

STATEMENT OF JOSEPH BECKER, DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION SCIENCES FOR THE INTERUNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS COUNCIL, INC.; ACCOMPANIED BY DR. JAMES MILLER, VICE PRESIDENT OF EDUCOM

Mr. BECKER. My name is Joseph Becker; I am director of information sciences for the Interuniversity Communications Council, Inc., usually known as Educom. First, I want to express our gratitude for the privilege of appearing here today to speak to you about title IX of H.R. 15067—the Networks for Knowledge Act of 1968. This is a matter which is closely related to Educom's own focus of attention.

Next I want to describe briefly the background and work of our council. It is a voluntary consortium of universities whose function, in its broadest concept, is to facilitate the extra-organizational communications of its members through multimedia, resource-sharing networks. It now has 88 members, with over 260 campuses distributed throughout the United States and Canada. Educom was conceived and incorporated in 1964 by the deans of the medical schools of six leading universities. They were deeply concerned with the problem of providing continuing education in the health sciences field in the face of the proliferation of information, but they immediately realized that their own problems were universal and that the solution lay in the improvement of intercommunication for the purpose of sharing resources.

As the volume of information and raw data increases both in published literature and from research, it becomes clearer that no one university can hope to store an adequate representation of it in its own traditional form of library or even in its modern data banks. Educom's role is to give its members options for sharing their resources, whether they be printed pages or the ideas of faculty members through every form of useful communications network—from the transfer of books by station wagon to the exchange of data in digital form by linked computers.

There are already many local, State, and regional groups responding to the challenge and seeking intercommunication to fill their specific disciplinary or functional needs, and you have heard about some of them this morning. Yet, the overall need for the external communications of the university to supply the many specific needs remain unplanned. It is in this area that Educom hopes to function.

We have already made a start on this program through our research activities; for example, one of our projects is a study of the entire range of biomedical communications, which will result in recommendations to the National Library of Medicine for a systems design to meet future needs. Another is a study of the exchange of agricultural information involving land-grant colleges and universities, their libraries, and the National Agricultural Library. A third approaches the problem of transmission of material from libraries to remote users in digital form, in comparison with its transfer in graphic form. We also have plans for working with universities to develop a beginning educational information network—a network for knowledge. The basis for this planning is contained in a book, *Edunet*, which resulted from a summer study session held at the University of Colorado, Boulder, Colo., in 1966. I have brought several copies of the book along, and