## Minutes of 29th Air Cargo Service User Meeting

The comment was then made by a carrier that there were still many unanswered questions since this proposal was originally put forward. Principal amongst these were the definition of an Air Waybill i.e. the relationship between International and Domestic consignments and how part shipments would be dealt with in this equation? How would backlogs be handled ? What guarantees would be given for points already allocated and what mechanisms would be put into place for carriers not to lose out on their historical rights ? It was also suggested that rather than SITA deciding what the three options would be the users of the service should decide. It was pointed out that the three options offered by SITA were only a distillation of views expressed during the meeting. It was then suggested by a carrier that there should be a 4th option which was to keep the modification list as current but provide the ability to reallocate points to a new list. This would have the effect of focusing attention on current requirements. A further option was also suggested which identified 3 types of modification - Small / Medium / Large and points allocated for example on the basis of 1 point for the small modification, 2 points for the Medium modification, 3 points for the large modification. One carrier thought these ideas were too theoretical. It could still not understand why SITA wanted to introduce a new system which would effectively cancel all outstanding modification proposals. Another carrier required clarification on the new proposal by asking whether they need to pay for each modification when requirements were more than allocated resources. SITA confirmed that the alternatives were either to wait until resource allocation had built up to a sufficient level or accelerate the process by funding a private modification. One airline raised the question that if resource allocation was to be shared equally who would get priority ? SITA commented that it was their intention to maximise throughput and that whilst under the new proposal it was perfectly possible to have the same number of developments as before, they would make the most effective use of resources and not have to wait for User meetings. A carrier then commented that it agreed with the additional proposal to have a fourth option. Another carrier queried whether it was possible to increase manpower to shorten the current list of modifications. It was commented that the level of resources should be directly related to the level of revenue and that developments had been substantially increased over the last two years. SITA commented that it was a worry that there is nothing in the current process which matches the modification list to the resources available. It also advised that it had no problems with the suggested 4th option. The proposer of the 4th option then expanded on this option by suggesting that only the top 10 modification requests be developed. All other allocated points could then be given back to the Users who could start again with a new list. Several carriers expressed the opinion that they did not consider this to be fair but the proposer commented that historically SITA had not been able to effectively manage more than 10 modifications between User meetings.

SITA then requested that a vote be taken on removing 2 options to ensure that there would be an absolute majority for the process selected. However one carrier expressed the view that a vote be taken on the more fundamental issue of whether there would continue to be commitment to the equality philosophy.

A recess was the taken and on commencement of this item SITA presented the various options that had been decided on so far:

1. The original SITA proposal which was to change current procedures and replace them by allocating resources based on usage of the system.

2. A modification of the above proposal which resulted in allocating resources equally.

3. The proposal from MA which was to keep the current process but allow users to reallocate their points to create a newer and more effective list.

4. No change.

A vote was then taken to see if these options could be reduced and option 1 above was removed.

**SITA**

# Cargo Services User Meeting

**September 21 – 22 1999**

SITA Information Services extends a warm welcome to the delegates attending CSUM 35.

We hope your journey was a pleasant one and that you will enjoy your stay in London.

The hotel concierge can assist you with your special needs, transportation, shopping, dining outside of the hotel, sightseeing and other cultural activities. If you require any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact myself, the secretary of the meeting - Des Keen, or any other SITA Cargo Services staff.

Our meetings will take place in the Turner and Constable Rooms of the Harrington Hall. Coffee and tea will be served prior to the meeting and during morning and afternoon breaks. The welcome coffee break starts at 0845 and we would appreciate your being there as early as possible so we can make a prompt start.

Lunch will be provided at 1230 in the restaurant. You will need to wear your name badge, which you will receive on the first day of your meeting, to be seated in the section where lunch will be served.

SITA will be hosting an evening out on Tuesday 21 September, details of which will be supplied during the conference.

You are also cordially invited to attend a reception, hosted by OAG – Official Airlines Guide, on Monday evening, 20 September which will be held in the lobby outside of the Turner and Constable Rooms and which will commence at 2000 hours.

Our best wishes for a successful meeting and an enjoyable stay.

Nunzio Raffio

Director Cargo Services

SITA then advised that carriers had the opportunity to comment now on these 3 proposals with the view of having a final vote taken at the next CSUM. However several carriers expressed the wish to make a decision at this forum. Before voting one carrier asked for more details on option 2 and SITA advised that they had approximately 2000 man days available for development. As currently there were 33 users this would mean that each carrier could expect to receive approximately 60 development days each. A vote was then taken on whether a decision should be made at this meeting for the preferred option and the majority view was that it should.

In a subsequent vote for the preferred option the decision was taken to adopt the MA proposal which changes the current process by allowing users to reallocate their points. In the discussions that followed one carrier suggested that the reallocation should be a one time process only, though SITA commented that it could be applied on a regular basis. A carrier then suggested that at each User Meeting SITA could explain how they would spend the 1000 man days they have available till the next meeting. SITA confirmed that at each User Meeting they would provide an approximate idea of the next 6 months effort.

In the final analysis SITA re-emphasised that that the decision taken would not make any change to the resources available.

**Action: It was agreed that the new voting procedure be adopted for use in the modification ballot following this CSUM. SITA will advise carriers of the number of votes they have given to modifications not yet started and available for re-allocation. At each CSUM SITA would provide a clear indication of what development work was planned for the next 6 months. The terms of reference will be changed and distributed accordingly.**

1996.

IV       CONCLUSION

## Agenda Item 44 - Any Other Business

RG requested SITA to provide an update on the AMS facility. SITA advised that the software they had received from TWA was now on the test system. Most of the current effort was being focused on part shipment handling which unfortunately was applied differently by TWA. In this context SITA also advised that US Customs were requiring part shipment information on House Air Waybills. The overall objective was to get through the US Customs test script and it was anticipated this would be achieved during the first quarter of 1997. In the discussions that followed one airline asked if the system could be brought up in two phases. SITA advised that they did not think US Customs would allow a two step implementation. This was subsequently confirmed in a telephone conversation with US Customs. Another carrier asked if there was a deadline on having the AMS system available. SITA advised that there was no official deadline. Systems had to pass a very large test script and even then final approval would not be given until parallel running between the automated and manual systems proved that the automated system was performing to US Customs satisfaction.

At the end of the discussion on this item several carriers expressed interest in being continuously updated on developments.

**Action: SITA to distribute functional specifications describing how the system will work.**

The second item raised in AOB by AS was concerned with Trouble Reports which were not being updated in CRIS. SITA commented that updates are made as soon as changes occur. Users were then asked if they would prefer to receive printed copies of Trouble Reports and the general consensus was that they would still prefer to receive hard copy updates.

**Action: Printed copies of Trouble Reports to be sent to all users**

The third item raised during AOB was raised by AN who were concerned at the level of Help Desk support provided. They felt that the Help Desk service had not expanded in line with the number of new carriers joining the service and were still only providing limited coverage hours. SITA commented that they had requested additional funds for the 1997 budget to enable them to provide 24 hours coverage. Obviously whilst no promises could be made that they would be successful in obtaining the extra funds they would do all possible to meet this concern. One carrier then requested whether it was possible to expand the help desk facility to include queries from individual stations - not necessarily the airline's HDQ. SITA commented that this could result in loss of control in providing support to customers and may even result in them processing unauthorised requests. However, they would be willing to consider this request and perhaps run a trial on this basis.

**Action: SITA to provide update at next user meeting**

# Minutes of 29th Air Cargo Service User Meeting

## Software Distribution

SITA advised that they now supported distributed software. Whereas previously the cargo system only consisted of mainframe products this is no longer the case and it is now necessary to coordinate the distribution of software upgrades.

Customers were advised that the preferred solution from SITA was Enterprise Desktop Manager which enabled automatic download of software. Currently the process was being evaluated internally and hopefully results should be available by the end of the year. The major considerations for external distribution were chiefly those of cost and security. Current price levels are £ 160 per PC though of course volume reductions would apply. Obviously this is something that users would need to evaluate.

## Future System Concepts

Eamonn O'Brien presented an outline of SITA's plans for the next generation of cargo service, delivering the benefits of distributed processing through the deployment of client/server technology blended with the best of advanced hosting capability.

SITA explained that it intends to achieve the transition to the future system by evolutionary rather than revolutionary change.

Information technology, in common with many other industries, tends to embrace a particular concept for a period of time, before moving on to the latest vogue.
Ten years ago, this may have been relational databases, five years ago artificial intelligence was regarded as 'state of the art', and the current major trend is towards distributed processing.

These popular movements have a solid theoretical base, and their popularity ensures that products are quickly developed to support the practical application of the principle. The one unfortunate aspect is that that same popularity can lead to demand for application of the principle in inappropriate situations. These cases tend only to be recognised after the trend has moved on, and the previous 'state of the art' technology has settled into a recognised niche.

The challenge for an IT organisation is to exploit the latest technologies and concepts, in order to realise all the potential benefits, while avoiding unnecessary risks and inappropriate applications. This challenge has occupied the thinking of a number of people within Cargo Services over the last year, and SITA now wished to share the conclusions with its customers.

The principle of distributed processing involves moving data and processes related to local activities out of large centralised mainframes and into smaller local systems. This offers the potential of
- lower communications costs
- greater accessibility of business information
- potentially simpler and faster development of functionality to meet local needs
- ability to maintain local operations during comms outages

The main risks of a distributed approach are:
- problems with timeliness and synchronisation of data updated at multiple   locations
- distribution and maintenance of software at remote sites
- support for more complex hardware and software combinations in locations   with less capable technical infrastructures
- the size of the investment and risk in migrating from mainframe legacy systems to distributed networks in a single step

All of these factors, both positive and negative, have shaped the model of the future Supercargo system.

A model of the future SuperCargo system was presented, offering a blended solution: distributed processing of functions best performed locally combined with centralised processing of those functions best controlled centrally. This combination offers a range of integrated access methods to suit individual cargo stations' business requirements and technical maturity

Flexible access methods allow:
• Solutions tailored to the needs and capabilities of the station
•Progressive implementation of new technologies as operations mature
•Continued use of legacy equipment and skills until a sound business case exists for upgrading

In summary, Mr O'Brien restated SITA's aim of exploiting current and new technology, through the selective distribution of processes. This approach maintains access to the rich existing functionality and connectivity of SuperCargo today through a choice of access methods to suit customers' needs and capabilities. By adopting an evolutionary approach, SITA is offering a low risk and low cost means for customers to progressively access the benefits of distributed processing at a pace dictated by their business needs.

A copy of the presentation can be found as an attachment to these minutes.