

The following, "The Legislature and Data Processing," is an excerpt from the *Report to the 41st Legislature from Committee on Legislative Procedure and Facilities of the Legislative Council*. The full document is available at the Washington State Library.

REPORT TO THE 41ST LEGISLATURE

From

COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE PROCEDURE AND FACILITIES

Of The

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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THE LEGISLATURE AND DATA PROCESSING

Among the products of the technological advances in recent years has been the development of electronic data processing equipment, including computers and many other types of equipment related to computer processes, which will store vast quantities of material, either statistical or textual, and return it to the user quickly and accurately and arranged as the user designates. Electronic data processing equipment is being used by government and private business and industry alike to assemble and retrieve information and to perform many tasks and services previously done either not at all or much more slowly, with far less accuracy, and less completely.

State legislatures, in the past few years, have found increasing use for electronic data processing equipment in the legislative process. Legislative journal-keeping, statutory information retrieval, budget and fiscal matters, bill drafting, printing, recording and supplying other types of information to the members of the legislature--all of these are legislative needs for which computers and related equipment are not only useful, but are more efficient and faster than other methods of doing the same thing.

Until fairly recently, the idea of an on-line, real-time, "conversational" legislative information retrieval system was largely a matter of conjecture for the data processing theorist. The development of large-scale, economical automated information storage media, increased processing speeds and capabilities of computers themselves, more sophisticated programming techniques, and new dynamic methods of user-computer communication now make such systems possible. Equipment storing billions of characters of textual and reference data can be linked to a computer, and its output devices to provide direct-access to the data. In addition, the output components themselves have improved tremendously. Highly reliable and efficient visual display devices, coupled with input or query media, such as a keyboard, actually place a person "in conversation" with vast amounts of stored data.

The same conversational ability permits alteration or updating, as well as viewing of any stored data. Thus it is now entirely possible to search every law on the books of the State of Washington and to extract all information related to a specific topic. The legislator who has spent countless hours manually researching statutes, similar laws, sponsorship, precedents, etc., can really appreciate this system.

LEGISLATIVE USE OF DATA PROCESSING

The purpose of data processing in the legislative process is to achieve greater speed and accuracy in the storage, reproduction, revision

and research for legislation. Increased precision and flexibility is possible when statutes, codes and legal opinions are compared. By utilizing a computer the complete text of all the statutes of a state can be placed first on cards and then on magnetic tape. This creates a word by word record of the legal code, thus making possible a rapid search of all statutes to find any word or combination of words and phrases. A simple method for printing the text of all statutory sections dealing with a particular subject is also possible, including sections which have not been included in the regular index of the code. The computer can rapidly cite full texts, sections, lines and key words of all statutes for comparison and analysis of consistency in the use of words appearing in various parts of the code. In statute revision as well as the law-making process, this type of comparison can eliminate ambiguous language, complicated laws, and conflicting provisions. The legislature's meaning of earlier sessions can be shown by citing key words in contest and then by comparison of each citation. The purpose of any data processing system in the legislative process is to eliminate redundancy; save time, labor and money; increase accurate analysis of statutory law; and aid in the creation of more accurate and clear legislation based on a full comparison with the existing code.

POSSIBLE SERVICES TO THE LEGISLATURE

Electronic data processing can serve seven basic functions in the legislative process:

1. data retrieval - Code revisions and searching current statutes to change wording is possible in addition to altering sections of similar bills, reorganizing existing parts of the code, drafting consistent new laws, etc.
2. bill drafting - Typing, proofreading and recording of amendments is expedited by data processing, eliminating conflict and duplication.
3. status of legislation - A computer can be used to follow the course of a bill and the process can be refined and extended to aid both the legislator and the Code Reviser.
4. statute printing - The full text of current legislation may be stored by the computer and used for automated type-composition of the statutes.
5. indexing of current legislation and of the Revised Code - The Code Reviser's office has created one of the most complete and well organized indexes in the country, but automation will aid his office in its revision work.

6. inter-agency cooperation and information sharing - Some agencies store their records in forms which can easily be used for research purposes in providing better, more accurate legislation in addition to providing statistical analysis for the prediction of future trends and the effect of legislation before it is enacted. This is especially useful when the tax and budget areas are being considered. As other states enter into the automation process, greater inter-state cooperation and information sharing may be possible. The Council on State Governments maintains a permanent committee on this subject.

7. legislative intent - The two basic phases of legislative intent, (1) the meaning of words used in legislation and (2) the compliance with legislation by administrative agencies, can be studied more easily if the Revised Code, the Opinions of the Attorney General, and the Administrative Code are placed on magnetic tape. Rapid and complete comparison would be possible if all three were up-dated after each session of the legislature.

THE USE OF DATA PROCESSING IN LEGISLATIVE-RELATED BODIES

1. Attorney General's Office. The Attorney General's Office has several possible applications for the use of data processing equipment. To date, approximately 7,500 opinions ranging from 3 to 25 pages each have been issued by this office. The index to these opinions consists of approximately 45,000 index cards and is expanding at a rapid pace. Presently the litigation files of the Attorney General's Office are indexed with approximately 60,000 index cards. Approximately 3,000 complaints from the general public received by the Consumer Protection Division are handled by the Attorney General's Office. These files could be cross-indexed via a computer both as to the name of the firm complained about and the name of the individual bringing the complaint, thus eliminating the time-consuming, hand-made index and docket entries. Adequate computer storage and retrieval will eliminate many of the files named above.

2. Statute Law Committee. The Statute Law Committee is vitally interested in placing in computer retrievable form the verbatim text of the Revised Code of Washington, as well as the Washington Administrative Code. Computer storage and retrieval will be invaluable as an information retrieval system to promote bill drafting, statute revision, and general legal research. Such a system will also have direct practical application to Code publication, especially as it applies to indexing and cross-referencing, typesetting and printing, and accounting. The electronic data processing equipment could also make substantial contributions to the legislative processes and procedures. A verbatim input of legislative measures, as well as a summary of legislative action thereon, will provide a more accurate and useful method of docketing, indexing, and reporting legislative bills. It will help prevent conflicting legislation and assist in the publication of the legislative record and journals.

Other areas of general interest and applicability will be budget making, factual research through central switching access to the state's data library, and drafting and amending bills through multi-terminal typewritten input and output.

3. State Law Library. The State Law Library is the state's primary repository of legal literature and research material. The objective of the library is to provide a comprehensive, organized collection of materials for legal reference, research, and study and to develop and maintain services for expediting such legal research. The Law Library provides services to the three branches of government, especially the Supreme Court, lawyers in state government, and other members of the bench and bar of the State of Washington.

4. The Supreme Court: The Court is vitally interested in placing its 30,000 reported decisions into computer retrievable form.

As an integral part of this research program, the computerization of the Revised Code of Washington, the Administrative Code, Opinions of the Attorney General, and decisions of state administrative agencies will make invaluable contributions in the area of law and judicial administration in general.

5. Legislative Council: The Legislative Council is responsible for continuing research in drafting of bills in the area of state government. If the body of case law and statutory law as mentioned above were placed in computer retrievable form in such a manner that the staff of the Council could obtain court decisions and statutes applicable to their areas of interest, such a service would be invaluable.

Electronic data processing will be of further assistance if and when the state system will be so organized to permit data to be readily available from local forms of government and from other states throughout the nation. It is also conceivable that many research reports and studies could be qualified and placed on tape so that reference work could be more readily facilitated by the Legislative Council staff.

6. Legislative Budget Committee. Perhaps to a greater degree than any other legislative or judicial agency, the computer needs of the Legislative Budget Committee are those of an 'information recipient'. From the point of view of an agency in need of print-outs placed in computer storage by other agencies, the needs are substantial. The Budget reporting system being implemented during the 41st Legislative Session is an example of the use of data processing services within the legislature.

LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH

It should be emphasized that data processing services cannot provide

all of the answers to the complex questions legislators ask; data processing simply gives greater flexibility and speed in handling data. Data processing is a research tool, an aid to study, rather than the end product of legislative investigation. Mechanical storage and ordering of data can never be a substitute for the analysis and deliberation of reasoned mind.

WASHINGTON STATE USERS AND POSSIBLE USES RELATED TO THE LEGISLATURE

Code Reviser

- Legal research
- Bill drafting
- Code revision
- Citators
- Indexing (RCW + WAC)
- Printing codes and compilations

Legislative Council

- Bill Drafting (e.g., crim. code, LID law)
- General Research

Legislative Budget Committee

- Fiscal researches and drafting

Attorney General

- Indexing (AGO)
- Citations (AGO)
- Special Compilations
- Legal Research

Supreme Court, Law Library, Judicial Council

- Legal Research
- Opinion Writing
- Rule Making (Rules of Court)

PRESENT STATUS OF ADP SERVICES

Data Bank

Revised Code of Washington)	Presently available
Washington Administrative Code)	In process
Attorney General's Opinions)	
Washington Decisions)	
Superior Court Memorandum Decisions)	Future
Administrative Decisions)	
Charters and/or Ordinances)	

Keypunch input and verification by: Department of Institutions
Maple Lane and
Walla Walla Women Keypunch Trainees

PRESENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES IN THE LEGISLATIVE AREA

In January 1967, a study of the state of Washington's ADP needs and goals was completed by the management consulting firm of Ernst and Ernst. The essential recommendation of the study is the gradual development of a long-range plan for ADP which would result in an integrated statewide information system.

Legislation implementing these recommendations was passed by the 1967 Washington Legislature. This legislation became effective July 1, 1967, and appropriated \$2.5 million to carry out its purposes.

As part of the long-range plan, a five-year plan is proposed as the beginning step along with the establishment of an advisory committee composed of representatives from the public and state government. Divisions are being established with the responsibility for developing and coordinating the total ADP plan. A central computer service center has been established in the Department of General Administration and the legislature is currently using the equipment from this center for its data processing services.

PRESENT LEGISLATIVE DATA PROCESSING SERVICES IN WASHINGTON

Legal Information Retrieval System

The State of Washington is in an enviable position to take full advantage of a computer-based legal retrieval system. The laws have been codified; new legislation is researched and referenced to existing law;

statutes are indexed and cross-referenced. This not only facilitates the task of planning automated systems but assures that such systems will stand the test of time without frequent revision and modification.

It is important to understand that a good legal retrieval system must be open ended and planned for proper interface with many related functions of government. The first step is to achieve the conversion of statutory law into machine-readable form and build a data base that is flexible enough to incorporate other forms of law in the future. It is anticipated that the legal retrieval system will ultimately provide the ability to search the following elements of Washington law:

1. Revised Code of Washington
2. Attorney General's Opinions
3. Supreme Court Decisions
4. Administrative Code

The objective of this effort is to design a working model which will be capable of interfacing with such other functions as bill drafting, bill status reporting, law search and printing.

RCW Conversion

The actual conversion of RCW data has been accomplished through the cooperative efforts of the Code Reviser's Office and the Department of Institutions. An inmate training program was set up by the Department of Institutions to provide key punch training at the State Penitentiary at Walla Walla. Through this cooperative effort, the trainees get production experience on meaningful projects and the State of Washington gets its laws converted into machine-readable form at a substantial savings. Estimates place the value of this service at approximately \$50,000.

The plan was devised to provide as a by-product to key punch training, a means of converting the primary law and decisions of the State of Washington into machine-readable form with institutional inmate help. The total conversion plan includes:

- RCW's - Revised Code of Washington
- AGO's - Attorney General's Opinions
- WAC's - Washington Administrative Code
- WR's - Washington Reports

The purpose of these conversions is to create an information retrieval library. This information retrieval library will provide a data base in machine-readable form to be used as input to a document processing system for computerized law search and for other programs such as printing, indexing and cross-referencing.

The RCW Conversion with an estimated volume of one-half million lines began in February of 1968 and is now complete.

RCW Retrieval System

The Revised Code of Washington, information-retrieval system has been operating regularly on a small data file of the first ten titles of RCW since the end of October, 1968. During this time, exploratory searches were made on the capabilities and limitations of the system. A manual reflecting the search capabilities and limitations plus a keypunch operator's manual have been prepared by the Legal Search Consultant in the Code Reviser's Office reflecting the results of these exploratory searches.

The whole ninety-one titles of RCW have been searchable as of January 13, 1969. The following governmental units have been apprised of the availability of the search service on a limited basis: the Legislative Council, the Legislative Budget Committee, the Code Reviser's Office, the Governor's Office, the Attorney General's Office, the Law Library and the Supreme Court. The search service is available to these governmental units through the Legal Search Consultant in the Code Reviser's Office. Legislators may make use of this search service through the Code Reviser's Office.

Some of the following subjects have been searched as of this date:

1. Subsistence and travel expenses on the state level
2. Eminent domain authority resting with state agencies
3. References to hospitals
4. References to explosives, etc., as related to storage, transportation, or use
5. Bonds with a fixed maximum rate of return
6. Title 28 sections of RCW located in other than Title 28
7. Devolution searches to correct proper governmental unit labels in various RCW sections
8. Checking RCW sections related to the Administrative Procedures Act

9. References to the Congressional Enabling Act in RCW sections

10. Licensing and examining boards with public representation

Some of the above searches are being used to aid in drafting legislation for this 1969 session. Without the benefit of this system, these legislative ventures would probably have not been undertaken because of the manpower and time requirements. The devolution of state agencies project in codification, not previously possible due to manpower and time limitations, is now feasible due to the computer search which locates the RCW section in which the old agency name still resides. In one of the searches above, the computer search turned up thirteen additional RCW sections directly related to the lawyer's problem, which he missed in his original explorations of the Revised Code of Washington.

Various projects have been developed or are in the process of development for using the stored information. One deals with a cross-reference list of internal RCW section cites, which is an invaluable aid to legal draftsmen. Several other projects dealing with output changes are being worked-up to develop a better finished product. A QUIC index of Title 23 A, the New Corporations Act, is being developed. In this index, the indexed word will appear in context or text with several of the words preceding the indexed word and with several words following after the indexed word plus the RCW section number in which indexed word falls. The user receptibility to this index will be tested in the future to evaluate whether to attempt to index the Washington Administrative Code by the QUIC index method. The last project is a cross-reference list of all internal cites of RCW and the Constitution as found in the RCW text, the Reviser's Notes and the Cross-Reference Notes.

Legislative Bill Status Reporting System and Related Programs

During the last legislative session, limited computer services were provided to assist the legislature. Such services related primarily to the preparation of printed material on a weekly basis for the legislative record. As a result of this project, it was determined that efforts would be made to study the needs of legislators and determine what could be done to provide more dynamic assistance during the next session.

Several subsequent developments have taken place which have generated enthusiasm and optimism on the part of the Secretary of the Senate and the Chief Clerk of the House for an improved computerized system. Most important is the legislative bill status reporting system designed to provide timely information through remote video terminal devices which was demonstrated at the National Legislative Committee Conference in San Antonio, Texas, in the fall of 1967. This demonstration was made possible through a system developed by the State of Pennsylvania to provide timely bill status reporting to the Pennsylvania Legislature. The demonstration was conducted on the computer

installed in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, for the Pennsylvania Legislature. Again certain guidelines were established as the study effort became involved in defining the requirements and needs of the Washington legislative processes. They were:

1. To determine the requirements and needs which might most effectively be met by a system which could be implemented prior to the next legislative session in January of 1969.

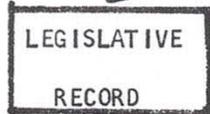
2. Establish, through investigation, the present state of the art related to legislative systems.

3. Evaluate findings relative to investigation of available systems in terms of requirements unique to the State of Washington.

Forty-First Session Services

Since the first legislative day, January 13, 1969, all bill history has been placed in the computer data base each day as the Senate and House bills have been introduced on the floors. This bill history includes all actions that have occurred, in addition to sponsor and bill title information.

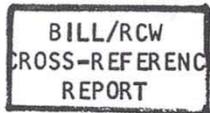
To achieve a true cross-reference relationship of legislative processes, it has been necessary to link (1) legislators, (2) legislative committees, and (3) the bill topical index, together in the same computer data base. The inter-relationship of these files, coupled with timely input to the system via ADP terminals as these changes or additions occur will provide current legislative information as follows:



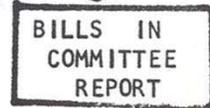
A Report Containing All Bill History, Bills Sponsored By Members And By Committees, A Topical Index, A Bill/RCW Cross-Reference List, And The Governor's Veto Messages (Monthly)



A List of All Bills And Their Most Recent Actions (Daily)



A List of All RCW Sections That Are Affected By Legislation (Daily)

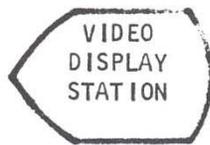


A List of All Bills In Committee By Committee For Select Distribution (Daily)



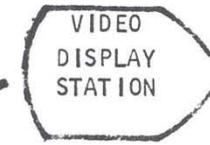
A List of All Bills By Sub-Topic Within Topic (By Request)

When the sessions closes, the data files relating to the Legislative Record Index will be used after the session for doing indexing work. These files can be used to furnish the finalized hardcopy of the index to the session law, to the House Journal, and to the Senate Journal. In addition, these files can be used to aid in indexing the new RCW supplement index to 1960 legislation.



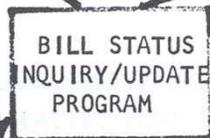
INPUT

- 1) BILL HISTORY INFO
- 2) ACTIONS AS THEY OCCUR
- 3) MEMBER INFORMATION
- 4) COMMITTEE INFORMATION
- 5) TOPICAL INDEX INFORMATION



INQUIRIES

- 1) BILLS SPONSORED BY MEMBERS
- 2) MEMBERS' COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS
- 3) BILLS SPONSORED BY COMMITTEES
- 4) COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS
- 5) BILL HISTORY - TITLE & SPONSOR
- 6) BILL HISTORY - ALL LEGIS ACTION
- 7) BILL HISTORY - ALL EXEC ACTION
- 8) BILL HISTORY - ALL ACTIONS
- 9) BILL HISTORY - MOST RECENT ACTION
- 10) BILL HISTORY - ALL HISTORY INFO
- 11) BILLS - TOPIC OR SUB-TOPIC
- 12) MEMBERS' BIOGRAPHIC INFO



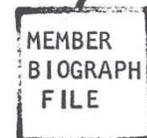
DATA ELEMENTS

- 1) COMMITTEE NAMES
- 2) COMMITTEE MEMBERS
- 3) TABLE OF BILLS



DATA ELEMENTS

- 1) SPONSORS OF BILL
- 2) STATUS TITLE
- 3) BRIEF TITLE
- 4) TITLE TEXT
- 5) TABLE OF ACTIONS



DATA ELEMENTS

- 1) BILLS SPONSORED BY MEMBER
- 2) COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS BY MEMBER
- 3) MEMBER NAMES
- 4) OFFICE TELE & ADDRESS
- 5) PERSONAL DATA
- 6) OCCUPATION
- 7) PREVIOUS SERVICE



DATA ELEMENTS

- 1) TOPIC
- 2) SUB-TOPIC
- 3) TABLE OF BILLS WITHIN SUB-TOPIC

S T A T U S S Y S T E M

H A R D W A R E

L O C A T I O N S

GENERAL ADMIN
BLDG.

DATA PROCESS
SERVICE CTR.
COMPUTER
FACILITIES

REMOTE TELEPROCESSING
LEGISLATIVE BLDG.

LEGISLATIVE
DATA PROCESS
CENTER

1053 PRINTER

- 1 CONTROL ROOM OF LEG. DP CENTER (INPUT & MONITORING STATION)
- 2 SENATE CHAMBER ROSTRUM (PRIMARILY AN INPUT STATION)
- 3 SENATE INFORMATION CENTER (INQUIRY STATION ONLY)
- 4 HOUSE CHAMBER ROSTRUM (PRIMARILY AN INPUT STATION)
- 5 HOUSE INFORMATION CENTER (INQUIRY STATION ONLY)
- 6 CODE REVISOR'S OFFICE (INPUT & INQUIRY STATION)
- 7 MEMBER'S OFFICES - 4TH FLOOR LANDS BLDG. (INQUIRY ONLY)
- 8 MEMBER'S OFFICES - 4TH FLOOR HEALTH BLDG. (INQUIRY ONLY)

LONG-RANGE PROGRAM

It will be the objective of the long-range study to define the requirements of the system for expanding computer services to incorporate many other activities related to the legislative processes. Some of these activities include:

1. Bill drafting
2. Bill actions, engrossments, etc.
3. Committee scheduling
4. Statutory information retrieval
5. Indexing
6. Budget preparation
7. Budget forecasting
8. Interface with printer for photo composition

It is expected that many other needs will be identified as a result of the long-range study.