Progress made in software numbering

The subcommittee of the American National Standards Committee Z39 (standards developing organization for library and information sciences and related publishing practices) investigating software numbering has announced agreement on the format of the number to be assigned to software for micro- and minicomputers.

The structure agreed upon is based on the concept that the number will identify a “shippable” unit—that is, a unique item that can be purchased, shipped, and inventoried distinctly from any other. The number, the committee said, must facilitate inventory control, ordering, royalty accounting, and sales tracking by manufacturers, distributors, and retailers.

Each distinct software item available for sale will be identified by a number composed of the following sections:

1. Registrrant. This part of the number will reflect the organization or individual who makes the item available for sale.
2. Product. The name of the software program.
3. Delivery medium. This element will reflect a combination of the physical media on which the program appears, the operating system(s) required for its operation, and any other distinctive information that uniquely identifies one offering of the same program from others available from the same registrant.
4. Check digit. This will be a mathematical check digit to verify the preceding numbers. The subcommittee is currently reviewing the pros and cons on Modulus 10 versus Modulus 11 verification.

In addition to the number, the standard will recommend and define certain elements of bibliographic data, which would include such variables as the minimum memory/hardware configurations, version numbers, and operating systems.

The subcommittee hopes to have a draft standard ready for review by the members of ANSC Z39 by early 1984.

Orlando welcomes seventh international SE conference

It has been 15 years since the term “software engineering” was first coined. Exploring what has happened to the field during this decade and a half will be the focus of the Seventh International Conference on Software Engineering, which runs in Orlando from March 26-29.

Jointly sponsored by the IEEE Computer Society, ACM Sigsoft, and the National Bureau of Standards, the conference features tutorials, technical sessions, and a tools fair.

For further information, see the advanced program on pp. 89-94 in this issue.

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