High School Students Use Computers

Education program at IIT’s computer school extends from 11th grade to graduate school

Dr. Lykos’ introduction consisted of a single object lesson. He had the students measure the vapor pressure of a pure liquid as a function of temperature. Each student obtained 20 points; from these he selected four for a tedious hand calculation. The calculation involved a least-squares fit to a relationship between temperature and pressure. By contrast, after spending one day learning to program a computer, the class had all 20 points measured by each student processed in a similar calculation, but done by the computer. The total computer time for a class of 30 students was less than two seconds.

Now IIT has a computation center and a program in computers as an integral part of the education of engineering and physical science students. For instance, printing key punch machines for preparing computer input are located in three dormitories for ready access by undergraduates.

The main machine used to support these programs is an IBM 1620. A UNIVAC 1105 and IBM 7090 are also available, as is an IBM 1401 computer. IIT is installing an IBM 7040/1401 this fall.

Several hundred undergraduates in engineering and physical sciences now use computers routinely, with permission from an officer of instruction.