processing capability. One of these is whether word processing services should be provided to units from centralized locations or whether units should continue to have their own capability. Another involves the standardization of equipment. Through consolidation the Department acquired word processors different from those already in use in Headquarters. Also there is the need to have secure word processors for classified work. The result is that the Department has several different and largely incompatible models. There is also a question about the adequacy of the training of some of the secretaries who operate word processors in units and accordingly whether some of the Department's resources are being used to their full potential.

In keeping with the broader approach to Informatics advocated in the preamble to this chapter it will also be necessary in future for the policy for word processing to be fully integrated into the Department's Informatics policy.

4.2.10 FUTURE SYSTEMS

An important issue to which the Committee will have to give immediate attention is the management of the introduction of modern office technology on a wide scale into the Department. To date use of EDP systems at Headquarters and at Posts has focussed on repetitive applications where the cost benefits of automation are immediate. There is a growing body of literature arguing that the real payoffs from automation come from providing time-saving and work-organizing tools to those performing managerial and desk officer functions (knowledge workers) in an organization. It is they who earn the greatest bulk of an organization's salaries and who can make the largest difference in the effectiveness of its performance.

The tasks of Departmental desk officers include collecting, collating and manipulating information, and generating a wide variety of written material. An important part of the process is consultation with others. Ten years ago when the author of the Wardroper report discussed the work of the desk officer he said "Much is still expected, but the only additional aids given to to-day's Foreign Service Officer to survive in meeting the complexities of daily problems are photocopying machines and a modern communications network". All that has been made available to desk officers since that time has been access to word processors and to an improved records management system.

For each of the tasks desk officers face each day there exists technology which will enable them to perform them more efficiently leaving them more time for analytical and creative work. For example, the drafting and redrafting of correspondence, a task to which desk officers must devote a good part of their time would be considerably facilitated if they had immediate access to electronic drafting tools and if they could exchange with each other comments through electronic means. It would no longer be necessary to have secretaries type drafts and to have them circulated by messenger. Moreover the time necessary for face-to-face meetings would be reduced. The consultation process would also be much easier if short messages could be exchanged electronically, eliminating the frustrating game of "telephone tag". An important part of desk officers' work is responsive. The provision of new office technology would enable them to react more quickly than at present to an unexpected event by providing them a more efficient way to communicate developments to superiors along with comments and suggested courses of action.

For officers working with trade statistics and other economic data new technology provides an improved capability to manipulate data.

The new technology offers similar advantages for managers who would find that electronic tools could make it easier for them to communicate with those above and below them in the hierarchy. They would also benefit by being able to draft more quickly and to make comments more easily on subordinates' drafts.

Recognition of the advantages modern office technology could offer led the Department in 1982 to undertake studies that have resulted in decisions to undertake three pilot projects to study aspects of the impact of the