

1997

Minutes of 30th Air Cargo Service User Meeting

2. System Expansion

Both cargo systems have been expanded to 50 partitions each. This allows more pool records on the system, more training partitions and certain system utilities will run more effectively.

3. Recoup.

This utility is now run once a fortnight on each system and the duration is now shorter under V.2.1.3.

4. Regression Testing

A COPY system is now in place where all developments will be tested. Live system activity will be recorded at a set time and day and these entries then run into the copy system where the new development will be tested. Most errors would be captured on this platform hence reducing the impact on the system when new developments are loaded. Final procedures are being put in place and from April this year all developments will be tested on this platform.

5. SQA Team Bench

A windows based PC product has been installed at QIF to test PC applications. Scripts are being written which can be used to test new developments as they are released.

With all the above in place, systems should be much more stable than in the past.

Agenda Item 18 / CSUM 29 - Modification Priority Procedures

Customers were advised that this item would be covered under Agenda Item 6

Agenda Item 44 / CSUM 29 - AOB - AMS

SITA advised that the functional description for the AMS interface was distributed on the 06.12.96. They further advised that they were completing changes imposed by new customs requirements and were expecting to load the interface live on the 25th March. This would then be subject to an accreditation test which was expected to take one month. In answer to a previous question on the subject from a carrier, XS advised that they had been in contact with US Customs in Washington who had advised that they will only exchange messages with one system. As a consequence only those carriers who perform their own ground handling in the US will be able to use this facility.

Agenda Item 44 / CSUM 29 - AOB - Trouble Reports

Customers were advised that these were being sent out through normal mailing and the latest update was to be found in the CSUM Folder. The question was asked whether any users would prefer to receive Trouble Reports via SITATEX and several expressed interest.

Agenda Item 44 / CSUM 29 - AOB - Help Desk coverage

SITA advised that following budget submissions which had now been accepted they would be able to offer full time coverage from July this year. This would mean that the Help Desk would be manned 24 hours a day - 7 days a week. As only one person will man the desk out-of-hours, there will be periods during rest and meal breaks when an immediate response will not be available. Advertising for the extra positions required was currently underway. One carrier commented that this additional Help Desk support did not address the real problems which invariably required technical intervention. However XS commented that the Help Desk would be able to judge the severity of any problems and, where technical intervention was necessary, an on-call programmer would have the tools to conduct an immediate technical investigation.

Agenda Item 9 - Introduction of CIR / CSI / CSN messages (MA)

MA introduced this item and advised that their local customs authority would shortly be introducing an automated system. As a consequence there would be need to exchange customs messages. XS advised that a current solution was already in place which handled and translated FFM and FWB messages sent to a PC. MA advised that whilst they would be happy to demo this product they feel that PC solutions are not always as reliable as the mainframe. As MA's customs authority had not yet fully designed its system requirements, one carrier commented that MA suggest that the US Customs messages be adopted - which is the approach this carrier has used. However further discussions revealed that US Customs have specific requirements which have as much to do with the processes involved as the messages which might make the process inappropriate. It was also pointed out that it would not be possible to use the AMS system with both US Customs and another Customs authority. In further discussions one carrier expressed concern that the EDIFACT standard must be adopted. Another carrier commented that although their customs authority was working on the EDIFACT standard many different interpretations could be applied. As a consequence it would be unfair to expect mainframe developments to handle these. XS then made the comment that the system strategy update presentation may offer a solution to this problem and this item was temporarily deferred. Following the presentation MA advised that their specific requirement had not been met and discussion then centred on whether the quickest way to handle this development was via a modification or industry requirement. Ultimately the decision was taken to handle this item as a modification and a vote was taken.

Action: Modification 547

Agenda Item 10 - Upgrade Freight Status Functionality (MA)

MA introduced this item and outlined the need for both harmonisation and expansion of Cargo-IMP codes.

XS responded to the second part of this agenda item concerned with automatic FSU processing and advised that they had tested the FSU tables and found them to be working correctly. MA advised that they would look again at the process and advise the Help Desk if any further problems were found. These would be handled as Trouble Reports.

Discussion then expanded to Cargo-IMP codes in general with one carrier commenting that XS should update all messages published in the IATA Cargo-IMP manual. XS sought clarification from MA that it was only STATUS codes that they wanted upgraded and then advised that the only codes not currently supported were:

NFD / CLD / CRC / DDL / DIS

However it was pointed out that the CLD status does operate in the UK and that the DIS status code had been developed as a private modification for Austrian Airlines. No developments had taken place on the other codes as users had not so far expressed the need to have them. MA commented that the two important codes for them were NFD (Notified) and DDL (Door to Door Delivery). XS then sought clarification on what input would trigger these status codes as currently there was no input for door to door delivery. For NFD status it was suggested that this could be triggered when the Notification of Arrival was printed though another carrier thought it would be more appropriate when the Invoice was issued.

XS agreed that it would investigate both status codes in terms of appropriate input generation and advise in due course. In answer to a question when the DIS code would be available XS advised that it would probably be available for general release in April '98. Until that time it would remain in exclusive use for OS.

In response to the fact that the system does not handle incoming FSLs SITA advised that the necessary development work would be undertaken to rectify this.

Action: Industry Requirement

V CONCLUSION

Agenda Item 19 - Any Other Business

XS advised that with effect from January 1998 the London Data Processing Centre would be implementing a No Smoking policy. This would apply to both employees and visitors.

XS canvassed opinion on whether users would be interested in receiving Cargo Service documentation on a CD-ROM. Certain carriers expressed interest and based on this initial feedback XS advised that they would investigate the matter further.

Agenda Item 20 - Modifications Ballot

The Secretary confirmed which Agenda Items, according to his records, had been voted as modifications.

MODIFICATION NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	USER AND A.I.
545	Allow flexible handling of Teletype Table	OK / 7
546	Deletion of Mechanised Cities	OS / 8
547	Introduction of CIR/CSI/CSN messages	MA / 9
548	Numeric Alpha Printer Numbers	OS / 13

Agenda Item 21 - Date and Place of next meeting

Delegates were advised that in accordance with usual procedures the next CSUM would be held in London. As advised in the minutes of CSUM 29 a booking had been made at the Harrington Hall Hotel in Kensington, West London for September 23 / 24 / 25. The 25th September would be for the ULD meeting.

Agenda Item 22 - End of Meeting

The chairman thanked SITA and all airlines who participated at this CSUM for their contributions. He wished everyone a safe journey home and expressed his wish that all present should meet again at the next CSUM.

Eamonn O'Brien, on behalf of SITA, thanked the chairman for the manner in which he had conducted the meeting. He also thanked all users for their participation.

SYSTEM STRATEGY UPDATE

Bob Burkard and Eamonn O'Brien presented UltraCargo - the evolution of SITA's SuperCargo service which will provide cargo automation and information services into the next century.

During 1996 SITA had formed a Cargo Strategy Team, consisting of senior representatives from SITA Information Services. The team had reviewed feedback from SuperCargo customers and decided to augment these views with a program of interviews with senior management of major cargo airlines around the world. Over 20 airlines were interviewed across a broad spectrum of size and geographic positioning, including airlines such as Lufthansa, Air France, British Airways, United Airlines, and Japan Airlines. The purpose of the interviews was to identify the strategic direction anticipated by major players in the air cargo industry and to plan the evolution of the SuperCargo service to support that strategy. That plan has now been produced and submitted to SITA management. It is now being incorporated into SITA's marketing plans and communicated to customers.

In broad terms the SuperCargo system will evolve from an automation-based to an information-based service that will provide the necessary decision support to profitably drive an airlines' cargo business.

SITA's approach is to continue to develop the SuperCargo service, whilst embarking on a parallel step-by-step evolution of the service, taking advantage of new and maturing technologies. There are four technical drivers for the development of UltraCargo:

- To leverage the recognised strengths of the current system; the richness of its functionality and connectivity, its ability to handle high transaction volumes, the highly regarded CargoWise interface, and the centralised management of hardware and software.
- To exploit new opportunities represented by maturing browser and thin client technology, the availability of the SITA IPNet, advances in TPF/MVS connectivity, and the availability of high productivity platforms and tools.
- To leapfrog cumbersome client/server implementations with their escalating hardware requirements, complex installations, high costs and long lead times
- To maximise accessibility of business information to meet current and future needs

A schematic of the UltraCargo system was presented and explained. The major features of UltraCargo being:

- The creation of a parallel relational database of Air Waybill, flight and customer data to support the management of the cargo business
- The creation of a CargoWeb module allowing the tracking and tracing of Air Waybills via the Internet - an operational prototype of this module was demonstrated
- The development of the CargoWise graphical interface to become a server-based application located close to the mainframe and accessed by browser-based clients

Work has already started on developing the UltraCargo system. A development schedule will be published shortly, and prototypes will be produced to provide an early opportunity for customers to see and comment on the new developments. A series of presentations to cargo service customer management is being prepared and progress will be reported to customers on a regular basis.

A copy of the presentation is to be found in the appendix to these minutes.

LIFE AND TIMES OF A MODIFICATION

