

APRIL 1995



A Newsletter from the Office of Information Resources Management - M/IRM

Welcome to **IRM** at Work!

by Shelley Anderson

Welcome to the premier issue of *IRM at Work*, the new newsletter from the Office of Information Resources Management. This April issue represents our first monthly publication aimed at keeping USAID employees informed of information management issues. This Newsletter replaces earlier newsletters issued in the past by IRM—including the *Information Exchange* and *IRM*. *IRM at Work* is one of several new channels of communication that IRM plans to implement over the next six months as part of our ongoing commitment to providing the highest level of customer service at USAID.

IRM at Work will provide news articles about computer technology that directly affect you, the end user. The contents of each newsletter are written with the explicit goal of educating each reader. The information on the availability, access methods and usage of technology tools will increase both your productivity and effectiveness.

The use of Information Technology has become an essential part of nearly every job. It is part of our Agency's work environment and has become critical to getting daily tasks as well as major projects accomplished. Furthermore, with the planned rollout of a new generation of information systems, Information Technology will have an even greater influence on our work environments than it does today. We have devoted the majority of this first edition of *IRM at Work* to the Agency's Information Systems Plan (ISP).

The ISP will ultimately affect all of us and how we carry out our respective responsibilities.

IRM is using *IRM at Work* as a means of communication and would like you to do the same. Letters to the editor, questions about USAID's office technology, comments about articles and article suggestions are welcome. Send us your ideas about what you would like to see covered. Readers, particularly those in missions, are encouraged to write articles. We would like to devote a regular column to articles contributed by our readers. Writer guidelines are available to assist you in preparing submissions (contact Shelley Anderson@irm.cis@aidw).

Please read and enjoy. Welcome to *IRM at Work!* ☺

Shelley Anderson provides systems analysis and desktop publishing support to the Consulting and Information Services (CIS) Division of IRM.

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The Information Systems Plan, as it was originally conceived by IRM back in 1992, was a plan to use state of the art business analytical tools to develop new systems for carrying out USAID's business.

The General Services Administration (GSA) was so impressed with the ISP that it honored USAID's Office of IRM with a 1994 "Best Practices" Award

*Front Lines
February 1995*

New Management Systems

by Chuck Patalive

New Management Systems? ISP? What are these terms USAID people are throwing around? The ISP, or Information Systems Plan as it was originally conceived by IRM back in 1992, was a plan to use state of the art business analytical tools to develop new systems for carrying out USAID's business. The ISP has now evolved into the New Management Systems. Briefly defined now, the New Management Systems are a set of system processes for carrying out USAID's business.

The new processes will rely on a new suite of corporate software designed and written specifically for the new processes.

So, what are the areas for which these new processes are being developed? To help USAID identify and analyze the business areas and design solutions and new processes, IRM contracted with James Martin Government Consulting, which refined a business analytical process called Information Engineering (IE). Briefly, the IE methodology calls for studying the entire organization's information needs and carefully defining a number of "environments", i.e., information, systems, technology and organization environments. Only then can a comprehensive plan (or architecture) be devised for meeting these needs.

There are three distinguishing characteristics of the IE methodology:

- A focus on the business impact, i.e., systems are engineered around basic business functions or areas and may cut across traditional organizational boundaries

in order to increase efficiency of the overall organization.

- Extensive involvement of the users in defining the organization's needs.
- Extensive use of shared corporate data.

Using the IE methodology, the Agency's work was broken down into eight business areas as shown below:

Operations Business Area

This is the core of the Agency's business. Operations involves our development goals and strategies, our project conceptualization, design, implementation, closeout

USAID Logo Available

The USAID Logo was originally sent out as an attachment to an Agency Notice dated 7/22/94. The WordPerfect logo should be available on a local drive, however if you do not have access to the graphic file, contact Bill Ruvinsky of IRM's CIS Division at [Bill Ruvinsky@irm.cis@aidw](mailto:Bill.Ruvinsky@irm.cis@aidw).



and evaluation. The remaining business areas, in one way or another, support the Operations. Without the Operations Area, there would be no need for the others to exist!

Acquisitions and Assistance Business Area

Essentially this encompasses all facets of procurements and grants. Any action which affects or is undertaken by a contract officer and/or the Office of Procurement is included in this business area.

Budget Business Area

This BAA focuses on the formulation of the Agency's annual budget submissions at the individual Bureau, Office, Mission level and aggregate Agency level.

Financial Management (AWACS) Business Area

This includes all facets of the bookkeeping of the Agency's transactions, including grants, loans, accounts payable, accounts receivable, payment vouchers, etc.

MANAGER'S CORNER

Welcome to this first issue of IRM at Work! This newsletter is another one of our new and exciting activities we are implementing in our effort to provide you, our customers, with the best possible service. Since our reengineering effort almost two years ago, we have embarked on programs designed to provide the highest level of quality service to all of our AID customers. Part and parcel of customer service is keeping our customers informed and that is why we have begun this readable newsletter. We in IRM realize that good service begins with quality products and processes, and for this reason we have adopted Total Quality Management as an operating culture. All decisions we make will incorporate the views and needs of our customers.

We've also added Omsbudmen and are in the process of implementing a 24-hour, one number Help Desk for all IRM services. We will be surveying a small number of you during the next month to help us configure the Help Desk to be of most use to you. USAID has moved ahead of many other agencies in our use of new information technology and this has transformed the way work is done in our agency. There will be significant change as several new management systems are rolled out on the USAID network over the next six months. We in IRM want to match USAID's impressive use of technology with world class customer service to help in all aspects of information technology.

Barry Goldberg is the Director of the Office of Information Resources Management.

Human Resources Business Area

This Business Area integrates the personnel and payroll systems for the Agency's three distinctly different workforces, U.S. direct hire, foreign service nationals and personal services contractors.

Property Management Business Area

Property Management is comprised of the overall management of the Agency's expendable and real property. This includes such functions as inventory, motor pool management and property planning/usage management.

Communications Business Area

This area incorporates the handling of all Agency external communications, including those with USAID's clients, interest groups, Congress and other government agencies.

Guidance Business Area

Guidance governs the dissemination of all USAID handbooks, orders and directives issued from Washington, as well as Mission Orders issued in the field.

After identifying the eight business areas, the next step in the process was to undertake, again using IE methodology, in depth analyses of each of the business areas (hence, Business Area Analysis or BAA) by a group of Agency employees, headed up by the "executive sponsor". This latter term is one of the critical aspects of IE: the executive sponsor is that person from the corporate entity who is responsible for that particular business area. In other words, the Office Director for Procurement is the executive sponsor for the Acquisitions and Assistance Business Area, not an IRM person. Likewise, the Controller of the Agency is the executive sponsor for the Financial Management (AWACS) BAA and so forth.

Generally, under the BAA Executive Sponsor, there are two

... the Agency's work was broken down into eight Business Areas:

- Operations
- Acquisitions and Assistance
- Budget
- Financial Management (AWACS)
- Workforce Planning (Human Resources)
- Property Management
- Communications
- Guidance

Deleting! The Easy Way

WordPerfect (5.1 DOS / 5.2 Windows) offers several quick and easy editing tools which many of us tend to overlook for deleting text. The following are a few useful tips to speed up your editing:

- To delete a word**, place the cursor (or Insertion Point as it is known in Windows) on the word and press CTRL/Backspace and poof!— the word is gone. Using the mouse to place the cursor or Insertion Point on the word to be deleted saves considerable time compared to motoring around the document with arrow keys.
- To delete a line of text**, press CTRL/END and all text to the right of the cursor or insertion point will magically disappear. Text from the line below will wrap up to your cursor if there was not a Hard Return command at the end of your original line of text. To delete all the text from the cursor or insertion point to the bottom of the page, press the CTRL/PgDn key

Of course, if you are working in WordPerfect for Windows and accidentally delete text that you wanted to keep, simply use the mouse to click on the EDIT pull down menu and click on UNDO or UNDELETE. That simple.

WordPerfect
for Windows



TIP!

Tired of redialing long phone numbers? You can now automatically redial the last phone number you dialed by pressing #7. This new feature is available in NS, SA-1, SA-14, SA-15, SA-16, SA-18, and SA-26.

groups, a Reference Group and a Core Group. The Core Group is the heart of the BAA. This Group is comprised of technical experts of the area, (e.g., contract officers for the A&A BAA), an IRM representative and a team of computer programmers, a representative from James Martin to facilitate the group in using the IE methodology, and user representatives, (i.e., people from the relevant technical staff offices as well as their customers.) This Core Group typically meets daily over a four to six month period pulling apart and analyzing the entire business area, and then putting it all back together using a data model. A data model is a diagram of all the information pieces and their relationship with each other. Simultaneously, using quick prototypes, the IRM programmers begin writing the actual computer code.

The BAA Reference Group is a broader group of employees who provide a review and validation of the work that the Core group is doing. Generally, the Reference Group may include several people from the functional area in addition to actual users of the services or products. For example, a group of project officers, technical officers, and program officers served on the Reference Group for the Acquisitions and

Assistance Business Area, providing feedback on the systems and processes under design.

An effort was made to ensure that both the core and reference groups have members representative of a cross section of USAID, i.e., GS versus FS and USAID/W as well as overseas.

As originally planned, the first business areas were scheduled to be implemented in late 1995 or early 1996. However, due to a variety of reasons, including the Agency's participation in the National Performance Review and the related reengineering activities, the phased rollout (computer jargon for installing the new software on the network and PCS) date was advanced to October 1, 1995. Under the new schedule, the AWACS system, the Acquisitions and Assistance system, the Budget system, and the first module of the Operations system will be rolled out by our target date of October 1, 1995. The remaining modules and Business Area systems are scheduled to be completed and rolled out over the next two years. ☺

Chuck Patalive is a Foreign Service Officer working in IRM as an Ombudsman.



TIP!

When using more than one application (i.e. WordPerfect and Banyan Mail), switch between them by holding down the ALT key while tapping the TAB key. Lift finger off the ALT key when the application you desire is shown on the screen.

Ombudsmen; At Your Service

by Darrell Owen

With little fanfare, IRM implemented one of several recommendations made in its 1994 Rightsizing Report that called for an Ombudsmen group. The purpose was to bring the customer's perspective to our decision making process. The positions were designated as Foreign Service (FS) slots to ensure that not only USAID/W concerns were addressed but also those of the mission staffs in the field. This is critical since IRM, with approximately 95 direct hires and another 200 contract personnel, had only four FS staff in IRM with only one in the Director's Office before the arrival of the Ombudsmen.

Both Ombudsmen bring valuable knowledge from years of experience in the USAID environment overseas as well as in Washington. This past summer, Chuck Patalive, a career FS officer, filled the first Ombudsman slot. Chuck served in Turkey, Pakistan, Egypt, Kenya, Syria and most recently in the Regional Development Office/Caribbean where he headed up the Private Sector Office for four years. Chuck came to IRM after a three-year stint working as a Career Development Counselor in HR. David Rybak from the Center for Trade and Investment Services Office joined on March 6th as the second Ombudsman. Dave, too, has worked in USAID as a private sector officer

and has served in Vietnam, Costa Rica and Jamaica over his 27 year career with USAID.

The customer service responsibilities of the IRM Ombudsmen are extremely broad yet critical as USAID moves into the information age. "In one sense, IRM has been too successful in bringing automation to USAID," Patalive notes; "in six years, USAID has become just about totally dependent on E-Mail communications and related Wide Area Network applications." IRM, itself, moved from playing a minor role when providing ancillary services via the mainframe to center stage by providing comprehensive information management systems. It is exceedingly difficult to stay on the cutting edge of technology while concurrently striving to provide a reliable and stable, desktop-to-desktop, communications system used by more than 9,000 USAID staff in more than 60 countries world-wide.

At times, in such a technical environment, the voice of the individual customer gets lost or overlooked as technicians work to maintain such things as telecommunications and network applications. The Ombudsmen are here to assist the customer and provide a specific channel to express their needs directly to IRM management on those occasions when they believe their needs are not being met.

Recently, IRM established an "Ombudsman Hot Line" to receive such calls for help or information. When your efforts using our normal procedures to resolve a problem or receive service from IRM fail, one of the Ombudsmen, Chuck or Dave, will intercede on your behalf to determine the cause of the problem and try to formulate a mutually agreeable solution. IRM's goal is to satisfy our customers.

The Ombudsmen can be reached via the Hot Line number, Banyan E-mail or FAX. If you choose to call by telephone, we have made a commitment to answer calls personally (no voice mail!) during the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. EST.

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Both Ombudsmen bring valuable knowledge from years of experience in the USAID environment overseas as well as in Washington.

Outside of these hours, voice mail will be available and our Ombudsman database will automatically log your call for action. Customers using FAX or Banyan E-Mail will promptly receive an acknowledgement of their communication upon receipt.

IRM is striving to be a better service provider. If you are not getting the service you need, give us a ring! ☎

If you are not getting the service you need, give us a ring on our IRM Ombudsman Hot Line!

Telephone:
703-875-1111

FAX:
703-875-1037

E-Mail Address:
IRM Ombudsman@
irm.od@aidw



Reengineering and the ISP; what's the connection?

Reengineering and the Information Systems Plan — how do they relate? Are they the same thing, complementary, or competing?

The Information Systems Plan was developed in 1992, and approved for

implementation in early 1993. It recognized that we had serious problems with the information systems in USAID, and established a plan to correct these problems by developing a suite of integrated systems that would cover all USAID business functions. The methodology chosen to implement the plan, known as information engineering (IE), used a number of techniques to rigorously analyze and model the information needs and processes of each of USAID's eight business areas. This analysis process, known as a Business Area Analysis, or BAA, relied heavily on input from the ultimate systems users.

The BAA process involved some reengineering, but that was not its primary focus. As users modelled the business processes, breaking each function down into smaller and smaller pieces in order to get a good understanding, it was often easy to see that some processes which made sense in a non-automated approach, or which made sense twenty years ago for reasons nobody can remember (i.e., "we've always done it that way"), simply no longer were needed.



QUESTION:

Many of my colleagues outside of USAID have access to E-Mail via Internet. It would help me a lot if I had access for exchanging ideas, etc. How do I get an Internet ID so I can communicate via E-Mail with these individuals?

ANSWER:

To obtain an Internet E-Mail address: Any person on AIDNET can send mail to, and receive mail from, anyone with an Internet address. However, to receive mail, you must first obtain the internet version of your Banyan E-Mail address. Send an E-Mail to the following address: "ismtp@basa14001@servers[postmaster@usaid.gov]". Within one or two hours you will receive a confirming e-mail with your Internet ID. Most LANs have added a Banyan nickname called "internet" to make it easier to mail to internet addresses. Try the following format to send to an internet address: internet[postmaster@usaid.gov]: If you do not receive an "unverifiable address message," the alias has been set up on your server for your group. If you receive the error message, DO NOT use the alias and ask your LAN support personnel to add the nickname for your group.

To send an Internet E-Mail: To send mail through the Internet you need to know the address of the person to whom you are sending the mail. To send mail to Tom Smith at USDA (whose internet address is tsmith@usda.gov), use the following address format:

"ismtp@basa14001@servers[tsmith@usda.gov]" or if a nickname is available for your group, "internet[tsmith@usda.gov]". For questions about accessing Internet, contact your local System Administrator or Ken Roko via E-Mail at Ken Roko@irm.tco@aidw.

WordPerfect MACROS

by Trudi Savoy

WordPerfect for Windows

Do you ever tire from filling out PIO/Ts by hand or by sitting down at the old rickety typewriter? The frustration is over. When in WordPerfect (5.1/5.2) just click once on macro, then on Play and select the macro of your choice! The SWAT Team's Wordperfect macros make it possible for you to use your computer to prepare a number of forms which are used on a regular basis at USAID. These macros currently reside on the LAN. To access a list of macros available, play the macro called "HELP". To find out more about the macros available for your use, just check with your System Administrator. Recently the SWAT Team added nine new Wordperfect for Windows macros:

Macro Name

- 347 Order for Supplies or Services
- 3542 Customer Supply Center Order
- 4-253 Completion of Assignment Report
- 330fax Fax Cover Sheet
- 530-3 Credit Card Purchase Transaction
- Index Creates index for your document
- Cash On the Spot Cash Award
- 1330 Project Data Sheet
- 4-483 Request for Employment of Consultant

If you need a new macro created, send your request to Jim Lindahl via E-Mail. If you have questions about existing macros, SWAT Team members Trudi Savoy and Mike Diehl will respond to your problems.

Trudi Savoy is a Macro Specialist who works for the M/IRM/CIS SWAT Team.

These were done away with, and this elimination of unnecessary work is, in effect, "reengineering".

Reengineering, however, is much more than simply eliminating unnecessary processes. Hammer and Champy, in their best selling book, *Reengineering the Corporation*, define reengineering as "the fundamental rethinking and radical redesign of business processes to achieve dramatic improvements in critical, contemporary measures of performance, such as cost, quality, service, and speed." In late 1993, key managers in the Agency began to think about what it would mean to apply this approach to the core business of USAID, and out of this thinking came the idea of reengineering the Agency's approach to delivering development assistance.

A key decision was made to integrate the reengineering effort with

the ISP. The ISP had defined the central business of the Agency as the "operations" business area, scheduled for a BAA in 1994. Prior to the BAA, a group of 15 professionals from all parts of the Agency spent six weeks developing a high-level vision of how a reengineered USAID would work. This in turn, fed into the operations BAA, which ran from June through September of 1994.

There are two primary ways in which the ISP and reengineering are related. First of all, the analytical techniques used in both are closely related. The Operations BAA employed selected techniques of information engineering as well as other techniques from the reengineering discipline. Compared to the earlier, more traditional BAAs (e.g., accounting, acquisition and assistance, and budgeting), only about 20-30% of the Operations BAA concentrated on the traditional IE

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There are two primary ways in which the ISP and reengineering are related:

- *First of all, the analytical techniques used in both are closely related.*
- *The second important connection between reengineering and the ISP has to do with the essential role information technology plays in the new way of doing business. Information technology is a key "enabler" of reengineering.*

modelling techniques. M/IRM had to adapt its portfolio of techniques and add new ones to meet the needs of operations reengineering.

The second important connection between reengineering and the ISP has to do with the essential role information technology plays in the new way of doing business. Information technology is a key "enabler" of reengineering. Without the ability to share information freely and rapidly, several of the core values of reengineering, namely empowerment and teamwork, would not be workable. In fact, many of the outdated processes that we are eliminating were in essence control procedures necessitated by a lack of good information about what was happening in various parts of the Agency.

Reengineering continues as this is written. Three teams are turning the BAA reports into actual procedures and policies for the Agency, while two other teams are developing computer systems to support the new way of doing business. By October 1, the

IRM at Work Distribution

The initial distribution of this newsletter includes copies to all missions in quantities equal to the number of Direct Hires at each post. Those receiving copies are encouraged to route them to colleagues, post them on bulletin boards or otherwise make them available. For USAID/W, copies are distributed to each Bureau and Office with the intent they will be circulated among the staff. Future plans are to make this newsletter available electronically.

We invite your comments and suggestions as to how we can improve the distribution such that all employees and contractors have access. Please send them to Chuck Patalive.

new policies will be in effect, and one of the two systems will be installed to support results tracking and performance measurement, with the second system to follow later in FY 1996.™

Publication Information

IRM at Work is a monthly publication from the Management Bureau's Office of Information Resources Management (M/IRM). The Newsletter is distributed to each USAID/W Office, as well as each overseas Mission. At present, Chuck Patalive (M/IRM/OD) serves as the Executive Editor and Shelley Anderson (M/IRM/CIS) serves as Senior Editor. Comments, suggestions for improvements, article ideas, and letters to the editor, are welcome and should be directed to either Chuck or Shelley. Writers' guidelines available upon request.

MAY 1995



A Newsletter from the Office of Information Resources Management - M/IRM

New Management Systems Rollout

by Maggie Benzin

The New Management Systems (NMS) are coming! By October 1, many of you will have been introduced to processes and automated tools that will make it easier for you to do your job. By that date, the first of the New Management Systems (see box) are scheduled to be in operation in USAID/W and the UNIX sites overseas. For those missions that are not UNIX sites, IRM will be furnishing a non-UNIX option for accessing the new systems. The implementation of these new systems is the result of the Agency's reengineering efforts.

Beginning June 1, the New Management Systems will be rolled out first in Washington and then in the missions. The business areas are planning to send teams of installation personnel overseas where they will install the systems and train systems administrators and other technical personnel. Before installation, however, the systems will be tested both in Washington and in selected missions. Each of the systems will be tested first for functionality, and then as an integrated package.

October 1995 Rollout

Accounting

- General Ledger
- Accounts Receivable
- Loan Servicing
- Accounts Payable
- Funds Distribution
- Cost Accumulation

Acquisition & Assistance

- Planning
- Award Formation
- Award Administration
- Small Purchases

Budget

- Budget Formulation & Distribution
- Budget Management Reporting
- Budget Decision Support

Operations

- Results Tracking

HR/TD is finalizing the training plans which will include training sessions in both the new tools and the newly reengineered business processes. In the meantime, the first thing you can do to prepare yourself is to become proficient with the Microsoft Windows software since all of the new systems will utilize the look and feel of Windows. Once you become acquainted with the basics of Windows, the New Management Systems will be that much easier to learn.

Beyond October 1, the remaining business areas will complete their BAAs and implement their respective new systems. Revised and updated versions of the first group of New Management Systems will be distributed as they become available. ☺

Maggie Benzin provides NMS project management and planning support to IRM senior staff.

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Printed on recycled paper.

Internet @ usaid.gov

by Jim Russo

"The Internet is the fastest growing communications tool, with as many as 30 million subscribers in 92 countries."

*Newsweek
February 27, 1995*

What is the Internet? The Internet (net) is a network of computer networks linking over 1 million host computers, over 30 million people, and is growing exponentially. It is used by soil scientists in Thailand to get the latest scientific information from American universities, by energy analysts from across the globe having electronic discussions about solar power, and was used by Relcom (Russian Internet service) to get the news out during the press blackout following the failed Russian coup in 1991. The Internet was developed about 20 years ago by the U.S. Department of Defense. It was designed to require the minimum of

any other. It pretty much works that way today.

WHY INTERNET AT USAID?

Providing information via Internet gives the Agency a chance to tell its story to 30 million Internet users worldwide.

Providing access to the Internet brings the resources of the world's leading universities and research institutions to the desktop of Agency research staff.

INTERNET SERVICES AVAILABLE TO AGENCY EMPLOYEES

As mentioned in the April issue of IRM at Work! pg 6, "Any person on AIDNET can send mail to, and receive mail from, anyone with an Internet address." In addition to E-mail, IRM offers several Internet services including:

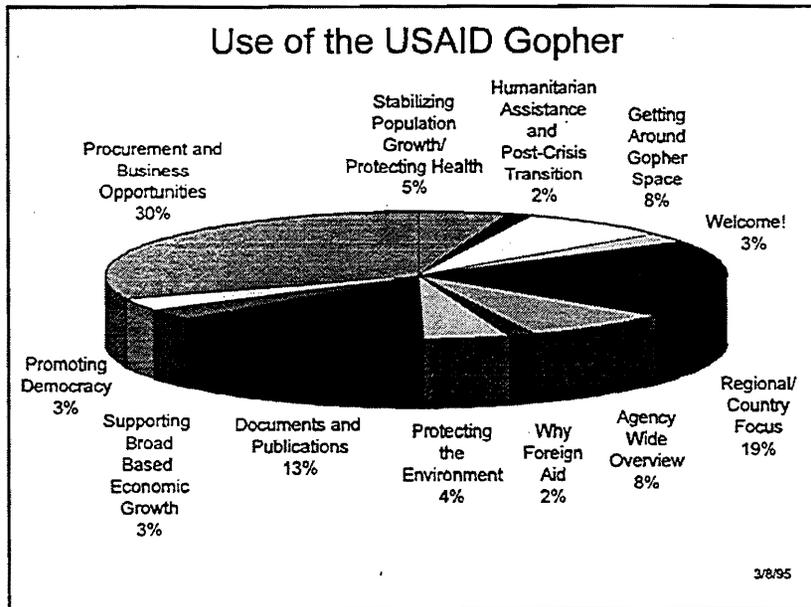
- electronic conferencing (listserv)
- gopher
- World Wide Web (WWW)

LISTSERV

Listserv (also called Listproc) is an Internet service that turns a simple one-to-one E-mail into a one-to-many E-mail-mediated discussion forum around a specific topic. You sign up or subscribe to a list via E-mail and you post and read messages via E-mail as well. Listservs tend to be fairly specific. For example, "devel-l" is a listserv which is international development oriented and "rferl-l" is a listserv related to technology transfer in Russia. All USAID press releases are now available via the "usaid_press_release" listserv. You can also start your own listserv. This service is available to Agency employees world wide.

GOPHER

Gopher is an Internet-based file management system. Gopher allows you to browse the net using menus. It enables access to resources across the Internet, without prior knowledge of location or address, to bounce from gopher to gopher transparently.



information from computer clients. To send a message on the network, a computer simply had to put its data in an envelope, called an Internet Protocol (IP) packet, with an "address." The computers, not the network, were responsible for ensuring communication success and each packet might take a different route to get to its destination. Every computer could talk, as a peer, with

MANAGER'S CORNER

by Joan Matejcek, Deputy Director of IRM

This year, USAID is experiencing change at a level that is unprecedented in the history of the agency. Like other Federal organizations, we are required to re-think our ways of doing business and to make those methods more responsive to the demands of the taxpayer. Many of these changes will re-focus our business processes on outcomes that are experienced by our customers. This shift in focus will change the information that we view as important and will require that we collect and manage different kinds of information in order to effectively carry out our missions. We in IRM are committed to assisting all of you in developing and using the tools necessary to work in the "new way." The information systems arising from the New Management Systems (NMS) will form the basis for a new toolset supporting our new ways of doing business.

The development of the NMS is a project without peer in the Federal information systems community. No other agency has combined reinvention of business process and redesign of information systems in so comprehensive a manner. While it is exhilarating to be "first" and "only," this status also carries additional risk. The next year will be challenging, but there are a few things that we can do as an agency to give ourselves the best chance of success:

- Participate:** Teams working on reinvention and system design activities need committed volunteers from Missions and Offices throughout AID. Please invest in our future by participating.
- Give honest, constructive feedback:** When reinvention teams ask for your input, please take the time to look at their product and give your thoughtful comments. This is the only way in which the product can be a success.
- Be demanding:** Systems not working well? Worried about your computer equipment? Need additional support? Tell us! IRM is focusing additional attention on customer service, and we will listen and respond; I guarantee it!

I joined USAID eight months ago, and from the first day I have been impressed with the dedication of every person who works for and with this agency. This is a group of people who truly believe in the work of the agency! And I believe that this factor will be the real key to our success in developing and using these new information systems.

USAID's Gopher is used for posting Agency data and information for access by our partners in the development community. The USAID Gopher contains development, project, procurement, public affairs and administrative information. In February, 11,300 outside connections were established to the gopher (484 per business day) and 77,791 files were downloaded!

WORLD WIDE WEB (WWW)

The World Wide Web is the newest Internet information service. WWW provides multimedia access to the Internet by incorporating graphics, pictures, sound and video into hypertext documents. The function of

WWW is to organize any information available by Internet into documents that are easily accessed through special links.

There are two fundamental differences between gopher and WWW: 1) WWW allows for the use of graphical presentations and 2) it allows for user navigation between related documents where as gopher does neither. WWW uses "browsers" for reading hypertext. Mosaic and Netscape, both available to USAID/W employees, are two such browsers. It should be noted that WWW can be slow due to the large size of the hypertext documents and that, in general, requires use of high-end PCs such as a 486.

News Flash!



The USAID home page is now accessible via the White House home page! We are linked to the White House's Independent Agencies page as well as a reference in the What's New.... The White House home page address is "www.whitehouse.gov".

USAID has its own gopher (address: gopher.info.usaid.gov) and its own WWW site or home page (address: www.info.usaid.gov).



TIP!

USAID vs. DoS E-mail Addresses

In the Street Talk Directory Assistance (STDA) or F2 listing of E-mail, USAID staff names appear in mixed case while DoS staff appears in all upper case. USAID staff has either "AIDW" or the mission name in the right hand column. DoS does not. Since we do have a larger number of additional names in our F2 directory than DoS, be careful when you address mail; would not want your "newsy" message going to the wrong person!

POSTING INFORMATION TO INTERNET INFORMATION SYSTEMS

The Legislative and Public Affairs Office (LPA) will work with your office to determine which information is most suitable for posting and the best location for that information. The principal purpose for posting information is to make the information accessible to those outside the Agency. LPA can help you to determine whether the information should be posted to the gopher or the web site and precisely where the information should be posted. In general, Agency information should be posted to the USAID Internet information systems and not to outside sources.

Contacts: John Norris@lpa@aidw
and Jim Russo@irm.cis@aidw.

MISSION SERVICES

At this time, with the exception of Manila, only Internet E-mail and listserv are available to the Missions although, many countries in the developing world now have full Internet connectivity. IRM is working on a mission Internet telecommunications strategy addressing such issues as Internet security, data transmission speed and LAN loads.

USAID/W SERVICES

For AID/W employees, IRM has selected a suite of easy-to-use, Windows-based Internet software as an Agency standard for employees requiring Internet access for business purposes. To have this software installed on your PC, please contact your systems administrator or Courtney Ives via E-mail at Courtney Ives@irm.tco@aidw.

IRM also provides introductory Internet training on a monthly basis. For training information, please contact Dana Bazine@HRDM.TSD@aidw. ☉

Jim Russo is the Project Manager for the Internet Data Services group.

Project Support Group Providing IT Services

by Bernie Mazer

Some Project Officers only see IRM/CIS Project Support Group as a consultant who states "As per Ref X, IRM has reviewed the Widgets procurement, and from a technical point of view, we concur...." and that is the end of IRM's involvement in the deployment of their project. That is, however, only part of the services that the Project Support Group (PSG) provides. The PSG provides Information Technology (IT) services to USAID project officers and their host-country counterparts world wide.

The Project Support Group consists of technically versatile, bilingual analysts who assist project officers in planning, designing, analyzing, procuring and evaluating Information Technology (IT) components of USAID projects. Generally, any project-funded acquisition of IT commodities and support services requires review and approval by the PSG if the cost of the project IT component exceeds \$100,000 over its lifecycle as stated in USAID Handbook 18 (see Cable #22295.) Examples of assistance the group provides to missions includes the IT components that the IRM analysts examine including the application, the framework, the technology and the resources that can support the project. The size and complexity of such assistance varies depending on the project and the phase in the project's life cycle. Examples of assistance the group provided in the missions includes an information needs assessment to support the reversion of properties from the Canal area in Panama and the technical assessment of the electronic interbank payment system in Ukraine.

Since PSG analysts are technical resources to USAID project officers during the planning, acquisition,



USAID/MANILA Goes On-line with Direct Internet Access!

By Bill Wanamaker, EXO, Manila

USAID/Manila, with the assistance of M/IRM/CIS Internet Data Services, went on-line as of 3-13-95 with direct Internet access to a local Internet service provider (ComNet). Mission users can now conduct on-line research in universities and research centers and download data to the designated workstations.

Manila can now accept Internet E-mail using its "exombox@usaid-ph.gov" mailbox. This mailbox is maintained by the Data Management Division (DMD) in Manila. It can be used as an alternate electronic mailbox when the USAID/W Internet gateway or the AIDNET connection is experiencing problems. Please include the name and title of your addressee at the beginning of your message. This will help DMD in manually routing your message to the proper person when it reaches Manila's Internet server.

Manila was able to get the Internet installation up and running at a reasonable cost as well as prepare training materials. Users are now scheduled to be trained in the use of Internet services such as File Transfer Protocol (FTP), Gopher, Veronica and Archie. Other services such as Telnet and WWW will be available to the users in the future.

For more information about Manila's experience with Internet, contact Romy Sison, Deputy Chief of EXO/DMD, or Meyer Tanuan, Chief of EXO/DMD, via E-mail.

Since the PSG analysts are technical resources to USAID project officers..., their support helps ensure the maximum use of IT resources to meet a project's needs.

implementation, and operational phases of a project, their support helps ensure the optimum use of IT resources to meet a project's needs. For example, during the acquisition planning phase, the analysts can ensure that requirements analyses are complete and that requests for feasible, cost-effective solutions are accurately described in the procurement specifications. The PSG ensures that essential procurement issues are addressed in the acquisition plan(s) and that appropriate strategic and operational planning considerations are incorporated into project implementation and management plans. During the acquisition phase of a project, analysts are available to review IT components to validate that they meet the strategic, technical and cost requirements.

As the project moves into the implementation and management phase, the IRM analysts can evaluate IT deliverables, monitor contract execution and support acceptance testing. In the verification and validation phase, the IRM analysts are available to evaluate user operations of IT components by participating in

observing user acceptance tests, and by interviewing and evaluating project personnel to determine "lessons learned" and success.

Because of the unique characteristics of USAID programs, the analysts' assessments are based on experiences from similar projects, the technological development of host country institutions and issues associated with sustainable development. The analysts support development of IT solutions in the areas of hospital administration, banking, legislative management, electoral processes, rural electrification, education administration, geographic information, publishing and export promotion.

The PSG analysts provide project support with analyses from their Washington, D.C., offices or with short-term, on-site technical assistance TDYs. These locally supported activities and on-site TDYs can take place anytime during a project's life cycle.

To see if the IRM team is part of the solution in a project's milestones and objectives, contact Bernie Mazer at (703)875-1446 (bmazer@usaid.gov) or Joe Gueron at 703-875-1734 (jgueron@usaid.gov).

IRM Streamlines its Policies and Procedures

by Joyce Cosby

The National Performance Review called for Federal agencies to streamline their policies and procedures. As required by Executive Order #12861, IRM is in the process of rewriting its internal policies and procedures which are currently located in Part IV of Handbook 18, entitled *Information Services*, totaling about 300 pages. This Executive Order requires USAID and other Executive Branch

departments and agencies to reduce their internal, non-statutory management regulations by not less than 50 percent—a daunting task to say the least!

At the same time IRM is reducing its handbook by eliminating superfluous and redundant policies and procedures, we are reformatting them to conform with the Agency's new CD-ROM Automated Directives System (ADS) which

replaces the Agency's paper-based directives system. IRM's targeted completion date is May 26, 1995.

Chuck Patalive, IRM's Ombudsman, will be establishing a reference group, consisting primarily of EXOs in the field and EMS' in USAID/W, to review the policies and procedures that are slated for change. Mission EXOs, in turn, will be asked to solicit feedback from their respective staffs.

The revised policies and procedures will be circulated to the Agency's Quality Council for clearance in May and forwarded to the Office of Administrative Services for incorporation into the ADS by June 1, 1995.

IRM is soliciting any comments or questions regarding Handbook 18, *Information Services*, from Agency employees. Please contact Joyce Cosby via E-mail (Joyce.Cosby@IRM.PMA@AIDW). ☉

Technology Upgrades: A Balancing Act

Remember the guy on Ed Sullivan who used to dash madly about trying to keep eight or ten plates spinning simultaneously? His task is not unlike the task faced by an agency IRM shop trying to keep up with technology these days. Few, if any agencies (or for that matter, private companies) have the budget to simultaneously acquire the latest generation of PCs for all their employees in the same budget year.

As a result, one of the unenviable tasks of an agency IRM shop is to make decisions about who gets priority in distributing new hardware and software. Generally, this is based on business needs. However, the need to stage such technology upgrades over time leads to another complication: technology refuses to stand still while we bring everybody up to the same level. Thus, one part of the agency is delighted to receive new 386 PCs while other parts are wondering why they are not getting them—until the 486 displaces the 386 as the new standard. Those surviving with the old 286 machines leapfrog ahead because their turn has come for the latest upgrade.

This happened in USAID/W when, several years ago, Wang VS systems were replaced with Local Area Networks (LANs) which required then



TIP!

Where to Print!

On occasions when you need to print to another printer (i.e., a color printer or perhaps at another location,) there is a "Set Print" icon under the Network Accessories Group in Windows to help you.

Double click on the icon and follow the prompts. If you don't know the exact name of the printer, use the F2 key and scroll through the list until you find the correct one.

If you send your print job to a different type of printer than you normally use, you'll need to make sure you are using the correct print driver. This may require you to contact your System Administrator and have the new print driver installed.

**QUESTION:**

Why doesn't USAID adopt the newer WordPerfect version 6.0 or 6.1 as its standard?

ANSWER:

Evaluations have indicated that WordPerfect (WP) versions 6.0 and 6.1 require 8 megabytes of memory as a minimum to run successfully. Most of our PCs do not have this much memory. For this reason, we've stayed with the 5.1/5.2 versions.

Without the Agency moving to a new version all at one time, considerable file incompatibility issues occur (i.e. an individual using WP 6.0 creates a document and E-mails it as an attachment to someone using WP 5.2—who can't read the file due to incompatibilities.) Because WP 6.0/6.1 files are physically larger, they would increase traffic on the network, thus having a potentially negative effect.

state-of-the-art, PCs with 286 processors and later PCs with 386 processors. Over the years, of course, technology has marched on, as have software requirements for bigger and more powerful machines.

Despite rumors to the contrary, every agency struggles with this problem. Currently in Washington, less than half of USAID's PCs are 486s; the remainder are 386s with a few old 286s still around. The 486 PC is now the Agency standard; although, consideration is being given to the Pentium given falling prices and the development of the next generation chip (P6) from Intel.

Until this year, the question has been one of how fast various machines could run the standard office automation tools like spreadsheets and word processing. However, with the first of the New Management Systems (NMS) coming on line over the next six months, the power issue becomes more critical.

Heretofore, the faster machines were provided to "power users" but recent testing of completed modules indicate that the New Management Systems will require a 486 DX PC with a minimum of 8 megabytes of RAM. We are exploring several options for replacing 386 PCs. In any case, in the short run we still may be forced to allocate the more powerful machines to those users who will be heavier users of the NMS — which may bear little resemblance to the user group which currently has 486 machines.

The point to all this is to remember the old plate spinner and to recognize that IRM, and the Agency, may need to do some mad dashing about for the next year or so to balance scarce resources with new systems requirements. Given the size of the USAID organization, and the rapid changes in technology, this sort of balancing act goes with the territory! ☹

Electronic Survey Software

by Darrell Owen

If you recently completed an electronic survey for the Human Resources Business Area Analysis (HR-BAA) Team, you have at least been introduced to the RaoSoft survey software. This package was used to construct and distribute the survey, collect responses and analyze the results. Going to all direct hire employees (GS, FS, and FSNs) and all PSCs, both in USAID/Washington as well as all the overseas posts, this was perhaps the most comprehensive survey conducted at USAID. It certainly was the largest the Agency has ever tried to conduct via electronic means! Considering its scope, and that this was a new undertaking, it went off quite smoothly.

The RaoSoft package was originally acquired in support of the missions serving as Country



Currently in Washington, less than half of USAID's PCs are 486s; the remainder are 386s with a few old 286s still around. The 486 PC is now the Agency standard; although, consideration is being given to the Pentium given falling prices and the development of the next generation chip (P6) from Intel.



TIP!

DOS applications can be put into a window (i.e. Banyan Mail, AID/W phone book, etc.) by having the application active & pressing the ALT & RETURN keys at the same time. The application can then be sized, put into the background, moved, etc. To close the application you will need to have it active and again pressing the ALT & RETURN keys, then the ESC key. You cannot close the application via the normal pull-down menu option.

Experimental Labs (CELs). Conducting surveys was an area in which several of the CELs indicated they needed some support. IRM took a quick look around for a tool and found RaoSoft to be a simple, inexpensive, and yet reasonably powerful tool for conducting surveys. Copies of the software have been distributed to each of the CELs and is available for use here in Washington as well.

To help ensure the quality of surveys as well, the Management Planning and Innovation Office (M/MPI) will be providing Agency-wide approval and coordination. Specific procedures for obtaining approval are provided in a recently issued USAID General Notice (Message #32 dated March 14, 1995.) Those Offices and Bureaus wishing to develop and issue surveys are encouraged to talk to Susan Walls before seeking support from IRM. Susan is located at NS-3748 and can be reached at (202)647-0943 or via E-mail.

Support for developing an electronic survey with RaoSoft can be obtained from Nancy Hutchins of IRM (M/IRM/CIS.) Nancy is located in SA-14 (1100B) and can be reached at (703)875-1836 or via E-mail. Support from IRM also extends to making the survey available via the networks, either at the Missions or here in USAID/Washington. Nancy can assist in coordinating these activities within IRM for those constructing and issuing surveys.

The package may also be of value for those organizations wishing to conduct surveys of non-USAID personnel/entities. This may include surveying PVOs, NGOs, other donors or actually obtaining on-site field data. Here again, anyone thinking RaoSoft may be of some help to generate surveys for use outside USAID is encouraged to contact Nancy to see if we can be of any assistance. ☐

The Management Planning and Innovation Office (M/MPI) will be providing Agency-wide approval and coordination. Specific procedures for obtaining approval are provided in a recently issued USAID General Notice (Message #32 dated March 14, 1995.)

Support for developing an electronic survey with RaoSoft can be obtained from Nancy Hutchins of IRM, (703) 875-1836 or via E-mail.

In the case of the HR-BAA survey, the Team itself developed the set of questions using an OPM survey as a base. This allowed for benchmarking USAID against the Federal government at large. IRM then, using RaoSoft, developed the electronic version of the survey. The survey was then tested in USAID/Washington by HR and IRM, and overseas by the Mission in Honduras, prior to releasing the survey Agency-wide.

In a number of discussions with personnel from various Bureaus, it appears there is considerable interest across the Agency in conducting employee surveys for a wide variety of purposes. Total Quality Management (TQM) and Reengineering incorporate customer feedback as core elements to improving the product/services of any organization. Surveys are a good mechanism for getting customer feedback. And while IRM stands ready to support the Agency in the use of this tool, it is also important that USAID employees not be inundated with a large number of surveys now that we have a relatively simple survey process available.

Publication Information

IRM at Work is a monthly publication from the Management Bureau's Office of Information Resources Management (M/IRM). The Newsletter is distributed to each USAID/W Office, as well as each overseas Mission. At present, Chuck Patalive (M/IRM/OD) serves as the Executive Editor and Shelley Anderson (M/IRM/CIS) serves as Senior Editor. Comments, suggestions for improvements, article ideas, and letters to the editor are welcome and should be directed to either Chuck (Chuck.Patalive@irm.od@aidw) or Shelley (Shelley.Anderson@irm.cis@aidw). Writers' guidelines available upon request.

JUNE 1995



A Newsletter from the Office of Information Resources Management - M/IRM

The New Management Systems (NMS) — A Closer Look

-Editor's Note

Due to the rapidly approaching October 1, 1995, implementation deadline for the New Management Systems (NMS), this June issue of "IRM at Work" is longer and contains several NMS-related articles. The authors of the articles have written with an intent to give you, the end users, a closer look at the systems and how they will relate to your work. Hopefully this issue of IRM at Work will answer some of your questions about the Agency's new way of doing business.

As a brief introduction to the NMS articles, please note that all the systems are designed to operate in the Windows environment and are intended to be both easy-to-learn and user-friendly. They all contain extensive, in context, help screens.

AWACS: What is it and What Will it Do?

By Doug Arnold

AWACS is the acronym given to USAID's new Worldwide Accounting and Control System. The team designed the system with the goals of capturing and recording accounting transactions when and where they occur, reducing paper and generating useful and comprehensible financial management information.

Firstly, to capture and record accounting transactions when and where they occur means that when a Project Officer prepares a requisition document, in that moment of preparation, an accounting entry will be created. It also means that, later when a Contracting Officer, Executive Officer or Mission Director executes a contract, the system will also record that event in that moment.

Secondly, to reduce paper and the requirements for manual input, AWACS will take full advantage of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) and state-of-the-art imaging and optical character recognition (OCR) technology to electronically match information in purchase orders, receiving reports and invoices to make payments automatically without today's tedious manual voucher examination process. Loan payments received from USAID borrowers which are transmitted through the Federal Reserve system will be automatically applied against the proper loan accounts without any need for the transmission of paper between the Federal Reserve and USAID. Electronic

REST STOPS

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Data Interchange and imaging will be used whenever possible to eliminate the flow of paper, provide faster service, and eliminate manual data entry requirements.

Thirdly, another primary objective of AWACS is to consolidate all of USAID's financial data into an enterprise-wide corporate data base where data from the field and USAID/W can produce timely, accurate and meaningful reports, particularly reports that contain graphical representations of activity of particular importance to management.

A Single Agency System

When completed, users will see a single Agency system. One in which they can log-on one time and have access to information from proposed budgets through closed projects. AWACS is expected to eliminate the need for much of today's redundant data entry and it will eliminate the need for people to develop and maintain a lot of so-called "cuff records."

For the first time, our missions overseas will be using the same system as at headquarters. This will ease the transmission of information and allow for faster responses to Congress and the public.

Something for Everyone

AWACS will help Project Officers, Contracting Officers, Mission Directors and financial management personnel do their jobs better. With the movement toward single source data entry, information pertaining to reservations and

obligations will enter the financial system much faster than it does today. An important by-product of this will

be the synchronization of all reports. Since a particular piece of information relating to an obligation will be entered only once, it will appear only once in the central database. When two reports or queries seek information about that piece of data, they will always come out the same.

Outside customers should also gain from this effort. The central information base will allow for quicker and more responsive answers to questions. It will prevent two people from giving out different answers based on information from two different systems.

Easy to Use

With AWACS you won't need your own programmer to find out what you want to know and you won't have to read pages of a computer print-out to find out what you want to know either. With the AWACS' standard querying capability and with hardly any training at all, most people can obtain what they want if they know what they want and it can be analyzed using modern graphical analysis techniques. In the Microsoft Windows environment, information you ask for can be pasted into spreadsheets, word processing documents and other applications.

AWACS and the NPR

AWACS will be fully consistent with the National Performance Review. The NPR recommends that agencies use technology to leverage improvements in financial management. USAID is doing just that. AWACS will consolidate and compare in one place: budget, financial and program data. It will strengthen the debt collection practices and it will definitely simplify reporting. USAID has already begun to show how it will put some vendors' needs first by putting into place as part of the AWACS initiative an electronic bulletin board showing the status of vendor's claims for payment.

When Will it be Done?

In May 1994, we implemented the first part of the Agency general ledger in USAID/W. While not of general



QUESTION:

How do you remove redline and strikeout attributes in WordPerfect documents?

ANSWER:

WordPerfect's (Windows version) Compare Document option can be used to quickly delete all strikeout text and provide you the option to either retain the redline attribute on text or delete the redline attribute and retain the text in the document. To use the Compare Document option, select TOOLS from the Menu Bar and select DOCUMENT COMPARE, and then select REMOVE MARKINGS. If you want to delete the strikeout text but leave in the redline text attribute, select the LEAVE REDLINE MARKS.

MANAGER'S CORNER

In the upcoming months, USAID will shine as a leader on the forefront of reinventing government. The implementation of the New Management Systems' practices and procedures will show that USAID's reform efforts are moving ahead. With full cooperation of USAID employees, we can make the implementation of the New Management Systems a fruitful result of a major reengineering challenge.

For example, USAID has made an effort to conduct its business more effectively. USAID procurement reform efforts will lead to the standardization, transparency and greater accessibility of USAID procurement information. In fact, starting in June of 1994, all USAID/W Commerce Business Daily (CBD) and Request for Proposal (RFP) notices were put on the Internet gopher and the File Transfer Protocol (FTP) server. Those notices represent two-thirds of USAID's CBDs and RFPs worldwide. As of April 1, 1995, all worldwide CBDs and RFPs were put on the Internet Gopher and FTP server. Additionally, these reforms have led to a larger, better-trained procurement staff which can fulfill Agency needs through advanced planning for procurement on both large and small scales.

On a broader perspective, the New Management Systems are the tool set for the Agency in its Reengineering program. The success of the New Management Systems and Reengineering will directly affect the future of this Agency. Continued progress on the design and implementation of these programs will receive a great deal of attention by the Administration and the Congress. The success of these systems will equate to the continued viability of USAID as an Agency.

We, in USAID, must work as a Team! Teamwork is a core concept in our new way of doing business. We must make this core value a reality now if we are to successfully implement these new systems. Please think about what you, personally, can do to move it ahead.

Michael Sherwin is the Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Management Bureau.

use to the rest of the Agency, this module was the first step toward assuring that all financial reports leaving the Agency reflect similar data. In addition, the graphical reporting system called "Pipe," which consolidates today's data from disparate systems to provide a view of what we mean by information, not just data, is now being deployed throughout the Agency.

Other modules, accounts receivable and loan servicing, accounts payable, and funds management (funds allocation and budget execution) are nearing completion.

These new modules will allow the Agency to meet all the requirements of the Chief Financial Officer's Act and will allow USAID to produce auditable financial statements—something which cannot be done today. After AWACS is tested, it should be ready for world wide implementation on October 1, 1995.

For further information, contact AWACS Project Manager from M/FM, Doug Arnold. ☎

Doug Arnold is the Director of Financial Systems.

Acquisition & Assistance — A New Management System

by Vicky Lieber

“USAID is driving with a great deal of energy and force towards worldwide implementation of our reengineered management systems by October 1, 1995.”

*Larry Byrne
Assistant Administrator for
the M Bureau.
Cable #105378*

Not sure how you'll be affected by the Agency's New Management Systems (NMS)? We shed some light on what to expect in the areas of procurements, grants and cooperative agreements.

The Acquisition and Assistance (A&A) system is made up of five applications: Planning, Award Formation, Award Administration, Support, and Small Purchases. In addition, a commercial off-the-shelf software package, the Document Generation System, will be integrated with the A&A system to produce the actual contract and grant documents.

What system(s) is A&A replacing?

A&A will replace the Contract Information Management System (CIMS), the Advanced Procurement Planning System (APPS), the Administrative Purchasing System (APS) and the Procurement Tracking System (PTS) module of the Mission Management Information System. All of the functions currently found in these systems will be available in A&A.

What will be completely new, not done before?

A&A will provide a number of new functions. Project Officers will be able to enter "requests" for advance planning as soon as they know of the possibility of a funded activity. These requests will be replacing PIOs. Program Managers will be able to view their own fund accounts and to reserve funds, and the Contracting Officer will be able to obligate these reserved funds — all through A&A, which will be tightly connected to the

AID Worldwide Accounting and Control System (AWACS). The A&A system also tracks all non-project fund procurements.

A&A supports the concept of a "development team," on which all the people necessary to the success of a funded activity will serve, including, but not limited to, the Contracting Officer and the Project Officer. The system allows for electronic reviews, approvals and routing. The system streamlines procurement and negates the need for duplicate data entry.

A&A will assist Negotiators, Contracting Officers and Office of Procurement managers with "workload management." A&A will also be used to collect all information on-line that is necessary to be recorded for any contract or grant and will assist in the creation of the negotiation memo and contract closeouts.

The fifth module, Small Purchases, will replace the form, AID 5-7, and all information necessary for a small purchase will be collected in the system. No hardcopies will be used to track the procurement and no duplicative data entry will be necessary. A&A will allow Agency personnel to use the Internet for electronic commerce; we will be able to send purchase requests electronically to vendors.

Who will be the primary users of this system?

Project Officers and their managers; Contracting Officers, Negotiators, and their staffs; and Mission EXOs and their staffs. The Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business will also be using the system - inputting small business vendors and reviewing applicable procurements.

How will A&A technology benefit these users?

A&A streamlines procedures; facilitates communication between a Project Officer and the Contracting Officer; facilitates any purchasing required with project or OE funds; and facilitates M/OP's evaluation process, all of which should result in goods and services appearing more quickly. One

significant benefit: you will be able to track a dollar through the Agency and will be able to relate how much was spent for any item bought by the Agency.

What's the best thing about the new system?

It generates excitement in the people who have tested it. The EXOs and Contracting Officers in Guatemala and Egypt thought the system would greatly assist them in their work. The system was demo'd at the EXO conference this March and it was met with a lot of enthusiasm.

Who do we contact if we have problems or questions?

Both M/IRM and M/OP will be supporting this system. M/IRM will be establishing a user help desk for all technical issues and M/OP will be able to support all business-related issues.

Any last comments for our readers?

A&A is a new way of doing business that will be supporting the reengineering reforms taking place throughout the Agency. It is a comprehensive tool that will assist personnel in the Agency to more efficiently and effectively accomplish the goals we have set for ourselves as an Agency.

For further information, you can contact A&A Project Managers from M/OP, Terry Payne and Carrie Johnson M/OP, or A&A IRM Coordinator, Kathy O'Meara. ☺

Vicky Lieber is a technical writer for M/IRM/SDM.

Update on the Operations Business Area

by Larry Tanner

In 1993, the Administrator declared USAID a reinvention laboratory, one of only two government agencies to be defined as such in their entirety. Following principles developed by the Intensive Reengineering Team early in 1994, the Operations Business Area analysis team, which formed in the summer of 1994, chose not only to analyze the operations (Ops) Business Area for systems design, but also to continue reengineering the way USAID does business. What are the implications of the Ops decision for October 1, 1995?

The Operations Report, issued in November 1994, called for a new Agency operations system to support managing for results and new policies and procedures to implement that system. The reengineered operations process provides for a single annual report and assessment of results in combination with an annual request for resources.

All of the new automated systems to be delivered to some sites by October, 1995 —accounting, budgeting, and acquisition and assistance, as well as operations — work together to support the goals of reengineering: closer teamwork through shared information, empowerment of employees on the front lines to make decisions, reduced paperwork, and a system of managing for results that encompasses planning for specific, measurable objectives and tracks their accomplishment.

The first software to be delivered from the Operations Business Area is called Results Tracking. This software will enable users to enter information about strategic objectives and supporting results into the Agency integrated information system. Users will be able to (1) formulate a new, or record an existing, results framework, showing

WordPerfect for Windows

TIP!

Add dots.....to your document!

Several publications use a series of dots between left-justified text and right-justified text on the same line. For example, a table of contents in a book contains periods and spaces neatly inserted between text on the left and the right.

WordPerfect makes it easy for you to create those dots!

Enter the text like you normally do at the left-hand margin, hold down the ALT key and hit the F6 key twice. Finish up by typing the text you want on the right side (i.e., a page number.) The first time you hit F6, your text is right justified; the second time you hit F6, the dots are added. Or, you may select Layout on the Menu bar and then Line and Flush Right for the same effect. You must go through the Layout menu option twice to get the dots. If you only go through once, your text will only be flushed to the right.

Information Technology Improving the Quality of Life

One of the nice things in life is to offer help to someone who really needs it and to see that the results of your help were positive.

On April 6, 1995, I was on TDY in Egypt providing IRM support to the Cost Recovery Health Project (CRHP)—a project that has been receiving IRM technical assistance since 1988. The HRDC office of USAID/EGYPT and I were invited to the opening ceremony of “Kafr El Dawar” hospital in Northern Egypt.

The hospital was completely renovated using USAID funds and assistance. It provides all basic health services (including Dentistry) to the local walk-in patients using the latest medical equipment and a prototype Management Information System for admission and record keeping. IRM provided assistance to the project and the local counterpart personnel at the Ministry Of Health (MOH) in order to develop this system and make it available to all hospitals in the CRHP project.



Local Egyptians were so grateful for this effort that they came for medical treatment and checkups just to see their name registered and printed on a computer. That interest is exactly what the Ministry Of Health and the USAID mission wanted to see: rural and urban population seeking preventive medical care. Thanks to the USAID Health assistance in Egypt, the Child Survival Program has been phenomenally successful in reducing 80,000 infant deaths per year. Additionally, due to USAID spreading the knowledge and use of Oral Rehydration Therapy (ORT), diarrhea is no longer the major cause of deaths in Egypt.

Rarely do we have the chance to see information technology directly linked to the Agency’s core business of assisting people in developing countries. Let’s keep up the good work and keep improving the quality of life in our world!

Moin Abulhosn is a Senior IT Analyst for IRM’s Project Support Group.

“The design effort for this system was assisted by the participation of a group of individuals from the field who came to Washington for a three week period during February 1995 to assist with the analysis process. This group will also provide a sounding board for the initial review of the system during May.”

the hierarchy of results that contribute to a strategic objective; (2) link operating unit strategic objectives to the agency goals and objectives; (3) track both planned and actual results, whether quantitative or qualitative; (4) query the system for information and reports about results. Information will be available from other operating units to help objective planners and activity designers with their work.

The design effort for this system was assisted by the participation of a group of individuals from the field who came to Washington for a three week period during February 1995 to assist with the analysis process. This group will also provide a sounding board for the initial review of the system during May.

We envision that having information available in the Agency integrated information system,

particularly in Results Tracking, will greatly reduce the time spent by field staff preparing reports responding to routine and ad hoc information requests from Washington.

The second software to be delivered by Operations, called Planning and Implementation, is currently being designed and is scheduled for delivery in the first half of FY 96. This software will provide automated support for the efforts of planners and implementers while collecting information about activities, budgets, schedules, team composition, and results packages. It will link to, and share data with the budget and accounting systems, enabling the agency to begin to manage its resources by strategic objective, rather than the traditional project. It will permit teams to work closely together on an objective or

activity even when separated by thousands of miles.

The new Operations software, which will be based on the standard Windows interface, is expected to be very user friendly and easy to learn. A major training effort to introduce the new approach to managing for results with new software, policies and procedures is being planned for the summer and fall of 1995, as noted in a recent Agency notice (April 28, 1995, #62) and cable (#105378) to the field. A later article will provide details on this effort.

For further information, please contact Operations Project Manager from M/ROR, Larry Tanner or the Operations IRM Coordinator, Bob Cunningham. ☉

Larry Tanner is the Team Leader for the Operations Business Design Team.

FAX-on-Demand

By Ed Stuart

No, this is not your overbearing boss' command to get that document sent! On the contrary, the demand comes from the recipient of information. It is a new way for the average person to receive timely and up-to-date information from a business or the government. FAX-on-Demand refers to a system that allows a caller to request an index of documents or specific documents over their telephone and have those documents sent automatically to their FAX machine.

USAID's interest in FAX-on-Demand was initiated by Pam White of the Human Resource's Recruitment Branch and their desire to replace an existing voice system. They envisioned a system for people interested in Foreign Service job opportunities that would preserve enough of the voice component of the old system for those users who do not have access to FAX technology while also expanding the capability of the system for those who do have access

to a FAX machine. The project began late last year and was put into production in March 1995. The new system is designed for three types of callers: 1) the caller who has a FAX machine and knows something about USAID but needs more specific information; 2) the caller who has a FAX machine and would like to listen to verbal information on USAID as well as be able to receive specific documents; and 3) the caller who does not have a FAX machine.

A caller to USAID's system is greeted and instructed in the use of FAX-on-Demand technology. The first type of caller, the user that is familiar with USAID and has used similar systems, has the option of dialing "1" to exit the voice component of the system and having a document index or specific documents FAX'ed to them.

The remaining users, those who wish to listen to the verbal component of the system, are instructed to stay on the line, after which they are led through a series of options to listen to various short informational messages. These short descriptions address the Agency and its mission, general employment information, specific employment programs, and employment opportunities with other international U.S. Government organizations. Documents of more specific information on USAID programs are described within each of these broad categories.

The second type of caller, one who has a FAX machine but would also like to listen to information about the Agency, is invited to "mark" those documents they wish to have FAX'ed by using their phone's keypad. The caller then has an option to continue through the system or exit and have the marked documents FAX'ed to them.

Lastly, the caller who does not have a FAX may listen to the verbal component of the system and is invited at any point to dial "0" to exit the system to leave their name and mailing address for a Recruitment Information package to be mailed to them.

The system operates 24-hours a day, 7 days a week and is accessible



TIP!

E-mail Overload!

If you have excessive E-mails, start managing them by filing to WordPerfect!

After reading your message, hit F10 and select the File option. At the next screen, select Disk file and then follow the instructions. If you type a file name and hit enter, your message is automatically filed to your personal WordPerfect directory. IRM is currently working on a way to manage E-mail more efficiently.

"We just got the most advanced Fax-on-Demand system in the Agency up and running to rave reviews from our customers — I can't tell you how excited we are about this!"

*Pam White
Division Chief of the
Workforce Planning and
Recruitment Branch of
Human Resources.*

Faster MACRO Access

By Trudi Savoy

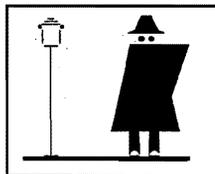
Get your frequently used windows 5.2 macros off to a faster start by assigning them to your personal macro menu. This is especially helpful for those of you who need to use personal macros on your C drive as well as the Agency macros located on the Y drive, because you can play macros from both drives without changing the standard macros path (y:\wpwin\macros) in the tool bar options File Preferences Location of Files.

From the Menu, click on Help, Using Macros, Macro Basics, and select Assign to Macro Menu. Follow the step-by-step instructions to assign up to nine macros to your macro menu. For your C drive macros, type the full path name where prompted for the macro name, for example: c:\wpwin\macros\macroname.wcm. You'll then be able to play a macro by clicking on "Macro" from the menu, and then clicking the desired macro name (or press ALTM and the number of the desired macro).

And don't worry, deleting a macro from your macro menu does not delete or affect the macro file itself.

If your mission System Administrator didn't get a macros disk at the April 1995 EXO Conference held in Leesburg, Virginia, please request one from Trudi Savoy or Mike Diehl. Play the HELP macro (OSHELP for Missions) to see a list of available macros. If you need assistance, contact Trudi Savoy or Mike Diehl. Send requests for new macros to James Lindahl.

"A computer virus is a program that copies itself to other programs to purposely alter system operations. Once executed, the virus is capable of performing any action, from displaying a message to destroying data."



by dialing (202) 663-2400. Where the current system focuses on FS Recruitment, efforts are under way to add GS vacancy announcements to the system.☺

Ed Stuart is a Computer Specialist for M/IRM/CIS.

Security... On the Prowl!

By Wanda Moore

If one morning when turning on your PC, one of the following messages appears on your screen, your PC is probably infected with a computer virus:

- STONED VIRUS:**
displays "Your computer is Now Stoned."
- LEPROSY (SCRIBBLE) VIRUS:** displays "NEWS FLASH... infected with incurable decay LEPROSY..."
- DEVIL'S DANCE VIRUS:**
displays "Did you ever dance with

the devil in the weak moonlight?
Pray for your disks!! The Joker."

A computer virus is a program that copies itself to other programs to purposely alter system operations. Once executed, the virus is capable of performing any action, from displaying a message to destroying data. Several viruses prowl around in our PCs without end-users even knowing until their computer stops working.

If you encounter or suspect a computer virus,

- STOP USING THE COMPUTER.** Some viruses are triggered by certain keystrokes.
- CONTACT** your Information Technology Specialist/system manager immediately.
- IDENTIFY DISKETTES** used on the computer and set them aside for analysis.

Because new viruses are created every day, please take precautionary steps to protect your data:

1. Scan computer diskettes with an anti-viral computer program to detect malicious code. USAID's standard is F-PROT. To invoke F-PROT from the DOS environment enter

"y:\f-prot\f-prot". Additional instructions on how to use F-PROT can be obtained from your Information Technology/System Manager or consult USAID General Notice -A.I.D. Computer Virus Guidelines Agency Notice dated 5/4/95, #12.

2. Copy attachments received from external E-Mail systems to floppy diskettes BEFORE reading them. Then scan the floppy diskette.

3. Ensure that software is obtained from reputable and responsible sources.

4. Perform routine backups of critical files and data and store in a safe place.☺

Wanda Moore is the Division Chief of the IRM Computer Security Group.

Privatization Efforts in the New Independent States (NIS)

By Bill Ramo

The Project Support Group (PSG) in IRM has been playing a key role in USAID's New Independent States assistance program by providing information technology (IT) services to support private sector development. Since early 1992, the NIS countries have embarked on an ambitious reform program to transform their centrally planned economies to free market economies. The IRM Support Group was requested to provide initial Information Technology assessments on a number of activities, including the Municipal Finance and Management Project in Moscow and Nizhny Novgorod, the Moldova Public Auction of State Owned Enterprises Project, and the Economic Restructuring and Fiscal Sector Reform Project under which IRM worked on the payment system for the

Central Bank of Armenia and the Electronic Interbank Payment System for the National Bank of Ukraine.

The Municipal Finance Development Project is being carried out by a consortium of U.S. organizations led by the Research Triangle Institute located in North Carolina. The project's purpose is to introduce municipalities in Russia and other New Independent State (NIS) countries to the best available techniques and systems for municipal budgeting, finance and management in the context of democratic local governance and a free-market economic system. Generally, Information Technology (IT) resources in many of the large city governments throughout the NIS are minimal. Thus, IT will play a critical role in the design and implementation of the new administrative and management systems in Russia.

During their TDY, the IRM analysts reviewed the strategic Information Technology objectives, performance milestones and measurable indicators of performance, and evaluation information system configurations appropriate to support the information needs of Moscow-wide government. As might be expected, there is a dire need within the Moscow city government to improve IT initiatives in order to enhance the city's financial management, its decision-making process and policy formulation and, finally, to develop a city-wide Management Information System. Further, our IRM team reported that within the government, a basic IT infrastructure is missing and that a shortage of funds prevented the government from purchasing the necessary hardware and associated services. On the positive side, the team found that Moscow does have a well-developed resource base of Information Technology expertise and vendors.

Under another NIS private sector initiative designed to direct nationwide auction of open joint stock companies, the Moldova Public Auction of State Owned Enterprises Project, IRM/PSG analysts evaluated networking requirements for regional

"IRM did an outstanding job for the National Bank of Ukraine's (NBU) Payment System, which is the most efficient system in the Former Soviet Union. We ended up supplying more than \$1,000,000 of equipment which will allow them to continue to provide effective service for several more years.

Bank clients now demand that their bank is on the system and one of the most effective tools NBU has in its supervisory role is to threaten removal from the system—two real compliments to how well the system works.

We didn't do all the work, but what we did sure helped!

Thomas Downen is the USAID banking advisor in Kiev.

“During their TDY, the IRM analysts reviewed the strategic Information Technology objectives, performance milestones and measurable indicators of performance, and evaluation information system configurations appropriate to support the information needs of Moscow-wide government.”



**FAX
TIP!**

Did you know that the Electronic Phone Directory contains fax and phone numbers for both USAID/W and overseas? When you click on the USAID Phone Directory icon, you can press F6 for the overseas phone and fax numbers; press F8 for all fax numbers. You can also find information regarding organizations, cities, countries and time differences!

auction offices to support basic office automation application requirements -word processing, spreadsheet analysis, and tracking vouchers for purchasing stock in newly privatized firms. These shares are tracked using a database management tool that provides the most simple and direct mechanism for a Russian citizen to participate in privatization and become a shareholder.

The IRM/SPG also conducted Information Technology assessments in the Ukraine and Armenia to support NIS banking and finance reform initiatives. For example, an analyst traveled to Kiev to evaluate the Electronic Interbank Payment System that is being implemented by the National Bank of Ukraine. Similarly, two staff analysts traveled to Yerevan to evaluate the planning and implementation of an Electronic Interbank Payment System by the Central Bank of Armenia, and, in addition, evaluated information needs and IT resources to support an electronic linkage between the Center for Economic Policy, Research and Analysis (CEPRA) and the Ministry of Economy.

For further information on these studies or if you are interested in having the IRM Special Projects Group provide Informational Technology assistance, e.g., initial assessments, review of scopes of work or bid specifications, please contact Joe Gueron, M/IRM/CIS, by E-Mail or telephone 703-875-1734.☎

Bill Ramo is a Senior IT Analyst for Project Support Group of IRM.

News from the EXO Conference

By Sandy Muldoon-Kunz

The first world-wide IRM Workshop on Managing Information Technology was held during April at the Xerox Document University in Leesburg,

Virginia. IRM organized and hosted the two-week conference, which was attended by approximately 200 Executive Officers and Systems Managers from 75 missions and several AID/Washington offices. The focus for this year's workshop was preparation for the NMS rollout, which begins shortly in missions. The goal of the workshop was to ensure that managers responsible for information technology in the missions and their technical experts had sufficient information to prepare their missions for the installation of NMS applications. By all estimations, the workshop was successful in meeting this goal.

The first week of the workshop was geared toward management issues. More than 50 speakers — including USAID Administrator Brian Atwood, AA for the Management Bureau Larry Byrne, Deputy AA Mike Sherwin, and staff from throughout IRM, FM, and OP — addressed the group on a variety of topics, including:

- a status report on NMS development including demonstrations of several NMS applications;
- telecommunications issues, and strategies for supporting the link between AID/Washington and the field;
- computer security issues
- budgeting, procurement and maintenance issues;
- technical configurations for UNIX, Banyan LAN servers and PCs required to support NMS applications;
- new hardware and software trends, including a demonstration of Beyond Mail, Lotus Notes, Travel Manager, the Document Generation System, and CD ROMs; and
- future technology trends: satcom units, Internet, video conferencing, bulletin boards and more.

The second week of the workshop was more technical and geared toward the systems managers. In-depth training sessions were held on Banyan VINES operating system and Sun UNIX advanced management concepts. Training on NMS installation and an introduction to

Oracle was done during one day's session, while another was devoted to technical telecommunications issues.

Any questions regarding the above mentioned topics should be referred to your EXO or System Administrator that attended the conference. Sandy Muldoon-Kunz may also be contacted via E-mail at Sandy Muldoon-Kunz@irm.tco@aidw.

Sandy Muldoon is a Computer Specialist for the Telecommunications and Operations (TCO) Division of IRM.

USAID's Network Management

by Pat Kristobek

An absolutely critical component of the New Management Systems is the underlying world-wide network. USAID's network is made up of over 450 LAN and corporate application servers world-wide, related concentrators, routers, and, of course, the communication systems, which lets all the servers "talk" to one another using either Banyan Vines or TCP/IP. There may be anywhere from 10 to several hundred users accessing each of these servers. At present, there are approximately 8000 PCs and 450 servers on the USAID network, or the AIDNET, as it is commonly called.

Keeping this system up and running reliably is a daunting task, to say the least. "We have had our difficulties maintaining network stability and reliability while coping with spectacular growth and complexity resulting from far faster PCs, increased Internet traffic and more complex and sophisticated documents on the network," says IRM Director Barry Goldberg. "The New Management Systems are at the heart of USAID's operations and, therefore, their implementation places even

greater responsibility on IRM to maintain a well functioning network."

Patricia Kristobek, the IRM project officer for a study on improving networked systems management recently observed at the EXO conference, that, "in one sense, the AIDNET can be compared to a stealth fighter aircraft — in order to maximize its stealth capabilities, the plane is inherently unstable by design." In order to compensate for the unstableness, the designers programmed in very sophisticated computer systems which automatically monitor and control various flight control surfaces of the aircraft which provide for a very stable aircraft. Such monitoring and control systems are also required for networks to ensure their reliability, availability and performance." Given the far flung reaches of the AIDNET, the wide variety of equipment and software operating it, and the explosive growth in network traffic, it is no wonder that providing stability and reliability is such a technical challenge.

The actual computer programs comprising the New Management Systems (NMS) are based upon open systems client/server technology. Briefly, a client/server system is one where the servers and individual PCs share the processing requirements. A world-wide client/server system obviously must have a stable and reliable network if it is to work as designed.

Recognizing the complexity that the new client/server technology would place on the AIDNET environment, M/IRM contracted with Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC) to deliver a strategy for effectively monitoring and controlling the entire network. The key deliverables of the study were a Requirements Analysis, a Market Survey and Alternatives Evaluation, and finally, an Implementation Strategy. CSC collected requirements from over 50 people in USAID, including representatives from the Business Analysis Teams and several USAID Missions. The study was completed in March of this year.

"We have had our difficulties maintaining network stability and reliability while coping with spectacular growth and complexity resulting from far faster PCs, increased Internet traffic and more complex and sophisticated documents on the network," says IRM Director Barry Goldberg. "The New Management Systems are at the heart of USAID's operations and, therefore, their implementation places even greater responsibility on IRM to maintain a well functioning network."

“IRM will implement the network management systems in a phased approach to support the management functions world-wide. The first priority will be on the network backbone, the world-wide communications systems and related computers, and the key NMS components, i.e., UNIX servers and Oracle databases. This phase should be completed by October 1995.”

CSC's recommended suite of tools, when fully installed and implemented, will automate many key network and systems management processes. From IRM's central control location, currently in Rosslyn, network managers will detect and resolve network problems, track network response times and traffic loads to ensure that it is performing at its best, track problems and status of repairs, track devices and systems, their configuration and their location, distribute software electronically over the network, and detect network and system security problems, such as unauthorized access. A rule-based problem-resolution system will take corrective actions, such as running programs, reconfiguring network elements, and shutting down systems when a given network event (or series of events) occurs.

IRM will implement the network management systems in a phased approach to support the management functions world-wide. The first priority will be on the network backbone, the world-wide communications systems and related computers, and the key NMS components, i.e., UNIX servers and Oracle databases. This phase should be completed by October 1995. Integrating management of individual LANs and connected PCs will follow. Ensuring the consistency and integrity of the IT infrastructure is key to the success of the New Management Systems.☺

Pat Kristobek is a Computer Specialist for the Information and Policy Administration (IPA) Division of IRM.

WordPerfect for Windows

TIP!

Instead of using just the “Page Up” and “Page Down” keys to move through your document, try Alt+End, Alt+Page Down and Alt+Home!

Alt+End moves the insertion point to the bottom of the current page; Alt+Page Down takes you to the top of the next page.

Moving backwards through a document? Try using Alt+Home to move to the top of the current page.

(Home-Home-Up arrow key or Home-Home-Down arrow key works great too! Up takes you the beginning of your document and down takes you to the end of it!)

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SEPTEMBER 1995



A Newsletter from the Office of Information Resources Management - M/IRM

New Management Systems (NMS) Update

by Dianne Arnold

While the overall reengineering of the Agency's operations is on track, the implementation of the New Management Systems (NMS) to support the new USAID in the field has slowed down. This will not, however, delay our change over to the four core values, managing for results, partnerships and teamwork. We have already demonstrated that these new techniques work in our experimental labs. We will bring the NMS on-line as quickly as we can in the field; Washington will be operational on October 1. The need to meet USAID's telecommunications needs internally and delays in obtaining new servers have slowed down the field implementation of the NMS. A procurement was initiated in July for new servers for each of the 44 UNIX sites. The current plan is for all, or most (depending upon shipping and customs clearance) servers to be installed in November and December. Once the missions have the appropriate server in place, the applications software will be installed. Plans are for missions to be using the new software no later than January 1, 1996. Complete cables on all changeover procedures will be issued shortly. Plans for non-UNIX missions are still being tested and will be communicated in September. Training for representatives from each bureau of Washington will occur in the September and October. For missions, regional training (for select representatives from the missions) is being planned for the December/January timeframe. The complex set of factors which must be resolved in order to successfully implement a corporate-wide management system are all in process — with the status changing almost daily. It has been difficult to provide accurate communication updates, because they are rendered inaccurate by events before the cable or memo is released. A series of cables and USAID/W notices on the entire Agency reengineering process will be sent out during the month of September. Included in these cables will be details on the NMS functionality, hardware, software and training. ●

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The IRM Two-Step Shuffle

by Chuck Patalive

Not to be outdone by other offices in USAID/W, IRM too, has made several changes in personnel. In several cases, the personnel moves resulted from the formation of the NMS Task Force and in other

“Replacing Barry in an acting capacity is Joan Matejcek who was the Deputy Director. Many of you will recognize Joan’s name; she has written several articles for IRM At Work. Joan came to us last year from GSA where she worked with the Federal IRM Reviews program.”

cases, changes were made to take advantage of the strengths of individuals as our workload requirements change.

First, we were all saddened with the sudden departure of **Barry Goldberg**, our Director. Barry has moved up the hill, to the Hill, to take a position with the House Appropriations Committee. We all miss Barry greatly and thank him for five great years..

The Office of the Director has undergone other changes too. Replacing Barry in an acting capacity is **Joan Matejcek** who was the Deputy Director. Many of you will recognize Joan’s name; she has written several articles for *IRM At Work*. Joan came to us last year from GSA where she worked with the Federal IRM Reviews program. **Wayne Van Vechten**, previously the Chief of PMA, is now acting in Joan’s former position as Deputy Director. And finally, in the Director’s Office, IRM’s secretary for the past 14 years, **Ruth Reed**, decided to retire her red pens and dictionary and enjoy life. We managed to lure **Victorial Johnson** from USAID’s White House Liaison Office to join us as Ruth’s replacement. We all hope Vickie enjoys an equally lengthy tenure with IRM.

As for IRM’s Planning, Management and Acquisitions (PMA) Division, **Margaret Alter** has replaced Wayne Van Vechten as the Acting Chief of PMA while **Tom Ryan** replaced Margaret as Team Leader for the Contracts (acquisitions) Team. (There is no truth to the rumor that these changes were made to

confuse our customers trying to complete year-end computer related procurements.) **Rusty Wallace** joined the Contracts team after spending some time in the CIS Division. Rounding out the last piece of the revamped PMA division, **Bill Anderson** took over as Team Leader for the Finance Team.

A major change which will directly impact all of IRM’s customers is the creation of the new Customer Services group located in the Consulting & Information Services Division. The User Help Desk and Mission Support Group will be managed by **Jerry Sajewski** who moved over from the PMA Division. **Bill Ruvinsky** is the Team leader for the Help Desk and **Courtney Ives** moved from the Telecommunications & Computer Operations (TCO) Division to take charge specifically of the Mission Support Group.

Dianne Arnold, who was the Division Chief for our Systems Development and Maintenance (SDM) division, was selected to go on detail to head up the Policy group for the newly established NMS Task Force. **Darrell Owen** was moved from his CIS Team Leader position to replace Dianne as the Acting SDM Division Chief. Supporting Darrell in SDM is **Jim Bossard** who moved from the TCO Division. Jim is one of IRM’s few Foreign Service Officers and now heads up the systems and software testing as well as Configuration Management. Configuration Management is the “what, when and where” of software development—what version of which pieces of software is in production at a particular time.

WordPerfect
for Windows

Tip!

After you have added several paragraphs to a lengthy document, you can run a spell check on only the paragraphs you have added, rather than the entire document. Simply block (F-12 key) or highlight the text to be checked with your mouse and run the speller. The speller will check only the highlighted text.

In the Information, Policy and Administration division (IPA) **Cathy Gleason** has assumed responsibility for the Computer Security Group replacing **Wanda Moore** who retired. ©

Chuck Patalive is one of the Ombudsman for M/IRM/OD.

MANAGER'S CORNER

By Frank Almaguer

The Human Resources Business Area Analysis (HR/BAA) team has completed the first phase of reengineering USAID's Human Resources function. The first draft of its Final Report to Management was delivered in June. The Report has already been vetted with the HR/BAA Reference Group—senior career managers throughout the Agency. Over the next month, we will be sharing it with the Agency's Quality Council and Labor-Management Partnership Council. Following final approval by the AA/M and the Administrator, it will be disseminated Agency-wide.

The Report was substantially influenced by the reform efforts already underway in M/HR (e.g. the new Employee Evaluation Program, reform of the FS assignments system, recruitment reforms, and introduction of the Learning Organization model by the Training Division), as well as by the feedback collected in the March, 1995, HR/BAA Personnel Services Customer Survey. Close to 2,700 employees and managers responded to the survey. Their feedback helped to shape the reforms in progress and the recommendations - more than 100 - made by the HR/BAA Team. I would like to personally thank each of the respondents for their valuable input.

Now, the second phase of the HR reengineering effort, the HR Business System Design (HR/BSD) phase, is underway. The HR/BSD team, headed by Doug Brandi, is designing automated HR processes and a new management system (NMS) for the HR function, as well as drafting new "customer friendly" HR policies and procedures. On-line testing of the new system should begin next spring. The HR NMS and its reengineered processes will equip personnel service providers throughout the Agency with the tools needed to do a better job for you and provide you with the access you need to personnel information.

All of this is going to add-up to big improvements in HR customer service throughout the Agency. To ensure that it does, with M/IRM's help, we will continue to measure and track our customer service progress with follow-up surveys. M/HR is committed to improving the management of the HR function throughout USAID and, with your ongoing support, we will achieve that goal.

Frank Almaguer is the Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Office of Human Resources.

IRM Shops Join Forces

by Paul Eavy

Most of you have probably heard proposals that Congress has to merge USAID, USIA and ACDA into the State Department. A week doesn't go by, after all, where there isn't some new story about consolidation or merger. What you might not hear much about is how the four agencies are already working together to

provide joint solutions to common problems.

While the list of shared administrative services has been growing, the Foreign Affairs InterAgency IRM Group (FAIIG) is the vehicle for the teaming up of USAID, State Department, USIA and ACDA IRM organizations to improve joint delivery of information technology services.

Beginning in 1993 as an informal group assembled by the information management leaders in USAID and USIA, the group now has an official charter, has added STATE and ACDA to the list of sponsors and has

While the list of shared administrative services has been growing, the Foreign Affairs InterAgency IRM Group (FAIIG) is the vehicle for the teaming up of USAID, State Department, USIA and ACDA IRM organizations to improve joint delivery of information technology services.

**USAID, DoS, USIA
and ACDA shared
services:**

- International Mail Service
- Building Security Services
- CD-ROM Publications
- Domestic
Telecommunications
- Computer
Hardware/Software
- Computer Security Services
- Co-location of Mainframe
Computers

***“Using VSAT
technology, IRM is
arranging for the
installation of
satellite dish
antennas, 2.4
meters in diameter,
at 44 missions.”***

IRM at Work, July 1995

extended invitations to participate to any agency which has a foreign affairs organizational component.

The new group's primary function is to develop consensus concerning more effective IRM policy coordination, planning, acquisition and implementation in connection with major information technology systems of foreign affairs agencies.

In the coming months the agencies hope to collaborate in the areas of systems development and technical architecture. All parties agree that collaboration on **Systems Development** provides the greatest potential for both near and long-term savings. The initiative is young but efforts are already being explored to move towards common financial management and personnel management systems among USIA, USAID and STATE. These, as well as less ambitious efforts, are all being considered as areas where *cost savings* can accrue for everyone through collaboration.

A common **Technical Architecture** can also benefit all of us. FAIIG members are actively pursuing the possibility of sharing a common computing platform (server operating system, hardware, graphical user interface, desktop PC, network operating system and database management system) for administrative systems. First up in this discussion is the impact that *Windows 95* will have on platform decisions.

“We're looking for the areas where we can make the biggest difference,” says Joan Matejcek, senior IRM manager for USAID. “Collaboration means cost savings, and big gains in collaboration have the potential to offset some of the even bigger cuts anticipated in upcoming OE budgets. We're hoping that FAIIG will be the vehicle to team up in meeting these challenges.”

Paul Eavy is a Senior Technical Advisor to IRM's Office of the Director.

VSAT - Continued

by Ken Roko

Installation of the VSAT equipment, including satellite dishes at 44 missions, is in full swing as you are reading this article. (See the July edition of IRM at Work for the introductory article on VSAT). USAID entered into interagency agreements with the U.S. Navy (NISE/West) and NASA; under these agreements, contracts were let to Lyman Brothers of Salt Lake City for satellite services (Intelsat), to Raytheon, which in turned issued subcontracts to Hughes Corporation for satellite dishes and associate equipment and to Circle International for shipping of all equipment to missions. “Coordination among the three government agencies and the four contractors to have equipment shipped, installed and operating in 44 Missions around the world over a four-week period to meet our deadline has been simply awesome!” says Joan Matejcek, IRM's Acting Director. “Ken Roko of our own IRM/TCO division deserves considerable credit for taking the lead in bringing the parties together over a three day marathon negotiating session in IRM's office to hammer out responsibilities.”

In order to meet the October 1 deadline of having the certain components of the NMS up and operating, 13, three-person installation teams are currently spread throughout world installing VSAT satellite dishes on Mission properties.

Generally, each team has a representative from IRM (or NASA,) NISE-West and Raytheon. (See schedule below.) Prior to each team's arrival in country, country clearances were obtained for team members and the equipment was shipped in and cleared by the mission. Out of 44 countries slated for VSAT, there have been some difficulties with only four countries ... certainly a credit to our relationships with the local ministries.

The specific Intelsat satellite that will be used for the Asian regions is not yet available; we hope to bring those Missions online sometime in October or November. Installation of VSAT at the following missions will occur after October 1: Moscow, Bangladesh, India, Kazakhstan, Nepal, Indonesia, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

The pieces to the puzzle of such a complex and optimistic implementation plan are beginning to come into place as this is being written. The teams are committed to stay at each mission until the job is completed, and we are satisfied that the VSAT is performing as expected.

As of September 2, 1995, Guatemala and Honduras were completed successfully. The Guatemalan installations took two days, and Honduras took one and one half days. The current schedule for other sites allows for three days each to allow for local situations such as mission manpower assistance, bad weather, etc.

IRM thanks the Missions for being very supportive and the extra effort to insure success.

VSAT Rollout



The following missions will have VSAT installed by October 1, 1995:

- 8/26/95 (completed!)
Guatemala and Honduras
- 9/9/95
Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru
- 9/10/95
Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama, Jamaica and Dominican Republic
- 9/16/95
Ghana, Niger, Zimbabwe, Kampala, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Ivory Coast, Morocco, Senegal and Guinea
- 9/23/95
Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Israel, Hungary, Jordan, Ethiopia, Botswana, Poland, Ukraine, Egypt, Haiti and South Africa.

Future articles will describe more fully the additional services VSAT will bring to each of the missions where it is installed, e.g., access to Internet. ☉

*Ken Roko is a
Telecommunications Specialist
in M/IRM/TCO.*

Help Is Just a Call Away!

by Jerry Sajewski

Have you ever not known where to turn with your automation questions?

Well help is on the way! The Consulting and Information Services Division (CIS) of IRM is currently designing and will be implementing a Centralized IRM Help Desk (CIHD). The CIHD will take information technology and management inquiries and insure that a response is delivered. "Help desks are becoming very common across the information industry," remarked Joe Gueron, Division Chief of M/IRM/CIS, "because they have been found to be effective and efficient ways to answer employees' technical questions."

Initially, the IRM help desk will field inquiries and problems related to the NMS; the initial components of the NMS are scheduled to be rolled out October 1. The Help Desk will be staffed not only with technical specialists, but also representatives from the NMS Business Areas. Eventually, as the Help Desk staff becomes more experienced, collectively, they will serve as the single place where automation questions can be directed, tracked and followed-up on. When appropriate, questions will be forwarded to "second tier" staff members.

A critical element of any help desk is the software and related database. As customers contact the help desk with their problems or make inquiries, they are entered into a database along with the answers or responses made by the help desk staff. Over a period of time, the database provides a wealth of



A new telephone number for the Help Desk will be released soon!

"Help desks are becoming very common across the information industry," remarked Joe Gueron, Division Chief of M/IRM/CIS, "because they have been found to be effective and efficient ways to answer employees' technical questions."

Cybernuggets...by Steve Hawkins

Am I a "Retro" kind of guy?

Last week a number of astute users chided me (imagine!) for providing a CYBERNUGGET that referred to keystrokes for rapid movement within WordPerfect. "Keystrokes are retro," they cried, "Click that mouse!" Well, heaven forbid that I should be accused of being RETRO. If you really want to move quickly and conveniently in WP, grab that mouse and click away. Anytime you are in a WP for Windows document, you will see a "Scroll Bar" that can be used to move through the document quickly with the mouse. The button is called the "Scroll Box" and represents the screen location in the document. When you move the Scroll Box, the screen position in the document moves as well. There are three ways to move the Scroll Box:

1. Click on the arrows at the top and bottom of the scroll bar; the Scroll Box will move in the direction you point and your position in the document will track along with it.
2. If you put the pointer in the stripe somewhere other than where the Scroll Box is and click the mouse, the button will move toward the pointer.
3. If you put the pointer on top of the Scroll Box and click and hold you can drag the Scroll Box to any position in the Scroll Bar. Note: If you drift out of the bar the Box will snap back to where it was but as long as you HOLD ONTO the mouse button it will snap back to the pointer if you get the pointer back in the Scroll Bar. After you have the screen adjusted to where you want the cursor to be, just put the mouse pointer in the screen to where you want the cursor and click one last time. By the way, there are still times when it's faster to move with a couple of keystrokes (don't tell anybody I said that).

"The CIHD development team is interested in hearing any ideas that you may have regarding the design or operations of a help desk, including days and hours of operation -please e-mail or phone any thoughts that you may have to Bill Ruvinsky of M/IRM at (703) 875-1827."

information regarding problem areas with say, certain software products, or locations or offices, or with the network itself. IRM will have yet another tool to diagnose and correct systemic problems while simultaneously helping individuals with their immediate problem. It also allows IRM to provide standard answers or fixes to problems while developing and documenting information to educate staff on frequently occurring problems.

The current help desk development schedule calls for a start during this October. The CIHD development team is interested in hearing any ideas that you may have regarding the design or operations of a help desk. Please E-mail or phone any thoughts that you may have to Bill Ruvinsky of M/IRM at (703) 875-1827.

In future editions of *IRM At Work*, and through Agency-wide notices, we will keep you posted on further CIHD developments. ☺

Jerry Sajewski is a Computer Specialist in M/IRM/CIS.

Windows 95 at USAID

by Chuck Patalive

So! you say, "When is USAID going to adopt Microsoft's Windows 95?" The answer is: not soon and maybe never. In fact, among managers of large networks, IRM is not alone in its reluctance to quickly adopt Windows 95. In general, there is an attitude of "wait for the next release" which in the past, has been a cleaner and more bug free version. There are other considerations too, such as cost, integration into existing systems, and modification of programs to take advantage of the new system. Further, there is the extensive training and related costs required to bring employees up to speed on Windows 95.

USAID is in the process of implementing four new primary corporate applications throughout the USAID environment. This process will demand consistency in our

workstation hardware and software components to enable proper operation of the NMS applications. To ensure these new systems operate as intended, IRM must ensure a stable environment. These NMS applications are written specifically for the Windows 3.1 user interface and could experience operating difficulties under Windows 95. Windows 95 may conflict with the software development environments and specific programming interfaces or drivers.

Cost is a major factor when considering upgrades or modifications. With more than 8,000 PC users on AIDNET, the cost to provide software and/or licenses to have Windows 95 operating on these machines would be enormous and difficult to justify given our current budget status.

IRM does, and will continue to, evaluate new technology including Windows 95 for applicability and cost effectiveness of implementation. However rather than Windows 95, Windows NT or another operating system may be better suited for USAID's network. ☐

Computer Security at USAID

by Van Newstrom

Increasingly, USAID depends upon its network of computers. They control our communications, financial accounts, purchasing processes and personnel histories. Although most of us have learned to trust them, in reality, they are vulnerable to the effects of poor design, insufficient quality control and accidental or deliberate attack. The modern thief can steal far more with a computer, modem and telephone than with a gun.

As attacks on computer systems increase, USAID system users are starting to ask security-related questions and incorporate computer security policies, procedures and guidelines into their daily routines. However, despite increased interest,

many system users still do not understand what computer security is and why it is very important.

Computer security protects your system and everything associated with it: the terminals, printers, cabling, data storage media, application software and operating system. Most importantly, computer security protects the information processed, stored and transmitted by them.

Traditionally, computer security has been viewed as procedures to protect against outside intruders who break into systems to steal money or secrets, or alternatively, to prove they can do it. Although such intruders do exist, they are not the only danger. Some of the more immediate dangers include sharing passwords with coworkers and friends, failing to back up files, and spilling liquids on a keyboard. These hazards, though not as renowned as viruses or hackers, are more likely to disrupt the flow of a normal work day.

There are three distinct aspects of computer and communications security: confidentiality, integrity and availability. Confidentiality assures only authorized users access information. Integrity assures information and programs are changed only as specified and authorized. Availability assures authorized users have access to information and resources.

Threats to a computer system or operation fall into three main categories: natural, unintentional, and intentional.

Natural threats (e.g., fires, floods, power failures, hurricanes) place at risk every facility and piece of computing equipment. Such threats cannot always be prevented, but risk mitigation policies and strategies can be employed to reduce the impact of such threats (e.g., installation of fire detection and suppression equipment, emergency power generators).

Unintentional threats are caused by careless disregard of established procedures or lack of knowledge. For example: users or system administrators may not be properly trained; equipment is dropped; or

WordPerfect for Windows

Managing your Files!

WordPerfect for Windows makes it easy to manage your directories which in turn allows the Local Area Network (LAN) to operate faster and more efficiently.

You have a choice of moving your documents to floppy disks or to your C: drive which is the hard drive. Of course, you can also delete files if you don't need them!

To manage your files when you are in WordPerfect, click on FILE and select OPEN. (If you have forgotten the name of your document, select one of the documents and click on VIEW. This allows you to see your documents without having to open each one.

When you find the file you need, you may delete or copy to your hard drive or a floppy by choosing OPTIONS and selecting the command you wish to make.

WordPerfect
for Windows

Tip!

When double clicking is troublesome for you, for example you cannot seem to click fast enough for the system to see a double click rather than two separate clicks, there is hope!

You can slow down the click. Select Control Panel from the MAIN menu screen; select MOUSE. The lower bar controls the double click speed. With your mouse, drag the box to the left towards slow. Click on OK when you are finished.

inappropriate procedures employed to update software resulting in erased files. More information is corrupted and lost through ignorance than through malice.

Intentional threats are the news-worthy threats and the threats that many security products are designed to prevent. These threats can originate from either outsiders or insiders. Outsiders may penetrate systems in a variety of ways: facility break-ins, electronic entry through modems and network connections, befriending inside personnel. Although most security mechanisms protect against outside intruders, most attacks are launched from within.

Insiders may be dismissed or disgruntled employees, or someone just trying to wreak havoc by disrupting office operations, or someone with more system access than they need. Employees may be intimidated, bribed or coerced by outsiders to share passwords or data. Other employees may use their inside knowledge of organizational and/or system operations to divert funds or supplies.

Within USAID, computer and communication security issues are addressed by the M/IRM/IPA security group led by Catherine Gleason. This group works on a variety of security issues that include: formulating computer security policies and procedures, assessing technical security features of software and hardware products and services; evaluating encryption devices and dial-up connection strategies; designing firewalls for Internet connections; planning security for USAID space in the Federal Triangle Building; working with system engineers to ensure the confidentiality, integrity and availability of

applications produced as part of the NMS project; and conducting computer and communications security briefings. The security group also responds to emergency assistance calls related to computer virus eradication, security violation inspections, and concerns related to password sharing.

If you would like to know more about computer and communications security or need assistance regarding a computer security issue contact Catherine Gleason by E-mail or phone (703-875-1678). ☎

Van Newstrom is a Computer Security Specialist on the Orkand Corporation contract working for M/IRM/IPA.

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A Newsletter from the Office of Information Resources Management - M/IRM

Executive Actions and Correspondence Tracking

by Joseph E. Nassif

When USAID published its Information Systems Plan (ISP) in March of 1993, one of the Business Areas was "Communications," which was scheduled for reengineering in Fiscal Year 1996. However, when the Agency undertook its "Rightsizing" efforts in late 1993, the need to improve the Agency's handling of executive-level correspondence surfaced as a high priority of Administrator Atwood and was singled out for reengineering immediately.

Executive correspondence is defined as letters, memoranda, briefing material and invitations addressed to the Administrator or Deputy Administrator requiring clearance, monitoring or other action by the Office of the Executive Secretariat (ES).

A joint effort was initiated between ES and the Office of Information Resource Management (IRM) aimed at bringing about major changes. A number of short-term improvements were put into place, including WordPerfect macros and streamlined processes and procedures. The long-term effort focused on: 1) reengineering the executive correspondence process, and 2) implementing a low cost system that would meet the management needs of USAID.

Results-to-Date

The logo for ExACT, featuring the word "EXACT" in a bold, sans-serif font. A large, stylized checkmark is superimposed over the letters, with the top of the checkmark extending above the 'A' and the bottom of the checkmark extending below the 'T'.

The new ExACT system has brought about a number of results with many more being realized over the next few months as the access is expanded.

To-date, ExACT:

- Established with a single Agency system to monitor the status, replacing 18 independent bureau systems.
- Eliminated 60+ large paper storage areas and established one official electronic location.
- Eliminated an estimated 750,000 pieces of paper storage per year (or over 80% of all executive correspondence.)
- Reduced photocopying by a projected 500,000 pages per year in ES alone!

A project was established in April of 1994 to carry-out this reengineering and automation initiative. Over 40 Agency staff contributed, encountering the normal problems, complexities, and yes, even delays with implementing a new system.

On May 14, 1995, the hard work began to pay off as ES put into production the new system—ExACT (Executive Actions and Correspondence Tracking). Beginning on that date, all letters, memoranda, briefing materials and invitations coming into ES were managed in the ExACT system. In July, key correspondence control contacts from each bureau were given access to the system. This established a single Agency

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“ExACT is an integrated system combining workflow management software with document imaging and indexing.”

As of November 1, 60 Agency staff were given access to the ExACT system. The next stage of the roll-out will add more bureau staff, so that by the end of the year, we'll have 100 users “up and running.”

system to track and electronically store executive correspondence and resulted in significant savings.

In August and September, 15 staff from the Legislative and Public Affairs (LPA) Bureau were added to the system. This improved and partially automated the process for handling Congressional correspondence and executive-level invitations.

As of November 1, 60 Agency staff were given access to the ExACT system. The next stage of the roll-out will add more bureau staff, so that by the end of the year, we'll have 100 users “up and running.”

What is ExACT and How Does it Work?

In *technical terms*, ExACT is an integrated system combining workflow management software with document imaging and indexing. The system operates with two scanning workstations, an image/database server, a banyan file server, a Local Area Network print server and ultimately 100 client workstations. The system adheres to Agency standards in that it relies on an Oracle data base, uses TCP/IP as its communication protocol, and provides users with a Windows interface on their desktop.

In *functional terms*, ExACT required some reengineering in the

structure and the processes of the ES operations. ES received over 20,000 pieces of mail in 1994 which was screened and then tracked. Anticipating the arrival of ExACT, ES reorganized its operations in April of this year creating an Information Management Unit to handle applications administration, records management and scanning operations, and an Analysis Unit to manage the process.

Since May, over 2,500 letters, memoranda, briefers and invitations have been managed in ExACT. The old paper system has been replaced by a new system that tracks, processes and stores correspondence using electronic folders, in-boxes and assignments.

Electronic Folders. Electronic folders are created for each incoming correspondence by ES analysts. Information about the correspondence is selected or typed in the system folder, including: date sent and received, author, addressee, summary description, mail type (i.e., Congressional), security classification (i.e., sensitive), and due/closed dates.

Scanning. Correspondence is scanned as an image (TIF format) into the electronic folders by ES, OCR'd (upon request) and indexed for future use. Instructions, attachments, drafts and comments/notes are common folder contents for letters requiring a response. Folders will accept most

ExACT: Process-Related Improvements

The Old System:

- Multiple tracking systems
Each Bureau had independent systems for monitoring.
- Serial processing
Individuals drafted correspondence that could be revised upto 44 times.
- Paper intensive
Multiple copies of papers were necessary to keep Agency staff informed.
- Crisis control oriented
Focus was on “getting things out” and allowed little time for planning.
- Little accountability
Due to a heavily sequential process and incompatible systems, accountability for correspondence was low.

...and the New System:

- Single Agency System
A single system monitors, processes and stores information.
- Operates with Teams
ES and Bureaus must now work together on the same system and process actions as a team.
- Mostly Paperless
Electronic routing and storage of papers.
- Results-Oriented
Planning is now proactive and managers have useful information.
- Greater accountability
Staff is more accountable for executive correspondence since everyone is using a centralized system.

MANAGER'S CORNER

We have learned a lot about reengineering in the Office of the Executive Secretariat (ES). Our efforts to improve the handling of executive correspondence have spanned almost two years and have involved executive management and staff from each bureau. Since May of this year, ES has been operating on the new ExACT system. The past few months have been a rich learning experience for all those involved, and I would like to share a few tips with Agency staff who will be working with the October '95 New Management Systems in USAID.

Adopt the Agency core values as a guide for your operations—they work. Customer focus, results orientation, empowerment and accountability, and teamwork have been guiding principles for ES staff in operating the new ExACT system. Teamwork, in particular, between ES and IRM, and ES and the bureaus, was critical in implementing and supporting the system.

Reengineering doesn't end with the implementation of a new system. We found that streamlining processes and procedures is a continual effort. Even those participating in early reengineering efforts could not anticipate the total impact before the ExACT system was in place. Which brings me to the third and most important tip.

Establish a mechanism for capturing recommendations aimed at improving the new system and process. We found that the greatest burst of staff creativity came in the first 3 months of operating the ExACT system. We were fortunate to have a system that was flexible enough to incorporate new features and user preferences, and a management structure to implement necessary policy and procedure related issues.

Finally, be patient, reengineering takes time. ExACT has functionally changed the way ES staff perform their day-to-day work. Be prepared to have resources available for necessary training and support, and to allow plenty of time for learning new systems.

Let me finish with a true story. Thomas Hubbard has opened and sorted incoming mail by hand for 25 years in ES. After 5 months on the new system, he has been able to use the new technology to enhance his job and finds that his productivity has increased significantly. I often find Tom scanning letters at his computer, smiling and saying, "I've waited 25 years for a system like this. What took you so long?"

Aaron S. Williams is the Executive Secretary of USAID.

"Customer focus, results orientation, empowerment and accountability, and teamwork have been guiding principles for ES staff in operating the new ExACT system. Teamwork, in particular, between ES and IRM, and ES and the bureaus, was critical in implementing and supporting the system."

*Aaron Williams is
the Executive
Secretary*

types of electronic files, including the Agency standards (e.g., WordPerfect and Lotus 1-2-3).

Electronic In-Boxes. ExACT users work out of electronic in-boxes. Folders are routed and modified to the appropriate in-box, usually by an ES analyst, and can easily be re-routed/modified by staff with access rights.

Electronic Assignments. Executive correspondence is managed using electronic assignments. ExACT users can send assignments to each other, including: provide drafter name and telephone number, draft response, review, clear, and for your

information. When assignments are sent, they appear in the electronic in-box of the receiving staff and stay active until a response is sent.

Searching. The ExACT system is fully text-searchable. Staff can perform sophisticated queries for folder information, attachments and assignments. This will significantly reduce the time in processing Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests for executive related correspondence, answering "Where is it?" questions, preparing senior management for meetings and in drafting related responses.

Other Features. There are a number of other standard and customized features in the ExACT system. Status reports can be generated and printed by users at any time and provide staff with information on pending and overdue correspondence. Fax capability is planned to be added to the system in October. Selected users will be able to fax system images or correspondence information to staff in Washington, D.C. and abroad, increasing the Agency's participation in the executive correspondence process.

ExACT: Interest Beyond USAID

As one could imagine, handling executive correspondence is a common problem across the U.S. Government. And ExACT is generating excitement among many agencies as they become aware of our new system. ES has given presentations to Justice, Interior, Health and Human Services, Labor, Veteran Affairs and ACDA. Each has considered or have in fact begun implementing the ExACT system.

For further information, please contact the ExACT Project Manager from ES, Joe Nassif, or the System Manager, Margo McLeod via E-mail.

Joseph E. Nassif is an Information Management Specialist with the Office of the Executive Secretariat

"Electronic Commerce is the communication of business information using information technologies, including Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), E-mail, bulletin boards, electronic funds transfer (EFT), electronic forms and electronic marketplaces."

Electronic Commerce on Internet

by Susan Chu

As the Information Highway grows in popularity, so does the means of doing business via the Internet. Electronic commerce is a perfect example of doing business over the Internet. Electronic Commerce is the communication of business information using information technologies, including Electronic Data Interchange (EDI),

E-mail, bulletin boards, electronic funds transfer (EFT), electronic forms and electronic marketplaces.

EDI and VANs

EDI is the computer-to-computer electronic transfer of structured data using public standards to exchange data between diverse systems. In the United States, the standard is X.12 and the international standard is EDIFACT. Traditional electronic commerce with EDI was developed by the manufacturing and distribution industries to reduce cycle time from production lines to retail stores, reduce inventories and cut costs. Value Added Networks (VANs) provide the networking capabilities, support, security, and reports. EDI requires stringent data mapping, translation, business partner agreements, and conformance to standards.

One example of electronic commerce using EDI and VANs is the Federal Government's Electronic Commerce Acquisition Team (ECAT) project. Under the National Information Infrastructure (NII) initiative, the Federal Government's (ECAT) is streamlining procurement through electronic commerce using VANs. USAID's Administrative Purchasing Division and IRM are working on a pilot project by sending electronic purchase orders of small purchases over the Federal EC architecture.

Why use the Internet as a network for Electronic Commerce?

Internet is the backbone for the global information superhighway. According to *USA Today* it has an estimated 30 to 50 million users as of the end of March 1995 and is growing at the rate of 8%-10% a month. Internet is a global network reaching an international audience. The internet provides subscribers with free or low cost information and services without borders and electronic marketplaces without boundaries.

Web browsers are becoming commercial. The commercial sector will represent 90% of the users worldwide by 1997. A recent report

**QUESTION:**

I often prepare documents for presentations or write reports where a graphic symbol, like a bullet, would help me emphasize certain points. Is there an easy way to do this?

ANSWER:

Yes! There is an easy way to use graphic symbols! In fact, you can find them in your WordPerfect for Windows application. When in your document, select *Font* from the menu and click on WP Characters at the bottom of the list. The default characters that you see are ASCII characters. If you click your cursor on the double arrows found in the box labeled *Set*, you will see a variety of WordPerfect character groups to choose from. The bullets are found in the Typographic Symbols group. Click once on the symbol you would like to use. Move your cursor into the document, and place it where you would like the symbol to appear. The last step is to click on the *Insert* button.

Our tip came from Greg Nyce who works on the IRM Help Desk.

from Forester Research estimated business transactions over the Internet—which is just a small piece of electronic commerce—could reach \$4 billion by 1998. The 1994 World Summit on Trade Efficiency concluded that low-cost, personal computer technology, linked by global networks such as Internet, offered a cost effective means for integrating developing countries into the global economy. One example of using Internet for electronic commerce is the UN Trade Point Development Project (UNTPDC). The UNTPDC is building the global Trade Point Network to support the UN International Trade Efficiency Initiative. The Trade Points are trade facilitation centers where customs, chambers of commerce, freight forwarders, banks, insurance agents, and potential business partners are virtually linked through networking. The UNTPDC provides electronic trading opportunities to the Trade Points via Internet electronic mail from Bangkok.

When is the Internet suitable for electronic commerce?

This is the most commonly asked question for organizations beginning to set up electronic commerce. Benefits of EDI and VANs over the Internet are security, reliability and accountability. VANs provide the security provisions, notification of

message delivery, support of X.12 binary file attachments (CAD drawings, X-rays, word processing files, and images) and integration with E-mail. Among some of the disadvantages, there is no 24-hour helpdesk, installation, testing, training, industry, educational or trading partner support on the Internet. The VANs are more costly, but the security, reliability and accountability are worth paying for in mission critical applications. For example, in the banking system, if there is a failure in an electronic funds transfer (EFT), there are specific rules involved for accountability and liability. A company should not be held accountable for a fund transfer which was not successfully transmitted between banks. Some people hesitate to conduct transactions on-line because of press reports about corporate break-ins on the Internet. Due to these factors the Internet is currently dominant for research, marketing, and business information sharing, but VANs are widely used for business transactions in procurement, taxation, and banking. Pilot projects should begin with non-critical transactions.

Internet electronic marketplaces extend electronic commerce to small businesses and consumers. The complexities of vendors and users accessing and ordering from electronic markets will result in the emergence of electronic market managers. The



Don't forget that the IRM Ombudsman is at your service!

Telephone:
(703) 875-1111

Fax:
(703) 875-1037

E-mail address:
**Ombudsperson@irm.
od@aidw**

WordPerfect
for Windows

TIP!

Block a section of text you want to copy or move with Alt-F4 or F12 and the cursor keys, as you normally do. To copy the block (leaving the original text in place), hit CTRL-INS, move your cursor to the new position, and click on Paste or hit SHIFT-INS. hit <Enter>. To move the text after blocking it (deleting the text from its original location), hit CTRL-DEL instead, move your cursor, and retrieve the block with <Enter>.

Gartner Group, listed the top 10 potential electronic market managers including CompuServe, AOL, MCI, AT&T, Microsoft, IBM, Prodigy, and other major phone companies.

In the future, with enhanced security measures on Internet utilizing encryption, cryptography and digital signatures, more users will choose Internet as the preferred network for business transactions. On-line service providers are starting to market services and support that were traditionally provided by VANs. The combination of on-line services and Internet may prove to be a low cost alternative to EDI and VANs.

Future Trends

Worldwide telecommunications deregulation has encouraged international partnerships in local and long distance services, cellular as well as value added networks for voice, data and video. Global competition, privatization and open markets have stimulated these networks to grow exponentially in Europe, the Far East and the Western Hemisphere. Companies will utilize Internet for trade facilitations, communications and EDI and VANs for transactions including invoices, payment, remittance advice, customs, and other documents. Hybrid Data Interchange Services-data, electronic forms and images managed by workflow systems, audio/video integration, fax and E-mail, will be provided through VANs or Internet.

Sources for electronic commerce

- Trade Journals: EDI World and EDI Forum
- X.12 standards : Data Interchange Standards Association, Inc. , <http://www.disa.org>
- United Nations Trade Point Development Center (UNTPDC) : <http://www.unicc.org>
- Trade Point USA : <http://www.tpusa.com>
- USAID Center for Trade and Investment Services: <http://www.info.usaid.gov/welcome/ctis>
- Department of Commerce International Trade Information: <http://www.ita.doc.gov>
- Dun and Bradstreet Information Services: <http://www.dbisna.com>

Susan Chu is a Computer Specialist working in the Consulting and Information Services of IRM.

NMS Standard PC

by Dean Salpini

In order to accommodate the Agency rollout of NMS systems over the next several months, IRM has developed a standard PC configuration that will be needed to run the NMS applications. This standard will allow for both the minimum NMS application suite and Agency office automation tools, such as Lotus, WordPerfect and E-mail, to run efficiently. As with all deployments of new systems, there will be minor modifications to the specific versions or software components depending on the final NMS application release. Further, some servers will house different office-specific business applications that fulfill a role in the day-to-day operations of the Agency, such as the ExACT system, in addition to the NMS applications.

Despite the office anomalies, the case for enterprise-wide standards is clear. It permits easier support and

Cybernuggets...by Steve Hawkins

I have received a number of questions regarding the ALT-H E-mail CYBERFEATURE. Perhaps additional clarification will help:

Arlington - Naima Taylor (G/PHN/POP/P&E) reported last week that she had been led by an unidentified force to a little-known but tremendously powerful feature with in E-mail. "It's amazing," she said, "You can cut and past text from E-mail using ALT-H." For importing them (or pieces of them) when she needed the text for other E-mails.

You can mark a block of text by pressing ALT-H and using the arrow keys to highlight the section you want.

Once a block is highlighted, you can use the Edit menu to copy the block onto a clipboard (press ALT-C or select Copy from the edit menu.) The system doesn't give you any feedback to let you know that the text is there, but if everything is working, just proceed and the magic should happen.

Once you've done this, you can again use the Edit menu to paste the text back into messages you are composing. (Once the cursor is located where you want to put the text, either press ALT-O or select Paste from the edit menu. And voila! The text appears.)

It is predicted that this discovery will save thousands of steps and person-hours for other staff using E-mail regularly. Our thanks go to Naima for her brave exploration of the unknown realms of E-mail and for sharing her discovery with us.

Happy Highlighting!

maintenance, allows modifications/revisions to be tested and deployed efficiently and promotes data exchange and compatibility objectives. Therefore, IRM has developed a standard PC configuration(s) that will accomodate our current information systems as well as our future corporate information systems, eg, the NMS (See right margin for configuration.)

As a practical matter, the computer hardware business runs on tight design/development schedules that introduce new chips or architecture in less than one year. This environment requires continuous monitoring and upgrading of PC components to take advantage of the latest features. Unfortunately, large organizations with complex portfolios and competing resource demands must choose carefully when to plan the next move. In this climate, USAID has initiated a strategy of defining both a target, ideal PC platform, and a minimum, functional PC platform. The target platform contemplates running all future corporate applications while accomodating existing systems. The minimum

environment, on the other hand, serves as a functional-yet less optimal-baseline for users to operate the NMS applications. In this scenario, Agency managers can determine the best mix of IT resources to achieve their individual office goals.

Even these PC configurations assume certain memory usage, such as 560KB RAM available for the NMS applications and basic Windows-related software, that is needed to effectively run the NMS systems. Further, not all offices or users will be able to upgrade to the target PC platform due to funding limitations and program priorities. Thus, IRM hopes that these specifications become a framework for Agency information system users to operate within, rather than an obstacle to information access and processing to accomplish business goals.

Dean Salpini is the head of the Technical Architecture group within the Information Policy and Administrative Division of IRM.

The recommended NMS target PC platform is:

- Pentium CPU (=60mhz)
- PCI or ISA bus architecture
- 16MB RAM (70ns min)
- 400MB hard disk minimum
- SVGA , .28 dot pitch, non-interlaced monitor and video card
- Etherlink III NIC card (3Com 3C509)
- 1.44MB, 3.5in floppy disk
- mouse
- Energy Star compliant
- QEMM ver. 7.5 memory mgr (2)
- ONnet PC TCP/IP software (network loaded)
- Windows 3.1 (network loaded)
- DOS 6.2 (3)

The minimum recommended NMS PC configuration is:

- 486 DX/33
- 16MB RAM (70Ns min)
- 400MB hard disk
- Etherlink II NIC
- SVGA monitor
- QEMM 7.0 memory mgr
- ONNet PC/TCP 1.0
- Windows 3.1
- MS-DOS 5.0

Mission Support Group Formed

by Jerry Sajewski

In order to provide missions with an ADP "Home" in Washington, M/IRM has established a Mission Support Group.

The Group is located in the Consulting and Information Services (CIS) Division and is headed by Courtney Ives. Many mission staff will remember Courtney as she has had prior experience in helping missions with information technology & management problems. The Group will have contact persons to help the regions; the current regional assignments are as follows:

- AFR - Shirley McCoy
- ANE - Steve Travis
- E/NIS - Marcia Hamilton
- LAC - Steve Travis

The establishment of the mission support group is not meant to stop the current direct contact with IRM Specialists that missions have found to be effective. (The list of M/IRM specialists who can be directly contacted by subject area was issued as a service which message to the missions in September.)

Rather the Mission Support Group was established to give missions an

extension of their staff in Washington for the following:

- Keep M/IRM management apprised of missions' viewpoints on pending issues;
- Keep active a two way dialogue on IRM policies and procedures;
- Help determine automation requirements and make recommendations for use of automation resources;
- Interact with mission staff on automation planning and budgeting;
- Help support missions' staffs by coordinating training;
- Help coordinate and expedite interactions of the missions with IRM divisions;
- Maintain a database of key mission related automation data;
- Help coordinate solutions to mission problems with resources available in Washington.

The Mission Support Group needs missions staffs' suggestions on services that could be provided or improved. Please contact Courtney Ives at 703-875-1200 or via E-mail at Courtney Ives@irm.cis@aidw, or via internet at cives@usaid.gov with any suggestions that you might have.

Jerry Sajewski is the head of the Customer Support Team which includes both the Mission Support team and the Help Desk.

Editor's Note:

The current issue of IRM at Work covers both October and November 1995 given the staff turnover in the Ombudsman function. IRM wishes to express its appreciation and best wishes for continued success to Chuck Patalive and Dave Ryback who departed IRM the first week of October. IRM at Work will resume as a monthly publication with the December 1995 issue.

Publication Information

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IRM at Work is a monthly publication from the Management Bureau's Office of Information Resources Management (M/IRM). The Newsletter is distributed to each USAID/W Office, as well as each overseas Mission. At present, John Tucker (M/IRM/OD) serves as the Executive Editor and Shelley Anderson (M/IRM/CIS) serves as Senior Editor. Comments, suggestions for improvements, article ideas, and letters to the editor are welcome and should be directed to either John Tucker@irm.od@aidw or Shelley Anderson@irm.cis@aidw. Writers' guidelines available upon request.



A Newsletter from the Office of Information Resources Management - M/IRM

New Management Systems (NMS) Update

by Mike Sherwin

They are here at last! The New Management Systems began implementation on January 3, in Washington. This allows us our first real opportunity to test the system in a truly operational mode. The new systems are scheduled to be rolled out to the 43 fully prepared missions within the next week, as we go to press with this newsletter.

These systems are not re-engineering; they are a tool to carry out re-engineering. They will not be a panacea and they will not be perfect. As with any new system, there will be bugs. We are relying on all of our staff to get involved in testing the systems capabilities. It is important to remember the systems will not come with information in them. Much of the data to make the system run will need to be entered. Remember also that we do not want to load the system with bad data from the old systems. Data integrity is essential. In addition, entering the data will give employees a chance to learn the system, to test the system and to improve the system.

These new systems contain highly confidential data which is subject to all of the procurement integrity rules. Employees will be given passwords and these must not be shared. Allowing someone to know your password could result in procurement integrity violations. In addition, we will be using electronic signature as a financial control mechanism. Violation of security here could result in serious criminal violations. Therefore, only USAID employees will be allowed into the systems. Institutional contractors may not be allowed access to these systems. Violation of these controls would be considered a serious breach and could result in employees being fired. In addition, the systems themselves will be protected. No change in conformation of servers will be allowed; all PCs linked into the system may contain only the approved NMS software. No exceptions will be allowed to any of these rules.

New PC installations and upgrades for older PCs have been occurring in both Washington and in the Missions. Enough PCs were purchased to provide over 50% of the users with 486 or better machines.

VSAT installations at all but 2 of the 43 UNIX sites have been completed. The two remaining sites (New Delhi, Moscow) will be operational shortly.

The deployment of the IBM RISC R20 machines in the 43 missions is almost complete (Bangladesh, Guinea, Jamaica, Kazakhstan and Israel are in process, pending building moves). System Administrators from these missions were trained in the AIX operating system in November. Instructions for tracking the operation of the equipment have already been distributed to the Missions; instructions regarding maintenance included under the contract with IBM will be issued shortly.

REST STOPS

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These systems are not re-engineering; they are a tool to carry out re-engineering.

In addition, IRM has established a centralized Help Desk which is currently providing support to NMS technical problems and questions Agency-wide. The telephone number for NMS questions is (703) 875-1234. You can also contact Help Desk staff via E-Mail: IRM HelpDesk@IRM@AIDW.

The first users to have access to these systems will be the approximately 370 users throughout the Agency who currently have access to the test version. Many of these people have participated in the NMS train-the-trainer courses conducted over the past few months. Those already trained in the NMS and those trained in the future will be expected to teach others in their bureaus and offices how to utilize these new management tools.

Mike Sherwin is the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Management and the Agency's Procurement Executive.

IRM Provides Assistance to Legal Reform in Russia

by Alvaro Garcia

Russia is strengthening its legal system to support its market economy, lessen investment risk, and provide a firm legal foundation.

The Russian Federation (RF) and the World Bank are cooperating in the preparation of a Legal Reform Project. The RF is requesting a \$100 million (US dollars) loan to improve its legal information system. In response to a request from the World Bank for IRM technical support, Alvaro Garcia traveled to Moscow for three weeks to assist a team of legal experts in understanding the technical aspects of legal information collection and dissemination in Russia.

Currently, a number of governmental and private institutions

provide legal information electronically in Russia. Numerous private legal information providers add "value" to the legal information generated by the court system, the parliament, and other governmental institutions. These value-added products consist of law classifications, keyword definitions (descriptors), and cross referencing capabilities that enable people to access legal databases containing five years of RF legislation (including Supreme Court decisions) and acts enacted under the USSR. Most of these systems are micro-based products developed using Microsoft software tools and/or C language. These legal systems are marketed as CD ROMs and are well-documented and commercialized products. Although the price of these systems is reasonable for large private and governmental organizations, it is prohibitive for many others. Another roadblock is that not all legal information generated by courts is available through these private databases. The new proposed system, as part of the legal information component, will fill the gaps.

The legal information component, as defined by the RF, is intended to strengthen the "on-line" sharing of legal information handled by governmental institutions. Thus, with the information they need at hand, these institutions can be more consistent and effective in generating their own legal acts. The World Bank is concerned with assuring that legal information is available to private individuals in an effective and timely manner.

The technical aspects of the legal information component are simple compared to the political and management elements that need to be considered in order to define and implement a balanced solution that allows the government to improve its legal information systems while ensuring that individuals have easy and affordable access to legal information.

Alvaro Garcia is an Information Technology Advisor in IRM's Project Support Group.

The technical aspects of the legal information component are simple...

MANAGER'S CORNER*by Caroline McGraw*

Faced with declining Operating Expenses and workforce, the effort to build a suite of integrated data systems becomes far more important than ever. The New Management Systems (NMS) will allow our staff to reduce the time that has previously been spent on routine data collection, data manipulation and reporting and instead provide the needed time to focus on the substance of the development process. We anticipate that, once the new systems are totally operational, such time-consuming processes as the Annual Budget Submission (ABS) and the Congressional Presentation (CP) will be far less burdensome to Agency staff.

Automated performance tracking information will enable managers to be much more alert to the progress or lack of progress being made toward the achievement of intermediate and long-term results. Managers will also be able to monitor the financial status of their activities more easily and effectively. Program oversight will become less labor intensive. As a result, we would expect a considerable reduction in management control weaknesses and fiscal vulnerabilities.

At the same time, as our employees become better informed, through the access to on-line integrated data systems, they will become and feel more empowered. Access to accurate and timely information is a major part of empowerment, a key concept underlying the President's National Performance Review (NPR). The evidence is clear that empowered employees are more energetic about their work and are more effective and responsive to their customers and partners. Often, we tend to place too much emphasis on the formal delegations of authority as an indication of employee empowerment. Access to information needed to effectively carry out one's work and increased opportunities for participation in the planning, implementation and evaluation processes are far more empowering than a simple delegation of approval authority.

Caroline McGraw is Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator for Management.

Access to accurate and timely information is a major part of empowerment, a key concept of the President's National Performance Review (NPR).

Cables and You in AID/W

by Theresa Rauch and Gretchen Larrimer

All of us in USAID send and receive cables as an integral part of our work communications. Over the past several years, IRM has made some substantial changes to the cable system to improve the flow of cables in AID/W. But how does the cable system really work now? In the old days, we prepared a piece of paper and mailed it to the cable room. They mailed us a comeback copy so we would know our cable was sent out. And, in the old days, if someone sent

us a cable we got it on paper as well—it came to a control point somewhere in our organization and was routed to appropriate staff for information or action. But now that everything is being done electronically, how does it work?

Cables You Send

When you are preparing an unclassified cable to be sent out, you use the cable macro CABLE.WCM. The macro will help you format the cable correctly. You must address the cable using the destination CITY name, not the country name. Once you have the cable prepared, you still must print it and have it cleared by the appropriate parties, as cited on the cable. But when you are finished with that, the paper copy becomes your file copy. At that point, you should

Over the past several years, IRM has made some substantial changes to the cable system to improve the flow of cables in AID/W.

Once each cable is profiled and its destination(s) determined, it is sent through electronic mail to a cable mailbox for the destination organization(s).

TIP!

WordPerfect
for Windows

Using the Search function to find text in a document can be quite a timesaver when you are in a hurry. There's only one problem, though. When WordPerfect can't locate what you are searching for, an error message (such as "String Not Found") appears in the status bar in the bottom left corner of your screen. This error message only appears for a second or two, so you have to be paying close attention.

Instead, you can tell WordPerfect to "beep" at you when it cannot locate the item of your search. To turn the Beep function on, select Environment from the Preferences (under File) menu. In the Beep On box, click on Search Failure and choose OK.

forward the cleared word processing document to the cable control person in your organization. That person is authorized to send your completed cable on to the Agency cable room for distribution. If a non-authorized cable sender tries to forward a cable to the cable room, he/she will receive it back with an error message.

One important hint about preparing cables for the field will help clarify the origin of your cable and expedite the answers. Cables which are transmitted to the field do not include the "drafted by" or "approved by" line when received in the USAID Mission. To ensure that the answer to your cable is properly addressed when it comes back from the mission, you may choose to place on the caption line of the outgoing cable AIDAC FROM (Your Organizational Symbol). Alternatively, at the end of the text of your cable you may ask the respondent to caption the return cable "FOR (Your Organizational Symbol)".

Once your cable has been correctly forwarded to the cable room, the cable room edits your cable for proper format. The cable room edits and makes changes to minor errors which cannot be accepted by the Department of State Communications Office. These include misspelled cities, misplaced precedences and captions, and incorrect format for additional addressee/clearances. Any errors identified in the text of your cable will cause the cable to be immediately rejected and returned via e-mail to the drafter.

Please note that classified cables must be prepared in special areas set up for classified traffic, not on the Agency network. They must be printed out and sent via regular mail or hand-carried to the cable room.

Comeback Copies

Comeback copies for unclassified cables are distributed via e-mail and are returned to the drafter and approving officer which appear in the "drafted by" and "approved by" fields on the cable macro. It is important to use only organizational symbols which have been approved by M/MPI in these fields. Symbols which deviate from the approved

organizational symbols will delay or misdirect your comeback copy. Please see the list of approved organizational symbols listed in the Agency Notice on the bulletin board. "Info" copy distribution on cables being sent from AID/W is based on each office's distribution profile designed by each Agency organization.

Cables You Receive

Now, what happens when a cable is sent to you? All Agency cables come into AID/W through the Department of State. They are then fed into the USAID cable room in NS. Once in our cable room, the cables are run through a software package that, first, separates them into classified and unclassified. All classified cables are sent directly to a printer and mailed to their destination offices.

Unclassified cables remain in the system to be directed by the software to appropriate recipients based on where they are addressed and their subject matter, as defined in the Telegram Distribution Requirements (TDR) prepared by each Agency organization. In the former cable processing system, 40% of the cables could be profiled by the system, while the remainder had to be handled by cable room staff. With the new profiling system, 95% are automatically profiled. Although this is a dramatic improvement in the handling of cable traffic and expedites the distribution of cables to their destination, it also increases the importance of the profiles established by organizations for the cables they receive.

Once each cable is profiled and its destination(s) determined, it is sent through electronic mail to a cable mailbox for the destination organization(s). These cable mailboxes generally are set up for every division within an office. In each division, a staff member is assigned responsibility for reading the cables in the mailbox and electronically forwarding them to appropriate staff in the organization. This is the electronic equivalent to the old process of reading and distributing the cable mail. However, if the person assigned to read the cables is out of

CYBERNUGGETS

In the midst of extolling the virtues of WordPerfect for Windows to staff so that they would all make the switch, one question kept surfacing for which I had no answer. "The screen's too bright! It hurts my eyes! How do I switch back to the old soothing blue background I was used to in WordPerfect for DOS?"

For awhile I simply assumed a superior demeanor and told them to buck up and step into the new world. Truth was, I didn't know how myself. I find that I can hold them at bay no longer, so I asked around to see if anyone knew the secret. As it turned out, April Dawn Vrugtman did.

The problem, it seems, is that the newer WordPerfect for Windows tries to work in WYSIWYG (that's slang for What You See Is What You Get) and can only do that with a white background. If that background bothers you, you can get rid of it by using the Windows Control Panel (under Main) to change the color. From the Control Panel menu, choose Colors. Click on Color Palette and select Window Background from the Screen Element menu above the color choices. Pick the background color you want - something nice and soothing or wild and crazy. Click OK to everything.

contributed by Steve Hawkins, G/PHN/FPS

the office, or is delayed for some other reason, people in that organization don't receive their cables. Also, if the cable mailbox fills up, it will begin to reject cables and return them to the cable room—the cable mailboxes have mail limits just like individuals on our network do. So it is critical that every organization with a cable mailbox has a primary cable distribution person as well as a backup cable distribution person and that those people have the time and ability to keep up with the cable mailbox traffic.

There are many more improvements being planned for the cable room both over the short and long term, including changes in the format of cables sent to you through electronic mail, improvements in the cable retrieval process for the cable room staff, even retrieval of cables directly by Agency staff eventually. Many of the changes that have been made are based on customer suggestions or requests, so if you have ideas about improvements, please let us know.

Finally, if you have questions about the cable system or are having problems sending or receiving cables, please get in touch with Theresa Rauch in the USAID cable room. Theresa and the staff in the cable room are there to help you expedite your cable traffic. They can provide you with a detailed explanation of the

cable process and can assist you with any problems you may be having.

Theresa Rauch is a Telecommunications Manager in IRM/TCO and manages the AID cable room. Gretchen Larrimer is a Computer Specialist in IRM/TCO and manages the LAN group.

The USAID Internet Mail Gateway: Some Common Questions

by John Dandeneau

Over the past several months, there have been a number of concerns about the reliability and performance of the Agency's Internet mail gateway. In addition, many Agency staff members have had questions relating to the sending or receiving of Internet mail. We have been working diligently to create a fault-tolerant, redundant system that will provide you with the level of service and confidence you should expect of the gateway. While we've been answering the questions



**Don't forget that the
IRM Ombudsman is
at your service!**

**Telephone:
(703) 875-1111**

**Fax:
(703) 875-1037**

**E-mail address:
Ombudsperson@irm.
od@aidw**

Approximately 5,000 messages are received and 4,000 sent daily.

To receive Internet mail, you must obtain an Internet id...

that come to us, we would like to take this opportunity to address them to everyone. We hope the following information sheds light on any questions you may have.

What is the Internet Mail Gateway? It is actually three servers, each running Banyan VINES and an Internet Mail Gateway software program. Working together, these servers handle all Internet mail coming from or going to any Banyan user in AID/W or the missions. Approximately 5,000 messages are received and 4,000 sent daily. This configuration was implemented following the difficulties encountered with a single gateway this past late October and early November.

What happened to the gateway in October/November?

At that time, our single server Internet Mail Gateway was capable of receiving thousands of messages per hour, while the associated internal Banyan mail service could only put out hundreds of messages per hour. This caused a back-up of messages on the single server, to the point where it became inoperable.

Is it fixed? Yes. First, we've found a way to limit the number of simultaneously incoming messages to a single server—to prevent an overflow of the associated Banyan mail service. Now that we have added two more Internet Mail Gateways, they work in conjunction with the original one to distribute the incoming and outgoing loads. Any messages unable to connect with the first gateway are received by the second or third one. This configuration has given us additional capacity to handle future growth or occasional down-time on any one of the three gateways.

How can I receive Internet mail? To receive Internet mail, you must obtain an Internet id, or alias. This alias plus our domain (usaid.gov) becomes your address that other Internet users mail to. It is generally in the form of *username@usaid.gov*.

Each alias points to one (and only one) Banyan id.

How do I get an alias? Send an email from your Banyan id to the address INTERNET[CREATE]; you don't need to fill in the subject line or body of the message. This communicates a command to the Internet Mail Gateway to create an alias for the Banyan id of the person sending the message (you!). You should receive back a message within a day with your alias and some other information. (Note: this replaces the procedure of sending an email to INTERNET[postmaster@usaid.gov]).

How does the Internet Mail Gateway create my alias? When the Internet Mail Gateway creates your alias, it follows these rules: (Let's use my name as an example, *John Dandeneau*)

1. First, it tries to take your first initial and up to 16 letters of your last name—*jdandeneau@usaid.gov*. Since "Dandeneau" only has 9 letters, it uses my entire last name. If that alias is already taken,
2. It then tries to take the first 2 letters of your first name and up to 16 letters of your last name—*jodandeneau@usaid.gov*. If even that alias is taken,
3. It then tries to just take up to the 16 letters of your last name—*dandeneau@usaid.gov*. In the rare case that this is not available,
4. It sends the postmaster@usaid.gov a message requesting that he create one manually for you. In this case, he will call you to discuss different possibilities.

If you need an alias in addition to the one given to you (called a secondary alias), simply send a message with the details to postmaster@usaid.gov. Be sure to include the reason why you need it (such as needing one called HelpDesk@usaid.gov, etc).

How do I send an Internet message? Use the syntax: INTERNET[*username@host.domain*]. The *username@host.domain* is the

Internet address of the individual you are sending to. If you receive an "Unverifiable Address" error message, contact your local IT/system administrator responsible for your server.

What happens if I change my Banyan group? Your Internet alias does NOT automatically follow you. You have to delete your alias before you leave that group and request another one when you arrive at your new one. This area is where we receive most of our requests for help. When you are changing Banyan groups, one of the last things you must do before leaving is send a message addressed to INTERNET[DELETE] from your original Banyan id. This will delete your associated alias from the Internet Mail Gateway. Upon arrival at your new group, you must send an INTERNET[CREATE] command to have the alias recreated. If the alias, for some reason, is not exactly the same as you had before, immediately send an email to postmaster@usaid.gov.

Can I attach files to my messages? Yes. You can attach any type of file to your messages, either binary or ASCII/text. Our gateway will use a program called UUENCODE to convert the message into a form that can be transmitted over the Internet. Upon arrival at its destination, either the recipient's gateway will automatically UUENCODE it or the recipient will have to do this manually.

Why can't I reply to all recipients (a feature of Beyond Mail) when dealing with Internet addressees? This is a limitation in the Simple Mail Transport Protocol (SMTP) that is used to send electronic mail across the Internet. There are currently only provisions for one REPLY-TO address, so when you select a REPLY ALL or REPLY TO ALL RECIPIENTS, you'll see Beyond Mail attempt to get all of the addresses correct, but not quite get it right (look on the TO: and CC: lines). You need to then manually add the

INTERNET[] to any Internet address listed and verify that the syntax of each recipient's address is correct.

When I reply to an Internet message, how come I see SMTP@BASA14031@Servers[the user's address] instead of ISMTP@BASA14029@Servers, as done previously? This is part of our load distributing strategy. When you compose a new email and send it addressed to INTERNET[the user's address], it is directed to the Internet Mail Gateway on the server, BASA14029. By forcing replies to Internet mail to go through the server BASA14031, we are able to distribute the outbound load. The number of new messages sent and the number or replies sent daily by Banyan users is roughly the same.

Who is postmaster@usaid.gov? It is the IRM person(s) responsible for maintaining the Internet Mail Gateways. Right now, that's John Dandeneau and Dennis Lauer. The use of the name postmaster is a convention on the Internet, where every domain (like usaid.gov) should have one. Then, if someone is having difficulty reaching a particular user, they can send email to the postmaster@domain and be relatively assured of getting a response.

Can you help me with my World Wide Web questions? No. The Internet Mail Gateways are handled by a group separate from the group that handles the rest of the Internet applications (WWW, FTP, Telnet, Ping, WAIS, Gopher, etc). For help on World Wide Web questions, contact Ed Stuart@IRM.CIS@AIDW or (703) 875-1069, or Jim Russo@IRM.CIS@AIDW or (703) 875-1608.

How long should a mail message take to reach its Internet destinations? This is a difficult question to answer. Sometimes, a message you send can make it halfway around the world in less than 5 minutes. Other times, it can take a lot longer. There are several points in the

TIP!

Computer Security

Once again, USAID personnel have fallen victim to a viral attack (see Agency Notice 12/11/95). Protect your system and data from potential loss by routinely scanning your hard disk and diskettes for viruses. You can access anti-viral software (F-Prot) from any AIDNET server. If you have questions concerning the use of F-Prot, contact your IT support person or E-Mail Cathy Gleason @IRM.IPA@AIDW.

process that can delay the message, starting with our own Banyan network. Generally, it will take between one hour and one day. Mail will be returned undelivered if it cannot be delivered within 96 hours (4 days). If you need to ensure the delivery of a message, send it certified (see the next question).

What happens when I certify (request a return receipt of) an Internet message? You'll receive a return message, notifying you that the message has been "relayed" to the recipient's mail server. Note that this is different from the kind of receipt you get when you send Banyan mail—that receipt indicates that the user has actually opened the message. An Internet receipt only tells you that the message has been delivered to their mail server. If the recipient's mail program supports it, you may actually get a second receipt about the same message, indicating that they have actually read the message. We recommend you use certification whenever you need to know a message has reached its destination by a certain time.

If you have any further questions or comments, send an email to INTERNET [postmaster@usaid.gov] or call John Dandeneau at (703) 875-1591. In keeping with Internet conventions, if any of your colleagues outside of the Agency have questions about our Internet Mail Gateway and its operation, have them send an Internet message to postmaster@usaid.gov.

John Dandeneau is the Internet Mail Gateway Administrator in the IRM/TCO LAN group.

If you need to ensure the delivery of a message, send it certified.

TIP!



File Your E-Mail Messages Into Folders!

To save time and aggravation when looking for a specific E-Mail message, organize your messages according to topic, sender, etc. (whatever categories make sense to you!) and file them into separate folders. Under the Manage Folders command, choose Create. At the prompt, type a name for the new folder. Once you create your new folder, it gets added to the list of folders in your mailbox. You can easily file your messages into these folders by using the File command. Remember that your maximum message limit is the sum total of all messages in all folders - it does not increase as you add new folders to your mailbox. If you do exceed your message limit, though, try filing older, lesser used messages to your WordPerfect directory (see page 7 of our June issue).

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A Newsletter from the Office of Information Resources Management - M/IRM

ListProc at USAID

by Michael Inguillo

E-mail is an exciting instrument, letting users share opinions and information in a timely way. One of the tools that we use at USAID to facilitate this electronic sharing is the ListProc distribution program.

Electronic mailing lists are a highly efficient way to both disseminate information to large numbers of people and hold long-distance discussions among many people. Instead of sending a single E-mail message to another individual, you can use an E-mail list to distribute the same message to numerous people at once. It is similar to using your E-mail Address Book feature, but automates the manual process of picking out names/addresses from a long listing. Essentially, a file of selected names/addresses is created and this file listing is reusable.

At USAID, ListProc is used to manage over 70 E-mail lists and these range in content from development of energy sources, to food aid programs, to technical issues within IRM. Fortunately, ListProc allows the delegation of duties to several individuals. Since each list has an "owner" the responsibility for maintaining any single list is not solely my responsibility as List Manager. In effect, each person "owning" a list becomes the broker of very specialized information and facilitates the terms of discussion for each list. With an unmoderated list, all messages sent to the list are automatically resent to everyone in the database. A moderated mailing list is one that has been screened by the list administrator—for example, that person may weed out duplicate messages or those inappropriate to the theme of the list. At the discretion of the list owner, the mailing list can provide archives of messages posted to it as well as supplementary materials. Since the information is made available over the Internet via E-mail, individuals and institutions outside the Agency can share information as well as partake in discussions providing various perspectives on issues.

The ListProc System hierarchy, in descending order, is as follows:

List Manager—has authority to control the ListProc service and is responsible for maintaining the ListProc System and providing solutions to list owners and subscribers.

List Owner—the individual responsible for maintaining a specific list and, if desired, moderating discussions. This person may also have colleagues working on the list in the capacity of *Subscription Manager* (approves or disapproves people who attempt to subscribe to their E-mail list) and *Archive Manager* (responsible for maintaining the archives of posted E-mail messages and/or supplementary files or documents).

Subscriber—anyone who wants to receive information or contribute to discussions relating to a particular E-mail list.

All of the commands recognized/used by ListProc are delivered over the Internet via E-mail.

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When you send a command to ListProc, you do so in the body of an E-mail message. It will communicate back to you in another message.

For example, if you wanted to receive a list of all the active lists at USAID, you would go into your E-mail application and send the following command (using the Banyan alias for Internet mail):

- To: internet[listproc@info.usaid.gov]
- LEAVE THE SUBJECT LINE BLANK
- In the message area, type LISTS

The response from ListProc will be in the form of an E-mail message. You can follow the same procedure but substitute "HELP" for "LISTS" to receive instructions on the numerous commands that ListProc understands.

Another and somewhat easier method of getting information to and from the USAID ListProc is via the USAID Mailserv page. To use it, just point your Web browser to <http://www.info.usaid.gov/cgi-bin/listproc> and click the buttons that correspond to your request. After filling in your E-mail address and sending the form from this site, ListProc will immediately send you the information requested.

If you are interested in setting up an E-mail list on a topic that would benefit from the global distribution of messages, I would be happy to work with you in creating your list and explain how to utilize it. You can contact me either via E-mail at michaeli@info.usaid.gov or by phone at (703) 875-1262.

Michael Inguillo is USAID's ListProc Manager and a member of IRM's Internet Data Services Group.

IRM Reorganizes

by Steve Dosh

In the face of impending retirements, IRM has reorganized at the Division Chief level offering growth opportunities to its cadre of information technology professionals.

Leading the charge are **Jane Bise** and **Jerry Sajewski**, who move into Acting Chief assignments at TCO and CIS, respectively. The former Chiefs of those divisions, **Joe Heffern** and **Joe Gueron**, have accepted assignments as Acting Division Chiefs of SDM and IPA. Joe Gueron will follow **Gary Nelson** as the permanent IPA head upon Gary's retirement from USAID after 10 years of dedicated service to the Agency. All of us here in IRM will miss Gary's insight, wit, and formidable expertise. Also joining Gary in the pursuit of happy and rewarding retirement opportunities are IRM staffers **Bill Harley**, **Kathy O'Meara**, **Lamont Phemister**, **Fred Harley**, **Paul Harley**, **Mary Romeyn**, and **Herb Strouthers**. IRM appreciates their service and wishes them the very best.

At PMA, FSO **Jim Bossard** has been serving as Acting Chief for several weeks helping to pull together an IRM office budget in the face of severe OE cuts. CIS welcomes the reintegration of **Darrell Owen's** considerable skills back in the Division after his serving for a period of one year as Acting SDM Chief. The IRM front office appreciates greatly Darrell's guidance and support to SDM in helping that Division through a period of considerable change resulting from the departure last year of **Dianne Arnold** and **Barry Goldberg**. **Joan Matejceck** and **Wayne Van Vechten** remain at the helm in acting capacities as Director and Deputy Director of IRM.

Overall, the organizational structure, functions, and duties of IRM have not changed considerably. What has changed is the manner in which IRM approaches the many and varied information management tasks. At our



IRM: At Your Service

<p>HELP DESK</p> <p>Phone (703) 875-1234 Fax (703) 875-1879 E-mail address IRM Help Desk@irm@aidw</p>	<p>OMBUDSPERSONS</p> <p>Phone (703) 875-11111 Fax (703) 875-1037 E-mail address IRM Ombudsperson@irm.od@aidw</p>
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MANAGER'S CORNER

by Barney Chessin

I've been reading *IRM at Work* since it started coming out, and have always found the issues to be interesting reading material. In fact, I have surprised myself by being able to relate to it so well... being one of those "system managers" dragged reluctantly into the 20th century. Those of you who grew up with computers cannot know the trepidation with which my generation approached each new "miracle" of the computer age. Even today, as I prepare this essay for attachment to an E-mail message to Washington, I have to wonder at the advances in technology I and others like me have been asked to manage. I'm still dealing with the fact that in a few short years we have moved to the point that most of our business can be handled without a cable in the mix. I also still marvel at the ease in establishing virtual partnerships with Executive Officers at other USAID missions; impossible only a short time ago.

However, as an agency, USAID must seriously address the nature of our present communication system and the limits we will set for its use. Each of us managers must address it individually and as part of a unified group. The old way is restriction of computer access to effectively limit what goes out or can come in. Some missions require that messages to the outside world be vetted through the Director or some other system guardian. Dakar does not operate like that. Occasionally I wish such a policy were still in place, but I usually get over that pretty quickly. We are better served by a freer and more open system. Still, it is clear that we have to develop a use code; one which is reasonable, but that also establishes functional ground rules.

Comparing the days when conventional mailings from home could take a month to get to post, and the more recent days of E-mail allowing immediate interface—I want to keep that kind of freedom in the system for officers serving overseas. However, I have seen some E-mails going out that did not demonstrate good judgment and seen others come in which frankly shouldn't have been sent. Without some type of signature coding, users can disavow controversial E-mail. Perhaps Headquarters is working to develop such a code, but I feel that users in the field have to take a more pro-active role in addressing the issue. All too often, the official response to misuse of an enhancement tool is to disallow its use by all. I firmly believe that there are reasonable people in Washington who want to do the right thing. I also believe that to best handle E-mail issues, those in the position to make decisions should enlist the thoughts of those most seriously affected by any decisions in this regard—field personnel scattered over the world.

I know there are others like myself who are not necessarily into the esoteric of telecommunications science, but who have a real interest in how we use it. I desire to see a signature system introduced which allows or forces us to take responsibility for what communications we put on the global highway, and would be happy to hear from others on this subject.

Barney Chessin is an Executive Officer in Dakar, Senegal

recent 3-day IRM strategic management retreat, we reviewed and reformulated the *IRM Mission Statement*. This statement now commits us to: **"Enable the USAID workforce and partners to manage and use information to meet USAID's strategic objectives."**

Once again, please always feel free to let John Tucker or me know how you feel IRM is doing in pursuit of this goal.

Steve Dosh is an Ombudsperson in IRM's Office of the Director.

USAID must seriously address the nature of our present communications system and the limits we will set for its use.

IRM is committed to enabling the USAID workforce and partners to manage and use information to meet USAID's strategic objectives.

Enterprise Network Management System

by Ken Roko

The Enterprise Management System is a collection of software to allow monitoring USAID's Telecommunications and computer platform resources.

Our ultimate goal is to be able to detect network problems as they develop, not as they occur or after they become catastrophic.

The Enterprise Management System (ENMS) is a collection of software designed to provide the ability to monitor USAID's telecommunications and computer platform resources. An article in the June 95 issue of this newsletter ("*USAID's Network Management*," by Pat Kristobek) described the purpose and research that went into picking the platform and tools that now comprise ENMS. I intend this article to provide you with a working snapshot of ENMS and explain our progress to date and plans for implementing ENMS.

The accompanying diagram shows the software components and their relationship to various hardware and operational entities in our network.

Over the last four months, we have been implementing various software tools designed to establish a network "baseline" (i.e., how we expect the network to behave) for each of USAID's telecom and computer platforms. From that we can project a maximum threshold (tolerance) above baseline using industry norms for both type of traffic and platform. This "tolerance" is the point at which we feel that performance expectations of the network will begin to be compromised. If the ENMS detects that these thresholds are reached, we configure the software to automatically perform additional tests on related conditions. If performance continues to exceed the maximum threshold, we ask the software to produce a trouble ticket. Depending on problem severity the software can also notify the appropriate personnel for resolution.

Our ultimate goal is to be able to detect problems in our network as they develop, not as they occur or after they become catastrophic.

The diagram shows that the components at the heart of USAID's NMS

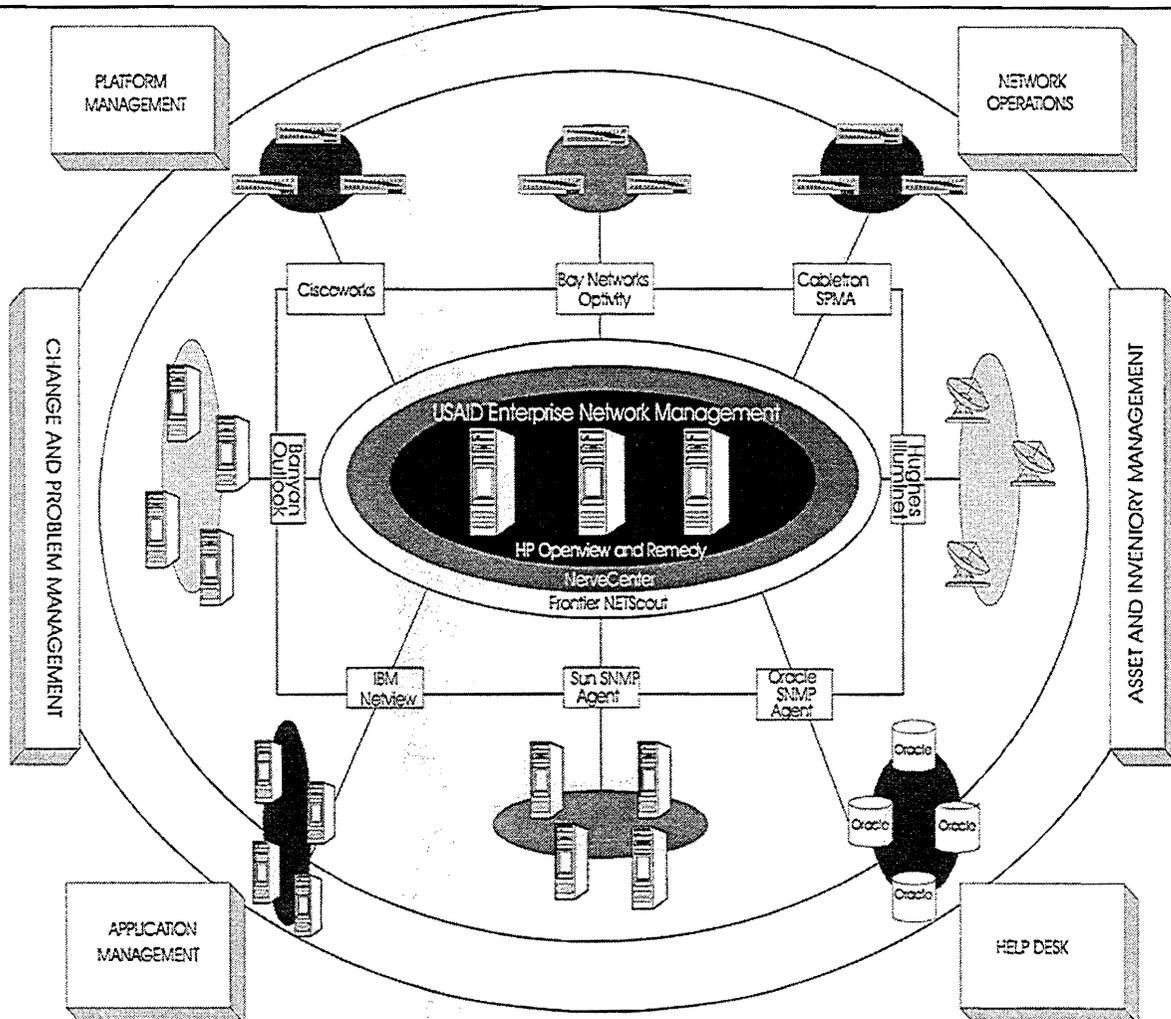
System are NerveCenter and HP Openview and Remedy. HP OpenView acts as the data collection point and network map, collecting information about the network and providing a visual representation of the network's health and status. Since HP Overview cannot make intelligent decisions about the data it collects, NerveCenter "processes" the data with an array of conditional statements that are defined by the ENMS staff. As you can imagine, defining these conditional statements is a tedious task; for example, defining "what-ifs" for each and every Ethernet port on every component in our network and trying to determine the "real" cause through additional what-ifs make this a complicated process. The good news is that once a model has been developed it can be replicated to other areas of the network.

If a problem is detected, NerveCenter passes an action to Remedy. Remedy takes the information about the problem, generates a trouble ticket and based on platform or network component notifies the responsible group that a problem exists.

Remedy is totally customizable for a variety of our network and Help Desk operations and is Oracle-based. It can be developed into a problem management system that provides an historical record of events by platform and machine, and can also help track work requests.

Beyond the core components of ENMS, there are quite a variety of additional tools that assist in looking at specific platforms. These are commonly called "element managers." After viewing a trouble ticket, the technician can access these tools to look at additional details about the problem and, in many cases, use these tools to repair the problem. For example, Ciscoworks allows the technician to correct routing tables, update the proper operating system, disable ports, etc. Other element managers employed by ENMS include Optivity for Synoptics equipment, SPMA for Cabletron equipment, Outlook for Banyan, and Illuminet for VSAT equipment.

In addition to element managers, other components of ENMS include



Simple Network Management Protocol (SNMP) agents. These are commonly available from the manufacturers; in the case of Oracle, we have had to develop an Oracle Management Information Block (MIB) so that HP Openview can obtain data about the health and status of the Oracle databases in NMS. NetView, which is an IBM-developed version of HP Openview, assists in monitoring the health of RS6000 equipment and reports the status to HP Openview.

We continue to fine-tune our statistics, validate our logic and results, and implement platform by platform. Future expansion of ENMS will include an asset manager called ISICAD (linking physical inventory and topology to the logical network), passing state-of-the-moment status reports to the IRM Help Desk, and detailed information on performance for routine reporting and planning.

How NMS-USAID/Mission sites will participate in ENMS largely depends on the availability of future releases of HP Openview to run in smaller-scale environments and then report to USAID/W's central ENMS site when action is required or on a routine basis for reporting purposes. In the meantime, USAID/W ENMS plans to collect the minimum amount of SNMP data from Mission platforms such as Cisco routers, VSATs, and RS6000s.

In summary, ENMS is becoming an integral part of USAID's network. It provides IRM personnel with the ability—if not now, then soon—to be proactive in responding to potential network problems or bottlenecks.

Ken Roko is a Telecommunications Specialist in IRM's Telecommunications/Computer Operations Division.

We continue to fine-tune our statistics, validate our logic and results, and implement platform by platform.

CYBERNUGGETS.....by Steve Hawkins

Doesn't it drive you crazy when you mark a block of text using the mouse only to discover that you took your finger off too soon and missed part of what you were trying to mark? I have having to start over again, particularly when I risk doing the same thing again because my fingers are so twitchy!

Am I just griping? Of course not! You know that I wouldn't list this as a problem unless someone had shown me a fix for it.

The solution to this situation lies in the use of SHIFT-CLICK. The SHIFT-CLICK function (you hold down the SHIFT key and click the mouse) causes the entire block from where you started marking (I call that the anchor point) to the present location to be marked. This means that if you missed a word on your first attempt, you simply put the pointer at the end of the word, press the SHIFT key and click—the word will be added to the already-marked text. It works the same way with larger stuff and can also be used to subtract markings when you accidentally mark too much. Try it. You'll like it!

Highway 1 Seminar for Foreign Affairs Agencies

by Kathleen Doyle

USAID joined the Secretary of State's Open Forum and the Highway 1 organization in sponsoring a Senior Executive Seminar entitled "Computer Applications for Foreign Affairs." The function was held in July at the offices of Highway 1 in Washington, DC.

Gary Vaughan of USAID's Latin America and Caribbean Bureau was instrumental in putting together the event, and introduced the speakers and panelists. The first was Kimberly Jenkins, Founder of Highway 1, who explained that it is a nonprofit organization created to make U.S. legislators aware of the possibilities of technology. Highway 1 does not sell technology products or services, but rather provides hand-on presentations in its own facility and, by request, at government locations. She was followed by Alan Lang, Chairman of the Open Forum, an organization begun in 1967 to engender a spirit of

cooperation between foreign service agencies. The Forum actively seeks to engage senior officials in discussions of the development and use of technology to improve systems, manage for results, and meet increasingly complex issues and challenges.

Mike Nelson, Special Assistant to the President in the White House Office of Science and Technology, gave the keynote address. He spoke of White House support of information technology and its vision of a global information highway and desire to share that vision. Specific goals are to promote private sector investment; promote competition in telecom and computer industries to drive down prices; open networks to a wide range of service providers, adopt flexible regulatory environments; and make advanced communications more widely available (there are now over 120,000 Web pages in the government). The greatest need, said Mr. Nelson, is in foreign affairs agencies because there technology can be used to show that we have an open government and want to get our message out. He mentioned the Leland Initiative and other high-profile projects to link to other countries, while emphasizing that a low-profile, "grass roots" use in offices can make huge differences. The first step is to educate management to get heads of agencies to try new services; the next is to "start small, just do it" and procurement rules now make this easier—especially for an office just buying a few PCs. A third step is to coordinate with other agencies and learn from the mistakes of others. He then presented two additional points: to use the private sector, "driving engine for the new technologies," rather than reconstructing everything; and to refrain from controlling flow on the information highway. Although some may feel that information flows too freely, the problems that arise are minor inconveniences compared to benefits achieved.

Bai Akridge, IBM Program Director for International Telecommunications Policy, spoke of the promise and prospects now that network computing has enabled an information highway and there has been a "formula convergence" of telecom, computers,

Highway 1 is a non-profit organization that holds presentations for the government on the subject of emerging technologies.

and the media. Among the most visible benefits are the viability of distance learning, remote diagnoses changing the nature of health care, online subscriptions to publications, and the changing art of diplomacy with many embassies having home pages, etc. At the same time, users are increasingly sophisticated and there are defense implications of that fact. As Dr. Akridge stated, communications policies are set by governments, yet private sector leadership is critical to keep products and services interoperable across boundaries. In the interest of security and privacy, customers should be able to choose and use encryption services and there must be copyright and patent protection.

Following these speakers, Mark Cannady, Director of Technology at Highway 1, invited the audience to attend any of three concurrent demonstrations.

One presentation focused on ways to provide real-time data concerning international disasters, particularly those occurring in remote areas. Vera Schneider of IBM discussed a G7 project called Image Navigation for Emergency Response (INFER) being developed for the US Forest Service and Canada's Emergency Management to assist in managing wildland fires in both countries. In case of fires, INFER's image analysis environment will be able to use an algorithm to determine types of trees affected and will allow searching for water areas, residential areas, etc. Data will be searchable in compressed format via technology developed by IBM with support from NASA and NOAA. The same imaging techniques apply to reporting of such other disasters as oil spills and pipeline leaks. Dave Budd, also of IBM, announced the daunting statistics that although 80% of the American workforce have computers, only 20% percent are computer literate. This made a strong case for voice enablement of computers, which has just recently become supportable on the Intel platform. This lets the user invoke a word processor or check E-mail with a voice "jump to" command. Eric Beller from Big Sky Technologies demonstrated that firm's "Adverse Event/Pager Alert with Phone Notes Applications." The

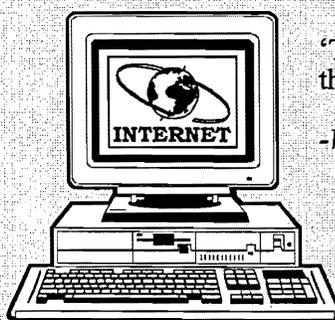
impetus to developing this product was a desire to access any database via a normal telephone; and Phone Notes works somewhat like dial-up banking applications. A caller leaving a request or question is prompted for keypad entries that essentially fill out a form clarifying the nature of the problem; and the person(s) paged can call in to retrieve this information. Pat Nugent of Eastman Kodak spoke of the exciting use of digital cameras to record images electronically that can then be immediately output over the Internet, via video downlink capability. A wish to take electronic imagery into military briefing rooms led to development of the Joint Combat Camera Center (JCCC) at the Pentagon to process and distribute significant digital imagery. This DOD imagery is used by top officials including the President. This reporting technology was used in several recent disaster situations, including the bombings in Saudi Arabia and Oklahoma City. Via a unique downlink and distribution process, images can be resampled, converted to TIF files, and then faxed. A representative from Apple Computers showed a hand-held computer that even allows Internet browsing and spoke of the new cross-platform Open Document setup wherein basic applications can be made objects that can then be dragged and dropped into "containers."

Another demonstration presented video conferencing as a way foreign affairs agencies can improve program effectiveness and operations, and featured two types of this technology. The first example featured a live video conference with Ambassador Daniel Spiegel and Public Affairs Officer Larry Taylor, who discussed the

Digital cameras can record images electronically that can then be immediately output over the Internet.

International video conferencing was presented in the context of two live demonstrations.

Will Things Never Change



'Tis true: there's magic in the web of it.

-William Shakespeare
Othello, Act III, Scene iv

experience of the US Embassy in Geneva in using digital video conferencing for Embassy operations and public diplomacy. As a second example, the Department of Commerce held a live conference demonstration with their office in Mexico City to discuss use of desktop video conferencing for the promotion of US business and data gathering.

A third demonstration focused on the use of collaborative "groupware" such as IBM'S Lotus Notes, as well as other technologies that can help foreign affairs agencies increase their efficiency in processing anything from cable traffic to procurement orders.

Hiram Larew, Chair of the Science and Technology Committee of the Open Forum, then moderated a panel of speakers who related earlier presentations to the current operations of foreign service agencies and also to future plans.

Joseph Bruns, Chief Information Officer at USIA, emphasized the importance of foreign affairs agencies now that 117 countries and 40 percent of the world's population are involved in some type of democracy. With the current limits on federal spending, agencies must find ways to extend efforts of staff here and overseas. Because the Internet has the potential for widespread misinformation, there should be a way to get clear information on US policy. The management of government affairs and the manner in which foreign affairs are conducted can influence events abroad.

Ambassador Teresita Schaffer, currently Director of the Foreign Service Institute, was enthusiastic that new technologies allow some activities to be done faster and others to be done for the first time, and spoke of the impact on training. One example is Internet availability of

foreign newspapers, through which students can increase their mastery of current events along with development of language skills. She stated that the whole area of technology has had a "profound effect" on how we use personnel abroad (e.g., low-end reporting no longer requires someone overseas). At the same time, the need exists to build relationships in person since the ability to support development depends on personal rapport, which puts us on track for the human input we need in our work.

Joan Dudik-Gayoso of USAID's Bureau for Global Programs reminded us that as technology makes us more accessible to individual countries, the Agency is exposed to the world. She spoke also of the need to recognize a generational issue regarding employee comfort level with technology. To assist the procurement of technology appropriate to our needs, we must thoroughly assess the functions that we require of it—and be willing to "tolerate some anarchy" as Agency use of technology evolves.

The last speaker was Mark Stiffler of the Defense Information Systems Agency, who voiced the need to get information to those people able to do something fast enough that their actions will be effective. Among the "freedoms" he felt vital to effective management of government were freedom from location, freedom to communicate as required, and freedom to eliminate meetings and memos via use of advanced communications.

In all, it was a thought-provoking session introducing many of us to technologies that we would like to see supported and funded in our own spheres of activity.

Kathleen Doyle is your Senior Editor.

Speakers related the day's presentations to the current operations of foreign service agencies and also to future plans.

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A Newsletter from the Office of Information Resources Management - M/IRM

Mining the Corporate Intranet for New Ways to Serve Clients

by Bob Egge

The Office of Human Resources in the Management Bureau (M/HR) has had very positive results from our investment in the development of an HR Website. Our experience to date suggests additional benefits can be realized by ourselves and similar USAID service organizations.

M/HR established a Home Page on the Agency's internal, or corporate, website and made it available to internal users this past Spring. The HR Website was an immediate success. The first three days of its existence resulted in 300 visitors. Within three months of establishment, the HR Website was recording just under 3500 visitors per month. The sheer numbers of USAID personnel visiting the HR Website were so impressive that the automated program that counts visitors was modified to disregard visits by the HR Staff who created and maintain the site.

Why the high level of interest in the HR Website? Clearly, the administration of Human Resources within USAID is a function which demands the dissemination of accurate and timely information. After all, "Personnel" impacts on every one of us, either directly or indirectly. Moreover, each employee has a personal interest in issues like assignments, promotion, benefits, career management and retirement throughout their careers. We've tried to meet this need by building content into the HR Website that speaks directly to these common areas of interest. The dissemination of such information via the HR Website represents a positive step in furthering M/HR's ongoing goals of providing better service to the Field and to Washington; improving our accuracy in effecting personnel actions; and administering Human Resource programs in ways that are responsive to the needs of both the Field and Washington while decreasing the time, effort and input required of our clients.

The Agency's corporate website or "Intranet" offers unique potential in this regard. Because the corporate website is accessible only by USAID personnel from USAID computers, the information found on the Intranet can be focused more definitively towards meeting the informational needs of the Agency's workforce, which is not the case with Website material developed for the Agency's public website on the World Wide Web. As the corporate site grows, client offices (e.g., IRM, FM, AS, and GC) have established their own home pages linked to the Agency's corporate home page and made specific information regarding their programs and functions available to the men and women within the USAID universe.

Our current thrust in exploring this communication tool is to look to interactive applications. We have begun by including a link to the Website of the Social Security Administration, where visitors from the HR Website may request their earnings and benefits statement online. The most rudimentary application of interactive capability on the Website is the "mail-to" command.

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Part of our goals for reengineering the Office of Human Resources includes development of formal channels by which our clients within USAID will have a voice in defining the areas in which we explore further development of interactive applications for the HR Website.

Throughout our Website, and at minimum at the bottom of each page, we have included a mail-to command which allows the user to seamlessly jump into E-mail and prepare correspondence to the appropriate HR professional.

We are now exploring ways to build partnerships and establish mechanisms through which we can facilitate input from our clients regarding personnel concerns, administration of Human Resources programs, and nurture professional dialogue on how our the Agency's workforce would like to see the Human Resource Administration function evolve. Within this context, part of our goals for reengineering the Office of Human Resources includes development of formal channels by which our clients within USAID will have a voice in defining the areas in which we explore further development of interactive applications for the HR Website. The number of possibilities before us is rich indeed. We see the technological capability available right now to create the opportunity for employees to respond to the informational content of our Website in such areas as Open Season Health Benefits elections, application for promotion in response to Merit Promotion Announcements, completion and transmission of Completion of Assignment Reports (COARs), and of course access and interaction with

self-directed training modules. We are excited about realizing opportunities in each of these areas.

The address for the HR Website is: <http://www.usaid.gov/M/HR>. Our site can also be accessed by the "point and click" method by clicking on the "Site Map" button at the "@USAID" Home Page. @USAID is the starting point for the Agency's "Corporate Website" which is available only to USAID personnel properly logged on to a USAID computer. The address for @USAID is: <http://www.usaid.gov>. We look forward to your visit to our site; and also your comments and ideas regarding its further development.

Bob Egge is a Management Analyst in the Policy, Planning, and Information Systems Division of the Office of Human Resources.

USAID/Panama Mission Assessment

by Russ Rose

From September 9-13, 1996, a team of four Information Technology Specialists from M/IRM visited USAID/Panama at the invitation of the Mission to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the Mission's Information Technology (IT) program. Jerry Sajewski, acting Director of IRM/Consulting and Information Services led the group. He was joined by Alvaro Garcia (IRM/Program Technology Transfer), Hang Nguyen (IRM/Telecommunications and Computer Operations), and Russ Rosen (IRM/Mission Support). The assessment team broke new ground in several areas.

This was the first formal IRM mission assessment conducted in over two years. For the first time, an IRM assessment team sought to evaluate strategic objectives and specific development programs, along with the administrative functions, in the context of the overall IT requirement and capabilities of the Mission. In addition, a formalized assessment



See Us Online, Too!

If you have access to USAID's Intranet Home Page, at <http://www.usaid.gov>, you can view this and all past issues of *IRM at Work!* with just a few clicks of the mouse:

1. Move your cursor down near the bottom edge of that page and click on Information Resources Management Division to bring up the Home Page of the IRM Office.
2. Click on IRM Newsletter to bring up the list of issues to date.
3. Select an issue by clicking on it.

If this does not bring up the chosen issue, then you will need to download and install a copy of Acrobat Reader software by following onscreen instructions.

MANAGER'S CORNER

by Joan Matejcek

The passage of the Information Technology Management Reform Act of 1996 (ITMRA) heralds a new way of managing information technology resources in the Federal government. Over time, ITMRA will change the way decisions are made regarding investments in technology in USAID as well as other Federal agencies. Larry Byrne, the Assistant Administrator for Management, has recently been named the Chief Information Officer (CIO) for USAID and I have been designated as Deputy CIO. It is our responsibility, under the Act, to ensure that USAID receives the best value possible for dollars invested in information technologies.

While the General Services Administration will no longer oversee our major information systems procurements, OMB will provide oversight of the information-related investments we propose each year as the USAID budget is reviewed. The performance of our past investments will also be subject to review. While the prior focus of oversight by GSA had as its objective improvement of the process for procuring information technology, OMB's approach under ITMRA will focus much more upon the quality of business decisions which involve information technology. OMB's review is likely to center upon the three questions that Federal CIOs are expected to address in their agencies: (1) Is the business process being supported by information technology a necessary business process for the agency? (2) Are there other sources who could fulfill the business needs outside the agency? and (3) Has the business process itself been reengineered prior to applying technology? Since OMB's determinations have a direct impact upon USAID's budget for information technology, it is important that our business case for technology investments be compelling in every case. The bottom line for us is that everyone who proposes or approves information technology applications within USAID will be asked to think in a new way about how technology impacts the business of the Agency.

It is also the job of the CIO to see that information technology issues receive the strategic attention they deserve at the highest levels of the agency and the Federal government. For example, it is likely that the CIO Council, which had its first meeting in August 1996, will drive Federal policy on how agencies will prepare their information systems to operate properly in the year 2000. While this is a significant issue for USAID, it is even more significant for large agencies who must examine and modify many millions of lines of computer programming to ensure that their systems will handle the change in century. CIOs will not only spearhead the strategic aspects of Year 2000 (Y2K) issues in their own agencies but are expected to work with OMB and the Congress in upcoming months regarding the budgetary impacts of Y2K compliance.

In upcoming columns I will focus on some other aspects of ITMRA that will change the way that USAID manages information technology. Stay tuned!

Joan Matejcek is the Acting Director of IRM.

methodology devised by business analysts in IRM/Mission Support was utilized to evaluate six core Agency IT components.

The team sought to assess: 1) the Mission's overall IRM plan; 2) NMS readiness; 3) current technology; 4) end user support; 5) new techno-

logy; and 6) project management support. Interviews were conducted with over 75 percent of the Mission's staff. Group and individual training sessions were held throughout the week to introduce the staff to current and new technology (including the Internet). A comprehensive review of

Since OMB's determinations have a direct impact upon USAID's budget for information technology, it is important that our business case for technology investments be compelling in every case.

An M/TRM team assessment of the Panama Mission's Information Technology (IT) program broke new ground in several areas.

The team suggested that the Mission create a permanent IRM committee with an IRM/CIS analyst as a "virtual" member to contribute support and guidance on IRM initiatives and planning as the Mission reviewed procurement requirements, assessed end user training needs, and automated administrative tasks and project requirements alike.

IT procurement requirements was conducted. The LAN was evaluated and "tweaked" to optimize performance. Recommendations were presented to senior management to develop an IRM strategy that incorporates the administrative and strategic objectives of the Mission.

In keeping with the spirit of the Agency's reengineering efforts and to maximize the use of resources at both the Panama Mission and in AID/W, the team suggested that the Mission create a permanent IRM committee and appoint a business analyst from M/IRM/CIS to serve as a "virtual" member. The member would contribute support and guidance on IRM initiatives and planning as the Mission reviewed procurement requirements, assessed end user training needs, and automated administrative tasks and project requirements alike.

The four-member team returned with a far better understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing missions as the Agency reengineers itself, NMS is implemented, and overseas operations are consolidated, while we all try to remain on the cutting edge of information technology. Two more IRM mission assessments (Jakarta and Gaborone) were planned for late September and October. Invaluable insight into sharpening IRM's ability to respond to the rapidly changing IT requirements of the Agency and missions will be gained from these TDYs.

Russ Rosen is a Senior Systems Analyst under contract to IRM's Mission Support Group.

The following article is reprinted in its entirety (with permission) from the Intelligence Community Quality Council's newsletter, Quality and Innovation, dated September 11, 1996.

Executive Order and Legislation Place New Focus on Federal Information Management

Executive Order 13011, *Federal Information Technology*, issued on July 16, directs that Federal Executive Agencies shall "significantly improve the management of their information systems, including the acquisition of information technology." Building on the Information Technology Management Reform Act of 1996—effective August 8—and other related legislation, the Executive Order provides a framework for improvements in the management of federal information technology.

Embodying the spirit of the National Performance Review (NPR) the Executive Order begins with a statement that "A Government that works better and costs less requires efficient and effective information systems." To better attain this goal, federal agencies are given "clear authority and responsibility to make measurable improvements in mission performance and service delivery to the public through the strategic application of information technology."

Specifically, Executive Order 13011 directs that Executive Agencies:

- Implement the relevant provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Information Technology Management Reform Act of 1996, and the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993.
- Implement an investment review process that drives budget formula-

Federal Editors Meet

Your editors, John Tucker and Kathleen Doyle, were pleased to attend the organizational meeting of the Federal Editors Network earlier this fall. This Network is an outgrowth of Vice President Gore's National Performance Review (NPR). According to the meeting announcement from NPR, the Vice President "believes editors can help transform the federal workplace to create an environment in which federal workers are truly empowered, innovation is applauded, and government reinvention will flourish." We appreciated the opportunity to meet the producers of other newsletters and to see many publications from other agencies. The next article is reprinted from one of these.

tion and execution for information systems.

- Rethink and restructure the way they perform their functions before investing in information technology to support work.
- Establish clear accountability for information resources management by creating Chief Information Officers (CIOs)—with visibility and management responsibilities necessary to advise the agency head on the design, development, and implementation of those information systems.
- Cooperate in the use of information technology to improve the productivity of federal programs.
- Establish an interagency support structure that builds on existing successful interagency efforts.

The Executive Order establishes a Chief Information Officers Council (CIO Council) as “the principal interagency forum to improve agency practices on such matters as the design, modernization, use, sharing, and performance of agency information resources.” Members are the CIOs of 28 Executive Agencies, including CIA and the parent agencies of all Intelligence Community elements.

In addition, the Executive Order establishes a Government Technology Services Board “to identify and promote the development of innovative technologies, standards, and practices among agencies, state and local governments, and the private sector.” Further, it establishes an Information Technology Resources Board “to provide independent assessments to assist in the development, acquisition, and management of selected major information systems and to provide recommendations to agency heads and OMB as appropriate.”

The Executive Order expands on the provisions of the Information Technology Management Reform Act. The Act revamps federal information technology acquisition, detailing the responsibilities of the Director OMB and heads of Executive Agencies in this area and calling for the appointment of Chief Information Officers. It permits federal agencies to buy their own computer systems, replacing the

CYBERNUGGETS...by Steve Hawkins

Last time, I wrote about how you can use SHIFT-CLICK to mark ranges in Windows applications without having to start over and remark from the beginning. The logical follow-on to this capability is the marking of noncontiguous areas. That's what CONTROL-CLICK is all about.

Let's say you're in the File Manager and want to copy some files from your system drive to your personal "C" drive to help reduce the load on the system. By holding down the CONTROL key while you point and click with the mouse, you can mark (highlight) any files you want—regardless of whether they are listed next to one another on the directory listing. It also works like a toggle so if you mark one accidentally or change your mind, you can unmark it simply by clicking again (while still holding down the CONTROL key). After you're done marking, click on COPY and all the selected files will be copied.

This CONTROL-CLICK function can be used in many places for many operations. It is a standard combination within Windows, so it's always worth a try if you want to perform an action on noncontiguous areas. It's very useful in Lotus when you are trying to shade or otherwise format noncontiguous areas (for example, rows that contain subtotals). One place it doesn't seem to work is within WordPerfect text. As near as I can tell, you cannot mark noncontiguous text in WordPerfect.

centralized General Services Administration approach. And it calls for pilot programs to evaluate specific new acquisition approaches.

The Act specifies the use of performance-based management of information technology with established goals, performance measures, benchmarking, and an annual report to Congress on progress toward goals. It also details how capital planning and investment control will be done. A “Sense of the Congress” statement is included that specifies that, in a five year period beginning with 1996, agencies should each achieve a five percent decrease in the cost of maintaining and operating information systems—and a five percent increase in efficiency of agency operations through improvements in information resource management.

The Executive Order applies to national security systems as they are defined and specified in the Information Technology Reform Act. Many provisions of the Act apply to national security systems directly, while others are to be applied “to the degree practicable.”

In a five year period beginning with 1996, agencies should each achieve a five percent decrease in the cost of maintaining and operating information systems—and a five percent increase in efficiency of agency operations through IRM improvements.

A Repository to Share

by Cheryl Hogans

Nowadays, success in the business environment hinges on making the necessary information available when and where you need it in order to do your job. IRM's Data Administration Group is now offering the Repository as a vehicle that can store information as well as make it available for sharing with others.

A repository is a collection of information assets that are important to an organization. Many think of the Repository as a static data dictionary that tracks data elements across applications. Although this may have been true at one time, Repositories are now much more robust. The Corporate Repository not only accepts information from a variety of Computer-Aided Systems Engineering (CASE) tools, which facilitate the development life cycle, but can process information from sources with different formats. Additionally, since the Repository is supported by an Oracle database, it can be directly accessed for report writing. Query tools for the USAID Repository include Impromptu, Q+E, and R&R Report Writer.

Central to the Repository's design is its capability to relate items of information to one another and store the related information as a "view" (a snapshot of business interest). For example, a programmer's view might specify what data is used by a specific module which is contained in a specific application that is owned by a specific business user (in which data, module, application, and business user are the information being related; used, contained, and owned are the relationships tying them together). A technical architect's view, on the other hand, might specify which PCs are connected to which network that is in turn connected to a specific computer (server) that contains a specific database which is accessed by a specific user who works in a specific business unit.

A repository is a collection of information assets important to an organization.

Central to the Repository's design is its capability to relate information items to each other and store related data as a "view."

To make Repository information even more available, we have initiated efforts to place selected Repository contents on the Intranet. The Web lets us to share information on a platform that is widely accessible to the average PC configuration at USAID.

If the Repository is going to be successful, it needs the help of developers, business users, and management to provide the business information. All of this information, of course, needs to be accurate and timely, and meet the needs of the users. Once the information is loaded into it, we can experience the true value of the Repository. What business information do you have to share with your colleagues at USAID?

Cheryl Hogans is a Senior Information Engineering Specialist under contract to IRM's Data Administration Group.

Mission Support Group Anniversary

by Renee Clemons

The Mission Support Group (MSG), now celebrating its one-year anniversary, is headed by Courtney Ives and supported by contractor staff analysts.

Mission Support's role is to serve as the M/IRM/CIS contact for Mission Information Technology and Management Services. Mission Support disseminates information on Agency directives, policies, and initiatives to and from the missions.

Mission Support acts as a liaison and provides extensive follow-up on USAID mission concerns. Missions can solicit our assistance via E-mail through the Mission Support mailbox at IRM-Mission-Support@IRM.CIS. Mission Support provides first-tier support to the missions. Requests outside our area of expertise are forwarded to the appropriate specialists..

Mission Support schedules in-house training for mission staff and provides logistical support for technical vendor training—Oracle, Banyan, and

IBM UNIX/AIX. Historically, Mission Support organizes System Managers Training Conferences. Our current and future plans are to continue in our tradition by adding IRM Virtual Conferences to our agenda.

Mission Support continues to establish and implement equipment deployment procedures resulting from mission closeouts. We communicate critical and time-sensitive information world-wide via service messages and monitor the cable mailbox to stay abreast of new developments at Agency bureaus. Mission Support has created and/or maintains a variety of documentation tools including the ACCESS Contact List, Mission Assessment Handbook, and Systems Managers Master List (SMmaster).

Mission Support publishes Technical Issuances that focus on the technical concerns arising from TDY consultations. Mission Support also schedules consultation visits for mission staff on TDY. Recently, Mission Support performed three Mission Assessments of the IT/IM programs in Panama City (*article on page 2*), Jakarta, and Gaborone.

MSG's role is expanding to include world-wide support of the NMS rollout. This comprehensive effort requires close coordination with the IRM Help Desk, NMS Status Group, and other NMS Subject Matter Experts. We are committed to providing quality services to the field. If you have any suggestions for services that you would like IRM/CIS to consider providing in the future, please let us know. For further details, see our Home Page at <http://www.usaid.gov/M/IRM/msg/index.html>.

Renee Clemons is a Senior Systems Analyst under contract to the Mission Support Group.

Middleware Explained

by V. J. Kebis

Middleware is software that allows elements of applications to interoperate across network links despite differ-



QUESTION:

If I'm away from my usual workstation but can access a USAID terminal, is there a way that I can check my E-mail messages?

ANSWER:

Yes—good news for personnel serving on temporary assignments, even overseas. From a terminal that is within USAID's Wide Area Network (WAN), just login using your full Banyan E-mail ID rather than your "nickname" ID.

Then enter the same password that you would use at your own workstation. You may have to wait a little longer than usual for the system to respond.

This process lets you use E-mail just like you would from your usual worksite (reading messages, sending replies or generating new messages, etc.).

ences in underlying communication protocols, systems architectures, operating systems, databases, and other application services.

In the past, applications having to interoperate across a network built the communication function into the program. For example, middleware products were designed to enable remote database access.

Today, off-the-shelf middleware is available to perform the tasks. Advances in middleware take over the software development burden of complicated networked computer models and make it practical to run applications in a way that would otherwise be too costly and very difficult to develop. Now the middleware software category has grown to include other data integration technologies such as distribution services (directory services, mail services, distributed transaction management systems, and software distribution services); application communication technologies (messaging, remote procedure calls, and distributed objects); and the emerging Internet and enterprise Intranet services.

In an enterprise-wide client/server environment, many components must be considered: application services such as systems management, database messaging protocols, applications distribution, etc. Some type of interpreter software is always required if dissimilar programs are to communicate over the network.

Middleware is software that allows elements of applications to interoperate across network links despite differences in underlying communication protocols, systems architectures, operating systems, databases, and other application services.

Middleware represents the software layer between the application program level and the system software level. It includes transaction monitors, data communication systems, networking systems, database access systems, and software development tools. It can be deployed either on two hardware tiers or on a third dedicated application server.

Within the software architecture, middleware enables manageability of the client/server and other forms of distributed computing and allows users to tie together computing and software development platforms.

Grouping by Functionality

One way to classify middleware products is by functionality, which allocates them into two groups. *Transaction Processing (TP) monitors* are complex subsystems usually used in a heterogeneous environment to "glue" different application tiers together and let clients communicate with the application servers. *Object-oriented middleware*, on the other hand, is generally used as the business processing tier which reflects the structure of an enterprise, its important business functions, and the way data flows between business units. Workflow is becoming an increasingly important function in business processing as organizations try to automate the flow of information among multiple systems.

Grouping by Network Use

From the perspective of network utilization, there are also two groups of middleware. *Managing tools* actively form a buffer zone between applications and the network. They intercept and translate an application's network transmissions (data and program instructions) between

different network communication protocols, operating systems, and application programs. This type of middleware usually runs continuously on all computers in the target client/server environment, waiting for its linked application to send or receive data. *Development tools* are based on Remote Procedure Calls (RPCs). Development tools help programmers manage data so it can move over the net easily and be recognized by different types of computers.

Current Level of Implementation at USAID

Initial testing and evaluation of simple middleware software products at USAID started at the time of decision-making for the new software development tools dedicated to supporting the new NMS application development. For access to the Oracle database, the NMS applications needed a common-call interface into the database, such as Microsoft's Open Database Connectivity (ODBC).

The next step of implementation would include network managing tools and Oracle Web Servers. Oracle Web Server offers an integration of Web browsers such as Netscape with Oracle database and other data sources. Developers can design dynamic Web applications supporting ad hoc analysis, interactive business processes, E-mail messages, workflow, etc.

As USAID follows the industry trends, it will conduct Agency-wide connectivity for all information sources by implementing new middleware technology.

V. J. Kebis is a Computer Specialist in IRM's Data Administration Group.

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A Newsletter from the Office of Information Resources Management - M/IRM

Interagency Conference Develops Technology Goals for Embassies

by Dean Salpini

On November 4-6, the foreign affairs community in Washington, DC got a glimpse of the American Embassy of the 21st century. Ambassador J. Stapleton Roy delivered the keynote speech at the Foreign Affairs Interagency IRM Group (FAIG) sponsored conference via a digital video conference link from his current post in Jakarta, Indonesia. This marked the opening of the first foreign affairs community conference focusing exclusively on information technology (IT) in the overseas post. The Department of State (DoS), USAID, US Information Agency (USIA), Foreign Commercial Service (FCS/Commerce), Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), Peace Corps, and other agencies participated. Over 280 individuals registered for the event.

This forum offered a rare chance to focus on the overseas post as a combined US Government (USG) community rather than taking the typical "Washington-centric" approach followed by most agencies. It also recognized the changes in both technology and the mission operating environment are requiring new ways of doing business. These new approaches dictate identifying common needs and applications, setting common standards, and examining shared support capabilities. The key objective of the 3-day conference was to develop strategies to employ IT more effectively in this post environment.

Chief Information Officers (CIOs) of participating agencies voiced their perspectives on strategic IT directions. Joan Matejcek, USAID's Deputy CIO as well as Acting Director of IRM, delivered a talk on USAID's technical directions and opportunities for collaboration with its foreign affairs partners. Joe Bruns from USIA, Eliza McClenaghan from DoS and Bernie McMahon from Commerce/ITA also contributed organization-specific views of the IT landscape and perceived needs at missions. They were accompanied by senior Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) who have faced the promise and problems of IT in overseas posts. The FSO panel was highlighted by Ambassador Joe Lake, now Deputy Assistant Secretary for Information Management at DoS, and included Rose Marie Depp of USAID's Management and Planning Innovation Office. Ambassador Lake acknowledged the challenges that lie ahead for DoS as they try to upgrade their technology base worldwide through the ALMA program and simultaneously reorganize the Information Management function internally. He was supportive of addressing common IT needs at post among the community, and mentioned experiencing many of the same frustrations other users had encountered due to incompatible and outdated systems.

Another key feature of the conference was discussion by interagency working groups that focused on already-identified IT problems and issues at overseas missions. These work groups were composed of functional officers who had experience with the specific topic area, had used IT tools at post, and had "real-life" experience with interagency IT issues at post. Each group was

REST STOPS

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Five work groups met to develop recommendations on predefined issues faced by overseas posts.

A suggestion was made to bring the foreign affairs CIOs together to develop an Internet strategy. This idea was seized by those CIOs attending and a meeting was held the next week to develop group strategies for follow-on activities.

limited to 10 persons and worked through a pre-developed issues paper on their topic area. The following USAID personnel served as participants in these groups: Gary Vaughan, Steve Hawkins, Joe Gueron, Paul Eavy, Mike Trott, Courtney Ives, Linny Jameson, John Tincoff, Jim Lindahl, Anne Langhaug, Joe Nassif, and Gretchen Larrimer.

The work group topic areas were as follows:

- Communications interpost and intrapost
- Shared administrative systems
- Sharing documents and databases
- Shared support for IT
- External information access/delivery

Each work group yielded promising recommendations not only of long-range activities but also of more simple actions that could be implemented immediately to sustain the momentum generated by the conference. Basic recommendations included one to "create an interagency focus group." Complex suggestions included "reviewing and relaxing security regulations in regard to unclassified network."

The Post Communications Group suggested an E-mail pilot at a post and an exchange of Internet E-mail addresses. The Administrative Systems Group recommended a survey of post hardware/software to identify which information could be shared electronically and also identification of a specific administrative function for shared development of a prototype system. The Documents/Databases Group discussed an Intranet for the Embassy country team members at post. The IT Support Group recommended sharing IT support and making capabilities from one agency available to another (e.g., DoS staff filing "sitreps" from a USIA site). The last group, who focused on issues of external information access, suggested an enhanced home page for the FAIIG and encouraging each Embassy to set up an E-mail mailbox for inquiries to the post.

One of the groups also suggested bringing the CIOs together from the foreign affairs community to develop an Internet strategy. This suggestion was seized by the group of CIOs in attendance and a meeting was held the following week to develop some group strategies for follow-on activities. Getting senior managers from four agencies or departments to coordinate resources on common issues was probably a result beyond what organizers could have asked for. Overall, the suggestions were well-composed and they provide a unique opportunity for the foreign affairs community to tackle technology-related issues at post without "bureaucratic overhead."

At the onset, Ambassador Roy specified three key obstacles to effective technology employment: the maturity level of IT, human factors, and the speed of change within IT itself. Each offers different challenges to those of us involved with IT, yet we can hardly afford to ignore them if we consider the fact that he and others have amplified that "it takes around 40 years for new technologies to yield significant productivity gains." So what does the future hold for the Embassy workplace? According to Ambassador Roy, the digital workplace would "not be clock- or space-bound. I should be able to access my voice mail on a secure phone link, download E-mail to my laptop or personal digital assistant, respond to communications, and forward items to others in the mission." According to the Ambassador, the Internet also features prominently in the business processes of the future Embassy—from visa information to trade and business opportunities. This medium has become ubiquitous and it has become necessary to exploit it and manage it at post.

Although some of these functions sound beyond our current infrastructure and budgets, the time has come to synchronize our planning apparatus between the parties and foster cooperation of all USG agencies at post. Will foreign affairs and diplomacy disappear from the new information age landscape? No. Are we certain to implement all the

MANAGER'S CORNER

by Joan Matejcek

Where will you be on January 1, 2000? According to many experts, you should be prepared on that date to experience malfunctions of many if not most computer systems as well as many electronic items that employ computer chips to operate. The "Year 2000" or "Y2K" issue is a hot topic for all federal agencies and organizations of all types.

In the federal sector, many agencies rely upon "legacy" systems that were designed and programmed many years ago. The majority of these systems were programmed to handle only two-digit dates representing the year (for instance, "98" for 1998). As a result, when the year becomes 2000, these systems will behave in unpredictable ways as the old programming logic attempts to make sense of a year that could mean 2000 or could mean 1900. Each agency must review all of its legacy systems as well as more current systems to identify and fix Y2K problems before they arise. But the problem is larger than that. In USAID we use many commercial off-the-shelf (or COTS) software packages. There are many uncertainties as to which of these packages will be Y2K compliant and so will operate reliably in the new century. The same is true for operating systems software, communications software, and the internal operating systems of each piece of equipment that USAID operates. Reaching beyond information technology, think about the other electronic systems that we use: elevators, security systems timers, heating and air conditioning systems, banking machines, and so many others.

IRM is preparing a plan to address the Y2K issues for USAID's information systems. As we progress, guidance will be distributed to all USAID organizations to help you get prepared for the year 2000. This guidance will be of particular significance for missions who have investments in locally-developed applications software. You may also be asked to provide information about the hardware and software that you use so that problems can be anticipated and thereby avoided. For those of you who are interested in more information regarding Y2K issues, a Y2K home page has been established on the Intranet with links to many of the federal Y2K sites and other resources. Check it out under the IRM home page.

Joan Matejcek is the Acting Director of IRM and Deputy Chief Information Officer of USAID.

"Legacy" systems programmed to handle only two-digit dates representing the year will behave in unpredictable ways as the old logic attempts to make sense of a year that could mean either 2000 or 1900.

recommendations that came out of this conference? No. But do we have a set of targets to strive for in the coming years? Absolutely! And what we need to do at this time is to follow the guidance offered by one work group from the overseas IT conference: "Just Do It"!

For more details of the conference, you can visit the FAIG home page at www.info.usaid.gov/faiig/.

Dean Salpini is Chief of the Technical Architecture Group in IRM's Information Policy and Administration Division.

IRM Evaluates Jakarta, RCSA-Gaborone

by Ed Sciuillo

IRM/Mission Support conducted assessments in USAID/Jakarta, September 23 - October 4, 1996, and in USAID/RCSA-Gaborone, October 7 - 18, 1996. Wayne VanVechten, Acting Deputy Director of IRM, headed up the Jakarta team which included Courtney Ives (IRM/Mission Support) and Dennis Lauer (IRM/

Additional details of the conference are available via the home page of the sponsoring group (FAIG) at www.info.usaid.gov/faiig/.

Staff reductions at the Jakarta mission must be balanced by more extensive use of automation.

The Gaborone site is actually a regional center that provides programmatic support to 11 countries in southern Africa (see map).

Telecommunications and Computer Operations). Darrell Owen (IRM/Internet Data Services) led the RCSA-Gaborone group along with Ed Sciuolo (IRM/Mission Support), Phil Gordon and Jonathan Kirkpatrick (IRM/Telecommunications and Computer Operations). The purpose of the assessments was to provide a comprehensive review of IRM/automation activities at each mission site. Special emphasis was focused on key areas of the overall IRM organization, New Management System (NMS) readiness, end-user support, current technology, future technology, and project support.

Jakarta

The USAID/Jakarta mission is collocated within the Embassy compound. The assessment team interviewed key mission managers at varying levels of technical expertise. As the impact of the reduction in mission staff due to mission restructuring is felt over the next three years, the remaining staff must maximize automation tools to enable them to work more effectively. Key assessment goals included achievement of a standardized technical environment for the New Management System (NMS); ensurance of the availability of technical resources adequate to utilize automation as a tool to perform duties effectively; institutionalization of the Data

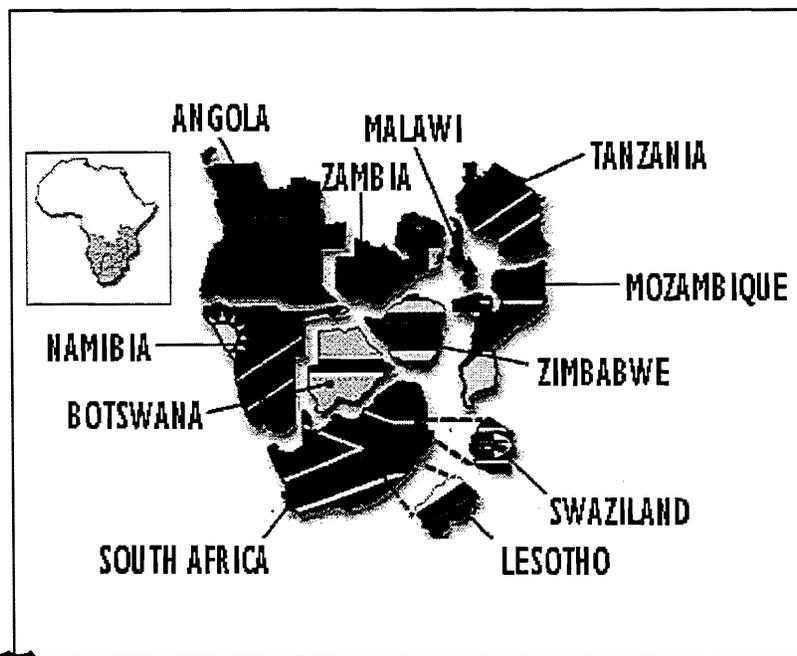
Management Center operation to maximize benefits in support of all mission activities; and assistance in resolving issues related to Diplomatic Telecommunications Support - Program Office (DTS-PO) support of video teleconferencing and technical support of NMS/E-mail and voice communication lines. The team provided a series of recommendations to enhance the overall IRM program, improve technical operations, and optimize network performance.

RCSA-Gaborone

The Regional Center for Southern Africa (RCSA) is located in Gaborone, Botswana. The RCSA provides programmatic support to 11 countries in the southern Africa region. This situation presented IRM with a unique opportunity to review Information Technology (IT) related issues associated with a regionally-oriented mission. In view of the anticipated overall downsizing of USAID's overseas presence, the RCSA provided an excellent model for USAID's future field operations. The assessment included a relatively large number of recommendations aimed at bringing about an institutionalized IRM program within the RCSA. The assessment document itself was to guide the RCSA executive level group (called META Team) as a direction-setting foundation for launching future IRM initiatives. The need to undertake a major reconfiguration of the network after new IT components from year-end procurements are received will serve to align the network within Agency standards and significantly improve services to the RCSA staff. It was further recommended that with the addition of more technical staff, the emphasis on customer services would be highly prioritized. And finally, contributions of the Leland Initiative, AfricaLink, and the Regional Telecommunication Restructuring (RTR) project present exciting opportunities to establish an RCSA agenda that would bring about enhanced communications to all of the regional development community.

Summary

The outcome of the assessments will help us define an IRM automation



guide to 21st-century technology. In the future, USAID Mission Support will explore the possibility of providing a universal virtual approach to extend this outreach to all our world-wide missions. For additional information about the assessment reports, E-mail "Courtney Ives@IRM.CIS."

Ed Sciuillo is a Senior Systems Analyst under contract to the Mission Support Group.

Low-Orbit Satellites Extend Internet Access to Developing Countries

by Maria Busquets

The USAID Office of Population is working with Management Sciences for Health (MSH) through the Family Planning Management Development (FPMD) project to test uses for electronic communications technologies in reproductive health and development organizations. Although access to and use of new electronic communications is growing rapidly in industrialized countries, many potential users in developing countries still find these technologies unaffordable or inaccessible. Currently, several factors limit access to the Internet in developing countries, including the following: unavailability or poor quality of local telephone lines; prohibitively high costs of local or long distance telephone calls; absence of an affordable Internet provider, particularly outside the capital city or major metropolitan areas; government regulations and other political factors; and lack of access to essential equipment such as computers and modems. While access to the Internet will continue to expand and eventually reach many users, advocates of electronic communications technologies need to ensure that in the meanwhile information remains available to a wide range of users,

including those who cannot afford or do not have direct access to the World Wide Web.

To provide reproductive health professionals and organizations with affordable, direct access to electronic communications networks in developing countries, non-profit organizations such as SatelLife and VITA are using a system of Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellites, simple ground stations, and radio- and telephone-based computer networks to connect users in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. For example, in a given country, SatelLife sets up a HealthNet "node" by giving people training and/or computers or software. Customers can then use FIDONet or Unix technology to send an e-mail or a message over the Internet (either via a telephone line or, if the lines do not exist or are not reliable, a LEO satellite). A "gateway" receives these messages and, if necessary, translates them to the appropriate format before transmitting them to the recipient. The same store-and-forward technology is used in reverse when the message is answered. Users with E-mail access can also participate in electronic conferences and bulletin boards, download documents from FTP sites, and search select library databases.

The recent Francophone Regional Advisory Committee (FRAC) in Mali exemplifies the ways in which the Office of Population is encouraging the integration of new electronic technologies. Since 1987, members of the FRAC, a coalition of public and private family planning organizations working in French-speaking countries, have met annually to share experiences and discuss local and regional management concerns. FRAC members identified the need to have more frequent communication with each other, but found that the high costs of travel and telephone communications made this impossible.

Using appropriate electronic communications technologies to address this need, SatelLife and FPMD are creating a micro-network connecting FRAC member organizations. To connect select FRAC member organizations in Senegal, Burkina Faso, and Mali, SatelLife

Internet access will continue to expand and eventually reach many users but in the meanwhile, advocates of electronic communications must ensure that information remains available to a wide range of users, including those who cannot afford or do not have direct access to the World Wide Web.

To address the need for better communication among members of the Francophile Regional Advisory Committee, a coalition of family planning organizations in French-speaking countries, SatelLife and USAID's Family Planning Management Development (FPMD) project are creating a micro-network.

FPMD will continue to identify information and develop materials to be made available to FRAC members and other reproductive health organizations' micro-networks. FPMD's Electronic Resource Center will be the prototype for developing information for these networks.

installed HealthNet nodes and trained users in use of communications software. With the micro-network, a growing number of FRAC members can now connect with each other and to outside information sources via E-mail. Over the next few years, remaining FRAC organizations in other member countries will be connected to the micro-network.

FRAC and FPMD have already started to use the micro-network for planning and information exchange. The agenda for the FRAC IX annual meeting in Bamako, Mali, was developed incorporating the electronic technology into the daily activities of the FRAC. FRAC participants also joined an electronic conference, Community Management of Health Programs (Comm-Manage), that was open to interested and experienced managers around that world. FRAC participants could share and request information from members of the Comm-Manage electronic conference during the FRAC IX meeting.

While SatelLife and FPMD expand the FRAC micro-network, FPMD will also continue to identify information and develop materials to be made available to FRAC members and other reproductive health organizations' micro-networks. FPMD's Electronic Resource Center will be the prototype for developing information for these micro-networks. The *FPMD Electronic Resource Center (ERC)*, currently being developed, is accessible via the World Wide Web and E-mail and gives users the opportunity to communicate directly with their

colleagues around the world, participate in interactive forums, conferencing, and document sharing, and provides access to a variety of management tools to help organizations improve program management. Its address is <http://www.msh.org/fpmd/erc/erc.htm>.

Maria Busquets is Deputy Chief of the Communication, Management, and Training Division of the Office of Population.

IRM Takes Part in Workshop re Telemedicine in Latin America, Caribbean

by Alvaro J. Garcia

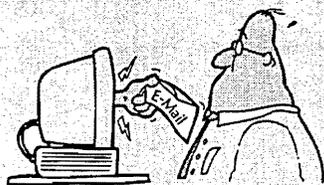
At the invitation of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), IRM participated in a 4-day workshop held in November aimed at defining technical and management policies to support successful formulation of telehealth projects in Latin America and the Caribbean. (Telehealth is defined as the extension of health services through the use of advanced computing and communications.) The conference brought together close to 60 experts in Information Technology (IT), including health technology vendors, telecommunications providers, consultants, and government health representatives.

In support of USAID strategic objectives in health, IRM helped define guidelines to assist the health providers and governments design appropriate IT solutions for telemedicine. Telemedicine, an application of telehealth systems, facilitates exchange of medical opinions among health institutions, allows remote contact with patients, and promotes resource sharing. Key elements considered in the discussion included cultural, financial, and technological characteristics of countries in the region.

Will Things Never Change

O, wonder!...
O brave new world, that has such people in it!

- William Shakespeare
The Tempest, Act V, Scene i



The group concluded that common goals for telemedicine projects should include reducing the cost of delivering care and the interval between presentation of a clinical problem and its effective treatment, as well as expanding access to health services into remote areas. Cost considerations should not deter governments from implementing telehealth initiatives, since telemedicine can be implemented using either simple telecommunications infrastructure (e.g., telephone, radio, or TV) or high-tech solutions such as satellite links and integrated multimedia units.

Another important strategy the group recommended was to define critical success factors that countries should identify to overcome implementation barriers and increase the impact of telehealth on the community. Some of these factors are:

- Raising public awareness of improved service possibilities
- Enlistment of influential champions for the program that can survive political changes
- Winning over a majority of senior officials to support the program
- Fostering solidarity of purpose among health professionals

A major constraint that the group identified to both high-tech telemedicine and low-tech alternatives is the lack of access to basic infrastructure by health providers in some Latin American countries. There are many rural areas that lack electricity, telephones, water, and other facilities. Furthermore, security for deployed equipment is not easily achieved. A major recommendation by the group is to ensure that during project formulation, implementors define a component to improve basic infrastructure, working in coordination with other infrastructure programs.

The recommendations emanating from all work groups that participated in the seminar will eventually be synthesized and posted on PAHO's Web Page (<http://www.paho.org>). The document will serve as policy guidance on telecommunications-based information systems for health profes-

CYBERNUGGETS....by Steve Hawkins

Those clever people who set up BeyondMail designed it to work with the Internet. Here's how. Any time you send a message that includes an Internet address to someone using BeyondMail it will automatically turn that Internet address into an active hyperlink. This means that, as a reader, you just DOUBLE-CLICK on the address and BeyondMail will automatically activate Netscape and put you at the specified address. No fear. No fuss. You find a great address and send it to someone who needs it. They DOUBLE-CLICK and they're there. Done.

Want to try it out? Here are some favorites:

<http://www.usaid.gov/> - is the USAID *internal* (corporate) web address. From it you can access all sorts of useful information about NMS, reinvention, etc.

<http://www.info.usaid.gov/> - is the USAID *external* (public) web address. This is how we present ourselves to the outside world. Our web site also contains pointers to many other sites of valuable development information.

As you are visiting any site, just "Add a Bookmark" in Netscape and you will be able to return to that site with only a mouse click.

If you have BeyondMail but this application link doesn't work for you, talk to your System Administrator about your Netscape setup.

If you are not set up with Beyond Mail but do have Netscape, you can still use these addresses (called URLs) to begin obtaining valuable information from the Internet.

sionals, service managers, cooperation agencies, and consumers.

Alvaro Garcia is an Information Technology Advisor under contract to IRM's Program Technology Transfer Group.

Vision 2000

by Steve Dosh

What will M/IRM look like in the year 2000? One thing is certain, new information technology legislation enacted by the 104th Congress will impact greatly on how Chief Information Officers (CIOs) of all U.S. Government agencies conduct business. M/IRM's strategic direction will continue to be guided by the most recent trends in strategic information management including Information Engineering (IE) and the Capability Maturity Model (CMM). From the reform perspective, there is a corresponding evolution from the radical solutions advanced by proponents of Total Quality Management

IRM's strategic direction will continue to be guided by the most recent trends in strategic information management.



What Your Domain Says About You

To split the Internet into understandable groups, the Domain Name System is used in Internet addressing, starting from the right with the largest domain. End users at the end computer are often hooked onto the domain name by an @ symbol. Domains include the following:

- MIL - Parts of the U.S. Military
- GOV - U.S. government agencies that are connected to the Internet
- COM - Commercial companies with computer connection to the Internet
- EDU - Schools and universities that connect to the Internet
- NET - Companies and groups concerned with the administration of the Internet
- ORG - Other organizations on the Internet

NMS has been installed successfully at 39 overseas missions and is operational in USAID/W, and many of the Agency's core business functions are now performed within it.

(TQM) and Business Process Reengineering (BPR) to the more pragmatic and workable solutions afforded by Business Process Improvement (BPI) as described in "Transitions to the Future: a Model IRM Program for the 21st Century," a recent GSA information policy guide. Consolidation of reform efforts is ongoing within M/IRM's process of continuous improvement. We continue to change to take advantage of newer, more efficient technologies.

NMS has been installed successfully at 39 overseas missions and is operational in USAID/W. Some formidable technical challenges remain. Many

USAID core business functions are now performed within NMS. As happens with most complex new computer systems, we all experience frustrations in learning how to use these new productivity enhancement tools. As puzzling as it may seem, keep in mind that skills acquired during this phase-in period will be useful in the years ahead. And keep those calls and E-mails coming in to our Help Desk. Check out the NMS Web site (<http://poseidon.usaid.gov/nms/>) to obtain further tips and pointers.

Several cross-cutting teams are hard at work here in USAID/W making NMS a unique success story. These include the NMS Advisory Steering Committee, the NMS Bureau Transition Coordination teams, the M Bureau NMS Users Group, M/IRM/SDM's Configuration Control Board (CCB), M/IRM/CIS's Interoperability Lab, and M/IRM/TCO's Infrastructure for NMS Configuration and Operations Performance (INCOP). We also appreciate the management reform efforts being advanced by our colleagues in M/ROR and M/MPI. There is considerable other Agency interest, too. In addition to NMS, many other information management systems continue to be maintained and operated by M/IRM. All in all, NMS remains a compelling data architecture and one that will continue to touch our lives well into the 21st century.

Steve Dosh is an Ombudsperson in IRM's Office of the Director.

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JANUARY 1997



A Newsletter from the Office of Information Resources Management - M/IRM

Information Technology Strategy for Democracy in Bolivia

by *Alvaro J. Garcia*

One year ago, in support of the USAID strategic objective in Democracy, IRM conducted a technical assessment of the Elections and Administration of Justice Projects in Bolivia. Since then, the National Electoral Court (NEC) successfully held primary elections for the Chamber of Deputies. Although many countries use commercial software for developing election applications, the NEC selected a Bolivian software company to implement election applications using the company's own database management system and software development tool. IRM concurred with this approach.

Today, the NEC is preparing the national elections for President and Deputies, to be held in June 1997. The preparation includes integrating the Civil Registry with the Electoral Registry to increase the reliability of data on eligible voters, and improving the system that counts votes and tracks election results. Another objective of the NEC for the upcoming elections is to widen the coverage of the Electoral Registry from 2.3 million to 3 million eligible voters.

In the Administration of Justice arena, case management and tracking functions in courts are cumbersome and difficult to perform without using information technology (IT). IT resources are critical to support case preparation, distribution, and resolution. Case preparation includes hearing transcripts, sketches, recordings, photographs, forensic lab analyses, suspect profiles, etc., thus presenting a good opportunity for multimedia systems. This information needs to be properly organized and accessible by judges, prosecutors, and defense lawyers—presenting a good opportunity for Internet and Intranet technologies through document, image, and text management systems. New evidence needs to be properly integrated into cases for online access. Cases must be distributed randomly among judges to ensure transparency in the process. To prepare court decisions, judges need access to jurisprudence and legislation. The general public and especially defendants' relatives need to know the status of cases. Disseminating information on case status is critical to effectively carrying out administration of justice programs and strengthening the credibility of public institutions.

The Bolivian software integrator is improving its product to accommodate new developments in hardware and operating systems technology. The pilot implementation of a case tracking system for the Superior Court in Santa Cruz has delivered promising concrete results. IRM evaluated the system's functionality and concluded that that the developed product has the potential to be considered for replication in other court sites.

The case-tracking product (IANUS) developed by the Bolivian software company can run on multiple hardware and software platforms. The methodology used for requirement analysis, based on quick development of prototypes, allowed the technical team to identify real user information needs

REST STOPS

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The pilot implementation of a case tracking system for the Superior Court in Santa Cruz has delivered promising concrete results. IRM concluded that the developed product has the potential to be considered for replication in other court sites.

The U.K. Overseas Development Administration (ODA) asked for USAID's help in assessing Intranet technology as a way to improve their access to current, pertinent information and to help decide whether an Intranet could offer a solution to their needs.

and design a product that can be adapted to any case tracking environment. IANUS allows automatic distribution of cases among courts and dynamically redefines the algorithm to adjust case load distribution if needed. In addition, the system can be easily customized using parameters.

The technical team still needs to cope with traditional constraints in public institutions. Some of these constraints deal with limited personnel resources to operate the system, inadequate budget to support and maintain the new infrastructure, and high turnover of trained technical personnel.

Alvaro Garcia is an Information Technology Advisor under contract to IRM's Program Technology Transfer Group.

An Intranet for the ODA?

by Joe Nassif

A few months ago I was invited, along with Jim Russo of IRM, to set up a prototype Intranet for the United Kingdom's Overseas Development Administration (ODA). The purpose of the trip was to show how an internal network could assist with knowledge gathering and sharing in the ODA—Great Britain's official aid agency—both in the U.K. and overseas. This was a unique opportunity to share USAID's experience with using Internet Web technology to significantly improve access to current, pertinent information and to determine whether an Intranet could offer a solution to ODA's needs.

The ODA had conducted a "Fundamental Expenditure Review" to establish more clearly stated goals for itself. This study produced over 100 recommendations, including ones on improved access to and sharing of information and lessons learned from both ODA's and other donors' work. The Intranet technologies offer a timely and cost-effective solution to these requirements.

The idea of architecting an Intranet for ODA was simple: the Web allows anyone to be a multimedia publisher. Instead of having to photocopy a document for internal distribution, ODA can store a single copy on an Intranet server for all employees to access. Each office in ODA can share a single database, ensuring that staff have access to the most up-to-date information. Private E-mails or chats in the hallway can become online discussion groups, shared by all ODA staff. And documents stored on the ODA server can include graphics, video, and sound in addition to ordinary text.

A project was established by ODA to develop a prototype Intranet system available for presentation to a cross-section of ODA staff, including senior management. The goal of the presentation was to "prove the concept" of what an Intranet could offer ODA. Using USAID's Executive Information System as a model, the project sought to identify which information would be shared on the ODA Intranet, demonstrate how to access corporate databases, and show how discussion groups can be incorporated as a feedback tool for the Intranet.

Prior to our TDY to London, three activities were completed to prepare for the prototype Intranet: (1) ODA set up a dedicated server, running Windows NT 3.51 and a network; (2) a local company, 2GL Systems, was contracted to set up the Intranet environment; and (3) an MBA student from The City University in London reviewed areas of information to be published on the ODA Intranet.

The project kickoff was a demonstration that Jim and I gave to nearly a hundred ODA staff on USAID's experience with our Intranet, with emphasis on executive information. A team was established comprised of us, six ODA staffers, and two 2GL Systems staffers to develop the prototype system.

Over the next three days, I conducted a number of interviews with a cross-section of ODA offices to determine what types of information could be published on the Intranet. Simultaneously, Jim and I worked

MANAGER'S CORNER

by Richard Byess

The December cover story in *Datamation* magazine notes that most reengineering efforts in corporate America fail. What is intriguing in the article is the assertion that the corporate Web (Intranet) holds promise as a way to revive flagging efforts at reform.

The authors suggest that reengineering initiatives fail for three reasons: that mid-level employees tend to equate reengineering with layoffs, because they mistrust senior decision makers; that massive personnel retraining is required; and that the competing needs and environments of different departments make cooperation difficult. By embracing the Intranet and enhancing communication between offices and individuals, says the article, corporations can address each of these problems.

As a means of sharing information on new processes and procedures, Intranets are unparalleled. If USAID were to make better use of our existing Intranet, we could greatly enhance internal communication. Bureaus and operating units could provide answers to technical queries, promulgate policy, circulate documents for draft, and conduct online discussions of development issues. Strategic Objective (SO) team members could collaborate on reports and decisions whether located in the host country or not. Good practices could be disseminated and discussed. Some corporations use Intranet "chat" rooms to enable employees to have discussions with senior managers at prearranged times. Imagine being able to engage in live video conferencing with distant mission staff to discuss progress in an activity you monitor.

The exciting thing about the Intranet is not in the technology, which does not have to be particularly sophisticated, but its potential for changing the relationships between people and their work processes. Unlike the traditional IT model, Intranet content is created in the operating units themselves. The *Datamation* article says that Intranet development is often championed by middle managers—in "grassroots, bottom-up efforts" that enhance ownership and help to break down organizational barriers. That is, after all, the goal of reengineering business processes.

We have already seen that adoption of the New Management Systems at USAID is causing managers to face a host of new issues concerning authorities, communication, and access to information. Corporations have similar concerns, and they understand that their survival depends upon effective mastery of these issues. That USAID is a government entity makes no difference. We cannot complete the reforms already begun without significantly altering the relations between operating units and Washington, between the field and our customers. The Intranet can help to bring that change about, and it is the middle managers who will benefit from it.

The text of the December article, along with other interesting resources, is available at www.datamation.com.

Richard Byess is the Director of the M Bureau's Results-Oriented Reengineering Office.

together with others of the project team to develop the prototype Intranet to incorporate the findings, as well as to demonstrate the navigation of legacy systems and the use of discussion groups. The prototype was completed in just three and a half days, proving that Intranet developments are extremely rapid!

Information collected and incorporated in the prototype included:

- Press information (e.g., speeches, press releases, telegrams)
- Program information (e.g., business plans, country strategies)
- Information resources (e.g., office instructions, staff handbooks)

Intranets are an unparalleled means of sharing information regarding new processes and procedures.

Members of the donor community have been trying a long time to improve the coordination of their efforts, to maximize the impact of their development activities. The Web is a powerful tool toward that goal.

- Bulletin board notices
- Tools created to improve communications and access to information included:
- Discussion forums
 - Work flow and forms flow (e.g., expense claims forms)
 - Legacy systems access (e.g., project databases)
 - Office tools (e.g., E-mail, telephone)
 - Search indexes
- Presentations were held throughout the fifth (final) day to demonstrate the prototype ODA Intranet. Over 160 staffers from across the ODA attended our presentations, and reacted with enthusiasm and excitement. The Permanent Secretary of the ODA, John Vereker, summarized the presentations and efforts in a letter to Administrator Atwood, stating that "I found this helpful in understanding the potential of the new technology (Intranet) to assist us to improve communications, lesson learning, and access to information...I believe it served as an excellent example of

cooperation between two aid agencies for the benefit of each."

Since our TDY, the MBA candidate on the project team completed his Master's thesis—summarizing the work that was done and recommending next steps for the ODA. The thesis is being reviewed by the ODA, which plans to connect its staff in the United Kingdom and abroad in the summer of 1997.

In summary, the ODA would like to improve the delivery of its programs by making better use of its information, currently locked away in legacy systems and on paper. The members of the donor community have been trying a long time to improve the coordination of their efforts, in order to maximize the impact of their development activities. The Web provides a tool toward that goal in that Intranet developments are extremely rapid and are a cost-effective means for gathering and sharing knowledge.

Joseph Nassif is an Information Management Specialist with the Office of the Executive Secretariat.

Quick Guide to Internet E-Mail

Anybody on the AIDnet can send mail to, and receive it from, anyone with an Internet address. This is done via the standard E-mail package used within USAID (e.g., Banyan or BeyondMail). To receive E-mail from the Internet you must first have an Internet address assigned to you.

To *confirm* whether you have an Internet address already, or find out what your current address is, send an E-mail addressed to "internet[stat]". You should receive back an automated E-mail confirming your Internet name (referred to as your "alias"). If you get an error message instead, then no Internet address has been assigned to you.

To *create* an Internet address, send an E-mail addressed to "internet[create]". You will get back an automated E-mail with your assigned Internet name.

To *send* E-mail to the Internet you need to know the Internet name and address of your intended recipient. For example, to send mail to Tom Smith at USDA (whose Internet address is tsmith@usda.gov), you would use the following address: "internet[tsmith@usda.gov]".

To *receive* E-mail via the Internet, you'll need to let your colleagues know your name/address, which will consist of your assigned alias followed by the @ sign and then the USAID domain (usaid.gov). The format will be "mjones@usaid.gov".

IRM Centralized Help Desk Anniversary

by Stephanie May

The IRM Centralized Help Desk, which is headed up by Bill Ruvinsky and supported by contractor analysts, is celebrating its 1-year anniversary. On January 22, 1996, it officially opened with a ribbon-cutting ceremony hosted by the then CIS Division Chief, Joe Gueron. In attendance were the IRM Acting Director, Joan Matejcek; Help Desk Technical Administrator, Jerry Sajewski; Help Desk Manager, Bill Ruvinsky; and the contractor analysts.

The Help Desk's role is to serve as a centralized resource for Agency personnel experiencing difficulties with computer software, hardware, and applications. The IRM centralized

Help Desk records, troubleshoots, tracks, refers, and reports on all questions/problems reported to it by the IRM users in Washington and in the missions. The Help Desk staff members provide first-tier support for Commercial Off-the Shelf (COTS) software applications and for related systems and hardware problems. Requests outside their areas of expertise are referred to the appropriate Subject Matter Experts—for example, questions or problems concerning the LAN or WAN, general telecommunications, PC/DIAL, or Internet.

The Help Desk has various resources available to solve COTS problems. Help Desk analysts have access to CD-ROM subscriptions, software tools, and a library of books. These all have detailed problem-solving information on Agency-standard software. In addition, the analysts have a great deal of in-house experience with these software packages. Therefore, the Help Desk should be your first resource when you have a question about your software package!

Effective November 1, 1996, the Help Desk extended its hours of operation to 12:00 a.m. through 6:00 p.m. Sunday through Friday in support of the NMS rollout to the Agency missions. The Help Desk is the focal point for NMS users reporting problems or requesting assistance via E-mail and telephone. The Help Desk works closely with the NMS Subject Matter Experts, TCO Subject Matter Experts, NMS Policy Group, and Mission Support Group to coordinate the referral of problems to the NMS Subject Matter Experts and to notify those users who have reported problems of resolutions to their concerns.

Agency users can request help via the Help Desk mailbox at IRM Help Desk@irm@aidw or by phone at (703) 875-1234. For further details, see the Home Page at <http://www.usaid.gov/M/IRM/helpdesk/index.html>.

Stephanie May is the Task Manager under contract to the IRM Centralized Help Desk.

ENI Urban Development, Housing Data Comes Online

by Nancy Hooff

The Urban Development and Housing (UDH) Division of the Energy, Environment and Urban Development Office of the ENI Bureau launched its Home Page on the USAID external Web site this past September. It is the first technical office in ENI to have done so. The page includes a wide variety of documents on housing privatization, urban service delivery, fiscal decentralization, and municipal management. Most of the posted material has been produced under the Division's technical assistance programs in the countries of Central Europe and the former Soviet Union.

This Web site is an integral component of UDH's assistance efforts, and it illustrates the potential for utilizing the Internet to further USAID program objectives. The Web site provides our technical staff and program managers in the field, counterparts, technical assistance providers, and other donors with access to information on the programs we are implementing throughout the region. New programs and reform agendas can then draw from the successes of previous USAID efforts. This helps avoid duplication of effort and encourages cooperation across countries.

The site is also a vehicle for regional information-sharing. We recently produced a *Guide to Local Government Innovative Practices*, which contains over 60 examples of particularly successful cases of local government reform. Each case briefly summarizes the essence of the innovation, its impact and any problems that implementers encountered. Contact information for the key people involved in implementing the innovation is also included to facilitate direct communications by those

The Urban Development and Housing (UDH) Division of the Energy, Environment and Urban Development Office is the first technical office in ENI to launch its own Home Page.

Interested parties can now access information on the programs we are implementing throughout the region. New programs and reform agendas can then draw from the successes of previous USAID efforts.

We are now examining options for making it a more comprehensive local government site by working with other USAID divisions to include their program information and documents.

interested in the activity. Hard copies were distributed to local government professionals at a USAID-sponsored regional conference on local government held in Sofia, Bulgaria in December. The *Guide* has now been posted on the Web site, which will provide access to its contents to a much wider audience.

The Center for Development Information and Evaluation (CDIE) and the Development Information Services Clearinghouse (DISC) provided invaluable assistance to UDH in developing the site. They helped us conceptualize the design of the Web site and create the design for the page. They assisted us in starting up the page while they trained members of the UDH staff in HTML. This minimized delays in getting the site operational and enabled UDH staff, who are now responsible for maintaining the site, to become familiar with HTML quickly.

Improving the site is likely to be an ongoing process. We are now examining options for making it a more comprehensive local government site by working with other USAID divisions to include their program information and documents. We are also considering expanding the links to other foreign assistance agencies and development organizations. Yet another option would be to add a discussion forum to the page. Suggestions are welcome and may be addressed to us at http://www.info.usaid.gov/regions/eni/urban_dev.

Nancy Hooff is the Deputy Chief of the UDH Division, Office of Energy, Environment, and Urban Development, in the ENI Bureau.

“Virtual” team members are those not collocated and therefore participating in team operations primarily through telecommunications systems.

Making the Virtual Team Role Work

by Hugh Sheridan (Sher) Plunkett

We have seen a lot of discussion about using electronic technology to obtain technical expertise from

“virtual” members of results-oriented teams. (“Virtual” team members, per Agency directive, are those not collocated and therefore participating in team operations primarily through telecommunications systems.) This approach would let us overcome travel fund limitations, time differences, and the long distances between USAID units. Virtual teaming seems such a good idea that it’s surprising to find very little actual analysis of the concept, or discussions about performing as a virtual team member, in USAID’s reengineering materials. Based on my own experience and on reading business literature on “telecommuting,” I want to offer some practical advice on issues that must be considered by teams and those playing virtual team member roles.

Teams are “people who need one another to act” to accomplish tasks. In USAID, the concept of team-based operations to achieve results is still emerging as a basic management tool. The inclusion of virtual team members so they can provide effective contributions to team operations is a complex process. Virtual members can play key roles and provide essential expert input toward task management, but because they are not physically present, their participation must be orchestrated from the beginning by the team members who are local. What does this entail?

To me, it means using the basic techniques of team management in special, focused ways. The team *charter* must specify not only what the team will accomplish but the contributions of its members and how and when these contributions will be made. Most work in USAID, especially during our transition to new modes of operation, is based on preexisting objectives, relationships, and mechanisms. Offices have been relabeled; teams have been created around project management responsibilities; and contracts, cooperative agreements, and grants that were in place now form the basis of implementation of “results packages” and “strategic objectives.” This means that the first task in using virtual team members is to give consideration to following:

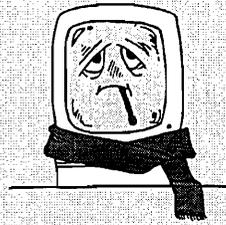
- The work processes and results sought by the local team
- Current operating constraints and bottlenecks
- Whatever is needed to address bottlenecks, reduce cycle time, and improve work performance toward results
- Functional expertise that is *not represented locally* but might address constraints and improve team performance

The operations team must decide whether currently-associated virtual members, if any, are playing the roles required and what specific skills are required of additional virtual members.

This self-diagnosis by the team lays a foundation for action. Virtual members are clearly more limited in their ability to further the team's purpose, and their participation incurs greater transactions costs both to local team members and to themselves.

Virtual team members can help local members achieve better results (higher quality, faster cycle time, greater customer satisfaction, etc.), only if several factors are addressed:

- The team must establish each virtual member's credentials as an expert and build mutual trust and confidence both internally and with key external stakeholders. This requires at least some face-to-face contact. AID/W units engaged in field support must program scarce Operating Expenses as well as program funds to let their staffers establish and maintain working relationships with any teams of which they are virtual members, and to keep current regarding changing field situations. Experience indicates that telecommunications can maintain working communications, but are insufficient to establish trust or to maintain effective work relationships. Programming OE funds for direct-hire technical support staff travel has been a sore point within USAID for decades. AID/W units and field units must work together toward an acceptable solution.
- The *team* must include in its charter and ground rules specific team communications "etiquette," appli-



Computer Virus or Hoax?

by Sonja Martin

What is a hoax? A hoax is defined as an act intended to trick or dupe. Recently the IRM Security Group has seen a surge of messages warning of the Good Times virus and other E-mail virus hoaxes. The Good Times virus is a myth, a hoax, a false rumor and it has created a lot of unnecessary network traffic wasting many hours of time and network resources.

Growth in the use of the Internet at USAID has brought a corresponding growth in the number of hoaxes, and they can take a variety of different forms. Users have seen warnings about Good Times virus, Irina, Deeyenda, MFM, Ghost, and Penpal Greetings only to find out it is a hoax—and such a hoax poses potential security risks. For example, the Deeyenda virus performs a comprehensive search on your computer looking for valuable information such as E-mail and login passwords, credit card numbers, and personal data. Typically, a virus hoax uses many tactics found in other hoaxes, myths, and urban legends.

The IRM Security Web page (<http://www.eldorado.usaid.gov/ipa>) offers information about viruses and virus hoaxes. It is an excellent resource to learn about viruses: what they can do, how they originate, other virus web sites, viruses found at USAID, and F-prot. F-prot is considered the premier anti-virus software and is used by the Agency for virus protection. It offers state-of-the-art technology to scan for known viruses and their variants. It is easy to use, designed for computer users at all levels, and can do the following:

- Prevent infected programs from executing
- Scan hard drives, diskettes, CD-ROMS, network drives, directories or specific files
- Accurately report "legitimate" viruses
- Eradicate a virus

The F-prot application includes utility programs for administration and verification.

Remember these four steps to preventing the problems of a virus or a hoax:

1. Do not spread panic.
2. Stop using the affected PC.
3. Write down anything that appears on the screen.
4. Get expert help.

Sonya Martin is an Information Security Specialist under contract to IRM's Security Group.

cable to its virtual members. These rules might include establishing an E-mail address list for notifications of task-related matters; frequently updating addresses, phone, FAX, and E-mail numbers; agreements on acceptable activity lead times

CYBERNUGGETS...by Steve Hawkins

Many of the people using WordPerfect for Windows do not like the default justification setting, which is Full (both left and right margins are straight). Worse than that, they cannot figure out how to change it.

The key lies within "initial codes"—and this is what you do, for example, to have your text justified only at the left:

1. Click on File.
2. From the File pull-down menu, click on Preferences (a shortcut to this point is Shift F1).
3. Click on Initial Codes.
4. While the "Default - Initial Codes" screen is active, just use the regular menu selection process to reset any initial codes you want to have as your defaults. In this example, click on Layout and then Justification. Then either click on Left or enter Control L to switch from full to left justification.
5. Click on the CLOSE button and then the default settings for all your documents will include the change.

NOTE: From the Layout Menu, you may want to select Page and check out some other auto format possibilities. Widow/Orphan line protection is a good idea; this prevents any page break that would either chop off the last line of a paragraph and throw it to the top of the next page or have the first line of a new paragraph appear all by itself at the bottom of a page with the rest of that paragraph falling on the next page.

Virtual members are individually responsible to avoid being spread too thin, and should expect to produce identifiable, measurable work products as negotiated with the rest of their team.

and lag times, "turnaround time" for communications between members, and alternative procedures such as "no objections" if responses are not received by set dates; recognition of time differences between the operations site and the locations of virtual members; and failsafe mechanisms to ensure that critical information or other inputs to team operations will be provided. Members must make use of multiple communications channels to ensure reliability

and timeliness in their work with each other.

- *Virtual members* must incorporate their responsibilities to teams in their regular work planning, and assume that their performance will be assessed and rewarded in the same way as their localized work responsibilities. They are individually responsible to avoid being spread too thin, and should expect to produce identifiable, measurable work products which they have negotiated with the rest of the team.

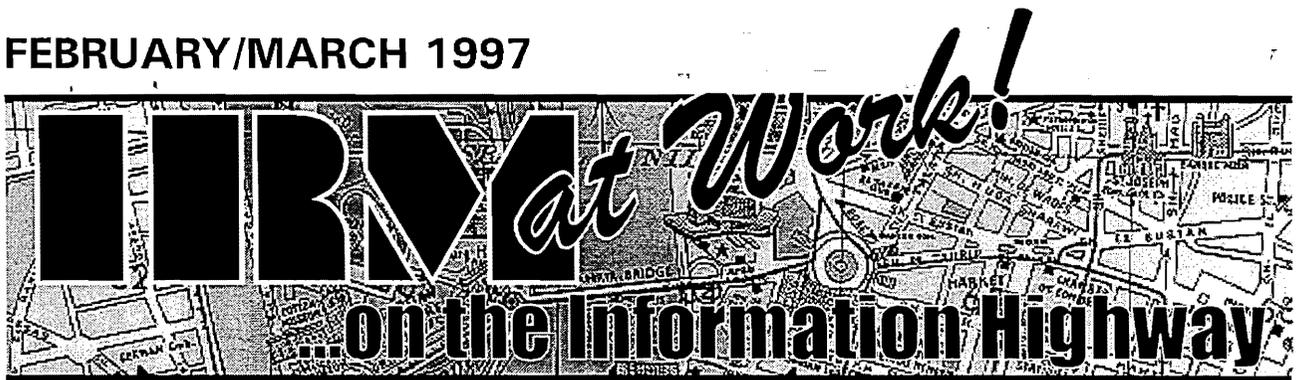
Millions of employees of private firms and government agencies now telecommute regularly, contributing significant value-added work to their organizations. By developing flexible work programs (in time and in space) they have become measurably more productive—and more happy! Virtual team membership relies strongly on adequate technical support. To the extent that USAID's investment in electronic communications technology grows in effectiveness and reliability, as well as flexibility, we will be increasingly able to incorporate virtual members into effective foreign assistance teams. In this transition phase, we must work together to adjust our expectations as well as our schedules, and to fit our work within the limits of our existing electronics communications support.

Hugh (Sher) Plunkett is a Customer Service Officer in the M Bureau's Office of Results-Oriented Reengineering. He has been a virtual team member in this and earlier assignments.

Publication Information



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A Newsletter from the Office of Information Resources Management - M/IRM

Mission Support Group Hosts Worldwide NMS Systems Manager's Training Conference

by Freddy Blunt

From February 18-28, the IRM/CIS Mission Support Group (MSG) hosted the New Management Systems (NMS) Systems Manager's Training Conference held in Arlington, Virginia. In addition to 56 Systems Management personnel from the 39 NMS missions, attendees included representatives of the U.S. Information Agency (USIA), the Office of the Inspector General, and a multitude of others. The event presented the chance for those gathered from overseas NMS missions to discuss their experiences with NMS and express their concerns on the role of the system as the flagship for their missions' future strategic planning.

After welcoming attendees to the conference, Joan Matejcek, USAID's Deputy Chief Information Officer (CIO) and Acting Director of IRM, introduced Larry Byrne, CIO and Assistant Administrator of the Bureau for Management. Mr. Byrne's opening remarks made it clear that the NMS conference would affirm the conceptual approach as well as solidify the practical functions that the NMS delivers to the missions. His policy statement left echoes that the Washington decision-making machine would drive the success of the NMS information technology worldwide. With such a clear policy statement, the Systems Managers would be better able to understand their role as material from the conference was presented.

The NMS Policy team, lead by NMS Task Force members Carrie Johnson and Terry Payne and Systems Development and Maintenance (SDM) Division Chief Mel Kinca, made demonstrative statements on NMS access/roles, patch releases, data migration, and Specialist With Automated Tools (SWAT) team collaboration with IRM's Telecommunications and Computer Operations (TCO) Division. Joe Heffern, Chief of IRM/TCO, laid a platform for TCO's support of NMS in areas such as PC Level, UNIX Level, LAN Level, and Telecommunication Level policies. The directives of these policies were highlighted with a panel discussion wherein controversial issues were acknowledged as challenges to work out any incompatibilities of mission practice with NMS policy.

The key approach to working out these areas of controversy was the practical hands-on experience the Systems Managers received. Some of the hands-on training was delivered by the PAL-TEC Employee Development group under the direction of Cary Kauffman of Human Resources (M/HR/TD). The majority of the hands-on training was delivered in the evening and covered such subjects as NMS application functions with regard to Operations (OPS), Budget, Acquisition and Assistance (A&A), and Agency Worldwide Accounting and Control System (AWACS).

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A highlight for many of the attendees was a hands-on session involving the assembly and use of a satellite dish.

Administrator Atwood urged the group to make the investment in the NMS because it is going to provide us with a tool to strengthen the Agency.

One of the conference highlights for many of the attendees was a hands-on session involving the assembly and use of a satellite dish. VSAT presenters provided an opportunity for the Systems Managers to actually aim a VSAT at a satellite in an effort to establish telecommunications. In addition, the Video Teleconferencing exercise provided a live demonstration with a conference call to the mission in Jakarta, Indonesia. Everyone was surprised and impressed with the clarity and the capabilities that the video teleconferencing offered. The essence of the hands-on experience gave new meaning to the term "seeing is believing."

Discussions and explanations of the new direction of the NMS policy and the instruction on the different platforms left many of the Systems Managers with little free time. However, the MSG group under the direction of Project Manager Courtney Ives and Task Manager Ed Sciuolo did manage to schedule a social calendar. The Friday night social hour was the first event whereby many AID/W staffers shared food, fun, and conversation with the Systems Managers. Also, weekend shopping and museum visits were arranged at that time. Despite the fun and leisure for the Systems Managers, the MSG group was always at work behind the scenes.

MSG staff members Thomasine Swann, Renee Clemons, Russ Rosen, and I were instrumental in disseminating details to the missions; evaluating and selecting the conference site as well as hotel accommodations; coordinating the acquisition of all technical hardware, software, and telecommunications required; compiling all conference training materials; and serving as a focal point for the availability of audiovisual

equipment and all other logistical issues. Staff worked very closely with the individual presenters and M/HR/TD staff to develop an agenda with optimal NMS topical areas to fit the rigorous time constraints.

IRM's Consulting and Information Services (CIS) Acting Division Chief Darrell Owen kicked off the seventh day of the conference with an organizational view of the personnel in CIS. He provided a brief but informative overview on subject areas covering Project Support, Internet Data Services, Security, Technical Architecture, and Future Technologies. The participants from these areas voiced their perspective on the NMS strategic direction. At the Computer Security briefing, the System Managers received copies of the Agency's Sensitive But Unclassified (SBU) policy; the theme of that session was "information security is your responsibility."

Another key feature of the conference was that the attendees had an opportunity to see and hear a presentation from their own colleague, Zakir Merchant of USAID/Budapest, who presented the Agency's viewpoint on the Electronic Certification System (ECS) financial accounting procedures. The direction of the presentation had a "real-life" sense of ECS issues that evolve from the mission experience.

On the final afternoon of the arduous 10-day training conference, USAID Administrator, Brian Atwood, urged the group to make the investment in the NMS because it is going to provide us with a tool to strengthen the Agency. While urging the Systems Managers to "operate strategically" and get the job done, Administrator Atwood echoed Mr. Byrne's remarks that emphasized the ongoing development of the NMS system will conform to all federal laws and appropriate CPA procedures. In closing, Mr. Byrne distributed certificates to all Systems Managers in attendance and both he and the Administrator posed for photos with the group.

Freddy Blunt is a Systems Analyst under contract to the Mission Support Group.

Want to Know More About SBU?

A lengthy directive on the Agency's determination of and policy regarding "Sensitive But Unclassified" material that is processed, stored, or transmitted in an electronic format was released as a USAID General Notice dated 02/03/97. The point of contact for questions regarding the notice is the Agency's Information Systems Security Officer (ISSO), Herbert B. Thompson. He can be reached either by E-mail at Herb.Thompson@IRM.OD@aidw or by telephone at (703) 875-1789.

MANAGER'S CORNER

by Ryan Conroy

A key responsibility of the Office of the Executive Secretariat (ES) is to manage the executive communications for the Office of the Administrator. As we look to the future, we are leveraging technology wherever possible to improve the flow of information to and from the Administrator. To that end, we have implemented a number of electronic systems that have placed USAID in the forefront of technology use by Executive Secretariats across the U.S. Government.

The Executive Correspondence and Tracking System (ExACT) was turned on in May 1995 in response to Administrator Atwood's request to improve the management of the Agency's executive correspondence. ExACT is an integrated system combining workflow software with document imaging and indexing. Nearly 80 staff from ES and each bureau use ExACT to electronically monitor, process, and store correspondence. To date, over 10,000 letters, memoranda, and invitations have been scanned into the system—eliminating the need for 60+ paper storage areas and replacing an estimated 750,000 pieces of paper per year. The results are not limited to system statistics. ES has actively worked with bureaus to increase efficiency in the handling of correspondence, streamlining work processes, implementing new procedures, and improving communication and collaboration; ultimately lessening the workload for everyone involved.

Another innovation involves the Executive Information System (EIS). Since 1993, the EIS has been a source of program, legislative, and public affairs information for incoming managers and Agency staff. A year ago, it was redesigned for the Agency's corporate web, @USAID, expanding access to 41 missions and USAID/W. The EIS links staff to Agency and world news, executive reports and notices, a speaker's kit, and over 1,000 related-web pages on the Internet. EIS pages have been accessed over 25,000 times by Agency staff. Other development agencies are adopting the EIS as a model for getting started on their own Intranet efforts, including the United Kingdom's Overseas Development Administration and the Development Assistance Committee in Paris, France. The EIS is located on the corporate web at URL <http://www.usaid.gov/A/ES/EIS>.

Planning for the future is a priority for our Office. Working with IRM, we plan to utilize new technologies to further improve the operations of the ExACT and EIS. In an era of having to do more with less, we are moving from a reactive to a proactive view of technology to further improve the Agency's executive communications. Any suggestions or comments that you may have are welcome.

Ryan Conroy is the Executive Secretary and White House Liaison for USAID.

We have implemented a number of electronic systems that have placed USAID in the forefront of technology use by Executive Secretariats across the U.S. Government.

IRM Assists Honduran Ministry of Health

by Alvaro J. Garcia

In support of USAID's health reform activities, I recently traveled to Tegucigalpa, Honduras to assist the

Health Sector II Project in establishing the Project Management Unit (PMU). This unit will be responsible for improving the management information and financial and administrative procedures for the Ministry of Health (MOH) of Honduras. My intervention on behalf of IRM led to the following results:

- An Information Technology (IT) component was defined to support the administrative, management, and financial improvements for the

The new Project Management Unit will be responsible for improving the management information and administrative procedures for the Honduran Ministry of Health (MOH).

IRM support of the project was deemed critical, and our continued support has been requested.

- MOH. These improvements will be implemented under the SIGAF initiative (in Spanish: Sistema de Informacion Gerencial, Administrativo y Financiero).
- A management plan was defined and fully endorsed by the Ministry of Health to support the implementation of the SIGAF component. Also a seminar was held with top and middle managers of the MOH to discuss critical activities, responsibilities, and resources needed for implementing the SIGAF system.
 - Functions for the Project Management Unit were defined. The PMU will be fully responsible for coordinating the implementation of the SIGAF system and acting as counterpart for the Ministry of Health to interact with hardware and software vendors as well as short- and long-term consultants in support of the SIGAF implementation.
 - External contracts required for the implementation were identified and outlines for scopes of work were defined. The implementation of the SIGAF system will require eight external contracts to provide equipment, applications, training, and other services to technical personnel and end users of the MOH.

- The procurement strategy was defined. A basic hardware and software infrastructure will be procured and deployed within the next three months. A second hardware procurement will take place after the Project selects the application software. Six out of those eight procurements are under \$100,000 each and will be carried out by the USAID/Tegucigalpa Contracting Office in a simplified manner (three quotations, local procurement preferred). The procurement of application software will require off-the-shelf software solutions modifiable at a reasonable price.

The project concluded that IRM intervention was critical to integrate the PMU within the Ministry of Health and achieve the full support and commitment of key Ministry officers. The Project has requested further IRM support to monitor the SIGAF implementation during three stages: (1) procurement and deployment of the full configuration, (2) implementation of procedures and application software selection, and (3) acceptance of application software.

Alvaro Garcia is an Information Technology Advisor under contract to IRM's Program Technology Transfer Group.



There's No Little Bird That Will Tell Us...

If you or your working team are currently involved in an interesting project dealing with information technology, or have recently completed such a project, your newsletter staff will have to hear about it from YOU. We enjoy featuring material from all bureaus in the Agency and will help with editing and writing tips, if you would like.

Remember, **IRM at Work!** is sent to all USAID offices in Washington and to all of our missions. Just think of the recognition!

Information about how to submit material is included in "Publication Information" on the last page of this issue.

The Leland Initiative: Progress with Internet Use in Africa

by Jim Esselman

As it nears the completion of its first full year of operations, the Leland Initiative, a USAID-directed project designed to support better access to and use of the Internet in Africa, can point to numerous achievements in meeting its objectives. The Leland Initiative, also known as the Africa Global Information Infrastructure

(GII) Project (see *IRM at Work*, August 1995 and June/July 1996), takes a comprehensive approach to improving Internet use; it encourages more open telecommunications and information policies, fosters a sustainable supply of Internet services, and prepares Africans to apply Internet tools to support sustainable development.

On the policy front during 1996, a Leland team from the State Department negotiated bilateral policy agreements (Memorandums of Understanding, or MOUs) with nine countries: Mali, Madagascar, Mozambique, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Benin, and Rwanda. Through these MOUs, the host countries agree to adopt cost-based telephone pricing schemes; allow free and open access to the information on the Internet; and permit unfettered access to the national Internet node by interested and able Internet Service Providers (ISPs). Each of these policy changes represents a dramatic departure from the traditional monopolistic practices of African state-controlled telephone service providers. For example, the adoption of cost-based tariffing has resulted in prices for a 64-KB-per-second dedicated circuit that are one-fifth of those charged under the old tariff approach. In some countries this means that a retail customer will pay less for one month of full Web access than he would pay for a three-minute international telephone call. For its part, by signing an MOU, USAID agrees to provide the policy analyses, equipment, connectivity, and training necessary to deliver robust, well-managed, and responsive Internet access. MOU negotiations with other countries will continue this year.

In the Internet service industry area, Leland technical teams have worked with USAID and host country colleagues in Mali, Madagascar, Mozambique, and Rwanda to develop country plans of action to expand the supply of Internet services. These plans typically address the development of:

- A final technical design for a national Internet gateway and dedicated access for private ISPs

- A business and marketing plan for the gateway
- A training plan for the gateway staff; and
- Where feasible, a "last mile" strategy and plan for expanding Internet access nationwide, including rural areas.

Expectations are that there will be up to 10 country gateways established under the Leland Initiative in 1997.

The ultimate goal of the investments in policy reform and Internet service is to increase the use of Internet technologies among the development communities in Africa. Toward this end, in 1996 Leland teams conducted Internet readiness assessments of USAID field missions and their development partners in Mali, Madagascar, Ghana, Benin, Mozambique, Zambia, Ivory Coast, and Botswana. These assessments help the Leland group and the missions in identifying "fast-track organizations"—those that are most ready to use the Internet and can serve as models for how other groups might use this technology. As a second step, Leland provides Internet training and action-planning assistance for mission staff and their fast-track partners. This approach promotes strategic thinking about the Internet and encourages its increased use. The first of these training workshops was completed in Ghana this February, during which there were more than 200 people trained. In addition, some twenty schools were introduced to the Internet and shown ways to establish electronic partnerships with U.S. and other schools.

The Leland Initiative has had a productive beginning year. In the months ahead, Leland will build on this foundation and the many lessons learned in the areas of policy, technical capacity, and applications to continue bringing the benefits of the GII revolution to Africa.

Jim Esselman is a Research Analyst under contract to the Center for Development Information & Evaluation in the PPC Bureau.

Expectations are that there will be up to 10 country gateways established under the Leland Initiative in 1997.

In addition to Internet readiness assessments, Leland provides Internet training and action-planning assistance for mission staff and their fast-track partners.

Teams and Information Technology

By Liz Baltimore

Teams want information technology tools that are user-friendly to help achieve quality results and save time.

The paradigm shift in information technology presents many opportunities and challenges for USAID as it becomes a more team-oriented organization. In their book, *Paradigm Shift — The New Promise of Information Technology*, Don Tapscott and Art Caston state that “Technology walls are falling. Old computing architectures are overthrown. The nature and purpose of computing has radically altered.”

Throughout the Agency, teams are looking for quicker and easier ways to help achieve team results. Every time I am asked to facilitate teambuilding workshops, help teams diagnose their work processes, assist with customer planning and strategic planning, or participate in discussions with colleagues who are or have been working on Strategic Objectives, Results, or other teams, someone will say “We like teamwork, but it takes too long.”

More on Internet Addressing

An AID/W staffer can easily have an Internet address created for himself by sending an E-mail to “internet[create]” or delete his existing Internet address with an E-mail to “internet[delete]”. However, there are differences for nondomestic personnel.

A staff member at a mission site having access to the USAID LAN would instead enter “ICHANGE[create]” or “ICHANGE[delete]” so that his name would be registered with or deleted from USAID’s main Internet Nickname database. A person at a mission site who E-mails to “internet[create]” will get an address assigned to him, but it will be deleted the next morning when the database replicates to all of the Internet Gateway servers. Likewise, the Internet address of a mission staffer who E-mails to “internet[delete]” will be reinstated the next day.

And what about mission staff who do not access the Agency LAN? All bets are off! The E-mail messages that are necessary to create and delete Internet addresses will vary, depending on the particular Internet provider serving that mission.

Team members want user-friendly information technology tools to help achieve quality results and save time. Teams working in the information era have been delighted to make use of some technology tools which improve their productivity. The agency’s New Management Systems (NMS) is a set of information technology tools for managing and operating in USAID’s new way of doing its day-to-day business. There are a number of other information technology tools which help teams to operate more efficiently. The shift from strictly personal computing to multifunctional information sharing and computing is a contributing factor to effective teamwork.

Teams want the capability to gather and research information easily from internal and external sources. The Internet and Intranet information systems are one way of getting information quickly. Information on almost any subject from many sources around the world can be obtained by using the Agency’s access to Internet. At the same time, non-USAID parties can obtain certain Agency information from USAID’s worldwide web site. With the appropriate Internet addressing, team members can also communicate and interact with outside team members, partners, and customers—especially to obtain input and feedback. USAID’s policies, procedures, agency notices, strategic plan, development reports, Results Review and Resource Requests (R4s), and other pertinent reinvention information can be accessed more readily using the Intranet, USAID’s internal corporate web site.

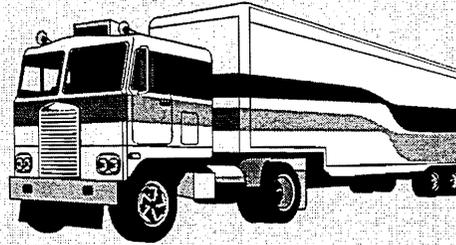
The Management Bureau’s *Reform Incentives and Results Subteam* members used a variety of information technology tools to complete their first draft report within three weeks. The team used the Internet to research information about incentives programs in place at other federal agencies and at corporations. For example, information gathered from the Office of Personnel Management, universities, and the National Performance Review was useful in formulating the team’s thoughts. They also searched the Intranet for a copy of USAID’s cur-

rent reward and recognition policies. After research and input from various sources, each team member prepared his/her section for the team's report and used E-mail to forward draft recommendations to the team leader. Ultimately, the word processing capabilities of WordPerfect were used to merge each section into a consolidated draft report. Virtual team members in the missions and Washington have an opportunity to provide their comments and input very quickly via E-mail and voice mail.

Information technology for virtual teaming has provided faster and easier communications for distributing draft products in a short turnaround time. The *Human Resources Agency Training Team* is currently developing a worldwide strategy to provide every employee with management/reengineering training. Virtual senior leaders, focus groups, and team members in the missions are providing input, feedback and training requirements very quickly through E-mail. The minutes of each meeting are first tape recorded and then finalized in WordPerfect documents files. Minutes are then electronically mailed to each participant in Washington and in the missions. In a matter of a couple of weeks, a draft of required employee skills and curricula can be circulated for further input, discussion and completion.

Teams want tools to efficiently manage team dynamics, set milestones and time frames for achieving results, and diagnose work processes. Commonly-used information technology tools such as CaLANdar for scheduling, Time Line for project management, Lotus 1-2-3 for spreadsheets, ABC FlowCharter, PowerPoint, and Raosoft SURVEY software can each contribute enormously to team productivity. Assuming shared access, team members can make changes, additions, provide comments and participate in completing a report or other team product with quick turnaround time.

The CaLANdar package is an excellent tool for arranging team meetings, times and locations. Time Line and Microsoft Project are each user-friendly applications for scheduling



USAID/W: Get Ready to Move!

To ensure that there is a smooth transition of automation services when the Agency moves to the new building, a complete and accurate inventory of computer equipment, files, and services is needed. To accomplish this, M/IRM has imposed a freeze on computer/printer relocations, adding/changing services or programs on LAN/UNIX file servers, and relocation of user files to different servers.

The USAID move will take place over several months and current plans indicate that not all staff in a particular location will move at the same time. IRM has been developing a move transition plan to address the provision of services to both the new and old locations during the move. For the plan to succeed, we must be fully aware of what all those services are that are shared between locations/groups. IRM/TCO staff are inventorying all files and services on servers and reviewing each LAN user's profile to identify cases wherein the user accesses files on other servers. To do this and ensure that requirements are not changed, a freeze has been placed on adding or moving LAN services and applications. During this freeze (effective February 28), and while we are making move plans, we may need to make LAN changes or clean up group names, locations, etc.

Remember that *only* IRM/TCO has authority to relocate computer equipment. Network connections and the operation of PCs and printers are very dependent on correct network addresses and only IRM can verify the addresses. Therefore, the freeze extends to PC and/or printer moves, except for emergencies. IRM/TCO staff members will be updating the inventory for computer equipment (including PCs, printers, scanners, and UNIX boxes), ensuring that they are barcoded and including the barcode number, serial number, model, staff member's name, and location in the inventory. This data will be integrated with the furniture and non-computer equipment inventory data, to be gathered by M/AS, to build a complete property profile for each Agency staff person. Project-funded computer equipment should be clearly marked so the inventory can distinguish it from OE-funded equipment.

and tasking via charts of milestones and time frames. Lotus 1-2-3 can aid in managing/monitoring the team's resources. WordPerfect can not only be used for standard document entry but also for creating tables, mailing lists, text with graphics, and macros. Don't forget that many of these tools can be used to integrate *your* team's work.

The *REDSO/East and Southern Africa (REDSO/ESA)*, Nairobi,

USAID teams can boost productivity by use of available software applications.



**From the White House—
“A Message to Federal Workers”**

February 6, 1997

As I begin my second term as President, I want all of you to know how proud I am of your hard work and accomplishments during the past four years. I came to Washington with a high regard for civil servants, and you have only confirmed that opinion.

And I’m not the only one who has been impressed. Four years ago, public confidence in the federal government was at an all-time low. But you have begun to change that attitude. Even in a time of leaner budgets and smaller staffs, you have improved service to the public, forged effective partnerships with communities and private businesses, and discarded old-fashioned management systems. Now, for the first time in decades, public opinions of federal agencies is markedly on the rise. Congratulations—the credit for this stunning turnaround goes to you.

Vice President Gore and I are excited and optimistic about the prospects for America in the next four years. We are on the right track to the twenty-first century and are picking up speed as we continue to work with you to reinvent government. I believe that our nation will enter that new century stronger, more confident, and more capable than ever before. And I believe that a large part of that success will be achieved because of the energy and talent of each of you—the men and women of the federal government.

Thank you for all you do on behalf of your fellow Americans.

- William J. Clinton

Strategic Objective Teams used the ABC FlowCharter tool to produce electronic documentation of the work processes/activities involved in

achieving its objectives. Each team member participated in developing a written draft of the steps involved in each process, diagnosed the customer/partner linkages, and analyzed customer requirements. The information was analyzed and used to develop an effective and meaningful REDSO Customer Plan. Diagrams created in ABC FlowCharter provided a simple and systematic view of how business is currently conducted, allowed the teams to rethink improvements in customer planning, and assisted them in developing measurable customer standards. The team also used this diagnostic process to develop a customer survey that was used at the annual Scheduling Conference to obtain feedback from missions. REDSO was also introduced to Raosoft SURVEY software as a tool to create and analyze customer and employee surveys. The presentations capability of PowerPoint makes it easy to create overhead slides and meeting handouts of strategic and customer plans and of team results.

Teams wishing more information on these or other software application tools should consult IRM for advice to purchase them and to learn more about the use of these tools. The Office of Human Resources, Training/Learning Division, provides training on several applications, and many team members report learning from colleagues and online tutorials. Experience has shown that teams find value in these tools and have fun using them.

Liz Baltimore is a Reengineering Officer in the M Bureau’s Office of Results-Oriented Reengineering.

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A Newsletter from the Office of Information Resources Management - M/IRM

U.S. Institute of Peace Conducts Conference on Virtual Diplomacy

by Dean Salpini

In early April, the U.S. Institute of Peace sponsored a conference on "Virtual Diplomacy" held in Washington, DC. In delivering the keynote address, Richard H. Solomon, former Assistant Secretary of State and current President of the U.S. Institute of Peace, explained that this forum was designed as "an exploration of how our world is being transformed by the global information revolution" and how technology "can be used to prevent, more effectively manage, or resolve international conflict." In fulfillment of this objective, the Virtual Diplomacy conference brought together a "Who's Who" list of diplomats, technologists, private relief organizations, multinational donors, policy makers, and U.S. and foreign governmental officials.

Those attending included former Citicorp Chairman Walter Wriston, former Secretary of State George Shultz, former Assistant Secretary of State Chester Crocker, Ambassador John Negroponte, Cable News Network's Ralph Begleiter, Bell Labs/Lucent Technologies' Arno Penzias, and Gordon Smith, Canadian Deputy Foreign Minister. The World Bank, United Nations, International Peace Academy, Consortium for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN), Volunteers in Technical Assistance (VITA), and many more private voluntary organizations and nonfederal entities were represented. Even Vice President Al Gore had been scheduled, but was unable to attend.

The range of topics and technology was broad. Geographical information systems, digital objects, Internet technologies (i.e., search engines/browsers/applications), cellular telephones, satellite networks, packet radios, smart TVs, information agents, and more were discussed as tools for conflict resolution. Even the effect of the media and the military on diplomacy through their use of advanced technology was discussed. While Arno Penzias of Lucent Technologies talked about "each PC today [having] more electronics than the U.S. did during World War II" and technology "affecting the hierarchical organization structure of organizations," such as the Japanese car manufacturers during their

onslaught of the U.S. automotive market, there were reminders of the "technological have-nots." Ismail Seregaldin of the World Bank painted a picture of the developing world as a world wherein "there are growing inequalities between the rich and poor, and technology may be exacerbating these differences." He also stated that the "top 20 percent of the world's population is 60 times richer than the bottom 20 percent" and that "over 1.3 billion people still live on less than one dollar a day."



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One of the key obstacles to applying technology to diplomacy is the inequality of existing infrastructures in the world community.

While technology is clearly an enabling tool, not all situations require "state-of-the-art" communications.

These two extremes provide one of the key obstacles to applying technologies to diplomacy

—the inequality of existing infrastructures in the world community.

In another presentation, Warren Strobel, *Washington Times* correspondent covering the Department of State, recalled stories of the Burmese opposition group based in Thailand stirring public opinion through the Internet and garnering "virtual constituents" in Boston, Massachusetts, to rise to their cause without having met any of the group face-to-face. This powerful community was able to send news information into Burma through informal channels, while encouraging the U.S. to limit trade to Burma because of human rights violations in that country. Other examples of technology serving democracy included the Bosnians accessing the Internet to learn about civic roles in a democracy; coordination of food supplies to Rwandan refugees through packet radio links; and provision of a global positioning system and remote sensing based data to relief planners in Turkey for the Kurdish rescue operations.

Another presenter covered the U.S. military view of the technical revolution. Lt. General Paul Van Riper of the U.S. Marine Corps stated that "intellectual concepts" rather than technological weapons of mass destruction were the key to applying information technology more meaningfully in conflict resolution. His example dealt with the Germans in World War II and describing how they won on the battlefield with better execution of plans and strategies, such as "the blitzkrieg"—not simply military technology. A similar point was made by several other speakers. Ted Okada of Food for the Hungry spoke of retail point-of-sale technology (certainly not a new development) being used to "tag" children and reunite them with their parents if they become separated in an evacuation process. Sharon Rusu of ReliefWeb indicated that facsimile was still a major data distribution technology for over 10,000 worldwide users to exchange information about relief efforts in the Great Lakes region

of Africa. Thus, technology is clearly an enabling tool, but not all communities require the "state-of-the-art" to accomplish their objectives.

And what technology was discussed during these two days of contemplation? The Internet, of course. This medium was described as everything from the "great equalizer" to the "new universalism" destined to destroy sovereignty. The Clinton Administration's Next Generation Internet Initiative, with its goal of connecting universities and national labs, promoting research into networking technologies, and demonstrating new applications to meet important national goals, was mentioned by several speakers as indicative of the future programs planned involving technology. In addition, many vendors displayed their high technology "wares" in an adjacent exhibit hall. From the latest satellite-based terminals moving disaster relief data back and forth over the Internet to communications managers deployed by USAID in remote areas of the globe, to the ReliefWeb home page of the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs, which provides a clearinghouse of humanitarian activities, commodities tracking, expert registries, and emergency response information, computer technology was displayed prominently. Several consulting firms were also present to offering "user-enabling" services to those venturing into the electronic world for the first time.

As would be expected in this technology-rich environment, several Internet-related applications were displayed. Examples included the U.S. Information Agency's web site (<http://www.usia.gov>) covering U.S. embassies overseas and cultural exchange information for host country recipients. Also impressive was a collaborative workplace application running on a Web-based browser developed by Lawrence Livermore Labs and the Institute of Global Conflict and Cooperation at the University of California - San Diego (<http://www.igcc.ucsd.edu>). The breadth of applications was truly invigorating.

MANAGER'S CORNER

by Joan Matejcek

This is going to be a difficult year for USAID employees who are "change-averse" (to use the politically popular term). Throughout the Agency, it seems as though the pace of change increases every week. At a recent "all-hands" meeting of IRM employees I discussed the programmatic changes that will influence IRM direction, our top priorities for the current year, and some directions that are likely over the next few years. I will use a couple of Manager's Corners to share my thoughts on these subjects.

This year IRM will play a significant role in two of USAID's largest administrative efforts: the continued implementation of the New Management Systems (NMS) and the consolidation of USAID/Washington employees into the new Federal Triangle Building. Both are major projects which could easily occupy the full attention of an information technology organization like ours. As the NMS Task Force evolves and NMS moves toward the completion of its first year of operation in Washington, IRM will play an increasing role in maintaining the operational capabilities of NMS. Work is now underway to define the appropriate management structure to continue NMS development until the full complement of NMS software is completed and implemented worldwide.

The Federal Triangle Building will house over 2,000 USAID direct hire employees and a limited number of contractors who provide direct operational support. A small IRM group became part-time residents of the FTB on April 17; they will oversee installation of the new network for the building. Additional moves will begin in late June and continue through early October 1997, with hundreds of staff moving each weekend. The network infrastructure for this new building will be robust, expandable, more secure, and far more complex than the current Washington "backbone" network. The FTB's telephone system will also be highly sophisticated and offer greater service and increased features. The coordination to ensure that everyone moves on schedule with PCs and associated equipment connected in a timely manner rivals planning for the most complicated military exercise. Add to that the need to keep critical Agency information processing running smoothly throughout the move schedule and you have a recipe for many sleepless nights! Several significant information technology issues are impacted by the move, too. For example, most institutional contractors who now work in USAID offices and enjoy direct access to AIDNET will be located in commercial space after the move, losing that access. Determinations are being made on a case-by-case basis regarding the best methods to allow contractors and USAID personnel to continue to work together effectively while housed in different locations.

Joan Matejcek is the Acting Director of IRM and Deputy Chief Information Officer of USAID.

IRM will function significantly in the continued implementation of NMS and in the consolidation of USAID/W personnel into the new building.

And what of the future? Are we destined to repeat the question posed by T.S. Eliot, "Where is the wisdom lost in knowledge?" or will we convert that knowledge into information of relevance? According to Marc Weiser of Xerox Palo Alto Research Center (PARC), the future lies in a world of "ubiquitous computing." This could mean a research student in Russia

reading the text of a speech and viewing a video clip of the Israeli Knesset directly off the Web, or a citizen in a small town wanting to know the weather forecast and location of key tourist sites for an area field trip and downloading a geographical information system-based map along with geopositioning data as guides to his destination. Digital

Users must convert knowledge gained online into information relevant to their goals.

CYBERNUGGETS...by Steve Hawkins

One of the great features about most of the software that works in the Windows environment is that there are many ways to accomplish the simple tasks that we all do most frequently. The fastest way to do something will usually depend on where your hands are and how long it takes you to make up your mind.

For example, in BeyondMail there are at least five ways available at almost any time to delete an E-mail message:

- Grab the envelope icon and drop it in the trash well.
- Grab the envelope icon and drop it in the Trash Folder.
- Highlight the E-mail on the Folder Summary display and press the Delete key on your keyboard.
- Highlight the E-mail on the Folder Summary display and then click on Message up in the menu bar and then Delete from the pull-down menu. (I've even had a user tell me to create an icon button to do this; a suggestion I've followed and am most pleased with.)
- Highlight the E-mail on the Folder Summary display and press the Control and D keys simultaneously.

If that's too many options for you to remember, then just use the one that works for you. It is very easy to spend more time deciding among options than is saved by choosing one option over another. The point is to be aware of the many options available to you because sometimes your usual method may be blocked by the software whereas another method may still work.

The growing prevalence of digital objects and visualization will allow multi-dimensional object viewing from desktop and hand-held computers, but human interface and intervention will still be required.

objects and visualization will also become more prevalent allowing multi-dimensional object viewing from desktop and hand-held computers and maybe even from "wrist watches," a la Dick Tracy. This 3-D world is still going to require human interface and interpretation, but the technology tools will allow much faster analysis of data.

The challenges in this new world will be much like the old: protection of basic copyrights and privacy of individual information. As we become more connected as a worldwide community, we become susceptible to commercial fraud and ethical abuse, not to mention outright criminal activity. "Boundaries" or community enforcement mechanisms to deal with disruptive or negative behavior will need to be more defined if the "global Esperanto" espoused here is going to survive. This will necessarily entail more cooperation as international regulators, government bodies, and technical groups collaborate to stabilize the Internet and other

"electronic byways" for the good of all mankind.

In summary, as Walter Wriston declared, "the mental process of reading dispatches is very different from today's instant publishing on CNN with images of body bags at Dover Air Force Base." Further, he suggested that "when the method of creating wealth changes, so does the power structure" and the "Internet standard is much more draconian than the gold standard." As we move to a virtual community of the future and spread technology around the world we must keep in mind the impact of these tools on the common man and provide more incentives for peace than warfare. Perhaps that is what "virtual diplomacy" is all about.

Dean Salpini is Chief of the Technical Architecture Group in IRM's Information Policy and Administration Division.

Lessons Learned: IRM at DoD!

by Margaret A

From January through mid-April I attended the Department of Defense Information Resources Management College (IRMC) Advanced Management Program (AMP) at the National Defense University in Washington, D.C. The intensive program was designed to train senior IRM officials from Defense and civilian agencies in the strategic management and use of information. Participants included officers and civilians from the Air Force, Army, Navy, National Security Agency, Defense Intelligence Agency, Defense Information Systems Agency, Defense Logistics Agency and the Army National Guard. There were also representatives from National Archives, Justice, Treasury, State, Energy Departments, the Federal Emergency Management Administration, General Services Agency, U.S. Geological Survey,

Environmental Protection Agency, General Accounting Office, and the Federal Aviation Administration. Other attendees came from the Polish Armed Forces, the Philippine Navy and Air Force, Boeing, McDonnell Douglas, and Corning Glass.

A key lesson emphasized to us is that information can be of strategic value and must be managed for the greatest possible effect on agency mission outcomes. For example, USAID's mission, which is to promote broad-based sustainable development and provide humanitarian assistance, can be viewed as an information transfer function. USAID's advisors play many roles. Some help developing countries create policies and practices that will enable farmers to grow and distribute food more effectively. Others help countries select policies and approaches to managing the environment to sustain a dependent population for generations to come. By providing advisory assistance, USAID transfers information and, more significantly, knowledge; which is understanding based on experience and accumulated learning. That assistance rests on a base of well-managed information and can be enhanced by the use of IT.

In the program we were indoctrinated in recent legislation, including the Clinger-Cohen Act and the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), which requires the establishment of strategic plans and performance measures for the use of Information Technology (IT). Clinger-Cohen recognizes that the effective selection and use of IT is the responsibility of all agency employees, and requires each agency to conduct an assessment of its employees' skills and abilities in using IT. Recognizing the strategic value of IT, Clinger-Cohen also requires each agency to establish a capital investment review board to select and evaluate its IT investments to maximize their mission effectiveness. The Act also requires agencies to monitor and report on the accomplishments of schedule, cost, and performance goals for their IT investments. Working with the Agency's Chief Information Officer, USAID has begun to

implement that legislation. A question that I bring back to USAID is: "How effectively are our investments in information technology helping USAID staff accomplish the Agency's mission?" In the real world of USAID there are many demands for each dollar available to invest in IT. With the background I gained at the IRM college, one of my goals is to enhance the Agency's ability to leverage its investments and to continuously improve its effective use of IT.

Margaret Alter is Chief of the Information Technology Acquisition Team in IRM's Planning, Management and Acquisition Division.

USAID's mission, to promote broad-based sustainable development and to provide humanitarian assistance, can be viewed as an information transfer function.

Federal Office Systems Expo FOSE '97

By Renee Titonis-Brock

From Former South Dakota Senator Larry Pressler, to Ted Waitt, the Chairman and CEO of Gateway 2000, to Scott Adams, creator of "Dilbert," FOSE '97 had something for everyone interested in the future of information technology. The annual trade show,



USAID Calendars Page

A new offering for users of the Agency's Intranet is located at <http://www.usaid.gov/calendar>. The USAID Calendars Page was developed by an inter-bureau working group to improve Agency access to event notices. The current version pulls together existing calendars managed in Legislative and Public Affairs, Office of the Executive Secretariat, Office of Results-Oriented Reengineering, the Office of Program Coordination within PPC, and Administrative Services. In addition, there are a number of links to calendars on the Internet which are maintained and operated by other U.S. federal agencies, multilateral and bilateral organizations, nongovernment organizations, private voluntary organizations, and the U.S. Congress.

FOSE is a useful forum to learn about new developments and applications at no cost to the government information technology professional.

Former Senator Larry Pressler gave a special presentation about the FY96 Telecommunications Bill.

held this past March 18 through 20, has grown over the past 21 years into the largest Integrated Information Technology trade event serving all levels and branches of government.

With diminishing federal resources dedicated to training, FOSE proves to be a very useful forum to learn about new developments and applications at no cost to the government IT professional. This year's event featured educational seminars sponsored by such leading information technology companies as Microsoft, Compaq, and Oracle. These companies demonstrated some of their latest product solutions as applied to government users' information technology problems. Editors' seminars, which featured writers from the nation's top information technology magazines, provided attendees with objective opinions on the latest IT products on the market.

FOSE '97 featured four dynamic keynote speakers. Michael Zisman, CEO of Lotus Development Corporation, gave the opening keynote discussing technology advances, including Java and the Internet, that enable better communication and collaboration. Focusing on messaging infrastructures, Internet/Intranet strategies and interoperability issues, Jeff Raikes, Senior Vice President of Microsoft North America, spoke on "The Connected Government." Ted Waitt, Chairman and CEO of Gateway 2000, discussed what his company has learned regarding customers' wants and how information technology can serve these needs. Finally, Scott Adams, the creator of the "Dilbert" comic strip, added some levity to the conference with his humorous depiction of the cubicle experience.

Former South Dakota Senator Larry Pressler gave a special presentation in which he discussed the FY96 Telecommunications Bill and the implications of that bill for the further development of our global information infrastructure.

Following on the annual success of the Internet Pavilion, there were two new additions to FOSE this year. The Multimedia Pavilion featured leading providers of multimedia products and services, while the Office Systems

Pavilion showcased vendors of office systems equipment. In addition, over 300 other vendors were on hand to demonstrate a very wide range of information technology products and services.

FOSE '97 addressed IT developments in key areas such as:

Internet/Intranet Strategies. In FOSE's hands-on Internet Pavilion, participants were able to enhance their knowledge of working Internet systems. They also learned about new technologies in the marketplace as well as how they can help develop effective Internet/Intranet strategies for their agency.

Network Security. Information was provided on economical solutions designed to ensure data protection, network restoration, and disaster recovery.

Database Technology. Many of the new database technology products that allow users to manage all data types including documents, web pages, geo-spatial, sound, and video were presented.

The Year 2000. With less than three years left and millions of lines of code needing overhaul, government agencies need to find quick and cost-effective ways to transition their computer systems. Information was provided on products and services specifically designed for the Year 2000 conversion process.

For USAID, some of the more interesting products showcased were the Web-based groupware products. This type of software features work flow management, electronic scheduling, form processing, and message sharing capabilities. As the Agency's Intranet continues to grow, staff in both AID/W and overseas have a wealth of information available at their fingertips. The addition of some groupware components could take the Intranet one step further by providing a more collaborative and efficient means of information sharing.

Renee Titonis-Brock is a Program Analyst in the Office of Health and Nutrition, Bureau for Global Programs, Field Support, and Research.

Case Tracking System in El Salvador

by Alvaro Garcia

An automated Case Tracking System will allow the Judiciary, the Attorney General's offices, and Public Defender's offices in El Salvador to manage and track their cases, using a standardized software technology. This initiative will facilitate future interaction to exchange information among institutions in the Sector.

The Judicial Reform Project II, through its prime contractor Checchi Consulting, subcontracted the design, development, and part of the implementation of an automated Case Tracking System to a local software integrator in El Salvador. This initiative emerged in 1995 when the Project identified the need to migrate the existing Clipper-based system implemented in 20 courts to a more robust hardware and software architecture and to provide standardization.

The Project selected Sybase and Visual Basic as the software platform to design and develop a micro-based application to manage and track cases handled by several institutions in the Justice Sector. The technical team defined a client/server environment for the new application, using existing hardware as much as possible. Another technical decision was to run the application on existing local area networks (LANs) running under the Novell/Netware operating system, a mature software product in Latin America. Conceptually, the technical team chose to keep the design simple to allow users within an office to share case information, leaving possible electronic data interchange among other offices and institutions for future application designs.

The new product developed by the system integrator is currently being readied for deployment in several courts, Public Defender's offices, and Attorney General's offices. New versions reflect a more familiar screen interface and appropriate judicial



Too Many Files?

To support the Agency initiative to reduce USAID/W office files by 50 percent in preparation for the move to the Federal Triangle Building, Administration Services (M/AS) personnel are offering to assist offices in their file reduction efforts.

M/AS has procedures in place to scan project and program files onto CD-ROM to assist bureaus and offices in preserving permanent records in accordance with Agency requirements as specified in ADS 502.

The use of CD-ROM technology will allow bureaus and offices to access critical documents by viewing and printing images of these documents. M/AS will work with the Bureau Records Liaison Officer (RLO) or designated contact person(s) on specific procedures required for utilizing the CD-ROM scanning services. Please note that official files must be purged of any classified documents. All classified documents must be kept in a separate, locked file cabinet in accordance with Agency policy (Reference ADS 502.5.2e).

Any questions concerning this support service should be directed to Diane Payne of M/AS; she may be reached by telephone at (703) 516-1860 or by E-mail at Diane Payne@m.as.iss.sa16@aidw.

language, but some technical problems still persist and the full functionality has not been tested yet. The prime contractor wants to proceed with the pilot implementation; however, there are some critical issues that need to be addressed:

- Hardware configurations for servers and workstations must be upgraded to host the new Sybase application properly.
- Functionality of the new system must be fully tested in a multi-user environment. Major functionality errors and limitations need to be corrected. The full functionality needs to be accepted by end users.
- In preparation for the pilot implementation, the Public Defender's

A client/server application architecture was defined for the new system, using existing hardware as much as possible. Another technical decision was to run the application on the existing local area networks under Novell/Netware.

Quick Guide to Internet Mailing Lists

Mailing lists on the Internet send a single message to many subscribers. Anyone can send a message to one of these lists, but if you want to receive messages sent to a particular list then you must be a subscriber to it.

There are hundreds of these lists, covering every possible subject. To receive an E-mail message that will list all of the lists maintained by the USAID distribution program (ListProc), you would send an E-mail request as follows:

1. Address it to **internet[listproc@info.usaid.gov]**
2. Leave the subject line blank
3. In the message area, type **lists**

If you hear about a specific list to which you want to subscribe, you must send a request to the Internet and specify which list you wish to join and your first and last names. Specifically, you would send an E-mail request like this:

1. Address it to **internet[listproc@info.usaid.gov]**
2. Leave the subject line blank
3. In the message area use the format **subscribe listname Firstname Lastname**—for example, **subscribe devnet-l John Smith**

To unsubscribe to a list, which is probably a good idea when you will be away for an extended period and don't want your E-mail mailbox filling up, the process is just the same except that the message area entry would be **unsubscribe devnet-l** (you wouldn't need to include your name).

To send a message to a list, perhaps to send a query or to provide information for other members of that list, you would create an E-mail like this:

1. Address your message to the list, for instance, to **internet[devnet-l@info.usaid.gov]**
2. Use the subject area to be specific about your area of interest (for example, agriculture in a specific nation)
3. In the message area, include the query or the information (or note if you are attaching information to the E-mail)

offices and the Attorney General's office must hire two technical persons to give proper support to the

implementation and future operation of the new system. One person should act as backup.

- The pilot implementation needs further definition to identify specific components that will be tested and also requires a full endorsement by top officials from the three institutions. For this purpose, the technical team should prepare a management presentation to brief top officials on the purpose of the implementation, what will be measured, how, and by whom.
- Once the new product has passed the functionality and operability tests, the technical team needs to evaluate its sustainability. There are several aspects to include in this evaluation: replication costs, recurrent costs, strategy for support and maintenance, effort involved in modifying the application to adjust it to the new Criminal Code, operations and maintenance, personnel, learning curve, and actual integration of the new system within the institutions' organization and procedures.
- The Project could also evaluate the FoxPro product developed by the Judiciary as a possible "client" component to be integrated with Sybase or a similar database engine—taking into account functionality, operability, and sustainability factors.

Alvaro Garcia is an Information Technology Advisor under contract to IRM's Program Technology Transfer Group.

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IRM@WORK!

On the Information Highway

*A Newsletter from the Office of Information Resources Management — M/IRM
U. S. Agency for International Development*

MISSION CONNECTIVITY

By Darrell Owen
M/IRM/CIS

In the fall of 1997, IRM established a Mission Connectivity Task Force to explore an increasing number of issues associated with telecommunications between USAID/Washington and the Agency's field locations. This Task Force is headed up by Darrell Owen (M/IRM/CIS) with participation from across the Office of IRM, and with key participation from Overseas Management Support (M/AM/OMS). Efforts are underway to expand participation to the Missions.

Since developing the charter, the Task Force has met two times in late 1997 to launch the effort and to ensure coordination of their activities. The meetings have also served to direct the attention toward key issues. Most of the work to date has been, and will continue to be, done outside these meetings. Activities undertaken to date have included documenting current networks/services, identifying associated costs for delivering these services, documenting current and future requirements, and undertaking some preliminary analysis as to alternatives/options. This work has been captured in a master document that will evolve over the life of this project — concluding with a series of recommendations to management.

BACKGROUND/FOCUS

The primary focus of the Mission Connectivity Task Force is basically to examine USAID's current telecommunications networks, and to explore ways to bring about lower costs, added capabilities, added capacity, alternative sources for delivering these services, etc.

Being one of several foreign affairs agencies, USAID derives much of its telecommunications overseas from the Diplomatic Telecommunications Services — Program Office (DTS-PO). For the most part, USAID is obligated to use DTS-PO-provided services where they are available, and relies on commercial services when DTS-PO cannot meet our requirements (i.e., local in-country telephony).

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When USAID looked to implement the New Management System (NMS), the Agency obtained a waiver from DTS-PO — allowing the Agency to purchase and install up to 45 Very Small Aperture Terminals (VSATs) in support of the NMS. At present, these VSATs connect approximately 40 MACS/NMS sites with higher-speed capacity than what DTS-PO was able to provide at the time. These 40 missions have found that with the VSATs they have improved communications for the NMS, as well as full Internet and Intranet access. This has allowed these missions to have full access to our expanding central @USAID Intranet Web Site which allows them to gain access to the Agency's General Notices, Procurement and Human Resources information, Press Clips, the Administrator's Speeches, Congressional Schedules, the Executive Information System (EIS), chapters of the Automated Directives System (ADS), etc. From the Internet, activity managers can see when their procurements are posted to the public, gain access to current per diem rates, access the latest Congressional Presentation, as well as have access to key programmatic information being posted on the Internet by their development partners (other government and non-government organizations). The list goes on and is growing.

But in fact these capabilities are available to only about half of our field locations. Not only do the smaller missions lack this access, but those without these capabilities include our remote offices in Paris where PPC has employees that are part of the USG delegation OECD, and in Brussels where we are part of the US Mission to the European Union, and similar situations in Geneva, Rome, and Tokyo. In Long Beach, Chicago, Miami, and Portland, the Global Bureau has individuals representing USAID to the local business community in association with the Agency's economic growth activities. Having USAID-related information is especially critical here as but a small handful of individuals are responsible for representation and coordination on behalf of USAID on a wide-array of topics. Information access is essential, but somewhat lacking.

The focus of the Task Force has been to first understand and document the current resources and costs. The second element has been to document current and future requirements. Clearly NMS working at full capacity and efficiency is but one requirement — others include lowering our operating costs, expanding information access to other locations, and improving information sharing with our key development partners. The third element of this initiative is that of exploring technology alternatives/options for meeting these requirements. Are there less expensive ways to provide the needed services? Are there ways to

improve linking smaller missions to USAID/W? Is there a better solution for including our development partners? Unfortunately there is no single silver bullet to bring about a quick, cost-effective solution. Rather, a mix of ever-changing solutions will need to be packaged together — a solution set that will include DTS-PO-provided resources, our current VSATs, possibly additional VSATs, mission connectivity to local Internet Service Providers (ISPs), etc. As the list expands, so will future changes in requirements and available technologies to meet these requirements.

SPECIFIC ISSUES

Current plans call for the Task Force to develop some initial recommendations to Management by spring of 1998 — a few short months away. And while no recommendations are yet available, several key areas of focus are beginning to emerge. Some of the key issues include:

- **Cost Containment.** Without any further expansion of communications links to additional missions, charges for ongoing services continue to escalate. We simply must find a less costly way to deliver data communications to our field locations.
- **Internet/Intranet Access by Smaller Missions/Locations.** While our larger MACS/NMS Missions are reasonably well served, our smaller Missions are without Internet/Intranet services that would improve information access/sharing. Alternatives must be explored to increase the footprint of access to these locations.
- **Partner Access.** With USAID's strategy to increase our reliance on key NGO partners, our telecommunications strategy in the field has primarily been that of a private network. Solutions must be explored that closer align our telecommunications capabilities with what is required to support the Agency's strategic direction.
- **Expanded Capabilities.** While our present VSATs do provide Internet/Intranet access, the bandwidth of this communications link is not all that large. With even limited user base at each Mission, use is not only growing (outstripping our budget), but there is the need for capacity expansion. How to accomplish this expansion and hold down costs at the same time are difficult issues that need to be addressed.
- **NMS-Related Needs.** While the VSATs were initially put in place to support the NMS, this capacity was sized on a large number of unknowns at that time. We now have more experience upon which to design/redesign our

Continued on page 3

network in support of the NMS. But the NMS is likely to undergo considerable change over the next couple years, and these changes need to be taken into account in our re-thinking of any communications changes.

- **Mission Internets/Intranets.** Increasingly, our missions are finding the need to develop local repositories of information for meeting both internal and external in-country needs. For Mission Intranets, these augment the Agency's Intranet currently operating in Washington by providing locally-specific information. Mission Internets are aimed at providing local in-country access to key information — including sharing critical information with our development partners. There is the need for some standardized approach for these activities to ensure sustainability and supportability of the Missions' efforts.
- **International Voice/FAX.** At present, DTS-PO provides what is called International Voice Gateway (IVG) to several of our overseas posts. This service is of significant importance in holding down the costs on international calls — again, where it is available. Where it is not, our costs are high and increasing. While we do not have hard figures from within USAID, industry numbers place FAX at anywhere from 50-65 percent of international telecommunications costs. A survey several years old showed it to be around 30-35% at USAID. Internet FAX is a possible option for the FAX, but for voice, finding alternatives is not so apparent or simple.
- **Programmatic Use/Funding.** At present, telecommunications to/from our field locations are funded out of USAID's Operating and Expense (O&E) budget. Yet in fact a significant amount of this communications is in direct support of programmatic activities. Potentially these costs should be born by the program for which these costs are being occurred. Developing an architecture and approach which would balance these costs is a legal issue as well as a technological one.
- **It Has to Fit.** As this Task Force undertakes its focused efforts on Mission Connectivity, the Agency at large is faced with upgrading much of its Information Technology (IT) infrastructure. Many of the Personal Computers (PCs) now on the desktop will not make it past the year 2000. Nor will Windows 3.1. Our suite of Office Systems (i.e. word processing, spreadsheets, etc.) are out of date and won't pass the year 2000 either. Key components of our Local Area Networks (LANs) and our Wide Area Network (WAN) need replacing for the same reasons. It is essential that all efforts to resolve Mission Connectivity-related issues also align with the changes being planned to upgrade our IT infrastructure.

CURRENT/NEXT STEPS

To date, a significant amount of information has been collected and documented in various forms including short reports and draft papers. This documentation is being collected and placed into a single location and should be made available on the Intranet shortly (if it isn't already by the time this issue of *IRM at Work!* is issued). Research continues to explore additional alternatives — such as voice over the Internet, a reconfiguring of our VSAT network, an alternative to our VSAT network, and Mission access to local ISPs. As this material is developed (even in draft), it will be placed on the Intranet for review and comment (keep an eye on "What's New").

As part of this effort, a draft alternatives paper has been prepared for lowering costs and expanding the capacity of the VSAT network, with efforts underway to implement some of the short-term recommendations. Efforts are underway to monitor/manage traffic to/from the Internet to ensure it is work-related. A memorandum has been forwarded to DTS-PO requesting approval to relocate 5 VSATs to missions where enhanced connectivity is critical — some of these are non-NMS sites. Implementing an Internet-to-Intranet access via V-One SmartGate is being piloted in Europe, and testing/evaluation of a LAN Gateway allowing access to the Internet and into our Intranet is underway.

We are planning to have some preliminary ideas ready to present to the EXO's at their conference later this spring. This will provide an opportunity for collecting direct input from the field in addition to the field input being solicited now. Ultimately the findings will need to be wrapped into the overall effort to reconstruct the Agency's IT infrastructure — including whatever procurement acquisition is undertaken to facilitate this change. With the new Clinger-Cohen legislation now in place, USAID's executive management will ultimately review and approve at least the major components of any possible change resulting from this Task Force.

Those having input or wishing to discuss these issues are encouraged to contact Darrell Owen (via E-mail or by phone at 202/712-5443).

[Darrell Owen is currently the Chief of IRM's Consulting and Information Services (CIS) Division. This Division provides Mission Support, Business Analysis, Help Desk, SWAT Team, Internet/Intranet, and Information Technology Transfer services.]

REMEDY ADAPTABLE APPLICATIONS FOR EFFICIENT CONSOLIDATED HELP DESK OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT

By Dave Somers
Software Control International, Inc.

Charles Darwin once said, adapt or die, in reference to the evolutionary process. That process has taken on a new meaning when applied to today's dynamic global business arena — a world where change is the only constant, and the ability to adapt is the key to survival and business success.

Today's Information Systems (IS) professionals find themselves having to adapt to changing business conditions on a daily basis, a trend that's exerting an influence on organizations of all sizes. Existing systems and resources are being stretched to their capacity. Demands on help and service desks are increasing. Pressure to improve IS efficiency and reduce costs continues to mount. In the face of these challenges, finding a way to make internal operations run more efficiently is vital to creating a competitive advantage.

IRM HELP DESK VISION

USAID is currently positioned to develop and implement an innovative Trouble Ticket System that addresses its current and future needs. The purpose of this system is to provide a high level of customer satisfaction. This will be accomplished by designing a system that complements and enhances the business processes at USAID. USAID relies heavily on its network, making enterprise network management a focal point in the development of a Trouble Ticket System. The temporary loss of a network segment or key system could have a devastating impact on USAID's operations and employee productivity. To avoid such losses, the Trouble Ticket System must be intelligent enough to diagnose potential problems and automatically coordinate appropriate responses according to business rules. The Trouble Ticket System must be adaptable and scaleable to provide seamless mesh to today's evolving enterprise network.

This is where Remedy Action Request System (AR System), the industry's most widely used application for creating Help Desk solutions, and for automating internal processes such as asset management, change management, defect tracking and more, provides USAID with a state-of-the-art workflow process and Help Desk system that can be enhanced in the future to adapt to USAID's operations.

REMEDY'S ADAPTABLE SOLUTION FOR CONSOLIDATED OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT

Remedy provides IS organizations with scalable and highly integrated client/server solutions that are unique in the way they easily adapt to changing business needs. The Remedy approach gives the Help Desk the power to extend its support applications; providing the flexibility it needs to embrace change quickly and address rapidly shifting enterprise requirements.

All Remedy solutions are based on a scalable client/server architecture designed to ensure high performance, now and into the future. Remedy's open approach also enables these products to easily integrate with best of breed platforms, products and technologies, allowing the user the flexibility, adaptability and compatibility needed to create new applications quickly and easily.

Streamlining and automating internal operations improves efficiencies beyond the IS organization. Extending Remedy use results in a scalable and easy-to-use solution that USAID can use to consolidate and manage a broad range of internal operations, providing added value every step of the way. The more the Remedy solution is deployed across various organizations, the more benefits USAID will obtain.

Since these products are easy to customize, USAID will be able to save valuable time, resources, and budgetary expenditures.

ACTION REQUEST SYSTEM

The Action Request System (AR System) is the foundation for all of Remedy's integrated products. It's a highly adaptable client/server software application that enables users to react quickly to change and to automate the internal operations within USAID.

The AR System enables users to fit unique applications to successfully exceed USAID requirements. Its intuitive and adaptable design minimizes training and customization costs, thereby enabling a significant

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increase in productivity. Deployment is easy. USAID can cost-effectively extend the AR System across the enterprise through unlimited free read licenses that enable users to submit requests and query the system for solutions or status updates — free of charge. The AR System combines the ease-of-use and cost advantages of off-the-shelf turnkey solutions with the adaptability of custom-designed business process software implementations.

The AR System includes *Remedy Help Desk*, a full-featured, complete and highly adaptable Help Desk solution that automates functions such as problem management, problem resolution, reporting and measurement. This integrated Help Desk solution, along with ready-to-use change management and asset management capabilities, will enable USAID to implement the AR System quickly. The Remedy Help Desk can be easily tailored to meet specific USAID operational requirements.

As a bundled component of the AR System, the Remedy Help Desk provides a wide range of problem management, problem resolution and reporting/measurement capabilities to automate internal service desks.

PROBLEM MANAGEMENT: AUTOMATED INTELLIGENCE

- Automatic skill-based assignment capabilities route submitted requests to designated Help Desk personnel, matching the problem with the specific staff expertise required to solve it.
- Group or individual assignment capabilities provide the flexibility to assign to Help Desk groups or individuals, thus balancing work load.
- Escalation features automatically prioritize cases, based on adaptable parameters such as type, location, and urgency.
- Complete logging of information, such as date, time, and steps taken to alleviate problems, adds to a growing knowledge base that can be used to resolve future problems.
- Flexible problem categorization provides for efficient management of cases.

PROBLEM RESOLUTION: WHERE KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

- Self-help capabilities using both the AR System and Web-based client tools (via Remedy's AR Web) enable users to solve many problems without assistance, reducing dependence on internal Help Desk staff.

- Experiential data capture in the Remedy Help Desk's resolution repository for both in-house and third-party applications builds an extensive knowledge base that results in faster problem resolution and reduced costs.

- Easy integration with third-party knowledge-base packages provides flexibility and added productivity for Help Desk staff.

REPORTING AND MEASUREMENT: PROACTIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

- Ad hoc or predefined reports used in conjunction with the AR System provide flexibility and adaptability for measuring calls, service performance, and goals.

- Proactive problem solving, due to ease of integration with other Remedy applications such as Dashboards, Change Management and Asset Management, enables administrators to identify potential problems before they ever occur.

CONSOLIDATING CHANGE FOR TOMORROW'S CHALLENGES

While change can create daunting challenges, it can also present numerous opportunities. "Adapt or die," after all, can easily be translated into "adapt and prosper." In today's competitive global arena, those who ultimately adapt to change are those who will be in the best position to reap the rewards of success. Remedy's consolidated operations management solutions have been designed with these realities in mind.

With the expanding utilization of Remedy's Action Request System this will provide the necessary software tools required to address the growing needs and future operational requirements within USAID.

With the incorporation of the AR System model within the Help Desk work flow process, our team will successfully address in a proactive rather than reactive mode customer problems in a timely and more cost effective manner. Keeping this Help Desk vision in mind, providing total Help Desk customer support, plus managing for growth, will enable our team to provide world class quality IRM computer systems and desktop support throughout USAID.

Dave Somers is the manager of the USAID IRM Help Desk. Help Desk Team members are: Tammy Fitzgerald, Jim Garrison, Walter Lopez, Claude Miller, Arnold Perkins, Ron Pass, Sharon Tate, Loretta Armstrong, Mike McCormick, and Perry Wong.

EXECUTIVE ORDER ON Y2K CONVERSION

On February 4, 1998, President William J. Clinton signed an Executive Order on Year 2000 Conversion. The text of this Executive Order is presented below. It is also available on the White House Home Page (www.whitehouse.gov) under briefings. John Koskinen, formerly at OMB, will be heading up the Council, and Sally Katzen will be the co-chair.

The American people expect reliable service from their Government and deserve the confidence that critical government functions dependent on electronic systems will be performed accurately and in a timely manner. Because of a design feature in many electronic systems, a large number of activities in the public and private sectors could be at risk beginning in the year 2000. Some computer systems and other electronic devices will misinterpret the year "00" as 1900, rather than 2000. Unless appropriate action is taken, this flaw, known as the "Y2K problem," can cause systems that support those functions to compute erroneously or simply not run. Minimizing the Y2K problem will require a major technological and managerial effort, and it is critical that the United States Government do its part in addressing this challenge.

Accordingly, by the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Policy.

(a) It shall be the policy of the executive branch that agencies shall:

- (1) assure that no critical Federal program experiences disruption because of the Y2K problem;
- (2) assist and cooperate with State, local, and tribal governments to address the Y2K problem where those governments depend on Federal information or information technology or the Federal Government is dependent on those governments to perform critical missions;
- (3) cooperate with the private sector operators of critical national and local systems, including the banking and financial system, the telecommunications system, the public health system, the transportation system, and the electric power generation system, in addressing the Y2K problem; and
- (4) communicate with their foreign counterparts to

raise awareness of and generate cooperative international arrangements to address the Y2K problem.

(b) As used in this order, "agency" and "agencies" refer to Federal agencies that are not in the judicial or legislative branches.

Sec. 2. Year 2000 Conversion Council.

There is hereby established the President's Council on Year 2000 Conversion (the "Council").

- (a) The Council shall be led by a Chair who shall be an Assistant to the President, and it shall be composed of one representative from each of the executive departments and from such other Federal agencies as may be determined by the Chair of the Council (the "Chair").
- (b) The Chair shall appoint a Vice Chair and assign other responsibilities for operations of the council as he or she deems necessary.
- (c) The Chair shall oversee the activities of agencies to assure that their systems operate smoothly through the year 2000, act as chief spokesperson on this issue for the executive branch in national and international fora, provide policy coordination of executive branch activities with State, local, and tribal governments on the Y2K problem, and promote appropriate Federal roles with respect to private sector activities in this area.
- (d) The Chair and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall report jointly at least quarterly to me on the progress of agencies in addressing the Y2K problem.
- (e) The Chair shall identify such resources from agencies as the Chair deems necessary for the implementation of the policies set out in this order, consistent with applicable law.

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**IRM@WORK!
CUSTOMER QUESTIONNAIRE**

**This is your chance to "talk to" IRM.
We want to hear from you!**

Please reply via e-mail to John Tucker@irm.od@aidw (or by fax (202)-216-3053 — Attention: John Tucker) by April 20, 1998. You may simply write the question number and your answer. The answers given are suggestions only. We welcome your comments, suggestions and criticisms.

1. How do you receive the newsletter?
[Paper Copy/Intranet]
2. Do you read the IRM@Work! Newsletter when it comes out or randomly when you have time?
[Each issue/As time permits/Rarely/Not at all]
3. Do you keep issues for reference?
[Yes/No]
4. Do you share issues or articles with others?
[Always/Often/Seldom/Never]
5. Do you find the articles and information in the newsletter to be relevant and interesting?
[Yes/Usually/Rarely]
6. What articles interest you most?
[Software information and instructions/Agency-specific IT news/Information about Web Sites, internets, intranets/Contractor news and input/Private sector IT news and information/Other]
7. What information would you like to read in future editions?
[See question 6 for response alternatives]
8. To what extent are your Information Technology (IT) needs being met by the Agency?
[Fully/Fairly well/So-so/Poorly]
9. What areas would you like the Agency to strengthen? Please feel free to offer comments and suggestions:
A. Software updates and improvements
B. Training — specifically?
C. Upgraded access to more efficient e-mail, internet access
D. Better Hardware
E. Other (please explain)
10. How often do you use e-mail?
[Very frequently/frequently/rarely/never]
11. How often do you use internet for your work?
[Very frequently/frequently/Sometimes/Seldom/Never]
12. What internet services or information would you like the Agency to strengthen? Please comment.
13. Have you ever considered contributing an article for the newsletter? If so, what prevented you from doing so?

*From: A. Name (Optional!)
B. Post and/or Bureau
C. Job title/position (Optional!)*

Sec. 3. Responsibilities of Agency Heads.

(a) The head of each agency shall:

(1) assure that efforts to address the Y2K problem receive the highest priority attention in the agency and that the policies established in this order are carried out; and

(2) cooperate to the fullest extent with the Chair by making available such information, support, and assistance, including personnel, as the Chair may request to support the accomplishment of the tasks assigned herein, consistent with applicable law.

(b) The heads of executive departments and the agencies designated by the Chair under section 2(a) of this order shall identify a responsible official to represent the head of the executive department or agency on the Council with sufficient authority and experience to commit agency resources to address the Y2K problem.

Sec. 4. Responsibilities of Interagency and Executive Office Councils.

Interagency councils and councils within the Executive Office of the President, including the President's Management Council, the Chief Information Officers Council, the Chief Financial Officers Council, the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency, the Executive Council on Integrity and Efficiency, the National Science and Technology Council, the National Performance Review, the National Economic Council, the Domestic Policy Council, and the National Security Council shall provide assistance and support to the Chair upon the Chair's request.

Sec. 5. Judicial Review.

This Executive order is intended only to improve the internal management of the executive branch and does not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity by a party against the United States, its agencies, or instrumentalities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

CYBERNUGGETS

THINK YOU'RE FAST?

Steve Hawkins@G.PHN.POP@AIDWP

I don't care how fast you type. I don't think you can type the three paragraphs below in under 3 seconds. That's how long it took me to copy the old text from my CYBERNUGGETS file and paste it into this e-mail (try it if you don't believe me). Once the text is highlighted it takes only three keystrokes, CONTROL C to copy, ALT TAB to switch from WP to Beyond and then CONTROL V to paste. If you aren't using CONTROL C (or maybe CONTROL X), and CONTROL V at least a dozen times each day, you are spending too much time typing things that have already been typed.

These are still my all-time favorite
CYBERNUGGETS:

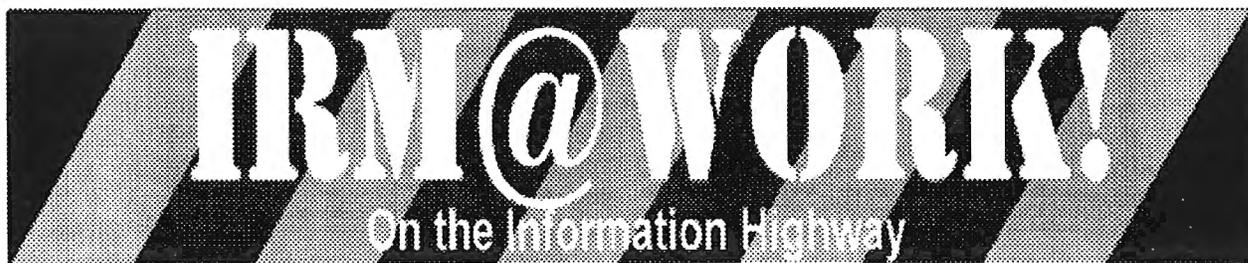
CONTROL C - (Hold down the CONTROL key and press C): Copies any highlighted (marked) material to the Windows clipboard. It is the functional equivalent of clicking on "Edit, Copy", but you don't have to take your hands off the keyboard to get to the mouse.

CONTROL V - (Hold down the CONTROL key and press V): Takes any material that is currently on the Windows clipboard and inserts it at the present cursor location. It is the functional equivalent of clicking on "Edit, Paste".

Special Note - These "Hot Keys" can be VERY POWERFUL. They frequently work even at times when "Edit, Copy" and "Edit, Paste" are not available. For example, there are times in Beyond Mail "Addressing" and "Managing Addressbook" where you can insert names and addresses using "CONTROL V" even though the menu bar is blocked. Try it.

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

IRM @ Work! is a publication produced by the Management Bureau's Office of Information Resources Management (M/IRM). John Tucker serves as the Executive Editor, and Lindsay Orkand serves as Senior Editor. Printed copies are distributed to each USAID/W Office and each overseas Mission. Issues can be accessed on line via the USAID Home Page, at <http://www.usaid.gov> (and from there, users can click on Information Resources Management Division and then on IRM Newsletter to pull up any issue they want to see). Comments and suggestions are always welcome. Readers wishing to give greater visibility to their own USAID project by having articles appear in this newsletter are invited to submit ideas and material to either John Tucker@irm.od@aidw or Lindsay Orkand@irm.ipa.sai1#@aidw.



*A Newsletter from the Office of Information Resources Management — M/IRM
U. S. Agency for International Development*

Mission Connectivity: Piloting in Europe

by Darrell Owen and Dan Henry

In our continuing efforts on establishing improved Mission Connectivity, one of the key areas of focus is that of connecting smaller Missions to the Internet/Intranet. While the larger Missions have reasonably fast connectivity through DTS-PO, and our MACS/NMS Missions have this access by virtue of the VSATs, the smaller Missions typically do not have this level of access. This is partly a function of justification (i.e. VSATs originally acquired to support the NMS), costs (acquisition, installation, and use), as well as technical in-country support. For these reasons, alternatives for connecting these smaller Missions are actively being explored as part of our Mission Connectivity initiative.

Using Local ISPs

One possible alternative for improving the linkages between overseas posts and USAID/Washington is through a local in-country Internet Service Provider (ISPs). Just a few years ago this alternative was not plausible as there were few ISPs in developing countries, and where they were, access could be quite expensive. But this situation is rapidly changing. In fact, USAID's Leland Initiative is working to establish ISPs in a number of African countries—creating a situation in which the USAID Mission can actually acquire Internet services through a commercial resource it helped create. In these cases, use by the Mission would help support the project even further by providing sustaining support to the ISP, while at the same time, obtaining critical services for enhancing USAID's operations.

Also, it has only been within the past few months that this alternative held the possibility of providing access into USAID's Intranet! With the move to the new RRB, a sophisticated firewall was put in place that now allows for accessing AIDnet from the outside the Agency in a way that is completely secure. This can be accomplished either through the Remote Access Server (RAS) or via the Internet. Those beginning to take advantage of the Telecommuting program will likely be familiar with one or both of these, as it's a way to stay connected at work while working from home. Both solutions rely on a product called V-One SmartGate to ensure tight security is maintained.

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Europe TDY

With these capabilities in place, and some home-to-office experience behind us, it was time for some limited experimentation overseas. As it turned out, concurrent with these solutions emerging, IRM was approached by PPC to see if something could be done to improve connectivity of their overseas staff in Brussels, Geneva, Paris, Rome, and Tokyo. These overseas locations, while not in developing countries, provided an excellent opportunity to meet an identified need and expand our testing of the Internet-to-Intranet solution. So in February 1998, Dan Henry from the Internet Data Services (IDS) Group and Darrell Owen traveled to the European posts to install and test the solution.

Paris, Brussels, and Geneva

In Paris, Brussels, and Geneva, individual PCs were connected to a local ISP for access to the Internet. With this connectivity established, the use of SmartGate was added — allowing these locations connectivity into USAID's Intranet. Due to available technology at post and limited time available, only one PC was set up to provide this access, providing but an interim solution until newer technology can be acquired, installed, and configured. Efforts are already underway to bring about upgrades that will further expand and stabilize this expanded access.

Rome

In Rome, ISP services were provided by the local USIS office. During the TDY this was accomplished via dialup connections off of three PCs supporting USAID's PPC and OTI offices. However, since OTI is supporting a LAN in Rome, plans are underway to establish a direct line via (xDSL) from USIS to this LAN so that all PCs can have direct access to the Internet — and for USAID personnel, access to USAID's Intranet. This solution in Rome also incorporated the use of an MS Proxy server for security — with SmartGate installed and working successfully in this configuration.

Zagreb

In Zagreb we were able to push the envelope even further. Here we installed WinGate as a proxy server on the LAN. This is a low cost, easily installed product that allows a single server to be connected to the ISP via a modem, and in turn allows all PCs on the LAN to have access to the Internet through this single connection. A single 56Kbps connection can support at reasonable speeds, 4-6 concurrent Internet sessions. Where needed, a second or even a third modem and dialout line can be added to the WinGate server for additional capacity. For security, WinGate was configured to allow no incoming

calls. Zagreb was an excellent test bed for WinGate since they are well served with a local ISP with fast, stable, and reasonably-priced Internet connectivity. In addition, they have three remote locations with one or two personnel and local ISP access. Since the TDY, the Mission has been installing new PCs with Windows 95 and upgrading existing PCs to Windows 95. In addition, they have installed Internet Explorer and expanding the license for the WinGate software to allow for additional concurrent use. The one remaining issue on this solution set is that the current version on WinGate does not support SmartGate—however, discussions with the vendor indicates that this will be resolved in an upcoming release. We'll see!

Summary

In summary, these piloting efforts went extremely well. Pre-planning to establish ISP accounts at each location (if they didn't already exist), pre-established SmartGate accounts, and on-the-fly support from across IRM throughout the TDY ensured that the short 2-3 days at each location were successful. For the first time staff at these locations now have direct access to USAID's General Notices, ADS chapters, USAID's most current phone book, Procurement and Human Resources information, the most recent Press Clips, Administrator Atwood's latest speech, the most current Congressional Presentation, latest solicitations, CDIE's OnLine reference and research materials, etc. They are now "connected" by having on-demand access to a growing inventory of key Agency-related information. The remote Internet-to-Intranet solution works for these small posts that have access to a local ISP!

Additional Pieces Needed

However, not all is solved as yet. One of the remaining issues that continues to plague these locations is Electronic Mail. At present, several of these sites rely on LapMail. And while it works, it is awkward, time consuming to download large attachments, and requires rebooting periodically, etc. This is the one remaining connectivity issue that needs more attention and an improved solution. Options being assessed include moving these locations to Internet mail—a solution being explored for Geneva. Another option is to use an International Voice Gateway (IVG) circuit in combination with the Remote Access Server (RAS) to periodically dial into Banyan here in Washington to obtain E-mail directly from Banyan services. This option is being explored in Paris and Brussels where IVG circuits appear to be sufficient to at least evaluate the alternative. Yet another alternative being explored is to rely on MS Exchange that is being installed as part of State's ALMA

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(A Logical Modernization Approach) post upgrades. In all the European locations, USAID personnel are located within Department of State space, and have access to DOSNet. Even if this does work, the paradox is that it may solve the E-mail, but cannot provide the required Internet/Intranet access as their OpenNet does not allow connectivity to the Internet at the current time.

Looking Beyond

We're also confronted with the need to find a connectivity solution for those locations that have neither a fast link via DTS-PO, a VSAT, or access to a local ISP. Options being explored here include: 1) coordinating with DTS-PO for circuit upgrades; 2) expanding USAID's current VSAT network; 3) finding a lower cost satellite solution; 4) finding Internet access via some other USG agency at post; and/or 5) exploring the possibility of using an existing program activity being undertaken at post that has a strong rationale to establish Internet connectivity — such that the USAID Mission could support the establishment of an Internet link within a project, and also acquire the needed capacity through these facilities on a cost-shared basis.

New VSAT Sites

With respect to expanding USAID's current VSAT network, in January 1998 IRM requested approval to expand the number of VSATs to five additional locations. We obtained formal approval for four in March and the fifth one in April. DTS-PO approval has been granted for: Luanda, Angola; Lusaka, Zambia; Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania; Phnom Penh, Cambodia, and Sarajevo, Bosnia. With these approvals, we are pursuing Host Nation Approval, and from there, the actual relocating, installation, and training of Mission personnel. Efforts are underway to expand our VSATs even further with a request for 12 more currently in process.

Stay tuned as this is a very dynamic area at this point in time.

Darrell Owen is currently the Chief of IRM's Consulting and Information Services (CIS) Division. This Division provides Mission Support, Business Analysis, Help Desk, SWAT Team, Internet/Intranet, and Information Technology Transfer services. Dan Henry is a member of the Internet Data Services (IDS) Group providing critical Internet and Intranet services to USAID.

FAREWELL TO JOAN MATEJCECK

Joan Matejcek left M/IRM in late March to join USIA. Joan came to USAID in September 1994 as the Deputy Director of IRM. In July 1995, she became the acting Director of IRM and remained in that position until July 1997. Joan undertook an additional assignment as USAID's first Deputy CIO in August 1996 and, in July of the following year, became Deputy CIO on a full-time basis.

At USIA she will be the Director of Overseas Support within the Office of Technology, coordinating technical support for USIA's offices in more than 200 locations worldwide, and assisting the Director of the Office of Technology in preparing USIA worldwide operations for consolidation with the Department of State. As Joan enjoys working directly with customers, communicating and problem-solving, she eagerly anticipates those aspects of her new job.

The past three years have seen tremendous change and also tremendous challenge for USAID, particularly in the area of information technology. Joan is particularly pleased with the Agency's progress toward realizing the potential of the Internet for the work done in exploring other technologies that help Agency staff to experience the benefits that were expected as a result of the reengineering of USAID work processes.

Joan writes, "I learned a great deal in my time at USAID and hope that I have been successful in bringing to bear in a positive way my experience in other agencies. I also leave many friends made as a result of our work together and I look forward to continuing those friendships from a different vantage point."

Joan, all your friends at USAID wish you great success and enjoyment in your new job at USIA and hope that you will keep in touch.

USAID ASSISTS THE CENTRAL BANK OF ARMENIA WITH ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS SYSTEM

Excerpted From An Article by Kirsten Michner

Under the Soviet Union, a simple banking procedure could take over a month to transact. The paper-based payment system was centralized for all of the Soviet Union across 12 time zones. Because there was only one bank, with headquarters in Moscow and branches in each republic, payments from the republics had to be physically transferred over thousands of miles of terrain.

Samuel Arakelian, Head of the Automation Department of the Central Bank of Armenia (CBA), explained, "If you were a customer of a bank, you would come to the bank, make a payment order on paper, and give it to the bank. Then the bank payment might stay in the bank, for example, for one week." This payment order would then be physically transferred to the bank's headquarters in Yerevan, then to the Central Bank and from there to another commercial bank headquarters. Each stop along the way could last as long as a week as each payment order was manually processed before it was returned to the region. Often the transfers were done through the mail service which was barely functional, "because the postal system often lacked gasoline for their vehicles, and sometimes even the vehicles themselves. Additionally, Armenia is a small country, but it has a harsh mountainous landscape. In the winter, some regions of the country are completely unreachable."

When the Soviet Union broke up, Armenia became an independent country and in 1993 established the Central Bank of Armenia (CBA). Initially, the CBA established communications with its commercial banks and their branches by telegraph. This system proved to be slow, unreliable, and costly at \$5 per transaction in a country where most people earn less than \$100 per month. To bring the CBA's banking practices in line with western banking standards, CBA's chairman asked for USAID's help in installing an electronic payments system. Tom Dine, USAID's Assistant Administrator for Europe and the New Independent States, met with CBA officials in 1994, and in the summer of 1995 USAID committed funding for the project. In early 1996, USAID staff began implementing the network and the functional programs.

"The USAID team had excellent cooperation on this project with other international donor agencies: the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the European Union. Additionally, the staff of the CBA was technically very savvy. The international donors found that the

Armenians were particularly adept at customizing the software and receptive to the training.

"With the assistance from USAID, the Central Bank created an inter-bank telecommunications network that they call *CBANet* (Central Bank of Armenia Network). This private, wide-area network offers a continuous communications link between the Central Bank, thirty commercial banks and all their branches. With this foundation in place, the banks can move payments from one bank to another instantly. Banks can get internal reporting and accounting on a normal supervision schedule, whether daily, weekly, or monthly.

"USAID provided the necessary equipment and functional software for the system, as well as technical expertise and training programs for the staff of the Central Bank and of the commercial banks to learn how to use and administer the system.

"Based on the *CBANet*, the staff of the Central Bank created and implemented the inter-bank electronic payments system called *BankMail* which provides paperless payments between all the Armenian banks. *CBANet* links the entire territory of the country, across the high mountains and low valleys that are so often physically impassable in the winter. *CBANet* has been extended to link not only the banking sector, but the other financial institutions in Armenia, including the Treasury and the stock exchanges. This enables the Armenians to use *CBANet* not only for bank payments but also for other aspects of their financial sector development.

"For its efforts, the American role in this development will offer an eventual payback to the US through increased trade and investment that comes with stable governments, safe financial institutions and an increased standard of living for its trading partners. ... Having an electronic payment system in place is a huge step forward in Armenia's economic development.

"In addition to the connection between commercial banks and the Central Bank, the Armenian banks also have a new satellite link to the rest of the world. The Central Bank of Armenia's latest achievement in their growing electronic network is membership in SWIFT, the Society of Worldwide Interbank Funds Transfers. Membership is considered an international seal of approval for banks. Member-

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THE WEBMASTER HAS LOTS OF HEADS

By Michael Inguillo, Webmaster
Internet Data Services Team

Believe it or not, the Internet Data Services (IDS) team still encounters people who believe one Webmaster creates, designs and decides what kind of materials should be published on the Agency's websites. There are, in fact, many individuals who contribute their efforts to producing and managing materials for the USAID World Wide Web presence or external web (<http://www.info.usaid.gov>) and the intranet or internal web (<http://www.usaid.gov>).

Building a website can be compared to building a house, as it requires a variety of experts to get the job done. When a house is built, a general contractor must sign up masons, carpenters, electricians, plumbers, glaziers and so on. Usually general contractors know where to find skilled workers as the construction industry has been around for centuries. Unfortunately, Information Technology Managers do not have the luxury of easily finding highly skilled experts due to the web development industry being as young as it is. Can anyone really believe that Java and JavaScript are just a little more than two years old, that building dynamically generated web pages was possible only three years ago and that USAID used to offer only ftp, gopher, and ListProc services almost four years ago? Finding highly-skilled, creative people to produce quality work is usually a task that requires time and, of course, a sharp eye for combing through technical resumes.

An Ideal Staff to Get Started

Since building a website is more intricate and time consuming than putting together an HTML page, the notion of utilizing a team becomes a necessity within an enterprise-wide environment. The following are the components of a fully staffed team.

Webmaster

Primary duties: Participation in the life cycle (Planning, Analysis, Design, Testing and Implementation) of a web site. Maintenance and management of websites on an organization's web server.

Skills: Listserv experience, expert in HTML and web design, knowledge of NT and UNIX systems and applications; knowledge of scripting languages, web server technologies, graphic design and strong interpersonal and communication skills.

Application Developer/Programmer (Various Levels)

Primary duties: Building internet applications.

Skills: Systems analysis, database design, HTML, Java, database/web integration, Perl, C, C++, and knowledge of NT and Unix.

Web Developer/HTML Coder

Primary duties: Design and coding of pages, conversion of documents into HTML, training, end-user support.

Skills: HTML, strong interpersonal and communication skills, scripting languages, and knowledge of NT and Unix.

Network/Systems Administrator

Primary duties: Unix and NT system Administrator, network configuration.

Skills: Windows 95/NT, various versions of Unix, NT server administration, HTTP, TCP/IP, knowledge of different local area network and wide area network topologies; mail/directory services.

Project Manager

Primary duties: Management of staff and related tasks; customer liaison; facilitator.

Skills: Project management in Rapid Application Development (RAD), HTML, technical understanding of telecommunications, networks, databases, software development; web design and development software; excellent writing and communication skills.

Information Custodians

Primary duties: producing content for their organization's website.

Skills: In-depth knowledge of their organization, basic HTML.

Although the descriptions above are not comprehensive, anyone working with internet-related technologies knows that your position often requires you to have skills in a variety of areas — not just one specific skill.

The internet industry keeps evolving at such a rapid pace that your web team needs not only basic fundamental computer skills but must also be extremely talented at researching and have the ability to quickly review products to see if they are worth a company's investment.

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The Seven-Headed Webmaster

USAID's IDS team follows the "ideal" staffing model and is able to provide a robust number of services to the Agency and its partners. While each member of the unit has a distinct expertise, "knowledge sharing" enables everyone to continuously learn new skills and technologies. Thus, the seven members of the IDS unit are capable of producing a number of USAID's websites by combining their expertise. Without the "teamwork" approach that has been cultivated within IDS, the innovation behind producing pages that take advantage of many of the emerging internet technologies would probably result in a disjointed, haphazard task. So, next time you look at any of the Agency's websites, remember that it was a group effort that created the USAID virtual community.

IDS TEAM MEMBERS

Shelley Anderson, Project Manager
Laura Byers, Web Developer/HTML Coder
Victoria Cosby, Webmaster (intranet)
Dan Henry, System Administrator
Michael Inguillo, Webmaster
Rick Ruiz, Application Developer
Mary Ellen Schehl, Application Developer

url: www.usaid.gov/m/irm/cis/ids

Central Bank of Armenia, continued from page 4

ship in SWIFT indicates that the bank has met some standards for ethics and accountability, and is a part of a global network including other Western banks.

"The system offers confidence to potential investors that their transactions will be processed promptly and safely. Now that it is in place, individual transaction costs of payments and settlements are negligible. Future plans for the system include links to the tax authority, so tax and customs payments can be absorbed into the national treasury immediately, and possibly expanding the system to offer social security benefits as electronic transfer payments.

"The system is good and functions well. However, Armenians still depend on cash a lot more than their Western counterparts. Samuel Arakelian is talking about the security features of the electronic payment system. He is interrupted by the arrival of his secretary bearing an envelope which she hands him. It is the sixteenth of the month — payday at the Central Bank. The envelope, with no security features at all, contains his salary — in cash."

Designing a Website? How 'bout Some Tips!

Those of us who have worked on the Internet Data Services team have seen it all — from a simple page with only a blinking word to complicated database-driven sites utilizing the latest and greatest bells and whistles. For all you future page designers, here are some quick tips:

- Know your audience. Even if you have a brain that would put Einstein to shame, you may still have to explain everything in plain English to get your message across.
- Even though you think you are a digital Renoir, remember the benefits of peer reviews. Solicit and incorporate feedback into your site.
- You do not need to fit everything on one page. Sometimes blank space is good.
- The <BLINK> tag is not an innovation.
- If you are designing your own site, make sure to keep your expectations in check by setting tangible goals.
- Unless you really are a digital Renoir with the brain of an Einstein, leave your ego at the door. Everyone is a critic.
- Make sure your point of contact is on your page. You know that feeling you get when you go into a store and there is no one there to help you? That's how people feel when they go to a web page, have a question about that page, and can't find the name of someone to contact.
- Learn from other people's mistakes. Take note of what elements you don't like about other people's pages and make sure you are not doing them on your page. Chances are if you don't like it, someone else won't either.
- Don't abandon your pages! After you've gone through all the work of learning how to create a site and putting it up for everyone to see, don't just leave your pages to gather cyberdust. If you haven't updated your pages in six months, update them now! Six months is a really long time in web years.
- READ. The more you read about design and HTML, the better a page author you will be.

IRM@WORK!
CUSTOMER QUESTIONNAIRE

Due to a mechanical breakdown and paper shortage in the Print Shop, distribution within USAID/W of the February/March 1998 IRM@Work! in which this questionnaire originally appeared was delayed until mid-May 1998. Therefore, the deadline for this questionnaire has been extended until June 30, 1998.

This is your chance to "talk to" IRM.

We want to hear from you!

Please reply via e-mail to John Tucker@irm.od@aidw (or by fax (202)-216-3053 — Attention: John Tucker) by June 30, 1998. You may simply write the question number and your answer. The answers given are suggestions only. We welcome your comments, suggestions and criticisms.

1. How do you receive the newsletter?
[Paper Copy/Intranet]
 2. Do you read the IRM@Work! Newsletter when it comes out or randomly when you have time?
[Each issue/As time permits/Rarely/Not at all]
 3. Do you keep issues for reference?
[Yes/No]
 4. Do you share issues or articles with others?
[Always/Often/Seldom/Never]
 5. Do you find the articles and information in the newsletter to be relevant and interesting?
[Yes/Usually/Rarely]
 6. What articles interest you most?
*[Software information and instructions/Agency-specific IT news/Information about Web Sites, internets, intranets/
Contractor news and input/Private sector IT news and information/Other]*
 7. What information would you like to read in future editions?
[See question 6 for response alternatives]
 8. To what extent are your Information Technology (IT) needs being met by the Agency?
[Fully/Fairly well/So-so/Poorly]
 9. What areas would you like the Agency to strengthen? Please feel free to offer comments and suggestions:

<i>A. Software updates and improvements</i>	<i>D. Better Hardware</i>
<i>B. Training specifically?</i>	<i>E. Other (please explain)</i>
<i>C. Upgraded access to more efficient e-mail, internet access</i>	
 10. How often do you use e-mail?
[Very frequently/frequently/rarely/never]
 11. How often do you use internet for your work?
[Very frequently/frequently/Sometimes/Seldom/Never]
 12. What internet services or information would you like the Agency to strengthen? Please comment.
 13. Have you ever considered contributing an article for the newsletter? If so, what prevented you from doing so?
- From: A. Name (Optional!)
B. Post and/or Bureau
C. Job title/position (Optional!)

CYBERNUGGETS
By Steve Hawkins, G/PHN/OFPS

Beyond Mail Headers and Footers

Headers and footers can be particularly important for Internet communications (where footers are sometimes called signature blocks). Because of differences among formats and mail handlers, Internet communications may not pick up Subject lines or other information in the manner you wanted. The header or footer, on the other hand, is usually embedded directly into the message text and is, therefore, more likely to come over just the way you want it to.

To put in a header or footer that will appear on every message sent out:

1. Click on **File &** then click on **Configure** on drop-down menu.
2. Under **Options** window, click on **Header/Footer** (near the bottom of the first screen).
3. Type text desired to appear for either the header or footer window in the space provided [e.g., *John Doe, Chief of Party*].
4. Click on **Auto Header Footer Enabled**.
5. **Okay** your way back out to the main screen.
6. Each time you compose a message, the Header and/or Footer will be inserted in your message like magic.

*It's a little trickier to put in a header or footer on selected messages only by linking a **Drop Well Icon** to a **Rule** that inserts a text file, but much easier on people who get messages from you every day:*

1. Create an ASCII file of your signature block in WordPerfect. For example, *John Doe, Chief of Party*. Save as, for example, *c:\jdoe\sign*, and **Format in ASCII**. Remember the name. You'll need it in Step 3.
2. In **Beyond Mail**, click on **Rule** icon (yellow ruler with green pen), click on **New**.
3. In **Rule Editor** window: For **Rule Name**, type in name [e.g., *signature*]; For **When**, scroll to **Dropped** and click; For **Then**, type: *insert file "c:\jdoe\sign"*; (use the file name from Step 1. **BeyondMail** rules end in a semicolon). Close window and save.
4. Click on **File**; click on **Configure** to go to **Beyond Mail Configuration**; under **Options**, scroll down to and click on **Icon Bar**.
5. Click on **Configure** to get into **Configure Icon Bar** window.
6. In upper right-hand corner, select **Icon Bar Type** associated with **Composing A Message**.
7. Still in **Configure Icon Bar** window, under **Icon Well** (lower left-hand corner) scroll down until you find icon of **Ruler with Feet** (someone's idea of a footer). This icon is in bottom half of **Icon Well**. Click on **Ruler with Feet** icon and drag it to a blank space in **Icon Bar** contained within the **Icon Bar Screen**. Blank square is usually plain white and can contain a simple number inside. Drop **Ruler with Feet** icon inside this blank space.
8. Still in **Configure Icon Bar** window, under **Icon Settings**, specify that this Icon is to be a **Drop Well**, linked to the rule you created back in Step 3 (e.g., *Signature*). Enter text that you want to appear at bottom of Icon (e.g., *Footer*).
9. Click **Okay** out of **Icon Bar Configuration** window, then **Okay** out of **BeyondMail Configuration**. You should see **Ruler with Feet** Icon within your icon bar when composing a message.
10. Now, when finished creating a message in which you want to include the footer/header, drag message envelope (in upper left corner) and drop it into **Ruler with Feet** icon drop well. The footer will be inserted at the cursor location in you message. Click on **Send** to transmit message.

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

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