

Networking: The Linking of People, Resources and Ideas

Greetings:

The CUSS network continues to grow, from 250 members in Oct. 81 to over 350 at present. The quality of incoming materials continues to be high, for example, the report by Dennis Barkley on developing an automated reference file and the 1981 survey of agency information systems in the Chicago area both contain timely information which is hard to find elsewhere. Keep the information coming, and since the purpose of CUSS is to share information, don't be hesitant to offer help to other members or call on others for help.

Other Network activities are also encouraging. Gunther Geiss is continuing to build the automated skills bank for those needing or willing to provide specific skills. Anyone interested should contact Gunther at Adelphi U., School of Social Work, Garden City, Long Island, NY, 11530 (516 489-2000 ex. 8083).

Tom Neudecker is exploring the possibility of an automated message system and literature resource bank using a commercial service such as the Source. One problem Tom faces is not knowing what percent of members have access to the terminal and modem required to use such a service. Those with ideas or suggestions for Tom should contact him at U of Pittsburg, School of Social Work, 2225 Cathedral of Learning, Pittsburg, PA 15260 (412 624-1902).

Lynn Harold Vogel (U. of Chicago, School of Social Service Administration, 969 East 16th St., Chicago, 60637) is considering a meeting of CUSS members in the Chicago area. Other areas may be ripe for local meetings; anyone interested in the possibility of local organizations should keep in contact with Lynn to see how the Chicago group progresses. For those interested in pursuing local activities related to the network, I will be happy to provide a list of local CUSS members.

CUSS is less than a year old, and is still groping for ways to satisfy member needs. I'm sure members would like to be informed of jobs in this area. Lets hear from you, and remember to recycle this issue to an interested friend.

Computer Use in Social Services (CUSS) is a network of professionals interested in exchanging information and experiences on using computers in the social services. The Network's newsletter is published 4 times each year. Those interested in joining the network and receiving the newsletter should write to Dick Schoech, Editor/Coordinator. Information on your interests, needs, experiences, hardware/software familiarity, etc., are welcomed. To cover expenses of postage and printing, a \$5 contribution is recommended for students and the poor, \$10 for individuals and \$10+ for institutions and those willing to provide additional support.

I wish to join the network. (Send to: Dick Schoech, UTA GSSW, Box 19129, Arlington, TX 76019)

Name: _____ Title/Occupation: _____

Organization: _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Contribution: I enclose _____ . Make checks payable to CUSS Network.

Table of Contents

General Information	
Introduction	1
Finances	1
Issues and Comments on the Network	3
Reports from Members	
Development of an Automated Resource Reference	
File by Dennis J. Barkley	3
Analysis of Chicago area MIS survey by Comprehensive Community Services, Inc.	4
Member Activities	5
Network Members (new members & address changes)	7
Resources and Materials	9
Upcoming Events, Conferences, etc.	9

Finances:

Check your mailing label. If a \$ appears after your name, my records indicate you have not contributed to CUSS and are being subsidized by 25% of the members who contribute. Your subsidy may be justified, i.e. you're a poverty stricken student or a victim of the Reagan cut-backs. If not, and you want to support the Network, grab your checkbook and write CUSS a check. Certain members should be subsidized due to the importance of their position, e.g., journal editors, my Dean, etc.

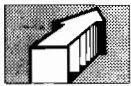
While we have been hurt by cost increases as the doubling of nonprofit postage rates, we have also been blessed by the purchase of the mailing list and a sponsor of this issue. Future sponsors are welcomed; we will strive to have sponsor advertisements as educational as possible. If you contact our sponsor, let them know you saw their advertisement in CUSS.

Dick Schoech, coordinator/editor, 1 Feb 82.

Systems...

For Patient Care, Clinical Research, Administration & Planning

Recognizing that computer information systems are simply tools to improve service delivery, Human Services Computing utilizes the best available technology to provide clinicians, researchers, and administrators with reliable, efficient, cost-effective, and useful information.



Epic



Analyst

Data Base Management

EPIC . . . a powerful data base management system distinguished by its 3-dimensional design: EPIC tracks patients through changes over time. EPIC provides organized but flexible data entry, sophisticated retrievals, and analysis of multiple encounter data recorded and stored over time. Its versatile report capacity includes statistical routines.

ANALYST . . . a data base management system designed for single encounter or "one time" data. ANALYST has been instrumental in establishing a wide variety of special data bases to serve both administrative and research needs. Initial set-up, data entry, reports, and statistics can be done by persons with only a few hours training.



Scribe

Word Processing

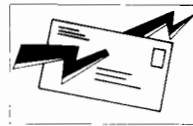
SCRIBE is a full screen-editing, continuous typing word processing system which combines the standard features of a quality word processor with the mass-storage power of a mini-computer. In addition, Scribe has form letter options which interface with HSC data base systems, and features such as bibliographic retrieval, indexing, reference, and table of contents capabilities. Since SCRIBE supports multiple users, the cost of this extra-feature system is fully competitive with ordinary, stand-alone microcomputer word processors.



Dialogue

Computer Interviews

DIALOGUE is a system which administers interviews directly to patients at a CRT. This system also provides clinicians with a summary report of findings. There are a variety of DIALOGUE interviews available — particularly for mental health services — and new ones can easily be created to suit user needs.



A.S.A.P.

Electronic Mail

A.S.A.P. creates an electronic communication network of terminal users. A.S.A.P. allows you to compose, edit, send and read mail with electronic speed and convenience. It maintains correspondence files and provides an audit trail — a record of when messages are received and by whom. It is an effective time-management tool that provides an immediate improvement in the flow of communications.



Calendar

Scheduling

CALENDAR schedules either inpatient or outpatient appointments. It matches staff schedules with patient appointments, identifies common available times for groups of providers, and efficiently manages multiple schedules. CALENDAR appointments are quickly entered and changes are easily made.

Human Services— Computing

2020 University Avenue
Madison, Wisconsin 53705
Telephone: (608) 231-2020

Issues and Comments on the Network

Comments from Lynn H. Vogel, U of Chicago, School of Social Service Administration, 969 E. 16th St., Chicago, IL 60637.

I am very encouraged and pleased by your second edition of the CUSS Network Newsletter. I am sure that you have already realized that you have in effect started an institution and the task now will be to figure out how to keep it going under the constraints of time, money, and people. I am wondering if you might not want to establish a variable dues structure, in which individuals might join for a rather modest \$20 or \$25 dollars, institutional membership might be somewhat higher (for not-for-profit organizations), and for-profit institutions perhaps charged a premium on top of that. This might help to underwrite the financial base of the Newsletter while at the same time recognizing that individuals and institutions have varying abilities to pay for membership.

I would certainly be supportive of your efforts to include objective descriptions of vendor products which have relevance to members, particularly where these might come from members of the Network themselves. I think that in this case, the members' individual experiences with vendors and with particular hardware and software packages, would be very helpful. I think you probably do not want to get into systematic evaluations of vendor products except as these have been used by individual members, since that would imply almost a separate institutional function. Certainly it would pay to seek advertising, particularly from vendors who are trying to market in the not-for-profit, human services area. Dealing with not-for-profits generally has its own set of headaches and problems, and any kind of exposure we can give to people interested in pursuing this market (for a proper fee of course!), should be encouraged.

Comments from Samuel R. Hazlett, DHHS/OHDS, Rm 4149, 26 Federal Plaza, N.Y., N.Y. 10278.

Two observations. 1. From the first issue, I suggest you're really dealing with small to medium size social service systems, and not intending to include operations like the Social Security behemoth in Baltimore, or even your Texas State AFDC & Medicaid operations. Of course, changing your title to recognize this might be interesting: Microcomputer Use in S.S. = MUSS? U'd rather CUSS. 2. Federal divisions mitigate against cohesive audiences. Mental Health people know little of Runaway Youth, who know little of V.D. Prevention, etc. I have no solution to this one.

Editors comments: With the present proliferation of micros and distributed data processing, it may be hard to equate hardware size with the size of the data processing task. CUSS member activities indicate micros exist in large state agencies along side the high mainframes. Combining an efficient mix of centralized and decentralized, large and small computers into one integrated organizational system is an important task for the future. Most users don't care about the size and location of the computer as long as they have the computing power they need.

Samuel's second issue, the territorial and divided nature of the human services, is a cause for concern. In my research on computing in business, government and human service agencies (for a reference, see the books section), I found that all 3 areas mentioned the same mistakes over and over again. And I must confess, I made some of the same mistakes myself. It seems we get too involved in the details to stand back and see we're all doing similar things only with different data elements. The statement "When you're up to your ass in alligators, it's hard to remember that your initial objective was to drain the swamp" applies here.

Any other comments or solutions to the issues Samuel raised?

Reports from Members

Development of an Automated Resource Reference File by Dennis J. Barkley, Computer Systems Consultant, 952 Kenilworth Ct., Walnut Creek, CA 94596.

The Contra Costa Crisis and Suicide Intervention Service (CCC&SIS) located in Contra Costa County, CA, provides a hotline service for callers in need of help or advice. The area served covers approximately 700 square miles and $\frac{2}{3}$ million people. The agency handles over 11,000 calls per year, and all calls are handled by trained volunteers. Many times this service will include informing the caller of a person or agency (a resource reference) which can be of further help or assistance.

Until 9 months ago, CCC&SIS hotline volunteers used a manual Resource Reference File. Each of the approximately 650 resource references in this file was on a separate file card. Each card included a name, phone number, and sometimes additional descriptive informa-

tion. One section of this Resource Reference File consisted of a grouping of all the entries by subject (such as "Ministers", "Youth Employment" or "Family Counseling"), and the other section of this file was an alphabetical grouping of the entries by name.

This file card system had several major problems which had a detrimental effect upon CCC&SIS's ability to properly and adequately respond to a caller's needs. First, and foremost, the file could not be used in a directly responsive manner. Most resource reference requests required a combination of several subject classifications. For the number and variety of resource references and resource requests involved, it was physically unreasonable to develop (or subsequently maintain) a subject category file which contained all of the possible (or even probable) combined subject groupings necessary to satisfy the requirements of most callers. For example, a request for "Low Cost Counseling" for a "Drug" related problem in the "West County" area would require that the hotline volunteer search through one of these three subject groups, such as "Drugs", looking at dozens of inappropriate entries in order to locate the few that would satisfy all three of these requirements. In most cases the resultant search would be very slow, inaccurate, and frustrating for both the caller and the volunteer. Sometimes speed was critical. There have been cases where callers have been lost (have disconnected) due to slowness and/or inaccuracies of resource reference retrievals.

Second, as volunteers familiarized themselves with a few resources in each category, they would try to avoid the problems associated with searching by subject classification and instead directly retrieve a resource reference by its name. However, using the Name section of the file had the disadvantage of potentially excluding valuable alternative resources.

Third, the file had problems associated with its physical attributes. The continual searches and entry pulls of the file led to a degradation of its contents, including loss and misplacement of entries and reduction of entry readability. The manual entry of data into this file without a rigorous structure requirement led to format and data inconsistencies which made searching and use more difficult. The validity of many resource references was uncertain because changes couldn't be controlled or easily and consistently maintained. Finally, any manual searches were subject to misreading and omission.

The solution to these problems consisted of first defining the requirements and then implementing a computerization of this Resource Reference File.

A key part of the requirements was to firmly establish the information and format needed for each resource reference entry. Each entry included space for the Name, Phone, Address, Fee, Limits, Services, Remarks, Date, Status, and 6 Subject selection codes. Each entry used a total of 384 characters which allowed space for up to 800 entries. Approximately 100 subject selection codes were defined. These requirements definitions have proved to be quite satisfactory.

The system implementation includes standard off-the-shelf hardware and specially tailored software (computer programs). The hardware is a Radio Shack model 2 computer with 64K bytes of memory and a Radio Shack model 4 printer. The computer is supplied with a $\frac{1}{2}$ megabyte disk.

The software consists of a main user program and several utility programs. Upon system turn on, the main user program will display on the computer a set of brief instructions. The system will always return to this point with a request to "Enter desired subject codes". The hotline volunteer (operator) will refer to a posted (or system displayable) "Subject Selection Codes" list for the subject(s) that seem to fit the current need. The operator then enters on the keyboard up to six 2-letter codes that define and limit the resources of interest. The system instantly displays the selected code definitions and the total number of entries found. The operator is then allowed to display and/or print any of the found entries or quit and re-enter a new set of subject selection codes. Provision also exists for the operator to select a resource by the first few characters of its name or by a unique entry number. Using the same example as before, the operator would enter "CL DR WS" and the system would display:

"CL - Counseling-Low Cost

DR - Drugs

WS - West County

3 entries found. Display or Quit (D or Q)?"

The system has now located all of the entries which fulfill the three specified requirements and no extraneous or inappropriate ones. At this point the operator could look at any or all of the three entries found, or quit and try a new code group in order to select out a larger or smaller set of entries.

The primary utility program is the resource reference editor. It allows a person to easily make changes within any resource reference entry, or for the addition or removal of an entry. Also provision exists

for automatic date assignment and cursor positioning for directing entry changes. A second utility program allows the summary printing of all of the Resource Reference File entries in alphabetical or subject grouped format. A third utility program allows the full printout of each entry in alphabetical order in a format suitable for assembling a hard-copy **Resource Reference Guide**. (This Guide also includes the file summary by subject groups.) This utility program also allows the automatic blanking of printed data marked as restricted to prohibit its dissemination outside of the agency. A fourth utility program is provided for miscellaneous data validity checks on the complete Resource Reference File (including checks for duplicate entries, erroneous dates, or invalid subject selection keys). These utility programs are password protected to prevent uncontrolled access.

The result of implementation of this system has been a vast improvement in the management and useage of the CCC&SIS Resource Reference File. Its use has been easy and almost self explanatory to the over 150 volunteers, most of whom have had little or no prior exposure to a computer system. Additionally, the periodic compilation of a **Resource Reference Guide** has proved useful for other agencies. In-house, this **Guide** is utilized when the system is not available for use, such as when the Resource Reference File is being updated or backed up, the system is in use by another operator, or the system is down for hardware maintenance or software improvement.

One of the key elements for the success of this system has been the fastidious assignment and periodic review of the subject selection codes. These codes are the key to the useful utilization of this automated Resource Reference File.

The full cost for this system was under \$6,000. For further information contact CCC&SIS, 415 - 939-1916, or Dennis J. Barkley, 952 Kenilworth Court, Walnut Creek, CA 94596.

Analysis of Management Information Systems Survey by Comprehensive Community Services, Inc., Chicago, IL.

I. The Survey

During August and September 1981, a mail survey of 500 non profit 501 (c) (3) metropolitan Chicago based organizations was conducted. The 500 organizations receiving the survey questionnaire were selected from the 1981 Human Services Directory. In addition, on site visits were made to 9 selected agencies.

II. Response

Over 50 per cent of the organizations surveyed returned a completed questionnaire. All 9 agencies cooperated to the fullest with the on site visits.

III. Findings

1. The response percentage of over 50% is extremely high indicating much interest in Management Information Systems.
2. Forty two (42%) per cent of the respondents use some computer based systems applications.
3. Fifty eight (58%) per cent of the respondents do not currently use computer based systems applications but nearly 32% of this group indicate plans to computerize one or more systems in the coming year.
4. Seventy two (72%) per cent of the systems applications relate to financial operations.

Only 28% of the systems applications relate to services to individuals (the main "business" of these organizations).

5. Eighty (80%) per cent of the application software was purchased from external vendors, either consultants or software houses.

Twenty (20%) per cent of the application software was written by agency technical staff.

6. A wide variety of new applications is scheduled for development, including —
 - A. Payroll
 - B. General Ledger
 - C. Bank Reconciliation
 - D. Accounts Payable
 - E. Accounts Receivable
 - F. Financial Statements
 - G. Assets and Liabilities
 - H. Cash Management
 - I. Personnel Records
 - J. Registration and Membership System
 - K. Client Records
 - L. Contribution Records

- M. Service Statistical Reporting
- N. Mailing List Function
- O. Word Processing Systems
- P. Inventory of Equipment and Supplies
- Q. Statistical Research
- R. Calendar (appointment, meetings, events)
- S. Grants and Contracts Management

7. Most agencies input data electronically — only a few use coding forms sent to a service bureau.
8. Forty six (46) organizations have an in-house computer. Twenty seven (27) of these are IBM equipment; 10 other vendors are represented by 1 to 3 installations.
9. Of the in-house hardware —
 - 28 computers have been purchased.
 - 15 computers have been leased.
 - 3 computers have been donated.
10. 50% of agencies using computers spend less than \$1,000 per month.
 - 73% of agencies using computers spend less than \$2,000 per month.
 - 87% of agencies using computers spend less than \$4,000 per month.

Note:

1. These costs are exclusive of any salary allocations.
2. These costs are exclusive of one time programming expense.
3. Costs include service bureau fees, hardware lease and maintenance expense, service and supply costs.
11. Fifty nine (59%) of current users of computer systems are planning hardware or software changes in the near future.
12. Ninety seven (97%) per cent of current users would be willing to share their knowledge, experience and skills with other agencies.
13. A wide variety of potential collaboration efforts was identified.
 - A. Uniform standards for software development.
 - B. Group contracting for software development.
 - C. Time sharing of hardware.
 - D. Back-up systems agreements.
 - E. Transfer or use of existing software applications.
 - F. A users group to share knowledge, experience and skills.
 - G. Telecommunications.
 - H. Word Processing.
 - I. Central data storage.
 - J. Collective purchasing of hardware, software, services and supplies.
 - K. Training modules for professional staff.
 - L. Decision on feasibility studies and consultation on hardware and software.

IV. Conclusions

1. There is great need and interest for coordinating leadership in developing Management Information Systems.
2. Most agencies are moving toward entering computerization or major changes in their use of computers. Right now would appear to be the strategic time to develop uniform standards and collaborative efforts.
3. Very few technical staff are directly employed by agencies. Technical expertise must come from other sources.
4. Hardware vendors, service bureaus, consultants, accountants, audit firms, volunteers-traditional sources of agency used technical expertises-have limited understanding of Human Services agency requirements for a total Management Information Systems.
5. Education and training are greatly needed for agency managers in the fundamentals of Management Information System.
6. Acceptance of the need for collaborative effort, in a wide variety of MIS related issues, seems to have high acceptance.
7. The relatively small monthly expenditure (less than \$2,000 per month) by 73% of the agencies, suggests that the only way to get leverage in the market place is to coordinate these expenditures through some arrangement of Group Purchasing and Contracting.
8. Computer systems to support accountability for Human Services should have as high a priority in development and usage as financial systems.

IV. Conclusions (Continued)

9. Given the evolving technologies in data processing, word processing and telecommunication, coordination and collaboration with hardware, software, service bureaus, and consultant vendors are essential in —
 - A. Evaluating application potential.
 - B. Avoiding costly decision errors.
 - C. Reducing redundant expenditures (re inventing the wheel).
10. Providing coordinated leadership in developing and implementing cost effective Human Services Management Information Systems, requires a long term commitment and effort (perhaps 5 years).
11. Coordination and collaboration with other community groups concerned about matters related to Management Information Systems are highly desirable. Such groups include —
 - A. Operational Assistance Division of United Way of Metropolitan Chicago
 - B. Executive Service Corps
 - C. Foundations
 - D. Coalition on Non-Profit Accounting
 - E. University of Chicago — School of Social Services Administration
 - F. Technical Assistance Groups
 - G. City of Chicago and State of Illinois
12. To achieve planned results, on a developmental basis, over several years of consistent and sustained efforts requires, the leadership stature and financial support of a major funding organization. The most logical would appear to be the United Way System (Comprehensive Community Services, Inc.) because of its —
 1. Ability to influence several hundred organizations.
 2. Funding Resources.
 3. Accountability for cost effective use of contribution dollars by agencies.
 4. Reporting requirements.
 5. Creditability for delivering support services.

V. Next Steps

The MIS Design Team met Friday, October 2, 1981 to consider, in light of the Survey Findings and Conclusions, appropriate next steps.

Three steps were agreed upon:

1. Interview large Service Bureaus to ascertain their interest in penetrating the Human Service market and assess their commitment and capability for:
 1. Software availability and development.
 2. Hardware capability and rates.
 3. Depth and competence of consulting and support staff.
2. Convene a Users Group to:
 1. Share Analysis of Survey
 2. Test next steps and rationale.
 3. Begin to develop involvement and ownership for concept of cooperative project.
3. Work with the Operational Assistance Division of United Way and University of Chicago, School of Social Services Administration in designing and delivering an educational component on Fundamentals of Computer based MIS.

Report from Australia (From Floyd Bolitho, La Trobe University, Bundoora, Victoria, Australia 3083.)

Greetings from Australia. The use of computers in the human services, for whatever purpose, is limited in Australia. Computers are just recently being used for student research projects. Now that it is known that I have some expertise in the use of several statistical packages, I'm being deluged with requests for assistance. Community groups and agencies are also beginning to ask for help.

I am considering a course and community workshop on microcomputers in the human services, and would appreciate any materials, handouts, overheads, etc., which readers think would be useful in the design and instruction of such a course.

(Editor's note: I'm sure a status report from CUSS members in other foreign countries, e.g., France, Japan, Israel, would be of interest to readers.)

Member Activities

My Interests (From Dick Schoech, newsletter coordinator/editor)

Besides teaching a course on the use of computer and information technology in human services, my time is presently consumed by a contract with the Texas Dept. on Aging to design and implement a prototype distributed microcomputer information system for Texas aging agencies at the State, AAA, and service contract level. We are presently completing our systems analysis and hardware/Data Base Management System selection, and will shortly be into more analysis and systems design. I'll try to report in more detail on this project in the next newsletter.

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

Our office is the Area Agency on Aging for Chicago and is the municipal agency for the handicapped. We operate a seven-year-old computerized client tracking and service monitoring system on the City of Chicago's IBM 370/3033.

We rely upon centralized processing and retrieval to manage information on approximately 60,000 active clients receiving a wide range of services from over 100 contractors and cooperating agencies. As one would expect, our several field locations which together provide citywide information and referral are swamped with paper files and forms.

What we would like to do is go to distributed processing via multi-terminal mini-systems in our field locations. This distributed processing would be oriented toward those of our clients who require intensive service provision. We hope to eliminate paper files, eliminate some forms completion (often duplicative, given multiple funding sources), and at the same time facilitate the case management model. We would continue centralized processing for those data for which such processing is appropriate.

A brief overview of our system and a description of its problems is available. We are presently investigating our hardware/software options. Any added information you can provide would be appreciated.

Micro Systems and Number-Crunching for Family and Child Welfare (From Linda L. Remy, Loring Assoc., 51 Loring Ave., Mill Valley, CA 94941).

"Loring Associates" is a group of women and men from several disciplines — social work, sociology, education, psychology and history. Our common ties are our interests in developing micro-computer systems and doing quantitative research for family and child welfare.

We have some projects with private non-profit agencies to develop information systems with different levels of sophistication. We are also involved in some heavy number-crunching studies. One involves institutional abuse and neglect of high-risk youth and their families. Another involves alcohol prevention for separated and widowed women. The largest is a major study on services to families to prevent foster placement.

We have two 64K Tarbell Empire I computers which each have 2-8" double-density, single-sided drives and Epson MX80-FT printers with Graphtraks. We use a variety of terminals and have access to Diablo and NEC printers for final copies of reports. I also do some work on a Cromemco Double-density, double-sided micro-computer. We use several telephone communication packages and modems, depending on the agencies' equipment and how we interface with them by phone. In addition, we link up regularly by phone to the UNIX system at the University of California Medical Center in San Francisco. Much of the data entry, clean-up, descriptive statistic runs, and simple report generation is done using dBase II on the micros. We also have a variety of other software.

Sometimes the work seems staggering. We are all learning a lot. But having control over the means of production (i.e., microcomputers) makes work a lot simpler in many ways. It certainly helps to control data processing costs, and reports can be prepared and revised quickly.

Good luck to CUSS. I have been waiting for someone to organize this for a long time.

Mis Success Factors (From Walt Troyer, U. of Md at Baltimore, School of Social Work and Community Planning, 525 W. Redwood St., Baltimore, MD 21202.)

I am interested in doing research (doctoral dissertation) on identifying factors highly correlated with MIS success in human service agencies. I am aware of the many factors mentioned in the literature which are supposedly important to insure MIS success but I have not seen evidence of any systematic research on this. Please contact me if

you have any information or suggestions. Secondly in planning for teaching a masters level course in MIS I would appreciate hearing from those of you who have taught an MIS course as to good textbooks or other material, course outlines and any audio-visual aids that have been found useful. Thanks much.

Judicially Committed Persons Tracking System (From Donald T. Lee, Los Angeles Co. Dept. of Mental Health, Judicially Committed Persons Program, 2415 W. 6th St., Los Angeles, CA 90057.)

A friend passed on the information on CUSS Network and I am very interested in joining. Please see enclosed check.

For the past five years, I have been the administrator of a mandatory outpatient treatment program for the judicially committed persons coming out of state hospitals and courts. This program is treating approximately 200 patients at any given time. Three years ago, it became overwhelmingly clear that I had to put a lot of this data on a computer in order to keep track of the large numbers of the court reports, attendance reports, and all kinds of status changes involved with these people because we were responsible to the Court for extremely close monitoring of patients who are now in the community. It took a year to get a computer which was something of a miracle as units as small as ours, in a large county system, do not have that privilege as a rule. For the past two years, we have been getting our computer operational, data put into various files and cleaning up coding errors that were part of the original start up of the system. One of our major files yet to be developed involves the listing of transactions which occur for each individual patient in the program. We will list transactions such as coming from the hospital, entering treatment, being hospitalized briefly, court reports being sent in, and jailed, etc.

We have different therapists writing a thousand reports a year to the courts. I am interested in seeing if we can computerize about two-thirds of the information which goes in the report which is all standardized historical data. I also have interest in the whole area of data analysis of demographic variables for our population.

It is reassuring to find that there is a whole network of people with similar needs.

Child History in Placement System (From Doug Britton, St. Louis Co. Social Services Dept., 422 W. 3rd St., Duluth, MN 55806.)

I have enclosed our procedures manual for our Child History in Placement System (CHIPS). The system was developed in response to user needs and serves as the prototype for future development (currently in process) of an integrated social service information system. The unique aspect of this system is that it is fully user operated. Our social workers have been very satisfied with both the utility and ease of operation of the system. Let me know if you have comments or questions.

May I also compliment you on your article "What Human Services Can Learn From Business About Computerization," **Public Welfare**, Summer 1980. I have, on many occasions recommended your article as the best counsel available to agencies contemplating computerization. It is most frustrating, however, to see the same mistakes repeated time and time again.

Again, thanks for the network. I look forward to further correspondence.

Applications and Teaching Materials (From Rachel Kats, U. of Haifa, School of Social Work, Mount Carmel, Haifa, Israel 31 999)

Thank you very much for sending me your Bulletin. Since I am teaching both research methods and human service organizations, I am interested (at least theoretically) in the topics you presented: new ideas for computer applications, teaching material, etc. My interest at this moment is mainly theoretical, though I am a regular computer user, but I am interested in remaining up to date in this area.

WANTED: A Small Supercomputer (From Louisa Messolonghites, Prevention Resources, Pyramid Project, 7101 Wisconsin Ave., Suite 1006, Bethesda, MD 20014).

I am in the market for a personal computer that requires the minimum of technological savvy and that includes adequate training in its use. It should be conventional, patient, versatile, compact, portable, and economical for the multipurposes of household management, continuing education, entertainment, and work. My work is reading, writing, editing, teaching (or letting young people learn), and exploring ideas. The computer I envision would save me time and not become too addicting. And not too complex. I am very bad at math, but have excellent digital skills. Any suggestions where a rank amateur should start, acquiring the necessary basic information for computer consumership? How much to start up?

Computer Based Social Research (From Patrick A. Curtis, Apt. 2315, 3950 N. Lake Shore Dr., Chicago, IL 60613).

I am a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Illinois at Chicago and should finish this year. My particular interests are in computer based social research, especially statistical applications and analysis. I am currently working part-time with the Jewish Children's Bureau in Chicago where we are conducting a two-group comparison field experiment, a research and demonstration project attached to the agency's therapeutic family day care program. The program is designed to serve emotionally disturbed children in private day care homes. We will be randomly assigning 20 children to the program (family day care plus individual and family psychotherapy) and 20 children to a comparison group (individual and family psychotherapy only) by July, 1982 in an attempt to show that the program contributes to social functioning to a greater degree than psychotherapy alone. The data collection should end in late 1983.

I have been using UIC's IBM 370 and 4341 almost 5 years, mostly SPSS and SCRIPT work processing. I have a Lear Siegler CRT at home and a GE 2030 terminal/printer at work.

Extensive Mental Health Center Information System (From T. Edmund Lakeman, Mobile Co. CMH Services, Inc., 2400 Gordon Smith Dr., Mobile, AL 36617).

We are a comprehensive community mental health center in Mobile, Alabama, serving all of Mobile County (pop. about 365,000). We have 160 staff; serve about 5,000 persons annually; a caseload of 1,400 and annual budget of \$3.2 (pre-Reagonomics apex).

We have an IBM Systems 34 with 128kb work area and 128mg storage. This drives a main 300-1pm printer, seven in-house CRT's and one matrix printer and one remote CRT and matrix printer.

Our system is user-oriented, menu-driven so that various departments can use specified menus for their particular needs. The entire system is under my supervision as Associate Director. We have recently acquired the admissions process and quality assurance program. We have four full-time dp persons and other users in the various programs, including Finance and Accounting.

Our system is interactive with a 365 byte client master file so as to accommodate the bunch of data we have to collect on clients as well as to measure outcome on a 33 item problem list, ratable on a level of functioning scale.

The main components of the system are a complete financial package with the usual account receivable; accounts payable; payroll; chart of accounts; budget variance statements; summary budget; a fixed assets system that feeds into general ledger; service cost analysis; departmental budget variance statements; automated insurance billing and automated client billing.

The Management Information System produces a variety of reports on staff performance; time allocations; client services and characteristics; community services; intraorganizational services; etc. by overall center; by catchment area; by program; by unit; and by individual therapists. The IBM Data File Utility program permits quick production of any number of specialized reports which are needed daily and sometimes hourly.

An automated Personnel System is our latest development. It provides a monthly strength report, with turnover and attrition rates and shows positions by grant assignment (we still have two), by cost center, and with allocations by percentages.

The employee leave system manages the onerous system by keeping up with annual, sick, administrative and other leave and prints a monthly report for the employee.

We are pleased with the system . . . continually enhancing it and have licensed it successfully to two other community mental health centers. Our present one-time license fee is \$12,000.00 and this includes the software (sans the IBM utilities); documentations, and run-book as well as support in the way of telecon problem-solving and consultation.

We recommend an on-site visit for those serious about a mental health center system. We find that requirements for a center vary from other health and social service systems significantly so that there are few packages available in the country.

I can supply a detailed brochure of the reports if needed.

Home Computer Use (From Arline Prigoff, San Francisco, CA)

I am a doctoral student at the Jane Addams College of Social Work, U. of Illinois at Chicago Circle and will be moving to San Francisco where I will complete the write up of my dissertation on "Self Concept, Ethnic Identity, Job Aspiration and School Stress of Mexican American Youth in a Midwest Urban Barrio. I am about to purchase a home terminal for the San Francisco apartment for long distance communica-

tions with my data bank at the University. I am interested in learning more about home minicomputer capability and software, for the day when I will sever my connection with the University facility! It is a pleasure to join and support the network.

DSM III and Psychological Testing Programs for a TRS 80 (From Charles Hendry, 3540 Cochise Dr. N.W., Atlanta, GA 30339).

I currently am affiliated with the Clayton Mental Health Center in Riverdale, Georgia as Inpatient Director.

I am using the TRS 80 MOD I/III equipment. I would like to exchange programs or information about programs on psychological testing and the like. In particular if anyone has developed a useful program for the DSM III I'd be interested.

Psychological Programs for The TRS 80 (From Richard Echernacht, Iowa Dept. of Social Services, Mental Health Institute, Mt. Pleasant, IA 52641).

Thank you for sending me the Fall/Winter 1981 CUSS network news. Enclosed please find a contribution to put me on the roster. I have a TRS 80 Model I 48K with two disk drives and printer. I am a clinical psychologist at a state mental health institute interested in psychological and neuropsychological assessment, evoked potentials and data acquisition and analysis. As such I am interested in any and all programs for the TRS 80 that touches upon these areas. My experience is still at the beginners stage so I am in need of any suggestions.

Mental Status and Other Programs for a TRS 80 (From Robert L. Sherman, 1304 E. New Haven Avenue, Melbourne, FL 32901).

Thank you for adding my name to your mailing list via the list which you got from Marc Schwartz. I am a Psychiatrist and practice in Melbourne, Florida. I have a TRS-80 Model III with 48k RAM and four disc drive. Since obtaining my computer system last April, I have taught myself BASIC programming and had indeed had a couple of programs published. I am now putting the finishing touches on an automated approach to the writing of a Mental Status which I shall be offering to the public shortly. I also am completing a research paper on the comparison of a number of commercially available systems for MMPI administration and scoring. This paper will appear in Computers in Psychiatry/Psychology.

We are in the process of completely automating the practice. We are already making extensive use of our word processing capabilities and telecommunications for a number of purposes. In addition, we are beginning to put to use our software for General Ledger and for the Radio Shack Medical Office System. Although we have not yet used this Radio Shack package sufficiently to offer the brief critique which you have requested of your readers, as soon as we have enough information and experience, we will be happy to provide such a critique.

I was intrigued by your publication and would greatly appreciate it if you could send me Volume 1 Number 1. Enclosed please find my contribution to help cover expenses.

If you have any questions or information which you wish to come to my attention, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Resources and TRS 80 Program Generator Package (From Joseph Zefran Jr., Circuit Court of Cook Co., Juvenile Division, 1100 S. Hamilton Ave., Chicago, IL 60612).

Enclosed is my application to join the CUSS Network. I was pleased with the first issue of the newsletter and found some things to be helpful and would very much like to see it continue.

I would like to inform you of a few things which network people may

find interesting:

1. The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges has developed a well-designed, user-oriented information system specifically for juvenile courts, called JISRA. Contact: JISRA Director, NCJFCJ, P.O. Box 8978, Reno, NV 89507 (702 784-6631).

2. In my part-time job, I am writing the manual for a revolutionary software product for the TRS80-Model II. It is a program - generator package that allows users enormous flexibility in creating their own databases, forms, reports, etc. The package, in effect, does all the programming necessary. The users need only to design whatever they want. Since it is not quite on the market yet, please contact me for future details.

3. In the near future, the finalized copy of the Revised Edition of the ADMATCH Users Manual For Non-technical Users should be available. ADMATCH is an address matching program of the U.S. Census Bureau's that recodes address data for use with stat packages, SYMAP, etc. (SYMAP is a program that produces shaded-area maps on computer.) It is a project I did four years ago while completing my MSW.

I would also be interested in hearing about people who have developed computerized record-keeping systems in smaller agencies, especially how they were able to convince administrators to come up with the buck for development.

Improving Clinical Decision Making (From Louis Cenac, M.D., 5211 Essen Lane, Sulite 6, P.O. Box 80748, Baton Rouge, LA 70898).

Thanks for adding us to the CUSS Network and please accept my contribution. We are inviting correspondence from others interested in improving clinical decision making. Of course, we have an on going interest in potential counseling applications.

Micros in Clinical Practice, Research and Computer Aided Instruction (From Rob MacFadden, U. of Toronto, School of Social Work, 246 Bloor St. W., Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S 1A1).

Through being involved in a survey to ascertain microcomputer usage in schools of social work, I was given your name by John Flynn of Western Michigan University.

At the Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto, we use the central university mainframes for basically research, word processing and administrative purposes. We are now becoming very interested in microcomputers and hope to purchase some units by the end of this year.

I have a TRS 80 Level II system which I use for word processing, statistical work and as a terminal for accessing the mainframes. I would be interested, in particular, in any information on the use of microcomputers in terms of CAI in social work, in clinical practice, in research, in agency systems, etc.

Psychological Testing & Other Applications for the IBM Personal Computer (From Wandal W. Winn, 213 W. 6th Ave., Suite 6, Anchorage, AK).

I have an active medical practice in psychiatry as well as a background in computer science. Three weeks ago I became the proud new owner of an IBM personal computer and am very impressed with the machine and its BASIC. Documentation is excellent, but software is hard to come by at this point. I would be interested in contact with other IBM micro owners re: software, home and business use, etc. Also, I'm interested in the administration of psychological tests with the computer.

Network Members (new members and address changes)

Alabama

Gayle Wykle, U. of Ala/Birmingham - Soc Wk, Suite 339 Ullman Bldg., Birmingham, AL 35294

Alaska

Wandal Winn, SRA Box 1650-A, Anchorage, AK 99507

Arizona

Susan Moreth, Mesa Lutheran Hosp., 525 W. Brown Rd., Mesa, AZ 85201

Carl Brown, Phoenix South CMHC, 1424 S. 7th Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85007

California

Barbara Davis, U. of CA, Berkeley - Eval Serv, Berkeley, CA 94720

Donald Lee, L.A. Co. Dept. of M.H., 2415 W. 6th St., Los Angeles, CA 90057

Virginia Riehl, Contra Costa Co. Health Serv., 2500 Alhambra Ave., Martinez, CA 94553

Linda Remy, Loring Associates, 51 Loring Ave., Mill Valley, CA 94941
CC Crisis & Suicide Service, P.O. Box 4852, Walnut Creek, CA 94596
Dennis Barkley, 952 Kenilworth Ct., Walnut Creek, CA 94596

Colorado

Tim Brennan, Human Systems Institute, 1906 13th St., Suite 304, Boulder, CO 80302

Tom Isgar, 2354 Dennison Ln., Boulder, CO 80303

Robert Adelstein, 2777 S. Elmira #11, Denver, CO 80231

Connecticut

Robert Heltman, General Electric Co. W2H2, 3135 Easton Turnpike, Fairfield, CT 06431

Sara Logan, St. Dept. Human Resources, 110 Bartholomew Ave., Hartford, CT 06115

District of Columbia

Fred DeJong, Nat. Assn. St. Units on Aging, 600 Maryland Ave SW, Suite 208, Washington, DC 20024

Florida

G. Hale Pringle, 382 Brittany Circle, Casselberry, FL 32707
Robert Sherman, 1304 E. New Haven Ave., Melbourne, FL 32901
David Gersh, 11055 N.E. 6th Ave., Miami, FL 33161

Georgia

Charles Hendry, 3540 Cochise Dr. NW, Atlanta, GA 30339

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Patrick Curtis, 3950 N. Lake Shore Dr. #2315, Chicago, IL 60613
Clarence Fewer, Senior Cit/Handicapped Off., 180 N. LaSalle St., Chicago, IL 60601
Arline Prigoff, 1360 N. Sandburg Terrace 2401C, Chicago, IL 60610
James Gleeson, Central Baptist Childrens Home, 159 N. Milwaukee Ave. Apt. 622, Lake Villa, IL 60046
Jeff Epstein, Lake County Health Dept., 3010 Grand Ave., Waukegan, IL 60085
Ellis Neiburger, Dental Computer Newsletter, 1000 N. Ave, Waukegan, IL 60085
Richard White, Lake Co. Mental Health Div., 3010 Grand Ave., Waukegan, IL 60085

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Marvin Miller, 1315 W. 10th St., Indianapolis, IN 46202

IOWA

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Louis Cenac, 5211 Essen Ln., Suite 6. Baton Rouge, LA 70898

Maryland

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Mieko Tassone, Montgomery College, 51 Manatee St., 121A Hum. Bldg., Rockville, MD 20850

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Precilla Smith, 41 Maurice Rd, Wellesley, MA 02181

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John Nielsen, Psychiatric Consult. Services, 825 Parchment Dr. S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49506
Robert Stockman, Microcomputers in Planning, 1204 Peoples Bldg., Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Minnesota

Doug Britton, St. Louis Co. Soc Serv Dept, 422 W. 3rd ST., Duluth, MN 55806
Gary Prazak, Walker & Associates, Inc., 123 E. Grant St., Minneapolis, MN 55403

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New York

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Sol Zalcgendler, New York Dept Social Services, 40 N. Pearl St., Albany, NY 12243

Bill Cohen, The Haworth Press, Inc., 149 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010

Arlene Gordon, N.Y. Assn. for the Blind, 111 East 59th St., New York, NY 10022

Samuel Hazlett, DHHS/OHDS, Rm 4149, 26 Federal Plaza, New York, NY 10278

Debra Robinson, Creative Socio-Medics Corp, 437 Madison Ave, New York, NY 10022

Diane Carnegie, 225 Lawrence Ave, Staten Island, NY 10310

Maurice Satin, Long Island Research Inst., Health Sciences Center T-10, Stony Brook, NY 11794

Sally Siegler, Day Care Council, Westchester, 470 Mamaroneck Ave., White Plains, NY 10605

Mario Rendon, Leake & Watts Childrens Home, 463 Hawthorne Ave., Yonkers, NY 10705

Ohio

John Behling, Ohio State U. - Soc Wk, 1947 College Rd, Columbus, OH 43210

Oklahoma

Douglas Buche, N.E. Ok. Human Dev. Services, 105 W. Canadian, Vinita, OK 74301

Oregon

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David Nichols, Dammasch St. Hospital - MH Div, Wilsonville, OR 97070

Pennsylvania

Timothy Baker, Dept. of Public Welfare, Rm 430, Health & Welfare Bldg, Harrisburg, PA 17120

Andrew Paller, 3817 Spruce St., No. 709, Philadelphia, PA 19104

Tennessee

Warren Lambert, Lakeshore Mental Health Inst., 5908 Lyons View Dr., Knoxville, TN 37919

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Martin Sundel, U. of Texas/Arlington - Soc Wk, Box 19129, Arlington, TX 76019-0129

George Sutton, 1736 W. Randol Mill Rd #305, Arlington, TX 76012

Roosevelt Wright, U. of Texas/Arlington - Soc Wk, Box 19129, Arlington, TX 76019-0129

Martha Williams, U. of Texas - Soc Wk, Austin, TX 78712

Billy Moore, Community Council - Dallas, 1900 Pacific Bldg., Suite 1725, Dallas, TX 75201

Janis Gray, Texoma Regional Planning Com., 10000 Grayison Dr., Denison, TX 75020

Fritz Petree, Scott Instruments, 1111 Willow Spring Dr, Denton, TX 76201

Madge Watson, Childrens Home, 1100 E. Cliff Dr., El Paso, TX 79902

Ronald Cookston, Sabine Valley MHMR Ctr., POB 6800, Longview, TX 75608

Bill Bristow, Juvenile Probation Dept, 1st Floor, Co. Courthouse, Sherman, TX 75090

Dot Young, Central Counties MHMR Ctr., PO Box 518, Temple, TX 76503

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Wisconsin

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Australia

Norman Smith, Monash U. - Soc Wk, Clayton, Victoria, Australia 3168

Canada

George Chigol, Community Services/Corrections, P.O. Box 550, Flinflon, Manitoba Canada R8A-1K5

Bruce Tefft, U of Manitoba - Psych Dept, Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada R3T 2N2

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Robin Jones, Int. Assn of Social Workers, Lambfold, High Lorton, Cockermouth, Cumbria England CA 13 9UQ

France

Herold Heyward, Pommiers La Placette, 38340 Voreppe, Grenoble, France

Israel

Ram Cnaan, Ministry Labor & Soc Affairs, P.O. Box 1260, Jerusalem 91000, Israel

Resources and Materials

Newsletters and Networks:

Evaluation Network is for human service professionals interested in program evaluation. The \$10 membership fee includes a free subscription to the journal *Evaluation News*. For information, write Barbara G. Davis, Editor, *Evaluation News*, U. of California at Berkeley, Teaching Innovation and Evaluation Services, Berkeley, CA 94720.

Microcomputers in Planning Association publishes a bi-monthly newsletter for individuals in public and private organizations who are interested in microcomputers and the physical/social planning arena. Membership is \$12.50 a year. For information, write Robert L. Stockman, Ex. Dir., Microcomputers in Planning Assn., 1204 People's Bldg., 60 Monroe at Ionia, Grand Rapids, MI 49503.

Dental Computer Newsletter is an international group of dentists, physicians and office managers who are interested in office computers. Though the emphasis is on microcomputers the newsletter caters to all makes and brand names. Membership costs \$15 and includes a monthly newsletter, a software exchange, advice and experience, access to members world wide, and a computer bulletin board. For information contact Dental Computer Newsletter, D. J. Neiburger, DDS, Editor, 1000 N. Ave., Waukegan, IL 60084.

System Update is a newsletter designed to fulfill the information needs of professional groups involved in social services systems development efforts. For a copy, write A. Patricia Meier, Editor, MIS Bureau of Communications and Analysis, New York State Dept. of Social Services, 40 N. Pearl St. Section 10C, Albany, N.Y. 12243.

Government Documents:

From Fred J. De Jong, National Association of State Units on Aging (NASUA) 600 Maryland Ave., S.W. #208, Washington, D.C., 20024.

A number of documents have been developed as part of the NASUA Information Systems Model Project funded by the Administration on Aging. The purpose of the project is to document, catalog and facilitate the development of high utility information systems within State Units and Area Agencies on Aging. Best of all, each of these documents is available at no charge while the supply lasts.

- **Catalog of Aging Units Information Systems**
Consists of the actual input and report documents, user manuals and other materials which describe in detail the information systems of State and Area Agencies on Aging. The CAUIS procedures for obtaining material describes the range of materials available and outlines how copies can be obtained.
- **Survey Findings of Aging Unit Information Systems**
Reports on the State-of-the-art of information systems operated by a selected group of State and Area Agencies on Aging. Contains descriptions of systems employed by a variety of agencies ranging from small rural units to large urban organizations. Outlines various manual and computer approaches to the design and use of information systems.
- **Baseline Data Report**
Identifies in detail what information State and Area Agencies collect about their clients, service, providers and program related finances, based on an analysis of the state-of-the-art of systems. Data is organized into tables and displayed in order of the frequency with which it is collected.
- **Computer Systems Findings in the Aging Network**
Summarizes survey findings on the utilization of computerized information systems, and the types of systems SUAs and AAAs indicated as desirable for implementation.
- **National Position Paper on Information Requirements for Managing State and Area Agencies on Aging - Volumes I and II.**
A statement to the Administration on Aging by State and Area Agencies on the minimum information requirements for SUA/AAA management purposes. Based on surveys of the functional activities and corresponding information needs, this paper is designed to facilitate a close association between the collection of information and its utility for both internal and external reporting and program management. Also contains several recommendations for easing record keeping and reporting burdens, and proposes a strategy for enhancing timeliness and accuracy of information about network operations.

- **Report on High Utility Information Systems for State and Area Agencies on Aging**

Describes systems and/or subsystems that appear to have the greatest potential for use by the State and Area Agencies. Criteria for system selection include: simplicity of design and operation; comparatively low cost of development, operation and maintenance; and short time - span required for system adoption, implementation and utilization.

- **Self-Audit Guide**

An essential prerequisite for any systems development effort. Provides a structured approach for assessing the adequacy of an agency's current information system and determining appropriate changes. The guide ensures that important questions about information needs are answered before design work begins.

- **Uniform Description of Services for the Aging**

Presents a system for the design and implementation of common service names, service definitions, and service unit measures which provides for local flexibility as well as a standard basis for comparisons across agency and state lines. Published in conjunction with the National Association on Area Agencies on Aging.

Reports and System Documentation:

The Illinois Ceta/Plato Linkage Project: Automated Support for Participant Orientation, Job-seeking Skills, and Inter-Agency Coordination, by Marilyn L. Flynn & Louis V. DiBello. This report describes an 18-month linkage project using computer-based support for communications, instructions, and career-development. Write Karen Larson, Champaign CETA Consortium, 202 W. Hill St., Champaign, IL 61820.

Management Information Systems for Social Services, a report by the New York State Dept. of Social Services. Write Sol Zalcgendler, Director of MIS Communications and Analysis, 40 N. Pearl St., Albany, NY 12243.

Books:

Gruber, Murray, *Management Systems in the Human Services*, Philadelphia U. Press, 1981. This book has several chapters specifically related to information systems.

Hy, Ronn J. *Using the Computer in the Social Sciences: A Nontechnical Approach*, N.Y.: Elsevier North-Holland, Inc. 1977.

Newman, F. L. & Sorensen, J. E. *The Program Director's Guide Book for the Design and Management of Client Oriented Systems*, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing, Inc., 1981.

Schoech, D. *Computer Use in Human Services: A Guide to Information Management*, N.Y.: Human Sciences Press, 1982.

Magazines and Newspapers:

Computer Graphics News is a bi-monthly newspaper available from the National Computer Graphics Assn., c/o Scherago Assoc., 10th Floor Readers Service, 1515 Broadway, N.Y., N.Y. 10036.

Software News is a newspaper available free to those who hold the right position. For information, write Software News, 666 5th Ave. N.Y., N.Y. 10103.

Articles:

"A Survey of Data-Base Management Systems for Microcomputers," *BYTE*, November 1981.

Planning, Oct. 81 special issued on computers.

Public Welfare, Fall 1981. Several "opinions" on computers and social services.

"A Manager and His Machine," by Robert Heltman (see list of Members from CT).

Upcoming Events, Conferences, etc.

May 3 - 5, 1982, 7th Annual Multi-State Information System Conference, Orangeburg, N.Y. For details, write Linda J. Kline, Director, Liaison Dept., Information Sciences Division, Rockland Research Institute, Orangeburg, N.Y. 10962.

May 23 - 26, 1982, Alliance of Information and Referral Systems, in San Antonio, TX. For details, write Karen S. Haynes, Indiana U. School of Social Work, 1127 Atwater, Bloomington, IN 47405.

Oct. 30 - Nov. 2, 1982, 6th Annual Symposium on Computer Applications in Medicine, Washington, D.C. For Details, write Bruce I. Blum, Johns Hopkins U Traylor 514, Baltimore, MD 21205.

Big Brother and the 'Smart Card' (from the Periscope section of *Newsweek*, Feb 1, 1982, p. 15.

Ronald Reagan's war on waste in Federal programs may eventually get a new weapon: the "smart card." Now being tested in Michigan, it is a plastic card with its own memory chip that can be used by people eligible for food stamps and medicare. At a supermarket, for example, a cardholder would present the card instead of actual stamps: it would automatically verify whether he had enough credit for his purchases and would deduct their cost from his account. Agriculture Secretary John

Block and other government officials saw the smart card demonstrated in Washington last week and agreed that it might help save some of the \$1 billion now lost annually in food-stamp fraud and waste. Michigan officials, after checking the first test results in Detroit and Lansing, say they are confident that the computer-equipped cards will rapidly repay their \$300,000 cost. Sen. Robert Dole of Kansas plans Senate hearings in March to confirm the Michigan data and examine the card's nationwide potential.

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