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TRIS - THE RECORDS INFORMATION SYSTEM

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BACKGROUND

TRIS (The Records Information System) was conceived in 1977 as a result of concern over the number of custom-made, computer-based records management systems throughout the Agency. Early efforts to establish TRIS were not successful, although two systems, which later became key elements of TRIS, were developed by the Office of Data Processing (ODP):

ARCINS, Archives and Records Center Inventory System developed in 1977, is a file folder-level inventory of all inactive records retired to the Agency Archives and Records Center.

RAMS, Records Center and Archives Management System developed in 1979, provides job-level control over accessioning, recalling, and disposing of Agency records retired to the Agency Archives and Records Center.

In late 1979, the Information Services Staff (a predecessor of the Office of Information Services) established a task force to define and formalize data element standards for developing automated registries. As a result, the design of automated registries began to be treated as a single application thus enabling ODP to develop the third key element of TRIS:

Interim CARS, Common Use Automated Registry System developed in 1981, is a standardized software package for automating basic office-level registry functions.

In August 1981, the Office of Information Services (OIS) proposed to ODP that OIS direct the design and development of TRIS. ODP, however, felt that the responsibility for managing complex automated systems should remain in ODP, and that OIS's role should be to develop customer requirements.

STAT In 1982, ODP's budget proposal for TRIS contractor support costing [redacted] was disapproved. As a result, emphasis was shifted from the broader aspects of TRIS to the development of CARS as Phase I. Subsequently, ODP's TRIS program manager and CARS project officer were reassigned due to other priorities and ODP's efforts came to a halt.

Recently, in a thorough program review, OIS found that TRIS parameters have been ill-defined, have fluctuated over time, and have not been central to records information control and retrieval. As a result, OIS has focused TRIS on those sub-systems (CARS, ARCINS, and RAMS) that are essential to records and information management activities and has reorganized one of its branches to assume management control over TRIS development.

SYSTEM DEFINITION

TRIS will be an on-line, computer-based records and information management system that will encompass and enhance the capabilities of Interim CARS, ARCINS, and RAMS. It will control records in all media from the time they are entered into the system until they are either destroyed or, when national security considerations permit, transferred to the National Archives and Records Service. It also will provide the mechanism by which electronic document transmission and electronic document receipting between office-level registries will be possible. TRIS will be an Agency-wide, but highly compartmented, system.

SUB-SYSTEM SCHEDULE

The following contains a brief description of the three sub-systems of TRIS and the proposed timing of their development. A chart setting forth the schedule for the development of all OIS systems is attached to this report.

CARS. At present, 12 offices use a version of Interim CARS: Executive Registry, IC Staff, National Intelligence Emergency Support Office, Office of Legislative Liaison, Office of the DDA, Office of the DDO, Office of Logistics, Office of Security, Office of Imagery Analysis, Office of Scientific and Weapons Research, Office of Research and Development, and Office of SIGINT Operations. Ten more registries probably will receive an Interim CARS Package in CY 1983.

Although Interim CARS satisfies most automated registry requirements, at least six additional features are needed:

a. Electronic exchange of common data elements between registries to eliminate redundant keying.

b. Additional keyword and indexing capabilities for better information retrieval.

c. Additional capabilities to provide for better document control, including a limited capability to locate documents retired to the AARC.

d. Additional data elements (1) to provide for a Reports Management Program, (2) to record records control schedule item numbers for "front end" records disposition, and (3) to interface with ARCINS.

CARS will be compartmented; each registry will have access only to the data it sends or receives. In addition, home registries will be able to suppress extremely sensitive document titles to restrict access to the related information.

Assuming adequate programming support, OIS will begin the CARS feasibility study in August 1983 following completion of the CARS system development plan. CARS testing will begin in August 1984 with selected registries.

ARCINS. ARCINS is an off-line system. Most ARCINS input data must be recorded on paper forms and forwarded to OIS for keying. To reduce time and effort, ARCINS will be modified to permit selected users to input information on records into the system on their own. Software changes will also be incorporated to provide greater flexibility in updating or changing data elements in the system. The ARCINS feasibility study will begin during the testing of CARS. Assuming no manpower or system complications, ARCINS testing will begin by August 1985. As with CARS, the data in ARCINS will be compartmented, with access on a need-to-know basis.

RAMS. RAMS will be enhanced to provide reference frequency statistics on records deposited in the Agency Archives and Records Center. This will help determine the most efficient retention period for temporary records. RAMS also will be enhanced to provide on-storage space availability. This capability will provide for the more efficient use of space at the AARC.

COST

OIS believes that at least 75% (and perhaps 100%) of TRIS can be developed in-house without direct contractor support. (The extent to which an adequate digital storage medium and a registry-to-registry electronic document transmission system can be developed in-house is not known at this time.) The cost to OIS for TRIS during the first three years will
STAT approximate [redacted] Of this amount, manpower costs for requirements definition, feasibility studies, documentation, testing, and training will
STAT approximate [redacted] equipment costs of approximately [redacted] will include at least four Delta Data terminals, one printer, and one optical character reader. When technically and economically feasible, the addition of an optical storage and retrieval system, of yet undetermined cost, will be considered. As with Interim CARS, each component registry using TRIS will pay for its own equipment.

Near the end of the first two-year period, the need for direct contractor support will be evaluated. It is expected, however, that OIS will be able to "piggyback" on contractor-supported development programs elsewhere in the Agency and to pace TRIS development with those programs. With no direct contractor support, total costs to OIS, not including the possible purchase of an optical disk storage and retrieval system, should be
STAT considerably less than [redacted] A chart listing the major TRIS costs is attached to this report.

MAKING USE OF EXISTING TRIS SUB-SYSTEMS

OIS is making additional use of existing TRIS sub-systems through programming and procedural modifications. One example is the recent development of procedures enabling the DDA Registry to key directly into ARCINS, thus eliminating one data recording step. Another example is a current study to determine if registries can satisfy TSCADS requirements by using printouts from Interim CARS.

The greatest use of an existing TRIS sub-system, however, is being achieved by providing Interim CARS to registries warranting automation. ODP and OIS are working together to accomplish this objective in an expeditious and efficient manner.

EXPLOITING COMMERCIALLY AVAILABLE SYSTEMS

Considerable time has been spent looking at commercially available records systems with little success. The Agency's unique missions and functions, the high volume of its records, legal constraints, compartmentation needs, and other security considerations so far have precluded economical modification of existing software packages for OIS requirements. Efforts, however, are continuing.

OTHER OIS SYSTEMS

OIS will develop or enhance three additional systems if adequate programming resources become available. One is a document security system that is not directly related to records or records management activities, the second is an Information and Privacy Division system, and the third is a system to support an expanded records management program. Each is described below.

TSCADS. TSCADS presently is an off-line, batch system for recording the most recent location of non-electrical Top Secret (TS) collateral documents. It is labor-intensive and far from adequate to its job.

TSCADS will be replaced by an on-line system providing (1) a real-time auditing capability; (2) auditing of selected types of CIA documents held by other Government agencies; (3) control of other types of sensitive material, e.g., Treaty Organization, Restricted Data; (4) an interface with CARS to reduce keying time by at least 50 percent; (5) an audit trail of each document; and (6) personal accountability. None of these capabilities is presently available.

Assuming adequate programming support, the new system AUDITS (Audited Document Inventory & Tracking System), will be developed and tested concurrently with CARS (August 1984).

DECAL. The present DECAL system is an automated index of documents of general interest released, either in declassified or sanitized form, under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), and the mandatory review for declassification provisions of Executive Order (EO) 12356 and its predecessor Executive orders. Information believed to be of interest to the general public is indexed and used to rapidly satisfy identical or similar requests. At this time we are capturing more than 50 percent of the information being released.

OIS plans to increase the amount of material indexed in DECAL over the next year by recording significant documents released to requesters in years prior to the initiation of the DECAL system. Once this material has been included, it might be possible to expand DECAL to incorporate other types of material released by other Agency components.

The expansion of the existing DECAL system might require some modest increase in programming support from within OIS during the next year. Development of an Agency-wide system would require additional programming resources, the amount depending on the type and the size of the system envisioned.

ARMS. OIS plans to develop an ADP Records Management System (ARMS) to support the Agency's growing production and use of automated information. The system, as it is envisioned now, will have two primary functions. The first is to record information about existing and proposed Agency ADP systems in order to (1) establish data element standards to reduce the amount of data recorded in incompatible formats, (2) establish "front end" disposition instructions for the information stored or produced by a system to reduce the cost of unnecessary retention, and (3) identify and reduce the amount of identical data stored in two or more systems to reduce capturing and storage costs. The second function is to record information about (1) proposed and existing Agency software programs to facilitate "off-the-shelf" applications, and (2) commercial state-of-the-art technology that might be applicable to present Agency systems.

If OIS obtains its requested programming support, work on ARMS can begin in 1985.

PROPOSED OIS SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE