PALS Users' Group Newsletter 1990

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PALS USERS' GROUP MEETINGS
AT MID-WINTER ALA CONFERENCE

PALS USERS' GROUP MEETING
Friday, January 11, 1991
6:30 - 9:00 p.m.
AGENDA

6:30  Introduction
6:45-7:00  Update on MPALS development
          John Stromquist
7:00-7:30  Review of MSUS/PALS
              development, activities and
              services
          Dale Garrison
7:30-8:00  Discussion of Unisys product
              issues. Concerns related to
              pricing, maintenance and
              support. Questions and
              answers with Unisys
              representatives.
8:00-8:30  Review of current procedures
              in prioritizing the NFS
              process. Report on the NFSs
              reviewed during the July-
              December 1990 period.
8:30-8:45  Election of new Chair-Elect
          and Secretary
8:45-9:00  New business

The exact location of the meeting will be forwarded to you by Unisys along with the agenda for the Unisys meeting, 4-6 p.m., and reception, 6-8 p.m., Sunday, January 13, 1991. Please send any suggestions for additional items to Lynne Karen, Gill Library, College of New Rochelle, New Rochelle, NY 10805. Telephone (914) 654-5343, FAX (914) 654-5884.

BREAK-OUT SESSIONS
Saturday, January 12, 1991
9:00-12:00 noon
Unisys Office
324 S. Michigan Ave., First Floor

9:00-10:30 Bibliographic Instruction
          Clinic at Mid-Winter.
          Dr. Pat Libutti, Fordham
          University, will present an
          overview of the existing PALS
          instructional materials.
          Highlighted will be a video-
          tape presentation for PALS
          users featuring an intro-
          duction to the OPAC and to
          the ERIC database. Please
          bring your concerns, questions,
          and any instructional materials
          that you would like to
          contribute to this session.

10:30-11:00 Break

11:00-12:00 PALS Serials Module.
            Barbara Moore, Automation
            Librarian, PALS Customer
            Support. A review of the
            Serials Sub-System and its
            integration into PALS will be
            presented. Included will be a
            discussion of planning
            activities for implementation
            of the serials software and an
            in-depth look at the various
            features of the sub-system.
FROM THE CHAIR

Thomas Fuller best stated what is presently on my mind when he wrote, "Winter draws out what summer laid in." As I approach the Mid-Winter meeting, two issues have emerged from the June meeting that deserve attention. The first is the concern that the hectic pace of the ALA meetings often results in the absence of PALS users at the Users' Group meetings. Several people have suggested an alternative approach that would offer a PALS retreat in addition to or possibly replacing the forum of ALA. Dale Carrison has offered his assistance in planning and organizing a PALS Users' Group meeting in Mankato, utilizing the MSUS/PALS facilities. I would welcome your concerns and suggestions regarding this issue. Please feel free to contact me at (914) 654-5343 or bring these concerns to the floor at the Mid-Winter meeting.

The second issue on my mind concerns the need for cooperative communications with Unisys. Several PALS users have raised concerns over increased pricing for support and maintenance. Others have questioned the current financial status of Unisys. In order to facilitate an exchange of information I have asked both Gary Fry from Blue Bell and Tom Niezgoda from Atlanta to attend the Friday evening session of the PALS Users' Group meeting. I am hopeful that their attendance will initiate a dialog between the Users' Group and Unisys as well as lay a foundation for effective communications that will ensure the quality of the PALS product. If you are unable to attend the Friday session, please forward your questions with a colleague or send them to me for inclusion at the meeting.

I would like to thank all of you for your support and participation in the PALS Users' Group. I especially appreciate your enthusiasm and cooperation during this period of growth. Please accept my best wishes for a happy holiday season and a healthy and prosperous New Year.

Lynne Karen
Chair

NEWS FROM UNIPYS

Field testing of PALS 90.01 release is well underway. Shippensburg University in Pennsylvania began testing in early November. Additional test sites include the University of North Dakota and Chicago Board of Education. Our target date for your receipt continues to be late December. Check with your account representative to make sure you have a current SSP (Software Support Plan) contract which entitles your library to the 90.01 release.

Plans are continuing for the 1991 Mid-Winter ALA Conference. Please watch your mail for details of locations for the various Unisys PALS meetings. As soon as confirmation is received, you will be notified. If you have added new sites or members since the last conference who need to be on the mailing list, please forward them to Lynne Karen.

If any site desires a meeting with PALS management while in Chicago, please send your request to Gary Fry, Unisys Corp., P.O. Box 500 B140, Blue Bell, PA 19424.

See you in the Windy City!

Donna Gurdak Suder
Unisys

PROJECT INFORM SITE TOUR
PLANNED DURING MID-WINTER MEETING

The Chicago Public Schools will host a tour to show its library information system, Project INFORM, during the ALA Mid-Winter meeting. The tour will visit Curie Metro High School, a Project INFORM pilot site, on Monday, January 14, from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. Bus transportation will be provided. The tour is open to any conference participant. Please sign up at the Project INFORM display at the Unisys PALS booth (4013-4017) in the Exhibit Hall. For more information, contact the Bureau of Libraries, Chicago Public Schools, at (312) 535-8890.
The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) Library has been a PALS customer since 1987. The UAH Library serves a campus population of approximately 7,000 students and 3,000 faculty and staff, as well as members of the surrounding high-tech business community, high school students, and students and faculty from other colleges and universities in north Alabama.

UAH began its trial run with PALS in March of 1987. In July of that year, the full database was online and, even though half the records had not been run through authority control, UAH was in full test mode. Library staff members found themselves spending more and more time giving demonstrations of PALS as students and faculty discovered this new library feature.

In September, 1987, the first OCLC update tape was loaded with no problems. By December, the decision was made to no longer maintain the public card catalog. PALS was officially the catalog.

After a week-long, library-wide "bar-coding party," the PALS Circulation Module was installed in January, 1988. A specially-ordered program was run which "automatically" created item records from the "smart" bar-codes in the bibliographic records. This program initially created more than 90,000 item records. Later it was run again to pick up an additional 90,000 records. There were errors, but these were negligible compared to the herculean task of creating the records manually. Like most libraries, UAH has always been short on personnel.

Preparation for circulation continued through 1988. In June, Unisys provided training for library staff on the Circulation Module. In August, the first student records were loaded from the student database and in September the first faculty/staff records were loaded. Finally, on November 14, 1988, UAH went live on the PALS Circulation Module.

The system has been upgraded three times: in October 1988, May 1989, and again in December 1989. UAH is currently running PALS 89R1.

In February 1990, the UAH Medical Library was put up as a separate branch, able to be a unique entity within the system. The online catalog is shared by the main and medical libraries, but the circulation systems are unique to each site.

By March of 1990, over 3 million transactions had been processed through the UAH PALS system. At that point, over 9,000 patrons were entered in the circulation system. Some recent statistics for the UAH PALS system include:

- Terms: 7,116,262
- Unique Call #s: 225,270
- Unique Keys: 1,711,795
- Bib Records: 230,819
- Item Records: 234,629

UAH PALS is an open system, and can be accessed by calling (205) 895-6792. When prompted, type your name, CONNECT UAH1100, and $$OPEN LIBRARY. When logging off, type $$SOFF, then LOGOUT.

Jean Greenwood
Systems Programmer
Unisys will host a meeting and reception for PALS users on Sunday, January 13, 1991, at the Mid-Winter ALA Conference. The location for the meeting and reception will be announced, along with the location of the PALS Users' Group meeting, in a mailing to be sent out by Unisys in mid-December.

The meeting will begin at 4:00 p.m. and last until 6:00 p.m., immediately followed by the reception from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. All PALS users are encouraged to attend the meeting and reception.

Gary Fry, Program Manager from Blue Bell, will act as host at the Unisys meeting. Scheduled speakers include Jesus Rodriguez, Product Manager, Atlanta; Michel Ridgeway, Program Support Manager, Blue Bell; and Jimmy Thomas, Customer Support Manager, Atlanta.

Unisys will also be exhibiting during ALA at booths 4013, 4015, and 4017. Exhibits will be open from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Saturday, Sunday and Monday, and 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday.

WATCH YOUR MAIL FOR PALS MEETING LOCATIONS AND DETAILS -- COMING IN MID-DECEMBER!