

INTERDEPARTMENTAL

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY CAMBRIDGE, MASS. 02139

from the office of

June 28, 1972

Mr. T. H. VanVleck
Information Processing Center
Room 39-575

Dear Tom:

Re: Your big memo on operator communications and tapes

Overall these memos look quite good. I would propose a significant change in the operator communication pattern: that any extra operation consoles after the initializer console be logged in under an operator's name, rather than attached to the initializer process. I see several reasons for this proposal:

1. Generally, one doesn't need more than one console per available operator. By giving each operator his private console, responsibility for various functions can be more distinctly separated. By having him log in under his own name, accountability can be achieved.
2. Having several processes doing typing assumes that the single initializer process will not get more overloaded than it already is. Response to logins and new_procs can be maintained at a high level only if the initializer does not spend most of its time moving operations messages to and from several teletypes. The original proposal does not gracefully expand to a system with 5 tape operators and 5 printer operators.
3. The problem of allowing the quit button to be used goes away.
4. Different operator processes could have different login responders, according to the privilege, skill, or need of the particular operator.
5. One could easily add remote operators, for remote batch stations, with no worry about a remote operator fouling up the answering service process (and therefore the system) by using some privileged command.

Mr. T. VanVleck

-2-

June 28, 1972

Probably the same basic strategy of having a message routing dim in the answering service, in each operator process, and in the daemon process, would handle my proposal.

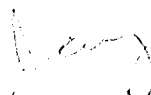
On the subject of tapes, the only observation I have is that there probably needs to be some escape for handling emergencies of the following two kinds:

1. A valuable Multics standard tape which for some reason cannot be read with tape_ must be read by a hastily-put-together program using nstd_. It sounded from your proposal that nstd_ would refuse Multics standard tapes out-of-hand, without even a way for privileged intervention to whack a path through.
2. A Multics standard tape from another site which has the same reel identifier as one of our own needs to be read.

I think that both of these cases can be handled within your proposal by trivial extension.

Could you please let me borrow the ANSI tape format standard long enough to make a copy? Thanks.

Sincerely,


Jerome H. Saltzer
Associate Professor of
Electrical Engineering

JHS/mw

xc: R. Daley
J. Gintell