

Acton High School selected for computerized library project

By LISA BOONSTOPPEL-POT
The Herald

Students at Acton High School are finding project research more rapid and expedient now that the school has computerized cataloguing as part of a pilot project on library automation established by the Halton Board of Education.

Acton High School was chosen as one of several secondary school's to pilot the new project as part of the board's long-range computer plan and Acton's

librarian Ken Ellis said the results were immediate since three Public Access Cataloguing (PAC) computers were installed two weeks ago.

"We're finding there are more students using the library," he said. "Initially we also found there were fewer questions being directed towards us and the students get frustrated less easily."

He admits the novelty of using a computer to find what books are available in the school library

has increased the attraction of the researching but can't deny the features the computers offer students over the old-fashioned system of card cataloguing.

"It enables them to do complex linkages that couldn't be done with a card catalogue," said Mr. Ellis. He explained that if a student was doing a project on zebra mussels, but only wanted information on their effect on the Great Lakes, the student only has to give the computer those three words to get that exact informa-

tion. If however, a student wanted all the information available about mussels they would only have to type that word to get the titles of all material discussing mussels available in the library no matter how insignificant the material was.

The computer system used by the school is Dynix, the same system in place in the Halton Hills public library's. Mr. Ellis, who was a member of the committee researching which computer system was most suitable, said this system gives the school an opportunity to connect their computers with the public libraries' so students could access more information if such a database sharing system were ever introduced.

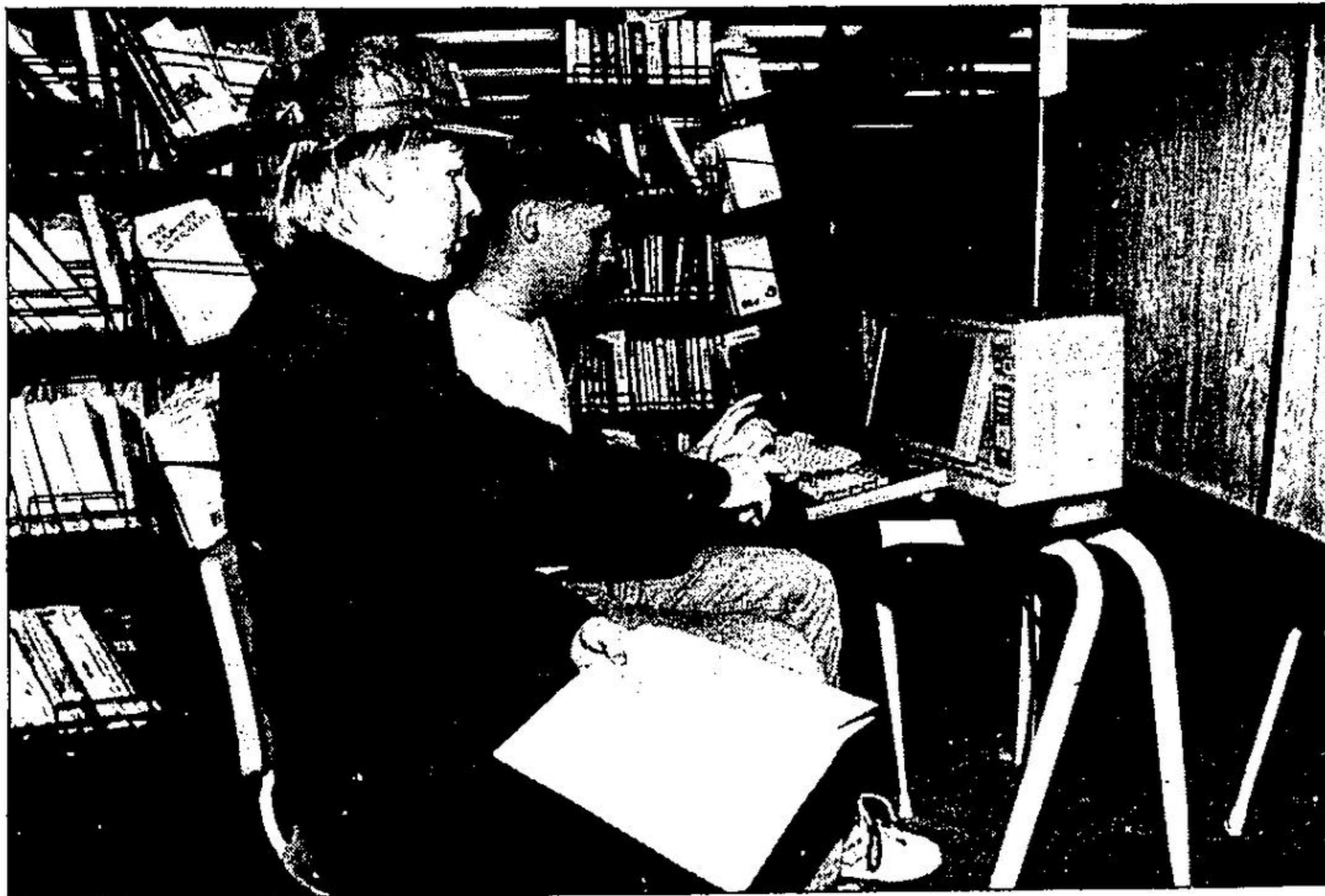
The school is also making use of a computer that utilizes magazine information recorded on compact discs. This technologically advanced information-finding machine was introduced by the school itself and is not part of the Halton Board of Education's computer plan.

The school is now in the process of linking all the library books into a circulation module so that librarians will be able to lend out books and record the information on computer, the way the public library system does.

Linking all the library's books into the computer will keep the librarians busy in the upcoming months said Mr. Ellis.

Soon, students will each be given link cards containing a code so the computer can record what books each student has taken out.

Eventually, all of Halton's secondary school libraries will likely be equipped with computer technology as part of the Board's computer plan, said Mr. Ellis.



School projects are now easier to research for Acton High School students who have been making use of the new electrical periodical index system available through computers. Here, Brian Deakin

(wearing cap) and James Kynock (behind) make use of a magazine data system that uses compact discs to store periodical information. (Herald photo by Lisa Boonstoppel-Pot)

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