STATE MACHINES
WORKING GROUP REPORT

Chairman, Randy Dumse

Attendees:

D. VanSyckel, J. Bowling, S. Gupta, E. Rawson, R. Blank, B. Buege, S. Gulick, J. Lundin, J. Basile, R. Joosten, plus approximately 20 others.

Discussion opened with the question of how many programmers had done real-time programming, which was all but two. That provoked a discussion of the nature of real-time. The original suggestion, agreed with by a majority, was that real-time programs always waited for events. This possibility was explored and the question was asked if any periodic processing was real-time, i.e., if an executive runs a COBAL payroll program every night at midnight - was it real-time? The discussion was found vast and tangential so it was abandoned.

The group was asked how many programmers had knowingly programmed a state machine, to which 11 replied positively. Another question posed was how many had programmed state machines, knowingly or not, the answer was 17. A total of 13 people said they had seen a machine programmed in the style of Dumse's paper at this Conference.

A vast discussion of the use of GOTO followed with the general consensus that GOTO's at a low level were desirable and "tolerable" in high level special cases.

The use of explicit state variables was raised. Although the consensus of the group was that no one objected to explicit state numbers, no one could explain the current controversey over state smart words.

Further discussion centered on different methods of syntactical accomplishing the virtual state machines.