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° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° NEW PROSE USERS' MANUAL AVAILABLE ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° °

Technical Communications students at the South Dakota School of
Mines and Technology applied their new-found skills to a real-
life manual writing effort during the summer of 1983. The result
was The New Prose Users' Manual: Text Formatting on the Cyber
170, a collective revision of the existing users' manual. Prose
is a directive-oriented formatting program that is usually used
in conjunction with the text-editing program Xedit on the Control
Data Corporation's mainframe computer. All class papers were
written on the Cyber, making the task of revision more welcome.

° ° ° ° ° TEXT-ANALYSIS PROGRAM EXPLORES PERSONALITY ° ° ° ° ° °

International Resource Development, a marketing research cor-
poration in Norwalk, Connecticut, has reported an IBM text-
analysis program with the potential to determine a wide variety
of personal characteristics--including social background--in a
writer's stylistic choices.

Primarily used to help professionals enhance their writing
skills, the program will be able to match seemingly latent sty-
listic variances (quantifiable choices, limitations, and
frequencies) with the writer's personal and social profile.
Where does the writer originate from? What are his table manners
like? How old is he? Is he lazy--or intellectually inquisitive?
These characteristics, claim the software writers, are suggested
in a writer's style.

Though few would assign an absolute significance to such analy-
sis, it offers the promise of being an objective tool to guide,
for instance, search committees in assessing a candidate's poten-
tial for success or failure in terms of specific job objectives
and compatibility with long-range company goals.

° ° ° ° ° ° ° CONFERENCE ON COMPUTERS AND WRITING ° ° ° ° ° ° °

An interdisciplinary conference on the use of computers in the writing process will be held March, 1984, in Villanova, Pennsylvania. A call for papers has been announced by Thomas E. Martinez, Freshman English, Villanova, Pennsylvania 19085.

° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° CALL FOR PAPERS ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° °

Papers on word processing in academic writing programs and other CAI topics are being welcomed by Collegiate Microcomputer, a quarterly journal which published its first issue in February of 1983. Earlier articles include "Word Processing in Academia" and "Using Computers in Teaching Reasoning and Writing." The annual subscription is $28 a year. Papers and requests for information should be submitted to Collegiate Microcomputer, Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, Terre Haute, IN 47803.

° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° WORD PROCESSING AT 1983 NCTE ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° °

This year's annual convention of the National Council of Teachers of English, to be held from November 18-23 in Denver, Colorado, offers a gold mine of introductory and advanced word-processing and computer-assisted instructional seminars.

A sample of seminar titles include "Using a Word Processor in Composition Instruction: Help or Hindrance," "Special Effects in Computur-Assisted Writing," "Word Processing for English Teachers: The Basics and Beyond," "The Computer and Technical Writing," "High Technology: Applications and Implications for Teaching English," "Computers, Word Processors, and the Teaching of Writing," "So you Want to Know More About Computers," "Computer Assistance Across the Skills," and "Microcomputers: Word Processing, Teaching Literature, and Evaluation Software."

For more facts about convention registration, seminar costs, hotel accommodations, etc., write NCTE Convention Information, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801.

° ° ° ° ° WHY DOES MY WORD PROCESSOR "PROCESS" WORDS? ° ° ° ° ° °

For those novice and experienced computer-types interested in gaining a more complete understanding of how and why a microcomputer does what it does--from a nuts-and-bolts (or chip-and-solder) point of view--two excellent books on the subject are An Introduction to Microcomputers, Volume 0, The Beginner's Book, by Adam Osborne and David Bunnell, and An Introduction to Microcomputers, Volume 1, Basic Concepts, by Adam Osborne.

Volume 0's six chapters discuss subjects such as microcomputer types and features, software programs, computer mathematics, information storage, programming languages, and the like--all presented in an easy-to-follow, progressive, competency-based format. After completing Volume 0's 227 pages, you'll have a solid grounding in what makes micros "tick."

For those ready to access more specific, detailed knowledge, Osborne's Volume 1 should fill the bill. This book isn't for lightweights, though, and if you haven't read Volume 0 or aren't familiar with concepts such as computer architecture, mathematics, and programming logic, Volume 1 may be too intimidating.

Assuming you have met the prerequisites, however, Volume 1 proves to a well-documented, logically-written text that leads you into the core of microcomputerland. Central Procssing Unit (CPU) architecture, serial and parallel Input/Output (I/O) instructions, assembly and machine languages, Random-Access Memory (RAM) and Read-Only Memory (ROM) addresses, logic distribution, and other advanced systems analysis and design concepts are detailed in this book's 400+ pages. Both Volume 0 an Volume 1 are available from OSBORNE/McGraw-Hill, 630 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, CA 94710.

° ° ° ° ° BUT I DON'T HAVE ACCESS TO A WORD PROCESSOR ° ° ° ° °

You really don't need an expensive, dedicated word processor to accomplish many word-processing tasks. Almost all mainframe, mini- and micro-computers have document-creating, editing, and printing capabilities accessible within their respective operating systems.

Frequently named "ED" or a derivative thereof, these text editors initially require some sleuthing within the confines of the computer's operating-system manual to locate their key words or mnemonics. Once discovered, however, they reveal their secrets quite readily, allowing even the most diehard typewriter loyalist easy access to sophisticated text-editing functions such as right-margin justification, global word and string seach-and-replace, variable-page length and width, and more--all at the touch of a few keys.

And if you wnat to change text, generate multiple copies of a document, or run single copies in a variety of formats long after you input the original, all you need do is to recall your text file from the computer's memory, insert your editorial changes and/or command codes, and voila! So, don't let your computer-science students have all the fun. Overcome disciplinary ethnocentrism and visit your school's computer center. Better yet,

ask one of your computer-science students to introduce you to "ED." Remember, there are still times when the child can be the father of the man.

° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° BIBLIOGRAPHY UPDATE ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° °

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° ° ° ° ° ° COIN-OPERATED WORD PROCESSORS AT HARVARD ° ° ° ° ° °

Digital Equipment Corp. has installed 40 DECmate I word processors with printers in Harvard's dorms, student union, library, and classrom buildings. The get-acquainted fee of $1 an hour will be doubled in November. Harvard and nearby Digital conducted an orientation and seminars for student arriving for the fall semester. Harvard's arrangement with Digital was set up by former Associate Vice President for Information Technology, Howard Resnikoff.

° ° ° ° ° CONTINUING-EDUCATION WORD-PROCESSING COURSES ° ° ° ° ° °

Faculty members who worry about personally paying for an expensive word-processing system should consider offering introductory Continuing Education courses on the subject. Now that the business and academic sectors of society are becoming increasingly computerized, the demand for basic word processing skills creates a unique opportunity for faculty who can teach the courses.

During the summer of 1983, three different courses were taught at the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology: one for business managers and other professionals, another for secretaries, and a third for teachers in academic writing programs. Audience-specific courses are perhaps the most sought-after. While all groups want to learn the basics of word processing--what it is--business managers, for instance, have additional concerns about system acquisition, price-performance ratio, and the like. Similar courses could well include a focus on business-related spreadsheets, computer-aided design with word processing, and other industry-specific applications for which software has been written.

With an emphasis on the end-user, such courses are fully supported by local vendors, many of whom welcome the chance to address classes and demonstrate equipment. In addition, many businesses beginning to think about the acquisition of word-processing systems tend to send their managers and secretaries to introductory courses which promise an impartial assessment of company needs. Colleges and universities are in a unique position to offer this perspective.

While a single stand-alone system can demonstrate word-processing principles in small sections (under twelve), larger classes should make a bank of terminals available. Monitors with extra-large screens are also present in many colleges with programming courses. These are ideal for the teacher with just a single system to work with.

° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° SUBMISSIONS WELCOME ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° °

Readers of Research in Word Processing Newsletter are encouraged to send along word-processing and text-analysis "findings" relating to academic writing programs. Relevant information is scattered throughout a wide variety of professional and popular periodicals. Submissions are, of course, always welcomed--as are feedback comments and other input relating to future issues.

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