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**N E W S**

**Inadequate computers affect USC's productivity**

By WILL MOREDOCK  
Staff Writer

As budget cuts threaten to cripple the University of South Carolina, one of the places they are taking their toll is in the area of data bases and computer hardware.

Most individuals can get by without a computer, but a major university without adequate computer hardware or software can be facing a crisis.

John Ureda, chairman of health promotion and education, said, "I've had no budget for computers for years...We have no hard money for travel or computers." The money spent on computers is generated from outside sources, he said.

When a university or a department cannot subscribe to or maintain needed data bases, it runs the risk of falling behind in its field. Students and faculty no longer have access to the best information.

Data bases are information services which libraries, schools and other institutions subscribe to and pay to have regularly updated. Data bases keep institutions current on information in their respective fields. Computer memory is housed in its hardware and memory defines the amount of data a system can handle and the speed which it can

run at.

James Durig, dean of the school of science and mathematics, said his graduate students do not have the computer storage to do their course work.

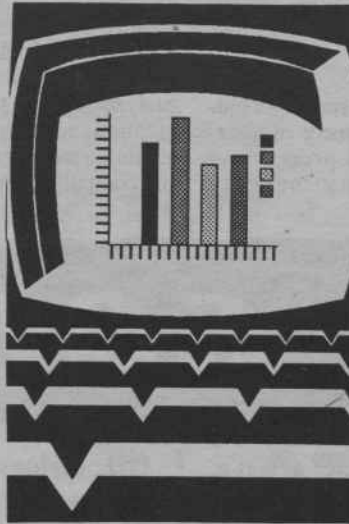
"We don't have the hardware to run some of our data bases," Durig said. "It takes a half hour to get all the software assimilated. That wastes a half hour of somebody's time."

A major university, without proper data bases, is headed off the fast track and into the ditch. When a department cannot provide its students and faculty with necessary hardware, productivity drops off and projects fall behind schedule.

Frank Avignone, chairman of the department of physics and astronomy, said some of his graduate students have had to use the computers

at the College of Humanities and Social Sciences to write their dissertations.

Durig has received letters from a number of graduate students, complaining about the lack of computer memory.



"I timed how fast the computer was from the time I (started work) to the time I heard the first sound," one student wrote. "It took 37 minutes...Now imagine that 15 people have to use that machine every day. You can see that we will not get this project done under current conditions."

Having a data base available to any researcher is the difference between spending hundreds of hours looking through papers and instantaneous success, said Thomas McNally, librarian at Thomas Cooper Library.

"The access factor is phenomenal," he said. Another crucial data base for a library is one that can tell where information can be found anywhere in the country, McNally said. "That's the name of the game," he said. Lack of funding for computers means that "on research projects, we will continue to operate with obsolete equipment," Ureda said. "The productivity of people on projects will be less than what it would be with state-of-the-art computers." Ureda said his department upgraded its administrative computers last year for the first time in 10 years, and it greatly increased the productivity of its staff. He would like to do the same for his faculty, but the money is not there. The College of Business Administration recently completed a strategic planning process and identified data bases it would need, assistant dean Bill Kettinger said. "But there is no money to purchase, and we don't project that the money will be available," Kettinger said. "It impacts the faculty's ability to do the research of a flagship institution with USC's reputation," he said.

**Control of CFCs might improve ozone equilibrium**

By MATT WRIGHT  
and ANN WINCHELL  
Staff Writers

An increasing number of scientists, including many who had forecast imminent ecological disaster, believe now that we are well on our way to solving the problem of a thinning ozone layer.

"The current and projected levels of ozone depletion do not appear to represent a catastrophe," says Michael Oppenheimer, an Environmental Defense Fund scientist.

But not all scientists are so optimistic.

"It would be helpful if we stop using chlorofluorocarbons. But we still don't know exactly what causes the changes in the ozone," said Shun Ko, USC geological sciences assistant professor.

Recent information from NASA

shows the hole in the ozone is bigger than it was several years ago and many scientists are still concerned, Ko said.

The ozone layer that circles the earth is the subject of many studies because its changing thickness affects the amount of protection it gives the earth.

Ozone in the stratosphere protects the Earth's surface by absorbing much of the ultraviolet radiation from space that causes skin cancer, cataracts and immune-system damage.

Optimism on the part of some is due in large part to a 1987 international treaty, the Montreal Protocol, that calls for the cessation of production of ozone-destroying chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). With confidence in the treaty, they estimate that worldwide ozone destruction will peak in only seven years. At the end of that period, this layer will

"It would be helpful if we stop using chlorofluorocarbons. But we still don't know exactly what causes the changes in the ozone."

Shun Ko  
Assistant Professor  
Geological Sciences

begin to thicken and return to equilibrium through natural processes.

Ozone has always been a renewable resource, because ultraviolet light makes it from oxygen, says Carl Sagan, a Cornell University professor.

And The New York Times reported last year on several pieces of cooling equipment which elimi-

nate the use of CFCs. One such device is an air-conditioner which uses water and the process of evaporation to control temperature. Refrigerators could cool with sound waves by harnessing the motion of dancing molecules.

The speed at which CFC production has fallen already has surprised many and has led some scientists to predict an end to this crisis before any noticeable damage could be done, according to The Washington Post.

The Post article sounded the cautionary note, however, that if the world's developing nations shun the expensive alternatives and the Montreal Protocol, production of CFCs might intensify as the economies of these countries begin to grow.

"The treaty is good, but all countries must take action. Otherwise, it is just paper," said Ko.

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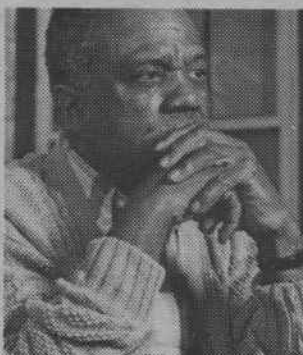
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