

## COMPUTERIZED CLASSIFIED

There's a quiet revolution taking place in Classified Advertising.

Slowly but surely, the clattering IBM typewriters, piles of specialized forms used for ad-taking and bulging advertiser clip files that were workday fixtures for the department's 160 full- and part-time sales representatives are giving ground to the pristine, nearly silent environment of video display terminals.

The transformation, nearly two years in the making, is almost complete. By the second week in November, when the last group of sales reps completes an intensive three-day training program in the art of computerized ad-taking, paperwork will have gone the way of the corner grocery. And with it will go many of the errors, human and mechanical, that were the inevitable result of ordering, processing and billing nearly 3 million ads, from 23,000 accounts, every year.

The system—164 terminals and eight printers linked to six Tandem computers in Data Processing—was designed and installed by Systems Integrators Inc. of Sacramento, the firm which recently brought the computer to Circulation Service. And like the circulation system, it was custom-tailored to fit The Post's special requirements.

"The system, as it was built for us, gives us the flexibility, power and growth potential we needed," said Advertising's MICK HAUSER, who headed a project team which included personnel from Classified, Accounting, Data Processing, Customer Relations and the Composing Room. "The system is compatible with the existing forms used for ad-taking and billing, so the basics of the job remain the same. All we've done is remove the papers and replace them with a vdt."

"We've also got plenty of power to handle the ad volume; even during peak periods, we don't anticipate problems. And we've got the capacity to accept up to 400 terminals without having to add any additional computers."

To fully appreciate what the system—dubbed "Coyote" by the manufacturer—will do for the employees involved, it helps to take a look at the paper-bound system it replaces.

The staple of the old order was a cumbersome four-part form designed to be read by optical character recognition scanners (OCRs) in Composing. The OCRs "read" the ad and (by means of command codes the sales rep typed on the form while selling the ad) keyed in the proper type size, column width and other information. The OCR then sent the ad to an automatic typesetting system, or APS, which printed it. The original ad order form was dispatched to Accounts Receivable, which billed the advertiser accordingly. The ad order then went to Credit, which filed it for reference.

Other copies of the ad order form went



(Photo by Gail Burkey, Classified)

Telephone sales manager **JOYCE RICHARDSON** cuts the ribbon on the first Coyote on-line terminal September 30, watched by (from left) sales representative **LENORE LOGAN**, training supervisor **FAYE DAIK**, voluntary desk supervisor **JEAN EFFENBERGER**, part-timer supervisor **CAMILLE TRAWICK** and on-line training and Real Estate supervisor **WANDA DAVIS**.

to Classified's Copy Desk, which used them to give Makeup a periodic estimate of total Classified lineage as each day progressed; to Classified Incentive clerk **RUSS BROWMAN**, who computed sales figures for each classification and sales representative; and to the sales rep's advertiser file, for possible future reference.

Errors in ads, or the billing of same, are handled by Customer Relations, which formerly had to refer to microfiche records supplied by Accounting, then send billing adjustments to Credit, which corrected the books accordingly.

Sound confusing? It was. And the new Coyote system has within its 121-key terminal the ability to eliminate many of the snafus.

For one, it should greatly reduce the amount of time sales reps spend on each call. "One of the biggest time-wasters in the old system—and one of the most constant sources of error—was that each time an account placed an ad, the rep had to reenter all the billing information Accounting needed to send out the bill," explained Systems manager **DONNA TAPSCOTT**. "Now all

they need to do is enter the phone number or advertiser name on the vdt, and the billing information is called up automatically. Then they're ready to take the new ad."

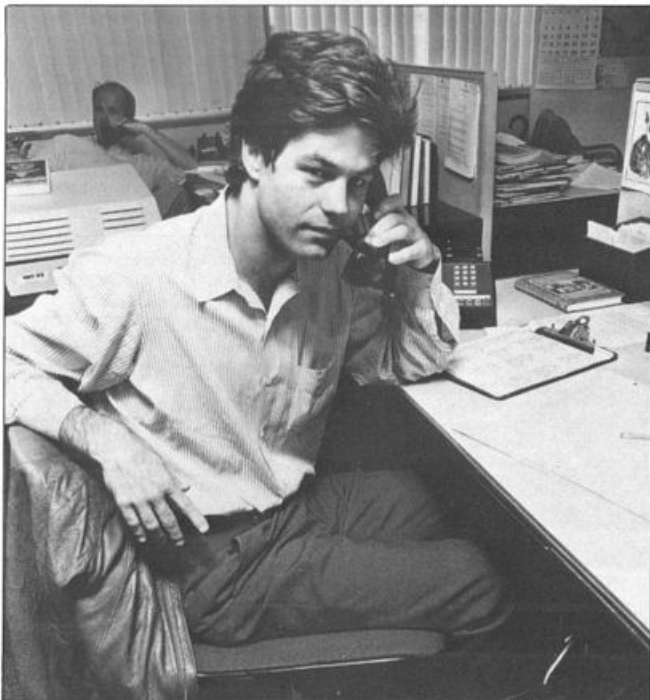
Another time- and error-saver is a feature which automatically hyphenates and justifies the ad at a touch of a key—enabling the sales rep to tell the client how many lines the ad will run in the paper. At the same time, the system provides an on-the-spot quotation of the potential savings to be had by running an ad a number of times, instead of just once. "It's going to save a lot of time that was spent counting characters and punching a calculator," noted Tapscott. "Showing an advertiser, in an instant, how they can best spend their money is one of the best sales tools you can have."

The biggest plus, said Hauser, is that the system will give sales reps more responsibility for the accuracy of the ads they sell. "They'll be able to catch most errors, and correct them, before they get into the paper, because they'll appear the same way on the screen as in the paper, and go into type directly once they're entered."

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# ALL THE HITS, ALL THE TIME!

If you like to keep abreast of what's hot on Washington-area bookstores, there's a scoop each week as near as your telephone. By dialing 334-4175, BookWorld fans can listen to a four-minute



BookWorld copy aide **ANTON MUELLER** dials up his best-seller list.

long recitation of the titles, publishers, and list price in the four categories of books—hardcover fiction and nonfiction, trade and

mass-market paperback—to be printed in the tabloid's best-seller list Sunday.

"We'd been getting a fair number of calls asking for the latest information, and it takes a long time to read a list over the phone," explained BookWorld editor **BRIGITTE WEEKS**. We wanted to get the information out quickly without tying up a lot of time, and felt we'd perform a public service by putting in a tape recording that callers can get directly."

The voice on the tape belongs to BookWorld copy aide **ANTON MUELLER**, who polls various bookstores in the metropolitan area, tabulates the results, and records the finished list over the weekend at home. First thing Monday morning, he pops the finished cassette into an answering machine locked in his desk drawer.

Who calls? Publishers, mostly, says Weeks. "Many times a publisher will have a contract with an author that ties payment to a book's appearing on the best-seller list, so they're understandably anxious. If they have a paperback auction coming (selling softcover rights of a book already appearing in hardback) the number of weeks a book is on the list tends to be important to them."

Area bookstores find an advance word invaluable, too, since it gives them extra time to make sure they have enough bestsellers on hand to meet public demand—although Weeks recalls one merchant who greeted news of the new service by saying that "If we don't know what's selling, we're in the wrong business."

BookWorld's best-seller list, said Weeks, is one of the top three in the country, along with those of the industry trade journal *Publisher's Weekly* and *The New York Times* book review.

"In many ways, ours is the most volatile," she said, noting that the other have a lead time of "about 20 days" between compilation date and publication date. "Ours is compiled on Thursday or Friday for two Sundays hence" she said, with the result that "nine out of ten times, books will show up on our list before anyone else's."

Weeks expects, however, that as news of the tape-recorded service catches on (book houses and retailers have already been alerted) there will be considerable interest among the buying public. And probably, she said with a laugh, among authors, too.

"If nothing else," she chuckled, "it will give them a way to call and see how their book is doing without resorting to the excuses they've used in the past—like saying they're a friend of the author's, and were just curious!"

## SPANISH NEWS SERVICE DEBUTS

The Los Angeles Times-Washington Post News Service and the German press agency Deutsche Presse-Agentur (DPA) have joined forces to offer Hispanic media a high-speed, Spanish-language news-wire. Called Spanish DataCall, the service will provide a mix of international news and stories from Latin American countries to its subscribers.

The new service was instituted to better serve a "booming" Hispanic market in the United States, according to News Service vice president/general manager **DOUG GRIPP**. "Spanish language papers are expanding into new technology, including electronic news editing systems," Gripp said. "We think this service is coming along at the right time."

The U.S. Hispanic population has grown from 9 million to 15 million in the last decade, according to U.S. Census figures.

Using a keyboard-equipped, high-speed printer and a standard telephone, subscribers can direct-dial the Times-Post computers in Los Angeles and obtain a directory of stories from the preceding 24 hours. They then decide which stories they want to read in full and order them by number from the printout. Newest stories are listed first, making it easy for editors to obtain timely "updates" without having to receive duplicates of lists ordered earlier in the day.

The stories are translated from the original language into Spanish at DPA headquarters in Hamburg, West Germany, then sent via slow-speed (66 word per minute) cable to the agency's Latin American desk in Washington. The News Service receives the signal via local phone lines and feeds it into its Washington computer, which feeds

it at 1200 words per minute to Los Angeles. There, it is stored until called up by subscribers.

"One of the beauties of the system," said Gripp, "is that it will interface with any electronic editing system, so editors can call up Spanish DataCall directly on their vdfs for editing, just as newspapers do with any other wire service."

The service supplements the existing Spanish-language wires of AP, UPI and other news services—but offers several distinct advantages to potential subscribers, most of whom are small- or medium-sized newspapers without massive news editing systems.

"AP and UPI feed everything to their subscribers, and that's one tremendous volume of news," Gripp explained. "Spanish DataCall subscribers can take as many, or as few, stories as they like. And at 1200 words per minute, they'll get them 20 times faster. So their computers won't be tied up."

*El Manana*, a 25,000-circulation Spanish-language daily distributed in Illinois and Indiana, became the first newspaper to subscribe to the service, which has been in use by Voice of America radio since July.

Gripp recently demonstrated Spanish DataCall at a Chicago meeting of the Inter-American Press Association, comprised of 500 newspapers and other media in the Americas and the Caribbean. *La Opinion* of Los Angeles and Miami-based *Diario Las Americas*, two 60,000-circulation dailies, are among a number of organizations which have ordered test installations, Gripp said.

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Other handy sales tools abound. An operator can call up an abridged systems instruction manual, as well as a general training guide for the department and an explanation of advertising standards, if needed. Clients who want to know how many readers their ad will reach will get a fast answer, thanks to a selection of the latest marketing information from the Research Department.

If an account has a question about an ad previously run—or a correction to make—the rep can call up the complete account history for the previous two months and make the correction on the spot. If the problem requires a billing adjustment, an indexed list of contacts in those departments tells the rep exactly who the advertiser needs to get in touch with.

Life will be easier in other departments as well. Makeup, for instance, won't have to rely on estimates to determine how large the section will be. As each classification in the department passes their deadline, linage will be instantly tallied and sent to a vdt on the fourth-floor. "Because the line count will be based on ads which already appear as they will in the paper, the figure Makeup gets will be an accurate figure, not the estimate they were getting before," said Tapscott.

The Composing Room's OCR scanners, which could be "confused" by dust, dirt or a crooked line of type on the OCR form, will no longer be necessary. Completed ads will be automatically sorted by classification, alphabetized, and stored until they're printed by the APS printers with which the Coyote is linked.



The new system seems to be of interest to (clockwise from top) instructor **FAYE DAIK** and sales representatives **ANGELA GREEN** and **BARBARA GARRISON**.

Customer Relations, which researches billing and ad-taking errors and makes adjustments where due, will have less paperwork to contend with, too, since they can call ads up on the screen instead of rummaging through files. Adjustments can be entered directly into the system, and become part of the account's permanent ad record. And each day's adjustments can be sent to Data Processing and the Credit Department.

Credit Department assistant manager **CLIF NEAL**, who worked on the projects team, said that the new system "is going to cut down billing errors considerably—but more than that, it's going to give us billing infor-

mation that's more complete, and give it to us faster than ever before. So we'll have time to call an advertiser with a large outstanding balance and discuss options—running a smaller ad, perhaps—instead of suddenly having to kill their ad. That's going to help us establish better rapport with our customers."

"All in all, it's going to be a more professional environment and make service better for the reps and customers alike," said Tapscott. We've asked a lot of everyone, by giving them a lot to learn in a very short period of time. But they're coming through like pros."

## THE INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER ASKS, "PARDON ME, BUT..."

"What's your favorite type of music?"



**WILLIAM MADDOX—Security/Springfield**

"Contemporary jazz. My favorite artist is Miles Davis; my favorite group, the Crusaders. I've always had an interest in music, and progressed into jazz from other types."



**ALAN McNIFF—Engraving/Northwest**

"Progressive jazz. It's good music to listen to."



**CHARLISE LYLES—Writers Group**

"Reggae. The content of the lyrics is much more involved—it says more politically, socially and culturally—than popular music in the U.S. has been the last five years. Disco has flattened pop's content to almost nothing."



**LIZ FINOS—Classified Advertising**

"I don't really have a favorite; I listen to all kinds, depending on what kind of mood I'm in."



**TED HARVEY—Pressroom/Northwest**

"Contemporary jazz; my favorite artist is O'Donnell Levy. It's mind-soothing, and relieves the pressures and thoughts of the day."



**DAVID BAYER—Customer Relations**

"Pop rock. A lot of my relatives are musicians; my cousin is a keyboard player in a rock band, and he's been a big influence on me. I'm sort of a trivia expert—one of those nuts who has a thousand records in his collection!"

Do you have a question for the Inquiring Photographer to ask? Send it to ShopTalk, seventh floor. Or call x6803.

## POST SCRIPTS

**FOREIGN DESK ASSIGNMENTS**—In a series of staff changes to take effect January 1, 1983:

HERB DENTON of National News will become The Post's full-time Beirut correspondent, devoting his efforts full-time to covering events in Lebanon. DAVID OTTAWAY will continue as The Post's Middle East correspondent, moving back to The Post's Cairo bureau. JONATHAN RANDAL and LOREN JENKINS will continue to be roving correspondents. The Post had based its Middle East bureau in Beirut from 1969 until it was shelled during the Lebanese civil war in 1976, when it was moved to Cairo.

MICHAEL DOBBS will move from Warsaw to Paris, and will be

replaced in Poland by BRAD GRAHAM. Graham, based at present in Bonn, West Germany, had joined Dobbs in Poland to report on the Soviet imposition of martial law in December 1981.

BILL DROZDIK, a new addition to Foreign News, will replace Graham in Bonn. Drozdik covered the Common Market and NATO as a Post stringer before joining Time Magazine, where he was most recently their State Department reporter. Fluent in German and French, he has done post-graduate work at the University of Brussels and the College of Europe.

GLENN FRANKEL will become a foreign correspondent next summer at a site yet to be determined. Frankel is currently at Stanford University on a National Endowment Fellowship, studying communism, international economics and African history.

**CORRECTION**—In case you thought last week's Inquiring Photographer was a contest, below are the proper identifications of the four Post employes whose pictures were mistakenly misplaced. Sorry; no prizes will be awarded to those of you who unscrambled them! Sincere apologies to the four involved.



MARY O'GRADY



JAY FISHER



CINDIE GUILL



JIM PRATT

## RECREATION ASSOCIATION NEWS

**ART SHOW REMINDER**—Tonight's the last night to visit the Association's Arts, Crafts and Photography Show in the ninth floor community room. It's open from 11:30-2:30 p.m. and again from 5:30-7 p.m.

**CAPITAL IDEA**—Tickets are still available for the new-look Caps' home contests against the Montreal Canadiens, Wednesday, October 20 (7:35 p.m.) and the defending Stanley Cup champions, the New York Islanders, on Friday, November 12 at 8:05 p.m. Call GERRI MARMER, x103-4216, or see BOB SURKOSKY in Composing for your reservation. Tickets on the concourse level, regularly \$10.50, are only \$8 when you buy from the Association.

## MARKETPLACE

**SKIS**—Cross-country Kneissl, 190-cm, waxless, with Troll quick-release bindings, 135-cm bamboo poles. \$100. Call Keith, x103-4285 days, 466-8263 evenings.

**STEREO RECEIVER**—Pioneer SX-3900, 120 watts per channel, Quartz tuning, power meters. Like new. \$350. Call 779-0730 evenings, leave message. Or call Glen, x7627 days.

**ELECTRONIC WATCHES**—And gift items for all occasions. Call John, x7148 Monday 7 a.m.-3 p.m.; Tuesday through Friday 11 a.m.-7 p.m.

**YARD SALE**—Saturday, October 16, 10 a.m.-6 p.m., 4010 Van Ness St., N.W. (rain date: Sunday, Oct. 17, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.) Nice clothes, air conditioner, new washer and dryer, some furniture and collectibles.

**GOING TO CHINA?**—Now organizing a small group to visit mainland China in September 1983, with possibility of a V.I.P. tour, visits to Chinese newspapers and other special attractions. For details, call Mee Lee, x7677.

**WANTED**—Old wood newspaper carrier wagons; parts. Any condition. Call Dick, x6709, 4th floor machinists.

**BIKE**—Peugeot, with 21-inch ladies' Mixte frame. Flawless blue finish, like new, \$200. Call Keith, x103-4285 or 466-8263.

**RENTAL/SKI LIBERTY**—Only minutes from slope at Ski Liberty, Pa. resort. 3-bedroom, 2 bath, living/dining room combination, eat-in kitchen, fireplace. Make your ski reservations now! Monday through Friday, \$300. Weekends \$150. Call Dan, x7653.

**CHEVY IMPALA**—1972 convertible, 65,000 miles, new paint, excellent condition, Maryland inspection. \$2800. Call Nick, 949-1494.

**GOLF SHOES**—2 pair, size 10½ Hush Puppies. Like new; \$12/pair. Call Dave, x6132.

**TRIP TO READING**—October 16, 7:30 a.m.—9:30 p.m., departing from Beacon Mall, Rt. 1, Alexandria, \$14/person includes bus, continental breakfast. Reg. deadline Thursday, October 14. Sponsored by American Legion Aux. Unit 24. Call Kathy Gere, Ad Services, x7796.

**YARD SALE**—20 families from Valerie Ct., in Annandale. Intersection of Guinea Rd. and Braeburn Drive, Saturday, 10/16 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (rain date, Saturday, 10/23, same hours). Directions: Take Va. 236 toward Fairfax, turn left on Guinea Rd., left on Braeburn, and watch for flags.

**HOUSE TO SHARE**—Female wanted to share house in convenient Alexandria location. Fireplace, dishwasher, washer/dryer, nice yard with patio, screened porch. \$325/month. Call Maureen, 548-1736 evenings.

**G15-78 TIRES**—Mint condition. Cash or barter. Call 832-9031.

**SKI EQUIPMENT**—Rossignol 170 skis with Tyrolia 350 diagonal bindings, Nordica boots (size 8, medium) and 46-inch 117 cm poles. Ski and boot bags included. All in excellent condition (almost new). Call Kim, x7622.

**HAND-KNIT**—Hat and scarf, in one, to keep you warm and beautiful. Great Christmas gift. \$15 for labor and material, or supply your own material and save \$5. For selection or order, call Minh, 439-3740 after 4 p.m.

**BICYCLE CARRIER**—Holds two bikes, \$10.  
**NYLON CARPET**—Brown/beige two-tone, 8x9 feet. Call Matt, x7350 after 6 p.m.

**WANTED TO BUY**—Child's record player and Lego set in good condition. Call Barbara, x6423 or 946-7713 evenings.

**TYPING**—In my home. Employment search letters, resumes, manuscripts. Pickup and delivery available. Correcting typewriter. Call Tim 946-1931.

Marketplace listings must be placed by noon on the Friday preceding publication date, and must contain the name and extension of the person placing the ad (though not necessarily for publication). Call x6803 or send your ad to ShopTalk, seventh floor. All ads will run twice unless otherwise requested.