functional activity. These assessment procedures can be used to provide an index of how any one patient's brain is operating at any point in time and – more importantly – to evaluate changes in brain functional level as a result of therapeutic intervention. One of the unique aspects of this particular approach to 'cognitive rehabilitation' is the use of electrophysiological procedures to evaluate the efficacy of treatment.

In general terms the aim of cognitive rehabilitation is to improve the quality of the patient's mentation and thus the quality of his or her interaction with the world. It is important to remember that for any individual patient, the particular pattern of deficit and dysfunction is somewhat patient and injury specific. There are – however – some general problems associated with nearly all head injuries. For example, most head injury patients display some degree of fatigibility, impoverished memory, diminished attentional capacity, decreased motivation and slowness of both thought and action. It is important to note that these sequelae can be considered 'general' not only in that they are nearly universal – but that within each individual these defeciencies permeate

and diminish all levels of cognitive activity. It is primarily these 'general' defects that we are attempting to remediate with our microcomputer-based 'cognitive' retraining programme.

In practical terms the cognitive rehabilitation project has benefited from the establishment of this network in the following ways:

1. complete and accurate monitoring of each individual patient's performance from the first to the last time they use the system.
2. the performance monitoring permits the continuous evaluation of progress for each patient and thus facilitates the tailoring of the rehabilitation programme to the specific patient.
3. an increase in the number of patients that may be dealt with simultaneously and an increase in the effectiveness of management due to points 1 & 2.
4. the use of the ordinary telephone system for the remote links ensures that the this facility could be available to serve patients wherever there is a telephone.
5. although the criteria for efficacy of the rehabilitation programme can not rest solely – or even predominantly – on the progress on the training material, there are nonetheless some very important questions of efficacy that can only be answered by close examination of the individual patient's progress during rehabilitation. The system has been designed to provide this information.

At the time of writing the 'network 'system has been operational for less than a year. Over this period the performance of the system affirms it to be an effective and practical solution to the problems of managing a home-based rehabilitation programme.

The Impact of Information Technology on Decentralization of Services, by Mike Monk and J. T. Wass, East Sussex Social Services Department, POB 5, County Hall, St. Ann's Crescent, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1SW

Background

East Sussex took the decision to decentralise its social services to a network of patch items in 1981. East Sussex covers an area of nearly 1,125 square miles and has a population of approximately 641,100, over 80 per cent of whom live in urban areas. Decentralication resulted in the creation of 45 locally based social services teams each covering a small area of the county; originally organised into 11 areas within two divisions plus a centralised administration.

Responding to change

The creation of a decentralised organisation raised fundamental issues in relation to information needs and control. It was apparent that management needed to be much tighter and more information was required at a local level. In response to this need, departmental management agreed to a dual strategy that:

1. developed the existing data base and home help systems to the fullest possible extent;
2. took full advantage of the rapidly developing microcomputer technology.

On the basis of the knowledge that was obtained from the purchase of intelligent terminals, it has been possible to create a computer/communications network linking county hall with divisional and patch offices.

By mid 1987, the programme of installing intelligent terminals in all of the department's patch teams and central support sections will be complete. These will be used to access the mainframe computer and also provide local microcomputer facilities.

Some of the potential pay-offs are:-

1. Up-to-date management control information available to all managers simultaneously.
2. The facility to monitor in detail the department's financial activities, handling payments, forecasting, calculating unit costs and measuring performance against budgetary targets.
3. Improved personnel management drawing on data covering staffing levels, vacancies, use of overtime, agency staff and manpower planning.
4. Word processing facilities increasingly used by managers and practitioners for letters, reports and minuting of meetings and case conferences.
5. Sharper analysis of consumer demands and service provision both at the level of patch teams where information specific to that area is required, and, at the senior management levels where aggregated information is required for strategic decision making. This includes demographic information, referral and work load statistics and the monitoring of statutory case reviews.

Further Developments

There are now a number of very promising developments which are being applied in the department. An electronic mailing and viewdata system is currently being piloted and will in due course be made available to the department's network as a whole. In addition to the advantages of electronic mailing – messages and information can be relayed in seconds – the viewdata element will provide easily accessible up-to-date basic departmental information, such as who's who, salary scales and mileage allowances.

Following the introduction of desk top terminals and printer for senior managers for a trial period, this facility will over the next two years be made available to all area and team managers in the department. In addition to providing direct access to mainframe systems including electronic mailing and viewdata, the equipment has a number of personal micro-computing facilities such as a spreadsheet and calculator. The terminal will enable a manager to have a whole range of information at his or her fingertips together with an ability to manipulate and transfer data. It represents a significant move away from a closed' information environment and control by specialist' administrators to an open' enviroment, and is in keeping with major developments in the commercial sector.

Experience has proved that to run services effectively local managers must have local budgets, and that to be effective local services must be flexibel and can only be so if there is flexibility within local budgets.

The network approach to computing has allowed pilot attempts in certain areas to break down the traditional local authority budgetary system and reconstruct it in such a way as to encourage local managers to shift money around without the need for constant reference to someone further up the hierarchy with a request for virement. When a patch team manager has vacancies in an old people's home he can release the resources, staff and their associated costs into helping people in the community. The intention is to establish patch team budgets over the next two years.

An associated development currently being piloted aims to integrate the hitherto separate processes of professional assessment and financial control. In the mian social workers determine (on the basis of what they think the client needs) which resources should be made available. They do so largely in ignorance of the relative cost of those resources, a situation which in commerce and our personal lives would not be tolerated.

We have, therefore, developed a micro-computing system to compare assessments of client needs with the range of services available, and the unit costs of these services. So that, for example, a social worker, home help organiser, residential care officer or team manager can calculate the

costs of alternative packages of care for a frail elderly client. The software should also provide the facility to monitor and record the progress of clients over time through various levels of dependency and allows for the aggregation of data so that profiles of consumers and relevant services can be compiled.

Conclusions

Experience of decentralisation has shown that there are a number of major ingredients involved in utilizing information technology to the fullest extent. These include:

1. A broad strategy – you must have a clear idea of where you want to go.
2. Compatibility of equipment – the ability to inter-communicate is essential.
3. Managerial commitment and patience – you will face constant technical hiccups and resource problems.
4. Balancing opportunities with consistency – try to take full advantage of the rapid advances in this field but don't lose sight of your aims.
5. The support of central computing staff – partnership is the name of the game.
6. Consultation with staff and trade unions – resolve the anxieties about the introduction of new technology.
7. Investment in training and support – is the key to creating the climate for change.

INTERACTIVE VIDEO IN THE EDUCATION OF THE DEAF

from Christopher F. G. Jones, Research Unit, Donaldson's School for the Deaf, West Coates, EDINBURGH EH12 5JJ.

This interacative video (IV) system is based on the Philips Professional Laservision video-disc player, the BBC micro-computer and a teletext television. The first two IV programs are based on commercially produced laserdiscs.

HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS: The hardware requirements for the interactive video system is quite simple and straight forward. You need the following:-

1. BBC micro-computer model 'B' with DFS disc interface.
2. Ideally, 80 track disc drive but 40 track disc drive will do.
3. Philips Professional Laservision player Model VP835/005B fitted with the optional teletext encoder.
4. Teletext television/monitor.
5. RS232-C cable to connect the BBC micro-computer with the Laservision player.

READING AND COMPREHENSION IV PROGRAM: The first one, the 'Reading and Comprehension,' IV program is based on the story of Ivor, the Engine, the popular children's television series from the BBC children's favourities (BBC Enterprises). Deaf subtitles prepared beforehand and stored on the floppy disc. These prepared subtitles are transmitted by the BBC micro-computer at predetermined times and for each scene the micro-computer stops the Laservision player to allow the child time to read each subtitle before proceeding to the next scene. After a short session of video play together with appropriate subtitles, the micro-computer stops and displays a storyline containing all the subtitles used so far without the video background. This is the next stage where deaf children are reading without visual component and this is followed by questions with multiple-choice answers to check for comprehension. If the deaf child gives an incorrect answer, he is given the storyline before answering the question again. If he gives the incorrect answer twice he is taken back to the beginning of the video sequence together with appropriate subtitles followed by the storyline and to the last question. Should he fail to answer the question the third time, he is then shown the answer straight away. When the child gives the correct answer, the Laservision player will be programmed to show either a still picture or a dynamic moving sequence relating to the correct answer given together with the appropriate subtitle but with the answer printed in a different colour. That is the very link between language and action thus allowing deaf children to directly manipulate with his environment.

TENSES AND THE PASSIVE VOICE IV PROGRAM: The second IV program helps to overcome a classic problem faced by our teachers of the deaf which is the problem of expressing the concept of time with tenses of verbs and the use of the passive voice. This particular problem is due to the lack of this vital link between language and action. As Seymour Papert informs us, classrooms are not ideal for use in education: teachers of the deaf are unable to create the right kind of environment for many things including the expression of the concept of time for tenses of verbs and the use of the passive voice. Interactive video in this particular case can be used as an educational tool to enable teachers of the deaf to show deaf children the concept of time. This particular program makes use of white boxes containing both the auxiallary verb and the verb but using different coloured text for the appropriate tense as well as the passive voice. The coloured texts are green, magenta, read and blue for the future, present, past and the passive voice respectively. The micro-computer instructs the Laservision player to provide a blank picture containing the subtitle of the sentence in the future. Deaf children are able to see the sentence written in the future tense together with a blank video picture so that they realize that something is going to happen. When the (SPACE) bar is pressed, the micro-computer instructs the Laservision player to provide the child with a video sequence of an event together with a subtitle written in the present tense. The child is able to see the dynamic link between the language meaning of the sentence written in the present tense and the action of the event. As soon as the event is completed, the subtitle is automatically changed into the past tense together with a frozen scene of the event implying to the child that the event is now completed and is now in the past. The child is invited to press the (SPACE) bar for the passive voice where applicable. This changes the subtitle text into the passive voice but leaving the frozen video scene alone. The child is able to see for himself the way the text is written in the passive voice and to relate it with the picture. This particular program initially has produced great excitement from teachers.

INTERACTIVE VIDEO DICTIONARY: Deaf people find reading difficult due to the lack of vocabulary and the demotivating tasks of looking up words in dictionaries. Not only that they may find a word or two that they have not come across before in the explanation of the original word. So looking up dictionaries can be an ad infinitum job for them. The idea behind this interactive video project is to enable deaf people to find reading a joy rather than a boring task. The deaf person would be reading a passage from selected graded reading on the VDU (visual display unit) provided from the floppy via the micro-computer. When he comes across a word he does not know, he would move the colourline indicator under the uncomprehended word and then press the (RET) key when the micro- computer will instruct the Laservision player to provide the appropriate picture and/or a sequence in sign. The reading materials selected are from the LINK-UP series books 1-5. The text from these books are prepared in teletext form and placed on floppy discs together with the control program. Special edition laserdiscs were commissioned so that the laserdiscs contained either photographic stills of graphics of the nouns together with video sequences of signs found in these five books. The signs selected are from Signed English which is based on BSL but used in the English text together with various markers to indicate tenses of verbs etc.

The interactive video dictionary can be used as a powerful interactive manual for learning signed english which should appeal to parents of deaf children wishing to use total communication. There are two ways of developing this manual, one way is to make use of the excellent interactive video system or to use it linearly with a domestic Laservision player costing around 250 pounds (375 dollars) and a textual manual to work from. If the deaf child is using the interactive video dictionary at school using the interactive video system to help with his reading, his parents could use the same laserdisc on a domestic player to keep up to date with their signs thus reinforcing their own child's reading and most important of all full meaningful two way communication.

Looking at the above these IV programs shows what interactive video can do in the education of the deaf, it can be seen that interactive video manages successfully to establish the IMPERATIVE DYNAMIC relationship between language and action and that much more work in providing many different application of interactive video in the education of the deaf is needed. One would perhaps draw that interactive video is the most ultimate medium for use in the education of the deaf.

INTERACTIVE VIDEO DICTIONARY PACK: This pack will consist of a custom-made laserdisc containing the signs and pictures found in the LINK-UP series books 1-5. A complete set of LINK-UP series books 1-5. The appropriate floppy discs. Please state 40/80 track / single/double sided. You may order this pack for research and evaluation purposes. Price 150 pounds (about 225 dollars).

READING 7 COMPREHENSION PACK: This pack will consist of one 'BBC Children's Favourities,' laserdisc and one floppy disc. Please state 40/80 track / single/double sided. You may order this pack for research and evaluation purposes. Price 75 pounds (about 112 dollars).

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JONES, C.F.G. (1986) 'The Need for Interactive Video in the Education of the Deaf.' PROGRAMMED LEARNING and EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY Vol. 23 No. 2 May 1986. Kogan Page: London.

JONES, C.F.G. (1986) 'The Listening Eye.' LEARNING TO COPE Computers in Special Education Yearbook. 1986/1987. EMAP Publication: London.

NHS REGISTER OF COMPUTER APPLICATIONS

from Joy Reardon National Health Service Register of Computer Applications, Regional Computer Centre, East Anglian Regional Health Authority, Union Lane Chesterton, Cambridge, England CB4 1RF

Description: The NHS Register of Computer Applications contains computer applications in use or under development within the NHS. Information on transferable systems is submitted and entered onto a computer at the East Anglian Regional Health Authority where the Register is maintained.

The Register of Computer Applications is in three sections: PRIMARY, SECONDARY, and TERTIARY. To be on the PRIMARY Register, an Application must be capable of being transferred, fully documented, supported, maintained, operational, and transferred to at least one other NHS computer. To be on the SECONDARY Register, an application and its documentation should be to a standard necessary to allow transfer without undue difficulty. It is expected to meet some of the Primary Register criteria. An application which does not satisfy the criteria for inclusion on the PRIMARY or SECONDARY registers will be placed on the TERTIARY register for information purposes only. All applications are classified by region codes, agency--department codes, function of the software codes, computer model codes, operating system codes, and the availability of the source code.

Regional Managers have requested that the Register should contain details of foreign computer systems that are operational outside the United Kingdom, but have been visited and evaluated by NHS staff. The objective of including these is to ensure that relevant information on foreign systems can be made available to other NHS personnel interested in assessing the alternatives for consideration against the U.K. options.

Availability: A full version of the register is available on a 5 1/4" floppy diskette produced by an IBM PC-AT under DOS 3.00. A link exists with the British Journal of Healthcare Computing (BJHC) Viewdata System. It is possible for anyone with a viewdata terminal to link to the BJHC Viewdata system and enquire on any application in the PRIMARY SECONDARY and TERTIARY Registers. A page in each edition of the BJHC will detail new and improved applications and any other news of interest to users.

The full NHS Register listing is only available to Principal Regional Contacts, District Information Officers, Data Protection Officers and the like. Small selected areas can be requested for listing along with a user guide. To obtain any of the above information contact Joy at the address above or Tel: 0223 61212 ext 350 or (direct line) 0223 312225. Prices for the listing range from 50–150 pounds or 75–225 dollars.

Sample Output: An example of an NHS REGISTER output follows.

REGION = Wessex SYSTEM NAME = Portsmouth Child Health System
SYSTEM SUMMARY = Child register Imm & Vac pre school
DEPARTMENT CODE = 113, Immunization
CLASSIFICATION CODE = 110, child surveillance and recall
MODEL = Plexus/Unix
OPERATING SYSTEM = Unix
SOURCE CODE = Own
LANGUAGE(S) = Unify and C
INITIAL CHARGE TO NEW USERS = Negotiable
SYSTEM CRITERIA:
  TRANSFERABLE = y
  MAINTENANCE AVAILABLE = y
  NO. OF NHS COMPUTERS TRANSFERRED TO = 0
  FULLY DOCUMENTED = y
  OPERATIONAL = y
  TRANSFER SUPPORTED = y
  IMPLEMENTATION DATE = 4/87
DESCRIPTION = First stage of a complete community system. The information system covers all persons within the district and acts as an accurate register to be used for screening and surveillance. It includes 'family links' for cross-referencing, and interactive interrogation and updating of records with comprehensive security measures. User guides will be available by mid 1987. The total cost of the system is 80,000 pounds or 120,000 dollars. Access to the system can be made using M2105 messaging terminals subject to authorization.

OPEN SOFTWARE LIBRARY

by David McKendrick, director, 164 Windsor Road, Ashton-in-Makerfield, WIGAN WN4 9ES, Tel: 0942-712385

The Open Software Library has been developed as a national resource for health workers involved in the use of microcomputers. Initially, the main function of the library was the distribution of healthcare-related software, but with the growing interest in computer use in the NHS and the general expansion of areas of development, OSL has progressed to provide a facility of wider application to health workers. At our present stage of development we provide a technical support system to health service staff which is of proven value, and our bulletin board system is a logical extension of

the promotion of exchange of ideas and information on health care computer use.

However, the principal function of OPEN SOFTWARE LIBRARY remains the collection of computer programs dealing with health care which otherwise might not be generally available, and the dissemination of these on cassette tape, microdrive cartridge and floppy disk. The library will register and bank original programs designed by authors who do not wish to publish their work through software houses. Each author will retain copyright of their material and receive a royalty for each request for a copy of their work.

The broad categories into which the programs may fall are:
Computer-assisted learning;
Program utilities;
Aids to teachers, e.g. video control, general purpose programs, record and search systems;
Research aids, statistical routines;
Management aids; Clinical applications.
Programs for submission and assessment must include documentation explaining the use, content and target group.

Microcomputers available to the service include Commodore 64, Spectrum 48K and 128K, BBC B, B and Master 128,, Amstrad 6128 and QL. We would be pleased to hear from individuals who wish to submit programs for the catalogue. Authors who wish to submit compiled, assembled, auto-run or copy-protected programs must also include the copying method for library use only. Utilities must include a full explanation of the routines together with a print-out or flow-chart.

For those wishing to purchase programs the catalogue is in the 'CATALOGUE' file in this section. Orders should be sent to OPEN SOFTWARE specifying catalogue number, program title, machine and medium, and number of copies required. Cheques should be made payable to OPEN SOFTWARE LIBRARY. For further information please mbx or write to:

EXAMPLES OF AN OSWL NEWS FILE [23 October 1986]

New NHS Strategy: The NHS Management Board has released its strategy to spend over #1 billion on computer systems over the next 10 years. Through a new management budgeting system managers at every level in the health service will be made aware of the costs of their actions.

Two pilot authorities will receive central funding to try out different approaches to the Korner plans for collecting patient and other administrative information. This will help to set a context for the Korner implementation programme.

The framework includes a table of tasks which the NHS is setting itself, together with targets and responsible parties. A new national training advisory working party will produce a comprehensive technical skills and management training plan for new entrants and existing staff, and is due to report by the end of the year.

European Health IT Initiative: An Esprit project to develop medical information technology systems has received #2.2 million of EEC funding for its infrastructure and co-ordination. The initiative is called BICEPS – Bio Informatics Collaborative European Programmes and Strategies.

A review of Europe's IT needs in health care is due to go before the Council of Ministers later this month. Among the priorities is a wide area network for communications within the EEC medical community.

In the UK IT'86 – the committee considering the follow-up to the Alvey research programme – is being lobbied to make health systems a top priority. The chairman of the committee – Nigel Harding from John Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford - has stressed that much more effort will have to be applied to the development of artificial intelligence techniques and relating them to clinical applications over the next few years if the UK is to capitalise on its skills.

GP Expert Systems: Whilst most medical expert systems have been designed to fulfill a specialist function, such as diagnosing diabetes, GPs' requirements are for a more generalist system. Dr John Fox of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund biomedical computing unit has teamed up with the Oxford University Press to complete a six-month project designed to establish whether building such a system for GP's is feasible.

The result is the development of a prototype system, called the Oxford System of Medicine (OSM). The knowledge-base for the system is stored in factual English-like phrases, which can be easily updated, and is designed to include OUP's medical texts, plus texts from other journals and knowledge from existing databases.

The prototype runs on a Sun 3 workstation under Unix, but there is also a version on a Research Machines Nimbus. It is intended that any commercial development would be targeted at low cost machines.

The British Computer Society: The British Computer Society has a number of groups relevant to health care. These are entitled the Health Informatics Specialist Groups, and cover medicine, nursing and other health care professions. A section on the OSL BBS is assigned for their use. Here is a sample of one of the BCS files.

MEDINFO – 86: Washington Revisited: Tuesday 2 December 1986. by Connaught Hall, 41 Tavistock Square, London WC1. MEDINFO 86 – WASHINGTON: 26-30 October 1986 was the fifth triennial event of the International Medical Informatics Association (IMIA), a special interest group of the International Federation of Information Processing. The conferences are held to provide a forum for the presentation and exchange of information relating to health care applications in information technology. It followed the progressively successful events at Stockholm, 1974; Toronto, 1977; Tokyo, 1980; and Amsterdam, 1983. In Washington the National Health Service presented a scientific exhibit showing some of the latest applications of information technology to health care in this country and this attracted considerable interest throughout the conference. The speakers at this seminar, who attended Medinfo 86, were asked to record their impressions on a particular area of interest. These records will be available to the delegates at this seminar, and the speakers will make a short presentation of the highlights of their record. Within each session it is intended that there should be opportunities for questions on the full views of the speaker on his particular subject. The full proceedings of Medinfo 86 (Editors R Salomon et al) are published by North Holland and are obtainable from Elsevier Science Publishers, Book Order Department, PO Box 211, 1000 AE Amsterdam, The Netherlands. The price for the set of two volumes is 4750Dfl.

EXAMPLE OF SOFTWARE AVAILABLE THROUGH OSWL. Since the OSWL is now a FIDOnet and CUSSnet node, many programs may be translated into the MS-DOS standard. Write the OSWL for a catalogue.

Software Title: Basic Information Board a 24 Hour Approach: Investigates new approaches to therapy with the elderly. Can be used for lost memory or restrict memory loss and encourage group participation. This software is an introduction to classroom Reality Orientation with large text to stimulate active group participation. It communicates information using colour sound and graphics. FORMAT: BBC Computer. SUPPLIER: WINSLOW PRESS

Software Title: Community: Menu driven catalogue of services available in the community giving total care. FORMAT: SPECTRUM 48K. SUPPLIER: OPEN SOFTWARE LIBRARY

Software Title: Community Psychiatric Nursing Record: Menu driven database storing event and demographic information on the work of one CPN for a ten year period. FORMAT: SPECTRUM 48K. SUPPLIER: OPEN SOFTWARE LIBRARY

Software Title: Computer Aided Patient Assessment A user database system which allows learners to be introduced to the concepts of dependency and its assessment. The user may set up the database with 12 to 32 patients

and apply dependency assessments. Methods available are the Norton Scale and Activities of Daily Living, or the user can define individual criteria and scoring. The program may also be used as a research tool for those evaluating patient progress. A printer output including simple statistics is also provided. FORMAT: BBC'B' (Disk). SUPPLIER: OPEN SOFTWARE LIBRARY

Software Title: Pelican/Speak Up/Conflict: This suite of three programs demonstrates aspects of behavioural approaches in psychiatric nursing. program 1 shows the use of stimulus/fading to encourage a patient to cross the road safely. The second program illustrates the use of 'shaping' to encourage a mute patient to talk. Program 3 shows approach/avoidance conflict in agoraphobia. FORMAT: SPECTRUM 48K (Cassette/Microdrive). SUPPLIER: OPEN SOFTWARE LIBRARY

Software Title: Schizophrenia: A fully interactive program for the management and care of a patient suffering from schizophrenia. This package is intended for use as part of a day workshop which includes experiential exercises (workbook included) and reflects the philosophy of the 1982 syllabus. It contains prognostic, diagnostic (ICD), nursing care, medical treatment and management sections and pre- and post-test. FORMAT: SPECTRUM 48K (Cassette/ Microdrive). SUPPLIER: OPEN SOFTWARE LIBRARY

TITLE: WARD 13: This is a simple management game for learner nurses to play. It mimics to some extent real events on a real ward. Players are divided into 'staff nurses' and 'learners'. The game takes place on a 16 bedded surgical ward. The time span of the game is one shift. Problems arise throughout the shift and 'staff nurses' must decide how these problems are to be tackled. No proposed solution can be absolutely right (or absolutely wrong) and solutions proposed by 'staff nurses' are judged not by a panel of experts but by their colleagues, the 'learners'. To this extent the game and real life run parallel. FORMAT: BBC'B' Computer. SUPPLIER: OPEN SOFTWARE LIBRARY

Net, Inc., is a BBS running on MIST software at Tel. 01928 7960. It has two conference areas of interest to the human services. Both are coordinated by Peter Wingfield, 28 Lansdowne Road, Holland Park, U.K. W11 3LL. Excerpts from these two areas follow.

Date: 08/01/87 at 21:00:49
From: Peter Wingfield-Stratford (Peter,103)
Subject: WHAT THIS CONFERENCE IS ABOUT
WELCOME TO 3-WORLD ISSUES

This Conference is a place for PEOPLE to talk / think constructively about Issues of International Development. We want the FOCUS to be about Countries where (This is important) the CITIZENS there want to IMPROVE THEIR (OWN) lot in this World.

Date: 02/06/87 at 16:26:21
From: Peter Wingfield-Stratford (Peter,103)
Subject: ETHNIC LANGUAGE COMPUTING PART 1 INTRODUCTION

This item is about creating text in languages that are not designed around the A to Z & 1 to 10 alphabetic keyboard. This means writing /thinking in an Ethnic script other than the English Tradition.

We are not very aware of the steamroller effect that dear old English is having on the World if we look only through our culture at the World. Some of the other cultures are beginning to feel a bit left out of things and are busily inventing. We risk losing much of interest if we let this go on much longer. Its all about that vanishing environment....The cultural written tradition.

Throughout the ages Man has got 'stroppy' a nice little-english word to suggest how strongly the feeling takes one...when others decide to wipe out his nice little ways of writing things. So much of one's tradition is bound up with writing it's about time we did something before its too late. Otherwise it'll be ASCII ASCII everywhere and 'nary a Zut to Trink

Where would the French be, for instance, if they hadn't stuck out for their culture and made up a whole new dictionary for Frenchmen true to use computers with. Now thanks to the Academie Francaise, we have delightful concepts to run off the tongue so easily..like

Le Logiciel for Database

L'Informatique for Information Technology

That is just for starters as we Anglophones now are won't to say...et Zut! alors for Lotta Bottle.

No seriously, there are lots out there in the Real Wide World who are Stifled by our English and all her works. NetWorking's about us all.

I notice very little about Ethnic Computing in any of the computing magazines. Well it seems quite a lot is going on, to bring Ethnic Computing about.

I'll start this topic rolling with a list of what I have found out for using Micros with other Ethnic Culture Traditions. This can range widely if people are interested. Some ideas that come to mind about this might be:

- Micros with Ethnic Keyboards & Screen Displays
- Printing Ethnic Character-sets with printers.
- Ethnic tongue written assembly-code concepts.
- Ethnic Character Software...handling screen by writing right-to-left & cursive characters.
- Ethic tongue Overlays & Error-messages in software
- Pictogram-characters..translation-coding systems
- Entering Ethnic Characters by novel Keyboards or without keyboards, or with special systems.
- Extended ASCII codes for accented English characters
- Sending Accented ASCII by coded normal ASCII (modems)
- On;Line Automatic Translation
- On-Line Lexicons and Dictionaries.
- Typesetting Ethnic Text using Micros.
- Expert-systems for database Query and interpreting with Ethnic-tongue commands.

I think this should be something to stimulate thought

Ethnic-script Applications: A List of computer systems for Ethnic-script Applications follows.

Sri Lanka: SINHALESE: A software Application Word-processor has been created for use with the BBC Micro. It makes Sinhalese pictogram text also English-keyboard text at once. The program also enables printing the text characters using a dot-matrix printer.

I have not seen the screen-presentation, but have an excellent application form for a Sinhalese group. Enquiries, Waltham Forest Thami Sangam, 39 Blenheim Rd, London E17 6HS

INDIA, PAKISTAN, BANGLADESH, East Africa, URDU, HINDI, GUJARATI, PUNJABI Software and firmware (special computer equipment) has been under development to enable computer programs in Urdu, Hindi, Gujarati & Punjabi language characters. It is understood these are all at the stage of making characters on screen, also they can be printed out. The software side has been under development by Philip Smith, of Tedimen Software Tel 0703-473774. The Hardware side comprises a BBC Microcomputer with development of adapted keyboards for the different tongues. The output can be printed. The system is not yet fully developed but is operational. The Contacts for the work on the Keyboard and development of user experience are: Charlie Lewis and Meharban Singh Lall, Pathway Further Education Centre, Havelock Road, Southall, Middlesex UB2 4NZ Tel -(1) 571-2241. The Pathway Centre is interested in all aspects of computing and ethnic Minorities.

Republic of China: CHINESE A report in Micro User Database Publications U.K. February 2nd issue describes a Word-processor for the BBC Micro creating Chinese pictogram text. There has been other comment about the development from Cambridge University. This stems from Robert Stors, a Professor of Chinese at Darwin College. His son has developed with Hatfield Polytechnic Herts, a novel keyboard. It overcomes the problem of the vast number of Chinese pictogram characters using a drum and special software keyboard interpreter. Report suggest a very large lexicon is available and it can be manipulated easily on screen. This has been a problem with other technical approaches performed in Japan hitherto.

ARABIC: Various systems are available for Arabic. I have seen accounts of at least two Word-processor systems for the I.B.M. P.C. Ref: News cutting in Institute of Petroleum: Dharam 1984.

The IBM PC: is available with PC1 /PC /XT configured in hardware with bilingual functions together. This uses a special Arabic/English keyboard and needs an enhanced graphics adapter card installed. Arabic and English may be written in appropriate directions ie English: Left to Right also Arabic Right to Left!!! at same time, also overlapping cursive Arabic script, numbers & symbols of the keyboards. This uses a word-processor.

An automatic shape-function gives generation of correct shape of the Arabic characters, also the whole word done with a single keystroke. The characters are automatically reshaped when letters are inserted/ deleted. WOW!! The system gives all Bells & Whistles, Graphic Script & high-res business (id est boring old pie charts etc) in mono or colour.

A system IBM DOS special 2.1 with a language support disk and special keyboard, also interactive tutor. I.B.M. offer a special Hardware arrangement. Their standard machine may be fitted out with a special keyboard dedicated to Arabic keys. Other suppliers offer a Software-only approach. An Arabic-script system was offered for the old Osborne 1 CP / M computer by a specialist software house. It is not clear if this gave screen edit facilities.

Both approaches are believed to enable the creation of cursive characters and also transpose the direction of writing in a word-processor. The hardware is standard and it is not clear now to me if this is any constraint to the user. This may depend on how many characters are required to write good arabic script.

SESAME BULLETIN: Sesame Bulletin is a journal for people interested in linguistic uses of computers. It deals specially in languages requiring special characters or scripts. The editors are Paul Bibire & John Clews. Paul has worked developing software for Old Icelandic and other Scandinavian languages & he lectures at Cambridge University. John participates cataloguing character sets and is working on automating Non-Roman scripts, also British Standard and I.S.O. characters. The handout says the most frequently-used scripts are Roman, Chinese, Cyrillic, Devanangari, Arabic and Japanese. The journal may be obtained from Sesame Bulletin, 8 Avenue Road, Harrogate, North Yorks, United Kingdom.

We invite anyone to add information of other ethnic computer applications they find, also to discuss how computing might be made accessible to different cultures by special hardware, adaptations

Date: 03/20/87 at 20:50:36
From: '3-Ear'
Subject: COMPUTER CLUBS IN AFRICA CONTACTS

The Association of London Computer Clubs got a nice letter from Zimbabwe recently.from Green Screen Club. They say they are the largest Computer Users Club in Zimbabwe. Having 350 members. Contact P.O. Box U A 393, Union Avenue, Harare, Zimbabwe.

Date: 01/01/87 at 03:28:16
From: Peter Wingfield-stratford (Peter,103)
Subject: INTRODUCTION TO DISABILITY – LINK
CONFERENCE DISABILITY – LINK
A Place for Computing for the Disabled

This is a Conference for PEOPLE to help one-another with information and ideas. The idea is to have a place where we can exchange information about what people may be doing, or thinking about doing to help deal with the Handicaps we are subject to, using Microcomputers to do it with somehow.

At present many people are working with Micros and all kinds of machines and software based upon Information Technology, to ENABLE our disadvantaged friends. The trouble is everyone is doing this without much knowledge of what others are doing, either in Britain, or Worldwide.

NetReach wants to hear about what you are doing and we will try to post up anything we hear about across the World from the Networks...both Human and Electronic.

Date: 01/01/87 at 02:41:35
From: Peter Wingfield-Stratford (Peter,103)
Subject: ELECTRONIC NETWORKING AMONG DISABLED ITEM 1
USE OF NETWORKING AMONGST DISABLED GROUPS

Hasicom is a group of people with hearing and sight impaired disabilities. It appears to have existed some years and has a Co-ordinator person, to whom interest should at first be addressed.

There is a Directory called DISDIR covering members. It would probably be desirable that privacy of members might be maintained, but disabled newcomers are welcome. Members are spread throughout the U.K. and all kinds of help is given, both personal and using the Gold Electronic Mail for building a community amongst people some of whom can be otherwise very isolated. I am seeking some contact addresses.

Date: 02/20/87 at 22:17:13
From: 'Peter Wingfield-Stratford'
Subject: DISABLED COMMUNICATIONS FOUNDATION

Foundation for Communication for the Disabled. This organisation exists to help with facilities needed by disabled sight people. They are members of the HASICOM group on British Telecomm Gold E0Mail. They are developing special software systems. One current interest is to bring into touch two people. One is blind and equipped to hear characters on computer Braille system. The other is deaf, and wishes to see the res It's from his blind friend. They are just beginning to deal with the problem with two machines next to one another. They were interested how to do it by Modem & phone. Contacts: 25 High St, Woking, Surrey. Tel 04862 27844.

Date: 04/15/87 at 19:25:08
From: Peter Wingfield-Stratford (Peter,103)
Subject: HANDINET AN EEC DATABASE IN MAKING FOR EQUIPMENT/ RESOURCES

HANDYNET A Project to Store in a Database a Complete Listing of all Technical devices for Disabled People covering all EEC countries, also all Nordic countries. This is a part of a group of projects organised by the European Community Directorate General DG XIII, Information Technology. Contact Mmme Danielle Rimbert, C.E.E. Place Ambiorix, Brussels.1040

The DTI is putting in British equipment. The Database will be held on-line at the European Space Organisation Computer, at some future date. It will be accessible to all ordinary citizens of the EEC directly like the ECHO system.

Date: 04/24/87 at 14:54:19
From: Edis Bevan (Edis,159)
Subject: DISABILITY INFORMATION SERVICE OF CANADA

DISC is a national information reference service for Canada. Limited to the disabled community. Provides BBs, newsletters, computer conferences on technical aids, human rights, employment alternatives. Consultancy service for disabled consumers setting up local information services. Joining fee $15 canadian. No online charges. Access via local datapac nodes. Address: DISC, Walter Dinsdale Centre, University of Calgary, 609, 14th St NW, Calgary, Alberta, T2N 2A1

Date: 05/25/87 at 14:47:24
From: Peter Wingfield-Stratford (Peter,103)
Subject: POSSUM A WAY TO GET A COMPUTER IF DISABLED

Disabled people have entitlement to a control system for controlling their environment conditions called POSSUM. This is an enhanced keyboard device. It is intended to give a way to control heating, doors, radios etc. POSSUMS are available in several models suited to control BBC Model B: Apple II: ZX Spectrum microcomputers.

The descriptions show a keyboard with larger size than normal and keys inset in holes. This helps people with tremor to get and hold a key under better control. The system has also software adjustment for tremor sensitivity in repeat of key. There are versions with scanning controls to move a light indicator around a large model keyboard simulator, so a person unable to use a keyboard can control a keyboard with a wand, joystick or switches attached separately. There are also means to control tape recorders and other devices of the Micro itself. These include a foot-skate control. Contact: POSSUM Ltd, Middlegreen Road, Langley, Berks SL3 6DF This system is not itself a computer able to communicate in the way like a personal computer does, but it may be organised so as to control a computer. The user needs to be assessed by their G.P. also by a regional officer and an application is made via them. The environment control system is free also there is a POSSUM Trust, a charity that helps the user separately to afford a personal computer. The POSSUM Trust reg Charity No 289461 14 Greenvale Drive, Timsbury, Bath BA3 1HP.

Date: 06/10/87 at 21:36:01
From: Peter Wingfield-Stratford (Peter,103)
Subject: TEACHER-TRAINING FOR DISABLED CHILDREN, ACE OXFORD

Teaching disabled children is a specialist job. The New Scientist of 4 June 87 has some pointers. Article Dr Ronald Stephens, of the School of Biological sciences, Portsmouth Polytechnic, P. 59-61

Aids to Communication in Education (ACE) centre, Oxford, Tel 0865-63508. They train occupational therapists, speech therapists, also how to overcome communication difficulties with disabled kids. They can recommend the most suitable communication aid, or writing aid needed by a particular child and their teacher and situation. Are there any more places like this anyone ????

COMMUNET by Peter Green, Fidonet 631/326, from Fidonews, Vol 4-24, 29 Jun 1987, Page 2.

Communet (Communications Network for the Community) was setup six months ago by several non-profit community groups in Melbourne Australia, including the Community Interest Computer Consultancy, the Working Women's Centre and the Coalition Against Poverty and Unemployment.

As we are new to FidoNet, this article is to explain who we are and seek contacts with other nodes anywhere in the world that may have similar interests. We are particularly anxious to join any international Echomail conferences discussing social and political topics likely to be of interest to our members, as well as technical topics relevant to establishing our network facilities or assisting community groups to make the best possible use of computers.

TECHNICAL PLANS: Due to very limited budgets, we need to establish communications facilities as cheaply as possible, yet with greater technical sophistication than typical mainframe systems, so they can be easily used by our non-computer literate constituency. We will therefore be generating lots of technical questions about the best way to do different things. Hopefully we will also be able to contribute some answers when we have gained more experience.

Our primary aim is to establish a national computer network to link micro-computers currently used simply for wordprocessing by various non-profit community groups and other organisations. We are working jointly with ASYNC ('Australian Students Information Network Committee'), which is planning a similar service, primarily to exchange material between student newspapers.

When funding is available, multi-user AT or 386 based Unix conferencing systems with large fixed disks will be established in each major city, linked by packet network channels for continuous parallel updating of all conferences in all cities. A gateway will be maintained to FidoNet, both for general access purposes and to transfer messages, files and Echomail to users operating 'Dutchie' point software.

The main services Communet will offer are Computer Conferencing and Email and file exchange for remote typesetting and Desktop Publishing of text files uploaded from wordprocessor software. But we are also interested in chatlines, multi-player role playing games and just about anything else that will encourage non-computer oriented people to get a modem and hook up!

Initially, we have established a single line private FidoNet node, currently running Opus 0.0 under SEAdog 4.00, as a preliminary test system. This is accessed regularly by members and associates of Communet to become familiar with various aspects of communications networks and to provide some initial services. As our orientation is towards non-computer literates and we lack technical knowledge, especially with Unix and communications networks, we hope to learn a lot from other FidoNet users. But we also hope to eventually contribute some ideas of our own.

PHONE NUMBER: Although we are not yet open to the general public, and therefore do not want our phone number listed in the nodelist where it could encourage calls from numerous BBS users, we would welcome direct file transfers and crashmail from other FidoNet nodes around the world. This can be achieved by simply including the following line in XLATLIST.CTL or equivalent: PHONE 631/326 61-3- 482-1718

PLANNED SERVICES: Two Communet services almost operational are:

1) 'Community Calendar' – a continuously updated list of activities and dates for public meetings and other events.
2) 'Public Radio News' – a professionally edited daily news feed for Public Broadcast stations around Australia. This will have associated with it a discussion area for feedback on news stories and comments on current events. We anticipate that users with a wide range of different political and philosophical outlooks will find this a useful way to debate and exchange views, and that it will spawn separate discussion areas on particular topics.

Other groups that have expressed an interest in setting up conference topics and interstate hook-ups include the Community Arts Network and Community Youth Support

Schemes. They are keen to learn how to use Opus boards, and will be seeking funding to obtain the necessary hardware.

Aims of Communet are:

1. Establish a network to link computers used by computer groups and their members at minimal cost and maximum performance.
2. Promote computer conferencing in Australia, by encouraging and assisting the setting up and running of such conferences and by providing access to international conferences and databases.
3. Provide computer communications services to the community sector comparable to those available in corporate networks, and to promote the the use of computer communication between community groups.
4. Establish an influential position for the community sector in exploiting computer conferencing and build this up as a counter to the press and TV monopolies.

As Australia's mass media are dominated by a very small group of large owners, we see the potential for computer conferencing to provide an alternative media that is far more democratic and interactive – allowing users to participate in the media rather than merely consuming it.

We also see computer conferencing as having great potential for breaking down international barriers.

At present these potentials are mainly being used by people with a technical interest in computing. But as the cost of hardware keeps falling and the quality of software keeps improving, more and more non-computer oriented people will join in.

Activities in the U.K. and Other Countries

[Editor's note: I have prepared these descriptions based on conversations, visits, or paperwork. This list is by no means comprehensive. Many good systems exist which I do not have information on or which I did not include. What I have tried to do is pull out projects which have implications for future efforts and which may be of interest to the U.S. market]

U.K.: City of Birmingham Polytechnic, Dept of Soc. & Applied Soc. Studies, Perry Barr, Birmingham, England B42 2SU

Stuart Toole have been very active in human service computing. Stuart has hosted two U.K. Conferences on Social Services Computing. Professionals from Holland and Germany also attended. They are in the third year of publishing a CUSSN Newsletter equivalent called **Computer Applications in Social Work (CASW)**. The Poly has invested in a computer lab of 2 AT fileservers networked to 18 pc XT's. using PC NET, Framework 2 and Dbase3. I admire them for taking on the problems with operating a lab, much less the hassles of keeping a network running. An additional option is that the file server can drive all the micro terminals which is excellent for demonstrating a program to students. The problems with the network and getting other software to run on the network should be a lesson to us all. Contact Stuart if you are thinking of setting up a similar facility.

In the curriculum, the Polytechnic has the first Qualifying Coarse in the UK To include Information Tech as a compulsory part of the syllabus at two levels (12 Hours introductory and two 20 hour projects).

Research at the Polytechnic has involved two human service expert systems projects, one on enuresis management (Enuraid) the other with Wolverhampton Social Services on child placement. Expert System Enuraid is a system designed to diagnose, give advise on treatment, assess progress, sort out problems with treatment, and advise on termination for childhood enuresis. It is currently being expanded and rewritten in Prolog. It will also contain advise on daytime wetting and have a database and notepad facility for clinical notes. The Wolverhampton Project is a system to advise on if a child should be placed in care and to evaluate the best placement. It will be linked to a database on fostercare resources. It is written in KES2 with links to a Database using dBase3Plus. They have also developed a prototype decision support system on Case conference decision tracking.

This activities at Birmingham are in sharp contrast to the social work program here in Cardiff and probably elsewhere in the U.K. The social work program at Cardiff has a mainframe terminal which does not work, a mimi which is not working and one IBM PC which is only used for word processing by the secretaries. Some students receive training in SPSS, but it may be as limited as setting up an SPSS program and giving the program to the computer center so that it can be punched on cards and run. However the school is eager to move forward and the training I did for faculty, students and field agencies was very well attended.

U.K.: The Work Priority System (WPS) for Managing Workloads excerpted from a draft paper by CRD Cheatle, Area Organizer of Social Services, Queensway House, Essex Street, Southend on Sea, Essex

WPS is a valuable tool for managing workload problems and for dealing with questions about the number of staff required to achieve specified service levels. It is capable of use by individuals and by groups of staff. Essex is pioneering the use of WPS as a total departmental system for managing fieldwork.

The application of WPS on a department wide basis requires work aimed at securing commonly understood definitions of work of different kinds, units of work, priority attaching to work of different kinds and unit times. These common definitions enable uniformity of application and comparabiltiy of the information arising from the reports provided by WPS.

The potential for the development of social work practice is very significant. Client Situations Dictionaries (CSD) represent a taxonomy of social predicaments that social workers recognize as a valid call on their skills. The professional discussions that give rise to the formulation of a CSD are rare opportunities for social workers to share and agree on views about the purpose and focus of social work intervention. The sharing of the elements of the social predicaments known to social workers are a spur to recognize both the common features and unique configurations of the situations which clients endure and of the interventions that are commonly used.

Interventions are themselves a matter of some concern. Social workers are not unanimous about the meaning of terms that are commonly used to describe social work--casework, family therapy, counselling, advocacy, etc. The use of WPS to analyse both demand for social work and the social work response presents a useful way forward to resolving the existing uncertainty about social work methods.

The establishing of agreed standards in terms of Priorities and Unit times provides for the first times an environment in which the self-managing social worker may emerge. Managers can have confidence that the standards by which work is to be judged are clearly published and understood. The reports provided by WPS serve as a continuing indicator of the drift of social work responses towards or away from the agreed standards counterposed against the drift in demand for social work services. The reports are as well knows to social workers as to managers--the information about performance is as public as the standards by which it is judged.

Managers then can concentrate on the more significant issues that relate to the kind of social work service that will be needed in the future planning period--five years, ten years. Social workers can concentrate on the practice issues that deal with questions of quality and effectiveness of the service.

Other factors than priority are capable of being introduced into the statement of departmental standards. A development of WPS, the Work Effectiveness System (WES) enables demand and responses to that demand to be analyzed in terms of other factors specified by the user. Such factors might include cost, complexity, effectiveness, client satisfaction, or personal interest. This more sophisticated searching analysis promises in time a greater understanding of how social work services may be more finely directed to achieving more surely the outcomes desired by both practitioners and users.

U.K.: Priority Decision System in Child Welfare from Jimmy Algie, Work Sciences Associates, 26 Southwood Lawn Road, Higate, London N6 5SF 01-348 5822 and from an article in the Sep. 86 issue of Community Care Magazine.

The experienced social worker and doctor take into account at least 40 factors in conjunction with assessing whether removal of a child from home into care is warranted in cases of child abuse or non-accidental injury to children. However, it has proven difficult for experienced practitioners to communicate to their less experienced staff their awareness of these factors and the ability to judge their balance in any particular case, with often disastrous consequences. The Decision Priorities System (PDS) software package is being used to clarify diagnostic decisions as a basis for training less experienced staff in handling these tragically difficult problems in the Essex Social Service Department.

The 40 factors are first clarified and weighted using PDS. With one case, 7 key factors involving the parents and the child's situation predominated in the decision. The 7 factors were then considered in terms of 6 criteria established previously with PDS, for example, life endangered, gravity of discernible damage, etc. Additional analysis establishes threshold points for removal based on the weightings.

PDS was used to guide the practitioners through a diagnostic process which provided general guidance on the cases considered. The interventions which the workers might take were similarly elicited and prioritized using PDS, together with a set of criteria for deciding which of these responses were appropriate. The system results in a more thorough assessment of risk in the case at hand, aids in explaining supervisors to train less experienced staff, and helps make case meetings more focused and productive.

U.K.: LAMSAC Social Service Application Group from Ian Robertson, Senior Consultant, LAMSAC (Local Authorities Management Services and Computer Committee) Vincent House, Vincent Square, London SW1P 2NB

LAMSAC is be equivalent to our Association of cities and counties. LAMSAC has a social services application group concerned with the effective use of computers in Social Service Departments. LAMSAC is considered by many as having a traditional and basic focus, since it has been in existence longer than other groups and represents the efforts of governments. The group meets regularly and had take on some basic projects, for example, new system development, ethics and security, standard setting, microcomputer systems, software development, publications and seminars. Some of its publications are listed in the Resource section of this issue.

A current 3 year microcomputer project with a software vendor is CRISP, Care Records in Social Service Packages. CRISP software will link micros and larger computers with the intent of tracing case histories and the services provided to children in home care and child care. The software is being developed through funding by a consortium of over 33 local authorities.

LAMSAC would be the best contact for anyone wanting information on how local governmental social service departments are using computers in the U.K.

U.K.: Research at the Royal Hospital & Home for Incurables from Sarah Wilson, Research Dept., Royal Hospital & Home for Incurables, West Hill, London SW15 3SW.

At the hospital we use a Apple IIs and BBCs along with various purpose designed keyboards and switches and voice over' systems for physically disabled adults. Software includes Apple-Multiple choice test assembly, PADS-Putney Automated Digit Span, Cattell's 16PF Personality Test, vigilance task, vocabulary scales, modified card sorting test, Skinner'--a switch user training program, line bisection, visuo-spatial organization, and visuo-spatial orientation.

U.K.: INTERVOL From Grant Burch and Alun Toghill, South Glamorgan Intervol,11 St Andrews Crescent, Cardiff, Wales, Phone 0222 28635

The South Glamorgan Intervol Community Computer Group is comprised of voluntary sector organisations and interested individuals within South Glamorgan who are involved with computers and their application within the community. The organisation is jointly sponsored by Cardiff Member relations Committee of the South Wales and Worcester Sector of C.R.S. and South Glamorgan Intervol which is the collective of over 300 voluntary/community organisations plus statutory bodies.

Intervol is hoping to network community agencies using the FIDONET software. We plan to have several hub agencies running FIDOnet, and then having each hub send out messages to many local agencies.

U.K.: The Domesday Videodisc Project

The Domesday Project is an interactive videodisc produced by a partnership of the BBC, Philips Electronics, Acorn Computers, and the U.K. Department of Trade and Industry. On the videodisc is stored archival data such as city and county statistics, maps, and photographs. While you cannot write to the videodisc, using a specially designed player, a videodisc frame can be recalled and stored in computer memory. Once in computer memory, the information can be worked with just as any other computer data in memory. This capacity to save and work with any information on the videodisc results in a powerful system for planners and policy analysts who frequently need access to archival data. For example, you can call up a local map, quickly superimpose data stored on disk onto it, and print it. This is the closest thing to interactive videodisc technology that presently exists. An wide variety of disks are available.

West Germany: German Network like CUSSN from Prof. Dr. Berndt Kirchlechner, Fachhochschule Frankfurt A.M. Fachbereich Sozialpadagogik, 6000 Frankfurt, Limescorso 9, Frankfurt AM, West Germany

I am the coordinator of a network like CUSSN in West-Germany, a network of people who are all teachers in schools of social work (in German: Fachhochschulen fur Sozialarbeit). We discuss how to introduce and use personal-computers in research, teaching, learning and the practical work of social workers. Some of us, like me, use computers since some time (personal computers since 1981).

West Germany: Community work Interest from Prof. Dr. Jurgen Novak, Eichelhaherstrabe 15a, 1000 Berlin 27, West Germany.

I am interested in the application of microcomputers in the field of community work in a neighborhood center, e.g., networking, self-help groups, all kinds of social work agencies, programs for your people, counseling, etc.

Austria: Any software in German? from Monika Vyslouzil, Sickenbergg. 7/16, A-1190 Vienna, Austria.

My background is social work and sociology with work experience as a social worker in prison and psychiatry. My current employment is as a teacher in a school of social work and as a research fellow in an institute for medical sociology.

About the use of computers in Austria in the human services, there is little to tell. I know that computers are used in social security, in hospital administration, and in the unemployment office. I am not aware yet of any computers being used in other social service agencies, but I know of plans to do so.

Does anyone have any idea whether there is any human service software in German?

Philippines: Network of Non-Governmental Agencies from Jake G. Tan, No 12, 11th Ave., Murphy, Quezon City, Philippines.

I am the coordinator of an informal group of Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) computer users in the Philippines. We have initially 12 NGOs that are working together to share bibliographic information through diskette exchange. This was initiated by out group, the AT/80 (Journal on Appropriate Technology) in order that we may be able to facilitate the flow of information among ourselves and the grassroots organizations we serve on various information needs such as appropriate technology or issues on development.

The informal network I am coordinating mostly consists of service organizations in the categories of human rights, advocacy of the issues of peasants, workers and slum communities. If anyone has that would be of use, please forward it to us. We are planning to set up a local FIDOnet bulletin board here.

Resources and Materials

Electronic Information Resources

Poly Fido is a Fidonet BBS operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week out of Polytechnic of Central London. One of the main interests of the board is a message and file area which concerns handicapped issues. Poly Fido is Net 506 Node 11. The phone number is (01) 580 1690. The sysops are Graham Hobson, Dave Laycock.

ADDS: Assistive Device Database System provides information on task-oriented adaptive aids. Given information about a person's disabiltiy and about the activities the person needs to accomplish, ADDDS can present a number of possible solutions. Information categories are: devices, bibliographic citations, resource persons and service agencies. Disability categories are communications, manipulation, mobility, and sensory. Interface category offers ways in which a person will control certain devices. Users purchase a database of six disks to run on an Apple II or single discs on a specific disability. For more information, contact the Assistive Device Center, 6000 J St., Sacramento, California (916) 454-6422.

Newsletters, Magazines, & Journals

Computers in Psychiatry Newsletter is a newly started newsletter with news briefs, short articles and software reviews. Write Dr. Roger Bloor, Dept. of Psychiatry, RAF H Ely, Ely Cambridgeshire, England

Journal of Computer Assisted Learning provides a forum for communications amongst teachers in all disciplines, teacher-training lectureres, students of education and local authority advisors. It addresses the problem of ensuring the top-level research in areas such as Artificial Intelligence, Expert Systems, Cognitive Psychology and Educational Research will influence developments and practice in education. The quarterly Journal publishes papers on CAL, curriculum innovation and management, information technology, and vocational and home education. It also publishes abstracts on CAL and related topics from the Educational Resource Center (ERIC) at Ohio State University and from other sources. $24.50 from Blackwell Scientific Publications, POB 88, Oxford, England.

Black Chip: A Radical Journal of New Technology. This newsletter posesses a revolutionary and anarchist perspective on computing. It contains a reprint from the American newsletter 2600. For a copy, write Richard Alexander, 55 Dupont Road, London SW20 8EH (Richard was moving, but as yet I have no forwarding address) [P.S. I am looking for a copy of 2600. If anyone has one, please send it or an address along to me in Texas]. Some resource groups mentioned in Black chip are:

Australia: Australians for Social Responsibility in Computing, School of Maths and Physics, Macquarie University, North Ryde 2113.

Canada: INPUT (Initiative for the Peaceful Use of Technology), Box 248, Station B, Ottawa, K1P 6C4 USA: Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility, POB 717, Palo Alto, CA 94301.

USA: Processed World, 55 Sutter Street, #829, San Francisco, CA 94104.

UK: Community Computers UK, Inter-Action Trust, Royal Victoria Dock, London E16 1BT. UK: Community Computing Network, c/o LITRU, 68 Chalton St. London, NW1 1JR.

UK: Scotland: Edinburgh Computing and Social Responsibility Group, 3 Buccleuch Terrace, Edinburgh EH8 9NB.

UK: Electronics for Peace, c/o Townsend House, Green Lane, Marshfield, Chippenham, Wilts SN14 8JW.

UK: Microsyster, Women's Computer Centre and National Women and Computing Network and Newsletter, (women only) c/o Wesley House, 70 Great Queen St., London WC2

The British Journal of Healthcare Computing
45 Woodland Grove, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 9EQ

Books and Reports

Title: Information Technology & People: Designing for the Future
Editors: Frank Blackler and David Oborne
Source: British Psychological Society, St. Andrews House, 48 Princess Road East., Leicester LE1 &DR U.K., 1987, 261 pages. 15 pounds.

CONTENTS:

Psychology and information technology by I. Howarth
Management, organizations and the new technologies by F. Blackler & C. Brown
Managing factory automation by C. Cleggs & T. Wall.
Ergonomics and the new technologies by D. Oborne
Office systems by B. Christie & M. Gardiner
The development and use of information technology in health care by M. Fitter
Expert systems in the health field by R. Thomas
The disabled by G. Hales
The computer in the classroom: A force for change by G. Underwood & J. Underwood
Attitudes to information technology by N. Kemp
Information Technology and home based services: Improving the usability of teleshopping by J. Long
Information technology in the home: Promises as yet unrealized by N. Frude

Title: New Information Technology in Management and Practice
Editors: Gordon Horobin & Stuart Montgomery
Source: Kogan Page Ltd., 120 Pentonville Rd., London U.K. N1 9JN, 1986, 148 pages, 12.95 Pounds.

CONTENTS:

Information Needs in Social Services: An Overview by Tom Wilson
Patterns of Computer Use in the UK by Elizabeth Cordingley
Patterns of Computer Use in the USA by Elizabeth Mutschler
Implementing and Managing Computerized Client Information Systems by Stuart Montgomery
Social Work Educatin and Information Technology by Norman Smith
Recording, Ethics and Data Protection by Peter Ashe
Welfare Benefits Computing by Gareth Morgan
Microcomputers as Aids to Social Work Practice by David Phillips
Computers in Social Work–A Practitioners View by Gordon Smith

Title: Directory of Research into Automated (Psychological and Psychiatric Testing) (DRAT)
Source: Sarah L. Wilson, Research Department, The Royal Hospital and Home for Incurables, West Hill, London SW15 3SW, U.K. One pound or three dollars to cover printing and postage. Make cheques payable to the Development Trust for The Young Disabled. The diretory is 14 computer printed pages.

CONTENTS:

This directory/printout list research projects in computer-based psychological or psychiatric assessment. It lists the projects principal workers, hardware, software, target subjects, and publications about the project. DRAT has been in existence since 1983.

Title: Data Protection and Personal Information: A Code of Practice for Social Services
Source: LAMSAC, Social Service Application Group, Vincent House, Vincent Square, London SW1P 2NB, December 86, 24pp.

CONTENTS:

This code is written for a typical social service department which has adopted a policy of client access to records and openness in recording. The code relates to personal information held either in manual or computerized records and is designed as a model of good practice as that is understood in 1987. It is consistent with the Data Protection Act of 1984.

Title: Paths to the development of computerized information systems
Source: LAMSAC, Social Service Application Group, Vincent House, Vincent Square, London SW1P 2NB, December 86, 40pp. 2.35 pounds or about 5 dollars should cover the report and shipping.

CONTENTS:

This reports is meant to follow a report titled Issues and Options of Computer Based Social Services Management Information Systems, which provided an introduction to computing. It outlines the a model of the steps in designing, developing, implementing and using computerized information systems in Social Service Departments. It presents the practical tasks involved in setting up a computerized information system, the timing and scheduling of decisions, the scope of commitment and involvement required by a Department. Although it is directed toward a comprehensive client record system, its principles can be readily applied to smaller client groups or other applications.

Software Announcements

Priorities helps an individual or group establish priorities and objectives in an efficient and orderly manner. It is the basis of several of the applications discussed in this issue, such as the work priority system and the child welfare decision priority system. This MS-DOS software won the Standard Award for Best Business Software Management and Computer Media from Management Today and The Financial Times. For more information, write Work Sciences, 26 Southwood Lawn Road, Higate, London N6 5SF. England.

The Patient Care System and Computer Record Information System for Psychiatry (CRISP) offer comprehensive support of all the clinical and administrative functions for a modern psychiatric service, in hospital, day hospital, out patient, and community. The system requires a minicomputer system with 8 i/o ports. For more information, contact Barry Minett, Protechnic Computers, LTD., 264 Newmarket Road, Cambridge, England CB5 8JR.

Guest Editors Wanted

Edit an issue of the CUSS Newsletter on your favorite topic. As an editor, you can increase your contacts with those working in your specialty area and become more familiar with their work

For more details, contact:

Dick Schoech, UTA GSSW, POB 19129, Arlington TX 76019, Phone 817 273 3964

CUSS NETWORK ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Upcoming Events

Third Annual Computer Technology Special Education/Rehabilitation International Conference, 15-17 Oct 87, Los Angeles Claifornia. Write California State U. Northridge, Northridge, CA 91330.

Quality Assurance: New Tools to Improve Human Services, 22-24 October, 1987, Charleston, South Carolina. Contact Ms Andrea Evans, State of South Carolina, State Health and Human Services Finance Commission, POB 8206, Columbia, S. Carolina (803) 253-6154.

Technology and Aging: The Impact of Technology on the Quality of Life of the Elderly, October 25-27, 1987, Miami, Fl. Contact Office of Continuing Education, O. of Wisconsin-Stout, Menomonie, WI 54751.

Symposium on Computer Applications in Medical Care (SCAMC), November 1-4, Washington D.C. Contact Katherine Baker, (202) 994-3415.

British Computer Society—Specialist Group for the Disabled: 3rd Annual Conference, 25 Nov 1987, Condon. Contact BSC, CEGB, Sudbury House, Newgate St., Condon, EC1.

Tenth MSIS National Users Group Conference, November 12-13, 1987, Holiday Inn, Suffern, New York. Conference theme: Issues in patient tracking. Contact Shelley Spring, Nathan Kline Institute. Information Sciences Division, Orangeburg, New York 10962 (914) 359-0002

The First International Conference on Computers in Health Care, Training, and Education, Keele University, October, 1988. Following the successful CBT '86 the open software library together with the National Health Service Training Authority (NHSTA) will organize this three day conference for people in caring professions. Abstracts should be sent to Graham Wright, Conference Chairman CBT '88, Open Software Library, 164 Windsor Road, Ashton-in-Makerfield, Wigan, England WN4 9³S, Telephone 9042 712385

Third Annual National Symposium on Information Technology as a Resource to Health and Disability Professionals, April 24-27, 1988 in Charleston, South Carolina, USA. For more information contact Girish Yajnik, Kathy Mayfield, or Denise Wiles, National Symposium on Information Technology, 1244 Blossom St., 5th Floor, University of South Carolina, Columbia, S. Carolina 29208, 803-777-4435.

I wish to join/renew membership in the CUSS Network. Send to:
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