



Steven Landon &lt;slandon110@gmail.com&gt;

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**Im a former remcen user from 1996-2000**

13 messages

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**Steve** <slandon110@gmail.com>  
To: jrouman@giresd.net

Sun, Jul 26, 2020 at 1:35 AM

Hi Im a former remcen/edcen user.

I used remcen/edzone from 1996-2000 when I graduated from Farwell High School. Mignon Laverty was our remcen rep back then and the Farwell High School Librarian.

These days im a retrocomputer collector and retro telecom hobbyist. and legacy data archivist recovering data from obsolete computers and obsolete media for people. I live in Farwell.

Im currently working on an exhibit to display at Vintage Computer Festival next year and hopefully place it in the InfoAge Science Center and Computer History museum in Wall New Jersey.

What i'm looking for is any relevant documentation to how it looked and worked back then. What hardware and what operating systems were used. Ive pulled up alot of stuff archived on [archive.org](https://archive.org), and even recovered my first webpage. I've even been able to secure ownership of the old MichNet access number for Clare.

My goal is to recreate the system as it worked when I used it from 1996 to preserve it for future generations.

I've got enough telco gear here to provide 250 lines, not that id ever need it but I can do it.  
My retrocomputing collection is rather large with my oldest unix system being a NeXT Mono Slab.

I used to dial up to the MichNet access number and then use telnet to connect to [remcen.ehhs.cmich.edu](https://remcen.ehhs.cmich.edu) and login from there. And used the internet in the early days. growing up id dial in from a Black and white Macintosh SE which i still have to this day.

I recall you being the system administrator back then.

This system was very near and dear to me, It was my first real exposure to the internet when the internet was in its infancy. I spent many hours in the old IRC chat on it, and made some wonderful friends all those years ago, and I still am friends with a few old remcen users. The access to this system back then is what made become an IT guy and data archivist.

Thank you for your time. I can be reached at this email or at 989-400-9874

Steven Landon

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**Jay Rouman** <jsr@dex.edzone.net>  
Reply-To: jsr@dex.edzone.net  
To: Steve <slandon110@gmail.com>  
Cc: Matt McMahon <mmcmahon@giresd.net>

Sun, Jul 26, 2020 at 8:58 AM

> Hi Im a former remcen/edcen user.

It's great to hear from you, Steve. Yes, I was the system administrator of Edcen and Remcen back in the day. I still work for the Gratiot/Isabella RESD doing network engineering.

I can give you a little summary of the Remcen setup and would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

The system was located on the third floor of the Old Library building, now renamed Ronan Hall. Ronan used to be a dorm on the corner of

Bellows and Franklin, but that's another story.

The Old Library building was the first building on campus to get a feed from Merit via fiber. They installed the fiber specifically for the Edcen project, which was created with a grant from Ameritech, but that's also another story.

Remcen was started as a spinoff from the Edcen system. Both systems were run on Sun Sparc systems. Edcen was a Sparc 10 and Remcen was a Sparc 20. These were "pizza box" machines. They ran SunOS (not Solaris) which was derived from BSD UNIX. Later, Sun got rid of SunOS in favor of Solaris, which I think was a mistake, but again another story.

The Sparc 20 had a 10 Meg ethernet interface.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SPARCstation\\_20](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SPARCstation_20)

We also had a few dialin modems which served both systems, although they were purchased for Edcen. There were maybe eight at one time, connected to an Annex Terminal server. At some point, the RESD in Ithaca got a fiber connection and it was decided to move Remcen there. The Sparc 20 was decommissioned and replaced by a rack mounted Linux box. I don't remember the manufacturer. It ran Slackware Linux, as do our current Linux boxes. This machine was eventually replaced by a rack mounted Dell, also running Slackware. By this time, the RESD had gotten into the business of providing Internet to school districts and Remcen was becoming less important. But it was certainly an interesting time.

The Remcen name wasn't used much after that. The operation at the RESD was (and is) called MMnet, and includes a fiber network connecting the districts in the area. But this is veering off into another story.

Sadly, all of the original equipment has been recycled. Edcen was taken over (rather abruptly) by the CMU IT department. The equipment was hauled away and I don't know what happened to it. I suspect it all landed at the Property Disposition auction. The Sparc 20 came to Ithaca but was never used there and was eventually recycled. Neither Sparc's ever had a hardware problem (except for Edcen's external drive which was not made by Sun). Sun really knew how to make hardware back then. The original boot drive in Edcen ran continuously for at least 12 years with never a glitch. I think I still have the Remcen DAT tape drive, but that would be the only part of Remcen still in existence.

I found four pictures of the room in Ronan, which I will send you. I don't know when they were taken but Remcen isn't there so it would have been after the move to Ithaca. You can see what was left of the dialin modem bank and the Annex Terminal Server. The black machine on the left was Edcen's web server. The PC's under the table were utility machines. I don't think the machines on the table next to the filing cabinet were in service. I think we may just have collected them to make it look like we needed the space. The Education Department was always threatening to take our room away. Remcen would have been on that table.

I'll cc Matt McMahon, the GIRESD Tech Director, who may have more to add. He has been threatening to put up a web page with the history of Remcen and MMnet.

Thanks for getting in contact and don't hesitate to ask any questions I might be able to answer.

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Jay Rouman ([jsr@dex.edzone.net](mailto:jsr@dex.edzone.net) [jrouman@giresd.net](mailto:jrouman@giresd.net))  
Gratiot/Isabella RESD, Ithaca, MI  
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**Jay Rouman** <jsr@dex.edzone.net>  
 Reply-To: jsr@dex.edzone.net  
 To: Steve <slandon110@gmail.com>

Sun, Jul 26, 2020 at 9:14 AM

> Hi I'm a former remcen/edcen user.

On a related note, my first UNIX machine was a Tandy 16 that I bought at a flea market in Ann Arbor. It ran Microsoft Xenix (amazing to think that Microsoft had a UNIX/Xenix before Windows). I must have given that machine away. It was replaced by a Tandy 6000, which had a whopping 1 MB of memory. It was designed as the server for an office, with serial lines going to terminals at worker's desks.

The machine got moved to a storage room at Mt. Pleasant High School, where I used to teach. I would love to find it a home before they recycle it. Do you want it?

It was working "when it was taken out of service." It isn't Year 2000 compatible and I don't think there is a way to fix this without having source to the firmware. Still, it is a piece of history and I hate to see it get trashed but I just don't have room at home. I used to be able to pick it up, but not any more. The machine is dog slow by today's standards.

However, the first piece of Internet E-Mail to arrive in Mt. Pleasant came to that system.

--Jay

**McMahon, Matt** <mmcmahon@giresd.net>  
 To: Jay Rouman <jsr@dex.edzone.net>  
 Cc: Steve <slandon110@gmail.com>

Sun, Jul 26, 2020 at 2:22 PM

I'll add in where I can:

> Remcen was started as a spinoff from the Edcen system. Both systems  
 > were run on Sun Sparc systems. Edcen was a Sparc 10 and Remcen was a

REMCen's name came about because it was a joint effort between the REMC and Central Michigan University. I think we came up with it at a meeting with Deb Dunbar (the REMC Director), myself, Jay and Dr. Hal Crawley who was the CMU person that got the Edcen project started (I think - Jay?). The REMC is the "Regional Education Media Center" and their primary purpose was to serve K12 16mm films and other media. If you ever watched a Video tape or film in school, it came from the REMC. REMC5 serves Clare-Gladwin RESD schools and Gratiot-Isabella Schools. They received money from a court settlement between the State of Michigan and Ameritech. Seems Ameritech was over-charging customers and settled the case by giving money to schools. That money went to the REMCs in the state. Many of them used the money expand dialin access. K12 had been riding the tails of Edcen. Back then, the Universities all provided dialin access to their staff (and students? dunno - Jay?) by working with Merit. I'm guessing you know their history, but if not, they have a site with a lot of really great info: <https://www.merit.edu/about/history/#1517512349021-c04ddbd3-bef1> Anyhow, they way it worked, is that the end-user would dialin to any Merit modem anywhere in Michigan and sign-in using their university email and password. Edcen provided K12 teachers with just such an address - for free. This didn't scale well and wasn't open to students. That's about the time that the REMCs got the Ameritech money and everyone in the state started creating their own versions of Edcen. We were fortunate since, well, Jay and Edcen were right in our backyard and Jay just happened to be a teacher in our region and a pretty nice guy :-)

> The Sparc 20 was decommissioned and replaced by a rack mounted Linux  
 > box. I don't remember the manufacturer. It ran Slackware Linux, as do our  
 > current Linux boxes. This machine was eventually replaced by a rack  
 > mounted Dell, also running Slackware. By this time, the RESD had gotten  
 > into the business of providing Internet to school districts and Remcen was  
 > becoming less important. But it was certainly an interesting time.

So state-wide, we now had tens of thousands of kids and teachers dialing in to the Merit modem banks. We were sending a LOT of time trying to meet the demand. Most regions just stopped when the Ameritech money ran out. In

Gratiot-Isabella, we happened to be starting a fiber-optic project to connect all of the schools in the region. That's the MMNet project and as Jay says, another story. We moved the original REMCen down to Ithaca and added our own modem bank - a Nortel CVX-1800 - and started charging for dialin access under the name EdZone. We still use the [edzone.net](http://edzone.net) domain to this day, even though we don't provide any real services directly to teachers or students. Our department is now focused on providing network engineering services to the schools in the region and teachers and students get their email and services from Google.

I'm sure you have found these links, but this is our 2/8/1997 website: <https://web.archive.org/web/19970208003401/http://remcen.ehhs.cmich.edu/>  
And this is the earliest EdZone site I could find, about 3 years later - 2/29/2000: <https://web.archive.org/web/20000229111958/http://www.edzone.net:80/>

- Matt

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**Steve** <slandon110@gmail.com>  
To: jsr@dex.edzone.net

Sun, Jul 26, 2020 at 7:38 PM

I would gladly give that system a home, I Thank you so much.

Thank you guys both for all the information, pictures and help. I will definitely keep you guys posted as I progress through the build. Finding a Sparcstation 20 should be pretty easy, thanks to the SUN rescue email list. I've got a sparcstation 5 here running solaris.

If you guys do a history of RemCen Page, i'd be glad to help out in any way I can.

Steve.

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**Jay Rouman** <jsr@dex.edzone.net>  
Reply-To: jsr@dex.edzone.net  
To: Steve <slandon110@gmail.com>

Sun, Jul 26, 2020 at 9:15 PM

> I would gladly give that system a home, I Thank you so much.

I will check to see when you can pick it up. Is one time/day better than another? It should fit in a normal size trunk. An SUV would be plenty big.

--Jay

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**Steve** <slandon110@gmail.com>  
To: jsr@dex.edzone.net

Mon, Jul 27, 2020 at 9:39 AM

I have an F150 Supercrew. so i got lots of room.

You just tell when and where and I'll be there.

Thank you so much for allowing me to have this piece of history.

Steve

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**Jay Rouman** <jsr@dex.edzone.net>  
Reply-To: jsr@dex.edzone.net  
To: Steve <slandon110@gmail.com>

Mon, Jul 27, 2020 at 7:07 PM

> I have an F150 Supercrew. so i got lots of room.  
> You just tell when and where and I'll be there.

I will see about getting it. I have to negotiate the Covid protocol.  
It shouldn't be long.

> Thank you so much for allowing me to have this piece of history.

I'm happy for it to find a home. It's certainly one of those, "If only..." machines.

--Jay

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**Jay Rouman** <jsr@dex.edzone.net>  
Reply-To: jsr@dex.edzone.net  
To: Steve <slandon110@gmail.com>

Tue, Jul 28, 2020 at 5:49 PM

> I have an F150 Supercrew. so i got lots of room.

I have the machine in the trunk of my car. You can pick it up most any time. Just give me a bit of warning. The root password is on a sticky note so it shouldn't be a struggle to get into it, assuming that it works. It has not been powered up for several years so I can't make any promises, but the price is right. I have the Service Manual for the 16B, which is an older model but very similar to the 6000. The disk controllers were very finicky so hopefully they still work. At the very least, it will make a nice conversation piece but I suspect it will work.

> Thank you so much for allowing me to have this piece of history.

No problem. I am just glad I could find it a good home. Please wear a mask when you come.

--Jay

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**Jay Rouman** <jsr@dex.edzone.net>  
Reply-To: jsr@dex.edzone.net  
To: Steve <slandon110@gmail.com>

Tue, Jul 28, 2020 at 5:52 PM

> You just tell when and where and I'll be there.

Duhh... It might be a good idea to tell you where I live.

913 North Drive  
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858-2848  
Cell: 989-600-7287

Look for a small house with a carport and big windows in front. Google has no trouble finding it.

--Jay

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**Steve** <slandon110@gmail.com>  
To: jsr@dex.edzone.net

Tue, Jul 28, 2020 at 10:53 PM

If you are free tomorrow afternoon I can come down, Ill give you a call once im headed that way

Steve

[Quoted text hidden]

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**Jay Rouman** <jsr@dex.edzone.net>  
Reply-To: jsr@dex.edzone.net

Wed, Jul 29, 2020 at 7:04 AM

To: Steve <slandon110@gmail.com>

> If you are free tomorrow afternoon I can come down, Ill give you a call  
> once im headed that way

Sounds good. By "tomorrow" I will assume Wednesday. --Jay

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**Steven Landon** <slandon110@gmail.com>

Fri, Feb 24, 2023 at 7:17 PM

Draft To: jsr@dex.edzone.net, mmcmahon@giresd.net

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