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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  
JUNE 22-23, 1990

The annual meeting of the PALS Users' Group began at 2:10 p.m. on Friday, June 22, 1990. The agenda was reviewed and all attendees were introduced. John Stromquist updated the group on the status of MPALS and Cliff Cox presented a detailed status report on the Chicago Board of Education Project Inform, an MPALS-based system.

Discussion then centered on a revision of the PALS Information Sheet, which includes a schedule change in the Users' Group meeting. The biannual meetings will take place on Friday evening and the UNISYS meeting and reception will be held on Sunday rather than Monday. The group agreed to meet on Saturday from 9 to 10 to establish formal advisory groups. The chairs of these groups will become members of the Executive Board of the Users' Group.

The group broke into three smaller groups to prioritize the RFCs. These groups were OPAC, LAW, CIRC, ILL, SERIALS, ACQ, OPERATIONS, and GOVERNMENT DOCS. Due to lack of time, these committees agreed to meet again on Saturday from 9-10 to complete the task.

Dale Carrison then presented an overview of the current PALS development activities at MSUS. Dale also addressed the use of EDI and announced an agreement with the Faxon Company regarding integrating EDI into PALS.

Friday evening at 7:30, the UNISYS presentation to the Users' Group began.

Jim Turner reviewed the move of the PALS Customer Support group to Atlanta. Marcy Dudakoff discussed the UNISYS commitment to PALS as an important product. Jesus Rodriguez then discussed the activities of the PALS Customer Support Group and distributed a draft copy of the PALS Directory. Donna Gurdak reviewed the system enhancements contained in release 90.01, which is due for release in December 1990. Questions and answers followed and the meeting adjourned at 10:15.

The PALS Users' Group met again on Saturday, June 23, from 9 until 12 noon. From 9 to 10, the sub-committee prioritized the Highly Desirable RFCs so that UNISYS can plan budgetary allocations for 1991, and the advisory group committee met and established eight advisory groups and chairs. These groups will consider all RFCs related to their modules as well as issues related to training and implementation.

The entire group met together from 10 to 12. During the first hour, Dr. Pam Cravey led a discussion on the circulation system which focused on solving problems related to training and implementation. From 11 to 12, Dr. Pat Libutti presented a session on instruction methodology related to users' perceptions. Pat discussed the basic assumptions regarding the user/training interface and related these principles to the design of instructional materials for PALS.

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#### FROM THE CHAIR

I would like to thank those of you who attended the PALS sessions during the annual ALA meeting in Chicago. Attendees included members from Alabama, Australia, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Manitoba, Minnesota, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, and Tennessee. The meetings were well attended and highly participatory.

I am especially appreciative of the time and energy devoted to the PALS sessions in view of the hectic pace that ALA extracts from all of us. During the sessions, I had several conversations with members regarding alternative suggestions for future PALS meetings. These suggestions included a PALS retreat, an annual meeting held at a PALS site rather than at ALA, and rescheduling the PALS Users' Group meeting to occur after ALA rather than prior to the convention. I would greatly appreciate your thoughts and comments regarding these suggestions.

The PALS Users' Group voted to adopt Advisory Committees whose responsibilities will be to review and prioritize the RFCs as well as to address concerns related to the implementation and use of their individual modules. The chairs of these committees will become members of the PALS Executive Board and participate in the planning and scheduling of all the PALS meetings. A list of all the committees and the addresses of the chairpersons is given below. If you are interested in participating in person, by phone, or by mail, please contact the respective committee chairperson. Your input is vital so that the committees can be as productive as possible and be responsive to the needs of the entire Users' Group.

--Lynne Karen  
Chair

#### PALS USERS' GROUP ADVISORY COMMITTEES

##### Circulation

Jo Reigel  
Director  
Wagnalls Memorial Library  
150 East Columbus Street  
Lithopolis, OH 43136  
(614) 837-4765

##### Database (includes OPAC and Technical Services)

Pat Libutti  
Education Bibliographer  
Fordham University  
113 West 50th Street  
New York, NY 10023  
(212) 841-5130

W. Bruce Fulton  
Mercy College Library  
555 Broadway  
Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522  
(914) 693-4500, ext. 263

##### Serials

Cindy Davies  
System/Technical Service  
South Dakota School of Mines and  
Technology  
Deveraux Library  
501 East St. Joseph Street  
Rapid City, SD 57701  
(605) 394-1259

##### Government Docs

Patty Anderson  
South Dakota School of Mines  
and Technology  
Deveraux Library  
501 East St. Joseph Street  
Rapid City, SD 57701  
(605) 394-1255  
(605) 394-1256 FAX

##### Acquisition and ILL

Becky Bell  
Network Librarian  
South Dakota State Library  
800 Governors Drive  
Pierre, SD 57501  
(605) 773-3131

##### Law

Lynne Karen  
Gill Library  
College of New Rochelle  
New Rochelle, NY 10805  
(914) 654-5343

##### Operations

Pat Nichols  
Elizabeth Dafoe Library  
University of Manitoba  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R3J 2N1 Canada  
(204) 474-9881

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# USERS' GROUP PRIORITIZES RFCS

The PALS Users' Group met on Friday evening, June 22, and Saturday morning, June 23, to review and prioritize the RFCs submitted by UNISYS.

It was agreed that the RFC packets should include the UCF form complete with a detailed explanation of the proposed change, date, and issuing institution. It was also agreed that the RFCs would be sent to the chair of the Users' Group for distribution to the various advisory committees. These committees would then review and prioritize their respective RFCs and present them for discussion at the semi-annual meetings of the entire Users' Group.

Dale Carrison reviewed the present status of the RFCs numbers 25-94 and categorized them as NP (not possible), OP (operational), PL (planned), NKP (no known problem), NCP (no change planned), and UP (UNISYS PALS problem). Based on these categories, the Users' Group discussed those RFCs in development and prioritized them.

The Users' Group requested that #76, 011456, Automatic Dropping of Item Prices, be installed as soon as possible in 90.01, rather than wait for a later release.

The following is a list of other prioritized RFCs in order of significance:

#1	80	011460	User defined statistical year & YYQ/YYS
	69	011427	Statistics on a fiscal year basis
#2	93	16319660	Fines not charged for days library closed
	36	011376	Incorrect calculation of fines
#3	62	011420	Dup copy numbers for same item/different library
#4	94	16319741	Holds must have option to be site specific
#5	48	011388	Validate password before filling in workform
#6	64	011422	Separate bill (price/processing fee/fine)
#7	63	011421	UME transfer report lacking info

#8	92	16319635	Change "barcode conversion mode" function to allow for easier use in libraries that use Dewey call numbers and have multiple records with the same call number
#9	86	011466	Enhance MSR to copy data to workform
#10	46	011386	Change status to INP auto after printing
#11	85	011465	Load serial record default values
#12	45	011385	Lending/borrowing library address available online
	43	011383	Link ILL borrowing/lending symbol
#13	42	011382	Include each library's ILL policy
#14	44	011384	Create address field for borrowing/lending library
#15	41	011381	Constant default for due date
#16	38	011378	Clear lending library from lending string
#17	90	16319601	Change PC SYNC software to eliminate prompt "Is mainframe down or offline?"
#18	91	16319619	Change documentation to reflect: 1) change in "Recall Screen" function key from F9 to F10; 2) Add "work-arounds" to "Barcode Conversion Mode" section when "BBRCA" results in multiple records with the same call number.



#### PALS USERS' GROUP RETREAT

The PALS Users' Group (PUG) meetings at Chicago were uniformly entertaining. The Saturday morning session regarding the formation of the various advisory groups, along with the excellent sessions by Pam Cravey on circulation problems and Patricia Libutti on bibliographic instruction, were very well received. But unfortunately, all the PUG sessions, both Friday and Saturday, were cut short.

We could easily have spent the whole day Saturday just talking about either circulation problems or comparative practices in user instruction. As it was, there was more to talk about than there was time. I don't know about other PUG members, but I could have saved myself the cost of ALA registration. I only managed to attend two ALA meetings, and I arrived late at those and had to leave early in order to try to get to PALS-related meetings.

In the beginning, as I understand it, the Users' Group was only three or four interested people meeting informally over coffee and sharing common interests. However, as time has passed and the PALS customer base has grown, so too has our need for more time to deal with our problems.

I know I'm not the only one who felt frustrated over the rushed pace of this last meeting. The need to deal with a large number of RFCs, the uncertainty caused by the Atlanta move, the desire to spend more time comparing notes with other PALS users, while at the same time dealing with the frenetic pace of ALA and the insanities of Chicago traffic resulted in frayed nerves and a feeling of vague disappointment.

I managed to snatch a few seconds of time to discuss this problem with Lynne Karen and some of the other attendees at the PUG meetings and got almost universal agreement that things have simply gotten out of hand. We are trying to do too much in too little time. The realization of this problem has resulted in a suggestion that I would like to offer to the membership for discussion.

What if we were to have a *special PALS retreat over a weekend*, during which

all the PUG members could meet in one place for an extended period of time without having to spend half our time searching for a taxi or waiting for a bus? With this retreat being held over a weekend, we could benefit from cheap air fares and, if we met in a generally central location off the major tourist routes, hopefully cheap room rentals.

During this retreat we could compare problems, identify areas where PALS could be improved, work on RFCs, and have time for programs like Pam Cravey's. It would be very nice if Patricia Libutti could present a program on bibliographic instruction techniques with PALS and devote two or even three hours to it without feeling rushed because of scheduling conflicts imposed by non-PALS interests. I'm sure there are other PALS members who, if offered the opportunity, could lead discussions on a wide variety of topics.

The PALS customer base is growing by leaps and bounds and I, for one, don't foresee it shrinking anytime soon. The decision to form specialized advisory groups points to the growing complexity of both the PALS product and the PALS Users' Group. If the PALS Users' Group intends to be effective, it will be necessary for us to devote more time to it than we currently do.

Let us hear from you. If you have an opinion on this, let me know or send your ideas to Lynne Karen. I will compile your responses and issue a follow-up in the next newsletter. If you would like to participate in a PALS Users' Group Retreat, or if you would prefer that we drop the whole thing and leave well enough alone, or if you have another alternative, drop us a line. Communication is what it's all about.

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Murfreesboro, TN 37132  
(615) 898-2572  
FAX (615) 898-5551  
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MTSU-PALS dial access: (615)898-5660  
Mail Password: +PALS  
Send mail to DAVID ROBINSON at LIB



#### NEWS FROM UNISYS

We have appreciated your patience and understanding as we complete our relocation to Atlanta. The good news is that we are already enjoying some of the advantages of working in the Atlanta Development Center.

Although we must apologize for any inconvenience you may have experienced with the 800 hotline support, I am happy to announce the implementation of more efficient call handling procedures. These procedures are detailed in the following article in this issue of the newsletter and have already been communicated to users via the Compuserve PALS bulletin board.

You should note an improved response time, thanks to the streamlined call routing procedure and the special features of the ASPEN voice mail system. I particularly like ASPEN's ability to notify me of waiting messages as soon as I

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#### UNISYS PALS HOTLINE RELOCATED

The Unisys PALS Hotline is now operated from the new Atlanta Development Center. It is equipped with two lines and is staffed from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern time by a Customer Service Representative.

To reach Unisys PALS Customer Support on the Hotline, users should follow the procedure shown below:

1. Call (800) 328-0440.
2. AT&T message: "To complete your call, please press or dial 1 now."
3. Press or dial 1.
4. Unisys message: "Thank you for calling the Unisys Customer Support Center. Please enter your 3-digit system code, followed by your service selection. For hardware service, follow your system code with 1; for software service, follow your system code with 2."
5. Enter 5202 to reach Unisys PALS Customer Support.

Users who have questions or need additional information about using the Hotline service should call James Thomas, Library Support Manager, at the Hotline number or at (404) 368-6410.

complete a call. You may find the ability to leave lengthy messages at any hour of the day a valuable supplement to our standard 8-to-5 support service.

The Atlanta Development Center is also well equipped to support both training classes for staff and system demonstrations for customers.

On July 24 we held a staff training session on the new PALS Authority Control and MARC Editor software. As you can appreciate, high-quality training in efficient facilities will be important for bringing the new PALS programming staff up to speed as quickly as possible.

On July 25 we held the second Authorities Peer Review Session with librarians from Traverse de Sioux Public Library, MSUS, University of North Dakota, Black Hills State University, Mankato State University, Georgia State University, and Minnesota Historical Society. The demo facility was a pleasure to use and provided an effective setting for exchanging information with our users and gathering valuable comments on our newest software products.

The Atlanta Development Center facilities will help us to serve you better. But most importantly, the Center allows us to consolidate our development and support teams and become a more efficient group, with improved communications among ourselves and with our users.

-- Jimmy Thomas  
Library Support

#### PLAN NOW FOR MIDWINTER MEETING

The Midwinter PALS Users' Group meeting in conjunction with the ALA conference is scheduled for Friday, January 11, 1991, from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. The Unisys PALS meeting will be held on Sunday, January 13, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. with a reception following from 6:00 to 8:00. Locations will be announced at a later date. Make plans now to attend these meetings.



SPECIAL NOTE TO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The Central Library Consortium of Ohio is interested in sharing experiences with other public libraries using PALS. Public libraries are encouraged to contact the Consortium by writing or calling:

Steve White  
System Manager  
Fairfield County District Library  
219 North Broad Street  
Lancaster, OH 43130  
(614) 653-2448 (8:30-5:00, M-F)

PALS IMPLEMENTATION QUESTIONNAIRE  
PLANNED

The co-chairs of the Advisory Group on the Online Catalog, Pat Libutti of Fordham University and Bruce Fulton of Mercy College, are preparing a questionnaire which will examine the implementation of the PALS system as seen by reference librarians, bibliographic instruction librarians, catalogers, acquisitions librarians, technical services heads and systems librarians. The questionnaire will be distributed at the PALS Users' Group meetings at ALA in January, 1991, and results of the survey will be published in the spring 1991 PALS Users' Group Newsletter.

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