

Editorial

Recently, one of my colleagues showed me a most beautiful line diagram of something. He said: "Isn't that nice? It has been made by my personal and it shows the energy consumption by my family over the last year." I admired it appropriately and then asked: "Where did you get the figures from?" The answer was: "Just read the clocks daily and jot the numbers down." "If you've got the numbers anyway, why don't you produce the graph by hand instead of writing a programme in BASIC which takes about 3 hours of your creative energy?" He said: "I want to show you how powerful my personal computer is."

I, as a technology freak, appreciated his message and applied it when our publishers sent me a survey of subscriptions to this journal. I put it in (inputted it?) to my own electronic brains and they produced another wonderful listing: the journal is now read in over 40 countries. The U.S.A. takes some 25% of subscriptions, U.K. and the Netherlands together another 20%, the rest being divided over the rest of the world. Wonderful isn't it?

On second thought, was there any new information generated by our gadgets? Admittedly not, it was all there in our figures and original listings. What then is the real profit of our professional assistants, if they do not produce really new information? In our last issue, Art Elias made a plea for engaging our brains in information processing. Who of you is going to write a paper on what the real benefit of our electronic friends will be? There is no benefit to society if you demonstrate that you have spent a couple of hours to programme an electronic friend in order to show us how clever it is to produce the results you already held, but now in an electronic way. Where is the borderline between our own, and electronic intelligence and creativity?

Of course, this has been very naïve reasoning. Please, show me!

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