



UPDATE

AFIPS Washington Report

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President to support limited privacy initiative

Consistent with the selective approach of the US to privacy regulation (versus the omnibus approach of the Europeans), the Carter Administration is expected to support a limited program of privacy legislation in the 96th Congress. The President's response to the recommendations of the Privacy Protection Study Commission and previous legislative efforts—termed the privacy initiative—is emerging from a year-long study by an ad hoc group. Known as the White House Privacy Study Coordinating Committee, the group is headed by Stuart E. Eisenstat, assistant to the President for domestic affairs, and Juanita M. Kreps, secretary of commerce.

Administration proposals are expected to center on limiting federal access to data in the private sector, i.e., in the area of medicine, credit, and insurance. The committee recommended applying these limits equally to state and local governments and endorsed federal legislation leaving adoption of laws that "meet certain minimum standards" to the states.

The privacy proposals would give individuals "ownership" of their personal medical, credit, and insurance data. Thus they could review information to correct errors.

(Aetna Life & Casualty Co. has initiated a similar policy at the urging of William O. Bailey, Aetna Life president and former Privacy Protection Study Commission member.) This right may be incorporated into legislation amending the *Fair Credit Reporting Act*. The proposals would also forbid disclosure of information "where there is an expectation of confidentiality." However, the committee agreed to exclude a recommendation that would encompass computerized telephone records.

The Administration's privacy agenda seems to coincide with that of Rep. Richardson Preyer (D-N.C.) who predicts the Congress will consider measures concerning medical records, banking records, and third-party records. However, the surprise defeat of Rep. Edward W. Pattison (D-N.Y.) in the November Congressional elections removes a staunch defender of financial privacy legislation from the House Banking Committee. On the Senate side, Sen. Thomas J. McIntyre's (D-N.H.) loss is expected to change the character of the Financial Institutions Subcommittee which he chaired. Strong privacy advocates were elected to the House of Representatives in California: Democrat Vic Fazio, sponsor of a Fair Information Practice Bill enacted in California in 1977; and Republican Jerry Lewis, sponsor of additional state-wide privacy legislation.

The presidential privacy initiative follows passage of the *Privacy Act of 1974* and the *Right to Financial Privacy Act*. The *Privacy Act* limits federal agencies' access to personal information held by other agencies. The *Right to Financial Privacy Act* limits federal access to personal information in the financial sector and is cited as a major achievement by the Carter Administration. But it has been criticized by certain individuals for increasing the potential number of bank examinations conducted by federal investigators, for lacking sufficient legal grounds to challenge unreasonable access to data, and for exempting political action groups. An internal audit, made public recently by the US Postal Service, criticizes the Post Office for inadequate implementation of the *Privacy Act of 1974*.

European privacy position explained, US criticized at Online conference

Concern was expressed for the protection of individuals, not nations, at the International Conference on Data Regulation: European & Third World Realities, held November 28-30 in New York City.

Frits Hondius, chief, Judicial Affairs Directorate, Council of Europe, told the Online Conferences Ltd.-sponsored conference that more than privacy interests are involved in European restrictions on the transmission of data across international boundaries. According to Hondius, such bodies as the 20-member CE, which is preparing a 1980 treaty concerning transborder data flow, are seeking to protect "people's rights and interests." The European goal, he added, is to "protect people against computers and computers against people."

Hondius outlined three general principles of data protection: (1) publicity—"People should know what is going on in general"; (2) propriety—"Data systems should be proper"; and (3) control—"Record-keeping should observe norms." Laws adhering to these principles are already in effect in some seven countries. Approximately seven more nations are expected to follow these countries with their own privacy legislation.

US privacy policy was criticized by conference participants. Hondius noted the lack of US attendance at the conference and at a recent session of the CE, of which the US is a non-voting member. Prof. David Linowes, former chairman of the Privacy Protection Study Commission, said that the *Privacy Act of 1974* did represent a step forward, but that it provides "no benefits for the general public," contains too many exceptions and too few penalties, and disregards accountability. Computer users from large multinational corporations also criticized the US for a lack of leadership in formulating a position on issues involved in transborder data flow. According to one account of an informal meeting, the users formed an ad hoc committee to lobby on transborder data flow issues.

Administration officials appearing at the conference reiterated their criticism of industry for not becoming involved in the issues. They implored industry to provide specific instances of economic harm caused by restrictions on transborder data flow. Attending the conference and named as primary contacts for industry were William Fishman, deputy associate administrator for policy analysis and development, National Telecommunications & Information Administration, US Department of Commerce; and Morris H. Crawford, Bureau of Oceans & International Environmental & Scientific Affairs, US Department of State.

Support growing for US position on transborder data flow

Substantial disagreement on US-supported issues developed at the meeting of the drafting group of the Organization of Economic Cooperation & Development, held December 6-8 in Paris. The OECD met to consider a new draft of "Transborder Data Flow Guidelines" prepared by Peter Seipel, consultant to the OECD Secretariat. Attending the meeting as US representatives were Lucy Hammer of the Department of State and William Fishman and James Howard, both of the National Telecommunications & Information Administration.

At the meeting, the delegations were divided on the inclusion of manual files as well as computer files in the draft guidelines. They also disagreed on extending privacy protection to "legal persons" (i.e., business corporations and various other organizations) as well as individuals. Generally, the Europeans favor a more comprehensive approach to privacy legislation and view as ineffectual the selective approach taken by the US.

Despite these developments, a consensus is said to be growing in both the OECD and the Council of Europe supporting the US position. The latest Seipel draft has been interpreted by an administration source as "very favorable" to the US position.

News briefs

A recommendation for a special assistant to the President for information technology policy, plans and programs, contained in a discussion draft of the *Summary Report on Information Technology & Governmental Reorganization of the President's Federal Data Processing Reorganization Project*

has been dropped in a final draft. The most recent version of the consensus report holds that the FDP RP recommendation can and must be implemented through a strong and persevering presidential initiative through the OMB.

Better information is needed to assess and evaluate the policy alternatives regarding the computerized criminal history file, according to an Office of Technology Assessment study released in January, the first phase of a new OTA assessment of the social implications of national information systems.

The General Accounting Office is preparing a study entitled *Security of Automated Information Systems of Federal Agencies*. According to a tentative outline of the GAO report, organizational structures are inadequate and comprehensive procedures are nonexistent in current federal security precautions.

The Federal Communications Commission is expected to add the *Computer Inquiry II* to its weekly agenda again, after two previous postponements. The FCC may determine whether AT&T, a regulated communications common carrier, can provide unregulated data processing services. ■

Session on novel technologies set for COMPCON 79 Spring

Scientific newsmaker Stanford R. Ovshinsky is among those scheduled to speak on novel technologies for computers at COMPCON 79 Spring, the annual West Coast conference of the IEEE Computer Society. The conference will be held February 27-March 1 at San Francisco's Jack Tar Hotel.

Ovshinsky, a self-taught physicist/inventor and president of Energy Conversion Devices, Inc., has gained prominence during the past decade for his contention that reliable semiconductor devices can be made from amorphous materials. He will discuss his recent work on new amorphous materials for computers at a COMPCON session devoted to novel technologies.

At the same session, IBM's Hollis L. Caswell will discuss the status of the experimental Josephson technology—a novel approach to the design of computer circuits which

depends on the "tunneling" behavior of electrons at temperatures near absolute zero.

This year's COMPCON is built on the theme of "Exploding Technology/Responsible Growth." A special keynote session devoted to this theme, featuring former NASA Administrator Robert C. Seamans of MIT and six other eminent speakers, will set the tone for the 25 technical sessions to follow.

Three day-long preconference tutorials are being offered on February 26: electron-beam lithography for very large scale integrated circuits, computer graphics, and software management.

Information about registration for the conference and tutorials is available from Ms. Terry Contreras, L-307, COMPCON 79 Spring, Lawrence Livermore Laboratory, PO Box 808, Livermore, CA 94550.

Early reservations for NCC housing recommended

The NCC '79 housing bureau has reserved rooms at a number of hotels in New York City. These rooms are being made available to all NCC registrants at convention rates, and due to the large anticipated conference attendance, early reservations are encouraged.

The Americana will be the headquarters hotel for both the Personal Computing Festival and the ACM. Activities of the DPMA and the IEEE Computer Society will be centered at the New York Hilton. All professional development seminars will be conducted at the New York Sheraton.

Please fill out the reservation form below in complete detail, particularly arrival and departure dates, types of accommodations, and the names of

occupants. Rooms must be claimed by 6:00 pm, unless later arrival is indicated on the reservation form. If accommodations of your choice are not available, the housing bureau will make a similar reservation elsewhere. Fill out and mail the housing form to: NCC '79 Housing Bureau, c/o New York Convention and Visitors Bureau, 90 East 42nd Street, New York, NY 10017.

All requests must be processed on this form; please allow three weeks for processing prior to making inquiries. To cancel or change reservations, contact the NCC '79 Housing Bureau at the above address. To assure accommodations, reservations must arrive by May 1, 1979.

Hotel	Single	Double/twin
Americana*	\$49-64	\$54-69
Americana City Squire Inn**	52	57
Barbizon Plaza	47&55	55&63
Essex House	55-65	65-75
Holiday Inn Coliseum	38	46
Howard Johnson's**	36-48	44-56
New York Hilton*	49-69	63-83
New York Sheraton	54-64	64-74
Ramada Inn**	36-48	44-56
Statler Hilton*	46-61	60-75
St. Moritz	39-51	47-59
Taft Hotel	22-31	28-37
Warwick	52-60	62-70

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HOTEL RESERVATION FORM

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*At least two names must be listed above.

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IEEE Computer Society members elevated to Fellow Grade

The IEEE Board of Directors has announced the elevation of 126 members—including 22 belonging to the Computer Society—to the grade of Fellow, the highest within the institute. A mark of unusual distinction attained only by invitation, this membership grade is conferred upon persons of extraordinary qualifications in their particular fields.

Computer Society members selected and their citations included Richard C. Barker for contributions to research, teaching, and international cooperation in the field of magnetics; J. Lionel Boulet for leadership in the establishment and management of the Research Institute of Hydro-Quebec; David P. Casasent for theoretical and engineering contributions to coherent optical data processing; Pieter Eykhoff for contributions to identification and parameter estimation in dynamic systems, to control engineering education in The Netherlands, and to international scientific cooperation; and Keinosuke Fukunaga for contributions to statistical pattern recognition.

Elmer G. Gilbert was cited for contributions to multivariable and optimal control systems; Kenneth W. Goff for technical contributions to and leadership in the design and development of hardware and software for digital computer-based process-control systems; Thomas J. Harrison for contributions to computer systems for use in process-control applications and to the development of standards for process-control computer systems; Robert W. House for contributions to the logical design of computers; Thomas S. Huang for contributions to the theory and application of image processing and digital filtering; and Donald H. Jacobs for contributions to and technical leadership in electronic computers, aircraft navigation systems, guided-missile range instrumentation, aviation fire control, and missile guidance.

Additional Computer Society members selected were Kurt Katzeff for leadership in the development of telecommunications switching systems; Granino A. Korn for technical contributions to the field of computer simulation and to electrical engineering education; Philip M.

Lewis, II, for contributions to switching theory, compiler design, and computer science and for leadership in professional activities; Yukio Nakagome for contributions to electronic-communications switching systems and digital signal transmission; Morio Onoe for contributions to the understanding of piezoelectric phenomena and the development of piezoelectric filters; Theodosios Pavlidis for contributions to the theory and application of pattern recognition; and Martin L. Shooman for contributions to the field of reliability engineering.

Others included Ikuo Tanaka for contributions to computer-aided analysis of electric field effects and the development of low skin-effect stranded conductors; Werner Ulrich for contributions to the development of telephone electronic switching systems; Teruniro Umezu for contributions to the development of analytical methods and their application to electric power systems; and Neal Zierler for the application of finite mathematics to the design and analysis of communication systems, including error-correcting codes and cryptology.

Best COMPSAC student paper selected

Derek C. Meyer, of North Carolina State University, has been selected as winner of the Computer Society's COMPSAC 78 best student paper award. His paper, "Construction of Sentence Pause and Intonation in Computer Synthesized Speech," describes a project for improving computer synthesized speech.

The student paper review committee consisted of Taylor Booth of the University of Connecticut, Jerry W. Johnson of Bell Labs, Alexander B. Long of the Electric Power Research Institute, and H. H. So of the University of California, Berkeley.

In announcing the award, Prof. So noted that Meyer's paper presented "a superb job of problem definition, hypothesis formulation, solution construction, and . . . experimentation and evaluation." Meyer's presentation was highlighted by a cassette recording demonstrating his improvement of synthesized speech.

Operating Systems TC to meet during COMPCON

The new chairman of the Technical Committee on Operating Systems, Henry L. Apfelbaum, has scheduled a planning meeting to be held in San Francisco during COMPCON 79 Spring. Apfelbaum asks persons interested in reactivating this TC to join him from 7-9 pm Wednesday, February 28, to discuss mutual interests. The meeting room at the Jack Tar Hotel will be posted. Those unable to attend may contact Apfelbaum at Sperry Univac, PO Box 500, Blue Bell, PA 19424; (215) 542-5224.

Transportable image processing software system planned

A transportable image processing software system is being designed to facilitate the exchange of Fortran image-processing programs among many different machines. Input regarding possible applications of such a system is invited from potential users. Please contact Prof. R. G. Hamlet, Computer Science Department, or Prof. Azriel Rosenfeld, Computer Science Center, at the University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742. Hamlet's phone number is (301) 454-4251; Rosenfeld's is (301) 454-4526.

Group to promote computing careers, education for women

The Association for Women in Computing, founded December 5, 1978, in Washington, DC, will encourage the professional and educational interests of women in computing.

The purposes of AWC are to promote communication among women in computing, to further the professional development and advancement of women in computing, and to promote the education of women and girls in computing.

Membership in AWC is open to all persons interested in the purposes of the association, regardless of sex, race, religion, or national origin. To obtain further information and a membership application, contact Anita Cochran, 5A137 Bell Laboratories, Murray Hill, NJ 07974; (201) 582-7817.