

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

PROJECT MAC

Reply to: Project MAC  
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Cambridge, Mass. 02139

Telephone: 1617 864-6900 x6201

June 29, 1972

Mr. Robert E. Hoffman  
Account Manager, M.I.T.  
Honeywell Information Systems, Inc.  
275 Wyman Street  
Waltham, Mass. 02154

Dear Bob:

On Tuesday, we discussed the typographical font used on the new PRT-300 printer, and you suggested that I collect some samples of what we feel are "preferred" fonts, for a Multics-type operating system.

Enclosed are three items:

1. A sample program listing printed on the new PRT-300 printer. While perhaps suitable for some applications, we generally agree that it is not really appropriate for ours.
2. A sample program listing printed on the older Honeywell PRT-202 printer. The font used on that printer is a version of IBM's "Courier 72" font. This font is quite appropriate for the applications we have in mind, although the old PRT-202 printer has other problems of alignment and smudging.
3. A sample technical report, computer printed with IBM's original "Courier 72" font. (It has been reduced to about 70% of its original size.) This sample is indicative of the appearance of a font designed for publication. It is also an example of a typical system application which is not yet possible using either the PRT-300 (because of the font appearance) or the PRT-202 (because of the print quality).

There are a fairly large number of similar applications: report generation, computer-generated personal letters, etc., which require that the printed result be read by a non-computer person, who is often quite intolerant of such things as poorly-engineered font design.

Mr. R.E. Hoffman

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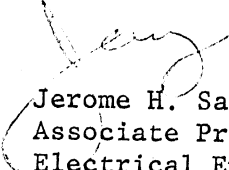
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One gets the impression that the PRT-300 font may have been designed with the intent of calling attention to the computer origin of the printout. In fact for some applications one wishes to avoid pointing such things out.

We have at present at M.I.T. several users who are trying to print books, manuals, and other documentation using Multics. Today, they resort to such tactics as writing the information out on tape and taking it to the nearest IBM 1403 printer.

Any help you can provide in finding a more suitable font design for the Multics systems will be appreciated. Thank you very much.

Sincerely yours,

  
Jerome H. Saltzer  
Associate Professor of  
Electrical Engineering

xc: C.T. Clingen  
F.J. Corbató