Networking: The Linking of People, Resources and Ideas

Greetings:

The CUSS network is being well received and now has over 350 members. Although a small minority (10%) have contributed money, if the network is to survive, we will need more member contributions to cover expenses. Some members reported receiving letters and packets of information, so it looks as if the network is working.

The initial picture that emerges from your activities is that many of you are interested in and are actually applying computer technology to practice (direct service, administration, policy planning or research). Many agencies are on the verge of computerization or in the initial phases. Since relatively little long term experience (2 + years) or research exists, the skills bank being developed by Gunther Geiss (see member activities) should become a valuable network function.

My feeling is that computerization is a specialty where knowledge and experience must replace the traditional "common sense" approach. This is true for several reasons, the first being the newness, complexity, and the rapid change that is occurring in the field. Second, the terminology and concepts of computers and information systems are as foreign to human service professionals as human service terminology and concepts are to computer scientists and systems analysts. Finally, computerization is a touchy subject that brings agency staff into areas where trust, power, territory, personal advancement, etc., have not been discussed or defined.

Communications is thus the key, but those who know are often reluctant to freely give away expertise which took much time and effort to accumulate. The network contains many willing to share some of their expertise, so send information on what you have done and what you are struggling with. Someone may be able to tell you how they handled the same situation, or someone may need your help in getting to your present level of development.

Most members have expertise to offer, but too often human service personnel focus on hardware and software and play down other equally important areas. For example, one of the most difficult problems a human service agency must face is determining what information to computerize. Thus, even though you may know little about computers, knowledge of your agency's information needs may be extremely helpful to other

members. I am pleased this newsletter contains reports from people who are struggling with information requirements issues in a variety of settings, e.g, alcoholism, vocational rehabilitation, mental health, education, etc.

I have exchanged mailing lists with Marc Schwartz, editor of Computers in Psychiatry/Psychology (CP/P). CP/P subscribers who want to continue to receive this newsletter should mail in the form at the bottom of this page. CUSS network members may be receiving something from CP/P in the near future or you can write CP/P at 26 Trumbull St., New Haven, CT 06511 for a sample issue. Anyone who doesn't want their name used in such exchanges should let me know.

Again, suggestions on where the network should be going and what needs it should be serving are welcome. Should vendor product descriptions be included? Should vendors be encouraged to sponsor the newsletter with advertising? I'm inclined to include objective descriptions of vendor products which have relevance to members, and also to seek advertising. Any thoughts? Anyone want to sponsor the next issue by defraying some of the costs?

Keep the activities, interests, resources, and contributions coming for the Spring issue, and recycle this issue to an interested friend. Thanks for your support.

Dick Schoech, Coordinator/editor, 1 Oct. 81

Conference Reports

American Psychiatric Association (From Marc Schwartz, Editor, Computers in Psychiatry/Psychology, 26 Trumbull St., New Haven, Ct. 06511) Reprinted from Computers in Psychiatry/Psychology, July-August 1981, p. 1.

The meetings of the American Psychiatric Association in New Orleans gave evidence of a rapid and considerable interest in the use of computers. The continuing education course on computers filled its enrollment within a few days, was one of the first to fill up, and was greatly oversubscribed.

Five speakers addressed an interested audience of 75 or so, then broke up into three special interest groups on micros and minis for individual use, minis for institutional or group practice use, and large mainframes for multi-state systems. The majority of attendees opted for the micro/mini session and spent a good deal of time discussing how a neophyte can most safely get started. An article in this issue of CP/P looks at the results of the CP/P user survey and addresses this situation.

The most heated part of the session centered on the use of computers for testing, with one speaker making the point that computers in

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I wish to join the network. (Institutional memberships are welcomed)

Name: _____

Occupation: _____

Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Contribution: A $5 - $10 contribution will cover expenses. Make checks payable to CUSS Network, and send to: Dick Schoech, UTA GSSW, Box 19129, Arlington, Texas 76019. (Attach your ideas, interests, needs, experiences, etc.)

general can score tests well but require sophisticated programming, considerable knowledge of test interpretation, and a lot of memory to provide meaningful findings.

Another point that emrged in the micro/mini group was that a few vendors of software in psychiatry/psychology have announced products prior to their completion. It turns out that getting through the last nine yards completing bug-free, commercial quality computer software required much more time and money than most new authors anticipate. Murphy begins burning the midnight vinegar.

After months of user anticipating and planning, sometimes the product never does reach the market. It seems prudent to carefully examine documentation and speak to other users before agonizing about whether to buy a non-existent product.

Use of Computers in Social Welfare Workshop (From Ronald Kushner, 51 - 15 63rd St., Woodside, NY 11377).

In the summer issue, you asked for further information on the one day workshop in New York on the "Use of Computers in Social Welfare." Since I was one of the co-presenters (with Myron Weiner of the University of Connecticut School of Social Work), I am happy to report on it.

The conference was held on May 16, 1981 at the Hunter College School of Social Work under the sponsorship of the Center for the Study of Social Administration. CSSA is a private, not-for-profit organization whose basic aim is to improve the management of social organizations and operates out of Hunter. Harold Weissman is the Executive Director.

The conference was attended by 38 people, mostly from the New York City area, although there were attendees from as far away as Maryland and Virginia. It was intended primarily for Social Welfare administrators with little or no direct knowledge or experience in implementing or working with computerized systems. The attendees were largely from this group, although there were some attendees (primarily from academic environments) who were fairly knowledgable. The attendees were from government agencies, private agencies, hospitals, academia and consulting.

The day consisted of three focuses:

1. Technical information about computers including what they are, how they work, the relationship between hardware and software, and the system development process.

2. Ways in which computers are and can be used in social welfare settings.

3. Issues that a non-technical manager needs to concern himself with in planning for and using computerized systems in his agency.

As part of 2, above, four representatives of companies that provide services in the social welfare area made presentations and provided demonstrations/discussions of some of the services they provide. There were ACPI Creative Socio-Medics, IBM, and Info Med.

Based on the evaluation forms that were completed by attendees at the end of the day, the response was very favorable. I am attaching a copy of the Summary of Evaluations to give you an idea of the participants' perceptions of its usefulness.

Because of the succes of the first conference, a similar one is planned for Saturday, December 5, 1981. Anyone interested should contact:

A. E. Dreyfuss
Center for the Study of Social Administration
Hunter College School of Social Work
129 East 79th Street
New York, NY 10021
Tel: (212) 570-5499

Let me know if you would like any more information about what we have done, or any ideas you may have on what can be done to improve its usefulness.

Another Report on the Same Workshop (From Gunther R. Geiss, School of Social Work, Adelphi U., Garden City, NY 11530).

The Conference was aimed at introducing agency staff to the world of computing. The primary mode used was presentation by the two lecturers, with brief presentations by a computer vendor, a software consultant, and two human service computer service bureaus. The Conference also provided a display, demonstration and discussion area for the vendors and consultants.

Attendees had a wide range of computer awareness which ranged from those who were curious but had no real exposure to or contact with computers, to those whose agencies actively use computers and a few who have done programming. A quick survey via self description showed a 50-50 split on novice vs. experienced users and public vs. private auspices. Lectures provided insight into hardware and software via discussion, displays of microprocessor chips and other electronic paraphenalia, and exercises in the basics of problem solving and programming. lecturers and vendors discussed the more complex issues of systems design; rental vs. lease vs. purchase; and how to relate to and deal with consultants, software vendors, service bureaus and time share vendors, and hardware vendors.

Specific subunits of the presentations, in order, were:

The Setting: Modern Technology and Social Welfare
Functions of Computers — What They Do
How is a System Put Together
Uses of Computers in Social Welfare
Vendors Presentations
Lunch and Demonstrations
Planning for Computerization
Computers' Impact on the Organization
On-going Operations: Management Concerns

Member Activities

My Interests (From Dick Schoech, newsletter coordinator/editor).
My interests remain the same: information requirements, decision support, small systems and teaching. I would like to hear from members who have experience using an agency microcomputer DBMS, or experience in distributed microcomputer systems.

I presented three 2 day workshops this summer for the Texas Department of Human Resources (Title XX agency) on "Understanding Computerized Information Systems." The workshops presented basic concepts, involved a field trip to a well-developed information system in the community, and allowed participants to design an action plan to improve their present system. The participants were diverse in terms of age, agency position, and computing knowledge and experience. Their enthusiasm and eagerness to learn made the workshops a pleasure and the evaluations were very positive. I will deliver this or a similar workshop to any interested agency for expenses, the cost of materials, and a nominal fee. Anyone interested should write or call for more details.

Skills Bank and Field Work Information System (From Gunther Geiss, Adelphi U., School of Social Work, Garden City, Long Island, NY 11530.

A skills bank to track and communicate with individuals with expertise in computers and human services has been formed. If you or a colleague are interested in participating in this expertise pool, and especially if you can furnish leads to non-academic expertise users, contact me by mail or phone (516 - 489-2000 X 8083). This pool will add to the activities of the CUSS Network by facilitating contacts with colleagues who have specific interests, experiences, activities, or abilities. The expertise pool will be published periodically in this newsletter. Inquiries can be answered if you are seeking an individual or group with specific expertise.

Colleagues with interest and/or experience in developing and operating field work (internship) information systems are being sought to form an information exchange group. Our system will include data on students, agencies, field instructors, faculty advisors, evaluation reports, etc. It will provide historical trend data as well as current data; and is aimed at decision support now, with an ultimate goal of making some assignments automatically. The system is being designed for implementation on a Burroughs B6800 mainframe with interface and local computing power provided by an Intertec Data Systems Compu-Star VDU-30 microcomputer. The information is based on relational data base principles. We would be particularly interested in experience with designing or operating such a system; and any experience with mainframe or microcomputer data base management software.

An Extensive CMHC System (From Ed Lakeman, Mobile Co. Community Mental Health Services, Inc., 2400 Gordon Smith Dr., Mobile, AL 36617.

We have an extensive program system for a comprehensive community mental health center including Management Information System, Personnel Management System, outcome evaluation system and a complete financial package including cost analysis, AP/AR, General Ledger, chart of accounts, etc.

We have an IBM Systems 34 with 7 in-house terminals, one remote, a main printer and two matrix printers. We serve about 5,000 clients a year with about 175 staff and a budget of $3.2 M (thus far, anyway).

Our software is in RPGII and we have marketed it a couple of times if anyone is interested.

I'll be interested in hearing about other human services users.

Agency/Worker Information Requirements: Hemispheric Dominance & Decision Making (From Lawrence L. Schkade, The U. of Texas at Arlington — Systems Analysis, Arlington, TX 76019 - 0437).

Two interests relevant to human services computing are of special interest. The first is the identification and classification of the types of information needed for decision making in human service agencies, especially documentation on the types and patterns of activities or information processing transactions that occur at the direct service level. Second, I am presently researching the relationship of brain hemisphere dominance and decision making, with special application to the use of computerized information in decision making. I welcome correspondence on either of these topics.

Suggestions Needed for Audio-Visual-Electronic Teaching setup (From Ray Koleski, Indiana U., School of Social Work, 925 W. Michigan St., Indianapolis, IN 46202

It was a very pleasant surprise to get Volume I, Summer, 1981 of the CUSS Network newsletter. I thought all of the information to be so valuable that I am sending you a check and want to be a recipient of future editions.

Dr. Jerry Powers and I, who are both on the faculty at Indiana University School of Social Work, each own an Apple II Plus. Both of us have used the Plato terminal here on our campus from time to time with students. So, the newsletter was very welcome.

The Indiana University School of Social Work is going into a new building on January 1st. There are some additional possibilities of adding computer facilities in our audio-visual-electronic setup. If you have any suggestions about terminals and the like, please pass them along.

Electronic Journal (From Michael J. Gorodezky, Human Services Computing, Inc., 2020 University Ave., Madison, WI 53705).

Enclosed are some articles regarding the development of an electronic journal. I have also enclosed a bit of local correspondence which summarizes my own ideas.

Dr. F. W. Lancaster who wrote *Toward Paperless Information Systems* (Academic Press: N.Y., 1978) has written some of the best on the subject. Dr. Lancaster has written a proposal to the National Library of Medicine to develop and evaluate an electronic journal. However, the proposal was rejected. He generously shared his proposal and the reviewer's comments with me.

I visited with Dr. Lancaster in his office at the Champagne-Urbane campus of the University of Illinois. To summarize our discussion, we both agreed that it is only a matter of a few years. Publishers will soon cease producing hard copy of frequently revised reference books. The major obstacle to developing a journal seems to be with authors. The problem (you may want to test this with your colleagues) is that most authors seek publications in established journals. Therefore, the start-up of such an apparently radical approach to publishing will need to be marketed to authors as well as readers.

My own attempts to establish a journal by using our MIP automated bibliography have been unsuccessful to date. In time I might have been successful had I secured grant support. Dr. Lancaster remains interested and I believe would have collaborated possibly as a system evaluator (he did an evaluation of MEDLARS).

For now I am unaware of current plans for an electronic journal anywhere. Although, I am sure others have concluded that it makes sense. Mostly, it is a matter of timing. The trick is to be among the first without being too early. One idea I have toyed with is to approach major publishers to seek their financial help and publishing expertise.

Meanwhile, I am leaving MIP to begin working with Human Services Computing, Inc. of Madison, Wisconsin. John Greist, M.D. is one of the principles with HSC. The company offers both time-sharing ports and data base management systems as well as automated interviews, bibliographic systems, text editing systems which may be purchased outright. This is a MUMPS system with current users in primarily mental health and health settings. Hopefully, you'll be hearing about our products. Since the corporation work parallels a good bit of your own writing, you may wish to read more about HSC. If so, drop me a note and I'll send you more details about the software and operating environments.

(Editors Note: I have discussed with several Network members the possibility of putting parts of this network on computer for on-line access via terminal and modem, but long distance rates and set up costs are limitations at present. Any ideas on this subject would be welcome).

Child Welfare System (From Fred Robertson, Harris Co. Child Welfare, 4040 Milam, Suite 301, Houston, TX 77006).

I obtained a copy of your CUSS Network Newsletter at the recent APWA Information Systems Management Conference in San Antonio. I am very interested in the sharing of ideas and experiences proposed by your Newsletter.

I have been involved for two years in developing a local MIS for Harris County Child Welfare in Houston. I have enclosed a brief summary of the basic approach we have taken. The original system design was completed with the help of Arthur Andersen & Co. We are using a Cyber 170 mainframe through a contract with Region IV Education Service Center in Houston. Our Client Reporting and Information Management System (CRIMS) is programmed in Cobol using total system software.

We became operational on April 10, 1981, with case and client data entry. The tracking of placements of foster care children is being implemented during September. The initiation of unit level reports will begin in October, 1981.

I was very intrigued that the APWA conference did not address the information needs of front line staff in social service delivery. The main questions addressed were related to state and federal reporting requirements. I firmly believe that the future value of computerization must be firmly based on the analysis of the needs of social service delivery staff and management staff involved in the day to day delivery of social services.

Enclosed please fine a check to help with CUSS. I'm looking forward to your next issue.

Generalized Microcomputer System & Other Services (From James B. Taylor, Human Services Institute, POB 1388, Lawrence, Ks. 66044).

Thanks for the initial copy of the newsletter. A check is enclosed as a contribution.

You and your readers may be interested in HSI's work with computer and microcomputer applications. HSI itself is a consortium of university-based consultants which offers a number of services to human service agencies. Members of our group have presented several workshops on microcomputer applications, most recently in June at the San Francisco meeting of the National Conference on Social Welfare, and in July (through KU) in Kansas City. We consult with agencies on MIS development and on microcomputer implementation. Several publications have resulted (see Resources secton). We are currently developing software for a generalized client information system, designed to meet the needs of a variety of agencies, utilizing the TRS 80.

Re your interest in therapy and counseling applications: Are you familiar with Joseph Waldron's work on automated testing? His group has developed (or is developing) microcomputer software for a variety of mental health applications — MMPI; neurological screening, 16-PF; an appointment, billing and scheduling package, etc. I note that he is not listed among your members. If you should wish to contact him, the address is —

Interactive
79 N. Broad St.
Canfield, OH 44406.

And, as you probably know, Radio Shack has recently released a turnkey package for physician's offices which can be adapted to the needs of a small community mental health clinic.

(Editor's Note: Could someone who has used the Radio Shack package write a brief critique? It sounds like it has possibilities, but my limited experience with Radio Shack software has not been too positive).

Automated Human Service Organization Lab (From Walter LaMendola, East Carolina U. — Allied Health and Social Professions, Greenville, NC 27834).

I just ran across your letter announcing a *Network in Computer Use in Social Services* and am extremely pleased. I would like to receive copies of the newsletter and would send you a donation if you could let me know how much you need.

I have recently joined the faculty here and am responsible to set up, develop, a Human Service Organization Laboratory. The lab will incorporate automated techniques in problem solving, utilizing programmable calculators, self standing microcomputers, and terminals to host computers both on and off campus. We are presently establishing field sites and have continued the field testing and development of the Human Service System programs that I developed at MRT, Inc. Last month I did a workshop for the State of North Carolina, which was geared to the Community Mental Health Centers here, entitled "Automating Mental Health Information Systems". The afternoon discussion revolved around the need for a network such as you have initiated. I

will be conducting a survey of the mental health centers this fall and will inform them of your work then.

I am working on an article which covers some of my experiences while Exec of MRT, entitled "Woe, pioneers!" and I will send you a draft to enjoy when I get it done.

Post Doctoral Fellow Program (From James Hedlund, U of Missouri Institute of Psychiatry, 5400 Arsenal St., St. Louis, MO 63139).

Three Post Doctoral Fellowships in mental health computer applications will be available at the Missouri Institute of Psychiatry (MIP), St. Louis, Missouri, beginning in the Fall of 1981. MIP is a part of the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Medicine. The fellowships will involve planning and conducting research-and-development concerning clinical computer applications in the field of mental health. Minimal qualifications include a Doctoral degree in a discipline related to mental health, with some experience in clinical and/or community programs. Some experience with mental health computer applications and/or minicomputers is desirable.

These fellowships will be conducted under the supervision of the Mental Health Systems Research Unit (MHSRU), in collaboration with the Department of Psychiatry and the School of Medicine's Information Sciences Group at Columbia, Missouri. It is anticipated that an MHSRU emphasis over the next several years will be the development of a minicomputer laboratory, with specialized research concerning clinical computer applications that could have a significant impact on decision making, delivery of services, and evaluation in mental health. An application area of special interest at the present time has to do with the development of computer "counseling" applications based on cognitive and educational principles.

The MHSRU, which has over one hundred publications concerning mental health computer applications, also conducts research and development concerning the Missouri Department of Mental Health's, state-wide automated mental health information system. This includes the conceptualization, back-up research, and consultation concerning the development and use of sophistsicated clinical data collection instruments, clinical prediction models, the monitoring, documentation and evaluation of patient care, and empirically derived professional standards of care. It also includes the conduct of clinical research closely related to and making use of the large DMH automated patient data base.

Twelve-month salary ranges from $13,380 to $17,040, depending on number of years of relevant experience. Starting date is open. Fellowships are generally for two years.

Potential applicants should send a Vita and letter of application that outlines specific interests and relevant experience.

Computer Aided Instruction (From Max Siporin, State University of New York — Social Welfare, Richardson Hall, 135 Western Ave., Albany, NY 12222).

I am very much interested to learn about the CUSS Network. Enclosed is my contribution to speed your work. I have an IMS 5000 system, which I use for my writing, but am eager for any materials or guides to the use of CAI for social work methods courses in particular. I would be glad to try out and respond to whatever material along these lines that you or anyone else would care to send me, and to share whatever materials we get to develop here.

I have had to spend several hundred hours of wasted and frustrating effort to achieve my present state of comfort in using my system for my writing. Even our Computer Center people could not help with the various problems I encountered. Some of this had to do with communication with our Univac, and some with the use of my particular equipment. The varied books on the market are not very helpful, and the lack of standardization for 5¼" systems in particular add much difficulty. The material I have seen on networks also are not encouraging so far for 5¼" systems. Some guidelines to the membership about these kinds of considerations would be helpful.

Evaluation and Management Information Systems (From Baila Miller, United Way, 72 W. Adams St., Chicago, IL 60603).

A friend recently showed me a copy of the Computer Use in Social Service Networks. I am currently working as a program consultant at the United Way of Metropolitan Chicago and am interested in evaluation and management information systems. I would like to see greater use made of computer capabilities in social services and am interested in contacting others who share these interests. Please add me to the network's mailing list.

DOPE May Live (From Leonard Gibbs, University of Wisconsin, Social Work Department, Eau Claire, Wisconsin 54701).

Enclosed is a contribution that I may continue to receive the *Computer Use in Social Services Network.* I think your publication will gain wide acceptance. The response may be surprisingly positive.

You may recall that we sent you a copy of a manuscript titled "Computer-Assisted Clinical Decision Making" that was an evaluation of the Databank of Program Evaluations (DOPE) in an undergraduate field-work methods course. At the time I sent you the manuscript, I thought that DOPE might be dead. It turns out that the Control Data Corporation in Minneapolis is very interested in continuing an abstract system like DOPE or DOPE itself. Now would be a very good time to express an interest in the Databank of Program Evaluations and some kind of abstract retrieval system for evaluation research for clinicians who apply social science knowledge in their work. I understand that the people at Control Data Corporation will be making a decision about such an abstract retrieval system sometime this fall. Howie Tolkinen (5001) W. 80th St., Suite 220, Blooming, MN, 55437, Tel. 612 - 830-6932) would be the one to contact.

CMHC Information System (From Jerry Cinani, Lancaster Co. CMHC, 2200 St. Mary's Ave., Lincoln, NE 68502).

I'm involved in the management of an automated MIS operated by a DEC pdp 11/23 with an RSX-IIm operating system, a datatrieve database management utility and BMD statistical package.

Computer — User Interface (From Norma Feinberg, Duquesne University, Sociology 515 College Hall, Pittsburg, PA 15219).

My area of expertise lies in the interfacing of computer knowledge and skills with human service uses. For many years, 1961 to 1977, I was the resource person in the School of Social Work University of Pittsburgh who worked with students and faculty in this capacity. I taught at the School of Social Work, Marywood College following Graduation. For the past year I have been working in the area of juvenile delinquency creating national data archives, management information systems for juvenile courts, and other areas of quantitative analysis developing additional skills that might assist social workers interested in doing secondary analysis or utilize archival data.

I will be teaching at Duquesne University this fall in the Sociology and Human Services department. The University has recently purchased a new hardware system and software very familiar to me. I will probably be very involved in the stages of development for this also.

News Source from The Washington Area (From Ying-Ying Yuan, 10624 Wayridge Dr., Gaithersburg, MD 20869).

I think that the network and the newsletter are both excellent ideas which will be of benefit to many. I will pass the announcement on to others in the Washington area. I will be glad to provide the network with news from the Federal arena and look forward to receiving the newsletter.

Conversational Data Analysis Program for Micros (From Richard Gorsuch, Fuller Theological Seminary — Psychology, 177 N. Madison Ave., Pasadena, CA 91101).

I'm glad to hear of your continuing interest with micro-computers, etc. Perhaps the following may be of interest for your newsletter:

CDAP: the Conversational Data Analysis Program is currently running on PBP 11's and APPLE II plus computers having a minimum of 48K space and one disc drive. The program is designed to be simple to use, requiring no manual, and to provide an appropriate statistical analysis for either nominal or other variables. Depending upon the nature of variables, a chi square, a multiple regression, an ANOVA, or a multiple regression analysis is automatically computed. The user need only specify whether the variables are nominal or continuous, give the data for each case, and indicate what the independent and dependent variables are. The program then picks appropriate analysis and provides the statistical analysis. Means, standard deviations, number of subjects at each level of the nominal variables, and correlations among other variables are also provided. No background or prior instruction is needed to run the program, nor is a manual necessary since the program provides all necessary directions for the user at each step.

Computer Use in Juvenile Court Research (From Joseph Zefran, 4918 N. Hamilton, Chicago, IL 60625).

I am currently employed by the Juvenile Court of Cook County as a researcher. I am also very interested in better use of computers in the social service field. I will send some of my work (what little there is so far) at a later date. I am hopeful of doing more work here at the juvenile court with the computer, but am still involved in selling the benefits to the administration.

Varied Interests (From F. Dean Luse, 119 Wilson, Park Forest, IL 60466).

My interests are in information systems, simulation, attitude measurement, research, and computer aided decision systems.

Struggling With the Same Problems (From Judith Glading, Human Services Planning Data Bank, University of Connecticut — Social Work, 1800 Asylum Ave., West Hartford, CT 06117).

Enclosed is a check to insure that I continue getting the CUSS Network Newsletter. I find it very interesting to hear of others struggling with the same problems.

One resource I have found invaluable is a SHARE document "Microcomputer Applications in Human Service Agenices" available free from Project Share, PO Box 2309, Rockville, MD 20852. It has a very good introduction to what a micro is and what it can do, as well as a realistic picture of the advantages and disadvantages of automation. Guidelines are given to help an agency think through the question: do I really need a computer?

Small Systems Software (From Joseph Spatafora, Suncoast Micro-Systems, 6219 13th Ave. S., Gulfport, FL 33707).

Finally!! A network for contacts with human services EDP interface. Our primary interest is new generation micros and system software affordable to small to mid-sized private, non profit organizations. I will write within the next few days/weeks describing our organization's needs, wants, and capabilities.

DBMS For Micros. (From James Norman, Condor Computer Corp., POB 8318, 3889 Research Park Dr., Ann Arbor, MI 48104).

I read your first issue of CUSS network newsletter with considerable interest. Significant interest appears throughout the newsletter on use of computers in the Social Services area, and you indicated, "the biggest problem area confronted seemed finding a good database software package that is easy to use and has adequate vendor training and support."

Condor Computer markets a relational database system which meets all your requirements. It is very easy to learn, since the relational structure permits a view of data as a table, rather than a network or hierarchy, and is made easier to visualize. The commands are very "English language" oriented. The User's Manual has been described as one of the easiest to understand and learn from.

We have significant experience in the human services area. Our CETA Management System is in use by a number of agencies throughout the United States. A Financial Management package, presently tailored for CETA agencies could be adapted to the needs of other nonprofit agencies for grants management.

Drug Prevention Resource Bank. (From Louisa Messolonghites, 7101 Wisconsin Ave., Suite 1006, Bethesda, MD 20014).

Prevention Resources is a quarterly publication of the Pyramid Project for the National Institute on Drug Abuse, Prevention Branch. It reaches about 15,000 professional and program people in the field of substance abuse prevention and related disciplines.

This information sharing service has been found very useful by a broad spectrum of prevention practitioners in the social and health services. If you would like to receive our publication, please let us know.

Systems for Long Term Care. (From Jack Habib, Brookdale Institute, POB 13087, Jerusalem, Israel).

Congratulations on your first edition. I am finding it very helpful. Enclosed is my contribution to the network's financial stability.

I will be teaching a course on information systems in social work this fall and will be working with the Social Welfare Ministry in Israel in developing an information system for the local welfare agencies. We shall be reviewing some of the systems developed in England and I strongly recommend the book *Ends and Means in Social Work* by Matilda Goldberg available from Allen and Unwin which evaluates the introduction of an information system for social work.

Two broad issues of particular interest to use are: what are the kinds of uses to which information can be put?; what are the conflicts that arise in designing systems to serve providers as opposed to managers as opposed to providers?

At the Brookdale Institute in Jerusalem with which I am associated a group of us will be working on an information system for the system of long-term care for the elderly and disabled.

We are very interested in an exchange of materials in these areas with other groups.

Information & Referral Systems (From Karen Haynes, Indiana University — Social Work, 1127 Atwater, Bloomington, IL 47405).

I am in receipt of your letter on "Computer Use in Social Services Network" and would definitely like to be on the mailing list. I'm not sure about the type of information you would want for your network, but I am attaching several flyers generally describing Information and Referral: The Journal of the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems and the forthcoming special issue on Health and I & R.

My interests, experiences, and expertise relative to computers are: 1. their use (current and future) relative to human resource and client information systems; and 2. client and management information systems and their use for program evaluation.

Please put me on the network mailing list and share any information about the Journal you think your readers would be interested in. We are in our third volume year and have published several articles directly related to computerization. (See Rources Section).

The Apple II Plus: My Most Useful Friend (From Coleen Shannon, The University of Texas at Arlington — Social Work, POB 19129, Arlington, TX 76019-0129).

After purchasing my Apple in January, I found that it quickly became my most helpful friend and will shortly become indispensible. So far the Apple has served me in the following ways."

1. As a terminal for the University's IBM 4341, allowing me to work on a project day or night from home,

2. As a word processor which also checks spelling (hooray!),

3. As a simple calculator,

4. As an independent computer to analyze data from small projects where the big mainframe is not needed,

5. As a teacher's aid by figuring grades, averages, etc.

6. As a personal data bank by storing information for income tax, schedules, etc.

7. As a communication vehicle by accessing my subscription the "Source" a communication network which gives me information for both work and leisure, and

8. As a source of recreation (games can be fun, especially while waiting for your program to run).

I'm sure that anyone reading this newsletter is already convinced that computers are necessary. However, the surprise for me is how friendly and helpful my Apple really is. It is always polite and never gets angry, no matter what time I come home.

Uniting Practitioners and Educators (From Lynn Harold Vogel, School of Social Service Administration, University of Chicago, 969 E. 16th St., Chicago, IL 60637).

I have just received a copy of the CUSS Network Newsletter, and have enclosed my contribution to join the network. I found the comments in the initial issue to be very informative and educational, and applaud your efforts to initiate this type of project.

I am the Chairperson of a new program in Human Services Management here at the School of Social Service Administration. We have received a grant from the Field Foundation of Illinois to get the program underway, and have been able to develop several management courses as a result. In addition we are exploring the development of a mid-level part time program in management. The development and use of information systems and the use of computers more generally, are of course a part of social services education, although I think that many educational programs are behind current developments in the field. I am working to involve more practitioners in our educational program to help alleviate this problem. I think that the CUSS Network is an excellent tool to facilitate communication between educators and practitioners.

Please add my name to your list for future mailings, and I would be happy to assist in other ways if the organization moves beyond the newsletter to other activities.

Computer Based Information for Program Evaluation (From Rob Ziffer, Philadelphia Child Guidance Clinic, Two Children's Center., 34th & Civic Center Blvd., Philadelphia, PA 19104).

Our agency is just in the preliminary phases of investigating how we can best utilize computer based information for program evaluation, and I will be happy to send information to you once our plan is finalized.

Biofeedback & Brain Research Using Interlocking Digital Converters (From Steve Whittaker, Central Utah Mental Health Center, 201 E. 500 N., Richfield, UT 84701).

I have acquired for our Center a Data General Nova 312 CPU with ten megabyte hard-disk drive and dual floppy disk drives. Our operating system is a Data General RDOS system. Currently we are developing accounts receivable and accounts payable packages. We hope to be

expanding into more interesting fields such as biofeedback and some brain research using interlocking digital converters.

TRS-80 Case Management, Budgeting & Community Bulletin Board (From Richard Williamson, 5200 S. Buckner, Dallas, TX 75227).

I presently have a TRS-80 model I, 48K, 2 disk system with a Centronics 781 U/L intelligent printer and a Lynx Auto answer/dial modem. My skills in BASIC programming are moderate. I'm interested in using micros to increase efficiency and effectiveness in residential treatment for children and youth. Specifically, I've begun using my computer to:

1. Assist in direct service case management by using daily individualized form memos to target specific client behaviors for observation, intervention & measurement. This process also provides documentation and a data base for periodic program evaluation.
2. Facilitate simultaneous client, staff, family, and school written communications. This too is accomplished through individualized form letters (extra-special delivery)
3. Assist in budget planning/management
4. Assist in inventory management
5. Assist in preventative maintenance schedules
6. Recently, I've begun exploring the possibility of operating a private single-issue computerized community bulletin board. This board would serve professional communication needs of youth serving professionals. Also, it could be a method of distributing basic training to paraprofessionals in the Dallas/Ft. Worth youth service agencies.

From Charles L. Rustici (Community Mental Health Center, Holy Spirit Hospital, N. 21st St., Camp Hill, PA 17011).

Please send me further information on the network. Our institution is in the process of going computer.

Installing a Vendor System (From Rob Guttenplan, Mental Health Resources, Inc., 300 S. 2nd, Tucumcari, NM 88401).

Mental Health Resources, Inc. is a community mental health center serving a seven-county catchment area in Eastern New Mexico. We have recently purchased a computer through Confidential Data Services in Lakewood, Colorado. The hardware is the TI990 system and the software comes from CDS. Installation of the system has been scheduled for the last week in September, 1981.

27 County Alcohol Data Collection and Client Follow-up Project (From Mark Godley, Alcohol Counseling Services, POB 365, 1305 W. Main, Marion Il. 62959).

In conjunction with the Region 5 office of the Illinois Department of Mental Health, I am implementing a region wide data collection and client follow-up project. This project involves 27 counties, 9 grant-in-aid community mental health centers, and the use of state operated computing facilities at the regional office.

Eighteen month follow-up data will be collected for outpatient alcoholic clients. Raw data will be collected and sent to the regional office to be entered, and outpatient follow-up summaries will be available on a quarterly basis.

I am interested in hearing about other people's experiences with data processing services in client services and would be happy to provide a more detailed summary of our project.

Need Suggestions on a Information/Evaluation Data System (From Barbara Monsor, Youth Guidance, 53 W. Jackson Bldg., Chicago, IL 60604).

The Social Services Network Summer publication came to my attention through the Chicago United Way.

I am responsible for research and statistics for Youth Guidance, a private welfare agency with a program in the Chicago Public Schools. We have developed an information/evaluation data gathering system and want to computerize. To time share or buy is the question? We hope to get help with this decision from some of the participants in your network, particularly PPRO at Irvine. It would be great to get some success/horror stories from other networkers before we take the plunge.

TRS-80 in a Vocational Rehabilitation Co. (From Dan Cohen, 216-05 47th Ave., Bayside, NY 11361).

I was excited to learn from Gunther Geiss of your "Computer Users in Social Service" newsletter. Enclosed is a contribution to include me on your membership roster. Also, if at all possible I would like to receive a copy of all back issues.

For my employer, a vocational rehabilitation company, I have applied numerous uses of our TRS-80 Model II to increasing our staff's efficiency and effectiveness. We use is for supervision and research concerning our caseload, as well as the more traditional accounting, mailing list, and word processing functions.

Teaching Information Systems & Decision Making (From H. F. Cole, Jr., University of Tennessee, School of Social Work, POB 90440, Nashville, TN 37209.)

First of all, congratulations on the first issue of the newsletter. You've certainly crammed a great deal of information into it. Now let me bring you up to date on what I've been doing, and hopefully provide you with material you can use in the next issue.

I taught Information Systems and Decision Making to our graduate-level social work students for the second time in the Spring, 1981 quarter. I made some revisions in the content and was very pleased with how it turned out. A copy of my course outline is attached. One of the texts I used was Christopher Evans' *The Micro Millennum*. I felt it was valuable in that it gave students a perspective on the range of societal changes that the microcomputer heralds. I would recommend its use to others.

Let me share another piece of information with you that you might want to include in CUSS. The Intercollegiate Case Clearing House (ICCH) has a cast study (9-378-536) that appears to fit very well in a course on Information Systems. Its entitled "Computers, People, and the Delivery of Services, The Implementation of a Management Information System". It deals with the people-problems associated with introducing a centralized MIS for use by several social service agencies. While I have not used it in the classroom yet, I've reviewed a copy and will incorporate it into my course next Spring. For information on this and other public policy and management cases, write ICCH, Soldiers Field Post Office, Boston, MA 02103. This particular case is 33 pages, and costs about $1.40 per copy.

Suggestions for Authors. (From Raymond Carlson, Dalhousie University, Social Work, Halifax, N.S. Canada)

Thanks for the first issue of the CUSS Network Newsletter. I am enclosing a cheque to help with publication costs.

Possibly the Newsletter could include under the Resources section a special listing of relevant papers where the author is prepared to distribute free copies.

Thanks for your efforts in getting this Newsletter underway.

(**Editors Note:** Good idea — I hope members with papers to distribute will send me a listing. Often conference papers are never published yet contain valuable ideas and information.)

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Resources and Materials

Television:

Three TV series are noteworthy. PBS has a 13 part series entitled "Fast Forward" which examines computers, information processing and communications. It has aired twice here and may be running in your area. I found the introductory information on computers and the program on handicapped applications particularly helpful and fascinating.

For insomniacs and those with a video recorder, Sunrise Semester has a course entitled "Computers: Concepts and Cultural Consequences," hosted by Nathan Hull of NYU. The first program on the history of computers was excellent.

Computerworld is presenting a weekly ½ hour TV news magazine in 13 major cities. The format is similar to the "Today" show and the programs I have seen were interesting, but not so good as the other two series.

I have received the following resources:

Newsletters:

A newsletter entitled "Information for Decision-Making" which is available free from the Center for Human Resources Planning & Utilization, 1280 Asylum Ave. Hartford, CT 06105.

A newsletter entitled "The Missing Link" from Arizona Evaluators Network, Carl Brown, Phoenix South CMHC, 1424 S. 7th Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85007

Articles:

"The Organization of the Long Term Care System and the Potential for a Single Agency Option." by James J. Callahan, February, 1979 (See membership list for address).

Microcomputer Applications in Human Service Agencies, by James B. Taylor and Jacque Gibbons, Human Services Monograph Series # 16, Nov., 1980, available from Project Share, POB 2309, Rockville, MD 20852 and a similar and slightly expanded version entitled *Using Microcomputers in Social Agencies,* A Sage Human Services Guide #19, Sage Publications, 275 S. Beverly Dr. Beverly Hills, CA 90212.

References:

The Winter 1981 issue of *Administration in Social Work,* the quarterly journal of human services management, will be a special double issue on computers. It will also be published as a hard back book. The table of contents appears below; for futher information contact Simon Slavin, Editor, Hunter College, City U of NY — Soc Work, 129 E. 79th St., NY, NY 10021.

"Computers: Tool of Management and Social Work Practice" by George Hoshino

"Strategies for Information System Development" by Dick Schoech, Lawrence L. Schkade, & Ray Sanchez Mayers

"Management Information Systems and Human Service Resource Management" by Glyn W. Hanberry, James Sorensen, & Ronald Kucic

"Feasibility as a Consideration in Small Computer Selection" by Walter LaMendola

"Small Computers: The Directions of the Future in Mental Health" by Alden C. Lorents

"Managing for Success: Assessing the Balanced MIS Environment" by Linda J. Bellerby & Lewis N. Goslin

"A Decision Support System to Increase Equity" by Lawrence Boyd, Robert Pruger, Martin Chase, Marleen Clark & Leonard Miller

"Computerizing an Integrated Clinical and Financial Record System in a CMHC: A Pilot Project" by Jim Newkham & Leon Bawcom

"Computerized Information Systems: A Practice Orientation" by Joan S. Velasquez, & Mary Martin Lynch.

"An Information System for the Social Casework Agency: A Model and Case Study" by Bruce A. Phillips

"Systems Design and Documentation: An Essential Relationship Facilitated Via HIPO Diagrams" by Gunther R. Geiss

From Duncan Lindsey, U of Oregon, School of Community Service and Public Affairs, Eugene, OR 97403.

"CP/M Database Management Systems" in *Creative Computing's,* Winter 1982 Buyers Guide issue is a good review of 4 micro DBMSs costing from $400 to $1500.

The following articles related to computers and information systems have appeared in *Information and Referral: The Journal of the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems.* For further information, contact Karen Haynes, Executive Editor, Indiana U — Soc Wk, 1127 Atwater, Bloomington, IN 47405.

"Computerization information and Referral: An Introduction." Vol. 1 (3), 1979, by Richard Sullivan.

"Technology: The CRIS Project — Marrying Word Processing and Computer Output Microfilm Technology to Publish a Directory of Human Services." Vol. 1 (2), 1979, by Thomas Deahl

"Using I & R data for Planning: The Process, Problems, and Potentials." (primarily an outline for the development of a computerized community data system) Vol. 2 (1), 1980, by Lisa Lekis

The following bibliography on small systems was provided by Ilene Hoffman, 193 Garden St. Needham, MA 02192.

Blechman, Fred & Gilder, Jules H. How to choose data base management programs. *Personal Computing,* Feb., 1981, V (2), p. 23-30.

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Osborne, Adam & Cook, Steven. *Business System Buyer's Guide.* Berkeley, CA.: Osborne/McGraw Hill, Inc., 1981.

Press, Larry, Getting started in personal computing. *Oncomputing,* Spring, 1981, 2 (4), p. 8-17.

Rae, Robert C. How to choose a small business computer. *Microcomputing,* Dec., 1979, p. 88-98.

Stair, Ralph M. Acquiring computer programs and software for the small business. *Journal of Small Business Management,* Oct. 1979, p. 37-42.

Watkins, Larry. How to plan for your business computer. *Personal Computing,* Jan., 1981, 5 (1), p. 42-44.

West, G.M. MIS in small companies. *Journal of Systems Management,* April, 1975, 26 (4), p. 10-13.

Upcoming Events

"Use of Computers in Social Welfare" Workshop. Saturday, 5 Dec 81. For more information, contact A. E. Dreyfuss, Center for the Study of Social Administration, Hunter College School of Social Work, 129 E. 79th St., New York, NY 10021 (212 — 570-5499).

A symposium on social service administration will be held at Hunter College in New York on March 6 & 7 in conjunction with the Council on Social Work Education Annual Meeting. Indications are that several sessions may concern information systems. For further information, contact Murray Gruber, Loyola U. School of Social Work, 41 E. Pearson St., Chicago, IL 60603.

Know of any upcoming events that may interest network members?

Additional Member Activities

Elsie — A Simulated case situation (From Normal J. Smith, Australia)

Elsie — a preprogrammed case situation written in FORTRAN was designed so as to introduce beginning social work students to some of the principles surrounding work with people.

The respondents, after logging on to the computer and accessing the program, are told that they are to imagine themselves as a social worker on duty in a busy hospital with a waiting room full of people. They are then told that their receptionist has telephoned to say another client is waiting to see them.

At this point the respondent has to select one of a number of predetermined strategies as to the action he should take. After making a choice, he is given feedback as to the possible effects of the decision and presented with another block of information and further decisions to make. This continues until he reaches the end of the case either through his own correct decisions or by loop process within the program.

The background to the study is written up, *Br. J. Social Wk.* (1980) 10, 491-499. "Computer Simulation and Social Work Education: A Suitable Case." Further information and technical details can be obtained from Dr. N. J. Smith, Department of Social Work, Monash University, Clayton, Victoria, 3168, Australia. Depending upon the costs involved, the program could be made available to anyone interested in it.

Conference Held for Public Welfare Data Processing Professionals (From John Musgrove, Texas Dept. of Human Resources, State Office 830X, Box 2960, Austin, Texas 78769).

Responses to growing information needs, shrinking budgets and demands for more efficient administration in human services were debated at the Fourteenth Annual National Conference of the American Association of Public Welfare Information Systems Management (AAPW/ISM), held at the end of August in San Antonio, Texas. The program this year was coordinated by John Musgrove, AAPW/SIM Chair and an official from the Office for Information Systems, Texas Department of Human Resources. Conference participants, numbering close to 300, included public welfare administrators, directors, managers and analysts from data processing departments in welfare agencies from 37 states, the District of Columbia, Virgin Islands and Canada, federal officials and vendors.

These are critical times as technological capabilities advance and major adjustments are being made in welfare administration. The conferees had an ideal forum to discuss the impact of welfare program changes on systems, major systems developments, federal funding limitations, and the use of technology. The challenge was put to professional data processing personnel to responsibly address the rising awareness and demand for automated systems to meet the need of human service workers and recipients.

The AAPW/ISM, an affiliate of the American Public Welfare Association, promotes the exchange of knowledge and stimulates interest in systems management, information sciences and electronic data processing for public welfare and related fields. Membership is open to all individual APWA members with responsibilities at the professional, administrative, systems management and data processing levels in or for state, local and private agencies administering public welfare programs. For more information, contact Mindy C. Fast, APWA, 1125 15th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005, phone 202/293-7550.

Mini and Micro Alcohol and Drug Abuse Systems (From G. Hale Pringle, 382 Brittany Circle, Casselberry, FL 32707

I read with some interest about your CUSS network and would like to be a member.

For the last four years I have been involved with social service agencies and computers in a number of capacities. A number of your letters mentioned a project which originated out of the University of Miami and created MIS information for drug abuse agencies using Texas instruments minicomputers. I have been involved with this project since the beginning. In addition to field testing their work, I have spent the last four years writing software for our agency. We have written such things as labels systems, fixed assetts accounting, budgeting systems, data base systems, survey data entry and analysis systems, etc. In addition we have developed a complete system for creating dittos using the word processor. We use these for all manner of forms and find it is much less expensive than other means of copying forms which change and are needed in relatively small lots.

In addition to this work, I have been involved with micro-computers and done various writing and consulting in this area. I am convinced that even small agencies can benefit from micro-computers and that such applications as VISICALC and word processing will become a standard in the industry within the new few years.

The last area which I have been involved in has been using a micro-computer to carry out drug and alcohol abuse prevention. We have developed and field tested a system which uses the computer to generate personalized booklets which have a prevention message. The field test indicated that this technique did result in changes in attitudes. This is especially exciting since it can be done on the smallest of micro-computers and is well within the reach of the smallest social service agency. Since the technique can be modified to deliver messages other than prevention, we see a real potential for agencies to carry out their primary purpose using micro-computers rather than just using their equipment to carry out administrative tasks.

Client Tracking and Service Reporting System (From Clarence L. Fewer, Office for Senior Citizens and Handicapped, 180 N. LaSalle St., Chicago, IL 60601

We are in the process of revamping our eight year old client tracking and service reporting system. We have clear ideas on what we want to do, and we probably won't go the package route. However, any information which you could provide on available packaged systems would be appreciated.

Help on Day Care Coordinating System (From Sally Ziegler, Day Care Council of Westchester, Inc., 470 Mamaroneck Ave., White Plains, N.Y. 10605).

Our agency is an umbrella for the day care centers in the county and we are being encouraged by private and public funding sources to use computer technology in our coordinating services. Your help will be greatly appreciated.

Electronic Health Data System Being Developed by the AMA and GTE (From ICP INTERFACE Administration & Accounting, Winter 1981, p. 8)

With the goal of being operational by no later than mid- 1982, the American Medical Association and GTE Telenet Communications Corporation have embarked on a project to develop and operate the nation's first electronic medical-health information system. The system will enable current and relevant medical and health information to be accessed instantly by computer terminal over GTE Telenet's "packet switching" data communications network.

GTE has already begun market testing and planning for the system. According to Dr. James H. Sammons, executive vice president of the American Medical Association, the system "will be providing updated information in an easily accessible and usable form to those professionals who are involved with the health of this nation." He also noted that the system will provide rapid access to the most current drug-related information. A system such as this will be a valuable aid to physicians in collecting all of the available information which could be useful in determining the best treatment or medical judgment for their patients, according to Sammons.

The medical information system will utilize advanced software and computer technology, but will not be complicated for users. Information required for use in patient treatment will be instantly available on computer terminals at locations anywhere in the country. Thomas A. Vanderslice, president and chief operating officer of GTE, noted that "the only equipment required to access the medical-health data is a basic computer terminal connected to an existing telephone line." Physicians, hospitals, medical group practices and other health-related organizations will be able to use their existing terminals with the new system in many instances. Users would be able to link their terminals via the nation-wide data communcations network operated by GTE Telenet Communications simply by dialing a local telephone number. Applicable information will be transmitted within seconds and displayed on the user's terminal.

"The American Medical Association has long been involved in bringing the latest medical information to the physicians of this country through various journals and other publications," says Sammons. With the development of this new system, the AMA will again be on the leading edge of scientific technology, he related. The electronic medical-health information system "will enable us to refine what kinds of information physicians and others in the health care delivery system need," added Sammons.

It is expected that terminals will be installed at the AMA building in Chicago in early 1982 from GTE computers in Vienna, Virginia. Vander-slice predicts that "it will be a major breakthrough in the dissemination of medical information in the United States." The AMA will provide the basic medical-health information for the data base, while GTE will develop, operate and market the data base retrieval system. After the initial installations at the AMA building, carefully selected hospitals and group practices throughout the country will provide the next level of testing to analyze the success of the system. The development of this system will continue the tradition of education for physicians to provide quality health care for their patients, according to Sammons.

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