SUMMARY

The problem of tedious record keeping and slow retrieval is well known in many property maintenance organisations relying on manual recording systems. In years to come, as the new technology becomes available, the use of management information systems to organise and carry out property maintenance work will be common for property maintenance organisations.

With property maintenance management information systems, many maintenance tasks from work initiation to job completion can be carried out much more easily by the help of computers. The property maintenance management information systems will also be able to collect, record and analyse maintenance data to provide information on the state of health of asset, planned preventive maintenance programme required and most importantly, to assess the effectiveness of current maintenance strategy on the assets by using feedback information.

Two separate surveys, one directed at property maintenance organisations and the other at software suppliers, were conducted by the author to establish the state of computer applications and evaluate the availability of software systems for property maintenance management. First survey revealed that the level of computer usage for property maintenance management was rather low. This was attributed mainly to factors such as ignorance of available software systems for property maintenance, lack of funds and generally insufficient number of property maintenance softwares being marketed locally. Comparatively, public sector maintenance organisations with a large stock of buildings to care reported to have higher use of computers for property maintenance management than counterparts in private sector.
The second survey found that software development for property maintenance management seemed full of rich potential and possibilities. Of all the software systems surveyed, only three were tailored for property maintenance management. These were the CHIME, WIMS and MAXIMO. Evaluated against a set of criteria desired for a property maintenance management information system, none came out to be a perfect match. The proportion of mis-match was 20% for MAXIMO and 40% for CHIME and WIMS.

To promote the importance and the use of computers for property maintenance management, a national body for property maintenance managers and maintenance personnel ought to be formed. Besides these, the property maintenance industry should also collaborate with the academic institution such as the National University of Singapore (NUS) to develop an Information Technology (IT) framework for the property maintenance sector in Singapore.

The future trends in property maintenance will envisage more suitable software systems available. Future computer applications in property maintenance will likely be on total building management systems, integrated facilities management systems and expert systems to condition survey.