

Project MIND . . . a column on Meeting the Information Needs of the Disabled

Print communicator for the deaf

TELEPHONES can now be instrumental in facilitating conversation between deaf persons or between deaf and hearing persons. The Porta Printer II, made in California and handled in Australia by Intercept Communications, is a telephone-coupled miniature teletype recently approved by Telecom.

In appearance it is a blend of a very compact portable typewriter with a paper print-out similar to that of a desk calculator. On the rear of the Porta Printer are two rubber cups which accept the handset of a telephone. Since the unit will operate from mains electricity or from its own power, it can be used in a public phone box or any telephone location.

The provision of a Porta Printer in large libraries would mean that deaf people could use reference services from home instead of having to be within the library to get the services needed. Price is \$995 for general clients, and \$795 to deaf persons.

Talking calculator

Wormald International Sensory Aids of Sydney handle a small electronic calculator which confirms input data and announces the result of required computations in speech form. The calculator has the normal four operations along with square root, percentage and one swappable memory. The usual visual digital display is retained. 'Speech-Plus' has a rechargeable battery, has an earphone socket for private listening, and comes with operating instructions on a cassette tape and costs around \$400.

Telephones for partially deaf

Telecom have a special telephone designed for use by the hard of hearing. These phones are suitable for installation in places such as libraries where normal-hearing and partially-hearing clients or staff need to use the same device. A volume control on the handset allows users to adjust the earpiece sound level

to personal needs. An additional glide-tone facility is available instead of the usual telephone bell which cannot be heard by some persons. For detailed information contact Customer Services of Telecom.

Compact cassette

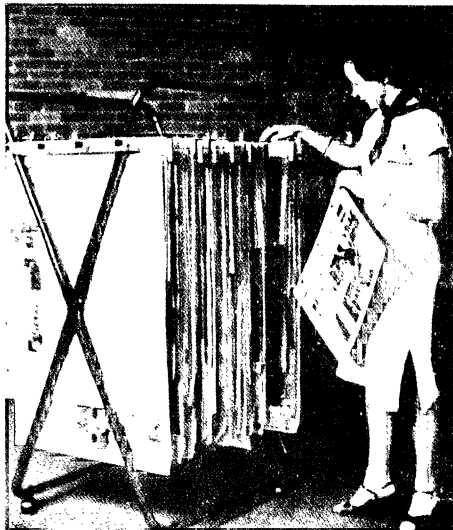
Several attempts have been made over the years to increase the amount of information which can be stored on tape. In the field of talking books the main strategies employed have been those which either increased the number of tracks recorded on the tape or required a lowering of tape speed. In some cases the two strategies have been combined.

The main existing formats for taped books are the Clarke and Smith cartridge system, the Library of Congress four-track dual speed (4.25 cm/sec and 2.125 cm/sec) system, and the conventional Philips compact cassette. The latter two systems use identical software and are compatible if one has a Library of Congress tape player.

A new product on the market promises to lower the cost of taped books because it uses a tape speed of 1.0625 cm/sec in a four-track configuration. This enables a C60 cassette to play back 16 hours of information. The all-round reduction of demand on space, costs and handling to one sixteenth of that required by current popularity. The new talking books employ ordinary cassettes, but a modified playback machine is necessary. The tapes and machines, made in Salt Lake City, have not yet been released on the Australian market.

All contributions to this column should be sent to Lloyd Junor, Lecturer in Media Studies, Department of Librarianship, Melbourne State College, 757 Swanston Street, Carlton, 3053. Phone: (03) 341 8111.

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Interested in maps?

THE Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology offers the subject 'Cartographic Information Systems' to full and part-time students in the final year of the Bachelor of Applied Science in Cartography course.

P.A.G. Alonso, former map-keeper at the State Library of Victoria and Centre for Environmental Studies, teaches the subject in the Cartography Section of the Department of Surveying at RMIT. The subject might possibly be opened to students from other RMIT courses and from other institutions, as well as to external students. It could form a single subject in a librarianship or archives course for students interested in maps.

The subject is concerned with the provision of information in spatially referenced data arrays in diverse formats: globes, traditional line maps, photomaps, atlases, relief models, digital terrain models and aerospace imagery such as aerial photographs and satellite images generated by radar, camera and multispectral scanner.

The subject also treats auxiliary documents commonly used with maps and in geographic research, ie gazetteers, toponymic lists, technical specifications, etc.

If you are interested in studying this subject, whether as an external or internal, full or part-time student, please write to Mr John P. Bertacco, Cartography Section, Department of Surveying, RMIT, 124 LaTrobe Street, Melbourne, 3000.