

UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

Computer Centre

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

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1 OPERATIONS

1.1 PDP-10 System

Friday	24 November	parity error in accounting files deleted, processed end of day accounts, 0830-0930 system offline 1200-1207, monitor error, reloaded monitor.
Monday	27 November	system offline 1005-1018, continue and restart failed, reloaded monitor system offline 1610-1613, 1650-1653, continued satisfactorily both times system offline 1830-1840, reloaded monitor line printer maintenance 0925-1120, 1405-1425.
Wednesday	29 November	end of day accounting, which aborted previous night, 0830-0855 login errors 0915-0921.
Thursday	30 November	system maintenance until 1020 checked accounting files until 1115 system offline 1520-1525, reloaded monitor system maintenance 1600-2400.

2 CONTINUATION CHARACTER

WN-116 reported that users could use a hyphen as the last meaningful character on the line in order to continue commands onto subsequent lines. The decoder treats the combination of <line delimiter> as a space; this is not the way Editor treats it (it is ignored in Editor). The next revision of the decoder will alter this so that the hyphen is ignored.

3 COMPILE COMMANDS THROUGH BATCH

The default option for the list file in the compile commands (e.g. FORTRAN, COBOL, etc.) has been changed in the new decoder.

If a source file is specified, the default is now a disk file with the name source-file/LST. Batch users must now specifically request the listing by using LIST or TYPE, or force the listing by specifying the output device as \$TTY.

e.g. .FORTRAN(L) MYPRG/F4

—
—
—
.LIST MYPRG/LST

or .FORTRAN(L) MYPRG/F4,, \$TTY

However, this problem does not arise if a source filename is not specified. In this case, the decoder assumes that the job input device is default and the job output device is also default.

4 SADAT FILE

It has been found that there is an incompatibility between the SACS command and the new command decoder that does not allow a SADAT file to be set up on other than the originator's project. The cause of this is known and will be corrected in the near future.

5 SNOBOL

The Snobol manual is now available from the Centre for the price of 50 cents. Snobol is on the LANG directory; to invoke it use the command

.LANG.SNOBOL p ,p ,p ,p ,p ,p

6 BASIC MANUAL

On page 7-8 of the Basic manual there is a typographical error. There should be an additional FOR statement

55 FOR J=1 TO D(2)

Also, the following coding added to the program, makes it more general

```
85     IF K<D(3) THEN 90  
86     PRINT V(FNA(I,J,K))  
87     GO TO 100
```

7 SUGGESTIONS

7.1 Program Catalogue

sug: The library catalogue should be compressed to delete trailing spaces so that listing it is cheaper.

rep: This has now been done. Not only have trailing spaces been removed, but multiple spaces have been converted to tabs. The original file has been compressed from 19K to 7K with a resulting saving in cost to the user trying to obtain his own copy. Thank you!

7.2 Publication of DEC Software

sug: Publish DEC's software news (e.g. predictions about new software releases) in the Bulletin so that users may obtain some idea as to what software DEC is likely to release in the future.

rep: The Centre does not favour the publication of details of all DEC future releases of software in the Bulletin. There are cases where these are not finally developed or available only after a considerable time delay. Also it is not always possible because of hardware or software constraints, for the Centre to implement all releases of DEC software. We intend however, to provide notice in the Bulletin, as early as possible, of the Centre's plans for hardware and software development and proposed releases.

7.3 DOC Files Available on Disk

sug: Put the DOC (documentation) files for new software on disk and allow users to list them - I refer to the DOC file for the latest version of Teco in particular.

rep: This would depend to some extent on the subject involved. Certainly in a case such as Teco, the DOC file could be made available for a couple of months and then removed as the demand for listing the file decreased. Such Doc file listings would usually be generally available anyway through the program librarian, although this is slightly slower than obtaining a direct listing yourself.

7.4 Teco Error Messages

sug: Change the standard option for error messages in Teco to give the short form error message. This would save a disk file lookup and processing; thus improving response.

rep: The practised user can obtain the short form of Teco error messages by typing 'lEH\$\$'. It is felt better, from the view point of new or casual users of Teco, to retain a more detailed form of error message as the default response.

7.5 Eliza

sug: How do you access Eliza?

rep: Eliza is accessed by saying:

(WORKER) HELLO<cr>

<cr>

after the program has responded initially with a carriage return. Because Eliza is written in a list processing language, all responses have to be terminated by two carriage returns. Information on the games on the system and the various library directories are now available in HELP.GAMES/HLP and HELP.LIBDIR/HLP.

7.6 Delete Command in Editor

sug: The Delete command in Editor should have a different brief form to the one in current use. The present brief form (D) can easily be misused as there is a command 'U' for up and its natural companion is down (real command NEXT). When this confusion occurs with users who do not know Editor very well, the results can be unwanted and sometimes disastrous, e.g. 'D *'. A suggested brief form for Delete is DEL which could not be confused with DOWN.

rep: The Centre appreciates that this can be very annoying for the inexperienced user, but past experience suggests that those who are used to 'D' as the abbreviation for Delete will complain if this is changed. Views from other users would be appreciated.

7.7 Login Queue

sug: Login should be facilitated to create a queue of terminals waiting to login. When a job becomes available, the

terminal at the head of the queue should be given the opportunity to login. If no response within seconds (say 5-10) that request should be deleted from the queue and the next on the queue be offered the job.

rep: While such a facility would be good, the Centre does not intend to provide a terminal queueing facility. The cost of another overhead job running the queue service when jobs are at a premium, or difficulties involved in making the monitor perform the queueing preclude such an idea. Although we appreciate the difficulties of waiting at a terminal to login, we believe that the enhancements now proposed to the system will appreciably improve the terminal service. The latest indication on delivery are that an additional 64K of 650 nanosecond core store should be operational by March 73.

7.8 Teletype Assignments

sug: Would it be possible to be able to assign TTY with more than one logical name?. This would be very handy for Fortran; e.g.

```
.AS $TTY=10
```

```
.AS $TTY=11
```

at the moment, the second assignment breaks the original one of \$TTY=10.

rep: While this could be useful, it is unfortunately not possible. The system allocates only one DDB (Device Data Block) to the teletype, and only one word in the DDB is allocated for the logical device name. Device data blocks are maintained by the system to give details of the characteristics of the device, required for the transmission of data to/from the device. The change from automatic 'assignment breakage' could also prove annoying to other users, since they would have to do a (currently) redundant DEASSIGN command.

7.9 Permission Message

sug: Can we have 'PERMISSION SET' rather than 'PERMISSION CHANGED'? Often, especially with PERMIT(m,n) ALL/ALL, there is no alteration of the original permission of all the files.

rep: 'PERMISSION SET' does not appear to be any better than 'PERMISSION CHANGED' since it implies that no permission was set in the first place. What about 'PERMITTING'? - any other suggestions?

7.10 Altmodes and Carriage Return

sug: On commands that are fully interpreted by Decode, a terminating altmode causes echo of a carriage return. On commands that are not fully handled by Decode, no carriage return is added.

Surely, if you are using altmodes as terminators, it is because you do not want the additional blank paper provided by the <cr><lf> combination. This is useful for example in 'DIR' commands, which provide their own leading <cr><lf> anyway.

rep: If an altmode is used as a delimiter, the command decoding algorithm does supply a <cr>. It is a matter of taste whether it should or not. Perhaps we could have some more comments.