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## "Goodbye Gutenberg" Part 2

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## “Goodbye Gutenberg”

*This is the conclusion of a summary of “Modern Technology and Historical Editing: National Historical Publications and Records Commission Word Processing Conference,” held in Philadelphia in May 1981.*

On Tuesday morning, Charles Cullen (Jefferson Papers) discussed his project’s recent conversion to twentieth-century technology. Cullen has both an IBM Series I mini-computer and access to the main Princeton University computer. With this arrangement he has independence from the main computer, but is able to hook into it and its software, speed, etc. Cullen uses Waterloo SCRIPT to format texts because it is simple, tested, and inexpensive. With ten codes designed to combine multiple instructions in one command and a simplified SCRIPT manual, the project encodes its manuscript. After the computer converts the SCRIPT codes into typesetting codes, and magnetic tape is sent to the Press, page proof is ready in one day. Although the proof needs to be checked for machine glitches, it does not need to be proofread, a savings which Cullen thinks amply compensates for the time spent coding. He detailed several advantages of a mini-computer: greater storage capacity, the ability to share equipment with nearby projects without being interactive, versatility and range of uses, and the ability to avoid obsolescence by simply changing the programs. The most satisfying use he has found so far—one which alone makes the computer worthwhile and which he would attempt only with a computer—is in preparing a cumulative index to the first twenty volumes of the *Jefferson Papers*. The process involves combining entries from three temporary typescript indexes (each indexing six volumes) and from volumes 19 and 20, after first reviewing and editing the entries. The temporary indexes are first scanned with a Kurzweil scanner and entered on tape. The entries are then automatically shuffled by the computer into volume and page order. After review and editing, the entries will be sorted alphabetically. Cullen cautioned that although computers themselves are quick, they are dumb, and programming can be painfully slow and expensive. Other costs are also high: the cost of the mini-computer, terminals, and the leased programs was estimated at \$35,000-\$40,000.

In summarizing the conference prior to the final panel, Joseph Raben, editor of *Computers and the Humanities*, urged us to look beyond the specifics of hardware and coding, beyond printed volumes how-

ever composed, and consider instead the larger question of the transfer of information. He enumerated several benefits of a systems analysis approach. From a long range perspective, he thought it clear that word processors were totally inadequate and recommended that we concentrate on computer capabilities. We can either resist the trend toward data bases for all kinds of information or exploit the opportunities it offers to documentary editing. Documents stored in data bases could be made available to a much wider audience of scholars and students. The information in documentary volumes could be updated after “publication” to add citations of new research or to correct errata. The storage capacity and high resolution offered by video disks ought to be considered. Raben advised historical editors to consult librarians and information specialists, who have been tackling similar problems, scholarly publishers, literary editors, who are relatively experienced in handling verbal material on computers, and foreign colleagues, who have been working with both pooled data bases and computer typesetting.

A final panel included seven editors from other projects which had used word processors and computers. Michael Richman (Daniel Chester French Papers) reported that his project has been using a Wang word processor and working with York Graphics. Charlene Bickford (First Federal Congress) emphasized the need to consult with publishers, printers, and other projects. In dealing with vendors, she recommended asking lots of questions. Gregg Lint (Adams Papers) stated that his project uses two word processors to save time and make revisions easier but submits a conventional typescript to Harvard University Press, which is not yet involved in computer typesetting. Lint questioned whether submitting a manuscript encoded for computer typesetting would save money or simply shift costs from the press to the project. Peter Albert (Papers of Samuel Gompers) commented that in selecting equipment he looked through the *Seybold Report* and talked with a university committee on computer applications but found that the most important step was to analyze the needs of the project and evaluate equipment accordingly. He recommended choosing a flexible system that could be used to accession documents, to generate lists of correspondence, perhaps to produce an index to a microfilm edition without rekeyboarding. David Wilson (U.S. Grant Association) reported using Waterloo SCRIPT to

produce a special volume of essays. Having encountered access and security problems with the main university computer, he recommended a system with some independence. Robert Hill (Papers of Marcus Garvey) noted that although his project will code for computer typesetting in the future, they are currently using an IBM word processor to produce conventional typescripts and have found many valuable uses for it. He has used the processor to incorporate changes recommended by the editorial board, to reproduce files lost in moving, to produce control files and files organized by various categories to save time in research for annotations. Larry Bland (George C. Marshall Papers) uses a system tailored to a project with minimum funds in a rural area. He uses a Compugraphic Mini Disk Terminal, a typesetting system used by many newspapers and widely available. (For a description see the May 1980 ADE Newsletter.)

During a general discussion, Robert Hill spoke further on using computers to effect linkages between projects and particularly on the benefits of a

consortium of Afro-American projects which could pool their data and produce valuable research tools. Charles Polzer (Documentary Relations of the Southwest) found this possibility of pooling information from editorial projects in data bases one of the most exciting ideas of the conference. He thought it might be a way for projects to make more of their considerable resources more widely available. Using an NEH grant, Polzer's project has used a computer to produce master indexes (available to the public in hard copy, microfiche, and magnetic tape) of primary documents dealing with the Southwest. The index is described in the project's manual (Tucson, 1977) and in the *Hispanic American Historical Review* 58 (1978): 460-465.

In concluding remarks, Frank Burke suggested it was time for historical editors involved with computers and word processors to agree on standards both to avoid duplication of effort and to ensure compatibility between data bases. He proposed that the Association for Documentary Editing might be the proper group to continue the discussion.

## *Electronic Editing and Publishing: Miscellaneous Sources*

Most experts believe the printed book will be around for many years. But it will be produced differently and it will be supplemented by publications in other media.

As Joseph Raben suggested in his summary of the NHPRC's word processing conference, documentary editors are not the only (and by no means the

first) scholars exploring electronic media. We also need to know what librarians, archivists, and publishers are doing and what various equipment and programming can achieve. We offer the following as an addition to the bibliography available at the conference.

—KW

### *Perspective*

Vannevar Bush, "As We May Think," *Atlantic Monthly* 176 (July 1945):101-108.

Rush Welter, *Problems of Scholarly Publication in the Humanities and Social Sciences* (New York, 1959).

Serge Lusignan and John North, eds., *Computing in the Humanities* (Waterloo, Ontario: University of Waterloo Press, 1977).

Primary Communications Research Centre, *Scholarly Publishers Guide: New Methods and Techniques* (PCRC, University of Leicester, 1977).

Maeve O'Connor, *The Scientist as Editor: Guidelines for Editors of Books and Journals* (New York and Toronto: John Wiley & Sons, 1979), chapter 13: "Editing in the Future: Innovation and Education."

Herbert S. Bailey, *The Traditional Book in the Elec-*

*tronic Age* (New York: R.R. Bowker Company, 1978).

*Scholarly Communication: The Report of the National Enquiry* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), especially recommendation eleven on the establishment of an office in the National Endowment for the Humanities to study and monitor the system of scholarly communication, recommendation twelve: "We recommend that the American Council of Learned Societies join with the Association of American University Presses and the Association of Research Libraries in establishing a standing committee composed of scholars, publishers, and librarians for continuing discussion of the nature and direction of technological change in the system of scholarly communication," and "Epilogue: A Longer View" (pp. 28-35).

### Periodicals

*The Bowker Annual of Library & Book Trade Information* (New York and London: R.R. Bowker Company) is a convenient guide to recent publications, studies, grants, etc.

*Computers and the Humanities* appears four times a year and is edited by Joseph Raben. Recent articles of particular interest include:

T.K. Bender, "Literary Text in Electronic Storage: The Editorial Potential," 10 (1976):193-199.

Wilhelm Ott, "A Text Processing System for the Preparation of Critical Editions," 13 (January-April 1979):29-35.

Paul Bratley and Serge Lusignan, "The Electronic Scriptorium," 13 (April-June 1979):93-103.

Yaacov Choueka, "Computerized Full-Text Retrieval Systems and Research in the Humanities: The Responsa Project," 14 (November 1980):153-169.

The April-June 1979 issue also contains a "Directory of Scholars Active." A listing for Peter and Miriam Shillingsburg's scholarly edition of William Makepeace Thackeray notes that they are using computer assistance in "collocation of texts, listing historical collation tables, emendations, alterations in manuscript, typesetting." For further information see Miriam J. Shillingsburg, "Computer Assistance to Scholarly Editing," *Bulletin of Research in the Humanities* 81 (1978):448-463.

*Publishers Weekly* covers electronics and publishing with a regular column, "Computer Update," and feature articles. Recent pieces include:

Gay Courter, "Word Machines for Word People," February 13, 1981.

Robin Shotwell, "Books on Demand," *ibid.*

Robert Dahlin, "Electronics and Publishing," in two parts, March 20 and 27, 1981; reprints available at \$2.50 from Frieda Johnson, *Publishers Weekly*, 1180 Avenue of the Americas, New York NY 10036.

Robin Shotwell, "Computerized Page Makeup: Just Around the Corner," April 10, 1981.

Recent articles in *Scholarly Publishing*, a quarterly, include:

Joseph Raben, "The Electronic Revolution and the World Just Around the Corner," 10 (April 1979):195-209.

John M. Strawhorn, "Word Processing and Publishing," 12 (January 1981):109-121.

Ian Montagnes, "Perspectives on the New Technology," 12 (April 1981):219-229.

Some of the papers from the Society for Scholarly Publishing's annual meetings are published in *Scho-*

*larly Publishing* (as well as in the Society's proceedings), e.g.,

T.S. Falletta, "Word Processing Interface to Typesetting," 11 (January 1980):171-178.

C.U. Greaser, "Writers, Editors, and Computers," 12 (January 1981):123-130.

### Interested Groups

The Association of American Publishers has a committee on new technologies which will act as a clearinghouse for information. Carol Risher is the Staff Director in the Washington office, 1707 L St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

The Association for Computers and the Humanities publishes a quarterly newsletter. Contact Joseph Raben, Editor, Queens College, Flushing NY 11367.

The Center for the Book at the Library of Congress, headed by John Y. Cole, is concerned with the future of the book, especially in terms of new technologies and competing media.

The work of the Centre de Traitement Electronique des Documents (CETEDOC), of the Catholic University of Louvain, is described by Paul Tombeur in A.J. Aitken et al., eds., *The Computer and Literary Studies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1973), pp. 335-340.

The Society for Scholarly Publishing, founded in 1978, publishes a quarterly newsletter and the proceedings of its annual meetings. The 1980 program included Constance U. Greaser on "Writers, Editors, and Computers," Peter J. Boehm on "User-Directed Photocomposition," and Michael Dodwell on "Technological Changes Taking Place in the Publishing Field," as well as sixteen other papers. The 1979 proceedings include Joseph Raben, "Setting Type in the Editorial Office: A Project Report," L.F. Buckland, "Book Composition by Author-System and Equipment Considerations," and Walter Grattidge, "Impact of Technology on the Future of Scholarly Communications." Further information is available from Elizabeth Fake, Executive Director, The Society for Scholarly Publishing, 2000 Florida Avenue, N.W., Washington DC 20009.

### Videodisks

"In the near future an optical system in which information is stored and retrieved by laser will make possible the storage on a disk of the contents of a library of several thousand books." Robert M. White, "Disk-Storage Technology," *Scientific American* 243 (August 1980):138-148.

### *Word Processors*

Buyers Laboratory, Inc., "Survey of Word Processing Equipment," *Library Technology Reports* 16 (July-August 1980):295-438. A description of word processors and discussion of features is followed by reports on 100 models.

*The Seybold Report on Word Processing* (Seybold Publications, Inc., Box 644, Media PA 19063). Analyzes one company's products in depth in each issue. The February 1979 issue, for example, devotes its 16 pages to the CPT 8000 and 6000 word processing systems.

And finally, encountered during the search for these sources,

H.O. Hmnnn, "Appropriate Typos," *Scholarly Publishing* (October 1980):31-36.