

XEROX

Information Products Group
Systems Development Division

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To: Tim Townsend, D. Liddle
Copies to: SD Managers, D. DeSantis, E. Harslem, S. Wallace, J. Wick
From: Charles Irby
Subject: October Status Report for Advanced Design and User Prototypes Group
Filed on: <Irby>Progress.Oct

Management Review Committee Demo

Video taping of the Wang and IBM system 6 are being coordinated in El Segundo by Al Bongerson, using approximately the vignettes used for the Lewis demo. Alto video taping will take place in Palo Alto, and will produce a separate video tape of our Janus prototypes and will be updated as new prototypes are developed. We are no longer planning on a live demo to the MRC or any other august body.

User Interface Specification

Dave Smith is working closely with the Janus-1 Functional Specification team in PSG. He is also aiding the Janus-1 Design Specification team in the use of Smalltalk for high-level design specification and some prototyping. Ralph, Dave, and I are also working on the items promised in the Review meeting. Richard Moore and Peter Bishop are working on the user's conceptual model of records and forms processing. Good progress is being made and occasional larger brain-storming and status meetings are being held. Ralph Kimball and I spent two days in Dallas critiquing the Troy LD user interface as part of OSDs Blue Ribbon Panel.

Data Management

Data Management has been split off into a separate group that is currently without a manager. Informally, I am still managing the activity in this area. Work is concentrating in the records and forms processing area as described above.

Prototyping

The formula/table software has been demonstrated to the PSG design Spec team and a design walkthrough was conducted for their benefit. A design walkthrough will also be done as a SD/Palo Alto CrossTalk seminar. This is one case where the design within a user prototype actually looks usable for the end software.

The implementation of graphics in the Desktop have been brought into alignment with the Janus-1 functional Spec by Jack Newlin. He is also working on facilities for changing the underlying grid.

I am preparing a proposal that would have us work with some people from ORG in prototyping some of the records and forms processing facilities of Janus.

We would like soon to begin prototyping the formatting and layout features of Janus, as well as several possible selection schemes. We are investigating the use of Smalltalk for some prototyping. We would like to work with Functional Test to evaluate these selection schemes.

In my opinion, the opportunity to enhance our prototypes to the point that they represent a reasonable cross section of Janus that could be used in Early Bird has passed. In the time remaining between now and year-end, we would not be able to produce a performance-tuned version that incorporates all existing prototypes plus text editing and formatting/layout. The existing prototypes could be demonstrated individually, of course.

Training

Betty Burr took the IBM online training to assess their training techniques and to become familiar with the IBM system 6. She found many problems with IBM's approach to CAI, pitfalls that we must avoid in Janus. Betty also visited a group in Rochester that developed CAI training facilities for the training in the use of the COIN system in branch offices. They are available to assist us under a contract-like arrangement.

The relationship of our help/training development to OSD and NS&D needs to be clarified. However, as we currently understand our charter, appropriate staff is a problem in this area. We are interviewing two people to assist in this area.

Window Package

The writeup of the window package was not distributed as promised because of a lack of resources and uncertainty about the form the interface to this facility should take (object- or procedure-oriented). We are now working with the Janus design team to firm this up and deliver the document as promised. This is another area in which we are attempting to help the design team get started.

Absence

I was absent for seven days because of a death in our family.