

# PRENTICE COMPUTER CENTRE

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



## NEWSLETTER

N-320

July 1988

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Authorized by the Director of the Computer Centre

## Phone Numbers for Enquiries

External users may dial direct by prefixing these extension numbers with 377.

<b>Management</b>	<b>Extension</b>
Director – <i>Mr Alan Coulter</i>	2189
Deputy Director – <i>Mr John Noad</i>	3017
Manager, Applications Development – <i>Ms Noela Meier</i>	4281
Manager, Distributed Computing – <i>Mr Anthony Bird</i>	3391
Manager, Engineering and Communications Services – <i>Mr Graham Rees</i>	3288
Manager, Finance and Administration – <i>Mr Denis Antonellie</i>	3963
Manager, Large Systems Software – <i>Mr Allan Woodland</i>	4017
Manager, Operations – <i>Mr Ian Armstrong</i>	3471
Manager, User Liaison – <i>Mr Geoffrey Dengate</i>	3944

**Central Services HELP Desk (0830-1630) CCHELP for electronic mail** **3025**

**General Enquiries & Course Enrolments** **3018**

### Principal Service Centres

Personal Computer Support Group	4018
Contract Programming & Feasibility Studies – <i>Ms Noela Meier</i>	4281
System Status Automatic Answering	3101
Central Systems Accounts (0830-1630) – <i>Mrs Carol Walker</i>	2188
Program Librarian – <i>Mr David Molloy</i>	4075
Operations	3212
Data Entry – <i>Ms Ngaire Brown</i>	3967
Dial-up modem numbers	(300, 1200/75, 2400, 1200 bps – 10 lines) 377 2977 (2400 and 1200 bps – 7 lines) 377 2922

<b>Hardware Problem Reporting</b>	<b>Extension</b>
PC Repairs and Maintenance	3938
Communications Fault Reporting	3938
Terminal and PDP-11 Fault Reporting	3938

Note: After 4.45 pm and at weekends, X3938 is serviced by a message recorder. Users wishing to report PC, terminal, communications and other hardware faults can leave their name, number and fault details.

### Griffith University

External users may dial direct by prefixing these extension numbers with 275.

Director, Centre for Information Technology – <i>Mr Mike Steel</i>	7125
Computing Services Manager – <i>Mr Ian Robertson</i>	7561
General Enquiries – <i>Ms Annabel Tyler</i>	7745
Computing Services Area – Science 2	7560

## Acknowledgements

UNIX is a trademark of AT&T Bell Laboratories

## 1. Newsletter Summary

- Two very useful utilities for UQVAX are described. These are SPELL, a spelling checker, and SWING, a directory management tool.
- Some examples of using DCL string manipulation commands on UQVAX are provided.
- The USENET distributed bulletin board system can now be accessed from UQVAX.
- A personal computer 'virus' has been detected on campus. Some simple precautions are provided for the protection of programs and data. For specific advice contact Mr Anthony Bird (ext. 3391).
- Information is provided regarding the new version of WordPerfect for PCs.
- The PC Support Group has been evaluating colour printers and, if there is sufficient demand, may provide a colour printing service. Your feedback is requested.
- Following liaison between TEDI and PCC, an optical mark reader (OMR) has been installed. The primary use of the OMR is the reading of survey forms and multiple choice question (MCQ) tests. Details of the MCQ service are provided.
- Advance notice is given of changes to the Newsletter format.
- WordPerfect is available for trial on UQVAX.
- Details of PC and Mainframe courses are provided.

*Geoffrey Dengate*  
ext. 3944

## 2. Large Systems Software

### 2.1 A Directory Management Tool for the VAX

SWING, from the DEC User Group (DECUS) library, is a VAX/VMS utility for displaying a graphical representation of directory trees on a VT100 or VT200 type terminal. The screen shows your directory structure with a list of menu items across the top. You can move to a directory, as is done with the **SET DEFAULT** command, by using the cursor keys. If you choose a menu item you can do other directory management functions, including creation of subdirectories, renaming, moving and deletion of subdirectory trees. SWING can also create printable listings of a directory structure. Single DCL commands may be entered without leaving SWING. By using the file management sub-menu, you can delete, edit, move, print, or rename files in the current directory.

Because the state of your directory is displayed graphically, SWING is a very easy facility to use.

To run SWING, you need to define SWING as a command. This is done by typing **SETUP SWING** or by including the line, **\$SETUP SWING**, in your LOGIN.COM file.

Once this has been done, the command, **SWING**, will invoke the program. Help is one of the menu items; just type **H** once you have the SWING screen on your terminal.

*Ian Burgess*  
ext. 4074

## 2.2 A Spelling Checker for the VAX

SPELL is a useful tool for checking the typing accuracy of text documents. This program has a very large main dictionary and will also maintain a personal dictionary of specialised words. When an unrecognised word is found you can

- correct the word
- have SPELL guess what it should have been
- ignore it
- add it to your personal dictionary or
- request that it be added to the main dictionary

In the latter case the word will subsequently be checked manually before being added to the main dictionary.

You are able to correct part of a file by starting at any line and quitting when you wish.

For a full description of how to use SPELL, type the command **HELP SPELL**.

SPELL is designed to run on a standard ANSI terminal (e.g., VT100 or VT200).

*Ian Burgess  
ext. 4074*

## 3. Operations

### 3.1 DECserver 500

As described in the March Newsletter, a DECserver 500 is now installed in the network. Unfortunately, users have been experiencing difficulty in gaining access to the DS500 host (and hence other Ethernet nodes) due to a lack of lines to it from the Micom. By the time of publication of this Newsletter, this problem will be rectified and, if desired, users will also be able to select DS500 at the Micom prompt. For information on how to use the DECserver, consult section 7.1.1 in the March Newsletter (N-318).

For simple access to any of the hosts, it is not necessary to go through the DS500, you can still just type UQVAX, UQKL10 or UQVM to the Micom prompt.

Please contact the HELP DESK on ext. 3025 if you have any questions or problems.

*Ian Armstrong  
ext. 3471*

### 3.2 Questions and Answers

**Q:** In DCL (Digital Command Language, on the VAX, Ed.) I want to take three symbols,

X with the value "1A"

Y with the value "05"

Z with the value "22"

and add them together to make A with the value "1A0522".

How do I do it?

**A:** If the values are strings,

```
$ X="1A"  
$ Y="05"  
$ Z="22"  
$ A=X+Y+Z  
$ SHOW SYMBOL A  
A = "1A0522"
```

If the values are numeric, (I assume hexadecimal since one is 1A),

```
$ X=%X1A  
$ Y=%X05  
$ Z=%X22  
$ A=(X*%X100+Y)*%X100+Z  
$ SHOW SYMBOL A  
A = 1705250  HEX = 001A0522  OCTAL = 00006402442
```

**Q:** But I got the problem wrong...

The value of X was "IA" not "1A" and Z was decimal 22.

I now have

Y a string with value "IA05"  
Z an integer with value 124

and I want A as a string with value of "IA05124"

```
A: $ Y = "IA05"  
$ Z = 124  
$ A = Y+F$STRING(Z)  
$ SHOW SYMBOL A  
A = "IA05124"
```

Notice it is Decimal

For further information on converting from values to strings and vice versa, see HELP LEXICALS F\$STRING and HELP LEXICALS F\$INTEGER.

*Ian Burgess  
ext. 4074*

## **4. Engineering & Communications**

### **4.1 USENET News Available on UQVAX**

A public domain program called News has been installed on UQVAX. This program was written by Geoff Huston of the Computing Services Centre at ANU. This program gives UQVAX full functionality as a USENET News node. Users on UQVAX can now read and post news to the world's largest distributed bulletin board.

The USENET news is brought into Australia, funded mostly by Telecom Research Laboratories. USENET news is a distributed bulletin board system originally developed for UNIX systems, using the UUCP protocols. Since then, however, implementations of network news have become available for VM/CMS, VMS, and other systems. USENET news is distributed to an estimated 8000 - 10000 sites worldwide, with approximately 2MB of traffic daily in the USA. The bulletin board is divided by subject into NEWS GROUPS covering topics ranging from the theory of computer architecture to the latest jokes.

The command to invoke the news program is **NEWS**.

In order for this command to work, you will need to set up your environment, using the command **SETUP NEWS**.

While you are running the NEWS program, you can get help at any time by typing **HELP** at the command prompt.

In order to find out more about this program, you can read or print out a document stored under NEWS\_\_DEVICE:[DOC]NEWSUSER.DOC on UQVAX. Alternately, a bound news manual is available at the help desk.

When you first invoke the news program, you will be confronted with an array of about 170 NEWS GROUPS, each of which can contain up to several hundred NEWS ITEMS. This is a sure recipe for information overload if you don't work out some way of controlling the flow. It is suggested that you investigate the use of the **REGISTER** command for news. Also, you should read all of the newsgroup called NEWS.ANNOUNCE.NEWUSERS before you post any articles.

*Mark Williams*  
ext. 4079

## **5. Distributed Computing**

### **5.1 Elementary Anti-Viral Precautions**

Several recent incidents involving the PC "Brain" Virus suggest the need to remind users of a few simple precautions for their programs and data.

1. New programs should be copied; use the copy, and save the original for backup purposes only.
2. Make periodic backups of all your important text files (data, programs in source form, documentation, etc.). While it is ordinarily less essential, you can also make backups of executable files which you have created, but only if you are certain that they are not already infected.
3. Take care when executing a program which comes from someone else. Remember that he/she may communicate the virus even though he/she has not yet noticed any strange behaviour.
4. Whenever you use a diskette which you do not have to write on, put a write-protect tab on it.
5. Use the software equivalents of write-protect tabs, PROTECT etc. for hard disks.

*Note:* All these measures will work against most "trouble-makers" to some extent. They are not guaranteed to work against all of them, or to confer complete protection. For example, the hard-disk write protection program PROTECT is effective against the Israeli virus, although it can be circumvented by more clever viruses.

*A.J. Bird*  
ext. 3391

## **5.2 WordPerfect Version 5.0**

Like most things WordPerfect Version 5.0 is a bit late in coming. Orders are going in but as yet have not been filled.

The upgrade of version 4.2 is not being handled by the Centre. Interested parties should contact WordPerfect Pacific [02] 498-7155.

Currently, the price for version 5.0 is the same as 4.2 ... \$295.

Some things to look for in the new release:

- Graphics insertion
- Style definitions
- Enhanced macros
- Better printer drivers
- Preview nearly wysiwyg
- Parallel columns improved?

*Alex Waskiw  
ext. 4018*

## **5.3 Are You Interested in Colour Printing????**

Then come and talk to the PC Support Group. We have been evaluating two particular colour ink jet printers.

The new Hewlett Packard PaintJet printer was lent to us by Abacus. At high resolution (180 dpi) it can produce seven colours and can print a page of black text in 30-40 seconds. A page of colour graphics takes about 4 minutes. It has two disposable print cartridges, one black (about 1000 pages of text) and one colour (about 180 pages of colour graphics).

The Xerox Shop supplied a Rank Xerox 4020 Color Ink Jet printer. The printer has seven distinct colours (yellow, cyan, magenta, violet, green, red and black) and using 20 nozzles can produce more than 4000 shades. There are automatic diagnostic and print head maintenance procedures which combine to provide more than 10000 power-on hours of reliable trouble free operation. Replenishing ink is a quick and clean procedure.

The PC Support Group has the technical specifications and prices for both printers. If there is enough interest, maybe the Centre could be persuaded to add colour printing to the existing laser printing service. Have a look at our examples (Room 418, Ask for Mark).

During May the PC Support Group was busy evaluating hardware. Not just printers, but also a PW2 Series 500/12 (80286) from UNISYS, an ULTRA Turbo XT from Imagineering, and finally a Macintosh II from Logical Solutions.

Let us know if you want us to look at other machines as suggestions are always appreciated.

*Mark Noonan  
ext. 4018*

## **6. User Liaison**

### **6.1 Multichoice Testing Without Tears.**

Computerised marking and analysis of multiple choice tests has arrived.

The service is the first to be offered based on the Centre's new optical mark reader. It provides for the reading of student answers, their marking, and the generation of a report on both the student results and the effectiveness of the test itself.

Benefits come primarily from the speed of the service and the level of analysis provided. Normally tests and examinations can be processed completely from the input of student response forms to the final report in a single visit to the Centre. Because feedback is rapid, the usefulness of the test for self-assessment by students is maximised. This makes it ideal for progressive testing throughout semester.

The report includes a comprehensive analysis of the performance of the test itself, far beyond anything routinely attempted by hand. Knowing the effectiveness of individual test items allows you to accumulate reliable suites of proven questions.

Analysis procedures were developed in conjunction with the Tertiary Education Institute, TEDI, which also offers workshops on multichoice testing techniques to complement the service. A comprehensive manual '*Multiple Choice Testing at the University of Queensland*' is available.

The service accepted its first independent customers during the first semester examination period, and is now available for general use. Charges are a fixed setup fee of \$5.00, plus 20 cents per student, regardless of test complexity. The charge includes a report of student results and the full test analysis. The test forms to be filled in by students are available from the University Stationery Store at \$9.50 per hundred (or from Examinations Section for central examinations only).

For further information contact the Help Desk (Ext. 3025) for '*Fact Sheet 1 - Multiple Choice Test Marking and Analysis Services*'.

John Currie  
ext. 4429

### **6.2 A New Look**

Watch carefully - this newsletter is about to change.

Feedback from our clients shows that the newsletter in its current form doesn't really satisfy their needs. So we're changing.

The major change will be the gradual removal of highly technical detail from the newsletter into independent information sheets. Nothing wastes time more than ploughing through involved descriptions of software and systems you don't personally use. Eventually we'll restrict newsletter contents to items of general interest, giving an overview of the Centre and the services it offers you - what's available, how it can be used, and what the alternatives are. These articles will refer you to information sheets for any additional detail. The sheets will be available from the Help Desk, either over the counter or by mail in response to your phone call.

Within a couple of issues we'll also be looking at a major change in the layout of the newsletter to improve readability.

In the last issue we began a questions and answers section. At the moment it is based on questions to our Help Desk, but we'd like to expand this into a regular dialogue with users. So if you have questions of general interest, or enjoy sending letters to the editor, here's a chance.

It won't happen overnight, but the Centre is moving the newsletter towards the sort of publication users have indicated they want. If you have any suggestions that you feel would help in this process, please let me know.

John Currie  
ext. 4429

### 6.3 WordPerfect on UQVAX

The Centre has available for trial, on the VAX-8550 (UQVAX), the popular word processing package WORDPERFECT. The VAX/VMS version supports all the facilities found in the PC version but frees the user from the worry of backups. Draft copies of your document can still be printed locally while high quality final copies can be printed on the Centre's 406 dpi Page Printer. PostScript is supported and existing documents can be easily transferred between the VAX and a PC.

For details on running WORDPERFECT on UQVAX type the following command to the VAX/VMS prompt: **HELP WORDPERFECT**.

Documentation is available for perusal from the HELP DESK and users seeking technical assistance should contact Mr Alec Waskiw on ext. 4018.

Users are encouraged to evaluate the package and provide Alec Waskiw (ext. 4018) or me with any comments regarding its performance.

Geoffrey Dengate  
ext. 3944

## 7. Courses

### 7.1 Nick Who?

Regulars to our courses may have noticed the disappearance of Nick Evans.

Nick is currently roaming the world on a well earned holiday, enjoying everything from the tavernas of sun drenched Greece to the ski slopes of New Zealand. Somewhere in between, he will pass through the U.S., visiting Carnegie-Mellon University to catch up on Andrew developments (Andrew is an integrated Personal Computing Environment). As well, Nick will visit Stanford and Berkeley for the latest on PC teaching methods and PC networking.

He returns at the end of July.

John Currie  
ext. 4429

### 7.2 Course Timetable

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

#### July

‡	Desk Top Publishing Seminar	July 11	9-12am
#	Introduction to UNIX	July 13-July 15	9-12am
‡	Introduction to PC/MSDOS	July 19-July 21	1-4pm
‡	Introduction to WORDPERFECT	July 25-July 28	1-4pm
†•	General Plotting	July 26-July 29	9-12am

## August/September

†•	Introduction to SPSS-X	August 1-August 5	9-12am
‡	Introduction to DBASE III	August 2-August 4	1-4pm
•	Introduction to IBM3081 (CP/CMS)	August 8-August 10	1-4pm
‡	Introduction to BASIC Programming	August 8-August 12	1-4pm
‡	Desk Top Publishing Seminar	August 9	9-12am
#	Introduction to UNIX	August 15,16,18	1-4pm
‡	Introduction to PC/MSDOS	August 16,18,19	9-12am
†	Introduction to DATATRIEVE/RDB	August 22-26	9-12am
•	Introduction to SAS	August 22-26	1-4pm
‡	Introduction to WORDPERFECT	August 23-26	9-12am
†•	Introduction to FORTRAN Programming	August 29-Sept 2	9-12am 1-4pm
‡	Introduction to DBASE III	August 30-Sept 1	9-12am

### Key:

- denotes IBM3081 course
- † denotes VAX8550 course
- †• denotes availability on both VAX and IBM - specify on enrolment
- ‡ denotes PC course
- # denotes VAX 11/780 course

### General Notes:

1. It is expected that users attending courses on specific packages (SQL, SAS, SPSS-X, DBASE III, etc) will be familiar with keyboard-usage, file-management and editing on the relevant machine (IBM, VAX or PC). Attendance at such short courses without this background provides many problems, as all courses are hands-on. Introductory courses are given frequently to allow familiarity with the fundamentals before attending courses on particular application packages.
2. All courses will be held in the Centre's teaching rooms near the Physics Annexe – the mainframe courses in Course Room 1 and the micro-computer courses in Course Room 2.
3. Staff, post-graduate students and kit-owners are admitted free to courses. The charge is \$10.00 per half-day session for other internal users; \$25.00 per half-day session for affiliated users; and \$50.00 per half-day session for external users.
4. Enrolments for all courses may be made by phoning ext. 3018.

Barry Maher  
ext. 3021