

COMPUTERS AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

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PREFACE

Information systems exist to serve people, not the other way around. If a system doesn't help the people within an organization help their clients, then it shouldn't be there. This has been said so often recently that it seems commonplace, but those of us who work with information systems and who teach about them know how hard this principle is to carry out in practice. It's all too easy to slip into familiar patterns that leave users and clients on the sidelines.

The same is true of most textbooks on information systems. All of them at some point stress the importance of people—users and clients. But when they get into the meat of the subject matter, they slip into familiar patterns. The result is usually a laundry list approach—the authors draw up a list of topics and tick them off as they cover each one. Along the way they lose sight of the “systems” aspect of information systems.

When I set out to write this book, I was determined to avoid this trap. I wanted, of course, to be current and thorough. But more important, I wanted to keep the systems perspective and the importance of people always at the forefront. I wanted students to see how computers affected their lives personally and in the context of the kinds of organizations in which they are likely to work.

The key features of *Computers and Information Systems* were all developed with these goals in mind. They include readability, a systems approach, currency, and a flexible organization.

Readability

The first and most important feature of this text is clear, direct, and lively writing. Without good writing, even the simplest concepts can seem obscure. I use numerous examples to illustrate key points. The primary source for examples comes from the world of business, although many business problems, say, in accounting, are applicable in any area.

Systems approach

I have adopted a five-part model as an information system for this book. The parts in this model are people, rules and procedures, data, software, and hardware. The parts are not equal, however—people are more important than the other four. In every chapter I relate the subject matter to this model.

I have developed four fictional organizations, complete with a cast of characters, as a way of showing how the elements of an information system actually work in an organizational setting. Most chapters start with a story that draws on one of these organizations or the people in them. The story usually presents the people in the organization with a problem that relates to the subject matter of the chapter. A wrap-up at the end of the chapter then shows how the problem is resolved.

FEATURES OF THE TEXT

Currency

In a fast-changing field like that of information systems, currency is important. I have endeavored throughout to include material that is as up-to-date as possible.

Flexibility

Computers and Information Systems is divided into five parts: Introduction, Hardware, Software, Information Systems, and Social Issues. Hardware and Software were written to be independent modules—depending on your preference you can go from the introductory chapters directly to software before covering hardware, or you can cover the material in the sequence in which it appears.

Other features

In addition to these key features, the book includes many other learning aids. These include:

- A **chapter outline** for each chapter.
- **Learning objectives** for each chapter.
- An opening **vignette** or **story** and a closing **wrap-up** for each chapter. These are usually taken from one of the four fictional organizations introduced in Chapter 1 and present the subject matter of the chapter in a realistic setting.
- **Key terms** set in boldface type and defined when they are introduced.
- **Case in point boxes** that present real cases related to the chapter material.
- **Career boxes** that focus on a career related to the subject matter of the chapter.
- **Enrichment boxes** with interesting supplementary material.
- A concise **summary** at the end of each chapter.
- A **key terms list** at the end of each chapter that lists the boldface terms in that chapter and the page on which they appear.
- A comprehensive set of **review questions**, including true-false, multiple-choice, fill-in, short-answer, and essay questions. Answers to all except the short-answer and essay questions are listed in the back of the book. The short-answer and essay question answers are found in the Instructor's Manual.
- An **appendix on programming in BASIC** that provides a comprehensive introduction to the BASIC programming language.
- An **appendix on number systems and binary arithmetic**.
- A **glossary of key terms** that contains concise definitions of all the key terms in the book.

Computers and Information Systems is designed for an introductory class in computers and information systems and meets or exceeds the curriculum for the first course in the Data Processing Management Association (DPMA) curriculum (CIS-1, Introduction to Computer-Based Systems). It presents a firm foundation for information system majors, for business students with other majors who must be familiar with information systems, and for students in other disciplines who need a general introduction to computers. Most students who take the course for which this book is written

are business majors, but I do not intend the book to be limited to business students. It can also serve students of diverse majors in a general service course. In fact at San Jose State my classes have many nonbusiness majors from the social sciences, the humanities, aeronautics, engineering, and health science areas.

THE INSTRUCTIONAL PACKAGE

Computers and Information Systems comes with a complete package of ancillary materials for both student and instructor. The package includes a student *Study Guide*, an *Instructor's Manual*, *Transparency Acetates*, a *Test Bank*, and a *Tutorial Disk* to accompany the appendix on BASIC.

THE STUDY GUIDE

The student *Study Guide*, written by Jerry Ralya, uses self-testing to help students master the material in the textbook. For every chapter in the textbook the *Study Guide* provides an outline, a list of objectives, a pretest, a detailed summary, and extensive review questions (with the answers provided in an answer key). Each chapter also includes a new boxed extract and an expanded discussion of the vignette/wrap-up sections of the text (called "Information Systems at Work"), to stimulate student interest in the material further.

THE INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL

The *Instructor's Manual* is a critical element in the instructional package. It contains material to help instructors organize lectures and class discussions and suggestions for using other elements in the package—including the *Transparency Acetates*, the *Test Bank*, and the *Study Guide*. In preparing it I tried to provide material useful to the full range of people who teach about information systems: both full-time and part-time instructors, veterans and first-timers.

For each chapter of the textbook the *Instructor's Manual* contains:

- A brief summary of the chapter that stresses its major instructional objectives.
- Annotated learning objectives.
- A glossary with definitions of the key terms in the chapter.
- A lecture outline that reviews the key points of the chapter. This outline is keyed to the transparency acetates, indicating when they should be shown.
- Teaching suggestions with ideas for enlivening lectures and discussions and pointers on how to make the most of the textbook and the other elements in the package.
- Case studies related to the material in the chapter.
- Answers to the end-of-chapter short-answer and essay questions.

TRANSPARENCY ACETATES

Computers and Information Systems comes with a set of ready-to-show *Transparency Acetates* for use with an overhead projector. All the diagrams have been rendered especially for projection. They include both completely original diagrams and important figures from the book.

THE TEST BANK

The *Test Bank* contains 3000 test items, including true-false, fill-in, multiple-choice, matching, and short-answer questions. The items were prepared

with the help of my colleague, Curt Stafford, a specialist in testing and evaluation for the School of Education at San Jose State University.

The *Test Bank* is available in printed form and on disk for the Apple II family, the IBM PC, and the TRS-80 Model III.

BASIC TUTORIAL SOFTWARE

A tutorial disk is available to accompany the BASIC programming appendix in the text. The disk, for the Apple II family and the IBM PC, lets students work with the model programs in the appendix.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A textbook like this could never be created in a vacuum. My goal, after all, is to serve the instructors and students who will use the book. Thus I owe a special word of thanks to the people who reviewed this book in all its many drafts and kept me in touch with the user perspective: Richard J. Batt, St. Louis Community College; George J. Brabb, Illinois State University; Frank E. Cable, Pennsylvania State University; J. Patrick Fenton, West Valley College, California; Richard Fleming, North Lake College, Texas; George Fowler, Texas A & M University; Carol C. Grimm, Palm Beach Junior College; Thomas M. Harris, Ball State University, Indiana; Rodney J. Heisterberg, Austin Community College; Lorinda Hite, Owens Technical College, Ohio; Prof. Peter L. Irwin, Richland College of the Dallas County Community College District; Cynthia E. Johnson, Bryant College, Rhode Island; Dee Joseph, San Antonio College; E. R. Lannon, University of Maryland; Ida W. Mason, California State Polytechnic University; Leonard Schwab, California State University at Hayward; Douglas A. Waechter, Sheridan College of Applied Arts and Technology, Ontario, Canada; Charles M. Williams, Georgia State University; A. James Wynne, Virginia Commonwealth University; and Fatemeh Zahedi, University of Massachusetts.

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Many people helped me in creating and evaluating the text and in putting together the elements of the package. My wife Lynne Burstein created the glossary and index. She also served as my constant advisor and confidante for the entire project.

Curt Stafford wrote the 3000 questions in the *Test Bank*, and is responsible for their high quality. Jay Barta collaborated with me on writing and testing the computer programs in the text and the appendix. Paul Ross helped me with the Case Studies in the *Instructor's Manual*. Shelly Langman provided a rigorous and extremely helpful review of the appendix on programming in BASIC.

One person—Jerry Ralya—I cannot begin to thank enough. Jerry's work is evident on every page of this book. He edited the text and put together the material for most of the boxes, including the career and case in point boxes. He also wrote the *Study Guide*.

Rachel Hockett of Cobb/Dunlop Publisher Services saw the book through production under an incredibly tight schedule. With her efficiency, intelligence, and tireless good humor, she is as responsible as anyone for the handsome text you're reading.

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Many people at Holt, Rinehart and Winston helped make this book possible. Tom Hogan, my Holt sales representative first discussed with me the prospect of writing this text. David Chodoff, Associate Editor at Holt, survived my thousands of questions, my lengthy telephone calls, and reams of manuscript to help organize what sometimes seemed a shapeless mass into a real textbook. Paul Nardi, Production Manager, is responsible for the overall appearance of the book. Also to be thanked at Holt are Paul Becker, Tom Gornick, Howard Weiner, John Tugman, Greg Kahn, and Mary Pickert.

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Finally, I have to thank the students from my classes at San Jose State who used this book in all of its many drafts over the last several years. Their comments—both critical and encouraging—helped make this book what it is.

Jerome Burstein
San Jose, California

BRIEF CONTENTS

Preface xvii

PART ONE INTRODUCTION 2

- 1 Information Systems and Computers: Tools for Business 4*
- 2 What Makes Information Systems Tick: From People to Hardware 30*
- 3 Information Systems in the Workplace: Computers in Business 64*
- 4 The Evolution of Data Processing and Information Systems: A Bit of History 94*

PART TWO HARDWARE 126

- 5 The Central Processing Unit: Smaller and Quicker 128*
- 6 Input and Output Devices: Faster and Friendlier 158*
- 7 Secondary Storage: Disks, Tapes, and More 188*
- 8 Teleprocessing: Linking the World 210*

PART THREE SOFTWARE 242

- 9 Designing Software: Programs to Provide Solutions 244*
- 10 Structured Programming: Tools for Programmers 272*
- 11 Programming Languages: A Comparison 300*
- 12 Software Packages: Programs Off the Shelf 328*
- 13 System Software: The Master Programs 356*

PART FOUR INFORMATION SYSTEMS 382

- 14 Information Systems and Computers: Management Techniques 384*
- 15 The System Development Process: A Structured Approach 406*
- 16 Databases: Managing Data Resources 438*
- 17 System Control: Data Integrity, Security, and Privacy 466*
- 18 Self-Analysis: Buying Your Own Microcomputer 494*

PART FIVE SOCIAL ISSUES 524

- 19 Careers in Information Systems: Prospects and Options 526*
- 20 Computers and the Future: Impacts and Issues 552*

Appendix A: An Introduction to Programming in BASIC A-2

Appendix B: Number Systems and Binary Arithmetic B-2

Glossary of Key Terms G-1

Answer Key K-1

Credits C-1

Index I-1

DETAILED CONTENTS

PREFACE xvii

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION 2

1 INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND COMPUTERS: TOOLS FOR BUSINESS 4

▶ ENTER THE COMPUTER 5

COMPUTERS IN THE 1980s 6

A large part of our lives / The computer: what it is and what it does / Four model organizations

THE NEED FOR INFORMATION 9

Data and information / The value of information

CONVERTING DATA INTO INFORMATION 11

Meet the computer / Five elements make an information system / Input / Processing / Output

▶ CASE IN POINT: THE USER TAKES CHARGE 13

TYPES OF COMPUTERS 20

Microcomputers / Minicomputers / Mainframe computers / Supercomputers

▶ WRAP-UP: BUYING AN AIRPLANE TICKET 23

SUMMARY 26

KEY TERMS 27

REVIEW QUESTIONS 28

2 WHAT MAKES INFORMATION SYSTEMS TICK: FROM PEOPLE TO HARDWARE 30

▶ DETERMINING INFORMATION NEEDS 31

WHAT IS A SYSTEM? 33

Parts of a simple system

ELEMENTS OF AN INFORMATION SYSTEM 35

People / Rules and procedures / Data / Software / Hardware

▶ CASE IN POINT: FULL-FUNCTION FOLKSINESS 38

▶ PROBLEMS AND PROBLEM SOLVING 42

THE SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT PROCESS 54

CONCEPTS: THE SYSTEMS ANALYST 56

CONCEPTS: DEVELOPING THE NEW INFORMATION

SUMMARY 59

KEY TERMS 61

REVIEW QUESTIONS 61

3 INFORMATION SYSTEMS IN THE WORKPLACE: COMPUTERS IN BUSINESS 64

INFORMATION SYSTEMS IN BUSINESS 66
Business functions at the office / Office systems / Toward the virtual office / Working at home

FROM RAW MATERIALS TO THE FINAL USER 78
Design and manufacturing / Agriculture / Resource extraction / Transportation / Communications / Wholesaling and warehousing / Retailing / Finance, insurance, and real estate

SUMMARY 90
KEY TERMS 91
REVIEW QUESTIONS 91

4 THE EVOLUTION OF DATA PROCESSING AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS: A BIT OF HISTORY 94

BIRTH OF THE MODERN COMPUTER 96
The earliest calculating machines / Toward the electronic computer

THE EVOLUTION OF COMMERCIAL COMPUTERS 104
First-generation computers (1951-1958) / Second-generation computers (1958-1964) / Third-generation computers (1964-1971) / Fourth-generation computers (1971-) / Toward future generations—fifth and beyond

SUMMARY 121
NAME LIST 123
KEY TERMS 123
REVIEW QUESTIONS 124

PART TWO: HARDWARE 126

5 THE CENTRAL PROCESSING UNIT: SMALLER AND QUICKER 128

THE HARDWARE SURGEONS 129

TYPES OF COMPUTERS 130

Analog, digital, and hybrid computers/General- and special-purpose digital computers

THE COMPUTER AND THE INFORMATION SYSTEM 131

THE CPU: WHAT IT IS AND HOW IT WORKS 131

The parts of the CPU/Control unit/Main memory/Arithmetic/logic unit/Registers/The machine cycle

THE SOFTWARE SURGEONS 133

DATA REPRESENTATION 137

Powers of two: number systems and the computer/Bits, bytes, and characters/EBCDIC and ASCII/Parity bits/Computer words

CHIPS: THE STUFF THAT COMPUTERS ARE MADE OF 144

Microprocessors/Random access memory (RAM) chips/Read-only memory (ROM) chips/Old memories, new memories

THE SOFTWARE SURGEONS 146

THE CPU AND COMPUTING POWER 151

SUMMARY 154

KEY TERMS 156

REVIEW QUESTIONS 156

6 INPUT AND OUTPUT DEVICES: FASTER AND FRIENDLIER 158

INPUT AND OUTPUT: OUR CONTACT WITH COMPUTERS 159

Input and output concepts/Input, output, and the information system/Input and output trends

TERMINALS: THE LONG ARM OF THE COMPUTER 163

Display terminals/Point-of-activity terminals

SOURCE DATA AUTOMATION 169

Optical scanners/Magnetic scanners/Three-dimensional scanners/Speech recognition systems

PUNCH CARD INPUT AND OUTPUT 174
TOWARD FRIENDLIER OUTPUT 175
Impact printers/Nonimpact printers/Graphical output devices/Audio output devices/Microfilm output devices

SUMMARY 184
KEY TERMS 185
REVIEW QUESTIONS 186

7 SECONDARY STORAGE: DISKS, TAPES, AND MORE 188

THE ROLE OF SECONDARY STORAGE 190
The storage hierarchy/Information systems and secondary storage/Selecting the secondary storage mix/Online and offline storage

MAGNETIC DISK STORAGE 192
Types of magnetic disks/Retrieving data from magnetic disk/Advantages and drawbacks of magnetic disk storage

MAGNETIC TAPE STORAGE 199
Types of magnetic tape/Retrieving data from magnetic tape/Advantages and drawbacks of magnetic tape storage

MASS STORAGE 203
Magnetic strip cartridge systems/Multiple disk drive systems/Optical disk systems/Videotape systems

OTHER TYPES OF SECONDARY STORAGE 205

SUMMARY 207
KEY TERMS 208
REVIEW QUESTIONS 208

8 TELEPROCESSING: LINKING THE WORLD 210

TELEPROCESSING TODAY 211
Applications of teleprocessing/Teleprocessing and the information system

NETWORK ORGANIZATION 216
Centralized versus distributed data processing/Network forms

TELECOMMUNICATIONS MEDIA 223

Types of media / Media capacity and mode

TELECOMMUNICATIONS CONVENTIONS 226

*Digital to analog and back / Transmission codes /
Asynchronous and synchronous transmission / Protocols*

COMMUNICATIONS PROCESSORS 230

*Multiplexers / Concentrators / Front-end
processors / Message-switchers*

OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL 234

*Private and common carrier networks / Value-added
networks / Local area networks*

SUMMARY 238

KEY TERMS 239

REVIEW QUESTIONS 240

**9 DESIGNING SOFTWARE: PROGRAMS TO PROVIDE
SOLUTIONS 244**

PROGRAMS AND THE INFORMATION SYSTEM 246

*Software and rules and procedures / Software and people / Software
and data / Software and hardware / Software and other software*

PROGRAMMING AND PROBLEM SOLVING 247

*Everybody solves problems / The program development cycle /
Buying software / Programming and the system development
process*

STRUCTURED PROGRAMMING 251

*The need for structured programs / How structured programming
aids programmers and managers / Criticisms of the structured
approach*

MANAGING FOR STRUCTURED PROGRAMMING 254

*The early programming approach / The chief programmer team
approach / The "egoless" programming team
approach / Structured walkthroughs*

STRUCTURED PROGRAMMING: THE HIPO METHOD 257
Visual table of contents/More on modules/Overview and detailed HIPO diagrams

SUMMARY 267
KEY TERMS 269
REVIEW QUESTIONS 269

10 STRUCTURED PROGRAMMING: TOOLS FOR PROGRAMMERS 272

DETAIL DEVELOPMENT 274
Programming as a rite of passage/Detailing the program logic/Structured program logic patterns/More examples of detailed design

PUTTING THE DETAILED PLAN INTO ACTION 287
Debugging procedures/Program documentation

SUMMARY 296
KEY TERMS 297
REVIEW QUESTIONS 298

11 PROGRAMMING LANGUAGES: A COMPARISON 300

SPEAKING THE COMPUTER'S LANGUAGE 302
All those languages: a programmer's Tower of Babel/Information-system elements and language selection/How computer languages differ

LOW-LEVEL LANGUAGES FOR HARDY PROGRAMMERS 308
Machine language/Assembly language

HIGH-LEVEL LANGUAGES 310
BASIC/Pascal/COBOL/FORTRAN/Additional high-level languages

VERY-HIGH-LEVEL LANGUAGES 320
RPG/Simulation languages/List-processing languages/Toward natural languages

SUMMARY 324
KEY TERMS 326
REVIEW QUESTIONS 326

**12 SOFTWARE PACKAGES:
PROGRAMS OFF THE SHELF 328**

PREWRITTEN PROGRAMS READY TO RUN 330
Speeding up the program development cycle/The advantages and disadvantages of prewritten software/Canned software and your information system

MULTIPURPOSE PACKAGED SOFTWARE 333
Word-processing software/Electronic spreadsheets/Database managers/Electronic mail/message systems/Graphics packages/Integrated packages

PACKAGES FOR GENERAL BUSINESS 345
Accounting/Management/Finances/Engineering/Manufacturing/Marketing

**PACKAGES FOR FUN, EDUCATION, AND
CONVENIENCE 347**

SELECTING PACKAGED SOFTWARE 351

SUMMARY 353
KEY TERMS 354
REVIEW QUESTIONS 354

**13 SYSTEM SOFTWARE:
THE MASTER PROGRAMS 356**

INTRODUCTION TO SYSTEM SOFTWARE 358

THE OPERATING SYSTEM 359
Job control program / Input/output manager / Program manager / Memory manager

CAREER BOX: SYSTEM PROGRAMMER 362

PROCESS PROGRAMS 370
Language translators / Utility programs / Library programs

MICROCOMPUTER SYSTEM SOFTWARE 374

COMING IN POINT: SETTING SYSTEM STANDARDS 375
WE'VE GOT OUR OWN OPERATING SYSTEM 376

SUMMARY 377
KEY TERMS 379
REVIEW QUESTIONS 379

PART FOUR: INFORMATION SYSTEMS 382

14 INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND COMPUTERS: MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES 384

THE UNFLAPPABLE MAN 385

**MANAGERS: CHARTING A COURSE OVER TROUBLED
SEAS 386**

Making decisions / Management levels / Reports managers need

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS 391
What an MIS does / Fitting an MIS into a business

DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEMS 395

FORMING THE NUCLEUS OF PRODUCTIVITY 396

INFORMATION RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS 399
TODAY'S CHANGING ORGANIZATIONS 399

COMING IN POINT: INFORMATION RESOURCE MANAGER 400

WE'VE GOT OUR OWN OPERATING SYSTEM 401

SUMMARY 402
KEY TERMS 403
REVIEW QUESTIONS 403

15 THE SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT PROCESS: A STRUCTURED APPROACH 406

THE UNFLAPPABLE MAN 407

STRUCTURED SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT 408
PROBLEM RECOGNITION 409
SYSTEMS ANALYSIS 410
Preliminary investigation / Detailed investigation

COMING IN POINT: INFORMATION-SYSTEMS CONSULTANT 411