PRENTICE COMPUTER CENTRE
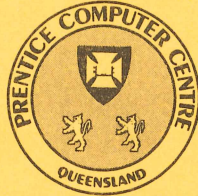
UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND, ST. LUCIA, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA. 4067.

NEWSLETTER

N-301   June 1985

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Authorized by the Director of the Computer Centre

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Terminals, CDN & Equipment Pricing

For prices on microcomputers, terminals, line charges, computer bits and pieces, type HELP PRICES on your terminal. This will provide appropriate menus.

1. Newsletter Summary

- We apologise to users for inconvenience caused by the renovations taking place in our operations area on the ground floor of the Hawken Building.

- The Facit letter quality printer is available for hire (at $2.00 per hour) but users must supply ribbons and print wheels which can be purchased from the Centre.

- The charging software for plotting on the VAX 11/780 system failed to charge some users for stationery and mounting non-standard pen carousels. This has been corrected.

- The new version of the Tektronics Graphics Kernel System (GKS) has been implemented.

- Purchase of STAIRS — an IBM package for the interactive manipulation of text database — will depend on the response of users during the current trial period.

- The CSIRO Cyber 76 will be decommissioned on 30 November. As a result there will be charges in the communications gateway to CSIRONET.

- Details are provided on courses for staff and postgraduate students.

Director
extension 2189

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

Operations — Sandra Campbell, ext. 3471

Systems Software & Extensions — Ian Burgess, ext. 4074

2.1 Renovations

By the time this newsletter goes to print I expect the renovations taking place in the central service area on the ground floor of the Hawken Building to be substantially completed. These will ultimately supply more pigeon holes, a better client service area with the Accounts, Help Desk and Librarian all located together, and more work space for the Operations staff.

The period during which these changes have been taking place has been frustrating for us as well as for our clients and I apologize for that. To those of you who have been generous enough to hide their frustration I extend my appreciation. I trust the improvements which result will make it worthwhile.

The area in front of the new counter is intended to provide for manual sales and a more accessible client reference library. These will be set up as soon as practicable after the renovations are completed.

Allan Woodland
extension 4017

2.2 Letter Quality Printer

Regular users of the Facit letter quality printer will have noticed that it has become somewhat nomadic of late. After a short stay in the Eastern Hut adjacent to the

Credit Union (announced newsletter N-300), it has now returned to the Hawken Building. We believe this situation will be more convenient both for our clients and ourselves, as it will allow us to give access to the room without the need to loan out (and ensure the return of) keys.

Another problem with this service (and indeed with some others) is the increasing costs of consumables. The paper and ribbons used during a period of hire has cost us up to about four times the hire charge! Print wheels which have a fairly limited life are an additional significant cost. Therefore, from 1 July 1985 new charges for this service will apply. The basic charge of $2.00 per hour will remain but users will need to purchase from the Centre the ribbons and print wheels they require. These cannot be hired or "part" purchased.

At this stage paper will continue to be supplied at no additional charge. Prices for ribbons and print wheels will reflect our buying price and unless there are further increases will initially be as follows:

Cloth ribbon	$10.50
Carbon ribbon	$12.50
Print wheel	$12.40

Intending users should book this service either at the new main counter, the night counter, or by phoning extension 3024. The maximum contiguous period which may be booked is two hours. However, in the event of there being no following booking, this period may be extended.

Allan Woodland
extension 4017

2.3 The Cost of Plotting to the HP Plotters from UQVAX::

If it is your impression that plotting on the HP plotters from UQVAX:: has become more expensive lately, please do not be unduly alarmed. You may have been one of the (hopefully small) group of users who have inadvertently managed to avoid paying for PCC supplied stationary and for mounting of non-standard pen carousels.

Due to a recent overhaul of the UQVAX:: plotter symbionts, these and several operational headaches have been resolved.

Bryan Claire
extension 4078

2.4 New TEKGKS Version on UQVAX::

TEKGKS (announced in the May newsletter N-300) has been upgraded to version 2.0. For most users the changes will be transparent, however there is now support for Tektronix 4014 terminals. A Model Device Driver is supplied for those keen to support their own terminals. You can still link your programs to TEKGKS with the command

    $LINK myprog,SYS$SYSROOT:[TEKGKS]SGKS/LIB

If there are any queries please call us.

Porl Gordon
extension 3022

2.5 STAIRS on CMS

STAIRS is an interactive text database manipulating tool. It can be used for storage and retrieval of documents. STAIRS allows users to search for text strings, select records and order retrieved documents in order of relevance. On entry of a document into a STAIRS database the user can specify which words are to be used as keys in later searches.

There is a help facility built in and a "First Time User" tutorial is available while the user is running STAIRS. To run STAIRS simply type at CMS command level

> STAIRS

STAIRS is currently **on trial** on UQVM and its subsequent purchase is dependent upon the reports of users who take advantage of the testing period.

To help us evaluate STAIRS users are requested to try it out and send their comments on its value to Allan Woodland at the Centre. Users are reminded that, at this stage, STAIRS is only **on trial** and users should not become dependent on it until a final decision is made on its acquisition!

Porl Gordon
extension 3022

3. Engineering & Communications Services
— Graham Rees, ext. 3288

3.1 New CSIRONET Gateway

As mentioned in a previous newsletter (N-296, January 1985) the current CSIRONET gateway will meet its demise when the CYBER-76 is decommissioned. The CYBER-76 decommissioning which was originally scheduled for 31 May has now been postponed to 30 November 1985.

After the CYBER-76 is decommissioned the current CSIRONET gateway will no longer be available and users will have to make use of a gateway based on a VAX. To assist users in becoming acquainted with the VAX based gateway and help them convert over to the new system there will be a period in which both gateways operate simultaneously. This period of simultaneous operation will begin as soon as Telecom install an additional communications line between the Centre and CSIRONET.

Details of the operation of the new gateway will be released in the next newsletter. In the meantime questions about the new VAX gateway to CSIRONET should be directed to Danny Smith (ext. 4079).

Arthur Hartwig
extension 4079

4. Applications Development

4.1 Information Concerning Courses

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

The following schedule of courses has tentatively been arranged for the period July — August, 1985:

July

Introduction to IBM	July 16-19 4 half days 9-12 each day
Conversion to IBM	July 23-25 3 half days 9-12 each day
Introduction to PDP-10	July 29-August 1 4 half days 1-4 each day

August

Introduction to IBM	August 6-9 4 half days 9-12 each day
SPSS	August 12-16 5 half days 9-12.30 each day
SQL	August 19-23 5 half days 9-12 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 Annexe. 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

5. Miscellaneous

5.1 Departmental Equipment for Sale

One only 5MB Seagate Technology Hard Disk Drive. In as new condition. Taken from DEC Rainbow but is standard ST506. $700 or offer. Contact David Yates on ext. 2070 or leave message on ext. 2731.