



ADCIS SIG CBT

NEWSLETTER

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The Newsletter of the Association for the Development of Computer-based Instructional Systems Special Interest Group in Computer-Based Training

CBT IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

J. J. Turnbull

Greetings from across the Atlantic to the ADCIS SIG CBT. The emergence of a group concerned particularly with training is most welcome, as the priorities and constraints of CBT differ from those for Computer-Based Learning in an educational environment.

The growth in general of computing as a learning resource (called "Computer Assisted Learning" over here) has been relatively slow in the UK. In both education and training the emphasis has been on simulation and modelling with very few exercising or instructional systems.

A major influence during the last few years was the Government funded "National Development Programme in Computer Assisted Learning" (NDPCAL) which ran for the five years ending December 1977. NDPCAL in turn funded projects in educational establishments and in commercial and armed services training. The emphasis throughout was on transferability and institutionalisation, and matched funding was demanded from the institutions involved. Particular training projects funded by NDPCAL included a feasibility study for Post Office technical training, the develop-

ment of a management decision making system and, within military training, the use of packages to provide introductory experience in computer aided design of electrical circuits.

Also with NDPCAL were a number of studies (in both education and training) leading to the specification of a very comprehensive computer managed learning system. Called CAMOL (Computer Assisted Management of Learning), this was subsequently implemented by the UK computer manufacturer ICL and is now generally available to users of ICL equipment. Computer managed learning has maintained the respectability which CAI has so far failed to achieve.

Towards the end of the 5 years, NDPCAL undertook a future study on "Computers in Industrial Training and Management Development" as one of a number of similar studies. The report of this study forecasted significant growth, but it emphasized that for effective growth there was need for a national centre for information which could coordinate research and development. For the UK, ease of communication over relatively short distances would enable such an authority to maintain close contact with developers and users.

National organizations which are concerned with supporting computers in training include the Training Services Department (TSD) and Council for Educational Technology (CET). TSD is directly funded by the

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Articles on computer-based training are invited from all members of the training community. Manuscripts should be limited to one or two letter-sized pages, typed double-spaced, and submitted to the editor.

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CBT FOR PROFESSIONAL ADULTS

Robert C. Fratini

After reading my institutional affiliation, some of you may ask yourselves, "What's someone from The American College doing in a Special Interest Group for Computer-Based Training?" My response is that I believe that formal institutions of higher learning and most training departments have similar charters: what we're both really involved in is education for adult learners.

Adult learners are just beginning to be served by the traditional educational establishment. Historically, education has been relegated to the early years of a person's life, with any learning that might take place once the individual entered the employment market being the responsibility of the individual's employer (what we refer to as "training"). The American College, in contrast to traditional educational institutions, has provided the professional adult learner with educational opportunities through an "open university" environment since 1927, and the College's programs developed in a computer-based format are just one more way of reaching the professional adult student.

Just as corporate trainers seek to improve the ways employees perform their jobs, The American College seeks to promote learning within a relatively narrow professional area: life insurance and related financial sciences. Just as employees who have been trained can do better jobs, the life insurance professional can better serve his client after mastering programs such as those leading to the Chartered Life Underwriter (CLU)

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professional designation offered by the College.

Still another common concern is the efficiency with which learning takes place. Our students share your concern with the cost of time spent in learning, because most of them are self-employed life insurance professionals who are foregoing income by studying rather than selling. Because our students lead such busy professional lives, we share the trainer's desire for instructional delivery systems that are both flexible and time-efficient.

Enter the computer as a means of meeting these needs. Since 1976 the College has developed sizeable portions of 3 of the 10 courses in the CLU curriculum for nationwide delivery via the Control Data PLATO Network: Economics, Analytic Accounting, and the Mathematics of Life Insurance. The availability of these lessons offers our 60,000 students across the country an additional study alternative, one that is individualized to adapt to various learning styles and one that is available almost anytime they are. We are planning to develop additional computer-based and computer-managed materials, and we're excited with the computer's potential for meeting the needs of our geographically and educationally disparate population.

So as far as The American College is concerned, despite our name, we are very pleased to join our fellow teachers of professional adults in the ADCIS SIG CBT in an interchange of techniques and ideas, because what works for traditional education and younger students doesn't necessarily work efficiently for adult learners. The needs of our particular student population are specific and sometimes different from those of students who have been served well by computer-based education in the past.

We think it is time that we began developing the body of knowledge and

THE CHAIR'S VIEWPOINT

Jesse M. Heines

Interest in the SIG CBT continues to run very high and we are getting new members every month. I have just received the final program for the February ADCIS Conference, and we will now have three technical sessions, as well as our business meeting.

Papers will be presented at our technical sessions by representatives of the following organizations: U.S. Naval Academy, Federal Aviation Administration, Army Research Institute, U.S. Army Air Defense School, University of Illinois, United Airlines, Digital Equipment Corporation, and University of Delaware. Topics will range from simulation and computergraphics to computer-managed instruction. I believe that this is a strong showing for our first year, and I hope that as many of you will be able to attend as possible.

Our Special Interest Group Business Meeting will also be extremely important. Both of our current officers are holding temporary positions, and elections for a full slate of officers will be held. All members of the SIG CBT will be allowed to vote. That is, you are not required to be an associate or institutional representative to vote in a Special Interest Group election.

The fourth issue of this Newsletter will be distributed at the ADCIS Conference in San Diego. In the fifth issue, we will summarize the activities at the technical sessions and business meeting.

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CBT IN THE UK (from page 1)

Department of Employment to monitor and assist training activities throughout the UK. CET is funded by the Department of Education and was the administrative parent of NDPCAL. CET now supports a number of software distribution agencies, principally in the area of higher education, and maintains contact with the original NDPCAL projects. There is also the National Computer Centre (NCC) which, as part of its brief to increase the effective use of computers, is concerned with the provision of resources for computers in training.

There is evidence that the growth forecast by NDPCAL is occurring, as companies start to look at the capabilities of dedicated small systems and the feasibility of implementing training systems "piggy backed" on an organization's operations system. We

invite developers and users in the States to write to us and exchange ideas.

CBT FOR PROF. ADULTS (from page 3)

experience for trainers that ADCIS has provided for other users of computer-based instruction over the years. This is one of the primary functions of this Special Interest Group, because the computer is a unique medium for instruction with its own instructional design considerations that are different than those of print, film, slides, or television. By sharing our experiences, we have the capability to build upon each other's work rather than duplicating it, creating the kind of environment where true innovation can take place.

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