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MISC

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17 February 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Plans & Programs Division, PPBS/NPIC

SUBJECT   :   Improvement of the MIS

1.   Management throughout the Center has expressed concern for the lack of timeliness of the MIS reports.

2.   This concern was stated at the time of [   ] MIS study when in fact at that time the MIS update required 7 to 10 days.

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3.   Today the situation is worse. Updates take upwards of 14 days -- too long to be of value to most users, expecially the PMB.

4.   To bring this problem into focus, let us review the memorandum of agreement between PPBS and PSG/AID of 25 July 1968 which dealt with the realignment of functions, responsibilities, and personnel associated with the MIS.

5.   Five people were transferred to AID and they were to perform the following activities:

    a.   The collection and verification of manhour data (recorded on time sheets) and submission of these data to the Operations Branch, AID for input to the computer based Management Information System.

    b.   The collection and verification of project data (e.g. project information work phase notices, products, etc.) and submission of these data to the Operations Branch, AID for inclusion in the MIS.

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c. The maintenance (e.g., updating and purging) of data contained in the MIS.

d. The preparation of algorithms for the retrieval of information from the MIS and the collation and presentation of this information in a format mutually agreed to by AID and PPBS. This will, however, be limited to those services amenable to existing MIS software and/or which require minimum manual extraction and formatting operations.

e. The continuing review and redesign of system components of the MIS in an effort to improve MIS products and meet the changing demands of MIS customers as determined by PPBS, in consultation with AID.

f. Serve as the interface between operational and developmental components of AID and MIS customers in all matters pertaining to the MIS.

6. Today only two individuals are associated with the above activities. In addition, essentially only activities 5.a and 5.d get any attention.

7. The other three people have been transferred to other types of work considered much more critical.

8. After observing the work of the AID MIS staff I would agree that two people are sufficient to carry on the above MIS activities provided certain changes in policy and procedures take place.

9. In terms of policy the MIS must be given a higher priority for EAM and computer activities.

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10. In terms of procedures I would recommend that the now essentially manual input data editing sub-system of the MIS be revised to take advantage of the computer to verify, correct and input the MIS data.

11. This would provide more time for the MIS staff to perform activities 5.b, 5.c, 5.e, and 5.f.

12. Before I detail my recommendations I will discuss other problems.

13. For several years now each time an improvement to the MIS was sought the method used was to go out and ask the various groups and divisions what sort of improvements they would like.

14. All sorts of nebulous answers would come back --- too many or not enough activities codes --- too many or not enough project numbers --- no skill codes ---- too many errors in system etc. ------.

15. Either these are problems or they are not --- no one knows for sure -- because very few studies have been made -- and the few studies that have been made have used inaccurate MIS data to prove that the data itself was inaccurate.

16. To put this aspect of the problem into focus let us again review the memorandum of agreement between PPBS and PSG/AID in terms of the activities to be performed by PPBS.

    a. Determination of management data elements which should be recorded in the MIS.

    b. The determination of the information elements which should be extracted from the MIS.

    c. The analysis of data extracted from the MIS.

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    d.   The preparation of management analysis reports based in whole or in part on information extracted from the MIS.

17.   Certainly PPBS has involved itself in these activities, however, this is not enough. PPBS must take steps to authenticate the information in the MIS. PPBS must analyze the information elements to determine whether there is misuse, whether the information is relevant, and to make inferences about the system as a whole. Only in this way can we determine the approach we are to take to develop a new system.

18.   In essence then we need both an auditing system (a vital aspect of any MIS which has never existed in our system) and a data element analysis system.

Recommendations:

    1.   PPBS/RAD take on the role of Center MIS coordinator.

        a.   To some extent RAD has this role since it chairs the PMB, handles requirements, issues project numbers and inputs work phase notices.

        b.   However, more has to be done in the area of auditing the system and drawing inferences from the data elements about the system.

    2.   PPBS/PPD task PSG/AID to develop an input data verify and edit sub-system to the MIS.

    3.   PPBS/PPD develop an auditing and analysis system.

    4.   PPBS/PPD develop a new production control system.

        a.   The parameters of this system have been set.

        b.   This system is in line with the new MIS concept of an operational control system.

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Preliminary MIS - Input Data (Man Hour) Verify, Edit, and Correct, Audit, and Analysis, work paper and flaw chart.

OPERATING PROCEDURE

1.   Each group within NPIC will be responsible for getting their time cards key punched and transmitted to the U-494 via Dct 2000 by 1600 hours on Tuesday of each week.

2.   Error listings will be returned via Dct 2000 to each group submitting time cards.

3.   Each group will correct all errors and resubmit the corrected time cards via Dct 2000 to the U-494.

4.   Two additional copies of all errors will be produced at the Central Computer facility for distribution to AID/SIS and PPBS/RAD.

5.   Components resident in building 213 and users of the MIS but not members of IEG, PSG, TS&SG, or PPBS will submit their time cards in such a manner as will be decided by Chief, AID.

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

1.   The system will require that tables of all active projects, activity codes, and component codes be stored in the computer for time and validation purposes.

2.   In addition, a table of NPIC skill codes will be stored within the computer for each individual. On input of man hour data a table lookup will be performed selecting for each individual by badge number the correct skill code for that individual.

3.   The skill code will become part of the man hour data record stored on the drum.

Much of the effort required to complete the weekly MIS update is of a manual nature.

This process is long and laborious, and does not guarantee that all errors which may be present in the man hour input data will be found or if they are found will be corrected in a timely fashion.

The purpose of this request is to streamline the process by which the MIS is updated and to provide a means to verify and correct, audit, and analyze the weekly man hour data from a remote access device.

There are three phases to this system:

1. To design and implement by 1 July 1970 a remote access system to verify, edit and correct drum stored MIS man hour data.

2. To design and implement by 1 October 1970 a remote access system to audit the weekly MIS man hour data.

3. To design and implement by 1 January 1971 a remote access system to analyze the weekly MIS man hour data.

    (2) However, more has to be done in the area of auditing the system and drawing inferences from the data elements about the system.

  b. PPBS/PPD task PSG/AID to develop an input data verify and edit sub-system to the MIS.

  c. PPBS/PPD develop an auditing and analysis system.

  d. PPBS/PPD develop a new production control system.

    (1) The parameters of this system have been set.

    (2) This system is in line with the new MIS concept of an operational control system.

9. The proposed MIS modification would comprise:

  a. Development of a remote access system for the U-494.

    (1) To provide PSG/AID the tool by which to verify, edit, and correct MIS input data and to provide a timely (weekly) MIS update.

    (2) To provide PPBS/RAD the tool by which to audit the MIS input data.

    (3) To provide PPBS/RAD the basic MIS data by which analytical studies can be made.

  b. Establishment of a basis of understanding between all components and the MIS.

    (1) To minimize the misuse of the system.

    (2) To streamline the system so as to make it trim and relevant.

    (3) To set the stage for a future real time, MIS system.

  c. *Utilization* ~~To make use~~ of information input into the MIS but lost once the update is made.

10. Concepts basic to this modification are:

  a. Time sheets will be modified to include the entry of the agency occupation (skill) codes.