RESEARCH IN WORD PROCESSING NEWSLETTER

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° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° WORD PROCESSING IN CREATIVE WRITING ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° °

The ability of computers to manipulate text variables with ease should not be lost upon those who teach creative writing. One popular activity is to have students "fill in" the absent parts of a story or poem, later measuring their response against the original "norm." The distance between the original and the student response promotes theoretical discussion about the relative merits of each. Changes are carefully examined to determine the roots of audience preference.

Interactive fiction has captured a portion of the print market as well. No longer passive recipients, readers are allowed to warp forward to other narrative options, perhaps strengthening their sense of how stories are constructed. Whether in print or on screen, interactive fiction is a <u>new</u> emphasis in a seemingly ripened genre-- indeed, the change itself hints at an evolutionary attempt to explore the future.

° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° CALL FOR PAPERS: UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA ° ° ° ° ° ° ° °

"Computers and Writing--Research and Applications" is the theme of the University of Minnesota's conference to be held April 12 to 14, 1984. According to orga- nizers Donald Ross and Lillian Bridwell, "the conference will bring together research reports aimed to specify the kinds of software that will be or should be available in the next decade, and discussions of current applications in hardware and software."

Suggested research topics represent a good survey of the word processor's potential beyond its "glorified typewriter" function: 1) Automatic analysis of writing using techniques from artificial intelligence and computational linguistics 2) Design cri- teria and standard algorithms for text-editor commands   3) Laser printing 4) Empirical studies of writer's behavior 5) Future developments in software design 6) "Human factors" analysis of hardware and software 7) Local area networks for personal computers 8) Electronic mail in the work place or classroom 9) Adapting existing software for writers' or writing teachers' needs.

Suggested applications are encouraged to combine a formal presentation with hands-on demonstration: 1) Automatic evaluation or "correction" of writing 2) Writer's aids such as automated bibliography or footnote formatting 3) Computer lab management 4) Hardware surveys 4) Use of data bases 5) Peripherals which the educator or writer can use. The deadline for abstracts and proposals is February 1, 1984. Contact the Computers and Writing Conference, Composition Program, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455.

° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° INTERACTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SOFTWARE ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° °

The corpus of literature currently being published on the subject of word processing would humble the mighty Thomas Hobbes, and those who wish to stay on top of it all must find an expedient and inexpensive method of cataloguing hundreds of references.

While business-oriented software such as dBASE II, Lotus 1-2-3, and Context MBA allow you to create bibliographical databases, their high cost (usually over $350) makes them financially impractical if all you need is a program to alphabetize, sort, and merge bibliographic entries.

Not to worry, because there are many low-cost, high performance bibliographical software programs available which will allow you to do just that. Here's a sample of what's currently on the market:

TITLE	COMPUTER	COST	PUBLISHER
Catalogit, Accession Plus	Apple II+, IIe Commodore PET,64 IBM-PC, TRS-80	$70	Right-On Programs P.O. Box 977 Huntington, NY 11743
Bibliography	CP/M-based systems	$125	Digital Marketing Co. 2363 Boulevard Circle Walnut Creek, CA 94595
Personal Bibliographic System	Apple II+, IIe IBM-PC Displaywriter	$250	Personal Bib. Software P.O. Box 4250 Ann Arbor, MI 48106

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° ° ° ° ° ° ° WRITER'S DIGEST ADDS WORD-PROCESSING COLUMN ° ° ° ° ° °

The infusion of computers into the world of writing has been a boon to the freelancer. With prices of word processors dropping into the typewriter budget-range, many of these writers have discovered that the computer can increase both the volume and efficiency of output. In response, Writer's Digest magazine has begun a regular column on word processing by Michael A. Banks.

Then, too, public financial investment in computer-related enterprises shows no sign of slowing down, and the magazine must welcome the influx of advertising dollars from this high-tech sector to phase out its former dependence on "low-prestige" revenues from vanity presses. Despite its introductory approach, Banks' column promises to make an important contribution.