

To the Editor  
The Computer Journal

### Basic data input routines

Sir,

I was interested in the approach to the problem of free format data input which was presented by Mr. B. E. Cooper in his paper 'Basic subroutine for the input of numbers, words and special characters' (this *Journal*, Vol. 11, p. 157). For several years we have used almost identical methods to process data prepared in accordance with the I.Struct.E. standard data format (see reference). Basic data items in this scheme comprise the following:

ITEM	EXAMPLES
Integer	5, -2, 0
Real numbers and ratios	2.5, -0.6, 5/8
Names	ABC, A35, W1.2
Headers	**JOINT, *ALL
(names preceded by special characters)	
A ditto item	=

Any item can be followed by a left bracket and a repetition count which implies that the item is repeated so many times

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Sir,

Would you and readers of the *Journal* please note we are not each other!

Yours faithfully,

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### Notice: Dudley Hooper Memorial Lecture

The British Computer Society are sponsoring a Dudley Hooper Memorial Lecture which will be given by Lord Robens of Woldingham, Chairman of the National Coal Board, at the William Beveridge Hall, University of London, Malet Street, London WC1 on Tuesday 28 January 1969. Tickets of admission may be obtained free of charge from the Conference Department, British Computer Society, 23 Dorset Square, London NW1.

### The Computer Journal - Notice

This is the last issue of Volume 11. The February 1969 issue will be Volume 12 No. 1, and publication will then continue on the usual quarterly dates in May, August and November, the volume number being in step with the calendar year.

A small change of format will be introduced with the February 1969 issue when the opportunity is being taken to change to the international A4 page size, i.e. 21.0 × 29.7 centimetres or 8.27 × 11.69 inches.

down a column of an array. The use of the repetition facility considerably reduces the labour of data preparation for engineers' programs.

We have implemented our free-format input routine on the ICL Atlas, the IBM 360/50, and the CDC 3200 and 3300 computers. Mr. Cooper's use of the Assembly-state/character-group table has impressed us as an efficient and flexible technique; our routine is somewhat more piecemeal at present but is being improved and extended to include a text item enclosed in apostrophes. Further extensions will be necessary for the implementation of the general engineering system GENESYS proposed by a committee set up by the Ministry of Public Building and Works.

Yours faithfully,

ERIC W. SOLOMON.

Engineering Computations,  
72 Newman St.,  
London, W1.  
12 August 1968.

### Reference

Standardization of Input Information for Computer Programs in Structural Engineering, *The Institution of Structural Engineers*.