March 22, 1971

To: Multics Administrative Distribution
          S.H. Webber

From: J.H. Saltzer, L.J. Haron

Subject: Plan for a Subsystem Writers' Supplement to the MPM

We have discussed at various times the need to limit SPS distribution but still leave subsystem writers with enough information to survive. This memo contains a proposal for a way to accomplish this feat; it is an extension of an idea suggested by Steve Webber.

The general strategy suggested is to immediately stop distributing the SPS or its updates outside the Multics project proper, and to begin a new manual, the Subsystem Writers' Supplement, to fill the gap.

We currently have a few user groups who receive the SPS; they do so because some routines described there are necessary to develop an ambitious subsystem. Those necessary routines would form the backbone of an SWS.

The following steps appear to minimize the effort in cutting over to the position where we have a Subsystem Writers' Supplement (SWS) which is distinct from the SPS:

1. A list of subroutines now in or destined for the SPS which should be in the SWS will be constructed and agreed upon.

2. An SPS→SWS conversion kit will be developed. It will consist of:

    a. a title page for an SWS
    b. a table of contents for an SWS, consisting of the list of step 1.
    c. a set of instructions requesting the recipient to move those writeups from his SPS to his SWS.
    d. a new SPS table of contents in which SWS entries are marked "See SWS".
    e. a small number of new SWS documents, never before published.

Since most initial recipients of the SWS already have an SPS, this will allow the new manual to get started with a minimum of effort on our part. This conversion kit will be issued as update 18 or 19 to the SPS.

3. The file of originals of the SPS will be similarly converted, and the resulting set of originals used to reproduce additional SWS's in small batches as needed.

4. Included with the conversion kit for outside recipients of the SPS will be a letter explaining that no more SPS updates will be forthcoming. A copy of such a letter is attached.

5. As new writeups are placed in the SWS, and old writeups are updated, their format will be changed to say SWS instead of SPS.

6. As a default, SWS routines are initially given "Development System" status, unless otherwise requested.

After this update, the distribution list for updates to the System Programmers' Supplement can be shortened to a more manageable size. This distribution list currently consists of

CSR staff, faculty, and students	25
MAC library	2
IPC	61
Honeywell	55
Users and other outside recipients	21
Total	164 copies

The last category, users and other outside recipients, should have no more need for the SPS after the SWS is distributed. It would be appropriate to review whether or not the Honeywell and IPC distribution lists are reaching the correct audience.

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

PROJECT MAC

March 22, 1971

To: Outside recipients of the MPM System Programmers' Supplement

From: J.H. Saltzer, Project MAC Computer Systems Research Group

Subject: System Programmers' Supplement distribution

        As the Multics System Programmers' Supplement grows in size
it becomes clearer that the present collection of manuals about Multics
does not match the needs of a subsystem implementer. The SPS is much
too large, contains huge quantities of information not of interest to
a subsystem implementer, and is really directed toward maintainers of
the system itself, rather than the subsystem writer. It also does not
distinguish among features which are intended properties of the imple-
mentation, under development and likely to change, and completely
inappropriate.

        To develop a more reasonable pattern of documentation for
subsystem writers, the following steps are being taken:

   1.   A new manual, the "Subsystem Writers' Supplement", is begun.
        It contains those subroutine writeups from the present SPS
        which have been found necessary for the survival of a sub-
        system writer. Initially, this manual consists primarily
        of old SPS sections. It is planned to someday review and
        upgrade the old SPS material to make clear which interfaces
        are not likely to change, and which are still under development.

   2.   Update number 18 of the System Programmers' Supplement, which
        is enclosed, consists of a conversion kit which produces two
        manuals, an SPS, and an initial SWS.

   3.   All distribution of the System Programmers' Supplement, and
        updates, outside of the personnel responsible for Multics
        itself, is discontinued.

   4.   The SWS will be initially distributed and updated by the
        Project MAC Computer Systems Research Group. Once the manual
        is on its feet, it and its updates will become available,
        for the cost of reproduction, from the Information Processing
        Center.

The list of subroutine writeups which should be moved from the SPS to the SWS is tentative, since there is no way of knowing what parts of the SPS are most often referenced by subsystem writers. Therefore, the aid of the present recipients of the SPS is requested in providing a list of additional subroutine writeups which should be candidates for the SWS. Please send such suggestions to

> J. H. Saltzer
> Room 536, 545 Technology Square
> Cambridge, Mass. 02139

Your comments on this plan are invited.