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IFIP – The International Federation for Information Processing

IFIP was founded in 1960 under the auspices of UNESCO, following the First World Computer Congress held in Paris the previous year. An umbrella organization for societies working in information processing, IFIP's aim is two-fold: to support information processing within its member countries and to encourage technology transfer to developing nations. As its mission statement clearly states,

IFIP's mission is to be the leading, truly international, apolitical organization which encourages and assists in the development, exploitation and application of information technology for the benefit of all people.

IFIP is a non-profitmaking organization, run almost solely by 2500 volunteers. It operates through a number of technical committees, which organize events and publications. IFIP's events range from an international congress to local seminars, but the most important are:

- The IFIP World Computer Congress, held every second year;
- Open conferences;
- Working conferences.

The flagship event is the IFIP World Computer Congress, at which both invited and contributed papers are presented. Contributed papers are rigorously refereed and the rejection rate is high.

As with the Congress, participation in the open conferences is open to all and papers may be invited or submitted. Again, submitted papers are stringently refereed.

The working conferences are structured differently. They are usually run by a working group and attendance is small and by invitation only. Their purpose is to create an atmosphere conducive to innovation and development. Refereeing is also rigorous and papers are subjected to extensive group discussion.

Publications arising from IFIP events vary. The papers presented at the IFIP World Computer Congress and at open conferences are published as conference proceedings, while the results of the working conferences are often published as collections of selected and edited papers.

Any national society whose primary activity is about information processing may apply to become a full member of IFIP, although full membership is restricted to one society per country. Full members are entitled to vote at the annual General Assembly, National societies preferring a less committed involvement may apply for associate or corresponding membership. Associate members enjoy the same benefits as full members, but without voting rights. Corresponding members are not represented in IFIP bodies. Affiliated membership is open to non-national societies, and individual and honorary membership schemes are also offered.

Arthur Tatnall Bill Davey (Eds.)

Reflections on the History of Computers in Education

Early Use of Computers and
Teaching about Computing in Schools



Springer

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Preface

Many people consider history to be about things that happened a long time ago: that it is about wars, kings, politics, nations, and such like. One could then ask why a study of the history of computers in education is important when it is a comparatively recent phenomenon beginning only in the 1970s.

This book deals with *personal reflections* on the history of computers in school education, rather than providing listings of names, dates, hardware and software details, and curriculum applications, and the authors of the chapters are not professional historians but rather people who as teachers, students, or researchers were involved in this history. They narrate their history from a personal perspective and offer fascinating stories not just of what happened, but also of how it affected them, with their chapters representing reflections on their experiences of this time.

As these stories have been told by witnesses who were involved at the time, their value lies not simply in the facts described, but rather in their mature reflections of events in this period. The book chapters are quite different to what would have been written by academic historians, and in any case few historians have exactly the same view or personal experience of past events. In many ways these chapters present a social history of the introduction and early use of computers in schools.

They cover the history of computers in education from the 1970s up to only about the mid-1990s, before the widespread use in education of the Internet, Google, Wikipedia, iPads and smart phones. Many changes have occurred since the mid-1990s, but they are a story for another time.

The chapters in this book deal with the introduction of computers in schools in many countries around the world: Norway, South Africa, UK, Canada, Australia, USA, Finland, Chile, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, Ireland, Israel, and Poland. All the papers were peer reviewed before final acceptance.

Perhaps after reading all the contributions you might like to reflect on whether the introduction and use of computers in schools really resulted in significant changes to education in the way that many of us at the time thought that it would. We hope that you will enjoy reading these fascinating stories and perhaps find some commonality in how and why computers were introduced into schools around the world.

March 2014

Arthur Tatnall
Bill Davey

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