

activities are a sign of the times. "More and more people freely admit, indeed positively boast, that they are not loyal to society and do not intend to serve its interests." This attitude is probably not new, but the openness in expressing it is. Indeed, for years our moral attitudes toward crime account for a peculiar ambivalence toward criminal behavior itself. On the one hand, it is feared, despised, and vigorously condemned. Yet it is also secretly admired, and we are always eager to hear the details of some outstanding criminal exploit. While not quite as lively as *The Godfather*, or *The Great Train Robbery*, *The Electronic Criminals* nevertheless will give you some insight into the emerging types of crimes, one of which almost assuredly by 2000 will have the title, "The Crime of the Century."

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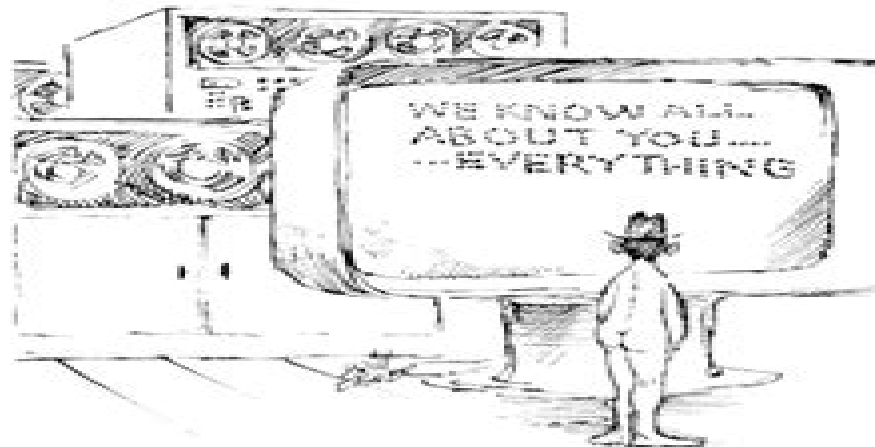
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Freedom's Edge: The Computer Threat To Society, by Milton R. Wessel, 137pp., \$4.95. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1974.

"A communications medium transmits messages. It also may affect the message itself.

"A computer system processes data. It also may affect the data itself. It is the theme of this book that when the computer's impact on the data is great enough, it changes the environment in which we live."

It is symptomatic that some people still insist that the time in which we are living be labeled "the atomic age" instead of "the computer age." Both technologies are approximately thirty years old, but while uses of atomic power are still almost nil, computers and data processing are so much a part of our world that we rarely even notice their existence. Therein lies a danger. Therein lies the threat to society.



In many ways computers are a unique invention; a general purpose invention. Computers do not simply affect one industry, nor one segment of society, nor one country. No aspect of our culture is left untouched: business, recreation, art, religion; they are all becoming computerized. Beside the influence of the computer, that of the omnipresent television set pales to insignificance. Perhaps in all of history only the invention of the printing press can compare in impact, and if you live in a large city you will find that the type in your daily newspaper is set by computer.

Milton Wessel is saying that we are right now tightrope walking on freedom's edge. The increase in use of computers is nothing short of phenomenal. In a very few years the pattern of the future will be set, and for the most

part we do not realize what is happening to us. Computer usage is so all-pervasive that only rarely does someone catch a glimpse of the whole picture and this is usually a trained professional, not the person in the street whose future is at stake.

Wessel's book is not technical in nature, but sociological. It is primarily a book of unanswered questions and very, very tentative suggestions. It is a quite readable book and assumes no technical expertise on the part of the reader. Wessel is himself not a computer professional but a lawyer. He has spent much time involved in the legal side-effects of a computerized society and much of what he has seen worries him.

Wessel is not opposed to computers. That is not the question at issue. Our modern lifestyle is absolutely dependent on the computer. Wessel is repeating a plea which has been raised many times in the past and is best summed up in the too often ignored motto of the Sierra Club: "Not blind opposition to progress, but opposition to blind progress." At this time the growing use of computers represents blind progress.

What we are blind to are the side-effects of computer usage. Most computer systems perform quite well the tasks they were designed to perform. But what else do they do? Wessel's point about a computer system affecting the very data it is processing is not a fear that some machiavellian computer is going to run amuck a la science fiction horror story. The point is that the very fact that the data is intended for computer processing will change that data; the manner in which it is collected, the manner in which it can be used, the manner in which it can interact with other data.

We have already seen this in the privacy issue; a data bank of personal information may have many uses other than the one for which it was explicitly designed. Other problems haunt the future. The computer credit card cashless society is almost upon us. It will be convenient. But it could also mean that a person cannot buy so much as a piece of bubble gum without that fact, and time and place of purchase, appearing in some data bank. Where were you at 7:23 p.m. the night of August 18, 1984? Hmmm, you were buying a copy of *Freedom's Edge*. Flag that person as a possible subversive!

Wessel gives many more examples, some less obvious, and raises many more questions, but they all boil down to one thing. When our society becomes one massive data processing system, will we be able to hold on to our individuality and our freedom? What if I do not want a computer credit card? Will I have a choice?

John Lees
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* * *

Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance, Robert M. Pirsig, 406 pp., \$2.25. Bantam Books, New York, 1974 (Paperback). Hardcover edition published by William Morrow & Co., Inc., New York, 1974, \$7.95.

How, you might wonder, did a review of a book with a title like this get into *Creative Computing*? The reason is that this book has as much to say about computers as it does about either Zen Buddhism or motorcycle maintenance.

This is a novel, but it has more philosophical content than character development or plot. What it is primarily about is the relationship between people and machines. The main machine in the book is a motorcycle, but it could just as well be a computer. It is pretty obvious from reading the book that both Pirsig and his hero have dealt with computers, mainly from the technical writing end.

According to the author's view, there are two basic ways that humans understand their world and their machines. The "classical" way looks for the basic underlying forms while the "romantic" way looks mainly at the immediate appearances. Riding motorcycles is basically romantic and maintaining them is mainly classical. The romantic mode is "primarily inspirational, imaginative, creative. Intuitive feelings rather than facts predominate". The classical mode "proceeds by reason and by laws".

Freedoms Edge The Computer Threat To Society

M Mark



Freedoms Edge The Computer Threat To Society:

Freedoms Edge The Computer Threat To Society Book Review: Unveiling the Magic of Language

In an electronic digital era where connections and knowledge reign supreme, the enchanting power of language has become more apparent than ever. Its power to stir emotions, provoke thought, and instigate transformation is truly remarkable. This extraordinary book, aptly titled "**Freedoms Edge The Computer Threat To Society**," compiled by a highly acclaimed author, immerses readers in a captivating exploration of the significance of language and its profound effect on our existence. Throughout this critique, we will delve into the book's central themes, evaluate its unique writing style, and assess its overall influence on its readership.

<http://industrialmatting.com/book/detail/index.jsp/empire%20of%20their%20own%20how%20the%20jews%20invented%20hollywood.pdf>

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Freedoms Edge The Computer Threat To Society :

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a). What voiced consonant has the same place of articulation as [t] and the same manner of articulation as [f]? ...