July 21, 1970

To Members of the Faculty and Staff:

On November 14, 1969, the Information Processing Center announced the general availability to the Institute community of the Multics computer system for a minimum period of three years, extending from October 1, 1969, to September 30, 1972. That announcement also stated that the Multics system would be improved and enriched during its initial period of operation and would eventually supplant the 7094-based Compatible Time-Sharing System (CTSS) as the Institute's primary, general-purpose time-sharing system. At that time, a tentative termination date for CTSS service was set at December 31, 1970.

During the eight-month period since the Center's initial announcement concerning Multics, the performance and level of use of that system have both increased substantially. Further improvements in performance and stability of the system, together with the development of a growing set of user-oriented software and documentation, are expected during the Summer and Fall of 1970. Concurrent with the increased use of Multics and also of the System/360, Model 67, usage of CTSS has been decreasing. Total use of CTSS during May, 1970, represented 56 per cent of the use during the same month one year earlier and only 37 per cent of the use two years earlier when two separate CTSS systems were in operation.

During the last month, the needs of the M. I. T. community for the continuation of CTSS service and the costs of providing that service have been discussed by the Information Processing Advisory Committee. The following decision concerning the future management of CTSS has been recommended by the Information Processing Advisory Committee, endorsed by the Information Processing Board, and approved by the Provost:

1. General availability of CTSS to the Institute community will terminate on December 31, 1970.

2. Access to CTSS after January 1, 1971, will be available to users only under the following conditions:

a) Each user must assure the Information Processing Advisory Committee that his computing needs can be met only on CTSS and that no other computer environment is able to satisfy his needs.

b) Remaining users of CTSS will be charged rates designed both to recover the costs and to assure that there is no financial advantage for those remaining on CTSS.

c) Service of CTSS will be discontinued on sixty days' notice when the total income from the remaining users no longer covers the marginal cost of providing the system.

The Information Processing Center stands ready to assist users with the conversion of their software from CTSS to other systems; any user who wishes assistance should contact Mr. J. Richard Steinberg in Room 39-427, Extension 7184. Users who wish to apply for access to CTSS after January 1, 1971, should contact Mr. Robert H. Scott in Room 39-565, Extension 4104.

The hardware configuration on which CTSS now runs has been in operation on the M.I.T. campus for approximately seven years and its reliability, while still excellent, is becoming harder to predict. The Information Processing Center will do its best to maintain the system in first-class operating condition for the remaining users; however, guarantees cannot be made and users of the system should realize that the probability of serious hardware or software failures is increasing.

In the announcement of November 14, 1969, the Center made official its commitment to the Multics system. With this announcement, the limitations that apply to the provision of CTSS service to the community are specified. Statements outlining the Center's commitments to the OS/360 and CP/67-CMS environments will be made in the near future.

Robert H. Scott, Director
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