

The Numbers Game—II

# Automation Sometimes Turns Numbers Askew; People Revolt Against System

Editor's note—Americans live their lives "by the numbers," but sometimes the numbers spewed out by modern computers go astray or go too far. The following dispatch, the second of three, reports on how some Americans have revolted against the numbers game.

By BARNEY SEIBERT  
UPI Correspondent  
On the Pacific Coast 1962 was the year of the great telephone revolt.  
In May of last year Pacific

Telephone & Telegraph Co. announced it was converting all its San Francisco exchanges to all-digit dialing.  
American Telephone and Telegraph Co. said it was running out of numbers, what with 3.8 million new phones going in every year in the nation. With the named exchanges there were only 540 exchange combinations possible on telephone dials. With numbers, the phone company said, 576 combinations were possible.  
The formation of the Anti-

Digit Dialing League was sponsored by a group of such serious thinkers as semanticist Dr. S. I. Hayakawa, whose talents do not run to remembering seven digits. They decided "there ought to be a law."  
Psychologist Jack Block of the University of California at Berkeley cited the Wechsler adult intelligence test, which says that only the most efficient minds can remember numbers of more than six digit.  
'Gone Too Far'

Carl Mays, executive secretary of the Great Issues Foundation, said, "This passive acceptance of creeping mechanism has gone far enough."  
Hayakawa charged that "the telephone company is saving itself trouble by giving it to us."  
"We need a little poetry in our lives and the end of the named exchanges will take it away," the semanticist said.  
Five hundred miles to the south comedian Allan Sherman in Los Angeles gave the ADL moral support by writing a song called "Let's All Call Up AT&T and Protest to the President, March."

The ADL carried its fight to the California Public Utilities Commission, where it still is continuing.  
To back its stand, ADL witnesses testified that the phone companies could have multiplied the possible number combinations nearly ten-fold without reverting to all-digit dialing.  
A psychologist testified that children would be more apt to forget the all-digit emergency phone numbers under stress.

Says Switchover Painless  
AT&T officials in New York countered that the switch to all digit numbers came with very little difficulty there and most of the opposition arose before the system was actually installed. AT&T said research indicated all digit dialing "would present no serious memory problem — subsequent field trials confirmed this."  
But the transition wasn't quite that painless for some.  
For example, there was the fellow who telephoned United Press International in Chicago and asked, "UPI? Where? Good gosh, I was calling my insurance company in Pittsburgh."  
Such things, the scientists point out, are human — not machine — error.

There was the fellow in Chicago who mailed a birthday card to a suburb, using the new Zip code. It was delivered more than a week later after stopovers (according to postmarks) in two other cities.  
Warden Ross Randolph of Illinois' Menard State Penitentiary said that introduction of the post office Zip code has slowed delivery of newspapers to prisoners by three or four days.  
"We can't stand much more of that efficiency," he said.  
The University of Utah, linked along with six other schools to a computer in Los Angeles by means of a telephone line,

sent the same mathematical problem with slight variations 17 times. Seventeen times the university got an answer. On the 18th time, the computer, apparently tired of the whole thing, refused to accept the problem.  
Then there was the magazine publisher who bought an automatic machine to handle his subscription list. Something went wrong with the machine and a single new subscriber got a truck load of copies of a single issue.

Most bank errors resulting in the automated accounting systems come when a deposit is entered before the computer has been advised that a new account has been opened.  
In this situation the computer will "either credit the deposit to an account that isn't there or forget about it entirely," Miss Wyman of Minneapolis — Honeywell said.  
Next: Is man losing his identity to numbers?

## The Medical Roundup

by *Walter Alvarez*  
Emeritus Consultant in Medicine  
Mayo Clinic  
Emeritus Professor of Medicine  
Mayo Clinic  
(Register and Tribune Syndicate, 1963)

### Child Learns To Talk

Many mothers write, worried because their child of 2 or 3 or 4 years isn't talking, or saying much. Naturally, they are wondering if the child is mentally retarded, and if so, how far below normal is he? Because I am no expert in this field, to get an answer, I generally pull down from my library shelves a book by the famous Dr. Gesell, who spent his life finding out just when a child should say occasional words, and when he should put three or more words together to form a sentence.

In "Today's Health," for April, 1963, I found an article by Flora Rheta Schreiber who once wrote a book on children's speech. In this article she tells what a child, at the different ages, should be achieving in the way of speech. To illustrate: she tells about a 14-month-old girl who had such a superior intelligence that she could say, when her father commented on her enthusiastic behavior, "But Daddy, I'm happy."

Mrs. Schreiber says that sometimes a boy will come out with a good sentence which shows that for some time he has been learning to talk, but perhaps for reasons of shyness, has not said much. Perhaps, at the age of 2, he did not say much, but at 3 he was talking to the children about him, and he was making sentences. As Mrs. Schreiber says, the better the child can talk, the less likely he is to be a problem to those

about him. Also, she says: "Your child may be slower than normal for his age, and yet not be so slow that you have to worry about him."  
May Use Single Word  
During the first year of life, children seldom use sentences, and some children may not even use words. Often a small child will use a single word like "up," when he means he wants to be picked up and perhaps taken out of his playpen. Or, as all parents know, he may say, "milk," when he wants his bottle.

At the beginning of his second year, Johnny may be using nouns as sentences. If he says, "water," he wants water, or if he says, "ball," he means "Give me a ball." But soon he begins to combine nouns and verbs to form sentences. This tendency is likely to come between the ages of 13 and 27 months. On the average, one can expect him to be making his first sentence at the age of 17 months. But he may begin to make sentences somewhere around the age of 21 months.

After that he should be trying to make his sentences longer and more complex and more varied. By the age of 2 years, Johnny is likely to be asking all sorts of questions.  
By the 18th month, about a fourth of our children are using noun and verb phrases; some of them perhaps containing only two words. Between the 21st and 24th months there is often considerable progress in the ability to think in an abstract way. Johnny may then say, "My Mommy," which involves the idea of possession.

By his third birthday his sentences should be somewhat similar in length, grammar, and structure to the ones that his parents use. With each passing month, he uses more complex and compound sentences. Then he should begin to string several sentences together. He may still be omitting auxiliary verbs, prepositions, conjunctions, some pronouns, and articles.  
Meaning To Sayings  
During the fourth year, the

child should be talking well. He should be putting words together properly, and he should be giving color, emphasis, and specific meaning to what he says.  
During his fifth year, Johnny's average sentence is between four and five words. He also continues to master the grammar of a well-rounded sentence. He should keep on lengthening his sentences until he is 9½ years old.

The person who has epilepsy may never have had a typical seizure. Dr. Alvarez outlines some interesting facts about this often misunderstood disease in his 25-cent booklet called, "What Is Epilepsy?" You may get a copy of it by sending 25 cents and a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your request for it to Dr. Walter C. Alvarez, Dept. MMT, Box 957, Des Moines, Iowa, 50304.

### FUND FOR GOLDWATER SAVANNAH, Ga. (UPD) — Georgians have contributed more than \$30,000 to the national movement to draft Sen. Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.) for president, state chairman Joseph Tribble said Monday.

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