

XEROX

Information Products Group
Systems Development Division
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To: Wendell Shultz, D. Liddle
Copies to: SD Managers, D. DeSantis, E. Harslem, S. Wallace, J. Wick
From: Charles Irby
Subject: August Status Report for Common Software
Filed on: <Irby>Progress.Aug

Management Review Committee Demo

A full demo was given for Jack Lewis and some of his people {Adams, Conway, Gingrich, Holland, Lanes, Padalino, Potter, Tregub}. Although preparation was somewhat tense (Murphy's Law had us by the throat all morning!), the demo went well, with very few hardware, software, or people failures. Bob, David, Jan, Gail, and Bev all performed admirably. The demo took somewhat longer than expected. We hope to correct for this before the demo to the MRC. The 1 September date for that demo has become uncertain because of McCardell's resignation. Also, plans for video taping the demo have not been solidified.

We were unable to connect with the A&E ethernet prior to the Lewis demo because the cables would not fit through the underground conduit connecting the two buildings. Thus, we were not able to conduct that part of the demo. We showed eight vignettes of generic word processing/document creation tasks including text editing, format editing, form letters, statistical tables and formulas, records management, graphics, and form design and fillin. In doing so, we utilized Bravo 7.0, Desktop, Formula (McGregor/Kimball), Form-Letter (Kimball), Find (Deutsch), Sil, and Spruce. Ralph generated an improved set of fonts for the Sequoia prior to the demo.

User Interface Specification

The user interface group is carefully reviewing the recent Janus-1 Functional Specification. To date, Ralph and I have been unable to devote much time to this review because of the MRC demo preparations. We will both have it read by the time we come back from our respective vacations (on the 29th). A formal review has been setup for Sept 1 and 2 in Palo Alto.

Data Management

Work is progressing well on the format and interface to higher level file directories. Several design memos were produced. In addition, our data management people are helping with the Pilot File System design. Richard Moore will start work on 22 August.

Diamond and Desktop

Jack Newlin's work in Diamond is complete for the time being. He is now working on graphics in Desktop, making them more like the Janus Functional Spec to test its validity and to test some other competitive ideas. Dave Smith has re-implemented the Desktop window and menu mechanisms to conform to the Janus Functional Spec. He is also beginning work with the new

compiled smalltalk, aiding people in El Segundo who wish to use it for prototyping. The formula/table software is being integrated with Desktop. We are also working with Bob Metcalfe's people to integrate their ethernet software with Desktop for the In/Out Basket function.

We are at a cross roads with respect to Desktop. We can choose to make it more useful as a component of Early Bird or we can start exploring some new areas, such as records management, form design, and so forth. We need guidance soon. We now have four good programmers versed in the code and ready to move in one of the two directions. As the program now stands, it is not rugged enough for extended use in an operational setting. The editor would have to be recoded and there is no formatting and layout support. It is my belief that we can do this in time for Early Bird if we begin soon.

Training

Work has begun in the Application Software Group on the implementation of one of the games suggested for use as a training aid. It is hoped that these games can be developed as part of the training of new junior programmers now coming on board. However, we probably need a programmer assigned to the task of supporting the development of CAI training disks. Some specific recommendations for other training materials were made. We need to review scope and staffing for training.

Work Plan

Since the D0 Engineering Models have slipped, the Pilot Functional Spec has slipped, some of our people have been loaned to the Pilot group, and the MRC Demo preparations have taken much of our time, Wendell has asked that I publish an update to the Common Software Work Plan. This will be done before the end of the month, if possible.

128K Altos

A letter of intent is being prepared for retrofitting some of our Alto IIs with 128K of memory. This will be most useful in the area of prototyping user interface features. The current plan is to equip six common software Altos, one Simonyi Alto, three Szelong Altos, and three or four OSD/Early Bird Altos with the extra memory. We have also agreed to pay a one time engineering charge for re-engineering one of the boards.