Preface

In both businesses and educational institutions, the advent and subsequent proliferation of PCs has introduced new issues which require intensive management attention. (1) Data security, (2) hardware and software acquisition policies, (3) backup procedures, (4) multi-user/single user considerations, and (5) software licensing are just a few of the subjects requiring new, and in some cases, specialized knowledge to be effectively addressed. In this issue, three of these PC management topics are discussed.

Small businesses and professional organizations are bombarded by solicitations to purchase various hardware and software. Determining a plan for successful purchase and implementation of a computer system is not an easy task. In the first article, "Computer Systems in Small Professional Organizations: A Discriminant Model for Determining Success Factors," Timothy Cronan explores the problem of successfully acquiring and using a computer in a specific segment of the small business marketplace, the professional organization. By surveying professional organizations that were using computer systems, Cronan identified several factors which had a significant impact on those installations which by their own determination are satisfied with their computer installations.

Although many companies initially acquire PCs as single-user devices, at some point they often consider linking these computers together. Other companies needing this capability right from the start invest in a local area network with their first computer acquisition. Ravinder Nath, in "The Impact of Local Area Networks on Users and Their Work: A Field Study," investigates the perceptions of the ways that the use of a networked system has affected their jobs. After discussing the four areas where the most significant impact has occurred, Nath lists a number of factors managers should consider when evaluating the acquisition and implementation of a LAN.

One of the most frequently discussed issues in both trade and professional journals has been software licensing and its implications for vendors and users. In the last several years, vigorous enforcement of software licensing agreements has brought public embarrassment to a number of companies. In her article, "A Survey of the AACSB Universities' Policies on Software Copying," Dr. Susan Athey reports the results of a survey of universities concerning their policies on software copying. Several issues are discussed, including the development of a policy, the methods of informing users, the enforcement of the policy, and the actions associated with its violation. Dr. Athey concludes with a number of recommendations based on the survey's findings.

The Expert's Opinion section features an interview with John Scigliano on how information technology has assisted in creating a revolutionary approach to education at Nova University.

In the hardware review section, Scott Huebner continues his discussion of the PCs components. In this issue, he details the difference between eight, sixteen, and thirty-two bit computers.

In his software review, Charles Cresswell reviews the desktop publishing package, Pagemaker, and Dawn Guerrisi reviews the PC-based Peachtree accounting software.

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