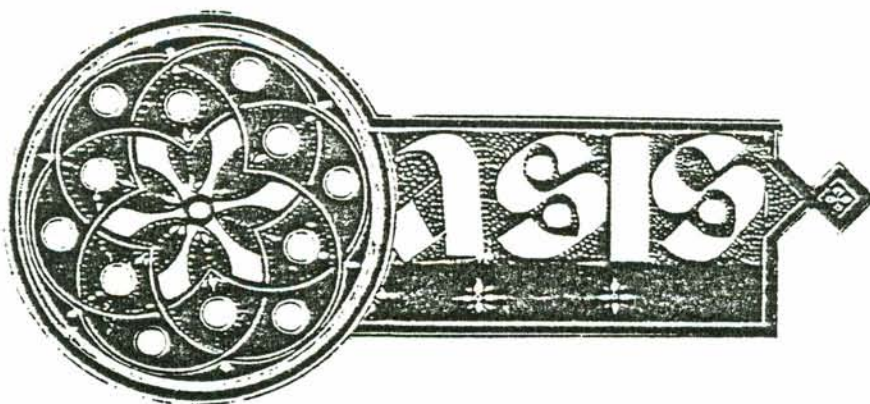


**ORGANIZATIONS
AND SOCIETY
and INFORMATION
SYSTEMS**

w. g. 8. 2.



NEWSLETTER 3.

APRIL 1984

FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF W.G. 8.2

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OASIS
ORGANIZATION AND SOCIETY AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

THE NEWSLETTER OF IFIP WORKING GROUP 8.2

THIRD ISSUE, APRIL 1984

Time flies, and I am now able to wish you a happy Easter. I hope that the sun is shining over your home and your work, that new ideas are blossoming and your research is flowering.

I.S. RESEARCH - A DOUBTFUL SCIENCE?

Let me start by giving you the latest news on our colloquium. We now have all our speakers and their names are shown in the time-table below.

The papers are not due in until the end of April but some speakers have already sent theirs and the standard is very high. I am sure that we are about to start a 'great debate' on research methodology.

I believe that we have found a British publisher, Ellis Horwood, who will produce the proceedings. He will make a definite commitment once he has read the papers that arrive at the end of April. The colloquium committee intends to ask authors to revise their papers and get them ready for publication once the conference is over.

I.S. RESEARCH - A DOUBTFUL SCIENCE?WG 8.2. COLLOQUIUM

1st-3rd September 1984
at Manchester Business School

PROGRAMME

	<u>Saturday</u> <u>1st September</u>	<u>Sunday</u> <u>2nd September</u> <u>Speakers a.m.</u>	<u>Monday</u> <u>3rd September</u> <u>Speakers a.m.</u>
9.00 - 9.45		A.M. Jenkins University of Indiana	C. Lyytinen Finnish Academy of Sciences
9.45 - 10.30		K. & J. Kendall University of Nebraska	K. Brittain-White University of North Carolina.
10.30 - 11.00		Coffee	Coffee
11.00 - 11.45		H. Klein University of Binghamton New York.	N. Vitalari-A Venkatesh University of California Irvine.
11.45 - 12.30		<u>Discussant</u> Tony Lowe University of Sheffield	<u>Discussant</u> Raoul Espajo University of Aston.
	<u>Delegates</u> <u>Arrive</u>		
1.00 - 2.00	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
	<u>Speakers p.m.</u>	<u>Speakers p.m.</u>	<u>Speakers p.m.</u>
2.00 - 2.45	H.E. Nissen University of Lund, Sweden	Trevor Wood-Harper, University of East Anglia	Open discussion session
2.45 - 3.30	A. Pettigrew University of Warwick	D. Boland University of Illinois.	
3.30 - 4.00	Tea	Tea	Conference Review
4.00 - 4.45	A Sandberg Quality of Working Life Centre, Sweden	L. Antill Polytechnic of South London	Niels Bjørn-Andersen Copenhagen School of Economics, Denmark.
4.45 - 5.30	<u>Discussant</u> D. Cooper UMIST, Manchester	<u>Discussant</u> Peter Keen London Business School	

We have not yet had many enrolments so please do send your booking forms in as soon as possible. We are providing our speakers with free accommodation and need an attendance of more than forty for our budget to be large enough to make this possible.

We will hold a WG 8.2 business meeting during the Colloquium, probably on the Saturday morning.

NEWS FROM WG 8.2 MEMBERS

Burt Swanson, our North American Vice Chairman, has written the following letter.

Dear Enid,

Thank you for your letter of March 7, 1984. I'm pleased to send along a few notes for your use in OASIS, according to your needs and wishes.

A recent effort in which I was involved (as Program Chairman) was the Fourth International Conference on Information Systems, in Houston, December 15-17, 1983. I am enclosing a copy of the program. You will see that a number of WG 8.2 members and friends were involved. One of the sessions in fact featured reports from the three working groups of TC 8. (Though Tony Wasserman did not appear as scheduled, however.)

The Fifth International CIS will be in Tucson, Arizona, November 28-30, 1984, and I enclose too its Call for Papers.

The Sixth International CIS is currently being planned, and will be held in Indianapolis, Indiana, in late 1985. The Conference Chairman is Jeffrey A Hoffer, Department of Operations and Systems Management, School of Business, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana 47405, tel. (812) 335-8449. The Program Chairman is Dick Welke.

The International CIS is run by its Executive Committee and Advisory Board. Dick Welke and I have been involved with the Conference since its inception, and we both currently serve on the Executive Committee. Either of us would be happy to assist on matters of mutual interest to International CIS and WG 8.2.

Under separate cover, I am sending some publications which will update you on some further local activities.

I hope to be in Manchester in September, if I am able to co-ordinate a couple of other activities which I have scheduled for about the same time. I'll let you know when it is certain.

Best regards,

BURT.

WG 8.2 members who participated in the Houston conference in addition to Burt were Dick Welke, Hank Lucas and Heinz Klein. Giampio Bracci, the Chairman of TC 8. was also there and gave a paper.

Burt enclosed with his letter the call for papers for the Fifth International CIS, to be held in Tuscon, Arizona. If anyone would like these I shall be happy to pass them on.

Niels Bjørn-Andersen has sent some notes on a new technological development programme in Denmark. Here they are:

New Investment programme in Denmark in Micro-electronics

Up till now the Danish government has been very reluctant to enter into any form of selective support of any industry. Only in very limited areas where the market forces are not functioning at all - e.g. ship building and agriculture - do we have government financial investment programmes.

Inspired by the heavy investment programmes in almost all other OECD countries the Danish government is now proposing that we shall also try to compete with the Japanese and their 5th generation, compete with the English and the Alvey report, compete with the Germans and their extensive government support programme etc.

The secretary for industry is these days presenting a programme worth approximately £100 million in order to "promote a utilization in society of the newest technological development, especially

within information technology." The areas to be supported are proposed to be,

1. general development of information technology
2. information based production systems
3. utilization of information technology in products
4. acquisition of know-how from abroad (it is assumed that 90% of the necessary know-how is to be imported!!)
5. financing of acquisition of equipment for research and R & D
6. technology assessment

One thing to notice is that contrary to many other programmes there is a lot of emphasis on the application of the technology rather than the development of the technology. Furthermore, 1½% of the total budget is reserved for technology assessment. The argument for not using more on that subject is that this amount would demand all the technology assessment competence available in Denmark!!

Niels Bjørn-Andersen

Niels is also commencing a new research project on Technological Development and the Public Service: The Impact on the General Public and on Employees.

This project is administered by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions and has participating research teams from eight European Countries. Each country will provide 3 case studies chosen from the list below.

List A: (2 case studies to be chosen)

1. Unemployment benefits
2. Social assistance/low income supplements
3. Sick pay/disability benefits/long-term invalidity payments
4. Child benefits
5. Housing subsidies.

List B: (1 case study to be chosen)

1. Employment services/job-matching services
2. Allocation of public housing
3. Car registration
4. Population registration

The aim of the project is to examine the effects of the introduction of electronic technology in a selected number of public services on:

- a) the public service agencies themselves e.g. impact on work organization, work environment and the quality of work of employees:

and

- b) the quality of service rendered to the public e.g. speed, equitability and effectiveness.

It is a unique study in that it is the first piece of research to focus on the impact of new technology on the public service in a comparative, cross-national European context. The comparative aspect is of particular interest and importance in that it will highlight the differential impact of computerisation in the various countries, facilitate the exchange of information and experience and lead to a greater understanding of this important topic within the European Community.

NEWS FROM OTHER WORKING GROUPS

WG 8.1 has put out a call for papers for CRIS 85: Improving the Practice. CRIS stands for Comparative Review of Information Systems Design Methodologies. CRIS 85 is the third CRIS Conference and it will attempt to capitalise on the work of the first two and focus on the question of how to apply the understanding gained to the everyday problem of improving the way in which people design

computerised information systems and improving the standard of design specifications. The latter is especially important in the case of a large commercial system which may be designed by one group, possibly even put out to competitive tender, and implemented by a group that never has any contact with the designers.

The conference will focus sharply on the needs of the practitioners and will seek to attract contributions and attendances from experienced designers, persons involved in training designers, and researchers who feel that their work is of immediate value to practitioners.

CRIS 85 will have three themes:

- A) CRIS 1 revisited - better design methodologies
- B) Improved design specifications
- C) Cost effective design

WG 8.1 has also announced a working conference on Theoretical and Formal Aspects of Information Systems. This will be held in Sitges (Barcelona) from April 16-18, 1985. The conference is supported by SYSLAB, Sweden. The University of Lisbon and the Polytechnic University of Barcelona.

Ulrich Briefs, Chairman of WG 9.1, writes that he is happy to collaborate with WG 8.2 and will keep us informed of his Group's future activities and projects. WG 9.1 has decided to postpone their working conference on User Oriented System Design Approaches until 1986 as it was clashing with TC 9s Conference on Human Choice and Computers III which will be held in Stockholm in September 1985. This Conference sounds most exciting. It will focus its attention on reports from individual nations on the policies of both government and the private sector in those nations and towards the social consequences of computers, and it will make comparisons

of policies among the countries. The proceedings produced following HCC 3 should form an invaluable reference book for international agencies and help guide individual governments in formulating their own policies.

TC 9 plans to present a summary of this report at IFIP Congress '86.

HCC 3 is the Third Human Choice and Computers Conference, the previous two having been held in Vienna in 1974 and in 1979, with support from the Austrian government. Proceedings were published by North Holland Publishing Co.

TC 9 now has a new Chairman, Hal Sackman, who is an old friend of WG 8.2

Fred Margulies, until recently, Vice-Chairman, has sent copies of two papers he has written. One of these 'Man's Role in Man-Machine Systems' which he has co-authored with H. Zemanek, analyses the changes which the man-machine relationship has undergone. The authors suggest that automation can provide an opportunity for reversing the deskilling that has occurred until now.

The second paper - User Participation in Systems Development - a case study of participative design, describes how a group of Austrian designers were participatively involved in the introduction of a CAD system into their offices.

NEWS FROM IFIP

Bill Olle has sent the minutes of the 11th meeting of TC 8 national representatives held in Paris on 23rd September 1983. Notes about this meeting were in our last newsletter.

IFIP Congress '86

The organization of IFIP Congress '86 is already underway with Dines Bjørner from Denmark in the role of Program Committee Chairman.

This will be held in Trinity College, Cambridge, England, from September 1st - 5th 1986. All presentations (invited papers, panels and solicited papers) will stress the bridges between the many worlds of science, technology and applications. A feature of this Congress will be a large number of invited papers, many of these being followed by 'responder' led discussions. There will also be a large number of panels - essentially featuring two 'extreme' positions and a mediating (chairman) position.

The Conference programme is divided into three streams. Stream 1 - Computation, Stream 2 - informatics applications and Stream 3 - informatics in the developing world. Our TC 8 Chairman, Giampio Bracchi, has written to Dines Bjørner pointing out that whereas Stream 1 (Computation) has a carefully structured list of topics, Stream 2 (Informatics applications) constitutes an ad hoc list of titles. It also has some gaps, in particular any consideration of information systems methodology. Giampio asks that the following subject areas be included.

- 1) Methods and tools for Information Systems Planning, analysis, design and evaluation.
- 2) Organizational and managerial problems of information systems.
- 3) Decision support systems.

Giampio, in his letter, also offered Dines the cooperation of the three TC 8 WG Chairmen, A. Solvberg, L. Methlie and Enid Mumford in the selection of topics for the Congress.

Microelectronics Monitor

IFIP Secretariat has sent a copy of this bulletin which is produced by UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization). The Microelectronics Monitor provides notes and abstracts from many journals. These are chosen to highlight an important market tendency, technical development etc. It is extremely readable and gives an excellent overview of the latest thinking. For example, under 'new developments' it discusses whether 'Biochips may be the brains of tomorrows computers.' It has sections on 'market trends and company news', 'applications', 'software and computer education', 'government policies', 'legislation and standards', and 'socio-economic implications'. Here is its last page, some examples of 'computer lingo'.

The fast growing breed of computer programmers, aided by other computer specialists, have added many colourful words to the English language, particularly slang words. The process shows every sign of continuing.

Debug In computer parlance, the word usually means an error made by the programmer when he wrote the program, thereby conveying to the computer a scheme of action which is not exactly the one that is needed to get the work done.

Gigo (Guy-go, abbreviation of Garbage In, Garbage Out). Bad data leads to bad results. Your staff may find that the provident fund values shown on their pay slips don't make sense. The programmer is likely to explain this by saying that this is a case of GIGO. The accounts people feed in "garbage" into his computer program which prints pay slips. So, in turn, the program puts out garbage. You had better check with the accounts people; they are likely to claim that the programmer runs a "bug farm".

Hacker

- 1) Refers to a dedicated computer programmer, expert at his job, who spends all his living hours at the computer centre.
- 2) An otherwise sensible boy who found himself a computer terminal while his friends found themselves girlfriends and/or wives.

Interrupt Mode The computer goes on doing some specified work, interrupting this occasionally to attend to urgent minor tasks that need a little attention. You are in an interrupt mode when you are handling such a minor task needing immediate attention. Or, you can "turn the interrupts off", or you can have "interrupts stacked up dangerously" waiting for attention.

Kludge An inelegant, clumsy way to "fix" a bug.

Pert Chart A graphical way of describing a complex plan of action. Invented in the fifties for handling major government funded projects in the US, the Program Evaluation and Review Technique views a project in terms of "events" and "activities". A Pert chart clearly shows what goes on in parallel with what, and what has to be completed before something else can begin.

Save World A hacker working at a computer terminal does not want a power failure to wipe out all his work. He gives a "save world" command once in a while, telling the computer to store in a semi-permanent way all that has been typed in. Hackers learn early in their careers to set up the computer to do an automatic "save world" every five minutes or so.

Stack Computer programmers store key information about what they are doing in a "stack" before they switch attention to an "interrupt". On returning from interrupt they "resume" the previous work by "unstacking" the detail that had been put away. You can get a "stack overflow" if you keep honouring all kinds of interrupts at a rate you cannot handle easily. But don't hesitate to stack up uninteresting jobs when something more exciting comes. You can go back to them later.

Timeshare Like a wizard playing chess "simultaneously" against a dozen opponents, large modern computers work independently in parallel

for a few dozen "users". Even small computers work simultaneously for three to six users who sit at interactive terminals.

By Dr. Ramani, a senior research scientist with the National Centre for Software Development and Computing Techniques. (India).

(Science Age, August 1983).

If you would like to have a copy of the Microelectronics Monitor please let the IFIP Secretariat know. Write to:

Mme Gwyneth Roberts,
IFIP Secretariat,
3, Rue du Marche ,
CH-1204, GENEVA,
SWITZERLAND.

OTHER CONFERENCES

News of conferences comes in by every post and it is only possible to mention one or two of these.

The First International Conference on Organizational Symbolism and Corporate Culture will be held at the University of Lund, Sweden, from 26-30 June 1984.

The Third Workshop on Capitalist and Socialist Organizations Focussing on Organizational Behaviour and the Impact of New Technology will be held in Helsinki, 29-31 August 1984. The sponsors are the European Institute for Advanced Studies in Management and Helsinki School of Economics.

CAITS (Centre for Alternative Industrial and Technological Systems) is having a one-day seminar on Human - centred systems - new technology for trade unions? on April 28th in London.

Change of address:

Mr. Guy Fitzgerald has moved from the
University of Aston in Birmingham.

His address is now:

Mr. Guy Fitzgerald,
School of Industrial & Business
Studies,
University of Warwick,
COVENTRY, CV4 7AL.