

**FSCS Steering Committee Meeting
September 17-19, 1996
Minutes**

Attending:

Steering Committee: Adrienne Chute, Denise Davis, Gretchen Fairbanks, Don Fork, Mary Alice Hedge, Carrol Kindel, Roz Korb, Elaine Kroe, Keith Lance, Libby Law, Sandi Long, John Lorenz, Mary Jo Lynch, Joseph Shubert, Tom Sloan, Mark Smith, Walt Terrie, Diana Tope, and Peter Young.

Others: Census: Diana Cull, Mike Freeman, John Medina, Larry McDonald (Chief, Census Government Division), Regina Padgett, Dawn Pennell, and Ellen Thompson.

PLLI: Barbara Humes and Carole LaCompagne (Luncheon Speaker - 9/17 Wednesday).

NCLIS: Jeanne H. Simon

Mark Smith called the meeting to order and welcomed the new steering committee members: Gretchen Fairbanks (SDC) and Tom Sloan (COSLA). John Lorenz reported on COSLA's appointment of Tom Sloan to replace Joe Shubert who retired as New York State Librarian in July 1996.

NCES STATUS REPORTS:

a. 1994 Data Collection: The data is currently undergoing technical review. The processing of the 1994 data was delayed by the federal furloughs and the extended review process. Keith Lance and Mary Jo Lynch were recommended for the Adjudication Panel. The anticipated publication date is December, 1996.

1995 Data Collection: 46 states have submitted data. The mentors reported on the results of their contacts with those states and territories which have not yet submitted data. Mark Smith will send a letter to all states which have submitted data to recognize their timely submission.

b. State Library Agency Survey: Joseph Shubert reported on the status of the StLA Survey. The 1994 Survey has been published. All states (except one) have submitted 1995 data. The anticipated publication date for 1995 data is January 1997.

c. Library Cooperatives: Diana Cull (Census) reported that the Library Cooperatives Survey package (pre-test and final survey) has been submitted to OMB for clearance. The pre-test should take place in late fall 1996 with the full survey conducted in the Spring of 1997. There was a discussion of an additional verification of the universe file which was reduced from 1,200 to 600 after review by the State Library Agencies.

d. LSA Mapping Task Order: A task order for geocoding public library service outlets mapping boundaries of public library jurisdictions and developing a public use data file linking FSCS and Census demographic data is included in a contract which is scheduled for award before the end of FY96. It was noted that Paul Planchon supported this priority of the Data Use Subcommittee and this is much appreciated. The importance of including the geocoding of the public library service outlets in new releases of the Tiger Files was noted.

e. OMB Review of FSCS: The OMB authorization for FSCS expires with the collection of 1995 data (1996 submission). A question about the need for annual data collection was raised as a concern by OMB. NCES is submitting a new clearance package covering FY 97, FY 98, FY 99 in January 1997. This package will include a report concerning the need for annual periodicity. This report will address, not only the amount of annual change in FSCS data, but also the advantages of annual data collection with respect to data quality. The issue was referred to the Data Use Subcommittee for further discussion.

POPULATION OF LEGAL SERVICES AREAS:

Mark Smith reported that the survey confirmed the comparability of the population of legal service area data for libraries being submitted by the states. It also confirmed that the data submitted for outlet population is not comparable. This issue was referred to the Definitions Subcommittee for further discussion.

SUBCOMMITTEE OBJECTIVES:

Mark Smith reviewed the subcommittee objectives and the following changes were made: Data Use objectives expanded to include: redesigning of the hours table, trend analysis, and periodicity of data collection. Definitions objectives expanded to include: outlet population.

1997 WORKSHOP:

This will be the 10th Anniversary of the first FSCS Meeting which was held in Annapolis.

Proposed Theme: "Now that we've got it, what do we do with it."

Location: Marriott Hotel, Annapolis, MD

Dates: March 2-5, 1997

(Sunday 1/2 day orientation for new SDC's followed by reception or general meeting for all SDC's, 2 1/2 days Workshop, followed by debriefing Steering Committee Meeting to include newly elected members as well as current members)

See Subcommittee reports for further information

IMPUTATION:

There was a discussion of meaningful relationship among variables and use of the 1992-1994 data to determine the mean for imputation. Use of Population and expenditure data was suggested as possible variables to use as characteristics for grouping libraries. All imputed values will be flagged by Pinkerton.

1996 SUBMISSION TECHNICAL PROBLEMS:

Census maintained a list of all problems reported by SDC's. This report was referred to the Technical Subcommittee.

REPORT ON INSTITUTE FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, LIBRARIES, AND LIFELONG LEARNING (PLLI):

Carole LaCompagne, Director of PLLI, presented information about the plans, developments and resources for the future and the library role in the institute. Although there is no funding for a Library Center two of the Field-initiated studies grants awarded include libraries.

1996 NCLIS INTERNET STUDY:

Peter Young reported on the 1996 NCLIS Internet Study which shows a 113% increase since the 1994 study in public library Internet connectivity. He also cited the NII Advisory Council's Kick-Start report that estimated the cost for public library involvement with NII at an initial investment of \$1.6 billion and \$1.3 billion annual recurring cost. These estimates were developed by consultants to NIIAC who made extensive use of the results from the various 1994 and 1995 NCLIS Internet studies. In addition, he discussed the Commission's submissions to the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) on their proceeding on universal service discounts for schools and libraries. The NCLIS FCC filings in April, July and August provided the results of the Commission's survey research on public library Internet connectivity.

LIBRARY PROGRAMS REPORT:

Don Fork reported on LSCA appropriation levels (House and Senate) and on the status of legislation for LSTA. There is Administrative, House and Senate support for libraries. The question is what will be the framework for the legislation and where its administration will be organizationally located.

BY-LAWS CHANGES:

Mark Smith will prepare wording for presentation to the SDC's. Information about these changes will be included in the December FSCS memo.

The following changes were discussed:

Membership:

- First paragraph:
 - 2nd sentence - remove the word calendar.
 - 3rd sentence - change "the FSCS staff at the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)" to "two (2) members of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) staff"
- Third paragraph:
- 4th sentence - replace with "New members elected or appointed each year shall begin their terms at the end of the annual workshop."

- Fourth paragraph:
add sentence - Interim appointments shall be made by the chair in consultation with the Steering Committee.

Officers:

- 1st Sentence - replace "each calendar year" with "before the annual workshop"

Sub-committees:

- Second paragraph:
add - and Training.

Committee Reports and Work Plan:

- Fourth paragraph:
replace "Policy and Procedures amended" with FSCS Policy and Procedures For Review of Data Elements"

SCHEDULE FOR 1997 MEETINGS:

This was not addressed.

OTHER:

Pascal (Pat) D. Forgione, Jr. is the new commissioner of NCES.

The next FSCS Steering Committee will be December 3-5, 1996.

Mary Alice Hedge, on behalf of the FSCS Steering Committee, moved that "Elaine Kroe be granted the "Unsung Hero's Award" by officially and publicly acknowledging Elaine's consistent, quality, professional attention to her responsibilities and handling all of the "nitty-gritties" necessary to do what is needed to be certain that the FSCS Surveys are accurate, complete, and timely. Her perseverance is extraordinary and appreciated." Second by Mark Smith and passed unanimously.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

Data Use Subcommittee (see page 13 for more detailed report):

- a. Adjudication of 1994 data (95 submission) is planned for October/November 1996. Data planned for release in December 1996.
- b. State ranking tables (NDRC): There are question regarding who will do this Census or NDRC.
- c. National Norm tables: to be discussed further
- d. Births/deaths/marriages/divorces: data compiled for selected states which are to review data and report back to Walt Terrie
- e. National household education survey: deferred to December Steering Committee Meeting.

- f. Hours tables: needs redesigning
- g. Imputation: Recommend using the following cells for imputation - Total operating expenditures/Administrative Structure Code and Population/Administration Structure Code
- h. Trend analysis: deferred to December Steering Committee Meeting.
- i. Periodicity of data collection: The justification for collection of the data annually:
 - (1) It is not an additional burden since the States collect the data annually for State use.
 - (2) The quality of the data is improved through annual collection and follow-up.
 - (3) The electronic environment is so dynamic.
 - (4) The data release schedule is slow now and the data would be even less useful if it weren't collected/reported annually.
 - (5) Efficiency and economy of scale. There was a discussion of the need for knowing the appropriate timing for presenting arguments supporting the annual collection and reporting of public library data at the national level.

Definitions Subcommittee:

Electronic measures (Input and Output):

There is a need for one or more meaningful, collectable data elements to capture the volume of electronic services.

There was also a discussion of developing a list of data elements that SDC's are considering adding and those being used for budget presentations and justification. Denise Davis and Mark Smith are to prepare a report on for the December FSCS Steering Committee meeting.

Input: In addition to the current input measures collected, the following measures, based on the NCLIS study, will be presented to SDC's at the Annual Workshop for endorsement:

Electronic data elements to be offered for consideration at the Annual Workshop are:

- Internet service provider
- Number of Internet hosts (machines)
- number of public use computers
- number of library web pages
- Internet Training provided for staff, for the public

Output: After extensive discussion of the need of meaningful output measures Roz Korb suggested the establishment of a Task Force involving outside experts who will produce a report identifying data elements and provide practical information for collection of the data. It was suggested that the proposed academic library project (McClure) be reviewed and that the contractor for revision of PLA's planning and measurement program (Wilson & Himmel) be contacted. State networks and vendors should be included. Names suggested were John Bertot (Md.), Jane Goodwin (Fairfax County), Paul Peters (CNI), Sam Memberg (NY-SIBL), Michael Stevens (BCPL) and Denise Davis (FSCS). The charge for this Task Force is to identify electronic output measure(s), identify what needs

to be measured, and provide instructions for how to measure. Roz Korb and John Lorenz will follow-up on this and try to coordinate a meeting of the Task Force to coincide with the December Steering Committee if possible.

Internet Connectivity Fast Response Survey: This was referred to Data Use.

Outlet level Population: Based on data indicating that the information presented on population of outlets is being inconsistently collected and reported by states, the Subcommittee recommends discontinuing the collection of this data element. This recommendation will be presented to SDC's at the annual workshop and endorsements will be solicited.

Subscriptions in electronic format: Denise Davis and Mark Smith had prepared a definition for consideration. Discussion included whether this should include paid/gift local library subscription only and what to do about state provided services such as SAILOR and GALILEO. The issue is what is to be captured: what the local library provides or what users can get at their local library. This will be discussed further in December.

Financial Data Elements: The Financial elements below were briefly discussed in light of the data compiled by Diana Tope from state annual survey forms. This will be discussed further at the December Steering Committee meeting.

Capital Outlay: Fifteen states report detailed breakdown of capital income and expenditures. The subcommittee discussed adding additional information about the amount expended for construction, technology and other capital outlay. The current definition will need to be expanded and it was suggested that the subcommittee look at the LSCA definition for Title II. Keith Lance, Diana Tope and Libby Law will develop an expanded definition to address this.

Indirect (On-behalf-of) income and expenditure: This is basically whether we want to know the cost to operate the library or the amount the library spends. The forms of three states currently identify indirect (on-behalf-of) funds. The possibility of including a separate question in FSCS was discussed to include (on-behalf-of) funds for salary, benefits, and others which can be documented (exclude estimates). Carrol Kindel will provide a sample definition (IPEDS) for consideration at the December Steering committee meeting. Diana Tope will review the state forms further and develop a recommendation for the December Steering Committee meeting.

Carryover funds: The Subcommittee decided that this is a compliance issue. Mark Smith will notify mentors to call their states to discuss this.

Ballot to remove Data Element "Total Librarians": The December FSCS Memo will include information about the elimination for this data element and solicit pro and con letters by January 15, 1996. Mary Jo Lynch and Mark Smith will provide draft wording for discussion at the December Steering Committee meeting. The ballot with copies of pro and con letters will be sent to SDC's by February 1, returned by February 15 and the announcement of the results will be made at the Annual Workshop in March.

The definition for the ALA/MLS data element will need rewording and a historical note is to be added. Possible wording will be "These are positions occupied by persons with degrees from graduate library education programs accredited by ALA. Include unfilled positions for which this degree is required."

Other Professional Staff: This is a new data element for consideration. Mary Jo Lynch and Roz Korb will work on draft wording for discussion at the December Steering Committee meeting.

Organization and Structure: Mary Jo Lynch and Libby Law will continue working on this and report at the December Steering Committee Meeting.

Technical Subcommittee (see page 14 for more detailed report):

- 95 data (96 submission): Report compiled by Census indicates that there is definitely a need to provide training for states which are importing their data into DECPLUS.
- 96 data (97 submission): DECPLUS will be used with only minor modifications and improvements to address problems identified by SDC's and Census. Training on submitting data electronically and import format training are to be included in the March 1997 Workshop.
- 97 data (98 submission): The subcommittee is working with Census to develop a new submission standard. This will place FSCS on the leading edge in use of technology for data collection. The concept will be presented at the 1997 Annual Workshop and major training will be provided at the 1998 Annual Workshop. There was a discussion of the minimum equipment specifications and the need to inform the SDC's of this prior to the Workshop so that they would be prepared to help identify any problems.

Training Subcommittee:

Theme: "Now that we've got it, what do we do with it".

Location: Marriott Hotel, Annapolis, MD

Dates: March 2-5, 1997

(Sunday 1/2 day orientation for new SDC's followed by reception or general meeting for all SDC's, 2 1/2 days Workshop, followed by debriefing Steering Committee Meeting to include newly elected members as well as current members)

In December each subcommittee needs to identify the amount of time they need, space needed, and equipment needed for the workshop.

Review of evaluation of 1995 Workshop which indicated that the SDC's want more time for practical hands-on training (commercially available software such as QuatroPro), the flag show (local and state use of data), SDC Caucus, meeting with Mentors, breakout groups with choices of topics, and training for new SDC's.

Local arrangements concerns: No low light/dark sessions, will rooms accommodate dimmers, lots of shorter break-out/small group sessions. Encourage presenters to provide handouts for all overhead use...

(See checklist for planning CE from Delaware)

Topics/presentations/sessions:

Below is a list of all topics which were suggested for the March 1997 Workshop.

Orientation of new SDC's - to include selected Steering Committee members, Manual and handouts to be distributed ahead of time, possibly followed with dinner with Mentors if a general reception is not scheduled.

Data Quality session - Walt Terrie's usual (This might also include a presentation of the Vision for the future)

Partnership program to include new NCES Commissioner Pat Forgione, NCLIS presenter (Jeanne Simon), and state library presenter (Tom Sloan) (Suggested as opening session and to include presentation of Awards - Eckard & Keppel)

StLA Survey - COSLA report to SDC's concerns, on relationship between SDC and person at state preparing StLA Survey, political importance of survey, definitions interpretation, and assistance SDC can provide to States in using data when published. (This might be a brief report on the StLAS followed by a breakout session for those SDC who are actually collecting and reporting the data for the StLAS to discuss further)

COSLA - Time for COSLA Representative to formally present new relationship. This might be combined with the Partnership Program.

Mentor Group meetings - Time for colleagues to informally share information with one another (SDC's are to be polled ahead of time to identify issues and concerns for discussion). (There are to be 3 breakout groups, each including 2 mentor groups. One mentor will be leader, the other recorder. Other Steering Committee members and staff should float between groups.

Using data for public policy - Susan Ahmed. This is to be a general session.

National, State, and Local use of data. How data is being used at the local level - possibly a panel on National, State, and Local use of data. - Include Local level librarians who have used data for justification of budgets, programs, etc...(ask Denise Davis for person) - Data Use will plan (Keith Lance)

NDRC - presentation of services with examples of library information provided in past.

Accessing and Using data from the WEB - Technical and/or Data Use (hands-on, accessing the Census WEB for the data, what resources needed at the local level, some simple/easy things that can be done with the data).

Hands-on training in use of commercially available software such as QuatroPro, Excel, Lotus 1-2-3, etc... to make data more useful at the state and local level . How to extract and present information in an attractive appealing way, using graphics. (Computer lab for software demonstrations) -- Keith Lance will do a survey of SDC's to determine what they want.

Edward Tufte - "Envisioning Information" Speaker on visual presentation of data. If possible, this might replace the hands-on which will be held in another year. Walt Terrie will contact Edward Tufte regarding cost and availability.

Potential impact of federal change - LSCA to LSTA

State of Art Public Library System (show and tell on changes in service delivery, how electronic services impact on general library service in terms of staffing, funding, etc...)- Tom Kozlowski (Anne Arundel County Public Library) SAILOR

Clarification of Definitions - Definition Subcommittee general session (all SDC's) - Lengthy session

New Data Elements/Deleted Data Elements - Definitions Subcommittee general session (all SDC's) -- This might also include a presentation from the Task Force which Roz Korb is coordinating to prepare a paper on electronic output measures. (There will be 12 - 13 elements for discussion. Suggestion a major block of time to present the new elements and then small group to discuss issues: Other Professionals, Operating Income, Organization and Structure,...)

Submission of data to NCES over the WWW/Internet (FTP & E-mail) - Technical Subcommittee and possibly states who have done it (OH, NY, WI)

Training in importing data into DECPLUS - Technical Subcommittee

1998 Submission Standards - Technical Subcommittee and Census will present the new approach and requirements to SDC's. This might be part of Walt Terrie's Data Quality presentation.

Local data collection in electronic format (Informs - Sandi Long & Gerry Rowland, IMPS - Census, CLIPPER - Bob Fortenbaugh, Others such as Denise Davis's use of WWW) - possibly break-out sessions -- each sessions should include training and support needed at the state level, training needs for the local level, local equipment needs, on going support needs and cost.

Schedule Outline:

Sunday:

Steering Committee meet prior to new SDC training to take care of last minute items.

3 hours - Training of New SDC's

Meal/Reception - paid by whom? (cash bar?)

First General Session/Partnership presentation

NCLIS - Jeanne Simon, NCES - Pat Forgione, COSLA/State Library - Tom Sloan. This would be Sunday evening or Monday morning and would include presentation of Eckard and Keppel awards.

Monday - 1 1/2 hour blocks of time

Second General Session

Key note speaker - Sue Ahmed

Data Quality - Walt Terrie

Presentation of By-law changes

Third General Session - Definitions

Lunch

Fourth General Session: Forward Planning (Steering Committee Members presentation)

Concurrent Sessions: "How to" sessions

- using data from WEB
- Submitting data through Internet/FTP or e-mail

Tuesday

SDC Caucus

Fifth General Session:

- Impact of electronic services on libraries - Ron Kozlowski, Anne Arundel County Public Library (in terms of resources, staffing, etc...)
- Panel on local library use of data
- Imperative to collect useful electronic data

Break-out group with Mentors

Lunch

Concurrent Sessions

- demonstrations concurrently
- local data collected electronically

Wednesday - (1/2 day)

SDC Caucus

Business meeting

- Planning for the Future - Steering Committee Presentation
- Election of new SDC's to the Steering Committee
- Evaluation

Steering Committee debriefing Luncheon (include current and newly elected members)

TO DO:

All Steering Committee Member SDC's: Review Births/Deaths/Marriages/Divorces tables and send comments to Walt Terrie by November 22, 1997.

All Subcommittee Chairs are to notify on training topics, the amount of time needed, and equipment needs.

Mark Smith: Write all states which have submitted 1995 data to recognize their timely data submission.

Mark Smith will notify Bob Fortenbaugh that there will be more than one vacancy on the Steering Committee to be filled so that Bob can propose a by-law change if he wishes. Mark will also offer to distribute any proposed wording in the December FSCS Memo.

Mark Smith is to prepare the wording for revision of the By-Laws.

Mark Smith will notify Mentors of states to contact regarding Carry Over funds.

Roz Korb and John Lorenz: Task Force on Electronic Output measures

Denise Davis, Keith Lance, and Mark Smith: To refine definitions of input electronic measures, report on electronic measures data collected which SDC's are considering for inclusion in State collection and those being used in budget presentation/justification.

Denise Davis and Mark Smith are to work on a definition for electronic subscriptions: paid vs. unpaid, unit of analysis, examples, online vs. CD-ROM

Keith Lance, Diana Tope, and Libby Law will review the state data collection forms and prepare information on Indirect (On-behalf-of) data element (Salary, Benefit, Other) for discussion at the December Steering Committee meeting.

Carrol Kindel will provide sample definitions on Indirect (On-behalf-of) income/expenditures (IPEDS) for consideration at the December Steering committee Meeting.

Keith Lance, Diana Tope, and Libby Law will review LSCA Title II information and prepare information on Capital Outlay (Construction, Technical, Other) for discussion at the December Steering committee meeting.

Mark Smith and Mary Jo Lynch will prepare a draft wording for the elimination of data items 14 (Total Librarians) including any revision in the definition of data item 13 (ALA-MLS)

Mary Jo Lynch and Roz Korb will work on draft wording for "Other Professional Staff" for discussion at the December Steering Committee meeting.

Mary Jo Lynch and Libby Law will continue working on Organization and Structure and report on recommendations at the December Steering Committee Meeting. Issues to be addressed are: geographical vs. legal, legal establishment vs. governance, clarify to states, need to revise or compliance issue, make categories mutually exclusive.

Walt Terrie (Technical Subcommittee) is to consider information about EDI provided by Don Fork in development of new submission standards.

Walt Terrie will contact Edward Tufte regarding cost and availability. Walt is to inform Diana Tope as soon as possible.

Data Use (Keith Lance) will plan program on National, State, and Local use of data (how data is being used at the local level - possibly a panel

Data Use (Keith Lance) will plan program on use of commercially available software such as QuatroPro to make data more useful at the state and local level. He will survey the SDC's to determine exactly what they want (possibly computer labs for hands-on)

Walt Terrie: Prepare information for informing SDC's of future minimum equipment specifications prior to the Workshop.

John Lorenz: FSCS Memo (December) is to include information about vote on by-laws changes, new data element, future minimum equipment specifications for data submission, solicit pro and con letters, solicit issues and concerns for discussion in Mentor Group meetings.

John Lorenz will ask SDCs in his memo to submit questions for discussion.

Census Bureau is to prepare combined History Files and send them to Walt Terrie.

Walt Terrie will continue investigation of history files.

Data Use Subcommittee Minutes

Mapping Task Order. Adrienne reported that a contract had been awarded based on the task order prepared by NCES staff. Subcommittee members asked to see a copy of the bid documents to see how that would be done. It is the contractor's intention to appoint a committee to advise on matters related to this task order. NCES would provide suggested names for this committee.

Adjudication of '94 data. NCES expects adjudication in late October and publication during November. Mary Jo mentioned that adjudicators had found a number of problems with the data on juvenile services.

State Ranking Tables. Keith related the saga of pursuing state ranking tables ending by reporting that the ranking tables were now officially in the works.

National Norms Study. Barbara Humes of NIPELLL reported that the 1993 data is done, but that she is waiting for '94 data.

Vital Statistics. Walt presented data analyzing the FSCS historical files regarding such status changes as mergers, closures, and new library creation. He will continue to analyze the data to try to determine whether the data can be usefully extracted or whether it should be deleted.

Household Survey. Data Use postponed any further discussion of this item until the December meeting.

Annual Training Workshop Activities. The subcommittee discussed various topics for the training workshop including the use of commercial software to format and manipulate the data, a flag show of exemplary data uses, and accessing and using data on the Web.

Imputation. Roz reported that expenditures would form the principal basis for imputation with population to be used as a fallback when expenditure data is not available. The first year to be imputed will be the 1996 submission data.

Norms Tables. Discussion of Barbara Humes's work on the norms tables will be put off until the December meeting. Meanwhile Keith will work with Barbara on this project.

Periodicity. The subcommittee discussed arguments to be used should the need arise to defend annual collection of FSCS data. Arguments identified were:

- Annual data is of better quality
- Lack of change is as important information as change

- Because the data would already be collected by the states, this program is a low burden
- Adverse effect on time-sensitive data such as Internet questions
- This program is really a compilation of otherwise available data
- Need to keep contributors trained and involved annually

Technical Subcommittee Minutes

First Meeting

Present: Walt Terrie, Gretchen Fairbanks, Sandi Long, Carrol Kindel, Elaine Kroe, Mike Freeman, Regina Padgett, Dawn Pennell

Reviewed subcommittee objectives for 1996.

1. Mail out a DECPLUS that doesn't require any subsequent correction by the end of April with an emphasis on quality rather than timeliness.
 - a. Failed in the strict sense. There was one release sent to all states, but there is a revised version on the Web that corrects a minor problem. Walt says the web page is working very well, easy to download software.
 - b. Census handed out a log of the calls they had received. Regina and Dawn reported on each problem. Most seem to be SDC errors, not problems with the software. This indicates the need for more training.
 - c. There is a problem with the new elements relating to electronic access. These questions are multiple choice and the field is a one character field. This makes it impossible to report a non-response with a minus one. Walt reported that this is a problem in all alpha fields as SDCs indicate non-responses in a variety of ways (minus one left justified, minus one right justified, or the entire field filled in with -1-1-1-1 etc.) The committee agreed, after much discussion, to recommend a minus one for numeric fields and some other (standard) character, left justified, for alpha fields. (See minutes of second meeting.) The software should be modified to accept this for the next data submission.
 - d. Training issues included:
 - Formatting of import files
 - Feedback on printing problems (John L. to include in his next memo a request for a description of printing problems.
 - Importing the Error Report.
 - Downloading program and data files and uploading the data.
 - e. At the annual workshop, Census would like to have a roll call of the states that have access to a web browser. Those states will not receive the diskettes, but will receive the users guide and will be expected to download the necessary files and upload their data.

2. Move to the future - minimum equipment specs, alternative data submission standards, etc.
 - a. Walt sees future software (DECPLUS equivalent) as a HyperText system running on the Census server. it would allow direct data entry and data import.
 - b. Mike described what Census is currently looking at:
 - A program in HTML/Java format.
 - To use SDCs would download the program, fill in the data, push a button to upload the data.
 - c. The group's consensus was to move ahead with anticipated implementation of new approach for the 1998 submission. The new version of DECPLUS, or its replacement, would be independent of whatever operating system the SDCs have on their computers.

Second Meeting

Present: Walt Terrie, Gretchen Fairbanks, Sandi Long, Carrol Kindel, Elaine Kroe, Mike Freeman, Ellen Thompson, Larry MacDonald.

Discussed the subcommittee's responsibilities for the annual training workshop and decided on the sessions we needed to emphasize.

1. Use of commercial software: reducing the data for presentation purposes (graphs, etc.).
 - a. Decided we needed a survey to find out what software packages the SDCs wanted training on and who could do the training.
 - b. Discussed bringing in Edward Tufte to do a presentation. Committee agreed to present the idea to the Steering Committee.
2. Local data submission via the Internet.
3. Importation problems and training (added to the list provided by the Training Subcommittee).
4. Vision for the future (added to the list provided by the Training Subcommittee).

Focused again on the 1996 objectives.

1. Alternative submission standards: This is in abeyance, as the committee is proposing moving over to a different approach. It is definitely on the back burner at NCES.

2. 1997 DECPLUS discussion:
 - a. What will affect the 1997 program? Just the deletion of one or two data elements relating to FTE.
 - b. Other problems:
 - Changing the data entry screen for the above mentioned deletions
 - Missing values on last year's submission (see the discussion of -1 during the first meeting). Census and NCEC will work this one out. After much discussion a "U" was agreed upon for a blank or unknown alpha field.
 - Printing problems.
3. Minimum equipment specs:
 - Web browser
 - Modem with a fast enough communication speed to make the software run at an acceptable speed. Mike took on the assignment of coming up with a draft of specs for the December meeting.