

## **Correspondence – Association for Computing Machinery**

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October 8, 1974

Jean E. Sammet, President  
Association for Computing Machinery  
IBM Corporation  
545 Technology Square  
Cambridge, Ma. 92139

Dear Jean:

Thank you for your recent letter and enclosed article regarding computers and public policy.

We have utilized computers in our reorganization of state government in Georgia with much success. Please let me continue to hear from you.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Carter

JC/scg

*copy of  
letter + enclosed info  
sent to Peter Bourne.*



Association for Computing Machinery

1133 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS  
NEW YORK, N Y 10036  
(212) 265-6300

JEAN E. SAMMET  
*President*

Reply to: IBM Corporation  
545 Technology Square  
Cambridge, MA 02139

October 1, 1974

Governor Jimmy Carter  
1974 Campaign Chairman  
Democratic National Committee  
P.O. Box 1524  
Atlanta, GA 30301

Dear Governor Carter:

In response to your letter of September 11, I am pleased to enclose a reprint of the article "A Problem-List of Issues Concerning Computers and Public Policy". This appeared in the September 1974 issue of the Communications of the ACM which goes to all our members. I know that the committee chairman, Mr. Daniel McCracken will certainly be glad to know of your interest in this matter, since there was a lot of effort which went into preparing this material. On behalf of Mr. McCracken and ACM we certainly hope that this paper will be useful in providing background to public officials who are concerned with the use of computers in today's environment.

Sincerely yours,

*Jean E. Sammet*  
Jean E. Sammet

JES:pa  
Enclosure

cc: Dan McCracken (no enclosure)

~~*Dan McCracken*~~



## A Report of the ACM Committee on Computers and Public Policy

The ACM Committee on Computers and Public Policy comprises Daniel D. McCracken (chairman and drafter of the report), Paul Armer (vice chairman), Robert L. Ashenurst, Herbert S. Bright, Jerome A. Feldman, Roy N. Freed, John King, Rob Kling, Peter G. Lykos, Susan Nycum, Lee L. Selwyn, Bruce W. Van Atta, and Joseph Weizenbaum.

The Committee on Computers and Public Policy of the Association for Computing Machinery is concerned by its charter with the broad area of the interaction between computers and people, focusing on the interests typical of legislative and regulatory bodies. Its

functions are: to advise the ACM Council, as appropriate; to serve the educational needs of ACM members and the general public in this area; and, if requested, to provide consultation on the technical implications of proposed legislation. The committee is not authorized to speak on behalf of the Association, and is prohibited (as is the ACM itself) from any activity that could be construed as lobbying. The committee may attempt to state and clarify issues, as in what follows, but it may not state ACM policy on any issue.

The committee foresees the need to

revise this report periodically as problems change or are resolved and as new ones arise. Accordingly, comments and suggestions are solicited, either on questions of substance or on ways of improving the presentation to better achieve the purposes of the paper. Such comments might suggest areas on which the committee could concentrate its further efforts, and might also be useful to the Council in its work.

# A Problem-List of Issues Concerning Computers and Public Policy

This paper is a listing of some of the present and potential problems which arise at the intersection of computing and public policy in its various aspects. There is no attempt to break new ground, which would be difficult when, already, the topics covered are the subjects of a small library of books. The intention, rather, is to serve the needs of people in both parts of the intersection. It is hoped, for instance, that this report will be useful to lawyers and law students who desire guidance in this rather new area. It is hoped, likewise, that it will be useful to computer scientists and computer science students, e.g. in seminars on the social implications of computing.

As another example, it might be useful background reading for staff members in Congressional offices.

In other words, the paper is intended to be a summary of some of the issues that impinge upon both computer science and the general public (and its representatives). It will not tell a lawyer anything about the law that he does not already know, but it might give him some new insights into the legal implications of computer technology. It will not tell the computer scientist anything new about computer science, but it might expand his understanding of the social aspects of his work.

The term "public policy" is intended

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Association for Computing Machinery

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JEAN E. SAMMET  
President

Reply to: IBM Corporation  
545 Technology Square  
Cambridge, MA 02139

August 26, 1974

Governor Jimmy Carter  
1974 Campaign Chairman  
Democratic National Committee  
P.O. Box 1524  
Atlanta, GA 30301

Dear Governor Carter:

Your letter of July 11, 1974, to Mr. Gordon Smith, the former Executive Director / of the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) was referred to me in order to enable the elected president of the Association to answer it. (Incidentally, you might wish to update your list to show Mr. Joseph Cunningham as the present Executive Director). I remember with considerable pleasure the fine annual conference ACM had in Atlanta last year, and in particular the constructive and interesting introductory remarks you made at our opening session.

As you may perhaps recall, ACM is a technical-educational-scientific society and hence is prevented by statute, and also by the strongly held belief of its membership, from taking positions on inherently political matters. This of course would not preclude us from identifying issues within our field of competence on which public officials, or candidates, might wish to take positions. Unfortunately at this time we do not have such a list. The closest document that we have is an article prepared by one of our committees which will be published within a few months which identifies problems in the computer field which are related to matters of public policy. While that article will not answer your question directly, it does provide a list of computer-related issues of public policy as seen by the technical people. It provides many questions but no answers. The article has been written to be read by the non-technical layman, and I will be happy to send you a copy as soon as it is printed.

I will also bring your letter to the attention of appropriate volunteers in ACM to see whether they might wish to consider developing a more concrete list of the type you suggest. Unfortunately, I doubt that such a list would be prepared in time to be significant to candidates in the elections this fall. In any case, I am sure you realize that if we did develop such a list we would certainly make it available to candidates of any political party.

On behalf of the other officers of the Association, I appreciate your thinking well enough of ACM to solicit our opinion on issues which should be addressed. The computer field has unfortunately been such a mystery to public officials that many have tended to avoid the problems entirely; it is pleasant to have someone in a significant government position who is concerned about the matter.

Sincerely yours,

(Miss) *Jean E. Sammet*

Jean E. Sammet  
President

JES:pa