N-156
19Nov73

UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

Computer Centre

NEWSLETTER

authorization: Director of the Computer Centre

## 1 SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

PERIOD FROM 1-NOV-73 to 15-NOV-73

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| USEFUL TIME | 180 | 85% |
| GOOD TIME | 188 | 89% |
| ON TIME | 211 | 100% |

| | |
|---|---|
| NO OF CRASHES | 3 |
| TIME BETWEEN CRASHES | 62.57 HRS |
| MEAN TIME RECOVER | 39 MINS |

## 2 STAFF

A program STAFF is available from the Civil Engineering Department. This program allows staff work-load allocations to be recorded for a number of subjects and staff timetables and summaries to be obtained. Interested users should print file STAFF.DOC [1Ø3,116] for details and an example.

## 3 PASSWORD

A new version of PASSWORD is now operational. This will allow users to change their passwords directly and will not require operator action to do this. In addition, the passwords are cyphered by a one way cypher. Any users who forget their passwords will have to be issued with a new one as the password will not be available even to the Centre staff. In the interests of security, users are advised to change their passwords from time to time.

## 4 DISPOSAL OF LOG FILES BY THE BATCH SYSTEM

The log file produced by the batch system has been a major problem for users, especially those with a small logged-out quota. For jobs read from cards the log file was not deleted until it had been printed, and its presence in the user's directory at KJOB often caused loss of files. This has been overcome by changes to several of the batch system programs to rename the log file to [3,3] at KJOB. For these jobs the log file is removed from the user's directory before he logs out so no quota problems result.

For SUBMIT jobs, the disposal of the log file defaulted to /DISP:PRESERVE. This has been changed to be /DISP:RENAME. If it is desired to retain the log file, it now is necessary for the user to specify /DISP:PRESERVE. If a user does this he should be aware that loss of files will result if he is over quota at log-out.

Disposal of the control file remains unchanged. It is not deleted by batch until the job has logged out, but this rarely causes problems because the control file is usually small.

## 5 USER SUPPORT

The Centre recognises that a real need exists to improve our user support by rationalisation, improvement and documentation of our library programs, training, greater availability of programmers for consulting and by direct contract programming services. Apt systems software is essential if the Centre is to provide a reliable and useful service to the large and varied group of users that we have. There are obvious improvements that must be made in the 5-series operating system; a file migratory system is an urgent need to allow large disk file allocations in the public area; software development is necessary to allow additional equipment such as the 30 inch plotter and the optical card reader to be brought into operation; new versions of compilers must be assessed particularly as to their impact on users and tested; the communications system including methods to allow connection of a range of mini-computers to the system is another area of major development.

Although our staffing situation should be better in 1974 than it was in 1973, our resources will still be limited and we earnestly request our users help so that what programming staff we have can be used to best advantage.

An area where users can assist us relates to consulting advice. Our major problem is that many users are referring problems to us without first having tried to find the fault themselves. Often problems are referred without sufficient documentation. Whilst we are happy to help with difficulties, some users are expecting our staff to write their programs for them (this we can do at a charge for service authorised by the Departmental Head). The result is an overall deterioration in service to all users. In mentioning these problems, the Centre is not suggesting that it should not do better. Rather we hope with cooperation between users and the Centre, we can improve the service.

As a trial, the following procedure will be introduced -

1 Programming Difficulties

(a) Students should take all programming problems to their academic supervisor.

(b) For other users, a duty programmer will be scheduled from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily Monday to Friday.

(c) If a user is unable to detect a fault in his program, he should report the problem to the Centre by completing a "Problem Specification" form. This should be handed to the enquiry window and an appointment will be made with the Duty Programmer.

(d) If you are unable to attend for an appointment during the scheduled hours of the duty programmer, your problem will still be worked on and a written reply made available at the output window. In this case, you should give, on the specification form, a telephone number and most convenient time when you can be contacted for additional information or discussion if required.

(e) It is recognised there may be some non-trivial problems that are being followed through with a particular programmer rather than the programmer who may happen to be on duty. In this case, please arrange an appointment at the enquiry window to see the particular programmer.

We hope that this need to complete a problem specification form is not interpreted as a bureaucratic imposition. It does to some extent force the user to define the problem; it allows a service to be given to those users who previously were not able to see a programmer during normal hours; and of most importance it allows a record to be kept and analysed of the difficulties users are experiencing. This will guide us in making more fundamental improvements (whether they be changes in the software or the conduct of training courses) which may go a long way to correcting the cause of a lot of the difficulties.

## 2 Service Difficulties

If a user is experiencing problems of an operational nature, e.g. output lost, file lost, accounting etc. he should report these to the Operations Supervisor (Mr. Jauncey) or in his absence to the Operations Manager (Mr. de Voil).

## 3 General Requests for Assistance

These include information on the range of services offered, procedures for using the system, advice on training courses. Such matters should be referred to the Operations Supervisor or the Operations Manager.

## 4 Complaints and Suggestions

The Director of the Computer Centre is anxious to hear directly from users having complaints regarding the level or adequacy of service offered by the Centre and suggestions for improvement.

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