SESSION XI DECSIG

DORIS AARONSON, *New York University, President*

DEC Users' Group Report

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DEC users discussed ways to improve communications among users, including the initiation of a newsletter. Also, new products of special interest to psychologists were described by the DEC representative present at the meeting.

COMMUNICATION AMONG DEC-USERS

The discussion focused on ways to facilitate communication among DEC users and to increase the value of communication in meeting the users' needs. The users present completed a questionnaire on their laboratory's hardware, software, personnel, and research functions. During the coming year, we plan to publish the results of this survey in a bimonthly DECSIG Newsletter. It was suggested that the Newsletter should focus on individual users' solutions to hardware and software problems that may be common to others doing computer-based psychology research. For example, one person present requested information on problems (and solutions) regarding a computer lab he was soon to set up in a truck that could be driven to the locations of his experimental subjects. The group was in favor of rapid distribution of information with little or no editing (as that would slow up distribution). The Newsletter might contain the names and phone numbers for a "hot-line" set of experts on particular areas of hardware and software. It was also suggested that the Newsletter might aid in setting up a "big brother" or "computer friends" system for new computer users. The Newsletter would include both "want-ads" from users who need information on specific problems and brief reports from users who have solved various hardware and software problems. To implement these ideas, it was suggested that each brief user report be mimeo-

graphed, xeroxed, or offset by the author and sent to an editor-coordinator who would send out the reports from several authors along with other news items whenever enough was accumulated to warrant a mailing. One person in the group offered to prepare mailing labels. Several suggestions were made to cover costs of a Newsletter, including commercial ads, user dues, and the On-Line Conference treasury. To start the communication rolling, a roster of DEC psychology users was distributed. Anyone wanting a copy should write or call Doris Aaronson (212-598-7668); DEC users who were not at the meeting should write or call Jerry C. Forshee (812-337-6122 or 812-337-1768) for a questionnaire, so that they will be included in information-exchange programs among users with similar needs.

DECSIG ADMINISTRATION

The steering committee of the National Conference has appointed Jerry C. Forshee as the new DEC Users' Group Chairman. He is interested in receiving the users' suggestions for DECSIG communications during the year and their ideas for the DECSIG session at next fall's On-Line Conference. Users should write or call him regarding DEC-relevant papers or symposia for the Conference, or if they want to write something for the Newsletter, to help in editorial or distribution work, or to be on the Newsletter mailing list.

COMMUNICATION WITH DEC REPRESENTATIVES

DEC was officially represented at the Conference by

Sixth annual meeting of the National Conference on the Use of On-Line Computers in Psychology, November 10, 1976.

Steve Mullen. He is a psychologist who has a good knowledge of PDP-11, 12, and 8 hardware and software. He is a part of a special section DEC has set up on applications in "Behavioral and Life Sciences." Any users wanting help with DEC-related problems may call or write Steve Mullen at 200 Forrest Street, Marlboro, Massachusetts 01752 (617-481-9511, ext. 6943; tell the DEC operator you want the Marlboro office). Mullen is now primarily concerned with the PDP-11 series and reports that DEC will soon have a specialist on 12-bit machines also assigned to behavioral applications. Mullen reported to us on recent and

future hardware and software development, including displays, floppy disks, faster memory and floating point processors, communication among machines via DECnet, updates and new documentation on operating systems. Anyone who discovers specific problems with DEC software or documentation is encouraged to write or call Mullen with information that might be included in published updates that could help other users. Users reported good relations with Mullen during the past year. He is responsive to user needs and returns calls promptly when messages are left at times when he is out of the office.