

I am Burton Grad and here are my notes from the dinner meeting held on 12/20/04 at Bogey's Restaurant at 323 Main Street in Westport, CT with the following former employees of National CSS attending: Bob Bernard, Alan Brigish, Harold Feinleib, Dick Glazer, Gary Holland, Dick Orenstein, Nick Pizarro and Bob Schraer. Luanne Johnson hosted the dinner and participated in the meeting:

The focus of NCSS was on remote, online program debugging with a COBOL Debug program and a Fortran Debug program. They built Nomad starting in 1973 (?) as a replacement for Ramis (which they were licensing from Mathematica) because of a licensing cost dispute or maybe because they wanted to control their own very important product.

They did not license the programs, but charged for their use on the NCSS timesharing system. Later they did license VP/CSS to a few customers and also licensed them to use Nomad and possibly some other programs.

Major customers included NY Telephone, Sikorski and Motorola (in Phoenix).

They reference their 1968 ad in Time Magazine as being instrumental in getting customer attention.

Bob Bernard started the company (CSS--I have forgotten what the letters stood for) in 1965. He was able to obtain \$600,000 in venture funding in 1967 or 1968. They were primarily doing consulting work in the first 2 years. NCSS was able to raise additional venture money twice more before going public in January 1970.

NCSS (or CSS--when did they change the name and why?) sued Computer Associates over their copying NCSS's version of ISAM and their Cobol Debugger. The suit was settled when Orenstein felt that NCSS was not losing any business to CA and found out that Charles Wang's brother was with a big law firm. NCSS was spending \$8,000 a month on the suit.

In 1970 they had the "Night of the Long Knives" when they reduced the company from 160 employees to around 65. They felt that this was the key to making the company financially successful (and permitting it to survive).

Weissman was selected as new president in 1975 and managed the company until it was sold to D&B. Goldstein was brought in as chairman from Tymshare and stayed through the sale to D&B. At the meeting, people said that they felt that Weissman was the only viable candidate to succeed Orenstein, but that David Fehr also really wanted the job. It was not clear why Orenstein was replaced in 1975.

Introducing Ramis in 1970 was a major factor in building usage of the system.

The progression from CP40 to CP67 at IBM's Cambridge Science Center (Norm Rasmussen was the head of the Center) was pivotal to IBM and to NCSS. Bayles was one of the key people in Cambridge as were Creasy and Comeau who stayed with IBM. Feinleib also worked on the conversion to CP67 while with Lincoln Labs. The CMS development was also in Cambridge, and I forgot to record the name of the person who headed that activity. It's not clear where NCSS got their CMS expertise.

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