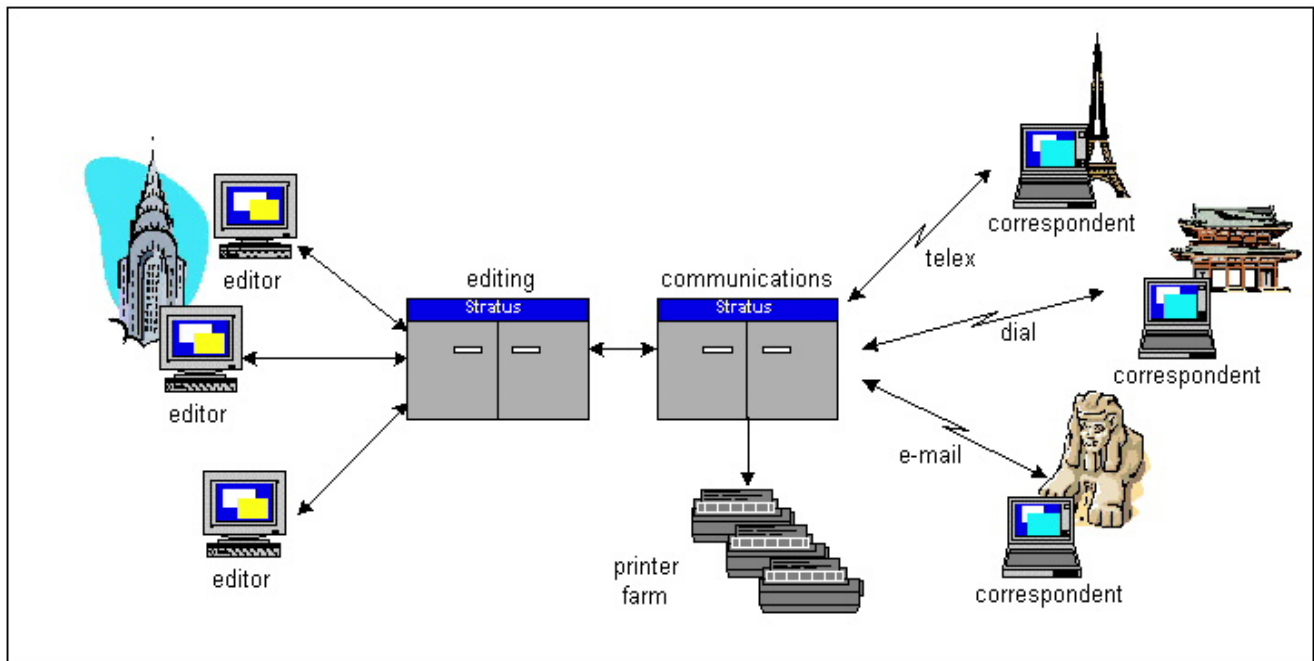# Time Magazine News Desk Service

Time Magazine maintains a worldwide network of correspondents. These correspondents interact with a central editorial group in New York City. The magazine's aging communications system was beginning to exhibit frequent failures, which could prove disastrous as issue time approached. Therefore, it was imperative for the magazine to develop a new system, one that would be fault tolerant, would possess 100% availability, and would interconnect the correspondent/editorial network.

Developed for the magazine by The Sombers Group, the news desk message switch and editorial system was Stratus-based and utilized a network of text-editing PCs. The system represented important advances for the magazine in terms of computer communications, text editing, and database management. It provided the highly efficient hub required by the editorial network. The magazine's editors, correspondents, and writers, who worked out of 33 bureaus worldwide, were able to communicate with each other and to have access to the system's full editing capabilities and editorial functions. Stories were made available to the news desk staff for review prior to distribution to section editors and writers. Edited stories then could be returned to the originating correspondents for additional input.

The system routed queries, responses, and administrative messages between the magazine's New York staff and its correspondents. Its primary functions were to serve as a communications hub, a store and forward message switch, a text editing system, and a database management system. It interfaced with a printer farm, four editorial typesetting systems, and three production systems.

To implement the message switch and editorial system, The Sombers Group installed multiple Stratus computers.

One handled communications and the printer farm, and the other managed the data base and provided all editing functions. Communications had to support whatever was available in the far reaches of the globe, from telex and dialed connections to packet switches and e-mail.

To satisfy database needs, which were characterized by rapid access to files in a relational data structure via several indices, Sombers used Status' indexed file structure to implement a tailored, high-performance data base. In addition, Sombers developed a multitasking, PC-based text-editing package that integrated functions of the Stratus computers with those of the news desk staff's PCs. The result was an exceptionally fast response time for search, edit, and storage requests.