



COMPUTING NEWS

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Plan Ahead for VAX Down Times

As most VAXcluster users are aware, periodic service interruptions are a fact of life in the computing world. Hardware or software failures occasionally bring a system down without warning. However, most service interruptions are scheduled and predictable, and users can often plan ahead to avoid disruption of their work.

University departments that run VAX jobs on a daily or weekly basis can minimize the impact of interruptions by becoming familiar with the VAXcluster's maintenance schedule and the times operators are on duty. Guidelines for anticipating service interruptions follow.

VAXcluster Service Guidelines

Weekly Down Time (Fridays 10:30 pm - 11:30 pm) - The entire VAXcluster is brought down every Friday evening for system software backup and re-computation of disk quotas.

Operator Schedule - When an operator is on duty, users can request tape mounts, expect 30-minute or better service on standard printing and plotting requests, and receive assistance with many data communication problems. Operator staffing is scheduled as follows:

Monday - Friday 8 am - 11:30 pm
Sunday 4 pm - 11:30 pm

When VAX operators are off duty, users have access to VAX processors, disk resources, and data communications, but will not receive responses to requests for tape, printer, plotter, and other operator services.

Scheduled Hardware and Software Down Times - VAX maintenance is timed to impact the fewest possible users. The Center management at-

tempts to minimize the inconvenience in three specific ways:

- **System Notice.** The staff provides at least 48 hours' advance warning online via log-in NOTICE. When possible, maintenance notices are issued a week in advance.
- **Selective Maintenance.** The Center interrupts service on only those components that actually need repair.
- **Prioritizing Repair Schedules.** High-priority repairs are per-

formed at times that impact the fewest users, and that still fall within our contracted maintenance hours with DEC (currently 6 - 8 pm, weekdays). Less urgent repairs are scheduled between terms.

To obtain a copy of the Center's service guidelines, send a request via VAX MAIL to Fred Beisse (username FBEISSE) or call Fred at x4404. The guideline packet includes a survey asking users to indicate their time preferences for scheduled service interruptions. □

New VAX Rates Take Effect

On November 26, the Computing Center instituted a new rate structure for VAX machine charges. During hours when operators are on duty, charges for CPU and connect time are now divided into "peak" and "off-peak" periods. Off-peak rates offer a 50% discount to encourage VAX usage during slow times:

| | Peak Periods (M-F, 8am-5pm) | Off-Peak Periods (M-F, 5-11pm; Sun, 4-11pm) |
|--------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Connect Time | \$ 0.016/minute | \$ 0.008/minute |
| CPU Time | \$ 0.030/second | \$ 0.015/second |

Rates for unstaffed periods (no operator on duty) and for jobs run in the LOWSBATCH queue continue to be discounted 75% and 95%, respectively.

For complete information on computing charges, type \$ help uo info rates or pick up a copy of the Center's charge rate sheet in the Documents Room.

Campus Lab Managers Share Ideas

Microcomputer lab managers from several different departments on campus met informally in October to discuss mutual concerns and share information. At a second meeting in November, the group discussed lab access policies. Information on software and software licensing will be shared December 12. The topic for the January meeting will be networking with Novell and AppleTalk.

Current participants represent Biology, Business, the Center for Advanced Technology in Education (CATE), Computer Science, Geological Sciences, Human Development and Performance, Journalism, Physics, the Social Sciences, the EMU, the Continuation Center, and the Computing Center.

If you're interested in attending these informal sessions, please contact Sara Wyant at x4394 or via VAX MAIL (username SWYANT).

HOLIDAY SPECIALS

MPP Offers New Deals, Products

To celebrate the holiday season, the University's Microcomputer Purchase Plan (MPP) is offering a number of special deals on microcomputer products. The Center's Microcomputer Support Lab (Room 202) provides demonstrations and assistance with Apple, IBM, Zenith, Claris, Microsoft, and Ashton-Tate products. The Lab is open weekdays from 9 am to 5 pm. Holiday bundles and discounts are described below. See related handouts in the Lab or call 686-4402 for full details.



Apple - Apple has assembled a selection of holiday package deals for the Mac Plus, SE, SE/30, and Mac Icx. Many bundles include an Apple ImageWriter II printer, and one Mac Icx package offers an Apple LaserWriter IISC printer. All packages include HyperCard software. Apple's discount prices are in effect through January 31, 1990.



IBM - IBM specials are available through February 15, 1990, for all but PS/2 Model 25s, which are discounted through December 31, 1989. Bundles are offered for PS/2 Models 25, 30, 50Z, 55SX, and 70. All bundles include a mouse and a selection of software that IBM will install on the hard disk prior to delivery. All but the Model 25 bundle include the IBM 8513 color display.

With each holiday promotion order, buyers will receive a complimentary gift package that includes a mouse pad, power strip, and diskette case. IBM has also instituted a convenient new loan program. If interested, contact the Lab staff for details.



Zenith - Highlights of Zenith's offerings include the introduction of three new laptop computers and two new desktop models, the Z-386SX-16 and Z-386-20. Zenith is offering free upgrades to the 150 Mb hard disk on desktop model Z-386/25, and is discounting Microsoft Word and Excel to \$100 for both with all system orders. All new machines are available for shipping in December.



Claris - While supplies last, Claris is offering special prices on MacWrite II and MacDraw II. MacWrite II is discounted to \$45.00, and MacDraw II is available for \$75.00.

Buyers who purchased MacWrite

II since September, 1989, are eligible for a software update. Bring your original MacWrite II diskettes to the Lab during regular hours for updating. You'll also receive updates to the documentation.



Ashton-Tate - For a limited time only, Ashton-Tate is offering Full Impact and FullWrite Professional at special discount prices. While supplies last, buyers who purchase both Full Impact and FullWrite Professional will pay only \$120 for the two programs, or \$65 for each.

STAT CORNER

During the month of November, vendors introduced a number of new statistics packages, including SPSS for the Macintosh and OS/2, and a new version of EQS for the VAX.

SPSS for the Macintosh and OS/2: SPSS Inc. has announced that the SPSS package is now available for Macintoshes and PCs running OS/2. For information on these new products, call SPSS Inc. directly, at (312) 329-3310, or write

SPSS Inc.
444 N. Michigan Ave.
Chicago, IL 60611

New Version of EQS for the VAX: The Center has received Version 3.0 of EQS for the VAX. New features of this LISREL competitor include the ability to handle multiple population models and models with structured means (including missing data models), the Satorra-Bentler scaled Chi-squared statistic, Lagrange

Multiplier and Wald tests for distribution-free estimation, and bootstrapping and jackknifing capabilities.

For more information on Version 3.0, see *EQS: Structural Equations Program Manual* by Peter M. Bentler. To order a copy, call BMDP at (213) 479-7799, or write

BMDP Statistical Software Inc.
1440 Sepulveda Blvd., Suite 316
Los Angeles, CA 90025

- Joe St Sauver

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