Network Working Group
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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FACILITY DOCUMENTATION

INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR EACH SERVICE AVAILABLE TO THE NETWORK

There are two classes of information which a site needs to provide for each service or process it makes available over the Network:

i) information required by system programmers in order to establish a connection to the facility

ii) information required by a user to gain access to and use the facility

The above two basic kinds of information which need to be in each facility description will comprise a "functional document" (see RFC 115, NIC (5822,) for a description of functional documents and recommended procedures for updating them).

The information required by user site system programmers may be a detailed document or a reference to a document containing a protocol common to several facilities or some combination of the above. All information required such as connection socket numbers, message formats, and character set information must be included. Two examples of system programmer type information are RFC 74, NIC (5417,) and RFC 105, NIC (5775,) prepared by James White of UCSB.

The information required by user site users is of three types:

a) information unique to Network users of the facility

b) information in common between Network users and server site users of the facility

c) information unique to particular Network user site.

The information of type c) would be prepared by the user site from the information provided by the server site. An example might be keying conventions required in order to send certain codes to the server site.

Future documentation will probably be written with information types a) and b) above integrated in one document, but initially server sites will probably have user manuals or documentation for their local users and will need to write a short document giving any additional information required for Network users. This information will vary, but might include a different login or control card sequence, varying echo or syntax for user sites operating with character at a time, line at a time, server site or user site echoing and so forth. Some features available to server site users may not be available to Network user site users or certain features may behave differently.

In addition to the above types of information, there should be instructions to the user on how to obtain help or answers to questions about using the facility.

Information about how to obtain administrative access (charge numbers, etc.) to a site should be contained in the document, ARPA Network Current Guides to Network Facilities, NIC (5148,). This information is being collected by BBN. This document will in turn contain references to the functional documents containing detailed descriptions of available Network facilities and how to use them.

Even if there are no special conventions or information unique to a Network user as opposed to a server site user, this fact should be explicitly stated in order to avoid confusion or uncertainty.

NETWORK INFORMATION CENTER POLICY ON DISTRIBUTION AND UPDATING OF DOCUMENTATION

The Network Information Center will distribute and maintain one copy of each functional document describing a facility in each Network Station NIC Collection. For this purpose we would appreciate it if 100 copies of each manual and set of manual updates, when they occur, could be sent to the NIC. Users at sites desiring their own copies of user documentation can obtain them either directly from the server site or by copying the master in their local NIC Collection. In order that users may know where to obtain additional copies of the documentation, an address and a price, if any, should be included in the information about each facility.

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