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Prepared by Roger L. Payne, U.S.A.

Toponymic Data Bases
In a Micro-Computer Environment

Roger L. Payne
U.S. Geological Survey
523 National Center
Reston, Virginia 22092
U.S.A.

Recent advances in software and hardware development allow more sophisticated processing of data. There are now data base management systems (DBMS) available suited to geographic names processing using personal computers. These DBMSs are easy to use and offer a wide range of functions and options useful for toponymic analysis. While some limitation on field length exists, most user's needs are easily accommodated. Also, the size of the files that one may create are quite sufficient for most names data bases on a provincial, regional or even national scale. A full range of options are available for the three basic operations of data retrieval, sorting and report generation. The structure and capabilities of one such system were successfully demonstrated at the recent second course on Geographic Names held under the auspices of the Pan American Institute of Geography and History in Santiago, Chile.

The cost of acquiring a micro-computer with appropriate software is no longer prohibitive. Such a computer with software could be operational for less than $US 2,000. Once procedures and rules for standardization and processing are developed and adopted, the micro-computer is an excellent and viable cost efficient vehicle for toponymic standardization, analysis and problem solving.