May 20, 1982

Dear Editor:

A new source of information about microcomputer courseware and other resources available for computer education in elementary and secondary schools will soon be available. Called RICE (Resources in Computer Education), it is a computerized data base. Initially, educators will be able to access and search the data base through the School Practices Information Network (SPIN) operated by BRS, Inc.

The RICE data base has been developed over the past three years by the Computer Technology Program at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, with support from the National Institute of Education.

Accessing and searching of RICE is being tested during May-August 1982. In September, two RICE files will be fully operational:

1. Courseware, containing descriptions of some 2,000 microcomputer products

2. Producers, containing information on some 150 producers of microcomputer instructional and administrative software products

Three additional files will become operational in 1983:

1. Computer Literacy, containing instructional objectives and test items for computer education

2. Project Register, containing descriptions of school projects in elementary and secondary computer applications

3. Inventory, containing numbers of student stations and other data on installations of hardware in schools

The enclosed packet includes a news release announcing availability of the new RICE data base and fact sheets providing additional information about various elements of it.

Please contact either of us if you would like further information. BRS, Inc. can be contacted at 1200 Route 7, Latham, New York 12110.

Sincerely,

Judith Edwards Allen
Director, Computer Technology
   Program

Jerry D. Kirkpatrick, Director
   Office of Institutional Development
      and Communications

JEA/JDK:dm

Enclosures

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

NEW SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT
COMPUTER EDUCATION RESOURCES GOES ONLINE

PORTLAND, OREGON---Educators will have a new source of information about
computer education resources when the RICE data base goes online in
September (1982).

"RICE is the most comprehensive data base available on microcomputer
software for use in elementary and secondary education," explains
Judith Edwards Allen, Director of the Computer Technology Program at the
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL). When the data base goes
online for public access, information will be available on some 2,000
microcomputer courseware items. "That is most of what exists that is
worthwhile at this time," adds Edwards Allen.

RICE, which stands for Resources in Computer Education, has been
designed and developed over the past three years by NWREL with support from
the National Institute of Education. The initial installation of RICE is on
BRS, Inc.'s School Practices Information Network (SPIN), which provides
search and retrieval services for more than 50 information files.
Information about procedures for accessing the RICE data base is available
from BRS, Inc., 1200 Route 7, Latham, New York 12110.

Operation of the RICE computer-based information system is currently
undergoing a four-month field test. When public access begins in September,
educators will be able to search RICE using procedures similar to those
currently used to conduct an ERIC search. Most searches are expected to
cost less than $5, based on computer time used.

(more)

It is expected that most computer searches of the RICE data base will be by organizations such as school districts, intermediate education units and state education agencies which provide these services to teachers and other staff members in their districts or schools, explains Edwards Allen.

Ultimately the RICE information base will include five categories, or "files." In addition to the file on computer based courseware, a second file of more than 150 producers or developers of microcomputer software will also be operational in September. Three other files will be added in 1983:

o `Computer Literacy, containing objectives and test items for computer education

o Project Register, containing descriptions of school projects in K-12 computer applications

o Inventory, containing numbers of student stations and other data on installation of hardware in schools

Searches of the files can be conducted using ERIC descriptors, or more than 20 other categories, such as the type of hardware the materials are used on, grade level, and mode of instruction (drill, simulation, etc.).

The Northwest Laboratory has established a national network of 26 educational institutions as the primary source of descriptive and evaluative information about software packages. Commercially developed materials are included in the RICE data base.

NWREL has developed a process for evaluating the content and
instructional quality of microcomputer software materials. Some 200 of the
2,000 courseware packages described in RICE have been evaluated by staff
members at these institutions using the NWREL evaluation procedure. The
"Evaluator's Guide for Microcomputer-Based Instructional Packages," which
describes the process and provides evaluation instruments, has been
published by the International Council for Computers in Education at the
Department of Computer and Information Science, University of Oregon,
Eugene, Oregon 97403 ($2.50 for single copy with quantity discounts). It
also is available through ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center
document ED 206 330).

Information about the RICE data base is available from
Judith Edwards Allen, Director, Computer Technology Program, Northwest
Regional Educational Laboratory, 300 S.W. Sixth Avenue, Portland, Oregon
97204.

May 20, 1982

How is Information Entered Into RICE?

Providers of information may differ from file to file. Providers may enter information either directly online or by sending it to the RICE staff who will enter it at the Laboratory. In either case, information is entered in predefined formats into a temporary file where it can be edited by NWREL staff members, who control its entry into the permanent file for access by users of the system.

The Laboratory has established a Network of 26 educational institutions serving elementary and secondary schools as the primary source of input of decriptive and evaluative information about software packages. All are directly involved in providing computer related services to school districts.

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Ed Obie
Department of Planning
Pouch F, Alaska Office Building
Juneau, Alaska 99811

ALBERTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Jim Thiessen
Floor 9, Devonian, W Tower
11160 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5K 0L2

CLACKAMAS EDUCATION SERVICE DISTRICT
Jerry Larer
North Clackamas School District
14211 S.E. Johnson Road
Milwaukie, Oregon 97222

AREA COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES
Kathryn Smith
ACES Computer Services
800 Dixwell Avenue
New Haven, Connecticut 06511

COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES
Jean Muccini
P.O. Box 2087
Norwalk, Connecticut 06852

CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Betty Glass
P.O. Box 2219
Hartford, Connecticut 06115

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE DEPENDENTS SCHOOLS
Dennis Bybee
2461 Eisenhower Avenue
Alexandria, Virginia 22331

EDUCATIONAL TESTING SERVICE
Bruce Taylor
Office of Development, Planning,
    Analysis and Administration
Princeton, New Jersey 08540

FLORDIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Dave Brittain
Educational Technology Section
109 Knott Building
Tallahassee, Florida 32301

INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
Sandra Cunningham
793 N. Main Street
Glenn Ellyn, Illinois 60137

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RICE: Resources in Computer Education
(Sample Search Session)

micro|SIFT

Microcomputer Software
and Information
for Teachers

Reproduced below is a sample search procedure.

Search Interaction	Explanation
Computer: ENTER BRS PASSWORD	
User: 123456	The agency's code number is entered.
Computer: SIGN ON IS COMPLETE 03/31/82 10:10:45 ENTER DATABASE NAME	
User: RICE	
Computer: BRS-SEARCH MODEL-ENTER QUERY	
User: 1: Mathematics	
Computer: RESULT 721	Information is available about 721 software packages in mathematics.
User: 2: Middle Schools	
Computer: RESULT 587	Information is available about 587 software packages at the Middle School level.
User: 3: APPLE II	
Computer: RESULT 815	Information is available about 815 software packages which operate on an Apple II microcomputer.
User: 4: 1 and 2 and 3	
Computer: RESULT 53	Information is available about 53 software packages which have all three descriptors above.
User: 5: Print 4TI, MI/DOC=1-10	Request to print items in query #4 by Title and Mode of Instruction for the first 10 documents.

Computer: 1

TI Mathematics Drill & Practice
MI Drill and Practice; Tutorial;
   Learning Management

2
TI Basic Math Facts and Games
MI Drill and Practice; Game
(etc. through math document)

END OF DOCUMENT

User: Print 4 All/Doc=All/ID   Request to print all items in this
                                  combination of descriptors offline
       OFF   have a printed copy sent by mail.

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The RICE Information Base

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RICE computer system is an information base, with related inquiry and update software, designed to provide information about the state of the art in the application of computers in schools.

Five categories (or "files") comprise the information:

o   Producers, which includes all commercial and noncommercial producers of computer-based instructional and administrative software

o   Software Packages, which contains descriptive and evaluative information about known products from producers

o   Computer Literacy, which contains objectives and test items

o   Inventory, which contains numbers of student stations and other data on installations of hardware in schools

o   Project Register, which contains descriptions of school projects in K-12 computer applications

Computer software necessary to use RICE includes the sorting and other data-base management software required to build and maintain the computer files, and the query software required to allow users to easily access, manipulate and retrieve the information in useful forms.

The initial installation of RICE is on the computer system of BRS, Inc., a company providing search and retrieval services for over 50 information files. Educators will be able to use RICE and the other files economically through the School Practices Information Network operated by BRS.

The information providers may differ from file to file. It is anticipated that the providers will be able to enter information either directly online or by sending it to RICE staff who will enter it. In either case, the data to be added will be entered in predefined formats into a temporary file where it can be edited by staff members, who will also control its entry into the permanent file for access by users of the system.

Information users will be provided with several means to obtain information from the system including print media and online access to the RICE computer. Through the online access, users will be able to search various categories of information for specific items of need or to obtain predefined reports designed by MicroSIFT staff who synthesize information and provide overviews or summaries. Agencies may wish to obtain reports online and then provide the information to their constituents through print media. It is anticipated that most of the direct access to the system will be by organizations such as regional education agencies, large school districts and state education agencies, which will provide search services to their constituent districts or schools.

IOWA REGIONAL COMPUTER CONSORTIUM
    Doug Archer
    Green Valley AEA 14
    Green Valley Road
    Creston, Iowa   50801

JEFFERSON COUNTY SCHOOLS
    Gene Collins
    13300 W. Ellsworth Avenue
    Golden, Colorado   80401

LEHIGH UNIVERSITY
    Leroy Tuscher
    Educational Technology Program
    524 Brodhead Avenue
    Bethlehem, Pennsylvania   18018

MINNESOTA EDUCATIONAL COMPUTING
CONSORTIUM
    Ken Brumbaugh
    2520 Broadway Drive
    Lauderdale, Minnesota   55113

MINNESOTA SCHOOL DISTRICTS DATA
PROCESSING JOINT BOARD (TIES)
    Jim Sydow
    1925 W. County Road B-2
    Roseville, Minnesota   55113

TRI-COUNTY CONSORTIUM
MACOMB INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT
    Tom Hartsig
    44001 Garfield
    Mt. Clemens, Michigan   48043

OAKLAND INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT
    Tom Schmeltzer
    2100 Lake Road

WAYNE INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT
    Lary Smith
    33500 Van Born Road
    Wayne, Michigan   48184

MULTNOMAH COUNTY EDUCATION SERVICE
DISTRICT
    Fred Newton
    P.O. Box 16657
    Portland, Oregon   97216

OREGON TOTAL INFORMATION SYSTEM
    Ben Jones
    1200 Highway 99N
    Eugene, Oregon   97402

PROGRAM OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION FOR
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
    Thomas A. Saterfiel
    P.O. Box 5365
    Mississippi State, Mississippi   39762

REGION IV EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER
    Marilyn Fricks
    P.O. Box 863
    Houston, Texas   77001

REGION X EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER
    Tommy Wade
    P.O. Box 1300
    Richardson, Texas   75080

SAN MATEO EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
    Ann Lathrop
    SMERC Library/Microcomputer Center
    333 Main Street
    Redwood City, California   94063

TECHNICAL EDUCATION RESEARCH CENTER
    Tim Barclay
    8 Eliot Street
    Cambridge, Massachusetts   02138

WEST LAFAYETTE SCHOOL CORPORATION
    Dave McGaw
    West Lafayette High School
    West Lafayette, Indiana   47906

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Evaluation of
Microcomputer Software

A process for evaluating microcomputer courseware for elementary and
secondary schools has been developed at the MicroSIFT (Microcomputer
Software and Information for Teachers) Clearinghouse operated by the
Computer Technology Program at the Northwest Regional Educational
Laboratory. Evaluation data and other information derived from the review
of courseware is entered into the RICE (Resources in Computer Education)
data base. Two forms are used to record information.

o   The Courseware Description form identifies the factual informatior.
    necessary for evaluation and use of a package, including source,
    ability level, subject, mode of instruction, required hardware and
    software, instructional objectives and prerequisites.

o   The Courseware Evaluation form contains a list of 21 points in the
    three categories of content, instructional quality and technical
    quality.

An "Evaluator's Guide for Microcomputer-Based Instructional Packages"
describes the use of the forms and provides guidelines, suggestions and
interpretations of each item on the Evaluation form. The book is designed
to be used by teachers and others in evaluating microcomputer courseware.

Materials evaluated for the MicroSIFT Clearinghouse go through three stages
of evaluation:

1. Sifting--This is a.first look at a package to determine that it is
    instructional in nature, will actually operate without problems on
    the appropriate microcomputer, and is complete with instructions.

2. Description--A package passing stage 1 successfully is described,
    using the Description form.

3. Peer Review--Teachers with experience in the subject and grade or
    ability level of the material are selected to evaluate packages
    according to the Evaluation form.

Copies of the "Evaluator's Guide" are available from the International
Council for Computers in Education, Department of Computer and Information
Science, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon 97403. Cost per copy is
$2.50 (1-5 copies), $2.25 (6-10), $2.00 (11-30), $1.75 (31-50), $1.50
(51-100) and $1.25 (more than 100 copies). It also is available through
ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center document ED 206 330).

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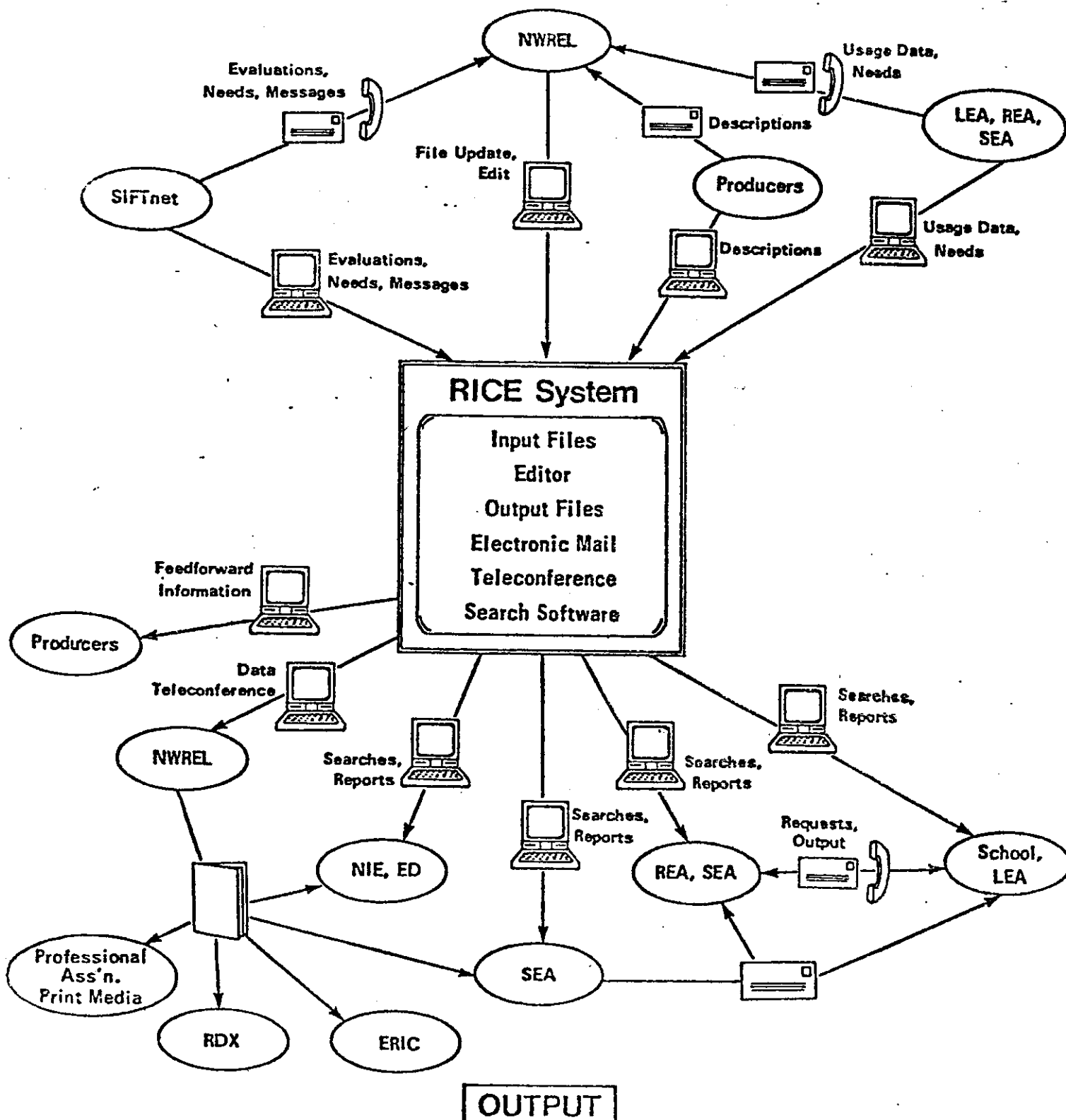
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RICE Interaction

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INPUT

NWREL

Evaluations,
Needs, Messages

Usage Data,
Needs

Descriptions

LEA, REA,
SEA

File Update,
Edit

Producers

SIFTnet

Evaluations,
Needs, Messages

Descriptions

Usage Data,
Needs

RICE System

Input Files
Editor
Output Files
Electronic Mail
Teleconference
Search Software

Feedforward
Information

Producers

Data
Teleconference

Searches,
Reports

NWREL

Searches,
Reports

Searches,
Reports

Searches,
Reports

Requests,
Output

School,
LEA

NIE, ED

Searches,
Reports

REA, SEA

Professional
Ass'n.
Print Media

SEA

RDX

ERIC

OUTPUT

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User:	1: Mathematics	
Computer:	RESULT 721	Information is available about 721 software packages in mathematics.
User:	2: Middle Schools	
Computer:	RESULT 587	Information is available about 587 software packages at the Middle School level.
User:	3: APPLE II	
Computer:	RESULT 815	Information is available about 815 software packages which operate on an Apple II microcomputer.
User:	4: 1 and 2 and 3	
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Computer: 1

TI Mathematics Drill & Practice
MI Drill and Practice; Tutorial;
    Learning Management

2
TI Basic Math Facts and Games
MI Drill and Practice; Game
(etc. through math document)

END OF DOCUMENT

User: Print 4 All/Doc=All/ID   Request to print all items in this combination of descriptors offline have a printed copy sent by mail.

OFF

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How to Access
The RICE Data Base

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Anyone wishing to conduct an online search of the RICE (Resources in Computer Education) data base can do so using any terminal or microcomputer equipment. It is anticipated that most of the direct access to the system will be by organizations such as school districts, intermediate education units and state education agencies which provide search services to their constituent districts or schools.

First, the agency must join the School Practices Information Network (SPIN). There is no cost to join the Network. Applications can be obtained from BRS, Inc., 1200 Route 7, Latham, New York 12110.

BRS will issue an identification number and password, and provide an information packet on access and search procedures.

The only equipment needed by a school district or other agency to conduct searches is a computer terminal or microcomputer with communications interface. The cost of the communications equipment is $300 and up.

A local telephone number will be available in most cities to access the data base without a long distance call. The search is conducted using ERIC and other descriptors.

The only cost for the search is a charge per minute of computer time used. Typically, the cost of a search will be less than $5. There is no minimum monthly charge or flat fee.