

EMU Computer Lounge opens to appease burgeoning demand

By Carol McCauley
Of the Emerald

Students will be striking computer keys instead of bowling pins beginning this week in the new EMU Computer Lounge.

Located in the former bowling alley and next to Footnotes, the EMU Computer Lounge is scheduled to open in response to the increasing demand for accessible microcomputer labs on campus, said Dexter Simmons, Lounge coordinator.

"There are a lot of computers on campus, but not many of them are available for student use to do term papers and theses and projects and that kind of thing," he said. University faculty and staff members have also expressed a need for more computers, he said.

The idea for the Computer Lounge arose from five years of increasing demand for microcomputer accessibility on campus, Simmons said.

The Computer Lounge is funded by the State Board of Higher Education, Simmons said. About 20 lab assistants were hired through work study or as volunteers to staff the center.

The center's main lab area holds 26 microcomputers, 14 of which are Macintosh Plus (Mac Plus), 10 are Kaypro, and two are Apple II e computers. Simmons said more than 42 software programs will be available with access to the University's main frame computer.

State-of-the-art equipment will be available in the Computer Lounge's desktop publishing room, Simmons said. Included will be three laser printers, a color graphics printer called a plotter and a color jet printer, which can produce 30 different colors for graphs. The plotter and color jet printers can be used to make transparencies or graphs for

presentations, Simmons said.

"The laser printers do typeset-quality printing as opposed to dot-matrix printing," Simmons said, making it possible to produce resumes for 25 cents a page.

Hourly rates in the center will be \$1.20, prorated for additional minutes, Simmons said. Term passes for students will be \$25 for 100 hours of use.

Unlike other computer centers on campus, the Computer Lounge will offer a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere, Simmons said. "We're putting in furniture that's very comfortable, top-of-the-line desks and chairs," Simmons said. "It's different because we won't have any academic classes given in the Lounge area, as opposed to other labs."

Kurt Harlan, one of five student managers in the center said, "I think it will definitely offer an alternative environment for students to work in."

He said he doesn't see the Computer Lounge in competition with other campus labs.

"I don't expect there to be

much overlap of services. If anything, I would expect that we would compliment them. Our availability and accessibility would be a compliment to whatever kind of structure or classes were going on," Harlan said.

However, for those timid at the computer keyboard, Student Manager Tom Landes said the Computer Lounge will hold free miniclasses for hands-on experience. "We've been frustrated ourselves using different things so we know what it's like," he said.

Lounge managers need to appear receptive to questions, Landes said. "It takes a high degree of patience. I think everybody has that," he said.

Student Manager Dave Martz said staff members were hired for their individual strengths using different software systems. "Hopefully, we can all learn from each other and fill the gaps," Martz said.

Simmons said a retail store, Computer and Software Brokers, will open in the Computer Lounge this August.

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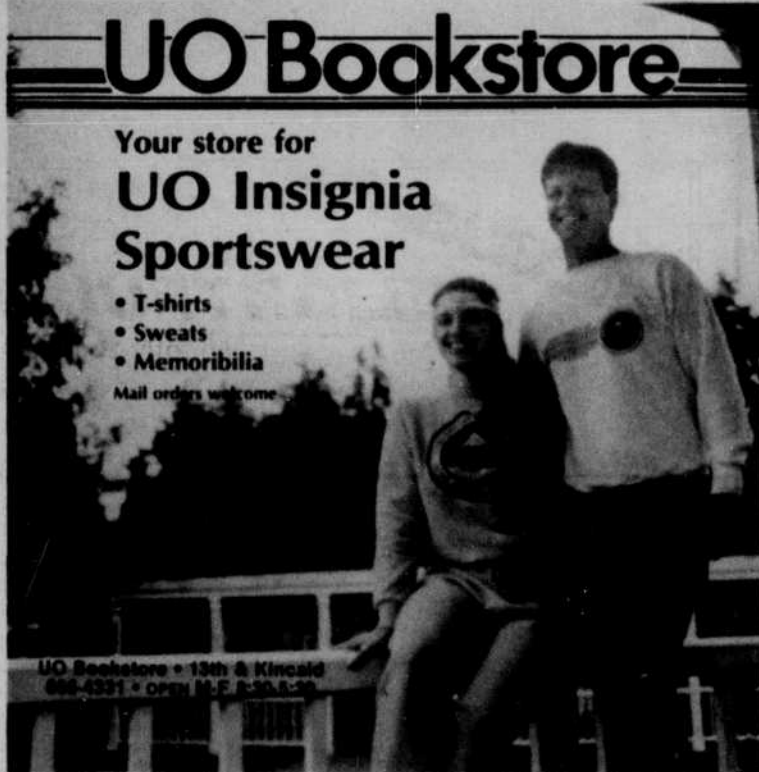
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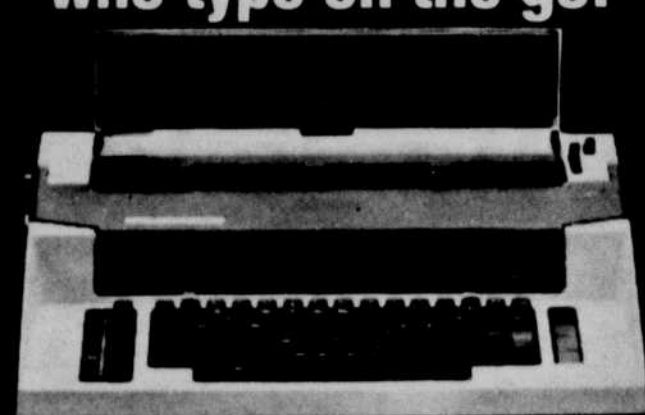
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