EDITORIAL COMMENT

This issue begins the second year of publication of the IASSIST Newsletter. The first year of publication, under the editorship of Ms. Alice Robbin of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, provided a firm foundation for the publication and also provided a much needed organ for the dissemination of information within IASSIST. With the beginning of the second year of publication, however, both the editor and the format of the publication have changed. It is my sincere desire to uphold and extend the high standards set in the first year by Alice.

One of the obvious differences in format from the first year is the double column style illustrated here. The double column layout produces a publication in the tradition of a magazine or journal and at the same time conserves paper. A text editing system available on the Kentucky Educational Computer Network (CMS Editor and Waterloo Script) is used to enter and format the publication. One innovation we are introducing is that of accepting papers or other contributions in machine readable form on magnetic tape. In fact, I would be delighted to have papers already entered using Script commands.

Especially with the fourth issue of Volume 1 it was clear that the Newsletter was moving toward the publication of substantive articles as well as providing news of interest to IASSIST members. This issue extends that trend. Because of time problems this implicit invitation to submit articles could not go out until this issue. For that reason I have selected several articles--all dealing with computer networks and networking--derived from papers given at the 1978 IASSIST Conference in February of this year. We hope that the articles presented in this issue will provide some information and stimulation of thought concerning an area of significant importance to our enterprise.

The term "network," as used by those of us who use computers, may refer to communications networks, computer networks, or both. The papers in this issue are directed primarily toward computer networks although many allusions are made to the communications networks on which the computers rely.

What are computer networks? One commonly used definition of a computer network is the following: One or more computers accessed by users via some communications network. The computers may consist of main-site, or host computers, and/or remote computing systems. Generally it may be said that communications networks can exist without computers, but computer networks cannot exist without communications networks.

In the following pages we will attempt to explore some of the characteristics, problems, and opportunities provided through the establishment and use of computer networks. Alice Robbin explores the impact of computer networking on the social science data library. The problems and potentials of resource sharing through networks, especially for the social science community, is discussed by Loraine Borman. And Richard Roistacher evaluates the economic climate and social structure in the network-based scientific community.

While attempting to move toward the inclusion of more substantive articles, we have not forgotten that the Newsletter is a primary means of communications for IASSIST members around the world. As a result, the Newsletter will continue to provide space for Action Group Reports and for News and Notes from around the world. Your contribution to these segments of the Newsletter will be greatly appreciated. If, for any reason, you especially like, or dislike, what we are attempting to do with the Newsletter, please write or call. I am looking forward to working with the Newsletter in 1978.

Substantive papers and book reviews will be accepted throughout the year and scheduled for publication as space becomes available. Material for "News and Notes" and "Action Group Reports" should conform to the following deadlines for the June, September, and December issues:

May 15, 1978 (June)
August 15, 1978 (September)
November 15 (December)

Material received after these deadlines will be held for the next issue, providing the notices are not time dependent. Your help in observing these deadlines will be appreciated.

T.W.M.