

ODP-83-1008
11 July 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR: DDA Plans Officer

FROM:

Chief, Management Staff, ODP

STAT

SUBJECT: Phase IV Planning Action Items

Attached is the preliminary response to the Phase IV
Planning action items of ODP. As promised to
former DDA Plans Officer, the discussion of ODP performance in
response to customer requests will be delivered to you by
31 August. Please call me
if you have any questions.

STAT

STAT

STAT

ADMINISTRATIVE-INTERNAL USE ONLY

ENHANCE THE INTEROPERABILITY OF ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS:

This report should review all current and proposed administrative ADP systems and report on what degree of interoperability will be needed and suggest an appropriate strategy to attain this goal. The ultimate Directorate goal is to achieve maximum common use of data bases and systems.

ENHANCEMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS INTEROPERABILITY

More than a decade ago, the Support Information Processing System (SIPS) project was initiated with the very best intentions of developing a pool of data common to different elements of the Support Directorate. The pool was to be accessible from a number of different information processing systems (information handling systems? data base management systems? information management systems? management information systems? data retrieval systems? etc?) which were also to be developed under the SIPS charter. The SIPS project was the granddaddy of DDA (then DDS) efforts to "achieve maximum common use of data bases and systems."

The goals of the SIPS project were found to be too ambitious given the state of data processing technology of the time, and SIPS gave way to a more modest set of project developments loosely congregated under the heading of Management Application Projects (MAP). The system development efforts initiated under the MAP banner included GAS, FRS, CONIF, PERSIGN (the Office of Personnel was a DDA (DDM&S) component at the time), ICS and payroll along with a number of smaller projects. These systems, which are operational today, do have some specific instances of commonality of data (interoperability?). For example, GAS and CONIF are interdependent and pairings exist between GAS and FRS, GAS and payroll, and PERSIGN and payroll.

In some instances, data is passed from one system to another by creating a data set or file of data as one of the outputs of one system to be subsequently (and sequentially) used as input by another system. Such processing may continue to be appropriate, i.e., there will quite likely never be a justifiable need for all administrative data to be completely accessible from all administrative systems. But increasingly, as administrative systems are modified or are entirely rewritten, increasing kinds and varieties of data are made common between systems. For example, GAS has been modified to incorporate new linkage between GAS and CONIF, GAS and ICS, and GAS and PDMIS. The development of a new Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS) has been proposed and is being considered. IFMS will combine all of the currently operational Agency financial systems into one integrated system with a common data base which will also be accessible, as appropriate, from LIMS and ACIS.

LIMS is interesting in itself in a discussion of interoperability of administrative systems. LIMS can be viewed as a major effort to maximize the interoperability of logistics systems. The same can be said of IFMS for financial systems. Such efforts are not revolutionary, but rather are evolutionary outgrowths which are enabled by experience and accumulated knowledge and by improved data processing technology.

The evolution continues. Preference for evolutionary development of increased capability continues. Remembering the SIPS experience, such preference represents a good strategy for achieving a goal of maximum common use of data bases and systems.

IMPROVE THE CAPABILITY TO SUPPORT USER APPLICATIONS SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT: Recognizing the scarcity of funding and personnel, we explore ways to use imagination and creativity to improve our performance in this area. Current backlogs must be drastically reduced and more timely support must be given to customer requirements. Your report should explore methods to attain these goals, including the feasibility of contracting for software services which are currently being provided by ODP staff. Also, discuss the timeliness, quality, and responsiveness of your support in terms of on-going projects and new systems.

IMPROVE THE CAPABILITY TO SUPPORT USER APPLICATION SOFTWARE

It is no secret that there has been an industry-wide growth in the backlog of requirements for applications software development. Data processing technical literature has described the situation in numerous articles. The growth has overwhelmed the capabilities of programming staffs to respond in any sort of timely fashion. Meanwhile however, the new applications which have been developed have increased the size of the base of developed software and have generated additional requirements for software maintenance. So, even though programming shops have expanded in terms of numbers of programmers, the increases in personnel have been dwarfed by the accelerated increases in applications software development requirements. And any growth in numbers of programmers has been diminished by the drain of requirements for additional maintenance.

The Office of Data Processing has experienced the above described phenomena. Requests for applications development have piled up. Software maintenance requirements have increased. And even though modest increments of additional programmers have been obtained for specific projects like ACIS or CAMS, the added personnel are not nearly enough to cope with the ever increasing requirements backlog. One more point - as the ODP users become increasingly sophisticated in their use of data processing capabilities, the problems they pose for solution by automated systems call for increasingly complex systems design. System deliveries thus require more time to accomplish.

In order to "drastically reduce" current backlogs of requests for application software development, ODP will rely on two approaches. First, ODP will intensify efforts to help the users help themselves do their own small systems development. To that end, ODP has instituted an Information Center where users can obtain assistance on the use of a variety of personal computers and personal computer software packages, and where they can seek help in the use of user friendly software packages available from the central service (The about to be acquired NOMAD data base management system is an example of such a capability.). Second, ODP will increasingly rely on contractor resources (using either ODP or customer funding) for large systems development. ODP personnel will perform contract monitoring for this class of developmental efforts. Finally, after having divided software development efforts into categories of large and small, a segment will then be carved out of the middle and designated as medium-sized projects. This segment will be the focus of ODP staff development activities.

Of course the universe of software development cannot be neatly and cleanly and rigidly divided into three parts. But with careful planning and good judgment, the differences in the kinds of resources available for system development, as implied in such compartmentation, can be distributed in such a way so as to maximize our use of resources and bring the most power to bear on

the current backlog. This strategy will be formalized in the ODP Strategic Plan.

IMPLEMENT CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN WORD PROCESSING AND VM:

This report should include an implementation schedule for an interface between word processing and VM and also for the introduction of a single multi-purpose terminal. It should also give a status of the program to use the Wang as the Agency's standard word processor.

IMPLEMENT CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN WORD PROCESSING AND VM

The effort undertaken by System Programming Division to convert Wang Word Processing System (WPS) documents to VM Script files has been completed. The capability to convert VM Script files to Wang WPS files will be available in August, 1983. The VM-to-Wang conversion capability will initially only support the conversion of the Script commands which are supported by the opposite conversion, i.e., the Wang-to-VM conversion. Capability to convert additional Script commands will be added in subsequent updates to the software. Additionally, a limited capability to send a Wang file to an AIM user is under development and is scheduled for implementation by 15 September 1983. The VM-to-Wang and Wang-to-VM conversion capabilities will permit the transferring of files between, for example, a Wang WPS and ETECS. So even though Wang/VM capability will be very primitive when compared against the variety of capabilities offered by a true VM terminal, it will provide a useful service.

Meanwhile, even though the growth of the Wang inventory in the Agency continues apace, the Agency's standard word processor (Wang) will never be universally used throughout the Agency. There are still some 280 NBI and 260 Lanier word processors along with a small number of miscellaneous other word processors in the Agency. Some of these devices will be exchanged for Wang devices in the future. But the exchange is normally considered to be of lower priority than is the installation of new Wang equipment. The pending requirements for new Wang installations make it certain that even the non-Wang devices which will eventually be exchanged will be retained for quite some time.

Aside from the word processing capability provided by pure word processing equipment, other means of delivering word processing support are being investigated. For example, the Operations Directorate is looking closely at the host-based word processing capability offered via the Delta Data terminal. Additionally, a number of personal computers or professional computers have been installed in the Agency. It is reasonable to assume that in some cases, their word processing capabilities will be explored.

Despite the fact that the Agency does not have and probably will never have a perfectly homogenous word processing world of only Wang word processors, Wang has become the Agency standard word processor. That did not happen by fiat. The volumes of Wang word processing equipment entering this agency (see tables 1 & 2 attached) have made it a reality.

Page Denied

Next 1 Page(s) In Document Denied