

Saltzer

For the Multics Corner of the IPC Bulletin  
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The popular Basic Language, which was originally developed at Dartmouth College, will be added shortly to the languages which are supported on the Multics system. A version of the compiler adapted from another GE time sharing system is currently operating on a test basis and will be installed early in December for general use. For those not familiar with Basic, it is very easy to learn and has much of the logical expressiveness of Fortran. Its design emphasizes convenience of use for small problems and rapid compilation; conversely, is not well adapted to large or involved computations. Although execution efficiency of the Basic object code is not quite as good as that of PL/I or Fortran, for most small problems this effect should be insignificant.

The first of a set of DS-270 fixed head disk storage units has just been installed and are being checked out. Software to drive them is also in checkout; they should be brought on-line some time in December. These devices, which are intended to replace the older model DS-10 disks, have a much better performance (this should show up in better console response times) for the same cost, and are also expected to improve on the poor reliability the DS-10's have exhibited when driven hard.

Professor Arthur Evans of the Electrical Engineering Department has become the first user of the Multics' ability to provide a restricted environment for some users. 140 students in 6.231, Programming Linguistics, are using Multics to do their homework in the PAL language. He has implemented both the PAL compiler and the restricted subsystem in the BCPL language.

Some telephone switching and data set troubles which have plagued Multics users are coming under control. Several older model data sets in the 645 room which would arbitrarily disconnect certain callers have now been upgraded to eliminate the condition. With a full load of users in the afternoon, busy signals upon dialing 8 have begun to appear. If you get a busy signal, please report it immediately to the 645 operator at M.I.T. x-5948 so that he can record the number you called from and the pattern of usage of the telephone trunks at the time. These patterns will allow the telephone company to reconfigure the data switch and rid us of the busy signals.

Consultation on Multics is available Monday through Friday, 2-4 P.M. in the PAI office. Users are encouraged to report there, system bugs, usage difficulties, and problems, so that improvements can be promptly made both in the system and in the documentation.