

February 20, 1961

Mr. Dean E. Madden, Chairman  
Decatur Public Library Board  
Decatur, Illinois

Dear Mr. Madden:

As requested in your letter of November 28, 1960 a committee has completed an appraisal of the IBM Series 50 installation at the Decatur Public Library. A report of our findings and opinions is enclosed. Members of the committee were L. D. Ater, D. E. Lydy and J. Shockey. Although all are members of the National Machine Accountants Association, to which the request for the study was originally directed, the opinions of the committee are given independent of the Association.

Our appraisal was limited in scope to justification of the installation based on costs of present machine applications and manual methods formerly in effect. The purpose of the study was not to determine whether total library expenses were reduced by an amount which would justify the installation, but whether professional personnel had been relieved of clerical duties, the cost of which were sufficient to justify the rental and operating costs of the equipment. No changes in present operating procedures were recommended and justification was not based on future applications of the equipment.

During the course of the survey, we observed and were informed of many efficiencies in library operations which have resulted from the conversion to machine processing. These efficiencies and the availability of information resulting from punched card methods now in use were not considered in justifying the equipment.

We wish to express our appreciation to Mrs. Mary T. Howe for the consideration and cooperation she has shown the committee during this study.

Very truly yours,



L. D. Ater

An Independent Survey of IBM Series 50 Equipment  
at the Decatur Public Library

Purpose

The purpose of this survey was to determine whether the IBM Series 50 equipment in use at the Decatur Public Library could be economically justified after considering rental and operating costs of the equipment as compared to the reduction in labor costs of clerical operations.

Scope

The survey included only the machine applications in effect as of December 1, 1960. It did not include any future applications, developments of present procedures not fully in force, limitations of equipment based on future volume, or suggestions for revision of present equipment or procedures. Included in the survey was a review of equipment rental costs and usage, clerical labor costs before and after conversion to machine methods, and a review of the applications in effect, primarily (1) book ordering, encumbrance and expense reporting, (2) borrower registration, and (3) circulation control, statistical reporting, and past due book control.

Book Ordering, Encumbrance and Expense Reporting

At the end of the 1959-60 fiscal year, there were 156,971 books in the total library collection. During the year 15,765 books were ordered. Under the present system, a source card is punched from purchase orders. This card is used for inventory "shelf lists", mechanical summarization of expenses by account classification and agency, book order lists to suppliers, itemized remittance advice and payment, and reproduction of circulation control cards. This source card has eliminated manual preparation and typing of these records, all

of which are necessary in ordering and recording of books purchased, making payment to suppliers and maintaining accounting records.

The Technical Processes Division and Clerical Office Section eliminated 433 hours clerical time monthly by transferring book ordering, payment and accounting functions to Data Processing. This is substantiated by the displacement of personnel in these sections after conversion to machine processing.

#### Borrower Registration

Borrower registration numbers were formerly assigned manually and a single typed card filed alphabetically in a central file. Punched card registration now allows mechanical sorting of cards in alphabetical and numerical sequence, with machine listing of all new registrations, transfers, and renewals and complete flexibility of the registration file for mechanical arrangement or selection of information. Registration during 1960 included 5,934 in the adult and youth classification, 4,065 juvenile, for a total of 9,999.

#### Circulation Control

In May, 1960 a pilot study of mechanical circulation control was begun in the Youth Room of the Main Library. A set of four "in" and "out" cards were reproduced from the book order card, and together with a due date card were inserted in the book jacket. This study includes approximately 6,000 volumes and cards are now used for maintaining an outstanding file from which returned books are removed from file by mechanically matching "in" cards against the outstanding file, preparing circulation statistics and selecting past due books.

Conversion of all Library Agencies to mechanized circulation control is planned, with one of the primary benefits the elimination

of book "slipping", which is the process of removing the present book card from the due date file at the time the book is returned and "slipping" the card into the book pocket before it can be returned to the shelf. Although this work is performed generally by the Office Occupations staff, where the hourly rate is not in excess of \$1.25 per hour, accumulation of books during rush hours decreases library efficiency. A method of duplicating prepunched book and borrower card information into circulation control cards is now under study by the Library staff.

### Circulation Statistics

Circulation statistics of all Illinois public libraries are required by law to be submitted within fifteen days after the end of the fiscal year to the Illinois State Library and local government. These statistics are also supplied to the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Adult, youth and juvenile categories must be classified by type of book or material, library functions, inquiries, references, and bookmobile locations. There are a possible eighty-six classifications in the three age groups for each agency with an additional ten location codes for each of three bookmobile units.

Each agency (Main, Evans Branch, Bookmobiles, Hospitals, Home Service) is required to accumulate daily statistics by age group and category. Daily circulation reports by agency are still prepared manually. However, manual posting and accumulation of statistics from twenty-nine separate ledgers with a possible ninety-six categories each has been replaced by keypunching from daily reports and accumulating and summarizing information mechanically.

We were informed that the manual process, which previously required

270 hours monthly, has been reduced to an estimated six hours per month through the addition of  $10\frac{1}{2}$  hours of machine processing. The reduction in clerical time calculated at October, 1958 rates by the Library staff amounts to \$620.40 monthly, or 2.35 per hour. This rate is considerably higher than the average for the entire staff since much of the clerical work involved in accumulating circulation statistics was performed by professional librarians.

#### Past Due Notices

Notices to borrowers on past due books were formerly typed individually from borrowers cards filed in due date order at circulation desks. These are now keypunched and book title, borrower's number and agency loaning are listed on past due slips mailed to the borrower. During the fiscal year 1960, 7,722 overdue notices were mailed on 13,300 books. Punched card records allow grouping all books for each borrower into a single notice through mechanical sorting by borrower number. Unless borrower cards were manually sorted by number under the previous system, an additional 5,578 notices could have been required, or one notice for each past due book. Maintenance of a punched card file of past due books not returned allows relisting of notices for followup, which under the previous system required retyping of all information.

#### Equipment and Personnel

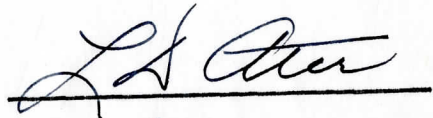
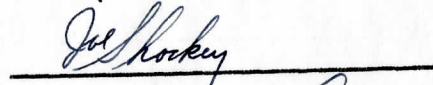

The IBM Series 50 installation consists of an 026 Printing Key punch, 082 Sorter with Card Matching device, 402 Accounting Machine, and 514 Reproducing Punch. The monthly rental cost is \$385.00 and no extra shift rental has been charged since installation. Machine usage recorded for five weeks by Library personnel during August and November, 1960 ranged from 10% to 60% of maximum one shift available hours on individual units.

Equipment is operated by a full-time keypunch and machine operator and an operator-supervisor who performs other duties as required. No additional employment resulted from installation of the equipment. The combined Data Processing and Clerical Office groups now require twenty hours per week less than the Clerical Office prior to conversion to machine processing.

Conclusions

Since the equipment was installed and placed in operation without any increase in personnel, and since the monthly rental cost of equipment has been saved through elimination of clerical labor, the cost of which exceeds the machine rentals, it is our opinion that the installation of the equipment is justifiable based on current applications.

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