

97[X, Z].—UNESCO, *Information Processing, Proceedings of the International Conference on Information Processing*, R. Oldenbourg, München & Butterworths, London, 1960. Distributed by International Documents Service, Columbia University Press, 520 p., 30 cm. Price \$25.00.

This volume publishes the proceedings of the first full-scale international conference on information processing by the use of modern digital high-speed calculators. The conference was sponsored by Unesco, and was held at the Sorbonne and at Unesco House in Paris during 15–20 June, 1959. It was attended by nearly 2000 participants from 37 countries. Fifty-nine papers were presented at eleven plenary sessions; in addition, approximately sixty short lectures were given at twelve symposia. The volume is divided in seven main chapters covering the following areas:

Chapter I.—Methods of Digital Computing

Chapter II.—Common Symbolic Language for Computers

Chapter III.—Automatic Translation of Languages

Chapter IV.—Pattern Recognition and Machine Learning

Chapter V.—Logical Design of Computers

Chapter VI.—Special Session on Computer Techniques of the Future

Chapter VII.—Miscellaneous Topics

In addition, there are published introductory or closing remarks by the Editor, S. de Picciotto; René Maheu, Director General of Unesco; Howard H. Aiken, President of the Conference; André Danjon, President of the Association Française de Calcul; Pierre Auger, Secretary General of the Conference; and Hughes Vinel, representative of the Department of State of France in the field of scientific research.

The list of authors and participants includes some of the best-known names in the field of high-speed calculators and their application. Thus, although the papers are not uniformly excellent, there is no doubt that the material contained in the volume constitutes the most comprehensive compilation of knowledge in certain areas of information processing available at the time of the meeting. The talks are especially lucid, and the discussions extremely helpful in clarifying many points. Also, the summaries, presented by the chairmen of the various sessions, are well done and easily readable. Of special interest are the frank and clear exchanges of technical information between the U. S. specialists in the field of MT (machine translation) and their counterparts in the USSR. D. Panov sets the tone for these meetings in his introductory statement, which is punctuated with humorous remarks (almost “wisecracking” in character) in the best American style. Thus he divides the work in the field of MT in four stages, (1) “Talking” about future accomplishments, (2) “Complacency,” when the algorithm has finally been constructed and we say how good it would be if only it worked, (3) “Enthusiasm,” when the algorithm works but still has many difficulties, and (4) “The final stage—more talking.”

Because of the large number of technical papers, and the wealth of material contained in the volume, it is not possible to give special attention to any number of selected papers in this review. The accession of this historic volume is a “must” for every modern technical library.

The sponsorship of this conference by the United Nations and the success which it enjoyed tend to emphasize the significance of this field of research in the modern world of great technological advances. There is no doubt that it will serve as the forerunner for many other such meetings to be held in the future.

H. P.