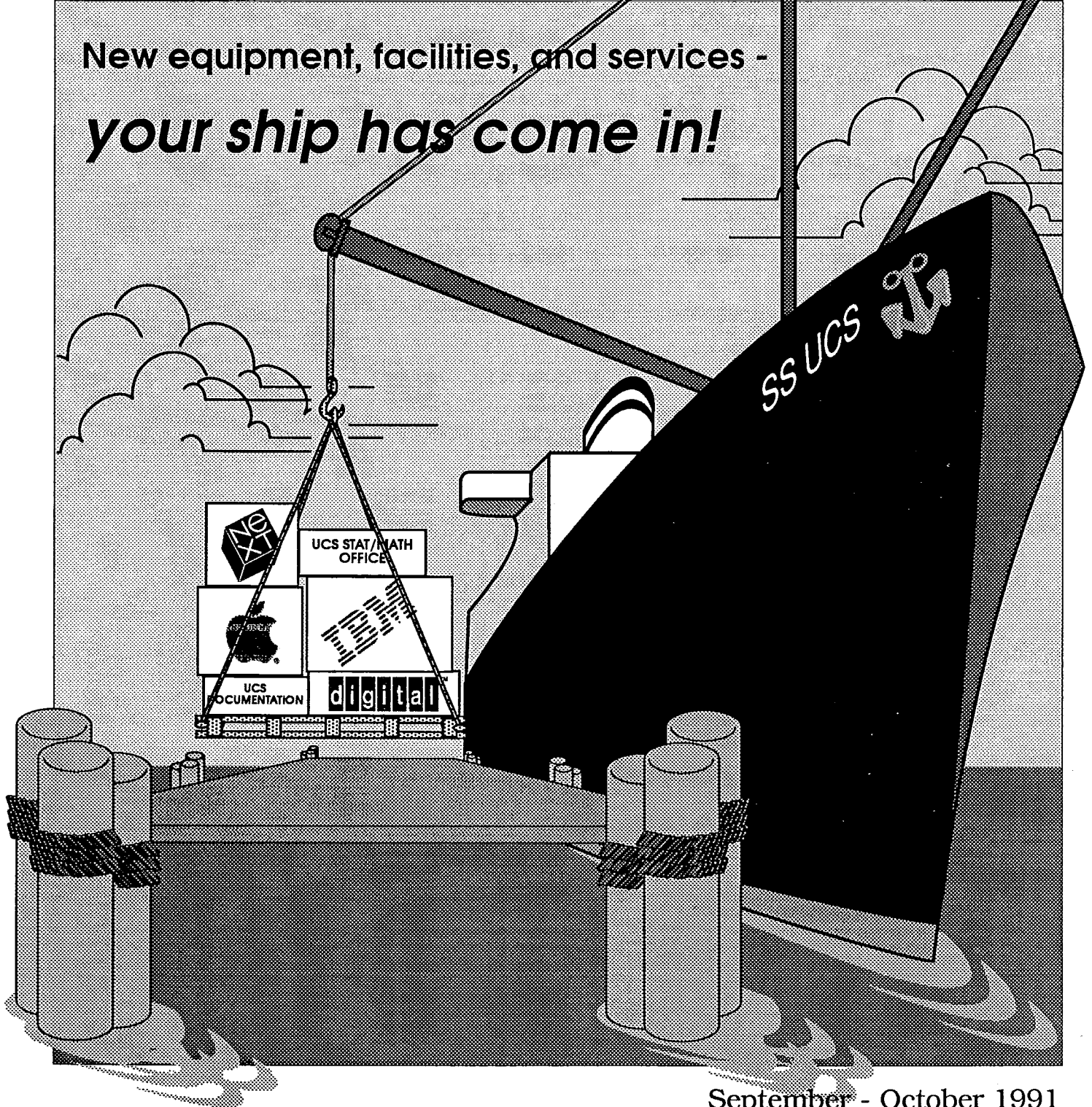


UNIVERSITY COMPUTING TIMES

INDIANA • UNIVERSITY

New equipment, facilities, and services -
your ship has come in!



September - October 1991

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University Computing

T I M E S

September—October 1991

The news magazine of University Computing Services, Indiana University, Polley Ann McClure, Associate Vice President for Information Resources.

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Big improvements in statistical software support

Craig Stewart

The UCS Office of Statistical and Mathematical Computer Applications is still in its formative stages, but we're already at work to improve support for statistical and mathematical software. Much direction has come from the ACPC subcommittee on Statistical and Mathematical Computing. This committee has suggested that UCS focus stats/math support more carefully by providing greater depth of support, across multiple platforms, for the more heavily used software rather than providing shallow support for all packages. More limited support will be provided for stats software with specialized functionality, or software that is of interest to a restricted group of users. Support for individual packages will be modified in keeping with changes in user demand and the statistical software market.

If you're expert with software for which UCS provides little support, it probably doesn't make sense for you to switch to a different package. But if you are currently deciding what stats software to use and have little expertise in any particular package, selecting one for which UCS provides strong support will help us help you.

This article outlines support levels for statistical packages, and discusses changes we foresee in the future. In subsequent articles, we'll outline availability and support levels for mathematical software packages, Fortran subroutine libraries, decision support software, and simulation software.

The UCS Workstations group has been developing a supported software model (see "New for fall in the Halls and public computing sites," page 9). The ACPC stats/math subcommittee has adapted that model for stats/math software on all platforms. Support categories are outlined below.

Standard tools. These are the "mainstream," commonly used software packages. For these UCS provides:

- Current versions of the software
- Basic consulting during business hours
- Basic to intermediate consulting at the Math/Stat Office
- Documentation in the Computing Support Center, the Math/Stat Office, and as many UCS public computing facilities as possible
- For micro software, UCS provides the support outlined for standard software in the article "New for fall," page 9.

There is a subset of standard tools, called "Standard Tools with Comprehensive Support," for which UCS provides the greatest support. In addition to the services listed above, UCS provides:

- Expert-level consulting (by appointment) with UCS professional staff
- Instructional materials (classes, workshops, or printed tutorials).

Special-request tools. These packages tend to be more specialized in nature or of utility to a restricted segment of the IU community. For these, UCS provides access to the software and at least basic information on how to invoke the software.

For microcomputer software, UCS provides the support outlined for special-request software in "New for fall," page 9. UCS hopes to develop partnerships with academic units for support of special-request tools. Such partnerships could provide for consulting and support within individual departments.

Software library tools. Mainframe software in this category may have an active license though its retirement has been announced. Or it may be software for which UCS owns a perpetual license — in which case UCS will make such software available on request for short-term use. For micro software, UCS provides availability as outlined in "New for fall," page 9.

Future plans

MICROS. Some specifics of our plan include greatly improving support for microcomputer stats packages. For example, we now have a site license for SPSS/PC+. It and PC-SAS will become more widely available in the public facilities and will be sold at the Computing Support Center. These will be reclassified as standard tools over the next year. We are considering expanding support for the DOS versions of Minitab and Systat. We also plan to expand the list of supported stats software for the Macintosh.

UNIX/ULTRIX. Due to the recent major changes in offerings of math software, we plan to move cautiously in acquiring stats software for the mainframe ULTRIX environment.

VAX/VMS. Our plans for the coming year include improved support for VMS-based SAS and SPSS in the form of better training for consultants in public sites, more documentation in the sites, more classes, and updated brief documentation designed to help users get started.

IDA is slated for removal at the end of the 1993-94 academic year on the recommendation of the ACPC

stats/math subcommittee. This should provide ample time for instructors to migrate to other packages.

Our goal is to better meet the statistical computing needs of the IU community. If you have concerns, comments, or suggestions, please contact the Math/Stat Office, 855-9255, or send e-mail to STATMATH. We are especially interested in your recommendations for standard software tools. □

Environment	Mainframes		UNIX-based Workstations	Microcomputers	
	VAXcluster VMS	IUBVM VM	Sun-OS	DOS	Macintosh
Standard tools	SPSS,* SAS,* BMDP, Minitab				
Special-request tools	Lisrel, Glim, RS/1, Liscomp, SCA, Shazam, EQS, TSP	SAS	SAS	SPSS/PC+, PC-SAS, Minitab, Systat, RATS, Lisrel, Gauss, Limdep, PC-Give, Datafit	Statview
Software library tools	IDA**			Microstat	

*Standard tool with comprehensive support.

**Slated for removal at the end of the '93-'94 Academic year.

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