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DOCUMENT RESUME

02433 - [A1732729] (Restricted)

[Management and Use of the Air Force's CREATE Time-Sharing Computer]. March 3, 1977. 2 pp. + enclosure (1 pp.).

Report to Brig. Gen. Howard M. Estes, Jr., Comptroller, Department of the Air Force: Air Force Logistics Command, Wright-Patterson AFB, OH; by Robert W. Hanlon, Regional Manager, Field Operations Div.: Regional Office (Cincinnati).

Issue Area: Automatic Data Processing (100).

Contact: Field Operations Div.: Regional Office (Cincinnati).

Budget Function: Miscellaneous: Automatic Data Processing (1001).

The Air Force's CREATE time-sharing computer provides responsible computational support to several audiences, but several of the management practices deviate from established policies and regulations. Findings/Conclusions: Although the approved use of CREATE is limited to technical applications, GAO's survey showed that 13 of 16 approved service requests did not fully meet this workload criterion. Requests that did not meet the criterion that all projects be cost effective have also been approved. Management controls exist to limit CREATE's use and to remind users that it is an expensive resource, but they have, at times, been ignored. The user group of user and management representatives has not met regularly, thereby eliminating an important communication link. Scheduled improvements include obtaining a new communication processor for CREATE, but management improvements may obviate the need for additional equipment. Recommendations: Automatic controls should be used to promote efficient use of CREATE. The user group should meet regularly to eliminate some of the difficulties identified. (DJH)

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Brigadier General Howard M. Estes, Jr.
Comptroller, U.S. Air Force Logistics Command
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio 45433

Dear General Estes:

The General Accounting Office's survey of the management and use of time-sharing computers included the Air Force Logistics Command's CREATE system. Your command has established policies to ensure that CREATE provides responsive computational support to engineers, scientists, statisticians, students, and educators; but several of the management practices deviate from the established policies as outlined below:

--Although you have established criteria which limits the approved use of CREATE to technical applications, our sample of 16 approved service requests showed that 13 did not fully meet this workload criteria. Uses which were inconsistent with established criteria included supply inventory lists, suspense file systems, job management systems, and personnel files. For example, the Air Force Audit Agency is using CREATE for a job management system to keep track of audit assignments. We think your criteria are valid for they ensure proper use of the system when they are followed, and we believe they should be enforced.

--Your standards require a cost/benefit analysis to make sure all CREATE projects are cost effective, but service requests have been approved which are not meeting this criteria. In our sample of 16 service requests only 6 were cost effective. Costs exceeded the benefits in three cases, and one example is a manpower program estimated to cost \$53,520 with benefits of only \$39,000. In the remaining cases the benefits were either not stated or were unsupported projections. For example, no benefits were identified for a procurement program estimated to cost \$367,934. We agree with your criteria for cost effective use of the system and recommend that it be strictly applied to all applications.

--Management controls are available to limit the use of CREATE and to remind users that the system is an expensive resource. Because the use of CREATE is based on job approval rather than budgetary controls, users consider CREATE to be a free service.

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For example, a data retrieval application authorized to run until April 22, 1976, was still being run in December 1976. Users said they have no incentive to be efficient in their programming or in their use of CREATE time. We believe automated controls will promote efficient use of CREATE services and recommend that you make sure these controls are used.

—The user group, which includes user and management representatives, was established to promote effective use of the system, to reduce redundant development work and to identify future requirements for CREATE support. This group has not met regularly and as such has eliminated an important communications link between users and CREATE management. We believe some of the difficulties identified above might have been eliminated through regular meetings and recommend that the group meet regularly.

We were told you have scheduled improvements in the management of CREATE which will resolve most of the conditions described above. One factor that still concerns us is your plans for a new communication processor for CREATE. Justification for this new equipment is based partially on the CREATE workload. We believe that as you improve CREATE it may reduce the present workload and as such you may not need the additional equipment.

Please keep us up to date on improvements in CREATE and its effect on the workload. If you decide to get additional equipment, we would like to be advised. We appreciate the cooperation Mr. P. T. Adams gave our staff and wish him success in his forward looking management improvement program.

Sincerely,

ROBERT W. HANLON

Robert W. Hanlon
Regional Manager




15 March 1977

United States General Accounting Office
Regional Office
8112 Federal Office Building
Fifth and Main Streets
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Dear Mr Hanlon

I have read your letter concerning the CREATE time-sharing system. We are in agreement with your observations, and were already engaged in definitive action to correct the deficiencies cited. As new regulations and directives are published relative to the management of the CREATE system, we will forward them to you.

Sincerely


HOWARD M. ESTES, JR.
Brigadier General, USAF
DCS/Comptroller