

UNL receives grant to develop computers for disabled students

By Linda Bendixen
Staff Reporter

UNL recently received a \$275,000 grant from the United States Department of Education to develop a computer system that is accessible to handicapped persons.

The grant, written by Christy Horn, coordinator of the Education Center for Disabled Students, in collaboration with Lois Schwab, professor of human development and the family, provides funds for three years. After that the university must provide the funding.

"We hope that because this is the first system of its kind, the university will continue to support it," Horn said. The system helps handicapped persons take their own notes and write their own papers. Horn said that in the past students had to dictate their papers to someone and hire notetakers.

Though the system is designed for disabled persons it does not rely on specialized equipment. It is built around a system of relatively inexpensive and adaptable IBM computers.

The computer center does, however, have some specialized equipment. A large print monitor, purchased by the University Foundation, can enlarge letters up to five inches and then scan the material on the monitor for visually impaired students. In addition, a voice synthesizer can read information from the screen. The center is also purchasing an optical character reader programmed to read journals.

The computers have modified keyboards that do not require a student to push two or more keys at one time in order to type. This is beneficial to students who are able to use only one or two fingers, Horn said.

The new equipment also makes it possible for students who are paralyzed to operate the computers. Switches that react to the slightest movement, such as a touch, a bite or even the blink

of an eye help the students operate the computers.

The switches are connected to a specialized word processing system called Words Plus. The disk contains a vocabulary bank of 2,400 words, which the student can use to write a paper. After a student has used the system for a while, the computer is able to predict

which words the student would use.

Portable computers are available for students to check out and take home, including portable lap computers that let students take notes in class.

All of these systems operate with keyboards. Modified typing techniques are taught to students with limited finger dexterity.

Police Report

Friday, June 13

2:30 a.m. — Medical emergency-injury at Coliseum. Person taken to hospital.

11:10 p.m. — Non-injury accident at 21st and W streets.

12:30 p.m. — Theft of book from CBA.

2:04 p.m. — Non-injury accident in metered lot at 13th and R Streets.

Saturday, June 14

6:13 a.m. — Small fire by dock at City Union.

8:33 a.m. — Vandalism at construction site at 12th and Q Streets.

5:36 p.m. — Person taken to detoxification center from 16th and P.

Sunday, June 15

1:05 a.m. — Emergency phone at Area 3 parking lot at 14th and New Hampshire streets vandalized.

2:11 a.m. — Three incidents of vandalism to vehicles reported in Area 23 parking lot across from Harper-Schramm-Smith.

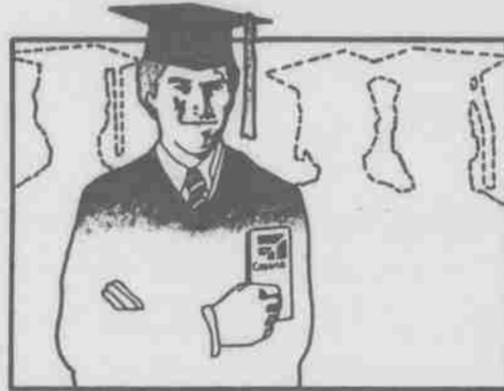
4:03 a.m. — Misdemeanor assault reported.

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Test inaccuracies examiner's fault

POLYGRAPH from Page 1

First, Wilkins asks irrelevant questions in order to trace the "normal" measurements of the subject on the machine. An example of this type of question would deal with the subject's name, age, the day of the week, and so on.

Second, Wilkins asks "throw away" relevant questions such as, "Do you intend to lie to me today?" Finally, the primary relevant questions are asked, he said. These questions deal directly with the subject and the incident from a general beginning gradually building to a climax of specific questioning.

"The questioning process can be unnerving for both the innocent and the guilty," Wilkins said. "If the subject is not nervous, I would right away suspect him of lying or using some sort of chemical abuse to keep him cool under pressure."

After the test is given, Wilkins compares the subject's answers with the subject's measurements on the polygraph. If the measurements remain consistent during each phase of questioning the suspect is "probably" innocent.

However, if there is a deviation, Wilkins must determine what it was about a particular question or questions that made him react differently. Later, the suspect is given a chance to explain his reaction.

As far as inaccuracies, Wilkins said it's the examiner, not the polygraph that messes things up.

"Less than ten percent of all polygraph operators are competent for the job," he said. "It's up to the examiner to interpret the results, the polygraph only measures the responses."

Lincoln has three private, four police, five UNL, three sheriff's, three state patrol and three public polygraph examiners, he said.

Many medium to large sized businesses in Lincoln now require new employees to take the polygraph test.

"This is due partially to petty stealing, occasional chemical abuse on the job, and that sort of thing," Wilkins said. "It's now more of a precaution than it used to be."

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