

Minutes for SCC meeting of September 20, 2006

by Dave Redell

Attending

Dick Guertin
Rebekah Kim
Al Kossow
Paul McJones
Randy Neff

Eric Petrich
Bernard Peuto
Mike Powell
Dave Redell

Bob Sanguedolce
Doran Swade
Dick Toepfer
John Toole

Teaching kids about programming – Dick Guertin

Dick talked about a role-playing game he devised to teach kids about the basic ideas of computer programming. He devised a participatory way for kids to execute a simple sorting algorithm. The key goals were to get and keep their interest by making it a game, to avoid jargon and excess detail, and to avoid any requirement for the kids to maintain a complex global view of what was going on. A key learning to be imparted to the kids is the idea that a mechanical process can achieve complex results without any form of “common sense”.

Dick then discussed the relationship of this kind of teaching activity to the software preservation activities of the SCC and CHM as a whole – i.e. do we just preserve the software, or do we go further and seek ways to present the basic ideas to the widest possible audience?

Plone site update – Bernard Peuto

Bernard discussed work that he and James have been doing to improve the Plone site. In particular, they want to provide more introductory material to make the site self-explanatory. James was not present to talk about his ideas, but the consensus was to tell him to go ahead and start implementing, rather than have a protracted review and discussion process. It will be better to fine-tune what he does if necessary rather than inject weeks or months of delay into the process. Mike and Bernard will make sure he is fully enabled to start work on the site.

The name of this committee – Bernard Peuto

The name “Software Collection Committee” has been criticized as not representing the interests and charter of the group very well, so the floor is open for proposals of a new name. It was noted that other CHM groups (as well as ACM groups) are called “Special Interest Groups” or “SIG”s. Members are encouraged to submit proposed names at next month’s meeting.

New materials arriving – Al Kossow

Al noted that a set of SDS machines is coming (910, 920 and 930) along with a lot of related software and other materials. With this and other new materials arriving, there will be a he amount of new cataloging activity needed.

Website upgrades – Mike Powell

Mike reported on new improvements to the website, including a message board. More

work is needed to provide for online creation of new accounts, suitable access controls for various forms of updating and so on.

A recent performance problem has been traced to pathological behavior by a local CHM WebCrawler robot interacting with dynamic calendar pages on the site. Mike will see that this gets fixed.

Project Updates

SNOBOL: There is outside work on SNOBOL, and some SCC members are checking to see whether SCC could cooperate with it.

CTOS: Dick Toepfer gave a brief status in his collecting activities and discussion with Allison Akbay

IBM 704: A listing of the Fortran I system is being OCRed to produce a running system on the 704 emulator. If successful, this will revive one of the most significant systems in the early history of scientific computing. Lisp 1.5 is also a target for revival.

System R: All has read a 1977 magnetic tape of the system, and discussions with IBM's lawyers are going forward to legalize CHM access.

LISP: Initial responses to CHM's inquiries about the Stoyen collection of Lisp materials in Germany were encouraging. More recently, Stoyen has seemed less responsive. More effort is needed to revitalize this activity and make sure that these materials are preserved.

Upcoming Meetings

Day	Date	Time	Conf Room
2006			
Wednesday	October 18	5:00 pm – 6:45 pm	Hopper
(no November or December meetings)			
2007			
Wednesday	January 17	5:30 pm – 7:30 pm	Hopper.
Wednesday	February 21	5:30 pm – 7:30 pm	Hopper
Wednesday	March 21	5:30 pm – 7:30 pm	Hopper.
Wednesday	April 25	5:30 pm – 7:30 pm	Hopper
Wednesday	May 16	5:30 pm – 7:30 pm	Hopper.
Wednesday	June 20	5:30 pm – 7:30 pm	Hopper
Wednesday	July 18	5:30 pm – 7:30 pm	Hopper
Wednesday	August 15	5:30 pm – 7:30 pm	Hopper
Wednesday	September 26	5:30 pm – 7:30 pm	Hopper
Wednesday	October 17	5:30 pm – 7:30 pm,	Hopper
Wednesday	November 14	5:30 pm – 7:30 pm	Hopper.
(no December Meeting)			