Economic and Social Council

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  STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES
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TOPONYMIC DATA FILES: AUTOMATED DATA-PROCESSING (ADP) SYSTEMS

A syllabus for ADP technology and toponymic application

Paper submitted by the United States of America**

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1.   Spatial science is an attempt to identify, analyse and classify the
environment and its components. An essential, but often overlooked aspect of
spatial science is what is referred to as toponymy or the study of geographic
names. The phenomenon of naming is man's attempt to provide spatial points of
reference in an otherwise culturally undefined geographical area. Until
recently, the collection and analysis of names has been accomplished through
labour-intensive manual processing, thereby prohibiting complete analysis.
With the advent of computer technology, the ability to store, process and
analyse vast quantities of names and associated information has created new
frontiers in toponymy. Advances in computer technology, especially with
regard to stand-alone hardware and related software, have greatly reduced the
cost and increased the arena of toponymic research and application.

2.   This course of instruction will address the application of automated data
processing to the science of toponymy with special emphasis on techniques of
data input and data retrieval. It is expected that the student will obtain an
overall understanding of ADP methodology as applied to toponymic research.

3.   Coursework will include special training in data collection, office
processing and data entry. Additional training will include techniques of
data retrieval utilizing a Data Base Management System (DBMS) in a stand-alone
computer environment. The course will include both classroom and workshop
training.

   I.   Introduction

        A.   Terminology
        B.   Standardization
        C.   Overview of hardware
        D.   Overview of software
        E.   Data Base Management Systems

  II.   Fieldwork (as applied to ADP)

        A.   Data-collection requirements
        B.   Data recording

 III.   Office processing

        A.   Data verification
        B.   Loading the data

  IV.   Data-retrieval requirements and techniques

        A.   Three principal operations
        B.   Standard or routine retrieval
        C.   Specialized retrieval
        D.   Formatting reports
        E.   Products

V. Maintenance procedures

    A. Field techniques
    B. Other written sources
    C. Office processing (backups)
    D. Updating the database
    E. User tracking
    F. Security

VI. Summary

    A. Questions
    B. Evaluations of workshop material
    C. Variations in toponymic application based upon cultural interpretation; discussion

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