

PRENTICE COMPUTER CENTRE

UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND, ST. LUCIA, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA. 4067.



NEWSLETTER

N-305

Nov/Dec 1985

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Newsletter Summary.
- 2.0 Central Computing Facilities.
 - 2.1 Closure of Client Room — Commerce Building.
 - 2.2 Expiry Date for Computer Accounts.
 - 2.3 Improper Use of Computer Systems.
 - 2.4 More Graphics Software Enhancement — VUEPLT.
 - 2.5 IFPS on UQVM and UQVAX.
- 3.0 Distributed Computing.
 - 3.1 Apple LaserWriter.
 - 3.2 User Groups on Campus.
 - 3.3 PC Survey Database.
- 4.0 Engineering & Communications.
 - 4.1 Electronic Mail.
 - 4.2 Changes to the AUSTPAC Gateway.
 - 4.3 Access to MICOM Circuit Switch from AUSTPAC.
 - 4.4 Correction to Previous Newsletter N-304.
- 5.0 Applications Development.
 - 5.1 Information Concerning Courses.
- 6.0 Miscellaneous.
 - 6.1 Departmental Equipment for Sale.

Authorized by the Director of the Computer Centre

Principal Service Centres

Extensions

Contract Programming & Feasibility Studies	3944
System Status Automatic Answering	3101
General Enquiries & Course Enrolments	3018
Training & Courses Information	3021
Dial-up modem numbers	(300 bps) 3772977 (1200 bps) 3772922

Consulting

	Mail Box	Extension
Central HELP Desk (0830-1630)	CCHELP	3025
Distributed Computing and Network HELP Desk	CCDCHELP	3938
Accounts (0830-1630)		2188
Operations		3212
Program Librarian		3943

Engineering and Maintenance

Development and communications	ENGIN
Mini/Micro support	ENGIN

Griffith University:

Consulting	7796
Computer Services	7560
Computing Co-ordinator	7561

1. Newsletter Summary

- The closure of the Client Room in the Commerce Building has highlighted the considerable demand which still exists for public terminals. We will try to provide a limited public terminal service early in 1986.
- Once again users are reminded that accounts on the KL-10 and VAX automatically expire on 24.12.85. Please complete a "Change of Expiry Date" form and lodge it with the Centre prior to that if you wish your account to carry forward to next year.
- Users are reminded of the serious view taken by the University on improper use of computer systems.
- VUEPLT, the graphics previewing program, has been enhanced to accept more of the HP-GL commands.
- The Interactive Financial Planning System (IFPS) is now available on the UQVM and UQVAX systems.
- An Apple LaserWriter is now available in the Centre to allow Macintosh users to produce high quality output.
- The PC Survey is complete and the information is set up in a 1022 database on the KL-10 for general access.
- Some of the latest offerings in Electronic Mail are discussed.
- Changes to the AUSTPAC gateway and the current mechanism of accessing the MICOM from AUSTPAC are detailed.
- Finally, the schedule of courses for the December, January and February period is given.

I would like to take this opportunity of extending to all our clients the compliments of the season. We look forward to working with you again in the New Year.

*John Noad
Acting Director
extension 3017*

2. Central Computing Facilities – Allan Woodland, ext. 4017

Operations – Sandra Campbell, ext. 3471

Systems Software & Extensions – Ian Burgess, ext. 4074

2.1 Closure of Client Room – Commerce Building

The Centre has received numerous complaints regarding the proposed closure of the Client Room at the Commerce Building. I apologise that it was not possible to put alternative facilities into place prior to closure. Unfortunately, the space in the Commerce Building is required to site a new faculty computer. Building alterations are required to make the site ready and the alternative accommodation at the Hawken Building is not yet available.

It should be said that the general policy is that user departments should be responsible for providing terminal facilities to meet their requirements. The Prentice Computer Centre's role should be to provide specialised facilities that would not be cost effective to install in every department. Nevertheless, we do recognise a need

for a small number of public access terminals for some users who do not have access to departmental terminals. We hope to be able to make a small room available early in 1986 to provide this service. In the meantime any user who is seriously inconvenienced and cannot obtain access to a departmental terminal should contact Mr Allan Woodland who will do his best to make alternative arrangements.

Director
extension 2189

2.2 Expiry Date for Computer Accounts

On 24 December each year all PPNs on the DEC-10 and UICs on the VAX expire, unless the Centre has been notified in writing that a PPN/UIC is required for another year. The term "expire" means that all files owned by that PPN, both on-line and off-line, are deleted, any balance of commitment is taken to 0 and PPN and charge code are deleted from the system.

It is imperative that if you intend to keep using your account for the following year you must complete the "change of expiry date" form, prior to 24 December each year. Separate forms for KL and VAX accounts are at the Batch Station.

We do this not to make life difficult for you, but merely to keep disk space clear and overheads down. Each year many people leave the University, go away on the Special Studies Programme or finish post graduate research and omit to notify us that they have finished with their account. Expiring accounts is our way, then, of keeping the systems operating efficiently for the user's continued benefit.

Userids on the IBM are currently set up with an expiry date nominated by the client. The date specified remains in force unless altered using the normal AUTH-UQVM form.

Carol Walker
extension 2188

2.3 Improper Use of Computer Systems

From time to time the Centre has published warnings regarding improper use of the computer systems. The January 1985 edition of the Newsletter (N-296) lists some of the actions that would be regarded as abuse. In spite of this, some students have risked disciplinary action under the statutes of the University by using or attempting to use others' accounts and by accessing or attempting to access files belonging to other users. When confronted with evidence of these activities, they have been surprised by the serious light in which these offences were viewed and by the severity of the penalties that could have been imposed.

The Centre has tightened security in several ways, including urging users to select secure passwords, but break-in attempts continue. We therefore ask all supervisors to impress on their students the seriousness of attempting to misuse the computers. We would prefer the practice to cease rather than take action which would disrupt a student's course by exclusion from computer access.

Ian Burgess
extension 4074

2.4 More Graphics Software Enhancement – VUEPLT

VUEPLT, the graphics previewing program on the VAX and KL-10, understands only a subset of the sixty HP-GL commands available and does not in all cases accept the full syntax of a command.

These restrictions tended to limit VUEPLT's use to fairly simple applications. In particular, programs such as SAS/GRAPH which produce plot files that use a wider range of HP-GL commands and syntax were unable to be previewed using VUEPLT.

In order to allow users of SAS/GRAPH to preview their plots, VUEPLT has been modified so that it now understands a larger subset of HP-GL commands. The commands that have been added are:

- AA – Arc absolute (for drawing circles and arcs)
- IP – Input scaling points
- LT – Set line type (dashed, solid etc.)
- PA – Plot absolute
- SR – Set relative character size

Also, command lines may now be terminated with a semi-colon and multiple co-ordinate pairs may be entered for the pen movement commands, i.e. PU, PD and PA commands can now be written as:

```
PA X1,Y1, X2,Y2, ..... ,Xn,Yn
```

As usual, there are a few caveats applying to the use of these commands.

VUEPLT uses calls to the CALF77 plotting routines to do its work and so can only provide an emulation of the HP-GL commands, e.g. the AA command is implemented using the CIRCLE routine. This means that some of the HP-GL commands cannot be implemented and those that are may not function exactly as they would if sent direct to an HP plotter.

The restrictions that apply to the above commands are:

- AA – Will ignore the chord tolerance parameter.
- IP – Does NOT change the scaling points. Merely used to provide information used to calculate the character sizes in subsequent SR commands.
- LT – Does not give the 13 line patterns provided by HP. Only allows parameters in the range 1 to 6 where the number represents the size of the dash in mm.

Unfortunately, the SAS/GRAPH documentation does not say just how much of the HP-GL command set it uses, so the changes described above cover those functions that we KNOW it uses. It is possible that from time to time SAS/GRAPH (or any other plotting software for that matter) will produce plot files that contain commands that VUEPLT doesn't understand. These commands are written to the error file VUEPLT.ERR so that you can find out what they are.

Since VUEPLT doesn't have to understand absolutely every command to make a reasonable fist at displaying a plot, this is not always a problem. However, if you find that you have a plot file that contains a command(s) that VUEPLT doesn't AND as a result it can't display the plot, contact the Prentice Computer Centre and we'll consider adding the extra capacity.

*Barry Costin
extension 3022*

2.5 IFPS on UQVM and UQVAX

Following a lengthy testing period with IFPS (Interactive Financial Planning System), release 10.0 has been installed on UQVM and UQVAX. On-line help to invoke IFPS is available on UQVM by typing INFO IFPS and on UQVAX by typing HELP IFPS. A brief explanation of the capabilities of IFPS can be found in newsletter N-294, November 1984, which is available on-line.

Clients are advised that, under our licence agreement, IFPS is not to be used by external clients or for research funded by grants from private industry unless permission is granted from Execucom in writing.

The Help Desk has IFPS manuals available for reference and these will become available for sale. If there are any queries please initially contact the Help Desk on extension 3025.

*Porl Gordon
extension 3022*

3. Distributed Computing – Geoffrey Dengate, ext. 3391

3.1 Apple LaserWriter

The Prentice Computer Centre has purchased an Apple LaserWriter for use by the University. The LaserWriter is a near-typeset-quality text and graphics printer for use primarily with an Apple Macintosh Personal Computer.

Centre staff have prepared a document "Using the Apple LaserWriter" for Macintosh users. This document is considered essential reading and is available from the Distributed Computing Section foyer, Western End 2nd Floor Hawken Building, or by phoning extension 3938.

The following procedures apply to usage of the LaserWriter.

1. Bookings must be made prior to use by phoning extension 3938 or calling at the Distributed Computing Section foyer.
2. The maximum contiguous period which may be booked is two (2) hours. However, in the event that there is no following booking, this period may be extended.
3. Bookings are restricted to Honours or Post-Graduate students or University staff.
4. Prior to use of the printer, some form of proof that the user falls into the above category will be required, i.e. student card, payroll slip, etc.
5. Having satisfied (4) above, one of the following is necessary as a deposit:
 - (a) student card
 - (b) drivers licence
 - (c) \$10.
6. An all inclusive charge of 30 cents/page will be levied.

7. Payments are expected in cash, however, if the cost is greater than \$15 (50 pages), a Prentice Computer Centre Equipment and Materials Order will be accepted.
8. Users are expected to have studied the Prentice Computer Centre document and relevant Apple literature and hence require little or no assistance from PCC staff. If PCC staff are required to provide assistance of greater than 15 minutes, the user will be charged at the standard rate of \$30 per hour (minimum charge \$30).

Geoffrey Dengate
extension 3391

3.2 User Groups on Campus

The following have responded to my request for information about the various user groups on campus.

- (a) *User group name:* Open Access
Contact name: Dr David Wadley
Contact phone: x3231
- (b) *User group name:* APPLE-Q
Contact name: Dr David Bourne
Contact phone: x2868
Location of meeting: Hooper Education Centre, Kuran St, Wavell Heights
Frequency of meetings: 3rd Sunday of each month 8.30am to 4.30pm
Other information: access to newsletters, technical notes, public domain software. Membership fee is \$18 per year (\$9 student)
- (c) *User group name:* Micro Bee User Group
Contact name: Phil Webb, Entomology
Contact phone: 378-4400 (H)
- (d) *User group name:* Kaypro User Group
Contact name: Dr David Yates, Botany
Contact phone: x2070

Geoffrey Dengate
extension 3391

3.3 PC Survey Database

The PC Survey Database is now set up. To gain access to this wealth of information log in on the PDP-10 and type the following:

```
.r 1022
*open dskd:pcsurv[10,213,pc]
```

A working knowledge of 1022 is required to make use of this information online.

For those of you who have no knowledge of 1022, but who have a database on their micro, there are two files containing the data and structure of the database. The raw data are available in the file "DSKD:PCSURV.TXT[10,213,PC]". You can use Kermit (available free from the PCC) to download this. The structure of the database (and PCSURV.TXT) is in the file "DSKD:PCSURV.STR[10,213,PC]".

Here is a brief description of the attributes:

Attribute	Description
location	Where is the PC located? U.Q., G.U., Home, etc...
department	
title	
firstname	Who looks after it?
surname	
phone	
number__identical	How many do they have of this configuration?
compatibility	What does it emulate? IBM PC, Kaypro, Osborne, Apple II.
model	What is it exactly? Macintosh, Bondwell, PC Clone.
memory	How much memory does it have?
hard__disk	What size hard disk?
colour	Does it have a colour monitor?
printer__class	What sort of printer? Dot matrix, near letter quality.
printer	What brand?
rs232	Does it have a serial interface?
modem	Does it have a dial-up modem?
special	Any special interfaces?
os1	
os2	Operating systems used?
os3	
use__wp	Do they use it for word-processing,
use__db	database,
use__ss	spreadsheet,
use__cal	computer aided learning,
use__dc	data collection,
use__ic	instrument control,
use__numeric__maths	...
use__data__analysis	
use__statistics	
use__graphics	
use__software__devel	
use__simulation	
use__games__hobbies	
use__other	... or something else?
word__proc	
data__base	Which brands do they have?
spread__sheet	
language	What languages do they use?
other__software	What other software of interest do they have?
kermit1	What versions of KERMIT?
kermit2	
access__pcc	What host access? Direct line, modem, none.
notes	Any other comments of general interest?

The information in the database was gathered with the PC Survey forms issued in a previous newsletter. We would like to thank those of you who filled them in. If you discover any inaccuracies in the database please let us know with mail to CCDCHELP.

Chris Barker
extension 4233

4. Engineering and Communications Services – Graham Rees, ext. 3288

4.1 Electronic Mail

Electronic mail is a facility which has been available on a number of computer systems for many years. Yet it does not seem to be widely appreciated within the University that electronic mail offers a number of advantages over alternate means of communication.

1. It is quick – normally mail would be delivered within minutes of sending, though this depends on a number of factors such as the communications path between sending and receiving systems, the availability of intermediate computers and processing load on the computers involved in the transfer. Normally electronic mail would be no slower than telex and often much quicker.
2. It is cheap. Examination of my log of off-campus mail transfers shows a recent mail transfer to the University of York in the UK costing 73¢ for 2721 characters (easily over 30 lines of text on a standard VDU) and a mail transfer to Adelaide costing 4¢ for 706 characters. (These charges are transmission charges and don't include charges for message preparation.)

As well as electronic mail based on an organisation's computer system, public electronic mail facilities have recently become available in Australia. The Overseas Telecommunications Commission (OTC) operate the MINERVA message system which can be accessed by dial up from anywhere in Australia. MINERVA offers the ability to send telex messages as well as electronic mail and telexes can be sent to a MINERVA mail box. MINERVA also has interfaces to similar systems in a number of overseas countries and messages can be sent to mail boxes on those systems.

Telecom Australia offer for Australian use a somewhat limited MAIL and telex facility on VIATEL and a much more powerful message system called TELEMEMO. These public systems are all available from special dial up numbers or through AUSTPAC (though VIATEL access from AUSTPAC is limited).

Within the University community electronic mail can assist communication between co-operating researchers, academic staff and students (particularly part-time or external students).

The University computer systems are accessible readily from anywhere in Australia through AUSTPAC and indeed from any country with a public data (X.25) network connected to OTC's MIDAS service. Therefore any of the main University systems may be used to provide an electronic mail service to anyone prepared to login to that system.

The University systems (particularly the VAX-11/780 and IBM) are likely to be considerably cheaper to use than MINERVA (25¢/minute) and TELEMEMO.

It is hoped that developments next year will extend significantly the number and geographical spread of systems with which it is possible to exchange electronic mail.

*Arthur Hartwig
extension 4079*

4.2 Changes to the AUSTPAC Gateway

Twice recently users of the AUSTPAC gateway have attempted to make calls but have been unable to do so because all the subscribed logical channels were in use. The gateway was not very informative in this situation but will now output a message informing the user that there are no available channels on which to place the call.

Negotiations with Telecom to subscribe to more logical channels have been in progress for some time and it is hoped that the number of available channels will be doubled in the near future.

*Arthur Hartwig
extension 4079*

4.3 Access to MICOM Circuit Switch from AUSTPAC

An order has recently been placed for an X.25 card for the MICOM circuit switch to allow access to the MICOM and hence to a number of campus systems (e.g. the central VAX-11/780 and the IBM 3083). Until this card arrives the Centre has the use of a MICOM X.25 PAD which provides similar facilities but in a different way. When the MICOM card becomes available access to the MICOM from AUSTPAC may change (and without much notice), but in the meantime, users are invited to make use of the facility. The MICOM PAD sets the parameters of the AUSTPAC PAD such that use of "full screen" software works reasonably well but users may find this mode fairly expensive for applications not requiring interaction with software using "full screen mode".

If calling from a public dial-up AUSTPAC PAD and quoting a Network User Identifier (NUI) or calling from a dedicated line, calling the address 2 737 20000 87 will connect you "straight through" to the MICOM.

If placing a reverse charge call (default from dial-up AUSTPAC PADs) the command sequence to access the MICOM is a little more complex.

1. Firstly, call the University AUSTPAC gateway in the normal fashion.
2. After quoting your password give the command
SET HOST AUSTPAC
3. Then give the command
CALL UQVM
to connect to the MICOM.

Note that in both cases there are still two places where a carriage return must be typed to enable auto-baud software to determine line speed:

1. When the call to the MICOM is complete.
2. After the MICOM connects you to the requested host and types "GO".

*Arthur Hartwig
extension 4079*

4.4 Correction to Previous Newsletter N-304

An editing error resulted in what should have been the first paragraph of the article "4.2 New Network Mail Facilities" being incorrectly placed as the first paragraph of the article "4.1 The Future of CSIRONET access".

Therefore the first paragraph of article 4.1 should be deleted and inserted as the first paragraph of article 4.2. The new network mail facilities described in article 4.2 are not yet available but should be available in early 1986. CSIRONET access facilities are currently those described in article 4.1.

Arthur Hartwig
extension 4079

5. Applications Development – Tony Bird, ext. 3944

5.1 Information Concerning Courses

Enrolments for all courses may be made by phoning extension 3018.

The following schedule of courses has been arranged for the period December, 1985 – February, 1986:

December

Elementary BASIC Programming	December 16-20 5 half days 9-12 each day
SCRIPT	December 16-20 5 half days 1-4 each day

January

Introduction to PDP-10	January 6-9 4 half days 9-12 each day
Conversion to IBM	January 7-9 3 half days 1-4 each day
Introduction to IBM	January 13-16 4 half days 9-12 each day
Elementary BASIC Programming	January 13-17 5 half days 1-4 each day
1022	January 20-24 5 half days 9-12 each day
Conversion to VAX	January 22-23 2 half days 1-4 each day
Using Your PC on the Network	January 28 1 half day 9-12
RUNOFF	January 28-31 4 half days 1-4 each day
Conversion to IBM	January 29-31 3 half days 9-12 each day

February

Introduction to IBM	February 3-6 4 half days 9-12 each day
SPSS	February 3-7 5 half days 1-4.30 each day
SQL	February 10-14 5 half days 1-4 each day
Introduction to PDP-10	February 17-20 4 half days 9-12 each day
SAS	February 17-21 5 half days 1-4 each day

General Notes:

1. Intending users of the PDP-10 system must be familiar with the content of the course *Introduction to PDP-10* (i.e. terminal usage, file-management, editing) before attending other PDP-10 courses.
2. In corresponding fashion, for the IBM system, users should have attended either *Conversion to IBM* (for previous PDP-10 users) or *Introduction to IBM* (for completely new users) before attending other IBM courses.
3. Courses held at St Lucia (with the exception of CAD/CAM courses) are conducted in the Computer Centre's teaching area near the Physics Annex. Courses designated (GU) are held in Room 1.49, East Wing, SIA Building at Griffith University.
4. Staff and post-graduate students are admitted free to courses; all others pay at the rate of \$10.00 per half-day session.
5. Enrolments for all courses may be made by phoning ext. 3018.

Barry Maher
extension 3021

6. Miscellaneous

6.1 Departmental Equipment for Sale

1. DEC Rainbow 100, 128K, dual floppies, LA50 printer, CP/M, MS-DOS, Fortran, C. Basic, + much software. Contact: Szokolay, Architecture, ext. 3878 or 2412.
2. SAS/GRAPH Manual, Edition 5. As new – \$50. Contact: Mal Greenhalgh, ext. 3611.