A PATCH PANEL FOR OPERANT PROGRAMMING COMPONENTS¹

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In our laboratory, optimum use of operant conditioning programming apparatus has been constrained by the labor involved in changing from one program to another. A complex program may take several hours to set up and debug. If it is desired to run two experiments concurrently, using different portions of the day, a partial solution can be achieved by wiring up most of the two programs separately and selecting between them by switches or by moving a few snap leads. A major disadvantage to this solution is that components such as timers, are quickly exhausted when two or more programs must be wired simultaneously. Altering one program without changing the others is also made difficult by the multiple wiring.

A relatively inexpensive and highly efficient solution to this problem is the use of plug board panels. The picture illustrates the resulting logical and aesthetic advantages. We are now able to interchange between programs in a matter of a few seconds by slipping out one plug board and putting in another. New programs may be wired up at the desk and debugged in odd minutes without disrupting ongoing activities. Frequently used programs may be stored away when one experiment is completed and need not be rewired and debugged if subsequent use is desired.

Every stud on every component of the programming equipment is brought to a contact on the plug board. In addition, busses are provided for "stacking". Topological conformity to the stud arrangements on the com-

ponents is preserved as far as possible. The 440 contacts available provide adequately for a full rack of equipment. In the apparatus shown, there are over 50 idle contacts on each assembly with the components shown, in spite of a liberal provision of grounds and busses.

The 440 contact assembly shown here was purchased from the Mac Panel Company, P.O. Box 5027, High Point, North Carolina for a total cost of about \$250 including half a dozen plug boards and the necessary wires. Extra plug boards are available at \$21.50 each. The utility of our rack of equipment has at least doubled with this small additional cost.

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