Minnesota’s Computer Industry: History, Legacies, Traces

Thomas J. Misa
Charles Babbage Institute
University of Minnesota
www.cbi.umn.edu
facebook.com/BabbageInstitute
tinyurl.com/sia-misa
• Minnesota -- before 1940
  - ‘late’ 32th state 1858
  - agro-industry: Pillsbury, General Mills, Toro, Hormel*

• Minnesota -- 1950-80
  - 2% US population
  - 3% US mfg workforce [1970s]
  - 17% US computer mfg wkforce
• computer industry in MN by 1960: (ERA-RR) Univac, Control Data, Honeywell, IBM-Rochester

› computing (hardware + software)

› ... networks, engineers’ stock, restaurants, venture capital

› economic impact: payroll, taxes, suburban development
Control Data at Minnesota state fair [1969]
Minnesota computing employment (1980-2011)

US computer industry (NAICS: 334)
1990–2010: 1.9–1.1 M
A. Univac West 7th (1956)
2750 Shepard Road, Saint Paul

B. ERA plant #1 (1946) Midway
1902 W Minnehaha Ave, Saint Paul

C. Control Data Northside (1967)
277 12th Avenue N, Minneapolis

D. Honeywell (1912--) S. Minneapolis
2701 4th Avenue S, Minneapolis

E. CDC–Seagate (1961)
7801 Computer Ave, Bloomington

F. CDC–Health Partners (1970s)
8170 – 33rd Avenue S, Bloomington

Addresses in Google maps
Univac West 7th/Shepard Rd (1956) St. Paul

goo.gl/maps/ir675
Engineering Research Associates: Plant #1 (c.1955)
Control Data Northside plant (1967)
Honeywell south Minneapolis (here: 1940s)
DIGITAL STATE

THE STORY OF MINNESOTA'S COMPUTING INDUSTRY

THOMAS J. MISA