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Terminal Talk - The Wofford Connection - May 1970

Wofford College Computer Center

-THE WOFFORD CONNECTION -

Wofford College Computer Center   Spartanburg, South Carolina

New Plotter.

On 5 May, the Computer Center installed a Hewlett-Packard 7200A graphic plotter, purchased with NSF institutional grant funds. This is an absolute plotter, specifically designed for time-sharing use. It is the first such installation in (at least) the South, east of the Mississippi.

This is again "a pioneering implementation of an educational tool" and the responsibility rests with Wofford students and faculty to derive maximum benefit from this plotter. It has, of course, the immediate application of replacing the teletype plotting that several people have been doing, providing a much more satisfactory format. This should encourage others to plot their results or prepare materials in this form. Insight usually comes more easily from graphic representation than from tables of numbers. We now have the facility to prepare those displays quickly and easily.

New Contract.

On 1 June 1970, a new Call-A-Computer contract will begin. This contract provides for unlimited use of the Raleigh system during the non-prime hours only (i.e. 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. plus Sat. and Sun.). This contract is expected to save money while providing for the considerable increase in unfunded research usage planned this summer.

A reduced contract with the Los Angeles system will be maintained for the benefit of funded research and perhaps (limited) educational uses. The use of this contract will be by permission only, as determined by budgetary requirements.

Key.

Since the library hours have been reduced for the summer, the Computer Center key will be kept at the college switchboard for the greater convenience of those using the center.

Plotter Software.

     Programs are especially easy to write for the Hewlett-Packard plotter. A brief introductory session was held in mid-May for interested faculty and students. This session was well-attended. Mimeographed instruction sheets, condensed from the Hewlett-Packard manual, are now available from the Computer Center. A copy of the complete manual will be kept in the Computer Center.

     Several students have already used the plotter in preparing final lab reports for Science 2. Dr. Moore has plotted hydrogen atom wave functions for use in his class. Users are encouraged to prepare and submit general purpose software for the Computer Center file.

     Three programs, supplied by Hewlett-Packard, have now been converted to run on our system. They are:

     1. CHGEN* (character generator)--draws user-supplied character strings on the plotter. Position, size, and horizontal or vertical format are selected by the user. The present character set includes the letters, the digits, and 14 special characters. RUN for instructions.

     2. FPLOT* (Function Plot)--plots a user specified function of X, using specified X-MIN, X-MAX, and DELTA-X. The program does automatic scaling with 1, 2, or 5 ($\times 10^n$) units/division. Axes with optional tic-marks are added. RUN for instructions.

     3. AFDRW* (function draw)--plots a user specified function of X on axes with specified limits. The user also selects X-MIN, X-MAX, and a precision. The choice of precision influences the accuracy and speed of the plot. RUN for instructions.