

UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

Computer Centre

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

Date : Week ended 18 February 1971

Authorization : Director of the Computer Centre

1. OPERATIONS

1.1 PDP-10 System

Normal schedule : Maintenance 0700-0930
Timesharing 1000-1700
Batch 1000-2230

Friday 12 February Card reader and disk and system maintenance,
0930-1320
Monday 15 February Disk maintenance, 0930-1345
Tuesday 16 February Teletype controller off line, 1200-1215
Wednesday 17 February Teletype controller off line, 1135-1147
Disk read errors, reloaded monitor, 1300-1345
Thursday 18 February Disk read errors, 1040-1115
Disk read errors, 1430-1700

1.2 GE-225 System

Normal schedule : Maintenance 0700-0900
Operations 0900-2400

2. PDP-10 SYSTEM PROBLEMS

The problems experienced on the PDP-10 system over the past week have been due to an unprecedented number of hardware failures. Whenever possible, users have been advised and asked to log our from the system. On other occasions however, the system has stopped before a message could be sent.

In many cases, information in users' files on disk has been destroyed and it has been necessary to recover these files from backup storage before the system is again made available for processing.

The particular hardware failures experienced are ususally heralded by one of the messages:

SWAP READ ERROR
TRANSMISSION ERROR

Any user receiving one of these messages on his terminal is requested to phone the Centre immediately so that action can be taken to get all users off the system before information is lost.

3. COMPUTER SYSTEM STATUS SERVICE

The automatic telephone answering service that gives the Computer System Status (on extension 8101) has now been operating for approximatley two weeks and it appears that users have made good use of it.

In the event of a system crash, the Centre requests users to wait about 10 minutes before phoning the Service. This delay gives the Centre's staff a chance to try to determine the cause of the crash, decide on what remedial action is necessary, form some estimate of the likely time of resumption of service and record a suitable message.

It must be emphasized that times given for resumption of service after a fault are estimates only. When any piece of complex equipment breaks down, it is impossible to say exactly how long it will take to trace the fault and effect a repair. A computer is no exception. Thus, as work progresses, the estimated time of availability will be revised.

In these circumstances, users are requested to contact the Status Service before attempting to log in again and check on availability.