

NAME OF SYSTEM:

Personnel Skills Inventory

ORIGINATOR:

United States Coast Guard

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OBJECTIVE. To establish an economical and effective retrieval system to assist in the identification of personnel qualified to fill specific job requirements.

BACKGROUND. A traditional personnel policy within the Armed Forces is the reassignment of uniformed personnel to new positions upon completion of a designated period in job assignment. These job changes are necessary to equalize time spent by personnel at oversea posts or on ships away from families; to give individuals experience in a variety of assignments; and to reassign personnel to positions of greater responsibility when they are promoted.

As the base of knowledge and specialization expands, a somewhat similar pattern occurs within the services. Thus, the need to select individuals having the proper skills and other qualifications becomes a real challenge. The Coast Guard was aware of the need to increase the effectiveness of their officer assignment activity. Several rather simple index reference systems were evaluated. The optical coincidence card technique was selected as best-suited to their particular needs.

THE NEW METHOD. The Termatex optical coincidence card system consists of a group of 9 x 9 inch opaque, plastic index term cards, a hole drilling machine, and a simple, backlighted card viewing device (light box). Each optical coincidence card represents a characteristic or attribute of significance in the determination of officer assignment qualifications. Approximately 500 cards make up the personnel skills inventory file. They are initially arranged under about

30 broad categories of interest and include such personnel characteristics or attributes as civilian education, language facility, military specialty, and past assignment data. Within each of these primary categories is a large grouping of more specific information such as year of birth, level of education, specific languages, and particular job qualifications and levels of past assignments.

The optical coincidence cards contain 100 vertical and 100 horizontal positions that total 10,000 hole positions or numerical "addresses." Each officer on active duty with the Coast Guard is assigned one of these coordinate addresses to identify his service record jacket. For example, an officer assigned the address at the intersection of vertical position 26 and horizontal position 43 would be given the coordinate number 2643 to identify his service jacket. A hole is drilled in all those cards representing an officer's service profile, at his "dedicated" address position.

Searches are initiated upon receipt of an officer's position vacancy notice in the Coast Guard headquarters, Officers Assignments Activity. These notices list specific skills and background requirements for the forthcoming vacancy. For example, among other demands the position may call for an advanced degree in oceanography, a familiarity with Spanish, and four years experience as a navigator. A clerk handling such a requirement would first note the proper major category index tab and withdraw the cards representing those characteristics or attributes.

The selected optical coincidence cards are carefully superimposed on top of the backlighted viewer. With the light turned on, a dot of light will reveal numerical coordinates representing service record jacket numbers of officers having the desired qualifications. Should there be no coincident holes, the originator of the search may wish to change the search criteria. Within seconds, cards representing changes or compromises may be placed on the light box. At the completion of a successful search the service record documents are withdrawn from the document file for assignment action.

REMARKS. While this system's procedural applications are similar to those described in the Joint Chiefs of Staff records retrieval system, the optical coincidence card in this example represents characteristics unique to personnel job qualifications. The JCS system highlighted indexing terms associated with identification of documents by subject matter content.

This index reference and retrieval system

permits rapid and flexible searches. Output is accomplished in a few minutes—only the time it takes to pull the appropriate cards, place them on the viewer, and check for coordinate numbers. A search question can be rephrased by adding or removing cards. While not used directly to make assignment decisions, this technique does allow the Coast Guard to maintain positive control over the initial identification and screening process relating to eventual selection.

PERSONNEL SKILLS INVENTORY

