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THE NEED FOR TRAINED TECHNICIANS

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The author and his associates are in direct contact with hundreds of users of electroacoustic instrumentation in government, education, and industrial establishments in the United Kingdom, and can thus see the problems connected with instrumentation and its use among the workers in the field of noise and vibration.

In government departments geared to research and development and other work in the fields of noise and vibration, section or group establishment takes care of the numbers of technical personnel. This number covers "technicians", but these are not technicians who have received formal training for this work.

In the industry, one frequently finds university graduates in senior engineering appointments, spending a large proportion of their time setting up instruments and taking readings. Also, at the other end of the scale, one can see undertrained technical

assistants struggling with the operation of simple measuring devices and occasionally producing results full of fundamental errors.

Environmental test laboratories also appear to suffer from lack of trained technicians as do some consulting firms and educational institutions. The author believes that there is a serious need for technicians qualified for work in the field of acoustics and vibration and suggests that measurements are the primary function of a technician. He suggests that a technician should be well versed in measurement techniques and in the use of modern instrumentation.

Other spheres of technical activity, e.g. the electronics industry, certainly seem to suffer from the shortage of trained technicians, - a fact known to the author from his experience of recruiting suitably trained and experienced staff for his service and calibration laboratory.

A suggested syllabus for the training of technicians in the field of noise and vibration should thoroughly cover the basics of acoustics and vibration, good knowledge of terminology used in these fields, fundamentals of measurement and analysis, use of modern instruments and presentation of measurement results.

It is not implied that there are no experienced and knowledgeable technicians working in the field, - only that they did not receive formal training and had to learn the hard way.