A student uses the Athena registration terminal in the Student Center library.

**Athena entering new phase of development**

One of the applications of Athena that has increased drastically over the last couple of years is the required use of the system for courses. Students are enrolled in courses that require the use of Project Athena last year reported spending 24 percent of all of the time they spent in on those classes with Athena. Although most of the courses that utilize Athena now are in the Departments of Electrical Engineering and Aeronautics, Lerman expects this to change as curriculum development projects, such as the writing project, are developed. This year Project Athena is entering the lecture hall with computers that will act as extremely sophisticated blackboards, according to Lerman. Professors will be able to make and alter very complicated diagrams with ease. The only drawbacks of these computers are their high costs and lack of availability, he explained.

Athena enters second phase of development

This fall, Project Athena is entering its second phase which is designed to make the system more accessible by turning the current time-sharing system into a workstation environment. By the end of this phase in 1988, approximately 1,500 workstations will have replaced all of the current time-sharing terminals, Lerman said.

Each workstation will be an individual computer powerful enough to run any Athena software package and will be networked to the rest of the system, Lerman explained. Also, workstations are being installed in five living groups this fall — Delta Upsilon, Zeta Beta Tau, Theta Delta Chi, Delta Upsilon, Theta Delta Chi, Pika and Ness House — with more living groups scheduled to receive workstations in future.

Athena and education

Although Project Athena is a five-year experiment aimed at improving the education of students at MIT, the majority of its users regard the system as a service rather than as an experiment, the survey indicated.

This is evidenced by the fact that more students use Athena for word-processing than any other application, Lerman said. He expected the system to be used for word-processing, but the question was whether the system could be used to teach students how to write.

Ninety-six curriculum development projects are currently being developed with the goal of materializing Athena in broad educational resource. One of the most ambitious projects in a software package that will use Athena graphics and audio facilities to tutor students in foreign languages. An additional software package will help students develop their writing skills.

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