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AMMcC/PW

29th April, 1974

Professor John J. Donovan,
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Alfred P. Sloan School of Management,
50 Memorial Drive,
Cambridge,
Massachusetts 02139,
U.S.A.

Dear John,

I have now, after a distressingly long time, managed to read and assimilate, Chapter 3 of your book with Professor Stuart Madnick. At the outset I would like to congratulate you on the clarity with which you have presented the content of this material. I am very much looking forward to reading the entire text of your book. I fear that the more technical parts of it may be a bit beyond me, but after all that is one of the reasons for reading a book - one wants to know what is going on in adjacent fields.

It is entirely possible that you may deal with the points I am about to raise elsewhere in your text. But I always find myself interested in the problem of optimisation. In particular, what should be optimised. In your text you make it clear as you move through the various memory management systems, that each successive method does a better job than its predecessors in optimising the use of the machine itself. As one who has been primarily a user of computer systems rather than a designer, I am very much more interested in optimisation of another kind. I am interested in optimising the benefit in terms of production output to cost in terms of total money invested, which a given computer system can create. I can visualise situations in which the very simple procedures which you comment upon at the early stages of this chapter might nonetheless prove to be optimally efficient in the cost effectiveness terms I have described. At the same time, I am quite willing to believe that there are a number of situations in which only the most sophisticated techniques, such as those described toward the end of your chapter, that would lead to an efficient result. In short, what I am concerned about is the relationship between the optimisation which you are talking about in your chapter (which I may describe as technical optimisation) and the optimisation which the user perceives

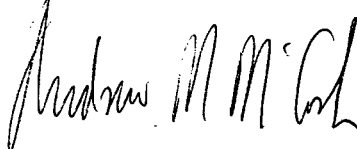
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(and which I might describe as economic optimization). It seems to me that we must in some sense bring these two kinds of optimisation together before we are going to be able to produce anything really useful in terms which a decision maker will be able to employ when he has to decide what kind of computer system to employ in a given situation.

I hope to be over to MIT during the summer. If you should chance to be there during my visit in August, I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further with you, or with Professor Madnick, if that should prove feasible. In any event, I very much look forward to reading the remainder of your text which will, I am sure, enjoy an extensive and very interested audience.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Andrew M. McCosh". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name.

Andrew M. McCosh