



PRENTICE COMPUTER CENTRE

UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND
ST.LUCIA
QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA 4067

NEWSLETTER

N-247

3-Dec-79

CONTENTS

- 1.0 CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR ARRANGEMENTS
- 2.0 PUBLIC PUNCHED CARD FACILITIES
- 3.0 QDATA - A DATA ENTRY PACKAGE
- 4.0 EXPIRY DATES ON PPNS
- 5.0 MAINTENANCE SERVICE CALLS
- 6.0 PUNCHING PAPER TAPES FROM THE KL10 SYSTEM
- 7.0 PROBLEMS WITH PDP11 CONTROLLED TERMINALS
- 8.0 VG - VERSION (II) RELEASE
- 9.0 REPLACEMENT FOR UFLIP
- 10.0 SOFTWARE CHANGES OVER THE CHRISTMAS BREAK
- 11.0 1022 DATA BASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
- 12.0 1980 COURSES
- 13.0 SEASONS GREETINGS

Authorized by the Director of the Computer Centre

1.0 CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR ARRANGEMENTS

No work will be processed for users on Monday 24 December to allow the Centre to complete end of year procedures. Users may collect any work processed previously until 12 noon Monday.

The Centre will close on 25 and 26 December and on 1 January. A single shift operation between 9.00 am and 5.00 pm will be provided on 27, 28, and 31 December.

Director
extension 2189

2.0 PUBLIC PUNCHED CARD FACILITIES

The Prentice Computer Centre has in the past provided punched card machines in public areas for corrections only. The use of punched cards as an input medium has declined dramatically over recent years and the amount of corrections does not justify the number of punches we now have, particularly at a rental of over \$1000 p.a. for each machine. From January 1980 we propose that only one machine will be available at each of the Hawken and Commerce stations.

The Centre has available on the PDP10 a system (QDATA - see details in following section of this newsletter) which provides data entry facilities. This system which allows input from a terminal has now been used extensively during the past year and should meet requirements for data entry.

The advantage is that we can replace the card punch machines with public terminals which have a more general use and reduce the operating cost to the University.

Operator Assisted Data Entry Facilities

We will continue to retain a card punching and verifying service as well as a terminal data entry service. In November 1978 we gave notice that the Finance Committee had agreed that current rates which do not anywhere near cover costs could be increased subject to reasonable warning and the availability of a viable data entry system. It is proposed therefore that charges will be increased as follows from 1.2.80.

Card Punching - \$5.40 per hour increased to \$11.50 per hour
Card Verifying - \$4.30 per hour increased to \$9.00 per hour
Direct Data Entry to PDP10 - \$8 per hour.

Director
extension 2189

3.0 QDATA - A DATA ENTRY PACKAGE

QDATA is designed for on-line entry of moderate quantities of data, and is especially useful where column formatting is needed. Data can be easily corrected or altered following the initial entering. In view of the reduction in numbers of keypunch machines on campus, QDATA may provide for the data entry requirements of many users.

Only a short time is required to learn the commands necessary to run QDATA. Initial entry is merely a matter of specifying an identification number for the batch of data, then saying that you wish to enter data - and you're ready! At some later time, its just as easy to append more data to this batch. And what if you need to change some of that data? A particular record may be selected by it's sequence number or contents. You then have a choice of updating that record, deleting it or inserting another record after it. When important data is being entered, a verification command allows you to re-key data and have it compared character by character with the original. Once you're happy with the data, an output command causes all column positioning, justification, and insertion of filler characters to occur, resulting in a usable data file.

The user can specify a range of parameters about his particular data. Each record can be divided into a number of fields, which the user describes individually. A prompt string can be displayed before each field. The type of allowable characters - alphabetic, numeric, or specials - can be set. Also the positions in the output record that this field will occupy. Plus whether the field is left or right justified, what the filler character is, or if this field is to be completely filled with user input, to mention some of the particulars. There are also fields that are "constants" - each record has this value inserted into it when the batch is output. You can set up different types of records, if you desire them.

There are several standard descriptions on the system, one being for entry of an 80-character record (similar to a card image). If you are interested in further information, there is a manual about QDATA available from the Hawken Batch Station for \$3.00. Assistance with creating the data descriptors is easily

available by contacting Mark Williams on 3391.

4.0 EXPIRY DATES ON PPNS

All PPNS will expire on 21 December, 1979. To avoid any inconvenience, please complete a 'Change of Expiry Date' form available from the Hawken Batch Station if you wish to renew your PPN for 1980.

Carol Walker
extension 2188

5.0 MAINTENANCE SERVICE CALLS

All Maintenance Service Calls for terminals, modems or computers for which the Centre is responsible should be directed to (377) 3938. Maralyn Kenley will receive and distribute these requests.

To ensure that your maintenance requests are dealt with promptly, please use the above number only.

Graham Rees
extension 3288

6.0 PUNCHING PAPER TAPES FROM THE KL10 SYSTEM

Users wishing to punch image-mode paper tapes from the KL10 system should note that the correct switch and value to do so is

/TAPE:IMAGE

Use of /PUNCH:IMAGE which is the correct way of specifying this on the KA10 will not produce the desired result.

Arthur Hartwig
extension 3021

7.0 PROBLEMS WITH PDP11 CONTROLLED TERMINALS

For some months there has been a problem with network terminals in that under some circumstances the only response the user was able to get from the terminal was a <bel>. This problem has proved very difficult to track and the circumstances under which it happens are very ill-defined. In almost all cases I have investigated, it appears that the PDP11 controlling the terminal sent a "connect" request to a DEC10, but for some (unknown) reason the DEC10 failed to reply.

In an attempt to get around the problem (this is not a fix for the problem but may help reduce its occurrence) the PDP11 nodes are being changed to introduce a "connect reply wait" of 10 seconds so that if the connect reply from the DEC10 does not arrive within 10 seconds the next time the user types a character another attempt will be made to connect the terminal to a host. Therefore, the terminal should eventually connect to the DEC10 provided the user types a character sufficiently often.

Arthur Hartwig
extension 3021

8.0 VG - VERSION (II) RELEASE

Version (II) of VG is now available on SYS:. To use version (II), the command ".R VG" <cr> invokes the MENU program. The Menu remembers the name of your VG file for the duration of your login after being told. To change to another VG file use the FUNCTION "SWAP". To obtain a list of available functions type <cr> to the question "FUNCTION". A conversion function is available for converting old VG files to the new format.

VG version (II) files will be noticeably smaller in size and processing is generally faster and cheaper. File size reduction may be as great as 50% and runtime reductions in the order of 25% to 50% less. Packing is now redundant.

For detailed information about the new version refer to VG.DOC from DOC:.

Persons wishing to convert existing files of non VG type should refer to me, particularly some of the older LABELS type files.

Some of the new features include "SETS", Search and select options, and printing direct (via the queue).

G.A. Vandenberg
extension 3943

9.0 REPLACEMENT FOR UFLIP

LIBMAN is a program to consolidate multiple files into a single large file for storage, with the ability to subsequently separate the files. Use of LIBMAN will help alleviate disk storage problems due to allocation being done in multiples of the cluster size (normally 5 blocks).

LIBMAN supersedes the UFLIP program, and users are advised that UFLIP will be removed from the system in the future. A program (LIBCVT) is provided for converting UFLIP library files to LIBMAN format. Both programs (LIBMAN and LIBCVT) are available on the UTI: directory, and further information may be obtained by printing the file DOC:LIBMAN.DOC.

UFLIP and LIBCVT will be removed from the system at the end of January 1980.

Mark Robbie
extension 3941

10.0 SOFTWARE CHANGES OVER THE CHRISTMAS BREAK

Over the Christmas period, some software changes will be made. These are as follows:

(a) KL System:

The following software will be moved from NEW: to STD:

ALGOL, BLIS10, COBOL, FILCOM, FORDDT, FORLIB, FOROTS, HELP, ISAM, LIBRARY, LIB012, MACRO, MAKLIB, QUOLST, SIMULA and TAPE.

In all cases, there are no incompatibilities between the versions on STD: and the new versions.

The following software on OLD: will be deleted at the end of January:

COBDDT, COBOL, CSORT, DDT11, FORDDT, FORLIB, FOROTS, IMSL, ISAM, LIBRARY, LIBOL, NYBMUL and RERUN.

CHANGE will be moved from NEW: to UTI:

(b) KA System:

- (i) Old versions of the COBOL operating system will be deleted. These are LIBOL6, LIBOL7, LIBOL0 and SELOTS. Any users with old saved files which use these will have to recompile their programs.
- (ii) New versions of FILCOM, HELP, QUOLST and MAKLIB will go to STD:

Will Gout
extension 3023

11.0 1022 DATA BASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Centre has now ordered this DBMS package and it will be available to users in the new year. Very little knowledge of computing is needed to obtain significant results and it is hoped that the package will be a useful addition to the Centre's services.

System 1022 is a sophisticated, general purpose, data management software system designed for use on the Decsystem-10. With System 1022 the user can create, update, and maintain large data bases. The system features a very fast retrieval capability and a comprehensive report writer. A simple easy to learn programming language DPL is provided.

Convenient to use for both conversational timesharing and batch production-mode applications, System 1022 is a powerful tool for managing data structures. It simplifies handling large or complex data structures by insulating the user from the physical structure of the data and removing the burden of programming the data management functions.

In addition to its own arithmetic and statistical capabilities, 1022 also provides an interface with SPSS for users wishing more statistical processing power.

An introductory course will be conducted early in 1980, details are included in the following item on Courses.

A.J. Bird
extension 3944

12.0 1980 COURSES

It is proposed to hold the following courses in the early part of next year. Application forms are available from the Hawken Batch Station. Completion of the Introductory Course is a pre-requisite for enrolment in subsequent courses. There is no charge to Staff and Post-Graduate students of University of Queensland and Griffith University. External clients are welcome to attend courses on a fee paying basis. The Centre also provides an allocation of \$20 computer time for practice following completion of a course.

(i) Introductory Course

A two day introductory course on the PDP-10 will be held on Wednesday, 30 January and Thursday, 31 January. The course will include an introduction to the Computer Centre and the services it offers. It will cover terminals and batched jobs, monitor commands and a beginner's guide to editing.

(ii) Word Processing - Runoff

Runoff courses are always well attended and it is planned to hold several this year. The first course will be held from Monday, 4 February to Thursday, 7 February from 9 a.m. to 12 noon.

(iii) 1022 Data Base Management System

An introductory course on 1022 will be held from Monday, 4 February to Thursday, 7 February from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

(iv) SPSS Course

A three day course on the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences will be held from Monday, 11 February to Wednesday, 13 February. The audio visual course developed by the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne will be used. If time permits, other statistical packages will be discussed at the end of the course. It is our experience, however, that there is a greater demand for SPSS so the course will concentrate upon that package.

(v) FORTRAN

An introductory course to FORTRAN will be held from Monday, 18 February to Friday, 22 February. The audio visual course developed by the University of London will be used. Those attending the course will need to buy the FORTRAN manual associated with the course. The manual costs \$3.20 and is available from the Hawken Batch Station.

Enquiries can be directed to extension 3018 or the Secretary on extension 2189.

13.0 SEASONS GREETINGS

The Director and Staff of the Prentice Computer Centre extend to you their best wishes for a Happy Christmas and a prosperous year in 1980.

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