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PERFORMANCE AND PROBLEMS OF SOFTWARE SURVEYS (Abstract)

What are software surveys for?

The general purpose of surveys of products and services is to give a first information on a special market segment to the potential buyer. Therefore such surveys have an important transmitting and at the same time objectifying task.

Which software surveys are available?

There is a lot of software surveys in West Germany and German-speaking neighbouring countries, for instance the well known Nomina Reports. Besides these general, many application fields and computer classes comprising surveys there are special ones which are sometimes part of a larger publication. In the field of architecture there are two special software surveys available: the survey of the Swiss engineers and architects association (SIA) and the survey of the Institute of Architecture and Planning Theory (IAP) of the University of Hannover.

What should be the tasks of software surveys?

Software surveys should answer to the following groups of questions:

- Which programs are available for a special field of application and what is their performance?
- What are the technical requirements of these programs especially with regard to the hardware?
- What are the price of the programs?
- Is there a solid software supplier near to the own office?
- What is the quality of a program in comparison with other programs?

What can present software surveys accomplish?

The present software surveys are more or less complete and actual. Apart from their special field of application they are different in depth and consistency of the program description. A very broad but briefly described software supply is found in PC-Softwareführer (Rossipaul); a limited and on the field of architecture and planning concentrated software supply is published in the software survey of JAP (Software für den Architekturbereich, Teil 1: AVA u.a., Teil 2: CAD)

What are particular problems of present software surveys?

Basic problems of software surveys are

- the fast decreasing actuality
- the uncertain completeness
- the lacking evaluation

The problems relating to actuality and completeness are of quantitative nature and can possibly be solved with technical means. Quite another problem is the lacking evaluation. Only a first step in evaluation is easy but not inexpensive; this means the check of the performance data (given by the software suppliers) through a neutral institution. In addition, the evaluation is a qualitative and user specific problem. It is first of all necessary, to describe and measure the suitability of a program from the view of a user and this is in particular important for CAAD programs. The central and extremely complex issue in this context is nevertheless the price performance ration.

On this field a European cooperation could sooner lead to better results.

Supplementary text to: PERFORMANCE AND PROBLEMS OF SOFTWARE SURVEYS

What are important characteristics of the IAP software survey ?

At present the IAP software survey is published as a two volume paperback. The first volume contains the alphanumerical programs, the second one the CAD-programs. Because of the predominant part of programs out of the field of tendering, contracting and cost accounting, the title of the first volume is AVA etc. (the German abbreviation for tendering, contracting and cost accounting).

Both volumes are structured in the same way: There is an introduction which deals mainly with the question how to use the book. Then there are the data sheets of the programs (55 so called AVA- and 76 CAD programs in total). Each volume ends with a program schedule and a suppliers list.

For the comparable description of the programs the IAP has developed a three-sectional scheme: The first section deals with general data such a field of application, interfaces and hardware requirements; the second section contains special data, based on a specific set of characteristics depending on program class (AVA, CAD or others); if a program consists of several modules, these modules are shortly described in the third section. A sample page of the general and first section of the program representation is shown in figure 1.

Of special importance are the program schedules in which the programs are collected in alphabetical order and described by a lot of criteria such as field of application, operating system and price. Figure 2 shows a part of the schedule for CAD programs. Such program schedules are an essential means for the appropriate and systematic use of a program survey.

o1. Programmname: Architektur G & W Version: 1.1

o2. Anwendungsgebiete: AVA, Massenermittlung, Kostenermittlung, Objektkontrolle, Textverarbeitung, Fläche/Raum;
Sonstige: Datentransfer

o3. Beschreibung des Programmkonzeptes: Das Programmsystem ist nach einem Datenkreislaufsystem konzipiert. Das System ist als Paket oder in Einzelmodulen lieferbar. Text- und Informationsverwaltung sind in allen Programmbereichen voll integriert.

Programmsystem besteht aus den Modulen (vgl.Pkt.12):
1. AVA1, 2. AVA2, 3. AVA3, 4. AVA4,
5. PLAN1, 6. PLAN2

Zusatzmodule (vgl.Pkt.12):
7. PLAN3, 8. PLAN4

o4. Schnittstellen: Daten-Import: ASCII
Daten-Export: ASCII
Anschluß zu CAD: k.A.

o5. Systemkonzept: Ein- und Mehrplatzsystem
netzwerkfähig: Novell, SK

o6. Rechneranforderungen: Betriebssysteme: MS-DOS, PC-DOS
min./empf. RAM: 640/ 640 KB HD. 40/ 40MB
Co-Prozessor: k.A. Programmgröße: 2 MB

empfohlene Rechnerarten:
IBM XT/AT - Kompatible

o7. Preise: (o.MWST) Software in 2 Ausbaustufen:
-Grundversion: Modul 1 7.200 DM
-beschriebene Version: Module 1 bis 8 22.700 DM

Wartung: incl. Installation: incl.

[_] Demoversion: keine [_] Lernprogramm: nicht vorh.
[X] Schulungen: 960 DM pro Tag

o8. Installationen: in BRD: ca. 800 Erstinstallation: 1985
weltweit: ca. 800 aktuelle Version von: 7/88

o9. Programmentwicklung: G&W, München

o10. Programmvertrieb: Hauptdistributor: G & W Ansprechpartner: G & W Software
Vertretungen in PLZ-Gebieten: 1 bis 8 Herr Grütter
Bayerstrage 13
Komplettbezug von Hard- und Software: möglich 8000 München 2
089/592876

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