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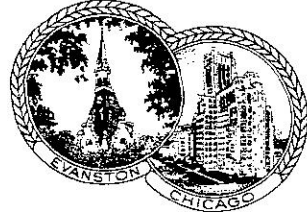
DATE **Jan 29, 1964**

TO **Marshall Fisher**   FROM **Jim Aagaard**

Tech Library DEP'T.   **Elect. Engg.** DEP'T.

I have looked through the IBM proposal for Deering Library, and I
have a number of comments which I will list for whatever they may
be worth (no charge).

1. There appears to be no provision for verifying the accuracy
   of the card-punching operations. The most satisfactory way of
   doing this is by machine verifying, which would require
   additional verifying machines and approximately double the
   total card-punching time. An alternative way would be to list
   the cards and proofread the list.

2. Although no specifications are given as to the type of student
   ID card which the machines would accept, I am sure that the
   present ID card is not suitable, and it certainly is not
   desirable to expect the students to carry an additional ID
   card for only the library. This may require a considerable
   amount of discussion among the several University departments
   involved in the creation and use of the ID card.

3. Similarly, the use of a 5-digit ID number is not compatible
   with the present system of ID numbers. I am sure that some
   other equally simple way could be devised to separate students
   from faculty than the way described in the proposal.

4. The only reason which I can see for the need for the alphabetic
   feature on the collator is because of the occasional letter which
   is a part of the call number. This tends to be a troublesome
   feature, and I suspect some way of punching the call number
   without requiring the alphabetic collating could be devised.

5. The proposal calls for printing catalog cards on the accounting
   machine, which might be a problem. I am thinking in particular
   that the weight of the card stock which would satisfy the
   library as far as durability in the catalog might be difficult
   to feed in the machine, and would be expensive to buy in
   continuous forms. A similar problem with the book pockets
   might be avoided by printing adhesive labels and sticking them
   on the pockets.

6. There are several other comments which might be grouped under
   the general heading of "this really should be done by the
   University's Tabulating Service Department."

   a. The most expensive single item of equipment is the
      accounting machine, and it appears to be used only a
      relatively small amount of time. Since the Tabulating
      Department now does most of the University accounting, it
      would seem reasonable that they could do the book fund
      accounting. Similarly, since all University disbursements,
      including those of Deering Library, are now processed through
      the Tabulating Department, the printing of book purchase
      orders would be a natural addition. Furthermore, the
      Tabulating Department has the keypunches, verifiers,
      operators, and experience to get this part of the job done
      properly.

   b. Likewise, the Tabulating Department already maintains a file
      of student names and addresses, and it seems very foolish
      to attempt to maintain a complete duplicate file at Deering
      Library for the sole purpose of sending out notices of overdue
      books. I have experienced some of these problems in attempting
      to keep track of just Tech students for mailing the
      NORTHWESTERN ENGINEER.

   c. Transferring these jobs to the Tabulating Department would
      eliminate the reproducing punch, accounting machine, and at
      least 2 keypunches from the requirements. There is a good
      chance that the interpreter would not be necessary if the
      keypunch involved in the chargeout procedure were replaced
      by a printing punch. It is, of course, possible that some
      additional machines and operators might be needed in the
      Tabulating Department, but certainly not the accounting machine.
      I feel sure that the net additional cost to the University
      would be less.

   d. On the other hand, it does not seem feasible to me at the
      moment that the chargeout procedures can be done by the
      Tabulating Department because of the physical separation
      involved. The library would probably desire daily processing
      of book charges, and would have frequent desire to refer to
      the out file. However, even these difficulties may be
      circumvented with the increasing availability of devices such
      as the data collection station, one of which is already included
      in the proposal. If the other parts of the job were to be
      done by the Tabulating Department, this aspect would deserve
      further investigation.

I don't want to leave the idea that I am not in favor of the whole
idea; actually I think it is long overdue. However, I would not like
to see it never attempted because the library doesn't want to start
its own data processing installation, nor would I like to see it
attempted and fail because of a lack of appreciation of some of the
problems involved. I am sure that someone such as Howard Smith of
the Tabulating Department could find many more hidden traps, and offer
many more constructive suggestions.