New Technology in the Human Services

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Software Directory 2nd Edition

Courseware Development and Implementation

Programs in Practice

Computers and Child Protection

Information Systems - Models, Issues and Uses

Beyond Software

Contents

4. Software Index

6. *Jackie Rafferty* - Courseware Development and Inplementation

8. *David Colombi* - Programs in Practice

10. *Ann Buchanan* - Computers and Child Protection

12. *Bryan Glastonbury* - Information Systems: Models Issues and Uses

15. *David Colombi* - Beyond Software

17. Software Directory

51. Alphabetical Index of Programs

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For this issue we have David Colombi of West Sussex Probation Service as Guest Editor. David obtained his Ph.D. at Southampton and has a long association with the Centre. With Jan Steyaert of Antwerp University and Jackie Rafferty from the Centre, he jointly edited *"Human Services and Information Technology: A European Perspective"* which was launched at the HUSITA 3 Conference in May 1993.

This issue of *New Technology in the Human Services* is the second edition of the Software Directory and replaces the first edition published in Volume 5 of the journal. The Directory provides information about and reviews a hundred and sixteen computer programs that are relevant to the work of the Human Services and it is combined with and preceded by thematic reviews in key areas of -

- Courseware Development and Implementation
- Computers and Child Protection
- Programs in Practice
- Information Systems - Models, Issues & Uses
- Beyond Software

The most obvious need for a new edition of the Directory is to catalogue new programs that have become available. However the directory also seeks to provide a framework which helps to understand how software is developing and being used and its significance for the human services. The thematic reviews examine developments in the use of computer sofware in different areas as a part of this process which is complemented by the structure of the directory into eleven subject headings with a short introduction to each section.

Just as new programs have come onto the market since the last edition, so some are outdated or no longer supported. Others have been dropped as the criteria for inclusion have been refined to focus more clearly on relevance to social work education and practice rather than just being useful general computing learning programs or applications. However the problem of deciding what to include and to exclude is simpler in theory than in practice. Whilst many programs select themselves, the interface between human services and medicine, law, and research continues to be hazy and ill-defined and there is a natural reluctance to exclude potentially useful material. A balanced approach has been attempted with inclusion of some programs relevant to social work research and to developing access to practice and resource information through authoring tools such as hypertext. A selection of programs relating to psychiatry, psychology and psychotherapy continue to feature although with greater emphasis on assessment and treatment at the expense of management and accounting. Forty three of the seventy five programs in the original directory survive into the new directory which means that nearly 65% of the programs listed are new inclusions. This gives some indication of the changing pace of development.

Along with changing programs, the information that people need to know about programs has changed. This is reflected in a new layout for entries. Previously, detailed technical information was critical as hard disks were not standard, current memory (RAM) was commonly 256K or 512K and 5¼" rather than 3½" disk drives predominated. It

was a chancier business as to whether a particular program could be used, whereas most programs listed here will run on a standard IBM compatible computer (referred to simply as a PC). Technical information is restricted to two factors, the first being the type of program which is usually DOS, Windows or MAC. DOS programs run on PCs and are "character based", but can include graphics. Windows programs use a graphics environment, with use of a mouse and requiring a higher specification PC (normally at least a 386SX chip, 2 Megabytes RAM and a hard disk). MAC programs are for Apple Macintosh computers which are based on a graphics environment. Where a hard disk is required for DOS programs or other technical limitations apply then this is shown under the heading *Limitations*.

The Directory entries describe the aim and functioning of each program and then separately comment briefly on the program. These are personal responses rather than critical evaluation of programs and sometimes it is not possible to make a full assessment of a program from a demo disk. Almost all new programs have been reviewed by the Editor and most of the older programs have been re-reviewed. Costs listed should only be taken as a rough guide as prices can go up or down and many have complex pricing structures. Demo versions of some programs are available through the CTI Centre for Human Services at Southampton University but purchases have to made from suppliers who will usually also charge for shipment/postage. Programs supplied as Shareware can be freely copied but if the program is of use to you then you should pay the registration fee which is shown in the program or on a README file. Freeware programs can be freely copied but not resold for profit.

Sources of Programs

The chief problems for any directory are about finding out what material is available, what should be included and how it should be organised. The first edition leant heavily on North American programs that are available through CUSSNet at the University of Texas in Arlington. This continues to be a rich source of material and we are grateful to Dick Schoech of CUSSNet for his continuing help. We have however been more selective and have excluded programs that are less relevant to practice or less relevant outside America. This particularly excludes several systems for managing client information in psychotherapy and medical agencies and billing clients. Our bias has been towards including those that are case management systems in the sense that they contribute towards good practice rather than just provide efficient administration.

The phenomenon of a proliferation of American client information systems is of interest, reflecting the smaller size of agencies and a desire to share products, not always for financial reasons. In Britain, with larger agencies, client information systems are more likely to be mainframe or mini computer systems designed for specific agencies or groups of agencies. This culture has spilt over into other types of programs so that many important developments about access to resource information and similar projects are taking place within social work agencies but are not being made available to others. There are notable exceptions but this parochial and fragmented approach not only inhibits development by restricting the available supply of programs that can be shared but also discourages agencies and social work educational institutions from making best use of those that are available. Often this is part of the 'two worlds' of mainframe and PCs, so that mainframe system users may be using dumb terminals on which external software cannot be run. Many agencies also have policies that do not allow software from external sources to be used for fear of corruption of existing programs either accidentally or through introduction of computer viruses. In this context it is reassuring to note that all of the nearly two hundered programs reviewed for inclusion in this Directory were tested for computer viruses and, without exception, all disks were clear.

Other established sources of programs are commercial software companies, development centres within universities and private individuals who market their work. In the first category are the welfare benefits programs from companies like Ferret who have led the way in creating and establishing use of applications relevant to professional practice. In the second category, some of the key developments in software for use in child protection work have come about through work at the University of Bath under Andrew Kerslake and others. In America, Dick Schoech at the University

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of Texas in Arlington and Walter Hudson at the University of Arizona have been key sources of software development. In the third category of private individuals, a significant contribution is made by Ken Manning of Psych Systems 2000 and by social work professionals who have turned to programming as a part time activity such as Tony Pipe of Fitzwilliam Software.

The business of learning about new programs comes through the day to day work of the Centre, through conferences, other publications and informal contacts, with the HUSITA conferences as a key means of sharing, learning and meeting with others involved in the field. Events too such as the South West London Probation Service Annual "Computer Open Day" are an invaluable source of information about new developments. However, while the Directory includes several programs from the United States of America and some from Canada in addition to British ones, regretfully it does not at present include programs from other parts of Europe. The book referred to at the start, *"Human Services and Information Technology: A European Perspective"* provides information about the state of development of programs in different countries but it has not yet been possible to catalogue the programs in a practical and accessible way. That perhaps is another task for ENITH to sponsor, but journals such as *Sozialmagazin*, published by Juventa include a catalogue of programs (*Katalog - Software für die soziale Arbeit*) which shows the state of development in Germany.

Another area of development is for programs to offer a choice of languages. Some do already, as for example *Ash Plus* or a client system developed by Jackie Rombaut of the Belgian Probation Service which uses three languages. Multi-language programs can work in different modes at once, as for example assessment programs that ask questions in one language but deliver subsequent reports in other languages as well, or information programs that offer the user a choice. Such developments are relevant not just for international co-operation and sharing programming resources but also because of cultural and linguistic diversity within countries and the importance of addressing the needs of ethnic minorities.

As noted earlier, programs are listed under eleven subject areas, although inevitably some programs could equally well fit in more than one section. The overall shift in the focus of the Directory is away from programs for managing basic information about clients for administrative, accounting and accountability purposes into those that are concerned with education and training and supporting direct work with clients. This trend is an encouraging feature of present developments and there is a continuing improvement in the quality and presentation of the programs. This applies to those from academic and private sources as well as from commercial companies and this is important given the continuing rise in expectations from computer users as the general standard of software has improved. This does not however mean that the era of software lagging far behind hardware progress has ended, for while there are new and exciting programs for this Directory to celebrate, much of the development is ad hoc and spasmodic. There is little overall sense of purposeful direction for the development of programs either in courseware to support social work education and training, in social work agencies to support practice or in access to information. That alas remains a challenge and is one that requires location of responsibility to undertake the task as well as of adequate resources and skills to achieve it.

In this context, the move away from DOS to Windows applications and Multi-Media Systems is important not only through the flexibility offered by Windows applications but because of the skills and time needed to develop programs. The *Keisha* program on child protection is an outstanding example of development of a high quality social work simulation program for education in child protection work that sets new standards of presentation and sophistication. The existence of programming tools for Windows and Multi-Media (as used in the development of *Keisha*) helps, but the transition is a major one. For programs to be developed to the standard of *Keisha* takes an investment of time, but the accumulating evidence is that it is an investment that pays off.

David Colombi

Directory Index

Software review information 5

Thematic reviews

Courseware Development and Implementation 6
Jackie Rafferty

Programs in Practice 8
David Colombi

Computers and Child Protection 10
Ann Buchanan

Information Systems - Models, Issues & Uses 12
Bryan Glastonbury

Beyond Software 15
David Colombi

Programs

1. Assessment and Treatment

AAInfo 17
Alcohol 17
Anxiety Program 17
Ash Plus 17
Captain's Log - Cognitive Training Demo 18
Case Planning System 18
CASS - Computer Assisted Social Services 18
Client Questionnaire 19
DAESy - Drug Abuse Expert System 19
Drugs 19
Emotional Security 20
Help Software 20
NAVH Placement System 20
Personal Excellence Package (PEP) 21
Problem Management Program 21
Relativity 21
TrAPP 21

2. Benefits

Bene Plus 22
Child Support 22
Helper Plus & Helper 3 22
Housing Finance Savings and Loan System 23
In-Work Helper 23
Lisson Grove Welfare Benefits Advice Program 23
Maximiser Plus 23
Renovator, PC Plus and 3 24
Welfare Benefits Adviser 24
XQ 24

3. Child Protection

CALA - Child Abuse Legal Adviser 25
CCLAWS - Child Care Laws 25
CHIAC 25
Keisha 26
The Law 26

4. Crime and Probation

Breach 26
Crisis 27
Crown Court Computer System 27
Driver 27
ICMS 27
Island 28
JJMS 28
LegAid 28
Probis II 28
Report 29
Service 29
Stealing Program 29

5. Tools and Training

AMS - Academic Merit System 29
An A to Z of Love and Sex 30
CareData 30
CataLIST 30
Community Services Locator 31
Demobbs: NASW NM BBS tutorial 31
DrugInfo 31
Empirical Practice 31
Guide 32
HyperHelper 32
HyperRez 32
Information Please 32
I-view Skills Sampler Support Kit 33
MHC-BIB (Mental Health Bibliography) 33
Notebook 33
PC-CAI (PC-Computer Aided Instruction) 34
Question Mark Professional 34
Question Designer 34
Social Work (Scotland Act) 1968 35
SpellGames 35
SWBIB 35
TAS - Teaching Assessment System 35
ToolBook 36
Trainers 36

6. Employment

PC Pathway 36
Performance Mentor 37
Personnel Policy Expert 37
Rave 38
Retirement Planner 38

 Copyright Centre for Human Services

7. Equal Opportunities and Disability

ADA.KIT (American Disabilities Act) 38
Augment 39
Discrimination 39
Equal Opportunities at Work 39
Freeboard 39
Learn to Sign 40
Stickey 40

8. Health Assessment

ACHI 40
Alcohol Withdrawal 40
CATP 41
DecisionBase 41
Hamilton Scale Depression Assessment 41
HIV/Aids Study Stack 42
Mental Health Assessment 42
TP Write 42
Wellness Checkpoint 42

9. Management

AMIS 43
Client Information Management System 43
Design Issues for Decentralised SSIS 43
DonorWare 44
Foster Care Protection 44
Human Services Information Systems 44
Management System 44
Negotiator Pro 45
R/Client 45
Servus Volunteer Database 45
siAMS 46
Sisyphus 46
SuperSync 46
Vixen 46

10. Qualitative Research

Abtab 47
(The) Ethnograph 47
FormGen 48
MEL-Micro Experimental Laboratory 48
Survey It 48

11. Statistics

Graphs and Stats 48
Instat 49
Kwikstat - Statistical Database Analysis 49
SAS System 49
SNAP 49
SPPC 50
SPSS 50
Understanding Statistics 50

Alphabetical Index of Software 51

Software review information

The programs are listed in the categories and order shown on the Directory Index. Each category has a short introduction. Technical information is kept to a minimum. Most programs are for IBM compatible DOS based computers and the assumption is that users have at least 512k RAM available and one floppy disk drive. Where programs require a printer or a higher specification this is indicated under "Limitations". Where programs use Windows on IBM compatible machines or run on MACs (Apple Macintosh computers) this is indicated. Windows programs require a hard disk and normally at least a 386SX chip and 2 Megabytes of RAM to run satisfactorily. The headings used are -

Type: DOS, Windows, Unix, Psion etc

Version: This shows the version, whether a demo version was reviewed and the year in brackets.

Author: Included where known and relevant.

Use: This identifies relevant settings for using programs. Many programs are relevant to more than one category as for example Assessment programs which are also relevant for teaching purposes.

There then follows a description of the program and how it works. Programs usually include documentation about the program either within the demo version or on a file on disk (usually called README or READ.ME or similar) and there may be brochures available.

Cost: Where known, costs are shown with the date. Prices may have gone up or down since. Programs often have complex pricing structures with discounts for site licences or educational use. Shareware programs can be copied freely but registration fees should be paid if the program is of use to you. Registration fees are low, but help authors to keep developing Shareware. Freeware can be copied and used freely. Neither Freeware nor Shareware can be resold other than to cover costs.

Limitations: This shows whether a printer is needed or a hard disk for DOS programs. Also memory needs where known. However for some programs requirements for the actual program may be higher than for the demo version reviewed. It is important to check with suppliers first. Ordering forms may be included within the demo.

Source: This shows the producer of the program. Demo versions of some programs are available form the Centre for Human Service Technology at Southampton University.

Comment: *Comments are in italics and are the personal opinion of the reviewer. They are not critical evaluations of programs, but provide some guidance on relevance, ease of use and appearance.*

Courseware Development and Implementation

Jackie Rafferty

This section aims to explore some background and current issues involved in the development and implementation of courseware for human service higher education courses. The Higher Education Funding Councils funded the Computers in Teaching Initiative Phase 2 in order to disseminate information on software for teaching and learning (courseware) following the Phase 1 initiative to develop courseware.

Development

In 1989 when the CTI Centre for Human Services started there was little UK software specifically designed for teaching and learning and the work of the Centre focused on creative use of practice based agency software, or courseware designed in North America, to encourage teachers to use computers in their teaching. Teachers in the Human Services were relatively new to the idea of using computers, and more broadly, information technology on the curriculum. It is clear from the work of the Centre that there is now wider interest in the use of the technology but still relatively little to offer teachers and students which is of high quality, centrally relevant to their curriculum and easy to use.

The Centre has recognised for some time the urgent need for more UK based courseware to be developed centering on the curricula of UK courses and therefore have actively pursued funding through various avenues. The most recent bids to develop courseware has been through the TLTP (Teaching and Learning Technology Programme) which in September 1993 announced the second year awards. The aim of the TLTP was made clear in the application information -

"The aim of the programme is to make teaching and learning more productive and efficient by harnessing modern technology. This will help institutions to respond effectively to the current substantial growth in student numbers, and to promote and maintain the quality of their provision. Particular importance is attached to ensuring that the benefits of the programme spread throught learning in higher education, and priority will therefore be given to supporting projects which promise a high degree of transportability, and which may involve consortia of institutions. The ultimate objective is a decisive extension in the use of technology in learning so that, where appropriate it becomes an integral and established feature of the delivery of higher education."

The Centre was involved in two consortium bids in round two of TLTP. The first, focusing on the social work curriculum, along with several other bids within the discipline did not succeed. The second bid, entitled *Caring Professions* and submitted by the University of Bournemouth in partnership with the CTI Centre for Human Services and the Open Learning Foundation did succeed. Funding has been approved for the first year, and subject to review, for the following two years to develop multi-disciplinary, multi-media courseware modules for 'Interpersonal Skills' and 'Research Methods' teaching aimed at nursing and social work students. Another funding source will also provide a module on teaching of 'Information Technology and Social Work'.

This section looks at some of the authoring tools the Centre is considering using; **Guide**, **ToolBook** and **Question Mark** are becoming standard tools throughout the CAL development constituency, **HyperHelper** is a North American DOS product and we have found it to be flexible, easy to learn and to use. The CTI Centre's conditions of funding do not allow it to undertake courseware development and therefore a new structure has been set up so that the TLTP funded work, the CTI work and other linked projects now come under the umbrella of 'The Centre for Human Service Technology', still based in the Department of Social Work Studies at the University of Southampton.

Implementation

Developing courseware is essential as is disseminating information about programs through initiatives such as CTI, but they are not the only ingredients that need to be in place before the aim of the TLTP can be realised. Equally important is the ability of teachers and students to be skilled in the use of the technology and for an infrastructure that enables a variety of methods of learning with information technology as a tool. A few universities, such as Durham, have put in place campus wide computer literacy projects with the aim of making teachers and students computer literate. Many of the enquiries the Centre has received over the last four years have been about IT and Social Work teaching where the emphasis is on

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computer literacy. The Centre for Human Services has always taken the line that in principle computer literacy teaching should be a centralised function and not department dependent, though there is evidence from the literature which supports the argument that computer literacy training is best undertaken by subject teachers so that the familiarisation with computers is context related. The reality is that responsibility for skills teaching is usually taken from within departments, often by bringing in people from related disciplines resulting in uneven teaching across departments. It is only now becoming context related. Nevertheless more students are familiar with the use of the technology. There are a range of packages which aid learning of generic computer literacy skills. Teaching needs to be matched to the software used in the institution and usually the student computer rooms provided by centralised computing services are adequate for that kind of skills teaching.

The next stage is more difficult in infrastructure terms. The Centre's response to enquiries on teaching literacy skills is that computer literacy is important both for study skills and for future use, and the next two steps are to equip students with a critical and ethical perspective and understanding of the use of IT in human service agencies and also to consider the teaching of the curriculum through the use of computer assisted learning.

Delivery

Multi-Media has come to mean a combination of graphics, text, audio and video material delivered through the computer. It requires comparatively high specification delivery computers and it is only within the last year that the price of such machines has fallen to the point where they are affordable by the education sector for other than specialised tasks. As a minimum, a multi-media computer will run Windows 3.1, have 4Mb of RAM, be fitted with a sound card, speakers and an SVGA monitor and, if not networked, 120Mb plus hard disk and increasingly a CD-ROM drive. JANET, the Joint Academic Network, which enables academics to transfer ASCII files and communicate globally is due to be upgraded to SuperJanet which will also allow graphics, video, formatted text and audio files to be delivered to computers linked to the network or able to access the network by dialling up the local higher education institution through a modem. This opens up exciting possibilities for students to access academic material from their department, the library, their place of work or from home. Herein lies a problem; many students of human service courses are mature students who do not live in college accommodation but commute from their homes. Their time in the institution is limited by the need to spend up to 50% of the course on agency placements as is the case with Diploma in Social Work courses. The rest of the course will be full with lectures, tutorials, seminar groups and increasingly computer assisted learning. It is expected that students will spend considerable time studying at home, therefore as we pursue the challenge of implementing computer assisted learning, should academics insist that students have high specification computers at home with all the relevant software, or should courseware be developed that runs on a lower specification machine? The question remains.

In higher education institutions the hardware and delivery mechanisms are nearly in place, at least theoretically. In practice social work courses are unlikely to have developed their own resource rooms with networked computers linked to JANET. The model for student computer use followed in most institutions has been large rooms with up to fifty computers in serried ranks which do not lend themselves to teaching methods which the Centre encourages. Ideally students should be able to sit at a computer to do personal work, move on to paired or group discussion, be able to see the teacher for class discussion and move between the different modes with ease in the same room. Students should also be able to take away on disk the results of their work along with the disk versions of the source material for further study and review.

Conclusion

The issues outlined above need to be explored in depth and the Centre will continue with this task. The Higher Education Funding Councils expect a major shift in teaching methodologies to encompass computer assisted learning meeting its objectives of *"making learning more productive and efficient by harnessing modern technology"*. It will require dissemination of existing technology support for teaching; development of new products and strategies; and funding for ensuring the infrastructure, training and support are in place before expectations are realised. Teachers can and do question the motivation for introducing computer assisted learning but productivity and efficiency cannot be dismissed and there are important advantages of flexibility and improved quality of teaching that the Centre would promote. The Human Services disciplines have not been in the forefront of developments but it is important to build upon the gains made over the last four years.

The author is co-ordinator of the CTI Centre for Human Services at the University of Southampton.

Copyright Centre for Human Services

Programs in Practice

David Colombi

The title of this section is a deliberate evocation of the earlier journal *PIP - Programs in Practice* which pioneered the idea of a software directory of programs relevant to social work practice in 1985. Much has changed since then, not least in that most of the twenty two different and mostly incompatible computers listed have disappeared from the market. What was evident from that era was a great sense of excitement and enthusiasm for the idea of using programs with clients, helped by the access to low cost home computers. The dissipation of much of that enthusiasm can be attributed in large part to the incompatibility of systems and to the limited amount of relevant software available.

While the evolution of IBM as the main standard solved one problem, in many agencies it only relatively recently that PCs have become available for use by practitioners and clients and in others this is not yet the case. In some agencies computers are made available with little thought about using them for anything other than word processing and administrative tasks. Access to suitable software is a continuing problem with practitioners having limited awareness of what software is available, what it does, what it costs and where it can be obtained. This directory seeks to redress the balance, but that alone does not address the more fundamental problem that use of computer software in practice is seen by some social work practitioners as suspect, irrelevant, inappropriate or at odds with social work values.

Issues about social worker attitudes and the use and effectiveness of software in social work practice have been addressed in this journal and in a growing body of literature in this country and in other countries. What is increasingly clear is that the ground is shifting from hostility based on legitimate fears about the use of computers to increased accountability and management control over practice, to a more positive one of welcoming systems that support and facilitate practice. This applies particularly to systems that provide information about practice and resources to enable the social worker to deliver a better standard of service to clients, but there is a growing acceptance of the idea of using computers directly with clients for assessment and help in solving client problems. Computers are seen less as a threat to professional judgement, more as an aid although the amount of relevant software is still limited.

The evidence for the effectiveness of using computers with clients in the human services is substantial and is addressed in the relevant literature. It includes evidence that clients like working with computers, trust and feel able to confide in them, respond to their thoroughness and non-judgemental nature and can be more honest with them in discussing such personal matters as sexual problems, alcohol and drug use, criminality and suicide attempts. Our purpose here however is not to examine that evidence but to focus on how computers are being used in practice and the needs and potential for development. We can identity three broad areas of practice information, resource information and assessment and help, which are considered in turn.

Resource information

The provision of easily accessible, accurate and up to date information about the resources needed to provide services to clients is fundamental. It covers information about services provided by the agency, local community resources and national sources of advice and help. Services, statutory and voluntary agencies, self help groups, homes, hostels, accommodation, employment and access to grants and benefits all come under this umbrella. It is an area where some agencies are making progress on in house systems, generally focused on agency resources and local resources, but few if any areas could claim to provide comprehensive information. Such information can be provided through computer programs or increasingly by on-line database systems which are discussed in the later review *"Beyond Software"* on page 15.

Software in this area includes the **NAVH Placement System** from the National Association of Voluntary Hostels, which provides information about voluntary hostels. The major American system **Community Services Locator** goes beyond simply resource information and is discussed in the review *Information Systems - Models, Issues, Uses*. **Trainers** details information about social work training courses, whilst in the area of employment **PC Pathway** and **Rave** are sources of information about careers, although each acts as an assessment system as well. Similarly Benefits programs are also concerned with resource provision and are referred to later.

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Practice Information

Human service workers function in a complex environment framed by theoretical and practical knowledge, by legislation and statutory rules and by agency policies and practices. Keeping this type of information understandable, up to date and accessible to staff is an obligation of agencies and essential to good practice. Computers have a major contribution to make and again many agencies are developing in-house systems for policy information. Programs here include **CALA, CCLAWS, CHIAC** and **Keisha** for child protection legislation and practice. Other guides to legislation include **ADA Kit** on the American Disabilities Act, **Equal Opportunities at Work** and **Social Work (Scotland Act) 1968**. Knowledge systems include **DAESy, DrugInfo, Alcohol Withdrawal, Hiv/Aids Study Stack, TrAPP** all of which provide information about different aspects of working with alcohol, drugs and HIV/Aids problems. **I-View Skills** advises on interviewing skills and **Emotional Security, Problem Management Program** and **Stealing Program** advise on working with different types of problem situations. **MHC-BIB** and **SWBIB** provide access to Mental Health and Social Work bibliographic information. **Breach** shows information about procedures for taking action for Breach of Probation Orders and **Service** provides information about the Probation Service.

For developing practice information within agencies, **Information Please** and **Empirical Practice** are general development tools that facilitate access to text information as do hypertext systems such as **Hyperez**. More specifically **Personnel Policy Expert** provides detailed assistance in development of personnel policies.

Assessment and Help

Some of the earliest work on use of computers for assessment and treatment took place in psychology and psychiatry, both of which are represented here and are of continuing significance for the thoroughness of the assessment and treatment approaches used. A good example is **DecisionBase** which is based on the DSM IIIR psychiatric diagnostic methodology and which lends itself to computerisation. Inevitably in all disciplines some approaches to working with clients are more suited to a computerised approach. Similarly personality and psychological testing is relatively easily computerised and features as in the **PEP - Personal Excellence Package**. Cognitive development is another area as applied in **Captain's Log** which assists people recovering from brain damage or in the **Help Software** (Help-Stress, Help-Esteem, Help-Think or Help-Stress) which uses Cognitive-Behavioral therapy and Learning Theory as a framework for promoting change.

In Social Work a major advance came with the development of **CASS - Computerised Social Assistance** written by Walter Hudson of Arizona University. This provides a comprehensive system of case management, diagnosis, problem assessment and evaluation, service or treatment planning. It includes a low cost student version and a client self assessment system. It remains an outstanding development even if over cautious about advising professional help. Other programs with a wide ranging approach to social work assessment are the **Case Planning System** from Psych Systems 2000 and **Ash Plus**, the latter being notable in being dual language - English and Spanish.

Other social work assessment programs tend to be more specific in their focus with a range of Welfare Benefits programs leading the way. This is a well established area of computer use for client assessment with **Maximiser Plus** from Ferret Systems, **Lisson Grove Welfare Benefits Advice Program** and **Welfare Benefits Adviser** as leading examples. Also established is use of computers in child care assessment, particularly through **CHIAC** which was referred to earlier in relation to practice information. This is an area in which systems can provide expert advice and guidance but by doing so can assist in reducing the massive stress and rapid turnover of staff associated with this work.

Turning to other specialist areas, **DAESy** and **TrAPP** are comprehensive systems for working with drug and alcohol users based on expertise from a wide variety of sources. These were developed in a probation context but can be used by professionals in wider settings. Also in this area of work, **Alcohol, Client Questionnaire** and **Drugs** are for direct use by clients and focus on assessment and client knowledge about alcohol and drugs. Also for use by clients is **Crisis**, a computer game that confronts probation clients with crisis scenarios to encourage thinking about consequences of actions.

Finally, in the area of disability, **Augment** is for assessment and advice on aids to assist people with communication problems and **Freeboard** similarly assists people who are not able to use keyboards and includes access to a range of devices including a camera system to detect head movements.

The author is Guest Editor

Computers and Child Protection

Ann Buchanan

Take one middle-aged, moderately computer illiterate academic; give her a program that she finds to her surprise she can not only work, but can actually relate to; then find her, having overcome the nightmares of linking into the network, of crashing the program, of remembering the entry code and password (despite her fail-safe technique), leading a class of thirty nine unrelentingly critical students on how to use these child care computer programs **CHIAC** and **CCLAWS**. This poor academic is either past her sell-by date, or the program(s) are worth buying. This is not to say that they could not be improved.

These two programs come from the SSRADU (Social Science Research and Development Unit) stable at the University of Bath. Their birth is related to two simple realities. Firstly that child care social workers should know what they are doing. They should know the parameters of the law in which they have statutory powers, and they should know the research on which they base their decisions. The second reality is that many child care social workers probably do not know their child care law (at least that precisely), and often have little idea of the research which could support their decisions.

Here at the University of Southampton, in our child care teaching in the Diploma of Social Work, we looked to **CHIAC** and **CCLAWS** to change the second reality. However, at an early date, the whole project nearly floundered because of the tight conditions of the licence. The obvious place to have the programs available was on the computers in the library where students could experiment in the privacy of their own time. From my point of view it was also important that they were available in the library because the only money I had been able to extricate from the University to pay the basic £800 plus initial fee and the £120 or so annual updating fee, was from the library budget. For one reason nor another it was nearly a year before a formula was found which satisfied SSRADU's licence conditions and our students' needs.

CCLAWS is, as its name suggests, the Child Care law component. On **CCLAWS** you can, among other things, look up the meaning of "Parental Responsibility", the conditions necessary before taking an Emergency Protection Order and the grounds for a Care order. On **CHIAC**, the child care practice program, you can, as you hold the telephone to your distraught caller, use one finger to check out on the Good Practice Guide and discover what questions you should ask next. Alternatively as the GP rings and wants to refer a "Munchausen" you can finger in the letters and find out what he or she is talking about. All very helpful for social worker credibility.

Both programs are useful information tools, albeit at a fairly basic level. Using **CHIAC** and **CCLAWS** I was able to reference a case study for an American Journal in an afternoon. Using **CCLAWS** I was able to check out the precise sections of the Act and the relevant Guidance and Regulations; using **CHIAC** I was able to highlight the relevant research. Happily I was familiar with the papers suggested. Anything that helps the academic write more papers at a greater speed, will not only help the academic's career but sell the computer program.

Students broadly speaking react in two familiar ways. On the one hand, there is the young whizz who advances on **CHIAC** as if making contact with a potential sexual partner. On the other hand, there are students more like the author, who have to get really steamed up with incentives, like if you do not use it you may fail your course, before they will even approach the computer. Formal hands-on sessions with lots of uncritical support overcome most fears. Students quickly learn that only one finger is necessary to operate the program, and generally speaking only four keys .... up, down, to the left, to the right - apart from the ubitiquous 'Enter' key.

Our Social Work Law in Practice course is assessed by case studies where students have to quote the relevant sections of the law and the appropriate sections of the Children Act Guidance and Regulations. With the help of **CCLAWS** students have reached a very high standard. Indeed this has been commented upon by our external examiners. **CCLAWS** helps students get inside the law, see its relevance, and understand exactly what they can, and more important, cannot do. The word then spreads and further computer phobic students overcome their fears. **CHIAC** was also rated highly by students. It gives students the idea that there really is a body of knowledge which might be useful to them in making decisions. **CHIAC**'s

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drawback is that some of the research is fairly old and has originated from the USA. Brighter students noted this, and rightly wondered whether too much validity should be placed on it. This problem is partially answered by a facility to check sources. Through sources students can access a commentary on the research including an assessment of its reliability. It was edifying to note that my prize research of the 1970's was assessed as only "moderately reliable".

Lecturers may be tempted to use the programmes linked for example to something like **Question Mark** for formal assessment. This would save considerable marking time, but I have anxieties that such assessment would mark not what students know but their computer literacy. It may yet come to this. In Hampshire Social Services **CHIAC** and **CCLAWS** are available to all social workers on Hantsnet, their cross county information and communication service. My students commented that many social workers in the local offices were not aware of the existence of these programs. They had never learnt to use them. Our students, were able to show off their skills by giving demonstration classes to their Practice Teachers. Very empowering for students. As computer literacy grows, lecturers can have higher expectations of students, and it may then be fair to use computer assessments.

I have only recently seen a demonstration program of **Keisha** which is a new Windows social work simulation program in which the student/social worker is given the task of investigating a child abuse complaint about a girl called **Keisha**. The program uses graphics to represent the available options such as a phone, a car for visits, people for meetings and a resource filing cabinet. The user chooses how to use these tools to investigate the complaint and has to contribute opinions, with the option of getting guidance along the way from experts, who may or may not agree. There is also access to detailed information about law and practice as in **CCLAWS** and **CHIAC**. The full system will provide an assessment back to the student on their performance. The program is American so the law and some aspects of procedure are different, althought the problems are universal. For more details of all three programs, see section 2 starting on page 25.

For an Apple Macintosh fan, I warmed to the technology with windows and pictures where you can click on an option. It made windowless and pictureless **CCLAWS** and **CHIAC** look dated. However I was worried that there was little room for differential diagnosis, although this may not be such a concern with the final version. The program was about Failure to Thrive, and that was what the problem was going to be. Of course, in the real world, it would be a very dangerous jump for a social worker to come to such a conclusion without first having other life threatening conditions checked out by the medics. I think the technology would attract students. The developers of **Keisha** have undertaken research on the effectiveness of the system which was presented at the HUSITA 3 conference in May 1993 (R. Satterwhite and D. Schoech, *"Multi-Media training for Child Protective Service Workers: Results of initial development and testing"*).

Social workers need information. One of the drawbacks of **CHIAC**, is that people's learning curve is faster than Chiac's updating service. Even with regular updating, students and practitioners quickly learn what the program has to offer and then it is redundant. **Keisha**, and such programs would have to offer not only improved technology but also a wider bank of research, which would also need to be regularly updated. It is important to remind students that using programs such as **CHIAC** and **Keisha** is no substitute for thinking. It would be very worrying it students accepted the information available uncritically. This is less of a problem with **CCLAWS**.

In the brave new world of tomorrow, I can see a time when I will be redundant as a teacher. I can see banks of computers with rows of students beavering away making meaningful relationships with programs such as **CHIAC**, **CCLAWS** and **Keisha**. They will learn how to spot abuse, the criteria for working in partnership with families and what to do when a young person is being looked after. When they go out into practice they will take their pocket computer and draw up packages of care, face to face with clients. If they need more information, they have only to push a button. It will all be there. The only thing I worry about is that human beings are not as predictable as computers. What happens when the angry father whose child is being legally removed decides to smash the computer. Maybe students still need to learn how to make meaningful relationships with clients and this cannot be taught by a machine.

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Information Systems - Models, Issues and Uses

Bryan Glastonbury

Two sets of data form the basis of most information systems in the caring services - about clients and about resources. Client data ranges from the equivalent of a card index through to a full case file. Resource data may be in the form of *inputs*, the raw materials for provision of services, such as staff, skills and budgets, or of *outputs* - the range, quantity and characteristics of services provided. Less common data sets are price lists for goods and services, structures for personal and social needs, or complex legal frameworks and rules such as those covering eligibility for benefits. This raw material has increased in scale and comprehension, but the real change has been in the range of information now drawn from the data, and the uses to which it is put.

Early information systems in the human services sought to emulate existing manual systems in ways that were more efficient, accurate and faster. Hence computerised staff records took over from salary ledgers and client records replaced the often uncomfortably large card indexes. It was also discovered that programs like SPSS could produce statistical snapshots or cumulative (annual) reports which traditionally took hours of tedious labour.

Major landmarks in progress include moves from remote queues to the interactive potential of being on-line; the development of micro-processors and the consequent scope for system flexibility and devolution; improved program languages, systems and screen design; and the rise of networking. In strong support was a continuing drop in the price of equipment in inverse relationship to its increasing sophistication and capacity. Twenty years ago there were no micro computers, no word processing packages and no accessible databases. Everything connected with computing was surrounded in mysticism, fathomable only to 'experts', while the rest of us approached with deference, scepticism and hope.

Today we are some way along the path to making valued computer applications accessible to professional care staff and many of their clients. More contentiously we are making progress in the view of technology as an aid to human service itself not just to its management and administration, and in overcoming suspicions which have led to the costly duplication of manual and computerised systems. Where have we now reached in the use of information systems? Two illustrations will offer some answers to that question.

Assessment & Care Management (ACM)

The core of the Hampshire Social Service Department (HSSD) system is a network linking agency staff to a substantial client database. It is part of the Hantsnet authority-wide network which ranges from staff bulletin boards to major policies and committee minutes and a fast e-mail service.

When the Government developed community care policies it advocated care management as the method of approach. Following widespread discussion and demonstration care management pilots, HSSD then drew up a detailed and precise specification for a new commercially written computer program - **ACM**. This uses Windows on a PC with standard Windows designs and modes of operations, whilst interfacing with the existing client information system. The front screen offers icons for Assessment, Care Planning and Opinions, with a button for on-line help. **ACM** is designed for use directly by social workers and other care staff, rather than administrative staff.

Initial entry into **ACM** prompts the user to search for existing knowledge of a caller/client. If none is found then a new record is started. Existing client details can be reviewed or a new assessment made and a full range of needs specified. **ACM** offers a comprehensive framework for professional assessment rather just linking needs to potential services. Following assessment a timetabled package of services can be set out and costed. It is possible to test out the costs and availability of different combinations - a valuable modelling opportunity.

After reviewing options and negotiating possible choices with the client, a firm care proposal can be logged, which is then drawn to the attention of senior staff who can authorise allocation of funds and resources to allow the care plan to proceed. The Opinions section enables client feedback, so their views on the care management and services they receive can be recorded, and eventually used to improve the quality of provision.

ACM completed trials during 1993 and will be fully implemented in early 1994. In its appearance, accessibility to professional staff, entry into the *Windows* mainstream, quality of output and cost effectiveness, it moves the use of information technology in receiving and meeting the needs of clients into a new generation of sophistication.

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Community Services Locator (CSL).

While **ACM** has an underpinning philosophy of supporting professional caring and strengthening professional output in the areas of assessment, care planning and resource usage, **CSL** takes a radically different approach. It aims to automate part of the human service process in such a way as to minimise the need for professional input from staff such as social workers. **CSL** operates within the context of Information and Referral (I & R) in North America, where it is used by a range of agencies.

The entry point is an approach by a member of the public or an intermediary for information, advice and possible referral for help about a personal or social need. Whereas a conventional client referral intake incorporates a professional assessment, **CSL** links issues identified by the caller to the 'Infoline Taxonomy', which is a structured categorisation of human needs within the computer program. The Taxonomy is in turn linked to a database of services in the caller's locality, so the immediate output of the system consists of information for the caller about possible approaches for service.

CSL is highly consumer focused, and opens the way for the caller to make requests or enter into negotiation for a care package. At the same time any agency using it can log the content of the call in a linked client record, which will be recalled at any subsequent contact or can be used to trigger follow-up. **CSL** has evolved over a number of years, so is neither new nor *Windows* based, but it has opened up the prospect of a consumer led non-professional approach to caring, with whatever strengths and weaknesses such a path may contain.

Information System Issues.

The role of information systems in enhancing or replacing the care professional is just one of a range of issues opening up for the human services. **CSL**'s use of the Infoline Taxonomy offers objectivity and comprehensiveness; yet there are dangers in an approach which rests too heavily on the initiative of a caller to get information, advice or service help. One risk arises from the general observation, valid across the world, that the social service resources available to meet people's needs are never sufficient. In short, demand for service exceeds the supply of services. As a result a distinction is often drawn between *wishes* (a person's requested help) and *needs* (those situations in which, following assessment, the provision of help is warranted). Integral to the distinction between *wishes* and *needs* is a process which, hopefully, helps bring demand and supply into balance.

Broadly it is possible to identify three types of response to the imbalance of demand and supply. One is to let market forces act, with price as the variable which achieves balance. The second is not to intervene directly, but to assume that other forces will act, with decisions elsewhere in society, and that poverty will not in itself be a bar to receiving help. This is the usual position of systems such as **CSL** and as a result the process by which individual callers are put in touch with help leaves largely untouched the task of determining whose needs are the most severe or most urgent, or who *should* have priority claim on limited service resources.

The task of establishing priority claims on service resources in a non-market context is complex and difficult, not least because of the challenge in setting the rules which should apply. Is there to be some general test of eligibility which takes account not just of identified needs, but also of informal help and of the ability to pay for all or part of the service? Is severity of need the primary qualifying feature? How do the demands of a sudden but transitory emergency (such as a carer for an elderly partner breaking a leg) compare with chronic situations (like long term care of a dementing and gradually deteriorating partner)? Do some groups in the community get priority over others? Threats to children, for example, are widely viewed as more important than to elderly people. These are familiar questions with no easy answers, but insofar as answers have been found, they have originated from professional debate and judgement as well as more detached indicators - a combination integral to the **ACM** philosophy.

CSL is self-contained in the sense that the process of seeking information or advice is an end in itself, rather than part of a continuum leading from initial contact with a person in need through to the provision of service and long term monitoring of the person's circumstances. Using **ACM**, a referral leads directly to assessment and, depending on the outcome, to service provision or case management. There are advantages to both approaches. **CSL** has the benefit of a clearly defined and implemented information and advice service: it can be accessed in a straightforward way as an information system without fear of further involvement. An outcome of this isolation is to separate identification of need from knowledge about the availability of service resources, so overcoming the accusation levelled against UK social work that professional assessment is restricted and contaminated by awareness of limitations on the supply side. Yet however theoretically attractive such a separation may be, does it have any practical value? **CSL** may be sociologically pure, but is anything achieved by

opening up imaginative servicing avenues, only to find that shortage of resources leads to a rash of 'Road Closed' signs? Customers calling into **CSL** define their own needs and ask their own questions. For the most part statements are taken at face value, and an attempt is made to answer questions in as practical a way as possible. Clients handled through **ACM** have their needs evaluated. This seeks to clarify the true nature, extent and severity of needs, as well as the actual or potential support system (relatives, friends, neighbours, local voluntary agencies) already on hand to help meet those needs.

For reasons primarily embedded in the difficulty of learning a computer application so quickly as to become immediately capable of using it, almost all systems for linking clients to services operate via an intermediary. However, the reasons for using an intermediary have more substance than the accident of impenetrable technology. Certainly the intermediary will be expected to have enough knowledge to make proficient use of the system, but as Hein de Graaf points out (in Ed. Glastonbury, *Human Welfare and Technology,* Van Gorcum, Netherlands, 1993, pp143 - 156) the intermediary is a much more important figure. She or he is the interpreter of the questions that the client (caller) wants to ask and of the responses offered. This is a professional task of understanding, presentation and communication, which may move further in such directions as trying to persuade a service agency to offer help to a particular client. In **CSL** this role may be taken by the clerical operator of the system, though an I & R professional role has been identified (by the Association of Information and Referral Specialists). In other approaches the intermediary may be the professional assessment person, the informed advocate on behalf of a client, or the agent through which a client absorbs the information coming from the system and learns to understand its implications.

Direct Public Access - the Next Stage?

This model of the citizen having contact with a computerised information system with the help of an intermediary is common in the human services, but recently a number of factors have moved some attention onto the alternative of direct caller access, without any role for an intermediary unless one is specifically needed or requested:

1. The realisation that one way of offering help in relation to very private and personal information is via a computer with assurances that no-one is snooping or invading privacy. A study by Joyce Epstein showed this was considered an attractive prospect by a group who were offered the chance to calculate their benefits eligibility in this way.

2. Technology becoming more accessible so that programs can be run more easily and screens or print are more welcoming and coherent. In relation to information systems work has been undertaken to involve users more thoroughly in their design.

3. Widening community exposure to information technology so that direct use gives rise to fewer fears and, perhaps, a growing sense of pleasure and achievement. Cohorts of young people have already passed through an educational system with a strong element of technology. Older age groups may not have this experience, but throughout society there has been a steady increase in computer familiarity.

4. The view that in times of economic constraints it may be more economic to offer direct access to information systems, and cut out intermediaries.

5. Perhaps most fundamental of all, a number of theorists (maybe best labelled as political theorists and moral philosophers) have begun the process of integrating IT into the fabric of society. This takes several forms. One is to seek codes of conduct and ethical guidelines to govern the acceptable use of new technologies, and give the public reassurance about what is being done with and in relation to their lives (see Glastonbury. B and LaMendola. W, *The Integrity of Intelligence: a Bill of Rights for the Information Age,* Macmillan, London and St. Martin's Press, New York, 1992). Another approach is to analyze the place of information in the framework of social rights. The right to information is strongly enshrined in US political life, but because it is perhaps less well established in Europe there is more attention to it as a theme. Lord Raymond Plant argued (in ed. Coote. A, *The Welfare of Citizens,* Rivers Oram Press, London, 1992) that the case for social rights can be derived from that for civil rights. Access to information can be viewed as a social right. In each of these situations a live issue is that of the right to direct unimpeded access to information.

Hence, although at present and in the recent past the notion of a direct public access information system has made little headway (especially the referral component), there is a groundswell towards such a move. Already work is being undertaken not only to enable direct access self-assessment, but also computerised self-treatment.

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Beyond Software

David Colombi

This final review section takes us beyond the use of computers to run programs either on their own or as part of a local network, into use of computers to access external sources of information. This covers access to CD-ROM disks, which use the same technology as Compact Disks and use of modems to access on-line databases and bulletin boards via a range of interconnected networks.

CD-ROMS

CD-ROMS have the advantage of being able to store and quickly access far larger amounts of data than conventional disks - up to 550 megabytes or 250,000 pages text can be stored. There is the disadvantage that a CD-ROM disk can only be read by the user, not written to (ROMs stand for Read Only Memory). There is also the need to purchase a special CD disk player, but the increasing range of CD-ROM data published makes this worthwhile for many institutions. CD-ROMS are used in conjunction with Windows or full Multi-Media set-ups to provide text and graphical images and can also be used for sound and moving images in Multi-Media environments. Some sources of CD-ROMS are shown at the end of this section.

Examples of CD-ROMs directly relevant to the Human Services are fairly limited at present. **VolNet UK** pioneered provision of on-line information relevant to human services and is described below. From September 1993 it provides a quarterly CD-ROM covering four key areas of - international development, social and community issues, related research projects and UK members of parliament.

The forthcoming **CareData CD** to be published in Spring 1994 by NISW (National Institute of Social Work) is a significant step forward and this will include some 20,000 references and abstracts of journal articles, books, reports, legislation and central and local government publications. CareData uses the HeadFast program to access data. The data is also available on four 3½" disks and the program is detailed in the "Education and Training" section.

Another System that comes both as CD-ROMs and as an on-line service is the **JUSTIS** database system which covers United Kingdom and European Community Law, drawing on British Law Reports and on the European CELEX legal database.

BookBank CD-ROM is a monthly DOS based book information service with information about over 450,000 published, recently published titles or provisional titles. Additionally BookBank OP details books out of publication titles. Browse, sort, search and print facilities are provided along with Tele-ordering.

BookFind-CD is another book information service designed for librarians and information managers. The World Edition on two disks contains two million titles and a compact version with short descriptions will be published. There is also a Standard version with 600,000 titles and a TES BookFind linking titles to reviews in the Times Educational Supplement.

Other CD-ROMs include such thing as Art, Poetry, Literature, Encyclopedias, Music, Geography, History, Newspapers, Science packages (Space, Living World, Earth Sciences, Biology), Language tutors, Cinema, Entertainment, Games or Photographic libraries. Information about CD-ROMs is advertised in PC journals available in local newsagents.

Networks and On-line Databases

So far the focus has been on use of computers in isolation, or on local networks within offices or departments. However with use of a modem, computers can be used to access a range of interconnected national and international networks. These networks can be used for purposes such as E-mail (Electronic mail) to communicate with other computer users or to access remote databases to obtain information on a huge variety of topics. Use of E-mail and the 'Bulletin Board Systems' used for E-mail and 'notice board' type data is beyond the scope of the present article. What concerns us here is using computers to access on-line databases.

The advantage of on-line databases is that unlike CD-ROMs, the database does not have to be purchased and they are updated by the database provider. The drawbacks are subscription charges to networks or individual databases and in potentially high telephone charges if time is spent browsing through information. For users in institutions of higher education with access to JANet through mainframe systems call costs do not apply.

As noted in the CD-ROM section, **VolNet UK** pioneered provision in this country of on-line information relevant to the human services. It comprises bibliographic references and abstracts compiled from a wide range of periodicals, daily newspapers and other sources. The topics range from social policy and funding to self help and community development. It too uses Headfast software for facilitating easy access to the data. As well as the main VolNet database, a RESEARCH database is also available with information on research projects currently in progress. VolNet can be accessed directly via the phone system or though the Mercury 5000 packet switched network.

Other examples of on-line databases are **NISS** (National Information on Software and Services) and **CHEST** (Combined Higher Education Software Team) both of which are university based systems to disseminate information about services and supplies within universities. Many on-line databases are part of network systems and can be accessed either by subscription directly to that network or via another network to which the user subscribes. This means that international databases can be accessed for the cost of phone calls to the local network. **CUSSN** (Computer Use in Social Services Network) is based at the University of Texas at Arlington and has been the major system within human services. It acts as a clearing house for software as well as for literature and has played a major part in developments in this area through its bulletin board, newsletter and journal.

The **SONETT** database at the University of Berlin is another system that is specific to human service workers needs and has been financed to encourage developments in this area. SONETT was described in detail in this journal in an article entitled *SONETT, an Enith Telecommunications Device* by Bernd Kolleck in Volume 5, No 2. As with CUSSN it provides a wide range of bibliographic information as well as software and acting as a forum for the exchange of ideas and information. On a smaller scale, the **Probation View** is a bulletin board system for the Probation Service that provides database information about probation and about the Criminal Justice System.

Within Universities in the UK **JANET** (Joint Academic Network) links universities for E-Mail and other purposes including access to NISS and CHEST referred to earlier. Within each country there are general network systems such as BT Gold, BITNET or Compuserve which provide access to an enormous range of databases. Specialist networks such as PEACENET and GREENET focus on the needs of specific interest groups. Many or most of these networks are linked to each other via INTERNET which is the 'backbone' that ties the disparate segments into a whole system of inter-connected users. The functioning of Internet is described in *The Whole Internet - Users Guide and Catalogue* by E. Krol (ISBN 1-56592-025-2).

Accessing between systems is done via e-mail addresses and codes but these can become lengthy and the process can be very technical at times. Systems such as 'Gopher', a software shell developed at the University of Minnesota provide a communications protocol which interfaces with TELNET, the general protocol for INTERNET. It provides a menu structure to enable users to look up and communicate with other users as they would in a telephone directory, without recourse to number or to codes.

The author is Guest Editor

Contacts and Sources

CareData CD: National Institute of Social Work, 5 Tavistock Place, London WC1 9SS. Published Spring 1994. Price £699 - £799.

BookBank CD-ROM: J. Whitaker & Sons Ltd, 12 Dyott Street, London WC1A 1DF.

BookFind-CD: Book Data, Northumberland House, 2 King Street, Twickenham, Middlesex TW1 3EZ.

Corel Professional Photos: Over 50 disks of different subjects. Tel: 0800-581028 or from Windowline on 081-401-1177.

Powermark PLC: A wide range of CD-ROMS on a variety of topics. Premier House, 112 Station Road, Edgware, Middlesex HA8 7AQ, UK.

JUSTIS CD-ROM and On-line database. Context Ltd, 1 Tranley Mews, London NW3 2QW

CUSSN: Contact Dick Schoech on e-mail on Bitnet b947djs@utarlvm1 or at CUSSN, UTA SSW, Box 19129, Arlington, Texas 76019-0129, USA.

SONETT: Contact Bernd Kolleck on e-mail kolleck@comz.fhss-berlin.dbp.de

VolNet UK: The Volunteer Centre UK, 29 Lower Kings Road, Berkhampstead, Herts HP4 2AB

The Probation View: Contact Michael Morrissey on 0689-831616

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Software Directory

1. ASSESSMENT and TREATMENT

This section includes programs for assessing and working with clients but excludes those in specialist sections on Benefits, Child Protection, Crime & Probation, Employment, Equal Opportunities & Disability. The thematic review "Programs for Practice" on page 8 deals with use of this type of program. There are some notable North American contributions such as CASS and ASH, but most are from this country with several from social work professionals turned programmers.

AAInfo

Type: MAC **Version** : 1989

Author: Pat P

Use: Alcohol Treatment

Written by a recovering alcoholic, AAInfo uses the graphics environment and sound effects of the Mac computer to display twelve 'cards' which can be selected to learn about aspects of Alcoholics Anonymous. These include an introduction to the philosophy of AA, the history of AA, the 'twelve traditions', 'twelve promises', the 'twelve steps' and the Lords Prayer.

Cost: Freeware

Limitations: Needs Apple Macintosh computer

Source: Pat P., PO Box 5574, Montalvo, California 93005, USA

Comment: *The idea is a simple but effective one although some text is rather wordy and use of fancy fonts make it not always easy to read. The approach is an evangelical one by a committed believer in AA. Although the style of the program is not to everyone's taste, AA continues to be a major force of help for many thousands of alcoholics and this provides a useful introduction to aspects of AA.*

Alcohol

Type: DOS **Version**: 1.2 Demo (1993)

Author: David Colombi

Use: Clients, Teaching

A twenty item questionnaire testing the users knowledge of alcohol and its effects. Each question is shown separately and one of five answers is selected. Provides immediate feedback and the current score. Concludes with comment on the users level of knowledge. Uses colour and graphics. Comes separately or as part of a Protocol Software package of programs, with own menu.

Cost: £25 for site licence. Subsequent copies £15 (1993).

Source: Protocol Software, School House, Angmering, West Sussex, BN16 4JS

Comment: *A serious quiz for clients to use or for anyone concerned about alcohol education and use. A simple but useful learning opportunity that is extensively used in a Probation Client context but has relevance elsewhere.*

Anxiety Program

Type : DOS **Version**: 0.9 (1992)

Author: Ken Manning

Use: Assessment

This program works from the basis that anxiety is a vital forces in people's lives but that excessive anxiety generates unpleasant feelings. If left unchecked it can manifest itself in the form of physical symptoms which can seriously affect peoples lives. The program attempts to aid diagnosis by explaining different types of anxiety and suggesting practical ways to help control, reduce or release unwanted anxiety.

Cost: £45 + VAT (1993)

Source: Psych Systems 2000, 301 Green lane South, Coventry CV3 6EH

Comment: *Suitable for use by professional workers in a range of different settings. Sold alone or as part of the 'Case Planning System' which is reviewed later. Operates at a general level rather than particlar cases.*

ASH Plus

Type: DOS **Version**: Demo (1990)

Use: Medicine, Psychology, Social Work, Law

This is a set of programs that collects diagnostic information and prepares reports for clients seen by a helping professional. Data can be collected from a subject, family member, professional or, unusually, from a colleague. It provides an Automated Social History based on up to 500 items. Other modules cover Crime,

Criminal Justice, Education, Sexual and Vocational, with the user able to add their own instruments. Data can be stored for future use and the program offers a choice of English or Spanish questions and it can be run interactively by the client or by using a printed questionnaire booklet, which is designed for use with an optical scanner. The basic Social History report is nine pages long, much including ratings in relation to specific problem areas - Alcohol problems are shown as 4 out of 23, although interpretation direct from the program is not clear. Other areas include Cognitive Assessment, Depression and Anxiety. The report then goes on to more text based assessments and then to risk analyses.

Cost: $345 (1990). Extra for 'Face Sheets' and rating forms.

Source: Anderson Publishing Co., 2035 Reading Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202, USA

Comment: *This is a powerful and easy to use assessment tool of relevance for a range of social work and other professional settings. One possible use might be as part of the process of preparing Pre Sentence Reports in the Probation Service a well as other statutory of voluntary agencies in the business of doing client assessments.*

Captain's Log - Cognitive Training Demo

Type: DOS **Version**: Demo (1992)

Author: Joseph Sandford, Richard Browne and Ann Turner

Use: Occupational therapy, Learning

Described as a computerized "mental gym", Captain's Log contains a wide range of cognitive exercises to help develop mental abilities. Designed for use for those who are brain injured, mentally impaired or psychiatrically disturbed. The modules cover Attention Skills, Visual Motor Skills, Conceptual Skills and Numeric Concepts/ Memory Skills. It works in assessment and training modes and is designed for use by persons aged from 6 through to adulthood.

Cost: $1795 (pre September 93).

Limitations: Hard disk recommended. Mouse required for some parts. Limited use demo disk.

Source: Brain Train, Dept M93, 727 Twin Ridge Lane, Richmond, Virginia 23235, USA

Comment: *The exercises are fun for people of all ability levels, not just those with impairment problems. They can be set at different levels of skill and with distractions and/or sound effects. A professionally presented package that has had very positive reviews from a number of occupational therapy journals in America.*

Case Planning System

Type : DOS **Version**: 0.9 (1992)

Author: Ken Manning

Use: Client assessment and treatment, training.

The Case Planning System is a number of programs that combine to form an information resource for Social Workers. The Case Planning Structure has six different stages from gathering information through to closing a case. This structure links to the other program modules which explore the complexity of casework and contain information about **Stealing**, Client Inventory Checklist, **Anxiety**, Resistance to Change, **Emotional Security**, Admitting Children into Care and others. Modules shown in bold are available and listed as programs in their own right. Other modules include Report Writing, Project Management and a Supervision Summary program.

Cost: £395 + VAT (1993)

Source: Psych Systems 2000, 301 Green lane South, Coventry CV3 6EH

Comment: *This is an important suite of programs which is potential use both for social workers and other professionals but in particular it could benefit students or other newly qualified personnel.*

Computer Assisted Social Services (CASS)

Type: DOS & Networks **Version**: 2.0 Demo (1990)

Author: Walter Hudson

Use: Assessment, Teaching

CASS offers case management, diagnosis, problem assessment and evaluation, service or treatment planning, program description and evaluation, program administration and management and other specialist functions related to professional human services practice. Its potential is diverse and it is designed for use by social workers and also for use by managers, supervisors, support personnel and administrators. Using five basic tools, many standard assessments are included, but customised formats can be designed by professional users. The program also includes a special program, Computer Assisted Assessment Package (CAAP), for use by clients which includes assessment scales, structured forms and questionnaires which are designed to help practitioners and clients to work in partnership. In use the program will advise the user to seek professional help when problems significant are identified. There is a student version available at significantly reduced cost.

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Cost: $395. Site licence $2,000. Student version $50 (1990).

Limitations: Hard disk required. 640K RAM.

Source: Walmyr Publishing Co., PO Box 24779, Tempe, AZ 85285-4779, Arizona, USA

Comment: *This is a major pioneering program which is unique in its flexibility and focus on assessment in social work agencies. It is open to development for UK users and worth developing both for agencies and for educational use. The program is of relevance for use in this country although there are some theoretical and practical differences in approaches to practice.*

Client Questionnaire

Type : DOS **Version**: 1993

Author: Tony Pipe

Use: Assessment of drug use.

A short program, taking about ten minutes, designed for use by clients to help them disclose problems they may be having with drug taking. It asks about the types of drug used, situations in which they are used and associated drinking. Information about the drugs includes lists of street names by which they are known and outline advice is available in relation to harm reduction and safer sex. The system produces a single report for the client's use and gives assurances that no information is retained.

Cost: £45 (1993)

Source: Fitzwilliam Software, 34 Woodlands Road, Heaton Mersey, Stockport, Cheshire SK4 3AF, UK.

Comment: *A useful program for initial assessment by clients of their drug use which they can then choose whether or not they wish to share.*

DAESy - Drugs Abuse Expert System

Type : DOS **Version**: 1993

Author: Tony Pipe

Use: Drugs use assessment and treatment, teaching.

DAESy is designed for professionals to use in conjunction with their clients who inject drugs to offer a comprehensive treatment plan. DAESy was developed in conjunction with Manchester Probation Service and a variety of drugs projects in Manchester and Liverpool using an expert system shell. It asks questions about the client's use of drugs and prints detailed advice on screen or to printer as requested. Advice covered includes Aids/HIV, HIV testing and issues about testing, Women and HIV/Aids, Safer Sex, Needle Exchange Schemes (including where to find out about them), Harm Reduction techniques for injectors, Repeated Injecting, Drug Use and Pregnancy. The section on opiate use analyses the user's history and advises whether community detoxification is feasible or whether in-patient treatment is needed, and on sources of information. The second part of the program deals with counselling drug users who wish on-going support, with emphasis first on behaviour changes to help users stabilise their lifestyle. The second stage focuses on in-depth approaches starting from analysis of readiness to change. The program finishes by printing treatment plans for the client.

Cost: £145 (1993)

Source: Fitzwilliam Software, 34 Woodlands Road, Heaton Mersey, Stockport, Cheshire, SK4 3AF, UK.

Comment: *The information given in this program is detailed and invaluable, drawing as it does on a wide range of expertise. It is of potential use for Probation Officers, Social Workers, Health Workers and others who come into contact with injecting drugs users, and can be used by the professional on their own for learning or with a client. Also a useful teaching aid. Although some of the advice is specific to UK situations and law, it has potential use elsewhere.*

Drugs

Type: DOS **Version**: 1.1 Demo (1993)

Author: David Colombi

Use: Drug assessment and education, Teaching

This program provides two questionnaires, the first a twenty five item questionnaire testing the users knowledge of a wide range of drugs and their effects. It includes alcohol, nicotine, caffeine as well as amphetamines, cannabis, heroin, magic mushrooms, barbiturates etc. Each statement requires True or False responses, with immediate feedback on answers. Concludes with comment on the users level of knowledge. Uses colourful graphics at each sage to show the drugs involved. The second shorter questionnaire asks about the users current level of drugs use and advises on this and customisable information on where help can be obtained. The program comes separately or as part of a Protocol Software package of programs.

Cost: £35 for site licence. Subsequent copies half price (1993).

Source: Protocol Software, School House, Angmering, West Sussex, BN16 4JS

Comment: Attractive graphics add to the interest and make this a useful program for use with clients in Probation and other settings.

Emotional Security

Type : DOS **Version**: 1991

Author: Ken Manning

Use: Assessment, training

The program is based on the view that emotional security is one of life's important cornerstones and the absence of it can underlie many conduct disorders. It considers how different situations can generate feelings of insecurity and how these can affect behaviour that underlies conduct disorders. The program attempts to provide information to clarify concerns and recommends approaches to either aim for or approaches to avoid.

Cost: £45 + VAT (1993)

Source: Psych Systems 2000, 301 Green Lane South, Coventry CV3 6EH

Comment: Suitable for professional workers and facilitates assessment to inform and provide a counselling framework. Sold alone or as part of the 'Case Planning System'

HELP-Software

Type: DOS **Version**: 1.4 Demo (1990)

Author: Each program is written by different authors to a common format.

Use: Client use in a wide variety of settings

This consists of four separate programs to a common format - **HELP-Assert, HELP-Esteem, HELP-Think** and **HELP-Stress**. They all use the principles of Cognitive-Behavioral Psychology and Learning Theory as a framework for promoting change. The stated aims are education and training, prevention of emotional problems, first level intervention and as an adjunct to counselling and psychotherapy. The programs can be used by groups of people or individuals and each program consists of a number of separate sessions which are described in the demo program, with the user able to try out a sample of a session from each program.

Help-Assert deals with assertiveness at Home, at Work, in Personal Relationships and in Public Situations. HELP-Stress has four different versions for general use, for police use, hospital nurses and physicians and for teachers.

Cost: $295 each for singe user versions. $395 for 12 users (1990).

Limitations: Needs hard disk or twin floppy disk drives.

Source: Counselling and Training Solutions Company (CATSco), 1531 Chapala Street, Suite 205, Santa Barbara, California 93101, USA.

Comment: A powerful and comprehensive set of programs that would be as applicable here as in America. The programs have excellent help and guidance and clear presentation and are genuinely interactive and responsive as well as being interesting to use. They are wordy at times and the 'positive thinking' approach may not work for everyone.

NAVH Placement Service

Type : PICK, SCO-UNIX, Windows **Version**: 1993

Author: Clive Ferguson

Use: Hostel placement

This program was developed by the National Association of Voluntary Hostels (NAVH) as a database of information of all voluntary hostels in the UK, linked to a client referral module to match hostels to client needs. Client details are entered including needs the degree of practical and emotional support needed, preferred area, religious factors, gender, age and length of stay. These criteria can be entered with a degree of elasticity, for example in the degree of support needed.

The system then identifies these against their provision, catchment area and referral criteria and lists basic information about suitable hostels. The user can then choose from the list to learn more detailed information about particular hostels. The parameters can be adjusted to increase or decrease the number of hostels. The full range of hostels includes specialist drug and alcohol hostels. The system has been piloted with various Probation projects and with Rampton and Broadmoor Special Hospitals.

Limitations : Needs hard disk and uses 20-25 Mb of disk space.

Source: National Association of Voluntary Hostels, Fulham Palace, Bishops Avenue, London SW6 6EA

Comment: An extremely valuable and easy to use program for those involved in the difficult task of placing people with needs for supportive accommodation in suitable hostels. Referrals still need to go through the NAVH for information about vacancies.

 Copyright Centre for Human Services

Personal Excellence Package (PEP)

Type: DOS **Version**: 1.3 (1987)

Author: Colin Jack

Use: Mental ability assessment

PEP is a package of 16 tests to evaluate personality, performance, intelligence and other mental abilities. The personality profile separated into public persona and private persona each consists of 100 questions about the user, with which the user agrees or disagrees to a varying extent. A one page summary of personality is followed by a bar chart rating for the person on 13 criteria (eg competitiveness, aggression). There are four intelligence tests using numeric, linguistic and spatial ability.

Other tests are for reaction times, memory and 'circadian rhythms'. One test shows how alcohol consumption affects performance and in this the user has to keep a symbol on the screen as close as possible to a randomly moving square. Others test typing skills, memory and the 'X factor' which is a rapid thinking exercise. The program is intended for self evaluation and development of skills, but has potential use for recruitment, although there are specific packages designed for that task.

Cost: £21

Limitations: Mouse useful, but not essential

Source: Iansyst Ltd, Omnibus Building, 41 North Road, London N7 9DP

Comment: *The program is simple and fun to use and an excellent introduction to the imaginative use of computers and to computer use generally. The personality assessments tend to be positive and it is less intrusive than some other programs in this area. It could have use in occupational therapy and other such settings.*

Problem Management Program

Type : DOS **Version**: 0.9 (1992)

Author: Ken Manning

Use: Problem Management

This knowledge based checklist is a generic problem solving tool that uses the psychological principles of problem management. It helps to clarify thinking dealing by detailed analysis of any particular problem situation. It works through its basic structuring of the information into a progressive sequence of operations, starting from problem identification through to organising and implementing action. Each section uses check lists, semantics and scales to define the problem and transform it into objectives to be achieved. This structure can be applied to any problem scenario with the aim of making it an effective counselling technique.

Cost: £65 + VAT (1993)

Source: Psych Systems 2000, 301 Green lane South, Coventry CV3 6EH

Comment: *The general application of this software makes it suitable for all professional workers at a level of general thinking about problem solving behaviour. It could be used by some clients as well.*

Relativity

Type: DOS **Version**: Demo (1991)

Use: Family work

Relativity is a database/graphics program which generates genograms or 'maps' of family life and emotional/medical processes over generations, based on information provided by the user. The demo version includes two such examples - one containing information about drug use and one medically orientated. For each person basic data and significant life events and relationships are entered. When data has been entered the genogram is displayed on screen with the user able to scroll up and down to see different generations. Particular types of information can be suppressed or displayed as desired.

Cost: $75 individual, $100 institution (1990)

Source: Wonderware Inc., 2330 Glenmont Circle *110, Silver Spring, Md 20902, Maryland, USA

Comment: *Of potential use in dealing with complex family situations to analyse relationships but the value will depend very much on the quality of information entered. Could be interesting for clients to use to do their own family analysis. The graphics look pretty dated by modern standards.*

TrAPP - Treatment of Alcohol Problems Program

Type : DOS **Version**: 1991

Author: Tony Pipe

Use: Alcohol Assessment/Treatment, Training

Designed to assess an individual's difficulties with alcohol and suggest interventions that may be effective. As with DAESy by the same author, this program mixes

assessment with advice - this time about drinking and the effects of alcohol on the body. At each stage the user has choices about whether to be given the advice and whether in printed from or on screen. The detailed advice includes some use of graphics in addition to text and includes advice on detoxification, dependency and physical damage. The assessment includes analysis of current alcohol consumption, analysis of the risks of withdrawal and of possibly related physical and psychological factors. The second part of the program deals with methods of counselling and relapse prevention.

Cost: £150 (1993)

Source: Fitzwilliam Software, 34 Woodlands Road, Heaton Mersey, Stockport, Cheshire, SK4 3AF, UK.

Comment: *Has many similarities with the DAESy program, but this time focusing on alcohol use. The program is thorough and detailed with authorative information, although with emphasis on physical and psychological factors more than social factors. Again an invaluable tool for all professionals working with alcohol misusers. The graphics are a bit disappointing.*

2. BENEFITS

Using computers for calculation of eligibility for a wide range of welfare benefits is a well established area of human services computing has been held up as an exemplar of the potential of computer use to directly assist clients. A number of programs were reviewed in some detail in Volume 4. No. 4 of the Journal. It is an area dominated by dedicated organisations who have the resources needed to continually update programs in response to ever changing rules of eligibility for benefits and changes in the benefits themselves. Many of the programs also encompass assessment for Council Tax, National Insurance or even income tax, thus going far beyond the original areas of concern.

Bene Plus

Type : Sharp IQ **Version**: 1993

Use: Benefits assessment

This is a new benefit assessment system which is supplied on a card to plug into a Sharp IQ 8200 Organiser. It can be purchased with an Organiser or as a "Premier" package which includes a years subscription to the updating service and helpline. It calculates entitlement to the five means tested benefits and entitlement to Health Benefits and mortgage interest payments via Income Support. On screen help is available and up to 10 cases can be stored, or results can be printed. Cables and software can be provided to enable linking to a PC.

Cost: Prices exclude VAT - £87 for card. £245 with organiser, £310 for Premier package.

Limitations : Needs Sharp IQ organiser.

Source: Inside Communications Ltd, Octavia House, Westwood Way, Coventry, CV4 8JP.

Comment: *Exceptionally this has been included without a detailed evaluation, but it builds on established developments. It is compact and designed for portability, fitting easily into a pocket. The small screen size means that some text is cryptic which may make explanations less clear for those new to the system. One advantage is that the user gains a personal organiser as well as a useful looking benefits assessment package.*

Child Support

Type : Psion Series 3 **Version**: 1993

Use: Maintenance Assessment

Asses liability and payments under the Child Support scheme. Includes assessment of means tested benefits, tax and National Insurance. Includes on screen context sensitive help.

Cost: Psion 3 £337, 3a £448.50 (£178 program only - maintenance £175)

Limitations : Needs Psion 3 series computer.

Source: Ferret Information Systems, 4 Coopers Yard, Curran Road, Cardiff CF1 5DF

Comment: *Again it has not been possible to see this in action but it comes from a well established source and uses a 'palmtop' pocket computer that is a significant advance over the Psion II, including the larger screen.*

HELPER Plus and Helper-3

Type: Psion Organiser II, 3 and 3a **Version**: 1993

Author: Philip Boyd

Use: Decision Support, Welfare Benefits

This comes as a complete system on the Psion Organiser II and Psion Series 3 hand-held computers to provide assessment of entitlement to Income Support, Family Credit, Housing benefit, Council tax and Income Support. It uses abbreviations to fit on the small screen. Helper was previously available as a PC version but this is now included as a module within Maximiser Plus. Helper-3 includes the "In-work Helper" program.

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Cost: Psion Organiser II XP £199 (£108 program only - maintenance £77.50 p.a.). Psion Series 3 - £307 or 3a £418 (£148 program only, maintenance £90) (1993).

Limitations: Needs a Psion Organiser II or Psion Series 3 or 3a.

Source: Ferret Information Systems, 4 Coopers Yard, Curran Road, Cardiff CF1 5DF

Comment: *An established program from a source providing a high standard of support and development. The portable nature of these machines makes them ideal for use 'on the road', although the small screen on the Organiser II is a limitation.*

Housing Finance Savings and Loan System

Type: DOS **Version**: Demo (1990)

Author: Herbert Seaforth

Use: Housing Accounts, Budgeting

An accounts management program for housing finance which uses dBase III+. Aimed at small to medium sized institutions. The program can maintain and process information on customer history, saving account transactions and current balances.

Cost: Shareware

Limitations: Hard disk recommended.

Source: United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, PO Box 30030, Nairobi, Kenya

Comment: *Potentially useful for the specialised settings for which it is designed. Includes some documentation on disk.*

In-Work Helper

Type: Psion Organiser II **Version**: 1993

Author: Philip Boyd

Use: Decision Support, Welfare Benefits

Like Helper-Plus this comes as a complete system on the Psion Organiser II hand-held computer, but provides assessment of entitlements to benefits for those in work plus national Insurance and Tax calculations. It uses abbreviations to fit on the small screen. In-work Helper was previously available as a PC version but this is no included as a module within Maximiser Plus. This program is included in with the Helper-3 program (see above) which runs on a Psion 3 or 3a computer.

Cost: Program £130. With Psion Organiser IIXP £221. Maintenance £90 p.a.

Limitations: Needs a Psion Organiser II.

Source: Ferret Information Systems, 4 Coopers Yard, Curran Road, Cardiff CF1 5DF

Comment: *As with Helper Plus this is an established program from a source providing a high standard of support and development. The portable nature of the machine makes it ideal for use 'on the road', although the small screen on the Organiser II is a limitation.*

Lisson Grove Welfare Benefits Advice Program

Type : DOS **Version**: 3.0 (1993)

Author: Tim Blackwell and Brian Jarman

Use: Benefits Assessment, Teaching

The Lisson Grove Welfare Benefits Advice program calculates a claimant's entitlement to welfare benefits under the Social Security Regulations. The program will either test entitlement to all benefits or just calculate entitlement to attendance allowance, disability living , disability working allowance or family credit separately. The program now also covers benefits to students. Local information may be added through the help system and from version 3.0 onwards it is possible to store cases and these will be compatible with future versions of the program.

Cost: Subscription p.a. £70. Volume discounts. (1993).

Source: Department of General Practice, St Mary's Hospital Medical School, Lisson Grove Health Centre, Gateforth Street, London NW8 8EG.

Comment: *Lisson Grove continues to be one of the major welfare benefits programs in the field. It is extremely easy to use and its review and recalculation facilities enable "what if" scenarios to be worked out, which is a useful educational aspect. The new case storage capability enhances its educational value as does the localised help system.*

Maximiser Plus

Type : DOS, MAC **Version**: 9.04 Demo (1993)

Author: Philip Boyd

Use: Benefits Assessment, Teaching

This is the lead program of a suite of programs from Ferret, but only runs on a PC, not on a Psion II. It

provides a comprehensive welfare benefits program with context sensitive help screens and an efficient update service. Assesses entitlement to the whole range of separate benefits except Widows Benefits, Industrial Injury Benefits and SERPS. It covers Income Maintenance, Family Credit, Council Tax, Health, Disability, Maternity, Unemployment and Elderly People's benefits. Maximiser includes the Helper and In-work Helper modules which are also sold (and listed in the directory) as separate programs for use on the Psion Organiser IIXP hand-held computer. The program will save details of cases and prints reports of entitlement.

Cost: £134. Maintenance £118.50 p.a. Discounts for multiple copies.

Source: Ferret Information Systems, 4 Coopers Yard, Curran Road, Cardiff CF1 5DF

Comment: *An established and very comprehensive system with each of the modules working in a similar way, which facilitates use. Valuable as a teaching tool as well as in practice where it is firmly established in use in a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies. Ferret have a good track record of keeping up to date with rapidly changing legislation. See also the XQ program about decisions in welfare benefits cases.*

Renovator, Renovator PC Plus and Renovator 3

Type : DOS, MAC & Psion **Version**: 9.04 (1993)

Author: Philip Boyd

Use: Renovation Grant Entitlement, Decision Support

Another program from Ferret which is available either for a PC (Renovator PC Plus) or for one of the Psion hand held computers. Renovator collects information about one or more "relevant persons" with a potential entitlement to a Means Tested Renovation Grant, does the appropriate calculations and reports on the applicant's "Notional Grant Contribution". It includes a database system which can store calculations to export to other systems. Interfaces available to "Urban Software" and "Space" Renovations systems. Has context sensitive help and includes references to case law.

Cost: PC £261. Psion II Organiser II £210 ($119 program only), Psion 3 £308.50, 3a £419 (£149 program only)

Limitations : PC needs hard disk or twin floppy disk drives. Runs on networks.

Source: Ferret Information Systems, 4 Coopers Yard, Curran Road, Cardiff CF1 5DF.

Comment: *Another of the comprehensive suite of Ferret Programs, this one developed for Housing Departments and meeting a more specialist need than other welfare benefits programs. Again the Psion versions offer portability.*

Welfare Benefits Advisor

Type : DOS & ICL DRS **Version**: 8.0 Demo (1992)

Author: Cliff Hacking et al

Use: Welfare benefits assessment

Designed for applicants or those with no special training in welfare benefits to provide information on entitlement to a range of benefits. It covers Income Support, Family Credit, Housing Benefit, Disability and Carers and the Social Fund. Questions are asked one at a time on the screen in clear language with a 'Why' option at each stage to explain why the question is being asked and an 'Explain' option to explain their significance. Version 8 covers developments in Disability Living Allowances, Attendance Allowance, Disability Working Allowance and Severe Disability Allowance. Information is not stored on the system, but printed reports of advice given can be provided. The program was developed in conjunction with Walsall Council. Version 5 was reviewed in Vol 4. No. 4 of the journal.

Cost: Complex pricing structure

Limitations : Needs hard disk with 1.9 Mb free memory.

Source: International Computers Ltd (ICL), Cardinal House, 20 St Mary's Parsonage, Manchester M3 2NL.

Comment: *Simple to use and attractively designed screens. Less sophisticated than Maximiser or Lisson Grove, but easier for the non-expert. Installation process is explained in the documentation but could be simpler.*

XQ

Type : DOS, MAC **Version**: 9.04 Demo (1993)

Use: Benefits Assessment, Teaching

This is an information system related to welfare benefits that contains details of abstracts of decisions by the Adviser magazine, Cleveland CCs unreported decisions file, the Maximiser and Renovator help files, the "Issues in Social Security" electronic magazine and a DSS "Benefits Advice File". The user can browse through the system to seek information and there are search and print facilities.

Cost: £68. Maintenance £37 p.a. or £27 for users of maximiser or Renovator.

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Source: Ferret Information Systems, 4 Coopers Yard, Curran Road, Cardiff CF1 5DF

Comment: *Another one of the Ferret family. The demo version gives only a limited impression.*

3. CHILD PROTECTION

The chief focus of programs in this area has been to do with legislation relevant to child care and child protection and providing practice information to support diagnosis and good practice. As such the programs have had a clear relevance to training as well as social work practice and the use of some of these within a teaching context is the focus of the review "Computers and Child Protection" on page 10. In this area the most notable new development is Keisha which sets new standards of presentation and case work simulation.

CALA - Children Act Legal Adviser

Type: DOS **Version**: 2.0 (1991)

Author: K. Bannerman

Use: Child Protection Legal Advice

CALA is, as its title implies, an advisory program on the Children Act 1989. It can be interrogated using actual case material; keywords are highlighted and definitions are provided. Case material is also included in later versions.

Cost: £600 plus maintenance fee (1990). Reductions for multi-users and educational use.

Limitations: Requires hard disk.

Source: Ovaltech, 2 Buckingham Road, Woodthorpe, Nottingham NG5 4GE.

Comment: *Useful as a teaching aid as well as for agency use in an area where the law is complex, particularly in relation to subsequent child related legislation, rules and statutory instruments that are derivitive from the Children Act. There is a need for direct access by practitioners to this type of information.*

CCLAWS

Type: DOS **Version**: 1.01 Demo (1991)

Use: Child Protection, Law

This program provides three basic modules of a Legal Commentary on Child Care legislation in force, a Sources module summarising the principal Acts, Guidance and Regulations and a Glossary of terms that have a specific legal meaning within the text. Subjects covered include Adoption, Care and Supervision Orders, Child Protection, Education, Guardianship, Parental Responsibility, Private Law Proceedings, Regulation and Monitoring and SSD support to families. It is based round the central position of the Children Act 1989 and provides information not just about the content of the legislation but an easy to understand commentary on it. The program shell can be extended to include an agencies procedures within the program.

Limitations: Requires hard disk.

Source: Social Services Research and Development Unit, University of Bath, Claverton Down, Bath

Comment: *An easy to use and valuable guide to Child Care Law. Unlike 'The Law' (see below) it provides a commentary on the legislation, as well as the actual text of the legislation, but it is not as comprehensive as 'the Law'.*

CHIAC - Child Abuse Information and Computers

Type: DOS **Version**: 3.0 (1991)

Author: Andrew Kerslake et al

Use: Child Protection, Teaching

CHIAC is targeted at main grade social workers in Social Services Departments and has four sections. The Legal section covers legislation, rules and case law as well as information on giving evidence in court, parent's rights and the role of the police. The Medical section has a glossary of medical terms and information about different types of injuries, including for example, how to tell if a bite was caused by an animal. The Research section summarises recent research on child protection, including incest, links to alcohol consumption, children who run away and the long term effects of abuse. Finally the Good Practice section provides information on procedures and advice on the role of the keyworker, case conferences, inter-agency co-operation and working with people from other cultures.

Cost: Was offered free to all Social Services Departments. Individual £131+VAT, site licence £2,200+VAT.

Limitations: Requires hard disk or twin floppy disk drives. Can be run on a network. Companion video available and other training material.

Source: SSDADU, The New Church, Henry Street, Bath BA1 1JR

Comment: *Originating from Bath University and describing itself as "the national computer information*

system for social workers in the field of child abuse", CHIAC is well presented and is in established use in many social services departments. Use of CHIAC in teaching is included in the review on page 10.

Keisha

Type: Windows **Version**: 1.12 Demo (1993)

Authors: Dick Schoech, Monica Williams & Ann Wilder

Use: Training, Assessment

This is a social work simulation program which places the user in the situation of having to deal with an allegation of child neglect. The demo version leads the user through a particular route whereas the full program will allow the user to investigate in his or her own way. Through use of the Windows environment, high quality graphics are used to represent situations, starting with an office in which the social worker is surrounded with the tool of his/her trade - car, phone, meetings, resource filing cabinet, pencil and, representing the supervisor, an owl. In the demo the user visits the home and inspects Keisha, a baby girl who is failing to thrive, and interviews the mother. When the computer shows a picture of Keisha, the user is asked to comment on what they think is wrong with her and is then can choose to see the views of three different experts. As in real life the experts do not always agree. On returning to the office consulting the resource filing cabinet proves more productive than consulting the supervisor.

Limitations: Requires 386 SX PC and Windows. The full version will require substantial hard disk space.

Source: Dick Schoech, CUSSN, UTA SSW, Box 19129, Arlington, TX 76019-0129, Texas, USA.

Comment: *This program is included in the paper "Computers and Child Protection" on page 10. It represents a major step forward in use of IT as a social work training tool and sets the standard for future developments. It is relevant for practice as well as for training, particularly through provision of the resource filing cabinet. One drawback may be the memory requirements of the full program.*

The Law

Type: DOS **Version**: 2.06 Demo (1992)

Author: Alan S. Holden

Use: Education, Practice

This program details legislation in sixty UK Acts of Parliament, Statutes or Regulations directly or indirectly relating to children. Ranges from the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 up to the 25 sets of legislation and regulations introduced in 1991, many consequential on the 1989 Children Act. Includes brief but limited notes on amending legislation and definitions. Useful information about key acts is included in a text file (GUIDE.ASC) which can be accessed via a text editor or word processor but not from the program. It includes a search facility for up to six words or phrases and these references can be printed, as can sections of legislation.

Cost: Licence covers use within an agency.

Limitations: Needs hard disk with 4 Mb free memory.

Source: Comyn Books, PO Box 247, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 3XU

Comment: *A useful reference source to an increasingly complex area of work. The program is easy to use and the 'locate facility is useful. It tells you what the law is, not how to understand it and hence is of most use to specialist workers in this area. No use of colour.*

4. CRIME and PROBATION

In this section programs include those for use by professionals for research and supporting practice and for direct use by clients. A number of programs in the first section on 'Assessment and Treatment' are relevant in this context and some of those relating to drugs and alcohol use were developed in a probation context for use primarily in probation. Use of games as a tool for working with clients (not just the young) is fairly well established here and elsewhere, as in the Probation Service in Israel.

Breach

Type: DOS **Version**: 1.3 Demo (1992)

Author: David Colombi

Use: Probation Officers, Teaching

Provides detailed information on law, theory and practice of taking action for Breach of a Probation Order. The main screen is a tree structure from which the user can choose the main options - practice, policy, the law, key steps and letters - or sub-options. These lead on to provide detailed information about the area selected. The letters section can be used to generate correspondence in actual cases, or uses customisable test data for demonstration purposes.

Cost: £30 for site licence. Copies half price (1993).

Source: Protocol Software, School House, Angmering, West Sussex, BN16 4JS

 Copyright Centre for Human Services

Comment: *Useful both as a learning tool for students and as a direct work aid for Probation Officers in understanding the process of breach and in the actual implementation of breach proceedings.*

Crisis

Type: DOS **Version**: 1.2 Demo (1992)

Author: David Colombi

Use: Clients, Teaching

Subtitled *"Crisis and Consequences"*, this is a game for individuals or small groups of clients. Players choose how to respond to crisis situations relating to violence, money, drinking, offending and cars. Responses vary from ignoring problems, seeking help, solving problems for oneself or resorting to crime, but no solutions have guaranteed outcomes. The aim is to get home without losing too much money or ending up in prison. The program uses humour and aims for realism and relevance to clients actual situations.

Cost: £25 for site licence. Copies half price (1993).

Source: Protocol Software, School House, Angmering, West Sussex, BN16 4JS

Comment: *An attempt has been made to simulate reality - that people have to make their own decisions in difficult circumstances, not to depend too much on a probation officer. Well received at CTI workshops.*

Crown Court Computer System

Type: DOS,Windows/NT,Unix,OS/2 **Version**: 1993

Use: Crown Court Record keeping

Crown Court Computer System (CCC) is a computerised record keeping and transaction processing system designed to track cases through the Crown Court from a Probation perspective. It can be used to monitor appearances and ensure that reports due have arrived and to notify probation staff of the outcome of cases. An orders module deals processes information about orders made. It uses a cross platform screen and database development system called Wingen which means applications developed on any of the above platforms can be re-compiled for a different platform. It can also use a range of Database Management Systems making it a powerful development tool.

Limitations : Needs 386 PC, Windows and hard disk.

Source: Silicon City. Tel: 081-847-4221 (UK)

Comment: *This is a new product that was demonstrated at the South West London Probation Service "Computer Open Day" in October 1993. It will be developed to meet service requirments in this area.*

Driver

Type: DOS **Version**: 1.2 Demo (1993)

Author: David Colombi

Use: Clients, Teaching

A 60 item questionnaire that sets out to test drivers anxiety and aggression levels as a driver by asking for responses to statements. The user selecting from pairs of statement the one most true for them. Limited use of graphics. At the end anxiety and aggression scores are shown with comments on how this would affect driving. Some aggression and anxiety is OK but high levels of both is dangerous.

Cost: £25 for site licence. Subsequent copies half price (1993).

Source: Protocol Software, School House, Angmering, West Sussex, BN16 4JS

Comment: *A serious program for all drivers and useful for adult clients as well as young offenders. Not a teaching tool as such but helpful as an illustration of a program designed for client use. Also has the quality of being a serious program which is fun to use.*

ICMS - Integrated Case Management System

Type : Windows **Version**: 1993

Use: Probation Client Information

This Probation Client Information System was designed for a consortium of Probation Services in East Anglia for use in local offices to manage local client information as well as providing statistical data required for the Home Office and service managers. The core system includes details about reports, offences, court results and supervision. The system links to "Word for Windows" to produce standard letters, forms and reports to courts, but could work with other word processors. This provides an effective means of dealing with significant amounts of text. Additional modules for court work, community service work, civil work are to be released shortly. The system is being developed with ccMail for wide area networking with batch transfer of records to a central computer.

Cost: Membership of consortium is £7,000 with £3,000 p.a. support costs.

Limitations : Needs 386 PC with Windows.

Source: Advance Systems, 11 Portland Square, Bristol, BS2 8SJ

Comment: *The Probation Service has waited many years for a PC client information system based on the needs of local practice. Use of the Windows environment brings advantages but excludes areas with investment in centralised/mainframe systems or in older PCs. ICMS is a high quality product but faces an uncertain future given the Home office drive to a single national system.*

Island

Type: DOS **Version**: 1.2 Demo (1993)

Author: David Colombi

Use: Client use

This program is a lesson and a test in practical judgment. The user, who is intended to be a client, is stranded on a desert island and has to make choices of the best equipment for survival and escape.

Cost: £25 for site licence. Copies half price (1993).

Source: Protocol Software, School House, Angmering, West Sussex, BN16 4JS

Comment: *Fun to use. This new version makes extensive use of attractive graphics.*

JJMS

Type : DOS **Version**: 1993

Author: Marc Radley

Use: Monitoring, Research

The Juvenile Justice Monitoring System is a database system developed in conjunction with the Social Services Research and Development Unit (SSRADU) at Bath University to monitor trends and patterns within Juvenile Justice. It provides a detailed recording system, geared to national monitoring requirements and able to produce over 150 standards reports and do 800 cross-tabulations. Its focus is on pre-court processes as well as court work and is aimed at Social Services, Probation and Police or for use on an inter-agency basis. It can analyse offences in relation to locations, peer group patterns of offences or police officer's arresting patterns.

Cost: £4,500

Limitations : Needs hard disk

Source: Social Services Research and Development Unit, Bath University, Bath.

Comment: *It has not been possible to see a copy of the program although literature and outputs have been seen and give a clear impression of a professional product from an established source.*

LegAid

Type : Psion Series 3 **Version**: 1993

Use: Legal Aid Assessment

Assesses entitlement to legal aid in Civil and Criminal cases ('Green Form'). Includes on screen context sensitive help.

Cost: Psion 3 £254, 3a £365.50 (£90 program only - maintenance £80)

Limitations : Needs Psion 3 series computer.

Source: Ferret Information Systems, 4 Coopers Yard, Curran Road, Cardiff CF1 5DF

Comment: *Again it has not been possible to see this in action but it comes from a well established source and uses a pocket sized computer.*

Probis II

Type : DOS **Version**: 1993

Use: Probation Service Client Information

A client information system for Probation Services to manage basic information about supervision and report work done by Probation staff. Reflects its origins based on Home Office needs for statistical data and includes a range of predetermined reports and analyses as well as flexible analytical tools. Is used by many services, including on networks in local offices. Probis 3 due for release in Spring 1994 promises to be better designed for local needs to deal with court work, bail schemes, client contact records, community service work and groupwork/project work.

Cost: Probis II is free to Probation services, Probis 3 will cost some £7,000 inclusive of first year maintenance contract. Maintenance is about £2,800 p.a.

Limitations : Needs hard disk. 386SX PC recommended for Probis 3.

Source: Hoskyns Group plc, Gemini House, 133 High Street, Yiewsley, Middlesex UB7 7QL.

 Copyright Centre for Human Services

Comment: *Probis has been around since 1982 and is due to be replaced by a national probation Case Record And Management System (CRAMS). Probis II is not user friendly and is stretched beyond its design purposes; the signs are that Probis 3 will give it a new lease of life.*

Report

Type: DOS **Version**: 1993

Author: Tony Pipe

Use: Probation Service Crown Court Work

For preparing 'fast-track' (same day) Pre Sentence Reports in the Crown Court. These reports were introduced by the Criminal Justice Act 1991 to avoid remands for reports on defendants convicted by Crown Courts. Details of the defendant and the case are fed into the system which identifies if it is a straightforward case or if there are complexities. For the former it produces a short report for the court to advise on sentencing options, and otherwise outlines reasons why an adjournment for a full report is needed.

Cost: Freeware

Source: Fitzwilliam Software, 34 Woodlands Road, Heaton Mersey, Stockport, Cheshire, SK4 3AF, UK.

Comment: *Useful for Crown Court Liaison Probation Officers in the two circumstances above, but does not claim to be suitable for generating the complex Pre Sentence Reports needed on adjournment.*

Service

Type: DOS **Version**: 1.2 Demo (1993)

Author: David Colombi

Use: Teaching, Training Sentencers, Conferences

Provides detailed information on the aims, functions and organisation of the Probation Service. The main screen is a tree structure from which the user can choose from thirty three options. Each provides more detailed information about the area selected.

Cost: £30 for site licence. Copies half price (1993).

Source: Protocol Software, School House, Angmering, West Sussex, BN16 4JS

Comment: *A simple introduction to the Probation Service for a client, volunteer or student. Easy to use without any previous instruction.*

Stealing Program

Type : DOS **Version**: 1992

Author: Ken Manning

Use: Juvenile justice work. Teaching

The program provides comprehensive information to help recognise and understand the reasons underpinning stealing behaviour. It endeavours to align intervention responses with causal factors as well as outlining more general approaches. Although the information mainly relates to young people who are experiencing episodes of stealing, much of the information will apply to adults.

Cost: £75 + VAT

Source: Psych Systems 2000, 301 Green Lane South, Coventry CV3 6EH

Comment: *Professional workers, foster parents or could be used by natural parents with discretion.*

5. TOOLS & TRAINING

This section ranges from Academic sytems for delivering and using course information, to tools for developing access to information and systems that facilitate use of information. The first category includes four systems from Walter Hudson that use computers as part of the teaching process for delivering course material, for evaluation and for student use. Other programs are more diverse in their focus although several are concerned with access to information sources such as bibliographies or community resources. It would however be possible to include all programs in the directory in this category as they can all be used as part of the teaching process. The review "Courseware Development and Implementation" on page 6 deals with some of the issues and the "Information Systems - Models Issue and Uses" review on page 12 refers specifically to the Community Services Locator.

AMS - Academic Merit System

Type: DOS **Version**: 2.3 Demo (1988)

Author: Walter Hudson

Use: Teaching

This program provides a means for students of recording and reviewing personal research and publications, classroom teaching and service by the student to their institution, community and/or profession. These are then combined and merit points are computed to produce a printed report with an 'academic merit score'.

Cost: $300

Limitations: Needs hard disk or twin floppy drives.

Source: Walmyr Publishing Co, PO Box 3554, Leon Station, Tallahassee, FL 32315, Florida, USA

Comment: *This is a limited version of the program, which is designed for the American Academic System. It does however have aspects which are relevant for non American users. It shows the usual thoroughness, clear design and helpful guidance that one has come to expect from programs from this source.*

An A to Z of Love and Sex

Type : DOS **Version**: 1.0 Demo (1993)

Author: David Colombi

Use: Sex Education

Provides information on over 150 topics relating to sex education. These are grouped alphabetically so the user chooses a letter from the main screen and then from the topics listed to receive information. The program provides specific information and the topics include biological facts, feelings, sexuality and sexual orientation, sexually transmitted diseases and sexual practices. Includes some illustrations. Aimed for adults as well as for young people and aims to provide factual information to help people to be more knowledgeable and better equipped to make their own moral judgements and decisions about their sexual behaviour. Issues such as abortion and homosexuality are presented in a balanced way although the program does seek to counter prejudice in all its forms.

Cost: £50 for site licence for school or other institution.

Source: Protocol Software, School House, Angmering, West Sussex BN16 4JS

Comment: *Later versions will increase graphics and topics covered. Explicit program that is fun to use and informative. Suitable for use in a range of settings and with all ages.*

CareDATA

Type : DOS, CD-ROM **Version**: Demo (1993)

Use: Education, Information access, Research.

This is a "Community and Social Care" database published by NISW (National Institute for Social Work) and to be officially launched in March 1994 as a CD-ROM disk and on four 3½" disks. It contains 20,000 abstracts to journal articles, books, reports, legislation and central and local government publications across the whole community care and social care fields. Information can be accessed in a range of different ways, including searching on key words or on any of the fields, or on combinations of as many fields as the user wishes. Information can be displayed on screen or printed on hard copy.

Cost: £599 for disk version. CD-ROM will be £699 or £799.

Limitations : Needs hard disk

Source: Mark Watson, National Institute for Social Work, 5 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SS

Comment: *This is a major new source of information that is directly relevance to the needs of human service organisations and to students, educationalists, researchers and others. The system, in common with a number of other suc systems uses the 'Headfast' database searching facility which is designed to enable novice users to be able to use it without training.*

CataLIST

Type : DOS **Version**: 1993

Use: Information on community resources

Cata-LIST is described as a "Database and Information Networking System" which is designed for use by statutory and voluntary agencies. The database system enables agencies to collect, maintain and distribute information about local, regional and national community resources. This can include information about things like publications as well as details of individuals, agencies and help groups. Data is not supplied with the system although data can be swapped between agencies using the system. The information networking system enables distribution of the information within an organisation using networks and includes mail-merge for mailshots, a calenders of events, statistical reports and exchanging information with external agencies.

Cost: £425-575 for single user package.

Limitations : Needs hard disk

Source: Information for Action, PO Box 277, Brighton BN1 4PF

Comment: *A well designed, modern and powerful system with extensive features and help facilities combine to make this an extremely valuable package that is being adopted by a variey of statutory and voluntary agencies.*

 Copyright Centre for Human Services

Community Services Locator

Type: DOS and UNIX **Version**: 2.0 Demo (1990)

Project manager: Gary Pinkerton

Use: Information Access to Community Resources, Teaching

Described as "a comprehensive system for delivering information and referral services", Community Services Locator is an easy to use system for direct provision to clients or their agents of information about community resources. The program is sophisticated and thorough. It includes a module for tracking client information but the main interest is in the very detailed community resource information. There is also a four hundred page "Taxonomy of the Human Services" with terms and definitions for some 3,000 community service programs.

Cost: $2,500 single user. $3,200 multi-user (1990).

Limitations: Hard disk required - 20 Mb recommended. Network version available.

Source: Community Technologies, 550 Fannin, Suite 100, Beaumont, TX 77701, Texas, USA

Comment: *This is another American program where the interest for us is in a major system being developed in Social Work to directly support practice. The review of "Information Systems - Models, Issues and Uses" on page 12 describes the system in more detail and examines issues about its use and implications for practice.*

Demobbs: NASW NM BBS tutorial

Type: DOS **Version**: 1989

Author: Mike Connealy

Use: Teaching

A tutorial program to show use of a bulletin board system, with simulation of access to a bulletin board to read and send messages and access to reference articles - in this case a HUSITA conference paper on networking. There is also an index of human services articles and resource materials, and of human services application software. The bulletin board involved is the NASW New Mexico BBS, but the principles are the same as for many other bulletin boards. The disk also includes NNCOMM communications software.

Cost: Freeware

Source: Department of Social Work, New Mexico State University, PO Box 3SW, Las Cruces, NM 88003, USA

Comment: *Useful for introducing new users to the idea of bulletin boards as a means of communication and sharing information. The advantage is not only that it is not necessary to buy a modem but also that users can avoid call charges while getting used to the basic principles involved.*

DrugInfo

Type : DOS **Version**: Demo (1993)

Author: Tony Pipe

Use: Training, Client use

This program provides information about drugs commonly misused, in relation to their drug groups, legal status, medical use, prevalence, availability and effects. The drugs included are amphetamines, cocaine, caffeine, steroids, opiates, codeine, LSD, cannabis, ecstasy, alcohol, barbiturates, hypno-sedatives, benzodiazephines, solvents, nitrites.

Cost: £25 (1993)

Source: Fitzwilliam Software, 34 Woodlands Road, Heaton Mersey, Stockport, Cheshire, SK4 3AF, UK.

Comment: *Useful source of information on drugs and drugs use, particularly on those less commonly known, in what is a quickly changing environment.*

Empirical Practice

Type: DOS **Version**: 2.4 Demo (1989)

Author: Walter Hudson

Use: Education

This program is designed to assist teachers of Social Work practice. The first of the three disks contains a program called the "Walmyr Bookmaker" which facilitates production of books, manuals or course packs of up to 25 pages in the demo version, but unlimited in the full version. It works from disparate ascii texts provided by the user for work requiring consistent quality presentation. The user can use the program to produce their own book or use the course material provided on disk to produce a book. This is material for a course on "Empirical Social Work Practice" which includes a number of quizzes, notes, homework assignments and other course material.

Cost: $50, discount for bulk purchase.

Source: Walmyr Publishing Company, PO Box 24779, Tempe, Arizona AZ 85285-4779, USA

Comment: *The book production facilites are useful but many users may prefer to use modern word processors which also facilitate book production and use features such as "What you see is what you get" (WYSIWYG). The value of this program may be as much as in making use of the course materials provided on disks two and three.*

Guide

Type : Windows **Version**: 3.1 (1993)

Use: Authoring, Hypertext, CAL, Multi-Media

A Windows based hypertext authoring system. Guide has text, graphics, video and audio facilities for interactive information management. Guide calls itself "The Complete Electronic Document Design and Publishing Tool". The program has extensive text formatting features and screen customisation. The author creates 'links' which permit easy movement between related information which can be accessed by four types of 'buttons' - Reference, Command, Expansion and Note buttons which are "hot" areas of screen where users can jump to a related topic.

Limitations : Needs 386 PC, Windows and hard disk.

Source: OWL International Ltd, Rosebank House, 144 Broughton Road, Edinburgh EH7 4LE.

Comment: *Like Toolbook (later in this section), Guide can be used on two levels, the simplest allows for intuitive development of linked documents and more sophisticated use is achieved by use of Guide's own language LOGiiX. For a full review see "CTISS File" (Number 13, April 1992) which is obtainable from the Centre for Human Service Technology.*

HyperHelper

Type : DOS **Version**: 3.0

Use: Authoring, Hypertext, CAL

HyperHelper allows you to create and browse through hypertext files, hypertext being a way of organising text so that you can link or jump from a point in a document to a related point in another document. Thus the document is organised not only two dimensionally (across lines and up and down pages) but it can be organised in "hyper" or "multiple dimensions". The program works by the author embedding codes around ascii text. Multiple files can be combined and external programs can be called. A shareware demo version - The Trial Kit - is a full working version of the program and includes the manual which has been produced as a Hyperhelper file.

Cost: The trial kit $5. The Developers Kit $89. The programmers kit, which includes source code, $199.

Source: Azarona Software, PO Box 768, Conifer, Colorado 80433, USA

Comment: *The CTI Centre evaluated a range of DOS based hypertext programs and concluded that Hyperhelper was the most flexible and easiest to learn and use. It is a powerful text based hypertext system which allows the author to configure colours and presentation but there is limited text formatting capabilities. Unfortunately the author is currently not contemplating a Windows version.*

HyperRez

Type: DOS **Version**: 1989

Author: Neil Larson

Use: Hypertext access of ASCII files

HyperRez is a memory resident hypertext program that demonstrates the way in which hypertext is used as an alternative way of structuring and accessing text information. Hypertext makes links between topics within ASCII documents to enable the user to move between different sections of the material. The instructions for the user are in hypertext on the disk and demonstrate the ease with which links can be made.

Cost: Freeware

Source: Neil Larson, MaxThink, 44 Rioncon Road, Kensington, California 94707, USA.

Comment: *A useful introduction to the use of hypertext as a means of linking text.*

Information Please

Type: DOS **Version**: 2.01 Demo (1990)

Use: Information access

This is a text storage and retrieval program which enables access to all types of full text information such as catalogues, letters, memos using category and keyword search. As such it combines some of the freedom of a word processor to enter detailed text exactly as you want it without the restrictions of a conventional database, but with the ability of a database to access and cross reference the information. Records can be linked to graphics.

 Copyright Centre for Human Services

Cost: Shareware. $50 registration.

Limitations: 286 chip or higher needed for large applications.

Source: TexaSoft, PO Box 1169, Cedar Hill, Texas 75104, USA

Comment: *A flexible, useful application although its position in between a word processor and a fixed field database is eroded to some extent by developments in both of these areas and in the development of hypertext and other authoring systems.*

I-View Skills Sampler Support Kit

Type: DOS **Version**: 2.33 Demo (1989)

Authors: Gale Goldberg-Wood, Ruth Middleman and F.Dean Luse

Use: Training students

A sampler of an interviewing skills teaching pack on "inter-personal communication skills vital to care-giving in the Human Service professions". The full version includes workbooks and a teacher's manual. The program focuses on presenting the concepts and principles of fifteen interviewing skills, either for self instruction or in classroom situations. It works through combining a "personalised conversation" with a learner's notebook. Case episodes dramatize how when and why each skill is applied and how skills work together. Quizzes provide feedback on performance and guidance on weaknesses.

The case episodes include "A woman faces her existential loneliness", "Anger, grief and guilt", "Frustration and silence: a family affair" and "Teenage depression and despair". The skills are grouped under four headings of Setting the Stage, Engaging Feelings, Generating and Processing Information and Managing Interaction.

Cost: Different prices for Student and University versions.

Limitations: Needs two 5¼" floppy drives or one 3½". Network version available.

Source: OUTPST Software, 119 Wilson, Park Forest, IL 60466, USA

Comment: *A useful program that provides help, feedback and practical analysis in learning interviewing techniques. The program is clear, detailed and well organised and is as relevant in the UK as in North America.*

MHC-BIB (Computers in Mental Health)

Type: DOS **Version**: Demo (1992)

Author: Bruce Vieweg et al

Use: Information access

This is an electronic bibliography which cites 581 publications from a larger database of 4,015 publications. It uses the APA reference format with associated key terms. Publications can be accessed by Author, Publication date or Key Index Terms. The latter includes 933 terms which can be selected in combination. The results of searches are printed to screen, printer or file and can include titles only or an annotation (summary) of the article. Files are in dBase format.

Cost: Freeware

Source: Missouri Institute of Psychiatry (MIP), 5400 Arsenal Street, St Louis, MO 63139, USA

Comment: *Useful content and easy to use. However this approach to accessing text information has been overtaken in some respects by development in hypertext and other authoring systems.*

Notebook

Type: DOS **Version**: 1.0 Demo (1992)

Author: Walter Hudson

Use: Education, Training

"Social Work Notebook System" enables lecturers to deliver course materials to students on disk. The F1 help facility at the start of the program describes in detail the process for lecturers in preparing material and setting up menus and sub-menus for the program to use. Course material is prepared on word processor and then saved as text files using a standard convention. The program links with the text editor provided on DOS 4 and above which can be used instead of a word processor.

The program then delivers the coursework to students. The demo version includes a course syllabus, course outline, events calender, study aids, information on a campus network and on specialist tools for the course. The lecture notes option identified thirteen subjects although the files for these were not included. The program works through simple menus into screen text on topics covered.

Cost: Freeware, but main files should not be altered.

Limitations: Requires hard disk. The memory required

depends on the quantity of notes included, but multiple disks can be used. On screen help and written material are available.

Source: Walmyr Publishing Company, PO Box 24779, Tempe, Arizona AZ 85285-4779, USA

Comment: *An easy to use package with powerful possibilities for delivery of a wide variety of computer based information. It could be used by agencies to deliver practice and training material as well as for social work courses. It inevitably raises issues about substituting computer courseware for teaching, or finding the right balance between these, with strong economic imperatives towards computer learning. The generic, customisable nature of the program is at the expense of imaginative presentation.*

PC-CAI (Computer Aided Instruction)

Type: DOS **Version**: 2.0 Demo (1990)

Author: Alan Elliot

Use: Teaching

Described as a "Personal Computer - Computer Aided Instruction Language", PC-CAI allows the user to create tutorials, tests, rolling demos and other programs. Makes extensive of graphics, animation and music to create attention grabbing screen effects. Registration includes provision of sample programs.

Cost: Shareware. Registration $49

Limitations: Needs hard disk or twin floppy disk drives.

Source: TexaSoft, PO Box 1169, Cedar Hill, Texas 75104, USA

Comment: *Avoids the need to learn programming to produce questionnaires, demos and other effects. Instruction manual provided on disk.*

Question Mark Professional

Type : DOS **Version**: 3.0 (1993)

Use: Teaching, research

Question Mark Professional allows you to create, give, mark and analyze tests on a computer. Questions can be entered in different formats including multiple choice, numeric, fill in blanks, word answer, free format, multiple response, matching/ranking, logical and explanation. Choices can be made about providing feedback after each question, at the end of the test or not at all. Each file can contain up to 500 questions. The teacher program is used for authoring, editing and analysis of test results. The student program is set for running the tests using author specified options. The program can be combined with graphics companion for grabbing and inserting graphics into tests. 'Toolkit' enables creating additional help screens and a Multi-Media Editor allows a test to call other programs, including digitised speech files created by QM Record, another Question Mark program.

Cost: £ 469 (1993)

Source: Question Mark Computing Ltd, 41b Brecknock Road, London N7 0BT

Comment: *An easy to use program which enables teachers to evaluate as well as administer student tests. A full review by Peter Miller (CTISS File, No 13, April 1992) is available from the Centre for Human Service Technology.*

Question Designer

Type : Windows, MAC **Version**: 1.0 (1993)

Use: Teaching, research

This program runs under Microsoft Windows and there is a MAC version for Apple Macintosh computers. It allows you to create and deliver tests, exams and other sorts of assessment on computer. It is suitable for use both by trainers and teachers who need to create tests and also by courseware developers who need to create test for wider distribution. It is possible to create aptitude tests, on screen questionnaires and computer tutorials and presentations. The question types differ from the DOS version (Question Mark Professional) by including graphical 'hot spot' questions and explanation screens. The program is in three parts - Designer for creating tests - Presenter for delivering tests and Reporter for analyzing answers.

Cost: £349 or £699 if combined with Question Mark Professional.(1993)

Limitations: Requires a 386 computer with hard disk and Windows 3.1.

Source: Question Mark Computing Ltd, 41b Brecknock Road, London N7 0BT

Comment: *Another easy to use program which takes full advantage of the potential of Multi-Media allowing users to incorporate graphics, sound and animation. It is designed as a full Multi-Media product and can therefore link to other windows authoring tools such as Toolbook or Guide. The disadvantage of the windows version is that free text responses are limited to one line from the six that are available in the DOS version.*

 Copyright Centre for Human Services

Social Work (Scotland Act) 1968

Type: DOS **Version**: 1990

Author: Vince McKechnie and Ian Brodie

Use: Education and Social Work practice

A four part program which tests the student's knowledge of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968. The first section is a multiple choice test which produces 20 randomly selected questions about the act. The second section requires short answers. The third section asks open ended questions and allows space for a word processed answer to be entered which is then saved and printed out for tutor comment The fourth is a multiple choice resume.

Source: The Queen's College Enterprises Ltd, 1 Park Drive, Glasgow G3 6LP, Scotland.

Comment: *A well presented program which uses a minimum of keystrokes. It makes a good introduction to computers for students. The material can be updated by the purchaser as legislation changes. Contact Queen's College for prices and more details.*

SpellGames

Type: DOS **Version**: 1.0 (1988)

Author: Alan Elliott

Use: Literacy

This program from the USA is a spelling game which presents spelling as an Olympic event with games in which you decide your country and your opponent. You then win or lose points according to your spelling proficiency in response to words briefly displayed on the screen. The program uses graphics figures and flags. There are four levels of difficulty and the speed of display of words can be varied.

Cost: Shareware. Registration $19.

Source: TexaSoft, PO Box 1169, Cedar Hill, Texas 75104,USA.

Comment: *Useful for adult literacy classes within Probation day centres and other settings. It is fun to use and unlike some such literacy programs aimed at children, this one could be used successfully with adults. The graphics are however a little dated by VGA standards.*

SWBIB

Type: DOS **Version**: 6.2a (1989)

Author: Don Mabey

Use: Information access, Teaching

This is described as a "Selected Annotated Bibliography having to do with the use of Computers in Social Work Practice". The annotations represent about a screen of information on each of the texts included. The bibliography originated through a World Health Fellowship study of the use of computers in mental health services with the author responding to resistance to the idea of use of computers in professional practice. The files are in ASCII format and can be used however preferred- eg through the program itself, through a word processor or through a hypertext program. The program includes an index.

Cost: Freeware

Source: Social Work Department, Centracare Saint John Inc., PO Drawer 3220, Postal Station B, Saint John, N.B., Canada E2M 4H7

Comment: *A detailed, thorough bibliography which is an invaluable source of information to anyone interest in the subject area. Inevitably strongest on North American publications.*

TAS - Teacher Assessment System

Type: DOS **Version**: 2.1 Demo (1990)

Author: Walter Hudson

Use: Education, Management

TAS - Teacher Assessment System from North America produces individual faculty reports and overall summaries based on student evaluations of classroom teaching performance. The Assessment System is complemented by a Teaching Evaluation Form (TEF) developed at The School of Social Work at Arizona University. It is designed for a University Department and can be used for a range of courses. The program uses median scores given by students to avoid influences of what the program refers to as 'malcontents and sycophants'. It claims validity through results of assessments being accepted as fair by the teachers involved in testing the system. The Teacher Evaluation Form uses 26 questions on which teachers are rated on a scale of 0 (low) to 9 (high) including 'Ability to explain concepts and principles' or 'Responsiveness to student learning problems'.The reports generated include a faculty report.

Limitations: Requires a hard disk.

Source: Walmyr Publishing Company, PO Box 24779, Tempe, AZ 85285-4779, Arizona, USA

Comment: *The program is well presented but requires some expertise to use to follow the detailed guidance given for setting up and using data files. The introduction provides information about using the program but no sample reports and it is on these that the real value of the program rests. The Evaluation Form is comprehensive and relevant.*

ToolBook

Type : Windows **Version**: 1.5

Use: Authoring, Hypertext, CAL, Multi-Media

Toolbook provides a system for the development of Windows based material incorporating graphics, text, animation and, in the Multi-Media version of the program, sound and video. It allows control over presentation and, using its own scripting language, it provides the basis for a wide range of tools and facilities.

Limitations : 386 PC with Windows and 2Mb free disk space.

Source: Asymetrix, 110 110th Avenue NE, Suite 700, Bellevue, Washington 98004. UK distributor (educational use only): Research Machines PLC, New Mill House, 183 Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 4SE.

Comment: *This program is much favoured for authoring material in academic environments. It can be used at different levels and at the simplest the screen can be designed with relative ease. Each screen is called a page, several pages making up a book. At the more complex level the user has to come to terms with the scripting language.For a review of Toolbook by Michael Beilby, see "CTISS file", Number 3, April 1992 which is available for the Centre for Human Service Technology.*

Trainers

Type: DOS **Version**: Demo (1992)

Use: Training

Trainers is a database of Training Services provided for Training Officers in social work agencies. It provides information on courses, training events and courses as well as training products, organisations and individuals. Subscribers receive regular updates from which they select information to view in relation to criteria of Range (New events, Courses, Conferences or Both), Subject Area (choice of 75), Area (10 regions of Great Britain including Ireland, International and In-house) and Date range (defaults to present onwards). From lists generated about events that match the search criteria the user can select events to have a single reference page of information about organisers, dates costs, subject areas etc. Additional free text information is available summarising such areas as Aims, Target Groups and Intended Learning Outcomes. Course information can be printed out. In the version reviewed over 1,100 courses were listed for the period July 1992 to the end of 1993.

Other facilities include lists of Ongoing courses, Consultants, Products and Address Book. The first three of these work in a similar way to course information with the user able to select according to type and subject area and able to access reference and free text information. The address book contained addresses of 505 organisations

Cost: £275 annual subscription for six updates. Subscribers advertise free.

Limitations: Requires hard disk.

Source: Wilson Hartley Trainers, 20 Ffrydlas Road, Bethesda, Gwynnedd LL57 3BL, Wales

Comment: *An easy to use, well presented and informative program that would be valuable to anyone engaged in organising Training events. It value inevitably depends on how comprehensive the information is, and this product covers a lot of ground, but inevitably cannot catch it all. Testing it for International Conferences on Information Technology revealed nothing about HUSITA 3. The program has some quirks like it not being clear how to reset search criteria.*

6. EMPLOYMENT

This is a short but significant section as computers have been used more as a threat to people's jobs rather than as a tool to assist them into employment. The main focus is on careers guidance with two American programs, PC Pathway and Rave to the fore. Another significant program is Personnel Policy Expert which is for assisting in development of personnel policies, and hence could equally have been classified under management. Sadly, but invitably, none of these programs actually increase the number of jobs available.

PC Pathway

Type: DOS **Version**: 6.5 Demo (1990)

Use: Careers guidance

This career guidance program starts with asking about the users situation according to environmental preferences, working hours preferred, preferred

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activities, activities not able to do, educational level, salary expectations, interests (dislikes as well as likes) and aptitude. As choices are made the number of jobs matching the users criteria from the 1,001 included. On the criteria used by the demo program, 26 remained including Musical Director for motion pictures, Public Health Nurse, Golf Professional, Hotel Manager and Private Investigator.

A useful feature is that the program will explain why any particular job was not included in the list. It also provides information about any occupation or those chosen in the search routing with basic characteristics of the job and a detailed analysis of the aptitudes required. Quick List and Search Word features are also provided to facilitate the process. Other similar programs are for Professions (PC Profway), Health related careers (PC Para) and high technology careers (PC Tech).

Cost: $299 (1990)

Source: SRC Software Research Corporation, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

Comment: *Has some similarities to the Rave program featured below. This one is easier to use but contains information about far fewer careers. As with other career guidance programs, this can only match the users preferences and abilities to theoretical options, not to actual available jobs.*

Performance Mentor

Type: DOS **Version**: Demo (1989)

Use: Performance assessment

For assessing the performance of employees, based on Management By Objectives (MBO). It includes modules for analysing your own management styles and the workplace including the appraisal system used within your organisation. These together set the context for analysis of employee performance. Assessments are made by highlighting characteristics which the employer thinks applies to employees. It is notable that more negative characteristics are listed for employees than for employers (eg. 'touchy'). The system then generates reports on employee styles, appraisal systems and appraisals of employees . There is also a detailed advice section which allows the user to be given an explanation of why each question is asked. Unfortunately, the demo version examined excludes access to significant parts of the program, including actual reports on any of the appraisals undertaken and also much of the advice sections.

Limitations: No documentation on disk.

Source: Performance Mentor Sales, 415/969-4500,3921 East Bayshore Road, Suite 205, Palo Alto, California 94303-4306, USA

Comment: *This is a well presented, easy to use and seemingly powerful program, although without seeing actual reports, on which its quality really depends, it is hard to be conclusive. Many of the characteristics listed are personal qualities rather than performance related and are hence of dubious relevance, although the program is looking at a match between the employee and his or her workplace. The program works on employers doing the appraisal rather than as a shared process, although it would be possible for that to be shared, including employees helping employers rate their own management style.*

Personnel Policy Expert

Type: DOS **Version**: 2.0 Demo (1989)

Author: Jack McGervey and Stephen Kellerman

Use: Personnel

A program to assist companies to write personnel policies in the form of a company or organisational handbook. The topics covered after introductory material include Employment, Employment Status and Records, Employee Benefit Programs, Timekeeping/Payroll, Work Conditions and Hours, Leaves of Absence, Employee Conduct and Disciplinary Action and Miscellaneous (Aids in the workplace). The first section on Employment covers Employee Relations, Equal Employment Opportunity, Hiring of Relatives, Pre-Employment Physical Examinations, Immigration Law Compliance, Conflicts of Interests, Outside Employment and Non-Disclosure.

The program provides advice at each stage and the user has full control over all the end product, which can be exported to the user's word processor. The policy is built up by the user selecting each section they wish to include and then being asked questions about items for inclusion. For each section a range of topics are listed, advice is offered and the user selects those to be included. The advice includes legal advice on employment law.

Cost: $495 (1989)

Source: Correct knowledge, KnowledgePoint, 1311 Clegg Street, Petaluma, California 94954, USA

Comment: *A thorough, powerful, well designed and simple program to use that has very obvious benefits for organisations in helping to insure that important issues are not forgotten in personnel policies. Although the program works to American, or Californian employment law, its relevance is international.*

Rave

Type: DOS **Version**: 2.3 Demo (1989)

Use: Client employment, Training

RAVE - Realistic Assessment of Vocational Experience - uses information supplied by the user about a client to identify possible career options. It can work from the client's work experience by analysing their preferences and success in jobs or by analysing their skills. The latter involves 16 pages of information to be entered which includes a very wide range of factors including skills, educational attainment, English proficiency, colour vision and supervising capabilities.

The program analyses from over 12,000 occupations although only 124 are included in the demo version. A look up facility supplies information about occupations. The demo version is also limited by the need to look up codes in the manual supplied with the program. Client information can be stored and details edited. Analysis of occupations lists occupations under three levels of 'Closely Related Occupations', 'Realistic Alternatives' and 'Eliminated Occupations'.

Limitations: Needs 640K RAM and Hard Disk with 0.8 MB free.

Source: Ciasa Inc, 2017 Cedar Street, Berkeley, Ca 94709, California

Comment: *This is a powerful and comprehensive program that sets out to do a specific task and does it thoroughly. It functions in an area where development has been limited and is potentially extremely useful. Although an American program it is generally relevant to the UK although some job titles are different. Inevitably the chief problem is that it can only deal with occupations rather than specific jobs and that career analysis is of limited value if there are no jobs available. It has potential value in working with clients who under value themselves.*

Retirement Financial Projector

Type: DOS **Version**: 3.0 Demo (1990)

Author: G.R. Anderson

Use: Retirement planning

This program as its name implies assists with planning for retirement, a process that should, it argues, start in your head not on the computer. The program is in practice an extended document file accompanied by some lotus files for use with a Lotus 2.01 spreadsheet. The program assumes familiarity with Lotus. The main document file has twenty four pages of text covering Living Expenses, Assets, Social Security, Projection and Parametric Analysis. The main spreadsheet details assets and expenses with separate sections for projection of asset growth, setting parameters and a scratch pad for storing notes and results of calculations. A second spreadsheet provides information about the Consumer Price Index from 1961.

Cost: Shareware. Registration $30

Source: G.R Anderson, 13032 Ambaum Blvd, SW, Seattle, WA 98146, USA

Comment: *Potentially useful to those planning retirement or recently retired. The necessity of using the program with Lotus (or Lotus compatible spreadsheet) restricts its use and user friendliness. It is recommended to read the text files first, which is easiest using the EDIT text editor now included in DOS.*

7. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES & DISABILITY

Programs in this section are mainly about using the technology to assist people who are disabled and this is an area where information technology has made a massive improvement in some people's lives. Two of the programs are different ways of doing the same task of enabling people who can only press one key at a time to use all the facilities on a keyboard and this is illustrative of how relatively simple practical work can make a significant difference. The "Equal Opportunities at Work" program is a significant contribution to challenging discrimination in the work place. The first program, ADA.KIT is not a computer program as such, but is a source of information about a major piece of American legislation that offers a model for development in establishing rights of Access for disabled people.

ADA.KIT

Type: DOS **Version**: 1993

Use: Education, Management

This guide for universities to implementing the American Disabilities Act of 1990 is a text file which can be viewed using a text editor or word processor. Section A "The Spirit of the ADA" is an overview of legal issues and encourages a pro-active approach to establishing adaptive computing technology. The comprehensive checklist on adaptive technology in section B provides the basis of campus assessments. Sections C and D area a User needs Survey and a self evaluation Short Form for departments.

Cost: Free but cannot be resold (Shareware). There is a fee for the consultation service.

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Source: Project EASI, IUUC, Educom, 1112 16th Street, NW #600, Washington, DC 20036.

Comment: *Not a program as such but relevant to the UK and other countries as well as to USA, both as regards introduction of similar legislation and for facilitating analysis of how the needs of disabled people are, or are not met in relation to using IT.*

Augment

Type: DOS **Version**: 2.7 Demo (1988)

Use: Disability (Speech impairment)

Augmentative Communication is about the gap some handicapped people have between what they understand and what they can express through speech and other means and includes techniques such as sign language or high technology solutions such as voice output computer systems. 'Introduction to Augmentative Communication Technology and Augmentative Communication Screening System' aims to provide information about Augmentative Communication and a screening procedure to begin evaluation for use of the technique. The program is for use by teachers, caseworkers, family members and consumers to complement, not replace, professional help. The program has modules of Assessing Readiness, Communication Activities, Clinical Services, Information Resources and Introductory References.

Source: Integrating Technology into Service Delivery, UTA Box 19129, Arlington, TX 76019, Texas, USA

Comment: *Although quite old and somewhat dated in its screen design this is a helpful program for evaluation purposes and identifying ways of helping and sources for help for people with speech impairment.*

Equal Opportunities at Work

Type: DOS **Version**: 2.1 Demo (1986)

Use: Equal opportunities, Training aid

The program aims to help employers eliminate discrimination in employment, to give guidance as to action that employers can take to ensure that employees do not discriminate or are not discriminated against and to help employers promote equal opportunities in employment. It is designed to promote discussion and operates through quizzes, interspersed with screens of information to set out what is lawful and unlawful.

Source: MLS - Mast Learning Systems, 3 Weatherby Mews, London SW5 OJG, London

Comment: *A well presented product using graphics effects that help this to be an excellent introduction to equal opportunities issues.*

Discrimination

Type : DOS **Version**: Demo (1993)

Author: Sheila Quaid and Joe Ravetz

Use: Identifying Discrimination in Job Interviews

This is described as the first stage of a prototype to advise on questions pertaining to sex and marital discrimination in the employment process. It operates through the user being asked about their experience of being interviewed and then advises whether there is or is not a primae facie case for saying that discrimination took place.

Cost: Freeware

Source: J. Ravetz, Department of Public Policy, University of Central Lancashire, Preston RR1 2TQ.

Comment: *Allowance need to be made for this being a prototype program with relatively unsophisticated presentation. It uses expert system techniques but the chief problem is that people discriminated against rarely have access to the information that can prove it.*

Freeboard

Type: DOS and MAC **Version**: Demo (1989)

Use: Disabled Persons

A demonstration version of software to assist disabled people use computers without having to use a keyboard. Works from mouse, joystick, scanning switch or other input devices or even from a miniature camera attached to the computer screen which responds to movements of the users head.

Costs A wide range of options are available, many including hardware.

Limitations: Needs input device - mouse, tracker ball, joystick or specialist switch which can be included with package, as can the camera.

Source: Adaptive Communication Systems Inc., Box 12440, Pittsburgh, PA 15231, USA Tel: 1-800-247-3433

Comment: *Demo version uses the keyboard to mimic effect of using other input devices. The supplying company provides an advice and support service.*

Learn to Sign

Type: DOS **Version**: 2.5 Demo (1991)

Author: Herb Bartow

Use: Disabled persons

Teaches North American system of "finger spelling" signing of the alphabet - which is different from British signs, although some letters are the same. Signs are shown by large clear diagrams. Also includes signs for 75 common words. The program has different modes and quizzes to facilitate learning. It can be extensively customised to the user's requirements including displaying right or left hand signs.

Cost: Shareware. Registration $15

Source: HCB computing, 316 Layfayette Street, Hackettstown, NJ 07840, New Jersey, USA

Comment: *A clear, easy to use program that makes learning to finger spell the American way fun and surprisingly easy.*

Stickey

Type: DOS **Version**: 2.0 (1988)

Author: Dr Neil Bennett

Use: Disability

This is a keyboard enhancer for people who can only use one finger, or a headstick or mouthstick which makes using the Shift, Control and Alt keys impossible. The program is a memory resident utility which can be switched on and off at any stage. When in use the Shift or Alt or Control keys can be pressed before pressing the relevant other key instead of these keys requiring simultaneous use with anothe key.

Cost: Freeware. A $10 voluntary contribution to the Center is suggested.

Source: Center for Computer Assistance for the Disabled (C-CAD), 2501 Avenue J, Suite 100, Arlington, TX 76011, Texas, USA

Comment: *For some, an invaluable program. The disk also includes general information about the Center for Computer Assistance for the Disabled and a keyboard locking program for good measure.*

8. HEALTH ASSESSMENT

In this section the main focus is on systems used for psychiatric assessment and treatment or assessment in relation to drug use, although the "Wellness checkpoint" is a notable exception. Again this is an area of overlap into other areas with some of the drugs and alcohol programs having medical as well as a social relevance. The other area of overlap is with client management systems in section 9, some of which are for medical settings and go beyond just managing information about patients. A notable dimension in this section is whether systems are for direct use by patients. All have an element of encouraging systematic and careful assessment of patients which in itself can be reassuring to patients who commonly experience feelings of being neglected.

ACHI Assessment of Chemical Health Inventory

Type: DOS **Version**: Demo (1988)

Author: D. Krotz, R. Komiowski & B. Berntson

Use: Alcohol and Drug Assessment

A self-test questionnaire which assesses drug and alcohol abuse. There are two versions, youth and adult with the former basing assessments on responses to 128 questions about use of drugs and alcohol and other aspects of their lives, particularly looking at family conflict and self esteem as well as drug/alcohol use. The latter is in general terms, rather than on specific drugs, with the concern being about social and personal consequences. Although it is a self test program the results are designed to be interpreted by a clinician using the printed report generated. This includes an ACHI score, a 'Berntson Social Desirability Scale' and a 'Factor Summary', with tests to check for random responses and consistency.

Source: Regency Education Systems, 15820 Addison Road, Dallas, Texas 75252, USA

Comment: *The questions are straightforward but quite focused and probing. The fact that it requires a trained assessor to use the results restricts its usefulness in social work settings. Its strengths lie in the willingness of many clients to be more open with a computer.*

Alcohol Withdrawal

Type : MAC **Version**: 1.1 (1993)

Author: James Todd

Use: Alcohol education and training

This is an educational program designed for counsellors and other health care professionals, but could be used by

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anyone in the human services field working with alcohol abusers. It uses the MAC graphics environment and sound effects to provide detailed information about alcohol withdrawal. This is primarily from a medical rather than a social perspective and focuses on theory, signs and symptoms, risk factor assessment and management, together with a glossary of terms.

Cost: Freeware

Limitations : Needs Apple Macintosh computer.

Source: Dr J. Todd M.D., 4 High Street, Suite 10, Brattleboro, Vermont 05301, USA

Comment: *Much of the information is technical about Alpha and Beta processes in the brain and it is stronger on symptomology than it is on treatment management. Nevertheless it has useful information about the effects of alcohol and the MAC environment presents this well.*

CATP - Computer Assisted Treatment Planning

Type: DOS **Version**: 3.2 Demo (1993)

Use: Treatment, Teaching

Designed to assist the user to write psychiatric treatment plans and operates in five basic modes of adult in or out-patients, children, adolescents and chemical dependency, although only the first two are available on the demo program. Plans can be in different formats multi-column etc and include such areas as psycho-social conflict, discharge planning and non-psychiatric medical factors. Plans can be stored for future use and development. The program encourages and enables a structured approach to report writing and also includes check lists of problems relating to fourteen different psychiatric diagnoses.

Limitations: Requires hard disk and 1.2 or 1.44Mb floppy disk drive.

Source: Southridge Software, Tel: (817) 421-9336 (USA)

Comment: *The description of this as a "computer assisted" not a "computerized" program accurately reflects the nature of this program which is well presented but of limited relevance to those not working in psychiatric settings.*

Decisionbase

Type: DOS **Version**: 2.0 Demo (1989)

Author: Phillip Long

Use: Psychiatric Diagnosis

The chief function is a psychiatric diagnosis using what are known as DSM-IIIR criteria. There is an initial interview, diagnosis, a Computerized History, a Computerized Textbook (descriptions and features of common disorders), Progress Charts (eg depression levels), a Search Utility to search patient files and Automated Patient Records. It also includes information on history taking, laboratory findings, patient education, treatment suggestions and access to tools such as outcome graphing, word processing and record keeping. The program has modes for therapist assessment, patient self assessment and also for the patient assessing partner, mother or father, or being assessed by an informant.

Cost: DSM-IIIR version $495, DSM-III version $875

Limitations: Requires 10Mb hard disk.

Source: Phillip Long, Decisionbase,#1206-750 West Broadway, Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 1J2, Canada

Comment: *A comprehensive thorough approach using an established diagnostic methodology, the program is unusual in the degree of patient self-assessment, including assessment of partners and parents. In a novel approach to funding software, it suggests getting the computer to do the diagnosis but charging as if you had done it.*

Hamilton Scale (Depression Assessment)

Type: DOS **Version**: 1988

Author: Grant Fair

Use: Mental Health

A computer version of a pencil and paper test which gives a standardised scale rating of depression. It is based on a "Review of Direct Assessment of Depression by Microcomputer by Marc Schwartz in *Using Computers in Clinical Practice*, (Haworth Press, Schwartz. M.ed.). The user is asked 18 questions about their current feelings covering depressive and anxiety feelings, suicide thoughts, physical symptoms and sleeping patterns. The program gives a score at the end but no feedback about interpretation, advising the user to ask their counsellor what the score means (even for the lowest possible score). Data can be stored or printed out.

Cost: Freeware.

Source: 161 Franklin Avenue, Willowdale, Ontario M2N 1C6, Canada

Comment: *The purpose of the program is based around evidence that people often find it easier to give personal information to a computer rather than to a therapist. The lack of any feedback about scores is a serious limitation and is quite frustrating.*

HIV/Aids Study Stack

Type: MAC **Version**: Demo (19)

Author: John F. MacGrady

Use: HIV/Aids education

This program is built around a 45 item quiz about the medical and social aspects of HIV and Aids but with access from the quiz at each stage into detailed information about the particular aspects of HIV/Aids being addressed and into sources of help in America. The program also includes an animation of the infection sequence of the virus, using the graphics environment to display relevant diagrams. The quiz is described as encompassing the minimum acceptable level of knowledge for today's health care providers and are multiple choice questions with applause provided for getting the right answer. Some questions are specific to American legislation and practices but most are of general applicability.

Cost: Freeware

Limitations : Needs Apple Macintosh computer.

Source: Coconut Information 1990, PO Box 75460, Honolulu, Hawaii 96836

Comment: *An extremely impressive questionnaire that makes very effective use of the MAC graphics and sound capability to produce a program that is very informative and interesting to use, albeit on a serious topic.*

Mental Health Assessment

Type : DOS **Version**: Demo (1993)

Author: Joe Ravetz

Use: Mental Health Assessment

This is an expert system currently being developed to provide advice to Social Workers and others pertaining to compulsory admission to psychiatric hospital under the Mental Health Act 1983. It provides information on definitions and legal procedure as well as guidance on diagnosis, the need for admission and the choice of procedure. The former is by selecting from five topic areas and then within each topic. Guidance in a case is by being asked key questions and then being advised if legal and other admission criteria are met.

Cost: Freeware

Source: Joe Ravetz, Department of Public Policy, University of Central Lancashire, Preston PR1 2TQ

Comment: *This is a program which offers advice in a complex area of mental health law that affects social workers and others. The advice is useful although the presentation of information is fairly basic.*

TP Write

Type: DOS **Version**: 1.5 Demo (1992)

Author: Arnold Schuster

Use: Treatment

Treatment Plan Generator is designed to help clinicians generate out-patient mental health reports in response to increasing demands by external reviewers. The reports work to fixed formats or to user specifications. The twelve modules include Diagnosis, Previous Treatment Efforts, Psychological Testing, Treatment Modalities, Medications, Primary Therapeutic Orientation and Treatment Goals. Basic patient information is entered and the report built up by selecting options from menus - in the demo version depression is characterised by depressive mood and suicidal thoughts. Symptoms such as insomnia, low self-esteem and weight loss are added from an extended list. This is followed by analysis of Appearance, Orientation, Memory and Mood. The program offers over 1,000 treatment goals, but the user can define their own. Reports are visible as they are generated and the final report can be edited and printed, saved or exported to a word processor.

Cost: $495 + $10 postage. Evaluation version $50.

Source: Reason House Software Inc, 204 East Joppa Road, Penthouse Suite 10, Towson MD. 21286,USA

Comment: *This is a well presented program with a stated aim of saving time but with a structure that assists a thorough approach and presenting a wide range of symptoms. The program seeks to combine being an informative guide with full freedom for the user to be in control and the result is impressive.*

Wellness Checkpoint

Type: DOS **Version**: Demo (1990)

Use: Client use

Wellness Checkpoint is about the user's mental and physical health. Using CGA graphics and analogies between bodies and cars, the opening module, 'About Wellness' promotes healthy living by careful diet, exercise. The fourth module 'Wellness Assessment' is a detailed assessment or the users health risk factors based on lifestyle and other factors. The third module use a game of cards as an analogy for wellness, where

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the user can learn about Basic Health Factors (heart, lungs, cancer, diabetes, environment) about Lifestyle Habits (eating, smoking, alcohol, medication and driving), about Coping (exercise, stress, relax, family) and Indicators (blood pressure, cholesterol and weight). The final module displays information graphically based on all users of the program.

Source: USA - Infotech Ltd. Tel: (204) 885-2558 (USA). UK - Question Mark Computing, 12 Heath Villas, London NW3 1AW

Comment: *The demo version goes at a preset speed - not variable for fast and slow readers. The program is fairly comprehensive and detailed and the strength is in this and the Graphics although these are dated by modern Windows standards, but are imaginative and effective. Could be used effectively with clients, and for that matter with staff and students.*

9. MANAGEMENT

The predominate type of program in this section are systems for managing information about clients which have been the driving force for much of the development of computerization within human services, as in other agencies. Some of the issues about the evolution of such systems are addressed in the editorial (as well as in the general literature) and issues about use of client information client are the subject matter of the thematic review on page 12 "Information Systems, Models, Issues and Uses". Some clients information system relating to probation and to juvenile justice are included in section 4 on 'Crime and probation'. Other programs included in this section are more diverse in their focus and include Negotiator Pro, DonorWare and SuperSync.

AMIS - Advanced Management Information System

Type: DOS **Version**: 2.1 Demo (1989)

Use: Case Management

A case management system designed for hospital social work and discharge planning departments in the USA. It covers intake and assessment, case management, personnel records, mailing, resource management and fund raising. It provides individual and caseload reports and is aimed for smaller agencies not able to develop custom designed systems.

Cost: $695 (1989)

Limitations: Hard disk recommended.

Source: King Associates Ltd., 215 Shoreward Drive, Great Neck, New York 11021, USA

Comment: *The demo version does not show the full range of options. Screen design is clear and not too cluttered and the program does give guidance to new users, making it more user friendly that many other products of this type.*

Client Information Management System

Type: DOS **Version**: Demo (1993)

Author: Larry Hall

Use: Education, Practice

This is a "Nutrition and Services" demo version of the program, managing information about a range of services from Meals on Wheels, Hospital Discharge, Transport, Shopping Assistance and Legal Assistance. The main client information has one screen of 46 data items including 17 problem areas mostly relating to medical issues.

The program is flexible with 15 different ways of accessing client data, but does not include help screens and only limited on screen help. It includes a wide range of predefined reports about service delivery and other aspects, although some such as psychiatric symptom check lists can only be printed.

Limitations: Requires hard disk with 1.4 Mb free memory.

Source: Texas Software, 10165 Phelan Blvd, Beaumont, Texas 77713-9669, USA

Comment: *The program appears to be a flexible and fairly powerful system for managing client information. The general design is good although the main client data screen is cluttered. The demo version focused on medical rather than social issues. Users needs access to a manual and the USA context and the lack of on screen help or text files limits its use for training purposes in the UK.*

Design Issues for Decentralised Social Services

Type: DOS **Version**: 1987

Author: Shawn Boles

Use: Development

Developed as a presentation to the 1987 HUSITA conference (Human Services Information Technology Applications), this is a planning and educational tool about the design and use of information systems within social services. It provides a graphical presentation that focuses on the information needs of consumers, providers and service purchasers with information loops

that enable decisions to be made on the basis of information. The program also details design and implementation issues of an information system within a small agency.

Cost: Freeware

Source: Shawn Boles, McDSC/College of Education, University of Oregon, Eugene, Or. 97403, USA

Comment: *Returning to this program after many years it was interesting to see how little the issues have changed about the need for information led decision making. The program is still relevant, particularly for decision makers as an useful and interesting presentation of some of the issues.*

DonorWare

Type: DOS **Version**: 1.2 Demo (1991)

Use: Fund raising

Described as Donor Management Software for fund raising by non-profit organisations, DonorWare, it provides a comprehensive and integrated system for managing and tracking information about donors and their accounts. It is linked to word processing, or to other databases and has voice and communications capabilities.

Cost: From $3,995

Limitations: Requires hard disk. Runs on networks.

Source: EMIS Software Inc., 901 N.E.Loop 410, Suite 526, San Antonio, TX 78209, Texas, USA

Comment: *A sophisticated, professionally produced program and priced accordingly.*

Foster Care Protections

Type: DOS **Version**: 0.1 Demo (1988)

Author: S.Ice

Use: Quality assurance

This program is to assist in the process of auditing foster care to meet the requirements of American legislation under what is known as Section 427. To qualify for funding of foster care a rising proportion of placements must meet the standards laid down. The program holds details about audits and generates a variety of reports on the data.

Source: S.A. Ice, Seattle. Tel: 206-442-0838 (USA)

Comment: *A well designed and powerful program, but it is necessary to study the on-screen help in some detail before actual use. The program describes the legislation and audit standards in some detail. Its main interest outside UK is in applying this type of data management system to a quality assurance process.*

HSIS - Human Service Information System

Type: DOS **Version**: Demo (1988)

Use: Management

Demo version reviewed. This is an American Client Information System which is designed to be usable across a wide range of Human Service organisations. Provides for storing and retrieving detailed personal, problem and social information about clients of social work agencies with a range of reports and analysis included. The demo version does not show the full features but it is customisable to the needs of different agencies.

Source: Echo Consulting Services Inc, PO Box 540, Main Street, Center Conway, New Hampshire NH 03813, USA.

Comment: *In being relevant for a range of agencies it lacks clarity, with somewhat fussy screen design. Its an area where agencies need systems designed to their particular needs.*

Management System

Type : DOS **Version**: 1992

Author: Ken Manning

Use: Management of client practice

The Management System is a series of inter-connecting knowledge base programs that provide information about general management practices. They include: Planning, Managing Change, Problem Investigation, Assessment, Conflict Management, Organisation, Evaluation and others. Although the system is designed for general management, the nature of the programs also make them applicable to social work.

Cost: £150 + VAT (1993)

Source: Psych Systems 2000, 301 Green Lane South, Coventry CV3 6EH

Comment: *The general application of this software makes it suitable for use in a wide range of settings. Other programs from this source are included in section 1 (Problem Management Program) and elsewhere.*

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Negotiator Pro

Type: DOS and MAC **Version**: 1.31 Demo (1991)

Author: Dan Burnstein and Geoff Chatterton

Use: Trade Unions, Any negotiation field

The Negotiator Profile is an expert system that determines yours and other personal and negotiating styles and advises on handling interaction. Advice from the Profile is fed into the Negotiator Plan module. The Plan section helps prepare 10 core questions from the 35 questions included to prepare for negotiation. The program enables you to prepare a 'Briefing book'. The Negotiator Profile use dimensions of 'Extroverted', 'Amiable','Analytic' and 'Pragmatic' and having analysed your style and the other side's style, assuming you have information on this, the program reports on the likely interaction.

The questions in the Negotiator Plan are grouped into areas of Background, Bargaining Cards, Strategies, Opening, Middle Tactics, Ending. The program allows up to 10 screens of information to be entered for each question. The program includes a hypertext glossary of 100 terms and the ability to copy text from other files.

Limitations: Requires hard disk.

Source: Beacon Expert Systems Inc., 35 Gardener Road, Brookline, MA 02146, Massachussets, USA

Comment: *The demo version provides a fixed pathway through the program, but shows a high quality easy to use program. The personal style analysis includes an on screen histogram display of style that changes in response to each question. The real worth of the program inevitably depends on the quality of the analysis supplied to take it beyond being just a useful means of organising and preparing for negotiation. The demo version gives a glimpse which suggests considerable potential in this area. Its focus on confrontation and opposing sides makes it less relevant to social work professional situations where parties hopefully seek to work together, although it is relevant to employer/employee situations.*

R/Client

Type: DOS **Version**: Demo (1989)

Use: Client Information, Case management

This Client Information System from North America records client data and assessment decisions for Social Service organisations. It can be user defined and includes over fifty standard reports. It includes provision for detailed narrative data making it relevant for practitioner needs to manage cases rather than just as a index or management tool. The functions include analysis of groupwork and case goals and scheduling of staff time. The program is menu driven with context sensitive help, making it designed for use by non specialists. It is geared to costing all services and relates costs to pre set limits, with inclusion of billing facilities.

Limitations: Demo works from floppy disk but a hard disk is required for the full system.

Source: Human Services Software, Great Lakes Behavioral Institute, Pittsburgh, 215 Fourth Avenue, Pennsylvania, USA

Comment: *The demo suggests a useful program for running a case management model of service delivery. The process of data entry, analysis and generation of reports is straightforward and screen design is clear and easy to follow. In a crowded field, this program appears user friendly, flexible and more relevant to practice than some such programs.*

Servus Volunteer Database

Type: DOS, Windows, MAC **Vers**: 1.1 Demo (1993)

Use: Volunteer management

Servus Volunteer Database Software is, as its name implies, a system for managing information about volunteers and matching them to projects. It can search for information on names, ethnic groups, skills, interests, availability and any other criteria and also tracks training, contacts with the organisation and work done. Information on volunteers is set out as a series of cards, like a card index, to make it more intuitive to use. The program includes 17 built in reports on volunteer activities. There are some additional interesting features which are not usually found in management systems, such as 'inspiring' quotations, a puzzle and a game.

Cost: $395 (1993).

Limitations: Hard disk required with at least 1.5 Mb free memory (DOS version).

Source: MicroAssist Inc., Site 43, Northfield, MN 55057, Minnesota, USA

Comment: *Another professionally produced, high quality and comprehensive package that would be applicable outside the USA for organisations that use volunteers. It includes recording awards and recognitions made to volunteers (eg Volunteer of the Year). Part of the proceeds of sales go to support the 'Campus Outreach Opportunity League'.*

siAMS

Type: DOS **Version**: 2.1 Demo (1989)

Use: Agency Management

A client management system designed for all types of Human Services agencies. Apart from managing information about clients it documents manpower use, the performance of service programs, compliance with government regulations and with contractual funding agreements and interaction with other agencies. There are staff records and payroll processing, leave reports and time sheet records as well as a fund-raising module. The demo version describes sections rather than allowing a detailed exploration, but an evaluation version of the program is available at low cost which is set against subsequent purchase.

Cost: $1,000 plus annual licence of $150. discount for multiple orders (1989).

Limitations: Hard disk required with 3.4 Mb free memory.

Source: Software Integration Services, 60 East 42nd Street Suite 2238, New York 10165, USA

Comment: *The demo gives only a limited impression, but this appears as another comprehensive, flexible package for managing client information, more manager than practitioner orientated, but with less cluttered screen design than some such products.*

Sisyphus

Type: DOS **Version**: 1.2 Demo (1990)

Author: Roger F. Schultz

Use: Report writing

Sisyphus is designed for mental health workers and its aim is described as being to simplify paperwork, which is described here as the modern equivalent of 'rock rolling'. Sisyphus is named after the mythical King of Corinth who was condemned to forever roll a rock uphill in Hades and the legend is detailed in the program. In practice Sisyphus goes much further than simplifying paperwork into being a case management system with diagnostic and treatment planning tools as well as administrative features. The demo version provides a tour of the features with explanatory 'pop-up' windows.

Cost: $550 (optional spell checker $100).

Source: Sisyphus Software, 771 Fifth Avenue, Utah, 84103-3511, USA

Comment: *Professional well designed software in an area where there are a number of such high level products. This one impressed through its screen design and clear structure.*

SuperSync

Type: DOS **Version**: 1.0 Demo (1988)

Author: Anthony Adams & Darry Adams

Use: Team development

This "Team Dynamics Program" is for evaluating and improving the function of a team of up to forty five workers. It works through peer assessment within teams, starting from an assumption that people like working in teams and want to contribute their best. It uses a range of questionnaires that focus on each persons relationship with other team members of the type "The person I would most like to start a new project with". Questions asked are positive and negative and new questionnaires can be created. The interactions between members are analysed and reports show how groupings function within teams, who are the leaders. It assesses strengths and also dysfunctional elements including 'renegades'. It claims that by doing so potential problems can be solved before they occur. The reports are at various levels of elaboration and complexity, relating to very diverse material.

Cost: $295

Limitations: Printer required.

Source: SwixTech USA, 2102 Business Center Drive, Suite 130, Irvine, California 922715, USA

Comment: *An attractive looking and interesting package that uses a powerful methodology and clearly has potential use in a wide range of teams. Considering how much effort is wasted through poor team functioning and how expensive and inconclusive 'weekend retreats' can be, this has to be worth considering. How creative and helpful it would be in practice remains a matter of speculation.*

Vixen

Type: DOS **Version**: Demo (1992)

Author: Mike Connealy

Use: Client Management

Vixen is an information management tool for Human Service professionals who are asked to account for their time. It provides a profile on each client, progress notes

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and routine reporting, a resource database, statistical analysis, calendar and diary facilities and interface with word processors. A number of reports can only be printed, rather than viewed on screen.

Cost: Shareware. Registration $45 for individuals. $300 for single site licence for agencies

Limitations: Requires hard disk and MS-DOS 5.0 and above preferred.

Source: Mike Conealy, 2209 Skyway Drive, Las Cruces, New Mexico 88001

Comment: *As a Case management system rather than a client information system this program is designed for the needs of practitioners rather than for service managers, including provision for detailed text information on clients. However the distinction between the two products is diminishing and many client information systems include the type of faciltites offered here. It is however a shareware product at low cost which makes it potentially relevant for small agencies, parts of the voluntary sector and for simulation exercises with students.*

10. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

This relatively short section describes some, and only some, of the programs available for undertaking research, with a particular emphasis on qualitative research. The Ethnograph is an exemplar of programs that can be used for analysis of large quantities of text information such as interviews, diaries, filed notes or other transcripts. The three survey programs included have the ability to work with varying amounts of text information as well as with coded data and multiple choice data.

Abtab

Type: DOS **Version**: 4.0 Demo (1989)

Author: Bruce Bell

Use: Survey research

The demonstration describes a program for generating simple questionnaires and analyzing results using frequencies, cross-tabulations and a range of other statistical analyses of data. The demonstration version uses a market research example but the program could be used for social research, client surveys etc. The program allows for free text responses and aims to provide a 'naturalistic' approach to defining report criteria. Data can be imported and exported from and to dBase and Lotus 123.

Cost: $999 including one year's technical support (1989).

Limitations: Requires hard disk.

Source: Bruce Bell and Associates, 425 Main Street, PO Box 400, Canon City, CO 81212, USA

Comment: *The approach is user friendly and the program appears to be flexible, responsive and relevant for a wide range of social surveys. The sound effects and graphics characters dragging on different screens on the demo version could be irritating if carried on into the actual product. The graphics are a little dated by modern standards.*

(The) Ethnograph

Type: DOS **Version**: 3.0 Demo (1989)

Author: John V. Seidel

Use: Qualitative Analysis

This program is perhaps the best known of a range of research tools used for analysing qualitative data. The Ethnograph is typically used where the researcher needs to analyse large quantities of text material such as interview transcripts, diaries or field notes. As such it replaces more traditional 'cut and paste techniques' and the first stage is coding the text through which the program can perform flexible cross referencing. Text is imported into the Ethnograph and line numbered so that one or more codes can be attached to each segment of text.

Codes can be the user's own text codes or predefined demographic factors (from templates) such as age, sex or education. The search facilities enables flexible analysis using single or multiple codes. The analysis includes application of boolean logic and can be extended across multiple documents.

Cost: $150 (1989)

Limitations: Printer needed.

Source: Qualitative Research Management, 73425 Hilltop Road, Desert Hot Springs, CA 92240, USA

Comment: *An established program that facilitates the process of qualitative research but does not attempt to provide expertise on analyzing the data. The quality of the results still depend on the conceptual analysis bought to bear by the researcher and the application of the coding structure. This can however be modified at any stage which enables conntinuing refinement of the process and helps this to be a powerful and time saving research tool.*

FormGen

Type: DOS **Version**: 3.3 Demo (1989)

Author: Randy MacLean

Use: Research, Administration

FormGen is used to design research questionnaires and forms for other purposes on screen and then to print them out for use in practice. The program includes a number of pre-designed forms which provide ideas which can be easily adapted to the users needs.

Cost: Shareware. Registration $35.

Source: FormGen Corporation, 63-64 Healey Road,Bolton, Ontario L7E 5A4, Canada

Comment: *There is limited on screen help so some experimentation is needed to get good effects. Being able to use the design ideas supplied with the program is helpful. The original usefulness of such programs is lessened as much of what is on offer can now be done from within a word processor such as WordPerfect by using tables options. Locking 'form text' cells in tables enables word processed forms to be used for form filling purposes.*

MEL - Micro Experimental Laboratory

Type: DOS **Version**: 120 Demo (1988)

Use: Research **Year**: 1988

Micro Experimental Laboratory is described as "An integrated system for authoring, running and analysing experiments". MEL works from forms filled in on screen by the user, or author. It includes four types of questionnaires (multiple choice, bi-polar, fill in and matching) as well as including text comprehension, testing of reaction times and some other specialist procedures.

Cost: Professional versions ($495), Instruction version ($295) and Run version ($49).

Source: Psychology Software Tools Inc, 511 Bevington Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15221, USA.

Comment: *An interesting, unusual program that could be used by students or researchers. It enables some quite interesting and varied ways of presenting questions on screen that grab the* attention of the user. The program presumes a fair knowledge of statistical methodologies when it comes to analysis.

Survey It

Type: DOS **Version**: 3.02 Demo (1990)

Use: Research, Teaching

This is described as an "Office productivity tool for administrative staff to define, collect and analyze survey - questionnaire - evaluation type data" and claims not to require any statistical knowledge. Statistics are limited to totals, averages, percentages and standard deviation, which in practice is all many surveys use. The system is menu driven and takes the user through the stages of generation of questionnaires, collecting data, analysing and reporting on the data. Questions can be multiple choice, multiple response, numeric, ratings or involve text information.

Cost: £349+VAT

Limitations: Requires hard disk with 4-5 Mb free memory.

UK Source: Question Mark Computing, 12 Heath Villas, Vale of Heath, London NW3 1AW, UK.

Source: Conway Information Systems Inc., 810 Cormorant Street, Victoria B.C. V8W 1R1, Canada

Comment: *Easy to use and helpful system for a variety of surveys, but does not do away with the need for research expertise both in deciding why questions are asked, understanding the pitfalls in data collection and in the interpretation of results.*

11. STATISTICS

This final section details a few of the many statisitical analysis programs available which are relevant for research in the social ciences. They vary enormously in their capability, cost and presentation from the expensive and sophisticated top-end programs such as SPSS and SNAP down to relatively cheap programs that may do all that the user requires.

Graphs and Stats

Type: DOS, BBC **Version**: 3.01 Demo (1991)

Author: Dr C. Rouse **Version**: 3.01

Use: Research, Education

A statistics and graphics program to present a variety of graphs of data that is input or read from files. Information is presented as line charts, bar charts, pie charts, histograms and scatter plots. Statistical facilities

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include dispersion (mean, variance, standard deviations etc), chi-square, transformations, Spearman's Rank and Kolmogorov-Smirnov. Graphs can be shown on screen in different colours or printed. A Windows version is due for release in early 1994.

Cost: £50 for version 3.01 stand alone (1991). Discounts for area and site licences.

Limitations: DOS version reviewed, requires 286 chip and VGA graphics.

Source: Fellingwym Systems & Software, Alltygolau Uchaf, Fellingwym Uchaf, Caerfyrddin, Dyfed SA32 7BB, Wales

Comment: *The main focus is on graphics presentation rather than statisitical analysis and there is a wide range of control over colour and layout of graphs. Generally easy to use once the idiosyncracies of using 'Esc' where 'Enter' is expected.*

INSTAT

Type: DOS **Version**: Demo (1990)

Author: Bob Burn, Roger Stern, Joan Knock

Use: Research, Statistical Analysis

Demo version viewed. This program provides advice and guidance on using statistics as well the means to enter, analyse and display results, using a wide variety of statistical techniques. The program includes facilities for recoding, sorting and grouping data and selecting sub sets. Parametric and non-parametric statistics and time series are included such as t-tests, chi square, multiple regression, analysis of variance. Presentation uses histograms, scatter plots, box plots, stem and leaf.

Cost: £200 (ex VAT). Teaching pack £40.

Source: Statistical Services Centre, University of Reading, Whitenights, Reading, Berkshire RG6 2AN.

Comment: *A powerful package with good introduction and tutorial facilities. The graphs were disappointing on this version. The price puts it in contention with SPPS, SNAP and other major contenders in this area.*

KwikStat

Type: DOS **Version**: 2.0 Demo (1989)

Author: Alan Elliot

Use: Research, Statistical Analysis

Another statistical analysis package with a wide range of features in the range of data manipulation, statistical tests offered and in presentation of results. Uses dBase files but can use and export ASCII data. Tests include Multiple Regression, T-tests, Anova, Chi Square and a "Survival Analysis". Outputs include the ability to use graphic characters such as people or cars on graphs in place of more traditional displays.

Cost: Shareware. Registration $49. Extra for supplemental programs.

Source: TexaSoft, PO Box 1169, Cedar Hill, TX 75104, Texas USA

Comment: *Does not have the tutorial and guidance facilities of InStat but straightforward to use. Graphs disappointing, but a lot cheaper than many of its rivals. Has been described as "Gods answer to SPPS"; "workhorse" is an alternative description. There is a later version available but we have not been able to review it.*

SAS System

Type : DOS and UNIX **Version**: Demo (1990)

Author: Dr J. Goodnight

Use: Research, statistical analysis

The demo version demonstrates statistical and graphical routines which include time series analysis, full function statistical analysis and data management. There is also a multi-dimensional spreadsheet.

Cost: Discount available for educational use through CHEST. Site licence fee of £1200 p.a. (1990)

Source: SAS Institute Inc., SAS Circle, Box 8000, Cary NC 27512-8000, USA.

Comment: *A well established major player in the statistical analysis market.*

SNAP

Type : DOS **Version**: 1.9 (1993)

Use: Research, Statistical Analysis

The core of SNAP is a simple to use survey analysis program ideally suited to handling social surveys. It can handle varying types of data and provide output as tables and crosstabulationss, with some descriptive statistics. When linked to CATILOG it aids creation of a survey questionnaire, and can also be linked to SPAN to facilitate file creation and transfer in various formats.

The most comprehensive version, SNAP Professional includes automatic coding of data from the questionnaire design, files that can be transferrred to other packages and and batch analysis and printout. A clear, well designed code book can also be printed and there are training courses and a support line.

Cost: Vary according to features purchased. Educational discounts available via CHEST and there are site licence discounts.

Limitations: Hard disk recommended. Will run from twin floppy disk drives.

Source: Mercator Computer Systems Ltd, 12 Mead Court, Coopers Road, Thornbury, Bristol BS12 2UW.

Comment: *Often compared with DOS version of SPSS, SNAP has less comprehensive statistical analysis features but is simpler and friendlier to use and CATILOG has valuable assistance in questionnaire design and layout where it gains by cutting out the need for a separate coding exercise.*

SPPC

Type : DOS **Version**: 5.0 (1991)

Author: Walter W. and Kirk L. Hudson

Use: Statistical Analysis, Education

This statistical analysis package includes summary statistics, crosstabs, measures of association, regression analysis, parametric and non-parametric hypothesis testing, correlation and multiple regression. All are presented clearly with on-line help explaining use of tests. The focus in the demo is on statistical analysis rather than graphical display of results, although registration includes provision of a manual and modules for data management, high resolution screen graphics and a slideshow. The program also includes a notebook facility for students and others and a 'Pot pourri' which includes a calculator, random numbers, data encryption, ASCII tables and a useful section on DOS commands.

Cost: Shareware. Registration is $49.

Limitations : Needs hard disk.

Source: Walmyr Publishing Co., PO Box 24779, Tempe, AZ 85285-4779, Arizona, USA.

Comment: *This is a well presented, easy to use program which with the extra modules provided on registration represents remarkably good value. It may not be as comprehensive as some in the range of statistical test on offer, but for many will cover all their needs in this area at low cost.*

SPSS

Type : DOS, Windows, Unix **Version**: 5.0 (1993)

Use: Statistical Analysis, Education

SPSS or *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* is a major system often encountered by students on university mainframe computers. It is extremely comprehensive and on the PC versions comes with a Base Module and seven add on modules such as Tables, Advanced Statistics and Trends. The Windows version includes Data Entry and Graphics in the Base module and data can be tranferred to and from other systems. SPSS can generate and modify variables and is operated through menus, by the command language or 'pasting' menu selections into syntax files for batch operations. It includes DDE (Dynamic Data Exchange) and OLE (Object Linked Embedment) for automatic updating of output as data changes. There is a glossary and detailed on-line help.

Cost: £695 for user Windows base module + £125 maintenance. Modules £295 + £60 maintenance (1992).

Limitations : Needs hard disk.

Source: SPSS (UK) Ltd, SPSS House, 5 London Street, Chertsey, Surrey KT16 8AP

Comment: *This has always been an extremely powerful and sophisticated package. The extension into Windows, particularly with use of the Tables option represents a significant step forward, and for this reviewer at least, makes it an indispensable day to day working tool.*

Understanding Statistics

Type: DOS **Version**: Demo (1988)

Use: Teaching

'Understanding Statistics in Education and Psychology' is a tutorial with eight modules: Why We Need Statistical Analysis, Descriptive Statistics, Sampling Form Populations, Introduction to Hypothesis Testing, Analyzing Discrete/Nominal Data, Correlation and Regression, Tests and Measurement and Analysis of Variance. The program is interactive, testing knowledge but with options of the computer providing answers.

Source: Formal Systems Inc., 100 Thanet Circle - Suite 205, Princeton, New Jersey 08540, USA.

Comment: *Although dated in design, it offers a clear guide to its subject matter which is helpful to those who wish to extend their knowledge or clarify understanding. For those with a basic difficulty in understanding the subject at all, this may not be the answer.*

 Copyright Centre for Human Services

Alphabetical Index of Programs

	Page
AAInfo	17
Abtab	47
ACHI	40
ADA.KIT (American Disabilities Act)	38
Alcohol	17
Alcohol Withdrawal	40
AMIS	43
AMS - Academic Merit System	29
An A to Z of Love and Sex	30
Anxiety Program	17
Ash Plus	17
Augment	39
Bene Plus	22
Breach	26
CALA - Child Abuse Legal Adviser	25
Captain's Log - Cognitive Training Demo	18
CareData	30
Case Planning System	18
CASS - Computer Assisted Social Services	18
CataLIST	30
CATP	41
CCLAWS - Child Care Laws	25
CHIAC	25
Child Support	22
Client Information Management System	43
Client Questionnaire	19
Community Services Locator	31
Crisis	27
Crown Court Computer System	27
DAESy - Drug Abuse Expert System	19
DecisionBase	41
Demobbs: NASW NM BBS tutorial	31
Design Issues for Decentralised SSIS	43
Discrimination	39
DonorWare	44
Driver	27
DrugInfo	31
Drugs	19
Emotional Security	20
Empirical Practice	31
Equal Opportunities at Work	39
(The) Ethnograph	47
Foster Care Protections	44
FormGen	48
Freeboard	39
Graphs and Stats	48
Guide	32
Hamilton Scale Depression Assessment	41
Helper Plus & Helper 3	22
Help Software	20
HIV/Aids Study Stack	42
Housing Finance Savings and Loan System	23
Human Services Information Systems	44
HyperHelper	32
HyperRez	32
ICMS	27
Information Please	32
In-Work Helper	23
Instat	49
Island	28
I-view Skills Sampler Support Kit	33
JJMS	28
Keisha	26
Kwikstat - Statistical Database Analysis	49
Learn to Sign	40
LegAid	28
Lisson Grove Welfare Benefits Advice	23
Management System	44
Maximiser Plus	23
MEL-Micro Experimental Laboratory	48
Mental Health Assessment	42
MHC-BIB (Mental Health Bibliography)	33
NAVH Placement System	20
Negotiator Pro	45
Notebook	33
PC-CAI (PC-Computer Aided Instruction)	34
PC Pathway	36
Performance Mentor	37
Personal Excellence Package (PEP)	21
Personnel Policy Expert	37
Probis II	28
Problem Management Program	21
Question Mark Professional	34
Question Designer	34
Rave	38
R/Client	45
Relativity	21
Renovator, PC Plus and 3	24
Report	29
Retirement Planner	38
SAS System	49
Service	29
Servus Volunteer Database	45

	Page
siAMS	46
Sisyphus	46
SNAP	49
Social Work (Scotland Act) 1968	35
SpellGames	35
SPPC	50
SPSS	50
Stealing Program	29
Stickey	40
SuperSync	46
Survey It	48
SWBIB	35
TAS - Teaching Assessment System	35
The Law	26
ToolBook	36
TP Write	42
Trainers	36
TrAPP	21
Understanding Statistics	50
Vixen	46
Welfare Benefits Advisor	24
Wellness Checkpoint	42
XQ	24

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