

Data game

Computer calculates careers

By LYNN ORR

A 67-year-old semi-retiree with a Ph.D. spent most of his career in advertising.

A devilish machine reported that railroad conducting was his true occupation.

A high school senior plans to earn her living as a beauty operator. The same circuitry told her to think again.

Brave new world, you surmise? Not quite. Rather, it's a new computer terminal at the Dunning-Hough Library in Plymouth that issued some surprising results when three volunteers tried to match interest and goals with career choices.

"I could have made a fortune in that business," said Plymouth resident Sam Hudson after the terminal screen flashed railroad conductor after he selected various interests via the terminal keyboard.



TIM FORD

His selection of a combination of inside and outside work eliminated his chosen field of advertising, the computer told the surprised onlookers.

Plymouth Salem senior Jenny Kackenko discovered that eliminating a high school degree from the options barred her from most careers that matched her interests.

PLYMOUTH'S police chief Tim Ford came up with 36 occupational choices via the Michigan Occupational Information System. Police work, however, wasn't included on the list.

In his checkered career, Ford has earned a living as a counselor, reporter, child juvenile parole officer, painter, college teacher and social worker—all of which appeared on the list.

"I've done so many different jobs, but the only one I found rewarding was being a police administrator," he said, contradicting the computer. However, at 52, he didn't rule out trying another occupation in the future.

The library's terminal, available free to residents on a walk-in basis, is provided through the Wayne County Intermediate School District, which also placed two terminals in the career resource rooms at Plymouth Salem and Plymouth Canton high schools.

There are 40 similar terminals in the Wayne County Intermediate School District, at an approximate cost of \$25 per month per terminal.

The federal government, through the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA) funding, is picking up the tab through next summer, according to Jim Fraser, coordinator of student services for the intermediate school district.

He expects to have as many as 60 terminals located throughout the county in the months ahead and is hoping for an extension of the CETA funding.

However, local school districts would be able to retain the terminals at a lower monthly cost if federal funding is terminated, he speculated.

THE COMPUTER, located in Lan-



Jenny Kackenko (right), a student at Plymouth takes a crack at the library's career computer terminal with a little help from library aide Celia Baber.

and programmed by the Michigan Department of Education, is contacted through the keyboard terminals.

The space-age machine arrives at its deductions by posing various questions and choices to the career-seeker, such as working with people rather than data, light versus medium or heavy work, working conditions and educational entry levels.

Temperaments, including an inclination for the creative, directional, logical, or persuasive and others are the final selections before the elimination process is completed.

But the computer doesn't stop there. Through more questions and answers, the keyboard operator is able to uncover all kinds of information about any of 350 occupations in the computer banks.

Job descriptions, educational and training requirements, earnings and advancement, employment outlook in both Michigan and the nation, and even a breakdown of minority and sex

status within an occupation flash on the screen at the touch of a key.

For potential students, the computer is the answer to college catalogue nightmares.

Instead of poring through catalogue stacks, information about courses, tuition, individual programs, and financial aid at training schools, colleges and universities in Michigan is available on the screen within seconds.

ABOUT 30 persons, mostly students, are using the library terminal, according to Celia Baber, a library aide who assists anyone having trouble getting acquainted with the terminal.

"Your answer puzzles me," is the computer's response when things go awry. A handbook, however, answers most questions and directs the keyboard.

"Computerization is really where libraries are going," Ms. Baber said.

In the future, the library hopes to have a print-out mechanism, so the career or college information seeker can take home a copy of all the information viewed on the screen.

Adults contemplating mid-life career changes or warring educational information can turn to the terminal for quick answers about the latest trends. Through the selection process, the physically-handicapped can discover occupations that don't require mobility.

And students curious about the job outlook can get the latest information on career trends before they consider spending years in training.

With three of approximately 40 terminals in Wayne County, the Plymouth-Canton area conceivably has a jump on the career game.

Photos by Bob Cameron

The following OCCUPATIONS match your MOIS Profile:

35 PERSONAL MANAGER	46 FOOD SERVICE MANAGER
37 COLLEGE INSTRUCTOR	48 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER
39 UNIVERSITY	49 SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR
40 SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHER	49 RETAIL SALES MANAGER
42 JEWELLER	50 CLEANSER
43 COUNSELOR	51 POLYGLYPTIST
47 SOCIAL WORKER	52 MUSICIAN & COMPOSER
48 EDITOR & REPORTER	53 URBAN & REGIONAL PLANNER
49 PAINTER & EXHIBITOR	54 COLLEGE INSTRUCTOR
21 CREDIT & COLLECTION MANAGER	242 OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION TEACHER
242 SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER	243 RESEARCH MANAGER
244 HUMAN RESOURCES COUNSELOR	250 HUMAN HOUSE RESIDENTIAL MGR.
318 RECREATION MANAGER	320 RELIGIOUS MINISTER
327 COMMERCIAL ARTIST	323 INDUSTRIAL DESIGNER
333 RADIO & TELEVISION ANNOUNCER	346 ARCHIVIST & CLERICAL
348 HISTORIAN	349 POLITICAL SCIENTIST

Police Chief Tim Ford came up with 36 potential occupations according to his interests and goals—excluding, of course, police administrator.

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Art-a-Facts

El Greco (whose real name was Domenico Theotocopoulos) was not Spaniard, but came from Crete. The name El Greco (The Greek) was given to him when he went to Spain—where he spent the rest of his life.

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