



Minnesota State Department of Education
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REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE
ON THE
MINNESOTA CAREER INFORMATION SYSTEM

Prepared in accordance with
Executive Order No. 83-20

and

Minnesota Laws 1979, Chapter 335,
Section 3, Subdivision 15

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THE MINNESOTA CAREER INFORMATION SYSTEM

Pursuant to Minnesota Laws 1979, Chapter 335, Section 3, Subdivision 15, this report presents the major activities, funding requirements, effectiveness and demonstrated need for the Minnesota Career Information System (MCIS).

History and Authorization

The Minnesota Career Information System was originally established in 1975 as the Minnesota Occupational Information Service (MOIS) with CETA funds provided by the U.S. Department of Labor. Federal funds were decreased each year, with funding to be taken over by the states and by user fees. Executive Order No. 147 established the Minnesota Higher Education Coordinating Board as personnel and fiscal agent. Executive Order 79-35 transferred MOIS, now to be called MCIS, to the Department of Education, but without staffing or funding. Executive Order 83-20 established an advisory council and authorized accepting federal funds. Minnesota Laws for 1983, Chapter 258, further authorized the Department of Education to collect reasonable fees for subscriptions to MCIS. Presently, MCIS operation is in the Pupil Personnel Services Section which has always regarded career guidance as a primary function of its services.

From the beginning, MOIS used the mainframe computer at Minnesota Educational Computing Consortium (MECC) as the prime mechanism for service delivery. However, by 1982, due to increased timeshare costs and information being outdated, the number of subscribers was reduced by almost one half. At this point it was decided to try a different delivery system.

Following a survey memorandum and in keeping with the national trend, it was decided to provide career information via microcomputer.

Operations of MCIS

MCIS is now operated to provide a state specific, dynamic career information system which is affordable and upgraded to current microtechnology. The system is organized into four basic components. A key element is the search mechanism called QUEST which sorts 278 careers in the system according to responses to personal questions and a self evaluation.

With the list of occupations sorted by QUEST, the user next accesses the Occupation File. This file provides descriptions of 278 major occupational areas covering 95% of our state work force. Using information gathered through expert field contacts, reference sources, Department of Economic Security, labor market statistics, census data, schools, state agencies, unions, trade associations and state licensing boards, this file provides wage and employment outlook information, employment numbers and abilities and interests associated with each occupation. In addition, bibliographic cross-referencing offers the user information for further exploration. Occupational data is checked for accuracy through a review by six validators in every occupational listing.

The school file consists of descriptions of nearly 200 post-secondary colleges, universities, vocational schools, teaching hospitals and professional schools in the State of Minnesota. The information in the school file is updated annually and designed for use in the current academic year. Information is presented on 103 topics for each school. Using Micro-MCIS, it is possible for a student to compare at least three schools at a time on a topic to topic basis.

The topics are divided into six main categories. The categories are: General information, Programs of Study Available, Admissions, Housing, Financial Aid, Student Services. Included in this information are current listings of names, addresses and phone numbers of contact people in each category. This information enables a student to initiate more direct contact with schools based on their individual questions and needs.

The school file helps students answer questions such as: How large is the school? How much are tuition, fees and other expenses? What services does the school offer other students? Is financial aid available? What kind of housing is available and how much does it cost? What programs of study are available?

The information in the school file is gathered directly from the schools by means of a questionnaire. During the first year transitional period of development, MCIS staff contacted over 90 percent of the schools by phone to solicit their support and participation in the system.

A number of new topics were added to the school file during this transitional period. New topics were included which would better meet the needs of minority, adult and handicapped students.

Enhancements: In 1984-85, information will be added about seven border schools in South Dakota and Wisconsin which attract many Minnesota students.

The program file contains descriptions of the types of programs offered at over 200 schools in Minnesota. The MCIS program classification system index contains 21 clusters, with two digit MCIS code numbers, of broad program areas and 123 programs, with three digit MCIS code numbers. These are presented in numerical order. An alphabetical index of programs is referenced to MCIS three digit codes and to page numbers in the printed volumes. Each program area begins with a general introduction, program description, types of schools where training and education are provided and the degrees offered. Program admission, typical course work and graduation requirements are described. A section "Things to Know" is included. Related programs with MCIS program codes, direct related and associated occupations with MCIS occupation codes are also included. The associated occupations with MCIS occupation codes are also included. This introductory section concludes with C.I.P. (Classification of Instructional Programs) cross reference codes.

The programs are organized numerically by the three digit MCIS program codes, and within each program area the schools which have the program are organized in numerical order by the five digit code assigned to each school. The program description for each school contains a description of that school's particular program, degrees offered, length of the program and special costs.

a number of major changes were necessary in shifting from the old MOIS to MCIS. For example, the preparation of the training portion of the Program File was updated for the first time since it was established.

Micro-MCIS was originally designed to be used on 12 field test sites, but was expanded to 50 sites following high interest by the schools. Scheduled for delivery in February, this will be the first totally microcomputerized state-specific career information system in the country. Presently, the national CIS office at the University of Oregon is finalizing the software development for Micro MCIS. There is also need for additional word processing editing before a satisfactory cross-loading can occur between the Burroughs and Apple computers.

Enhancements of MCIS

A number of enhancements have been planned for MCIS in 1984:

1. A National College File of 2000 institutions.
2. A special occupational file for handicapped workers to be used by Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors.
3. A guidance tool called "High School Planner" which is a computer-based procedure for helping students select their four-year high school courses in relation to their post-secondary training plans and career choices.
4. A national financial aids file.

Funding Requirements

Currently funding support for MCIS has been received from the SDE, user fees and a small number of grants. Major costs include membership fees to national CIS, software development and staff salaries. Currently, the bulk of the work is being done by 2½ contracted workers positioned as information specialists. The Pupil Personnel Section has provided time of two clerical and two professional staff to fulfill the work commitment. Word processing center has prepared the final copy. Other technical assistance has been contracted to develop the changes in computer processing.

Funding support remains a problem. The need is to rebuild the system by keeping user fees low and increasing subscriptions. MECC Timeshare was increased this year to \$1200 for metro schools and \$1800 for out-state schools causing many schools to drop out. User fee for MCIS was set at \$300 this year in the hope of bringing schools back into the system. This fee does not include the major developmental costs of the project.

The major factor in determining annual user fees is the number of user sites. The major cost consideration, continually updating the information, remains the same regardless of the number of user sites. After the current fiscal year, financial needs will be reassessed to determine future actions - increased user fees or other funding sources.

The program file was completely reorganized, with revised and expanded MCIS three digit codes assigned to each program. The new code system resulted in assigning new program codes to most programs and a complete reorganization of the file itself.

Possible changes in the Program File for the next edition are:

1. Uniform descriptions of programs with specific, unique aspects of the programs provided by the schools.
2. Job placement percentage of last year's graduates.
3. Accreditation of the program.
4. Admission requirements.
5. Interview requirements.
6. Course prerequisites.
7. Application deadline.
8. Application fee.

Method of Delivery

Schools are offered two options in the delivery of MCIS information. Option 1, or Micro QUEST, consists of the one floppy disk containing the search mode QUEST plus all the information files (Occupations, School and Program) in two printed volumes. Currently there are 135 schools and agencies that have ordered this version. In addition, Vocational Rehabilitation has contracted for 160 copies and the Minnesota Occupational Information Coordinating Committee for 18 copies.

Option 2, or Micro MCIS, allows QUEST and all the information files to be accessed by a microcomputer. This is possible for sites that have a hard disk interfaced to a microcomputer so as to accommodate the additional storage needed for all the files. Presently 50 sites have requested this version.

Status of On-Site Use:

As of January 9, 1984, the 135 sites that ordered Micro-QUEST have received the QUEST diskette and two printed volumes containing completely updated Occupation and School Files. The Program File is still at the printers and will be mailed as soon as possible (approximately two weeks from this report). Significant delays in the delivery of this material were due to the inability to download the School File from the MECC mainframe to word processing disks so that all 33 disks in this file had to be inputted manually. Also, due to an overload of work in the Word Processing Section, turn around time for camera ready copy was slower than anticipated. Receiving updated information from post-secondary institutions required phone contact in lieu of incompleting questionnaires. And finally,

Effectiveness and Demonstration of Need

School counselors have always felt the need for current Minnesota information on career opportunities. Most information available is developed on a national scale and does not give much information relating specifically to the state. The MCIS is planned to fill this void, and has been developed to meet the needs of counselors in the schools and others who may use the program.

The innovations in and application of MCIS in the field are presently being implemented and evaluated. The user response has just begun and the effectiveness of the MCIS system will be determined over the next several months.

Last year MOIS time share was accessed 300 times per day. It is believed that, with an increased number of schools and agencies participating plus an increased awareness of the need for career guidance in our changing and technical society, this use will even increase.

Currently user subscriptions total 135 Micro-QUEST sites, 160 Vocational Rehabilitation sites and 50 Micro-MCIS sites.