Access to 7094 computer increased; Time sharing program adds new uses

By Michael Shorenstein

M.I.T.'s new computer time sharing system has opened up a new claim of service to researchers and students. First placed in service last May as an experiment in maximizing the use and access to computer time, the system has allowed programs to be handled at a faster rate and has stimulated researchers to tackle problems they otherwise might not try. In an outline of its performance over the past few months, Dr. Fernando Corbato, Associate Director of the Computation Center, concludes that the system is usable and very valuable although there have been several operational and administrative problems which remain unsolved.

The time sharing computer is essentially designed to do just what its name implies; it is intended to handle several programs at once. In addition to the standard memory core and processing unit, a program supervisor is employed to switch the central processor to each user as much in the same way as a computer shuttle to current to different coils of an electric motor. The essence of such a system is to divide its added access to users on the console, its elaborate programming facility, and its ability to function as a general-purpose computer for several independent and diverse programs.

The history of time sharing at M.I.T. dates back to last spring when three to five users were given simultaneous access for one-half an hour per day. By June, after a successful six-week demonstration of the computer's capability to handle remote teleprint programming, the system was placed on a four-hour day for five users with access up to thirty users.

Although Dr. Corbato finds the inadequacy of the system more than the older 709 computer, he sees several drawbacks which limit and frustrate the user. For one, the system cannot be overloaded with programs; the result of this is that users receive service very erratically or even not at all. The 1960 on timetabling can now efficiently debug up to ten simultaneous teleprints. Secondly, Dr. Corbato sees the need for reports to the computer's monitor as the user's personal on the time used and the status of the user's programs so that the limited resources of the machine may be distributed fairly. Finally, Dr. Corbato reports that the programs are becoming too large (160,000 words) for outsiders to understand the entire operation of the system.

Campus praking crackdown

Last week the Institute regretfully banned praking on its Building 7 parking lot. —Photo by Conrad Grandstaff

16' totem pole among art exhibits at AWS-sponsored show Oct. 7-11

A contemporary totem pole designed by Bob Adams, a fourth-year architecture student, is among the exhibits at the art show sponsored by the Association of Women Students in Building Seven. The show, starting last Monday; runs through Friday.

Made of white cedar, the pole is 36 feet high and weighs 500 pounds. Arms extending four feet from each of the eleven sections, which are strong on a steel pipe. Because of its weight the totem pole was taken apart into 21 sections and assembled in the lobby of Building 7.

"Inscomm Openline" to begin fall program

"Inscomm Openline" will begin its fall program on TTH at 8 p.m. The weekly feature will air topics of interest to the M.I.T. community. Some activities will be the first topic of discussion.

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