LETTER TO EDITOR

Recently, Krishnaswamy [1] has used Fortran IV language for information retrieval. Regarding this short communication several comments seem to be in order.

1. It is a heavy and unwarranted price in terms of processing time for the simple error of leaving some blanks in the input author query or for accessing the second or third etc, author in the author list. This however is not without a premium of noise (according to the author this is not a drawback) resulting from the retrieval of a lot of junk information in cases where any four letters of the split author query are the same as the one in the author list. Obvious examples of this would arise when the complete author list contains author names like 'KRISHNASWAMY' and 'KRISHNAVENI' or 'HOFFMANN' and 'RIEMANN'.

There are many other efficient data organisation techniques - the indexed sequential organisation or the organisation of bibliographic records similar to the MARC-II format - that require NO splitting of the author's name.

2. The author has confused between the auxiliary storage which he might be using for storing temporary data sets with the virtual storage (VS). The author has made a naive and misleading statement that because the compilation of the author query is needed only temporarily hence a VS in IBM 370/155 was used. Actually VS has nothing to do with temporal characteristics and needs for its implementation the 'dynamic address-translation' facility for swapping the 'pages' between the main storage and an external medium such as a direct-access storage device for efficient and effective utilization of main storage.

3. The program logic, as depicted in Fig. 1 (Ref. 1) is such that if the input query starts anywhere after four columns (which is allowed by the so-called 'latitude') but before the seventh column, no output will be triggered even if the query author IS contained in the complete author list because of the implementation of the precaution number 1 mentioned by the author.

4. There is no explicit difference between the first two precautions mentioned in the paper. The third one is vague. The author has not shown in the flow chart as to how exactly is this precaution implemented, whereas he has shown the implementation of a precaution which is not discussed in the text. The author has unwittingly used the blank card for denoting the end of a data set, however the use of END parameter in the sequential READ statement would have been convenient and time-saving.

5. Lastly, the method described is not a general one and is true only if the programming language adopted is Fortran. But Fortran is not suitable for information retrieval applications. Either a versatile language like PL/1 or a low level language like Assembly or some other suitable variant of these should be used for efficient search and data organisation.

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[1] KRISHNASWAMY, R. Information retrieval using split query author and virtual storage (Short communication): Ann Lib Sc Doc. 1975, 22(3), 135-38.