Public Data and Personal Computers
The Emergence of a Personal Computing Culture in the Swiss Federal Administration, ca. 1980

Mirjam Mayer & Ricky Wichum, History of Technology, ETH Zurich

6th International Conference on the History and Philosophy of Computing, Zurich, October 28, 2021
"[T]he user can change the data, combine them and make calculations with them, modify the labels or restructure the whole table before saving the result under the chosen name in the temporary database."

(Bundesamt für Statistik, Was ist STATINF?, Bern 1986, S. 13)
I Statistical Information System (1974-1979)
I Statistical Information System (1974-1979)

Graphik 8 / Schematische Darstellung der Produktionsbereiche

Abgrenzung gegenüber der Umwelt
Abgrenzung der Produktionsbereiche

Eidgenössisches Statistisches Amt,
Statistisches Informationssystem, Bern,
August 1977, S. 36 (BAR E3321#1998)
Communication as a problem

Reduction of writing (Schriflichkeit) as rationalization measure

Imminent incoherancy of state writing

Unreliable documentation threatens state reliability and accountability

(Bundesamt für Organisation: Richtlinien für Schriftverkehr. Bern 1983.)
“The current keeper of the minutes fetches the protocol scheme from the file of the last minute taker. The two can be geographically far apart and the last keeper of the minutes may not have stored the scheme in the same mass storage where the current logger wants to store it. Thus, an efficient and distributed file system must be available. Once the current log keeper has the scheme on his screen, he will want to edit it. This requires good word processing software. After that, the finished minutes may need to be submitted to the chair. Since the minute taker sends the minutes via electronic mail, it does not matter if the chairperson is present in person or not. Once the minutes are approved, they can be sent to all recipients in the same way. They can print it out if they wish or file it directly in an electronic folder. The recipients immediately inform the minute taker of any discrepancies in response to his "mail". The date of the next meeting can also be entered in the electronic agenda. This described system is not future, but realistic present.”

(Schweizerisches Bundesgericht Lausanne und Luzern, Dienst für Automation: Konzept der Textverarbeitung an den Bundesgerichten, 1986, translation and emphasis by mm.)
Thank you for your attention!