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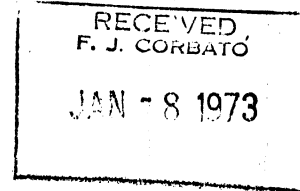
January 3, 1973

Dean James D. Bruce
1-206

Dear Jim,

Although we all must agree that during the past two years the I.P.C. has moved Multics into a more "service" oriented status, it is also true that we have not reached a plateau where we can pause and hand out awards. Your letter of December 18 substantiates this.

Let me outline the plans I.P.C., P.D.O., and Honeywell have to further improve the assurance of changes and our responsiveness to user problems.

1. New System Testing Procedure for Subsystem Developers

A list of subsystem developers is being prepared from which we will select a few developers and solicit their support in pre-testing system changes of the following nature.

    a. All new systems, which, by definition, are major variations from the current version and are defined by a digit change to the left of the decimal point, i.e. a change from 17.6 to 18.0.

    b. All changes to existing systems which affect the present user interface, or,

    c. All changes to existing systems which result in upward incompatibility with the older user interface.

We will, during Development Machine Time (probably 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.), have these users run test streams, of a critical nature, against files copied from the production system onto the development hardware. No charges to users will be made for the work done and useful output will be printed, copied, or reinstalled on the service system for these users, if they so desire.

I assume from your letter that your group should be included in this selected set of users.

2. Trouble Report Processing Improvement Program

Renewed emphasis on the handling of Multics Problem Report Forms, for both the standard and urgent variety, is being made within P. D. O. and I. P. C. I can assure you, however, that your "Urgent" message of December 4 was not ignored until Al Kraning's talk with Roger Roach on December 7, 1972.

Dick Steinberg, Bob Daley, and I have "Multics as an I. P. C. service" as number one on the agenda of our weekly meetings.

3. System Change Control Procedure

Effective in the very near future all production systems changes will be approved by either Dick Steinberg or me before installation. This procedure has been most successful on the OS/360 system, and, although it will be more difficult to implement on Multics, it will be worth the effort. I cannot give you a date for this implementation as the mechanics of the procedure are not completely established.

4. New Pricing Mechanisms

During January, in direct anticipation of the new Multics hardware and software, the I. P. C. will be revising Multics rates and charging mechanisms. Hopefully, we can produce equitable, reproducible, and attractive rates prior to beginning our second effort of encouraging Multics use, on and off campus, to fill the expended capacity.

Finally, I would like to address the perceptions outlined at the end of your letter.

A. Paying users are test loads........

This is not the case. You must agree that it is more difficult to debug time-sharing systems than batch systems because of the load dependent bugs. However, our plan to include groups like yours in new system testing should clear up our intent to not debug on line.

B. The paying customer has the lowest priority........

Ever since we have been able to control use of the system by class of user our efforts have been to maximize the number of paying users and minimize the non-paying users. The paying customer actually has highest priority.

C. Multics is too expensive........

I agree, but must add, relative to what ---- TSO, which is hardly an equivalent; CP; a PDP 10? Let's say Multics is expensive for trivial things, and we are working hard to overcome that situation.

D. Systems changes are not adequately pre-advertized.........

Item 3 in the plan outline of this letter should take care of this.

In summary, we are looking forward to 1973 as our Multics year: new hardware, new systems, new location, and a new approach towards the users. We have appreciate your patience in the past and assure you we will not be so dependent upon it in the future.

Sincerely,

Weston J. Burner
Director

cc:
Corbato, F. J.
Daley, R. C.
Kraning, L. A.
Scott, R. H.
Steinberg, J. R. (sc: JDB ltr. 12/18/72)