Please send me your suggestions. (You may volunteer to help develop the draft, but it isn’t required.) I even look forward to arguments for the position that certain areas might be ill-served by standards.

Of the 33 technical committees of the Computer Society of the IEEE, only 11 are involved in standards development. The TCMM sponsors about 35 percent of the standards development projects. I will forward suggestions outside of the TCMM’s areas of expertise or interest to the pertinent technical committees.

Flash!

By the time you read this, the following sponsor ballots should be under way:

- P959, I/O Extension Bus (SBX),
- P970, Advanced Backplane Bus (Versabus),
- P1096, Multiplexed High-Performance Bus Structure (VSB), and

If you are an interested party not on the sponsor balloting body (have not received a ballot) and would like to contribute comments, contact Louise Germani at the IEEE Standards Office, (212) 705-7960.

Flash, flash!!

The MSC has asked the TCMM to cancel its project P856, Methods for Evaluating Microprocessor Performance, for lack of progress over several years. If you are interested in the maintenance of this project, make yourself known to me or Louise Germani at the IEEE Standards Office. The MSC would like to continue the project if there are any interested volunteers.

Reader Interest Survey

Indicate your interest in this department by circling the appropriate number on the Reader Interest Card.

Low 174  Medium 175  High 176

MicroReview

Continued from p. 5

cation of 417 percent is used to get a good idea of how the document will look on a 300-dot-per-inch laser printer, since the bitmapped graphics of the Macintosh screen use a density of 72 dots per inch (300/72 = 4.17). Furthermore, whatever the displayed magnification, you can select a mode in which the cursor is replaced by a magnifying glass icon. As this icon is moved over any part of the display, a small area around the cursor position is shown magnified by a factor of approximately 5.

Knuth intended TeX for the creation of beautiful books, especially books that contain a lot of mathematics. The 70 pages of The TeXbook that deal with producing mathematical formulas are the heart of TeX. The rest is an envelope of applied computer science worthy of much study and admiration. A macro facility allows mnemonically named and easy-to-use formatting instructions to be constructed from TeX primitives. A collection of these, called Plain TeX, is supplied with TeXtures and described in The TeXbook. Plain TeX allows you to achieve with simple formatting commands anything that you can produce with a WYSIWYG word processor like Word. TeX handles kerning, ligatures, varieties of spacing, and all of the niceties that have become standard in the production of fine books.

These typesetting subtleties are handled properly without your having to do anything. Also, TeX examines whole paragraphs to find optimal line breaks, and it examines pages to find the best page breaks, again automatically dealing with typesetting niceties like “widows” and “orphans.”

A major benefit of TeX is portability. TeX implementations exist in a variety of computing environments, and TeX processes simple text files that can be produced anywhere and transported easily. For example, Unix tools can be used to generate TeX input files. These files can be processed by an implementation of TeX in the same Unix environment, or they can be sent over a serial line to a Macintosh, where they can be processed by TeXtures. This flexibility is unavailable with the “standard” Unix formatter, Troff.

As a tool for generating technical communications, TeXtures has several drawbacks. Like all formatters, it’s slow, and the use of formatting commands is far less intuitive than the WYSIWYG user interface. Furthermore, the price is substantial, especially considering that TeX is free and all you’re paying for is the Macintosh interface. Nonetheless, nothing else on the Macintosh will produce technical publications that look anywhere near as good. If you strive for perfection, then you’ll want to consider TeXtures.

Reader Interest Survey

Indicate your interest in this department by circling the appropriate number on the Reader Interest Card.

Low 177  Medium 178  High 179