

SUMMARY NOTES OF THE JACOW SPMS DATABASE DEVELOPMENT MEETING

Wednesday, 11 May 2005, Knoxville Convention Centre

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Present at the meeting

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INTRODUCTION

On behalf of the JACoW Chairman, John Poole, Christine Petit-Jean-Genaz opens the meeting, which will be devoted to discussion of Scientific Programme Management System (SPMS) Developments. She thanks Charlie Horak, the PAC'05 Hosting Editor for the warm hospitality and welcome enjoyed by all.

Christine recalls the discussions which took place during the 2004 Team Meeting (TM), in particular concerning how the JACoW Collaboration functions. The conclusions of the TM, which she will comment briefly at this meeting, will be reported at the JACoW Steering Committee the following week, together with the conclusions of the present meeting. These notes therefore report only on matters not reported elsewhere and directly related to the SPMS.

Since the TM at SNS in November 2004, a meeting to discuss the Registration Module (RM) took place, also at SNS, in February 2005. It is likely that a further RM Development meeting will be necessary end August/early September this year to draw conclusions from the introduction of this feature, and to refine it for EPAC'06, PAC'07, etc.

SPMS: ENHANCEMENTS SINCE TM'04

Numerous enhancements to the SPMS have been implemented since the summer of 2004, to mention only a few:

- Development of a Registration Module which is in production for PAC'05
- Re-classification of abstracts interface
- Selection of contributed oral presentations by Programme Committee interface
- Refereeing interface
- Customized Scheduler
- Paper upload/download scripts
- Scripts to pull together all of the elements of the proceedings prior to publication

JACOW COLLABORATION: SPMS & REPOSITORY, MODUS OPERANDI

SPMS: Protecting Repository Data

Christine recalls that the SPMS is based on oracle and a number of software packages to manage all contributions to a conference programme from abstract submission through to the publication of the proceedings, plus two associated modules:

- Affiliations Module, a database containing the addresses of laboratories, universities, etc., carrying out activities in the field of accelerator technology;
- Profiles Module, a database containing profiles of individuals active in the accelerator community.

Since the introduction of the system with EPAC'04, the number of individual profiles has increased from 3500 to >9000, and the number of affiliations from 600 to 1500.

This Repository data is delivered with the SPMS to JACoW Collaboration conferences. In order to protect this, if not personal, at least sensitive, data, the TM agreed that a written guarantee on the part of the Chairman of each JACoW Collaboration Conference wishing to use the SPMS should in future be required, undertaking that:

- the data will under no circumstances be used for any purpose other than in connection with the organization of the conference in question (i.e. non-conference announcements to the whole or parts of the Repository are strictly forbidden);
- it will be destroyed following the publication of the conference proceedings.

John Poole will write to the relevant Scientific Programme Committee Chairs of Collaboration conferences to request commitment.

SPMS Database Development and Decisions

To facilitate the development and communication of enhancements to the "official" version of the SPMS, it is decided that in future:

- the decisions on what is included in the "official" version of the SPMS, taking into account the interest of the JACoW Collaboration, will be taken

at JACoW TMs (or by the Chairman), and implemented by the SPMS Developer* (Matt Arena) (patches, etc.);

- the SPMS Developer will liaise with the JACoW Chairman regarding all requests for enhancements;
- a method to announce/describe “patches” will be decided, in particular with respect to production/maintenance of a Users’ Manual.

Furthermore, confidentiality/security aspects will be addressed to improve the levels of access to accounts/passwords etc.

Development of the RM will be pursued throughout the summer, and a short DB meeting at FNAL for conferences interested in implementing this new tool will be organized end August or early September.

Christine’s transparencies are attached in Annex 1.

WHAT’S NEW IN THE SPMS: SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME MODULE

Matt Arena, whose transparencies are attached in Annex 2, recalls in detail a number of the enhancements mentioned by Christine in her introduction.

Reclassification

Reclassification is a tedious job for Programme Committees (PC). It entails reviewing all contributions (well over 1000 for PAC and EPAC) to ensure that they are properly classified, such that posters may be sorted and grouped according to topic. The recently developed interface assigns rôles and privileges allowing PC members to propose re-classifications, and for “more privileged” members to validate them. This saves precious time during PC meetings.

Presentation Type/Selection of Papers for Oral Presentation

This interface is also used by the PC to identify and make proposals for oral presentation among those contributions submitted in response to the call for papers.

Again, PC members may identify and propose oral presentations, which can be validated by “privileged” persons, again saving precious time during PC meetings.

The two exercises are currently combined into one interface. Christine asks Matt to ensure that it is possible to propose them separately since some conferences (EPAC for example) do not offer this exercise to its PC.

Refereeing

Refereeing of papers involves assigning papers to referees who carry out a varying number of tasks, from checking that the formatting of the paper is according to instructions, to proof reading and copy editing to ensure

that the English is correct. Ivan Andrian developed an interface capable of managing these tasks within the SPMS in connection with FEL’04. Matt Arena will incorporate this as a regular feature in the SPMS. It will be used next in connection with FEL’05.

Personal Schedule

A new option has been developed by Matt to enable Conference Delegates to search the SPMS and select sessions of interest. Daily printable reports are available, with a rudimentary conflict notification. This is a step in the right direction of providing downloadable portions of the SPMS in PDA format.

Job Queue

This new feature displays the status of jobs running in the database, for instance synchronization or e-mailing, and provides the possibility start, or kill them in the event of hiccups.

WHAT’S NEW IN THE SPMS: REGISTRATION MODULE (RM)

Regretting the absence of a precise specification for the functionality of this application, Matt has built the RM based on several basic assumptions such as the fact that neither “one size fits all” nor “a customized application for each conference” would be realistic. He therefore opted for an application combining a little of both: generic code, and customizable registration data – a do-it-yourself kit.

Matt reviews the advantages and disadvantages of the system described in his transparencies (see Annex 3).

The RM as it is known, and as it appears in the SPMS, can be modified by users, or used as it stands for conferences with similar requirements to PAC’05.

The RM is however also a tool which allows developers to create their own applications, for registration or other purposes.

PAC’05 EXPERIENCE WITH THE REGISTRATION MODULE (RM)

Charlie Horak describes PAC’05 RM production experience (see her transparencies in Annex 4). It appears that the absence of a clear specification, or of experience of what is involved in registration, was a handicap. The development of this module was the fruit of an intensive and extensive effort between Charlie, Matt and with Ann Jordan, who was responsible for PAC’05 registration.

Charlie describes a number of the problems and their solutions both technical, and relating to policy/structure issues and makes a number of recommendations for future users.

* Distinction needs to be made between the rôles of “SPMS Developer”, i.e. Matt Arena, Developer of the “official” GPL version of the SPMS, and a “Conference Developer”, a person developing a conference copy, or “non-official” version of the SPMS ...

THE REGISTRATION MODULE (RM): THE FUTURE

Christine, who attended the February meeting on the RM prior to it going into production, was disappointed at the interface and its lack of user-friendliness. She too regrets that more effort was not invested in the preparation of a better specification, and this is a lesson to be learned for future enhancements.

Christine questions whether:

- the tool as it is now proposed can satisfy the requirements of the majority of JACoW Collaboration conferences;
- a registration interface similar to the one proposed within the Scientific Programme could prove more efficient and user friendly for the Registration Administrator;
- the activities pertaining to registration (delegate registration, social events, excursions, etc.) could be offered as independent modules which could be used individually, or combined into one or several registration forms, according to the specific requirements of each conference;
- the actions relating to delegate registration, for example, fee handling, type of registrant, type of payment, accommodation, etc. could be managed via tables with meaningful titles, instead of the current set of prompts pages, pop-up lists, etc.

Christine's transparencies are reproduced in Annex 5.

Following discussion, the Group feels that the current customizable tool offers great flexibility, arguably if one is sufficiently competent in IT/Oracle/Database Design techniques to be able to take the RM and customize it.

It is decided that Christine and Matt will pursue development during the summer in order to offer an improved interface, taking the opportunity to also iron out those problems where no satisfactory solutions were found for PAC'05. Following this preparatory work, a RM Database Development meeting will take place at FNAL late August/early September such that Matt will have time to incorporate the proposed changes in time for EPAC'06, in time for the going on-line of the EPAC'06 conference Homepage in October or November 2005.

STATUS OF PREPARATION OF SPMS USERS' MANUAL

A TM'04 goal was to have a first draft of the SPMS Users' Manual ready for PAC'05. This goal was rather optimistic ... Chapters and "volunteer authors" are as follows:

- Introduction, Christine Petit-Jean-Genaz
- Installation of the SPMS, Matt Arena
- Oracle Tuning, Matt Arena
- Conference tuning, Ivan Andrian or Volker Schaa

- Functionality (Description of the Tables and what they do), Christine Petit-Jean-Genaz
- Registration Module, Charlie Horak and Matt Arena (plus perhaps help from Ann Jordan)

Christine shows her first efforts to set up a website for the Manual in FrontPage

<http://accelconf.web.cern.ch/AccelConf/JACoW/SPMS/Manual/>

The Users' Manual will also contain a glossary of terms, descriptions of various activities, such as abstract submission, attribution of programme codes, etc., to assist Administrators who are unfamiliar with these tasks.

Christine's transparencies are reproduced in Annex 6.

REQUESTS FOR DEVELOPMENTS

A few requests for database developments are discussed:

- Programme Committee/Scientific Advisory Board interface to allow, prior to abstract submission:
 - o the submission of proposals for invited oral presentations
 - o the submission of comments on conference organization;
- Incorporation of PAC vs. EPAC "Styles" into the conference parameters;
- Identification of papers by for publication in PRST-AB or other Scientific Journals;
- Review of password access/security;
- Identification of abstracts submitted by Students participating in the competition for prizes for best paper submitted by a student.

FORTHCOMING JACoW MEETINGS

JACoW Database Registration Module Meeting: FNAL, 31 August and 1 September 2005

JACoW Team Meeting: Europe, venue to be decided, tentatively in the week of 21 November 2005

JACoW Steering Committee Meeting: EPAC'06, Edinburgh, Thursday, 29 June 2006.

ANNEXES

1. Introduction, Transparencies from Christine Petit-Jean-Genaz
2. What's New in the SPMS, Transparencies from Matt Arena
3. The SPMS RM, Transparencies from Matt Arena
4. The SPMS RM, Transparencies from Charlie Horak
5. The SPMS RM, Transparencies from Christine Petit-Jean-Genaz
6. The SPMS Users' Manual, Transparencies from Christine Petit-Jean-Genaz