UPDATE

AFIPS Washington Report

Pender M. McCarter
AFIPS Washington Office

Carter amendments to reorganization plan clarify transfer of OSTP functions to NSF

President Carter last month filed amendments to his Reorganization Plan No. 1. Designed to streamline the executive branch, the plan had included the transfer of certain functions of the Office of Science and Technology Policy to the President, for later redelegation to the National Science Foundation. The amendments would provide for the direct transferral of OSTP functions, including the national R&D assessment and five-year outlook for science and technology, to NSF.

The President's amendments appear to be in response to earlier comments by Rep. Olin E. Teague (D-Tex.), chairman of the House Committee on Science and Technology, who had criticized the ambiguity of the President's transfer of powers procedure. Rep. Teague called such redesignation of functions unfortunate because "it gives Congress no idea of their final disposition." House Resolution No. 688 had expressed disapproval of the initial plan, but on the day following the transmittal of amendments, it was rejected by the Subcommittee on Legislation and National Security of the House Committee on Government Operations, chaired by Rep. Jack Brooks (D-Tex.).

Coordination with OMB study. The amendments also state that the Reorganization "shall become effective at such time or times on or before April 1, 1978, as the President shall specify, but not sooner than the earliest time allowable," in this case 60 working days from July 15 (when the plan was presented to Congress), or October 15 (when the plan becomes law, unless vetoed by Congress). The April 1, 1978, date would coincide with the conclusion of an OMB reexamination of federal data processing by six task teams under the supervision of Wayne T. Granquist, OMB associate director for Administrative Management.

Last month, the Computer and Business Equipment Manufacturers Association and the Computer and Communications Industry Association filed differing recommendations with the OMB on Federal ADP procurement. While CBEMA criticized the General Services Administration for overly strict enforcement of policy concerning agency ADP procurements, CCIA favored further centralization of ADP procurement policy within GSA.

Privacy, other DP legislation given limited chances for passage

Following presentation of the Privacy Protection Study Commission's final report in July, chances for passage of DP and privacy legislation appear to be limited, according to an AFIPS survey of higher-level Congressional staff members last month. Reasons for delay in consideration of the legislation introduced in the first session of the 95th Congress include: uncertainty over adjournment (with estimates ranging from as early as this month to late November); receipt of Executive comments on the Privacy Commission's recommendations; and consideration of other business ranging from the Lance investigation to energy, lobbying, and anti-child-pornography legislation.

In addition to the privacy legislation already introduced, new House legislation is expected concerning record-keeping among educational institutions. The Omnibus Privacy Act is also anticipated, incorporating previous legislation introduced by Rep. Barry M. Goldwater (R-Calif.) and Rep. Edward I. Koch (D-N.Y.), as well as providing for a new Federal entity overseeing implementation of privacy legislation. In the Senate, additional legislation covering all areas addressed in the Privacy Commission's final report is expected from Senators Bayh, Heinz, Muskie, Percy, Proxmire, Ribicoff, and Weicker.

NBS proposes revision to Computer I/O Channel Interface

The National Bureau of Standards last month published a proposed revision to the NBS Computer Input/Output (I/O) Channel Interface to be adopted as a Federal Information Processing Standard. According to the announcement of the revision "acquisition alternatives that comply with this standard shall be considered competitively with other alternatives so as to meet the Government's data processing requirements at least cost."

Commission on Federal Paperwork expected to recommend new cabinet-level department

The Commission on Federal Paperwork, established two years ago by Congress, is expected this month to announce some 750 recommendations for reducing paperwork, which could result in annual savings of $10 billion. At its final meeting in September, the commission conditionally approved a recommendation establishing a Department of Administration that
would combine the functions of the Automated Data and Telecommunications Service (ADTS) as well as the National Archives and Record Service, within the GSA; and the Bureau of the Census, within the Department of Commerce.

Recommendations pertaining to data processing are incorporated in an “Information Management” section of the final report. The commission is expected to recommend consolidation of the major paperwork, information and communications-related policy oversight functions and authorities which it holds are now dispersed and fragmented among the Information Systems Division in the Office of Management and Budget, ADTS within GSA, and the Office of Telecommunications Policy in the Executive Office of the President.

The commission on Federal Paperwork is also expected to favor improved coordination of records and paperwork management programs and policies with related information policies such as statistics, ADP telecommunications, public-use reporting, and other similar activities. The complete report is scheduled for release early this month.

First meeting of OSTP Advisory Group on White House Information Systems identifies EOP information needs

The first meeting of the Office of Science and Technology Policy Advisory Group on White House Information Systems was held August 24-25 in Washington. The Advisory Group was formed to identify information systems needs which can be accommodated to support the “decision processes” of the White House and the Executive Office of the President.

At the first meeting, Stuart E. Eizenstat, assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs and Policy, told the Advisory Group that the Office of Domestic Affairs and Policy requires more sophisticated document tracking techniques. He noted for example, there are “several hundred” legislative bills of interest to his office. In addition, Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Charles L. Schultze cited the need for “large scale data bases,” also for document tracking.

Written statements are solicited by Advisory Group Chairman John Godsen of Equitable Life Assurance Society. The next meeting of the Group is scheduled for October 4-5 in Washington to continue briefings by EOP staff on their information needs. Other Group members include: William Cotterman of Georgia State University, Gerald Dinneen of the Department of Defense, Dr. Vincent McRae of IBM, Jon Turner of Columbia University, and Russell Shank of UCLA.

NASA, Illinois Institute of Technology survey user needs for VLSCS

The Ames Research Center of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the Illinois Institute of Technology last month began conducting a survey to determine projected user needs for very large scientific computer systems which might become available in the 1985-1990 time period. Results of the survey, which may assist in developing design requirements for future VLSCS, are expected to be published at a future date.

AFIPS in Washington

OTA program recommendations.

As a member of an Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) Working Group, AFIPS last month provided comments on a first year OTA program. The Working Group was first established to describe the issues of telecommunications, computers and information policy, in order to identify policy options and define research strategy.

In submitting the Federation’s comments, prepared by a panel representing the AFIPS societies (along with individuals who served on previous AFIPS panels), Washington Office Director Philip S. Nyborg wrote OTA: “As is evident in our project recommendations, there are numerous issues in the telecommunications, computers and information policies area in which OTA could well serve its intended function of apprising the Congress of major technological change. For example, in its next session Congress will likely consider legislation related to national telecommunications policy, electronic banking, electronic mail, privacy, computer and telecommunications security, computer crime, standards, and copyright protection for computer programs. Clearly, these policy issues have major technological components, and the Congress will have substantial need for a credible, accurate and independent source of technical information.”

The AFIPS panel recommended projects for primary consideration, given anticipated budgetary constraints, and projects which should be considered if additional funding becomes available.

Projects in the first category were:

(1) assessment of the impact and operation of federal standards activities; (2) assessment of technological and economic impact of federal legal protection for software; (3) assessment of the existence of technological problems regarding privacy and security; (4) assessment of electronic mail: regulatory aspects and private sector role; (5) assessment of electronic fund transfer systems (EFTS); privacy, security and regulatory aspects; (6) alternative approach to projects 3, 4, and 5 (i.e., a case study approach considering privacy and security, the relationship of regulatory jurisdictions, and private sector involvement as these subjects concern electronic mail and EFTS); and (7) assessment of opportunities and problems resulting from new applications and techniques arising out of the convergence of computer and communications technologies. Projects in the second category were: (1) assessment of the adequacy of existing computer systems audit and control techniques; (2) assessment of educational technology; and (3) assessment of alternative regulatory approaches regarding offerings of mixed communications and data processing services.

Participants on the AFIPS panel were: H. Lewis Parker of COMSAT Laboratories (AIAA), Peter Lykos of Illinois Institute of Technology (ACM), Judy Edwards of Northwest Regional Educational Laboratories (AEDS), Bruce Spiro of Defense Communications Agency (DCA), Lynn Hopewell of Computer Sciences Corp. (IEEE Computer Society), William E. Perry (IIA), Hans Oser of the National Bureau of Standards (SIAM); and Vinton Cerf of Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, Alex Curran of Bell-Northern Research, Inc., and Frederic G. Withington of Arthur D. Little, Inc. (all from previous AFIPS panels). Alternates included Kenneth Hales of Boeing Aerospace Co. (AIAA), and David R. Kniefel of New Jersey Educational Computer Network (AEDS).

Reviewers comment on privacy report. The Privacy Protection Study Commission last month released five appendices to its final report, Personal Privacy in an Information Society, which had been sent to the President.
Errata to May issue

In the article “The Microprocessor in the Biological Laboratory” by R. L. Schoenfeld et al in our May 1977 issue, the credit for the experiment which described the use of the cat’s paw manipulator (Figure 2, p. 57) to study brain mechanisms in learned behavior was inadvertently omitted. The citation for that equipment and the experiment in which it was used should have been as follows: Ghez, C. and Kabota, K. “Activity of Red Nucleus Neurons Associated with a Skilled Forelimb Movement in the Cat,” Brain Research (129) 1977 (in press).

Leonard Y. Liu to chair ’78 NCC professional program

Leonard Y. Liu of IBM’s San Jose Research Laboratory has been named chairman of the professional program for the 1978 National Computer Conference. According to the announcement by AFIPS, Dr. Liu will be responsible for the overall planning and implementation of the professional program for the ’78 NCC, to be held June 5-8 at the Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, California. Coordination of all Program Committee activities will be the responsibility of Sakti P. Ghosh, also with IBM’s San Jose facility, who has been appointed vice chairman.

As manager of the San Jose Computer Science Department since 1973, Dr. Liu is responsible for the laboratory’s work on exploratory, advanced applications, and data base systems. With IBM since 1969, he has also been a research staff member at the T. J. Watson Research Center, manager of the System/A Supervisor Group, and senior manager of the Application Systems Group. He received an Outstanding Contribution Award for designing the System/A supervisor in 1972. Dr. Liu received his BSEE from National Taiwan University in 1963 and his PhD in computer sciences from Princeton in 1968.

Dr. Ghosh has been with the IBM Research Division for 15 years. His fields of interest include data management, storage structures, performance and evaluation, information management systems, filing structures, algebraic filing schemes, and time-space trade-off in filing schemes. He holds a PhD from the University of California, Berkeley. He is a senior member of IEEE and was the U.S.A. chairman of the Second International Conference on Very Large Data Bases and treasurer of ACM-SIGMOD 77 Conference.

The ’78 NCC is sponsored by AFIPS and four of its participating organizations—ACM, DPMA, IEEE Computer Society, and SCS.

Call for officer nominee petitions

The following officer nominees for the 1978 term have been submitted to the Computer Society Governing Board:

President
Rex Rice, Fairchild Semiconductor
Merlin G. Smith, IBM

First vice-president
Harlow Freitag, IBM*
Richard E. Merwin, U.S. Army
BMD Program Office
James Snyder, University of Illinois

Second vice-president
Tse-Yun Feng, Wayne State University
Edward A. Parrish, University of Virginia

Under the current constitution, nominees must be selected from the current Governing Board and officers (see IEEE Computer Society roster, p. 3). However, under the proposed new constitution, which has been mailed out for membership vote, officer nominees may be selected from the membership at large. If the new constitution is ratified by the membership (votes will be counted by the end of October), any nominations from the membership at large that qualify otherwise will be included in the approved slate and will be voted on by the board at its meeting in Chicago during COMPSAC, November 11, 1977.

Officer nominees must hold a member grade or higher in the IEEE Computer Society and must have been a member for three years or more; petitions from the membership at large must be signed by at least 250 IEEE Computer Society members (member grade or higher) who have not signed any other petitions for the same office in this election.

To be considered as part of the approved slate of nominees, membership petitions must be received by the Computer Society secretary on or before November 7, 1977, at the following address:

E. A. Parrish
Department of Electrical Engineering
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, VA 22901

* Nominated via Governing Board petition; all other nominees were submitted by the society’s Nominations Committee.

Advance program available for Workshop on Microprocessor Education

Six sessions are scheduled for the Workshop on Microprocessor Education to be held November 29-30 at the University of Maryland, College Park. Sponsored by the IEEE Computer Society’s Technical Committee on Mini/Micro Computers and the university, the workshop will stress college-level courses appropriate for students in such fields as chemistry and education, as well as for those majoring in computer science and engineering.

According to Yaohan Chu of the University of Maryland, program chairman, sessions will cover beginning, undergraduate, and laboratory courses. An additional session on non-college courses will include presentations on “Microcomputers for High-School Students” and “A Portable Microprocessor Laboratory.”

Workshop participants are asked to preregister by November 15. Fees are $30 for IEEE and Computer Society members, $40 for non members. Complete registration and program information is available from the workshop chairman, Paul Hazan, Johns Hopkins University, Applied Physics Lab. Johns Hopkins Road, Laurel, MD 20810, (301) 953-7100, or from Dr. Chu, Dept. of Computer Science, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742, (301) 454-4245.

Hotel accommodations are available within the university’s Center for Adult Education where the workshop will be held. For information call (301) 454-2325.