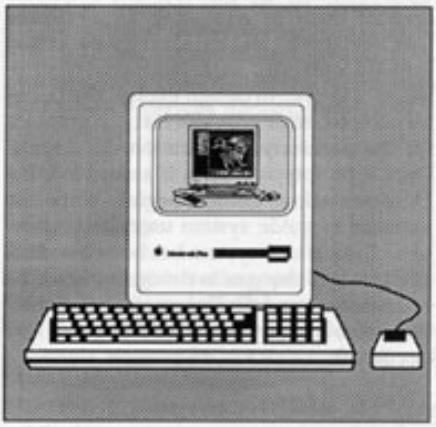
PROFS

Program for Regional Observing and Forecasting Services

The Documentation Center



Services

System Documentation

The primary responsibility of the Documentation Center is to provide documentation for PROFS system development projects. From the earliest stages of the design effort, Documentation Center staff are involved in planning, writing, illustrating, editing, and publishing the documents essential to system development.

First, requirements must be determined; the Documentation Center assists the development team in compiling requirements lists, then editing and formatting these lists as formal documents. As the functional requirements and system design evolve, the Documentation Center provides text and graphics for the necessary specification documents. Once a prototype system is assembled, the Documentation Center begins work on manuals to guide system users and operators. Even after a system has been installed, updates and changes to the system must be documented, and the Documentation Center maintains a library of updated manuals and documents for all PROFS projects.

The PROFS Library

PROFS system documentation, programmer manuals, and scientific publications are available from the PROFS Library. The library also contains reference copies of manuals for the PROFS computing facility, as well as scientific publications from other laboratories and agencies.

The Documentation Center keeps multiple copies of PROFS publications on hand in the PROFS Library, and most reference manuals can be checked out for limited times. A file of publications by PROFS authors is available, and reprints of papers and technical reports can be obtained from the library.

The Macintosh System

The Documentation Center maintains a network of three Macintosh computers and a LaserWriter printer for general PROFS use. Each Macintosh is equipped with a hard disk containing Microsoft Word®, SuperPaint®, MacDraw II®, and MacProject II® software. *These hard disks are not backed up, so users are asked to save their data files on floppy disks available from branch secretaries.*

Manuals for the general-use Macintosh hardware and software are available for use in the PROFS library, and the Documentation Center staff are happy to assist new users and answer questions. *Any problems with the Macintosh system should be reported to the Documentation Center.*

PROFS Notes

Timely announcements and news of interest to PROFS are published in the weekly PROFS Notes bulletin. In addition to a calendar of meetings, visitors, seminars, and other events, PROFS Notes features system news, tips from the System Manager, a Macintosh tutorial column, and contributions from the PROFS staff at large.

Articles for PROFS Notes should reach the Documentation Center by 11:00 a.m. on Thursdays, preferably through the VMS Mail utility addressed to VONDAUSTER or RAMSAY.

On-Line Documentation

Documentation for the more than 500,000 line of code running on the PROFS computer system is available in both hard-copy and on-line form. The hard-copy *Application Programmer's Manual* and *Facility Programmer's Manual* are in the PROFS Library; the GUHELP on-line documentation help facility is on the PROFS Cluster.

GUHELP is currently being replaced by a new software documentation and on-line help system. New software documentation standards are being established, and the new system will automatically generate on-line and hard-copy documentation. Programmers will use the new system for all new software; as existing software is revised, existing documentation will be converted to the new system. Eventually, documentation for all PROFS software will be available in the new easy-to-use format.

Change Management

Changes to any complex computer system must be reviewed systematically and implemented with caution. To facilitate the change management process at PROFS, the Documentation Center maintains a data base of all reports of problems with the system and proposals for system change.

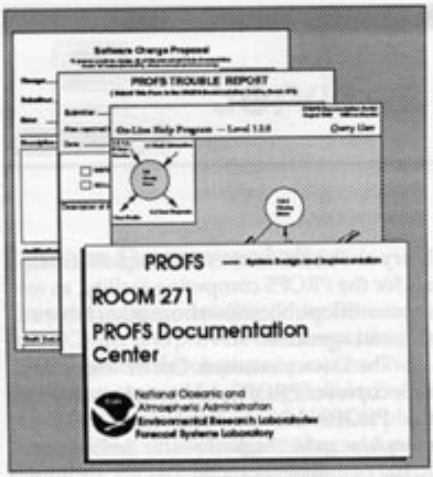
Trouble Reports ensure that the appropriate persons are notified of trouble encountered with the system. If a problem exists, a solution is found and implemented. The Documentation Center tracks each Trouble Report to its resolution.

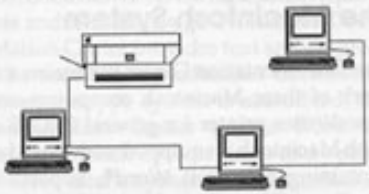
Change Proposals provide a mechanism for approving changes to the system. To avoid undesirable side effects, changes require technical review, testing, and systematic implementation. Documentation Center tracking ensures the orderly progression of Change Proposals through the process.

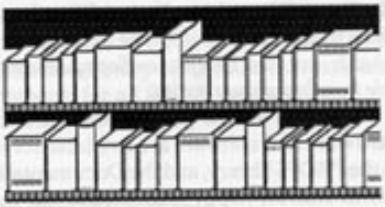
Graphics

Effective graphics make appealing presentation materials, and the Documentation Center helps PROFS presenters make the best possible impression at local, national, and international conferences.

The Documentation Center staff are skilled at producing text, graphics, data flow diagrams, charts, and tables for overhead transparencies and slides. They also give advice on layout and design of posters, illustrations, and covers for publications. They even provide the occasional door sign for PROFS people on the move.







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