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PALS User Group Newsletters

M. Louis Salmon Library

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PALS Users' Group Newsletter 1990

University of Alabama in Huntsville

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PALS

USERS' GROUP

NEWSLETTER

PALS USERS' GROUP MEETING SUMMARY

PALS Users' Group meetings were held during both summer and mid-winter ALA conferences. At the annual summer meeting, held June 23, it was agreed that the Users' Group newsletter would be funded by annual subscription fees of \$20 per subscribing library and would be produced quarterly through the University of Alabama in Huntsville Library. Ways to strengthen the voice of the Users Group in the Request for Change process were discussed, with further discussion scheduled for the Mid-winter meeting. It was also agreed that the officers should be expanded to include a Secretary and a Treasurer in addition to the Chair and Chair-elect. Dale Carrison of MSUS/PALS discussed the possibility of linking adjacent PALS sites through networking and gave an update on development activities at MSUS/PALS. Marcy Dudakoff, Jim Turner, Michel Ridgeway, and Jimmy Thomas of UNISYS presented program development highlights, including the RFC process, the authority control module, and the Universal MARC editor.

The mid-winter meeting, held January 5, 1990, included election of Frank Slater, Director, ODIN, North Dakota Library Information System, as Chair-Elect for 1990. Dale Carrison discussed negotiations with Wilson for the inclusion of Wilson indexes in PALS. John Stromquist presented an overview of MPALS. A packet of RFCs received from UNISYS was distributed and the Users' Group was asked to review those requests and prioritize them for submission at

the summer ALA meeting. Two motions regarding user concerns were passed unanimously. The text of those motions is shown below. It was agreed that comments concerning the RFCs should be sent to Del Williams of the University of Alabama in Huntsville for inclusion in the newsletter. Pamela Cravey of Georgia State University volunteered to serve as a clearinghouse for RFCs relating to the circulation module. During the evening meeting, UNISYS representatives Gary Fry, Michel Ridgeway, Jesus Rodriguez, and Jerry Rovlin presented an overview of UNISYS development plans, customer support procedures, and the OFC/RFC status.

Motions passed at January 5, 1990, meeting

I. The PALS Users' Group moves:

- A. That the PALS Support Group create two distinct mechanisms for processing user concerns:
 1. Maintenance procedures to deal with the failure of a delivered product to live up to vendor claims or to contractual obligations, and
 2. Product development procedures to deal with the development of new sub-systems or enhancements to existing sub-systems.
- B. Further, that the PALS Users' Group be charged with reviewing unresolved user complaints/concerns and for recommending whether they fall into 1 or 2 above.

(cont'd on page 4)

FROM THE CHAIR

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those of you who attended the PALS Users' Group meeting on January 5, 1990. It was a pleasure to meet with you. At the same time, I would like to extend an invitation to all members to attend the annual meeting of the PALS Users' Group on June 22, 1990, during the American Library Association conference in Chicago.

The Users' Group will meet on Friday afternoon, 2:00 - 4:30 p.m., and again in the evening from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. for UNISYS presentations. During the afternoon meeting I would like to devote approximately half an hour to discussing various business matters. The remainder of the session will cover RFC procedural issues and the setting of development priorities. If you have any concerns or suggestions for topics to be addressed during the meeting please contact me by telephone at (914) 654-5343, or FAX at (914) 654-5554, or drop me a note at the Gill Library, College of New Rochelle, New York, NY 10805. I would appreciate all of your input so that the meeting can be as productive as possible.

In addition to the above meetings, I would like to extend the scope of the PALS Users' Group through break-out sessions scheduled for Saturday, June 23, 1990, from 9:00 till noon. Two sessions will be scheduled. One session, moderated by Dr. Pat Libutti of Fordham University, will address the user's perspective of the online catalog. Topics will include the exchange of materials for bibliographic instruction as well as helpful hints for successful search strategies. The second session, moderated by Dr. Pam Cravey, Georgia State University, will focus on the circulation system and innovative uses that expand its functionality. The basic premise of these sessions is to provide an informal forum for the exchange of ideas and information. Please feel free to bring any hand-outs, point-of-use materials,

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA CELEBRATES PALS INSTALLATION

A gala celebration sponsored by the University of North Dakota and UNISYS marked the successful implementation of the University's new statewide automated library management system, which uses PALS.

The North Dakota network allows seven of the state's academic libraries, the Grand Forks Public Library and the North Dakota State Library to make their combined 1.7 million volume collection available to any library patron. Establishment of the statewide system was made possible primarily through University of North Dakota's Chester Fritz Endowment Fund.

According to Larry Isaak, Assistant Commissioner of Administration for the North Dakota Board of Higher Education and Director, Higher Education Computer Network, "This network will have far-reaching implications for a rural state like North Dakota. The system will ultimately impact libraries at all levels, giving all citizenry access to knowledge and information like never before."

Planned expansion will enable to system to include the records of all major public, private academic, state agency, tribal and other libraries in
(cont'd on page 4)

training manuals or other PALS related documents to share with other librarians during the break-out sessions.

I will forward a final agenda to all of you sometime in early June which will include the locations of the Friday and Saturday sessions.

Thank you for your past participation in the PALS Users' Group. I am looking forward to your future support in its growth and development.

Lynn Karen, Chair

PALS CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

UNISYS PALS conducted customer satisfaction surveys at ten user sites during 1989 in an attempt to accurately document problems and opinions regarding the PALS system and support services. A summary of the results was presented at the mid-winter PALS Users' Group meeting by Jesus Rodriguez, Support Manager.

Survey results indicated high customer satisfaction with the functionality and ease of use of the system. One hundred percent of respondents were satisfied with the functionality, while 70% reported satisfaction with ease of use and the term searching capability. Forty percent were satisfied with overall performance. Regarding UNISYS support, 40% were satisfied with customer and technical support, but only 30% felt satisfied with UNISYS' dedication and commitment to PALS.

Documentation was the item receiving most complaints, with 70% of respondents reporting dissatisfaction. Communication and customer support were next, with 60% dissatisfied. Other points of dissatisfaction included ease of use (50%), training (40%), and problem resolution (30%).

UNISYS plans to address the problems identified through the survey with its 1990 customer support improvement plan. Documentation will be improved by developing new manuals for PALS 89.02 and correcting wrong references in current documentation. Other points being addressed through the plan include improved communication through new product release announcements, reviews of RFCs and notification of problem fixes, better customer service call-back response, and an aggressive training development program.

The surveys consisted of questionnaires, completed by library personnel at each site, and follow-up on-site visits and interviews with library and data processing personnel.

Sites surveyed included Creighton University, Fairfield County Central Library Consortium, Georgia State University, Loras College, North Orange County Community College District, South Dakota Library Network, University of Alabama in Huntsville, University of North Dakota, Weber State College, and Westchester County.

MINNESOTA REGIONAL PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM JOINS PALS

The twelve locations of the Traverse des Sioux Library System will go online with the PALS OPAC and circulation system by fall of this year. The Minnesota regional public library system will use over 80 terminals and work stations and will feature a PALS-to-PALS telecommunications connection between Traverse des Sioux and MSUS/PALS.

The regional system will be the first public library in Minnesota to join PALS. The twelve member libraries have over 225,000 volumes and serve a population of 230,00 in nine rural counties in south central Minnesota.

The new telecommunications interface will allow Traverse des Sioux member libraries to access 60 other libraries in Minnesota and North and South Dakota which use the PALS system. The interface will be implemented during the summer of 1990.

AUSTRALIA FORMS PALS GROUP

The four PALS sites in Australia -- University of Queensland, University of Wollongong, Monash University and Brisbane City Library Service -- have formed a Special Interest Group under the auspices of the Australian UNISYS Users Group, United UNISYS Users (U Cubed). Sue McKnight, Principal Librarian, Systems Implementation at University of Queensland, is convenor of the new PALS group.

PALS USERS' GROUP NEWSLETTER
BACK IN ACTION

This is the first issue of the PALS Users' Group Newsletter after a lengthy hiatus. Now that the newsletter is back in production, we hope to establish a regular quarterly publication schedule with issues appearing in March, June, September, and December.

The newsletter should reflect the needs and interests of the Users' group. Therefore, it needs your input. Please send us your news items, address changes, questions, problems, and solutions so they can be shared with others. We also need your comments and suggestions. The deadline for inclusion in each issue is one month before publication:

May 1 for the June issue
August 1 for the September issue
November 1 for the December issue
February 1 for the March issue

Please send your news or comments to Lynn Karen, Gill Library, College of New Rochelle, New York, NY 10805 (Phone 914-654-5343 or FAX 914-654-5554) or to Susan Herring, Library, University of Alabama in Huntsville, Huntsville, AL 35899 (Phone 205-895-6432 or FAX 205-895-6403).

Library
University of Alabama in Huntsville
Huntsville, AL 35899

USERS' GROUP MEETING cont'd

C. Further, that all maintenance issues be given immediate and continual attention until they are resolved and the results be communicated back to the originators.

D. Further, the Users' Group strongly urges UNISYS to put adequate resources in support of the categories above in a timely manner.

II. The PALS Users' Group moves that UNISYS establish a procedure for all open problems and change requests to be distributed to all PALS customers on a scheduled (preferably monthly) basis, and report closure for those requests that are completed and report the status of those remaining open.

NORTH DAKOTA SYSTEM cont'd

North Dakota and to extend access to this vast collection to small libraries throughout the state.

"The demographics of our state are changing very rapidly," explained Frank Slater, Assistant to the Director, Chester-Fritz Library, University of North Dakota and Director, North Dakota Library Automation Project, "and PALS will allow us to meet the growing demand on libraries within our cities without compromising the level of service experienced by our library patrons in rural communities."