
Taking the Leap—Property Management Via The World-Wide Web

BY CHERI CROSS, CPPM, *Great Smoky Mountain Chapter*

When I arrived at the office at 6:30 A.M. this morning, the phone was already ringing and twenty e-mails had arrived since 5:00 P.M. yesterday afternoon. Oh well, just another typical day in Property. Then. . . the voice on the phone remarked, "Just wanted to let you know that this new property system is great!" And, to my surprise, e-mails contained comments like "The new system is soooo user friendly" and "I love this - Thanks!" Could this be real? Can you imagine?

Believe it or not, it is real. These are actual comments from property custodians and I can tell you the secret of how we achieved this unbelievable success. You see, Lockheed Martin Energy Systems and Energy Research (LMES/LMER) have taken a leap into the 21st century in the area of property management. Virtually all property management functions are accessible to individual custodians by utilizing the World-Wide Web (WWW). There are basically three property related programs available to LMES/LMER employees on the Web - Swap Shop, the Prism/Web Interface and the High-Risk Property Checklist.

SWAP SHOP

As with any other government facility, our primary source for the acquisition of property is internal reassignment. Reutilization as a source of supply continues to increase in importance due to decreasing budgets (less money) and downsizing (idle equipment). LMES and LMER have always maintained second-hand stores operations to facilitate reutilization efforts. The Swap Shop, an electronic bulletin-board-type exchange network for internal excess items, was developed in 1993 on the LMES/LMER computer network. Swap Shop proved to be so beneficial that it was upgraded in 1996 and moved to the Web to take advantage of a wider audience and user friendly technology. Swap Shop is totally customer driven - requiring minimal intervention from Property Management personnel. Custodians enter excess items directly into the system. A series of questions guide the custodian through the entry process and document such information as description, value, acquisition date, property number (if applicable), and the contact's name, location and telephone number. Then, employees can view all internal excess items via the Swap Shop before initiating other acquisition methods. What makes this a real bargain-basement bonanza is that users can find almost anything by browsing through the "Items Available" listing. From electrical

equipment and hardware to chemicals and computers - Swap Shop has it all. If an item appears to satisfy the requirements, you simply call the contact to obtain further details and arrange for the transfer of the item. There is also a listing of "Items Wanted" that may be reviewed by custodians of surplus property. Who knows? Someone may be patiently waiting for your excess (remember, one man's junk is another man's treasure).

Obvious cost savings include the avoidance of procurements. Approximately 1,200 items at a cost of \$2 million were reutilized via Swap Shop in FY96 alone. Other not so obvious benefits include the avoidance of costs associated with disposition, the various advantages of reusing hazardous materials, and pollution prevention.

PRISM/WEB INTERFACE

LMES/LMER was the fourth DOE site to implement PRISM (a PProperty Information System). Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory developed and first began using PRISM in 1991. The system was then updated by both Westinghouse Savannah River Company and Reynolds Electrical & Engineering Co., Inc (REECO). LMES/LMER obtained a copy of the REECO version in late 1995 and immediately began implementation. However, it soon became apparent that our philosophy regarding accountability was a little different than previous PRISM users. We delegate accountability/responsibility to the individual users of property items (we call them custodians). Allowing custodians to update information pertaining to their own property seemed only natural. Thus, the Web interface to PRISM was born. Ten thousand employees now access the Web from their personal computers and link to the PRISM interface from the internal home page. A user-id and password are required. The system recognizes the user by displaying their name and badge number and then lists the following main menu:

- Confirm Inventory
- Change Location
- Request Change of Custodian
- Cancel Change of Custodian Request
- Accept/Reject Custodianship
- Reports and Queries
- Request to Excess Property
- Cancel Excess Property
- Lost/Damaged/Destroyed/Contaminated Property

Now we spend our
time managing
property instead
of managing
a database

Upon selecting a menu option, the user is provided with an itemized listing of all accountable property assigned to them. By simply "clicking" on the appropriate property items, changes or requests are processed. Some changes are transferred to, and automatically update, the "real" PRISM system. Others generate e-mail messages to the appropriate people for further investigation and/or processing. For example, I want to change the location of my computer. To accomplish this, I select the "Change Location" option from the main menu. A listing of my property appears along with prompts for the new location information (site, building and room). After the new location is entered, I select the items to change by using my mouse to "click" on the appropriate property items. A "submit change" button is then selected and my location change is complete. It's that simple! The new location information has now been electronically sent to and processed within the Property Database. There is also an option to enter another employee's badge number so that the user can perform menu functions for co-workers. This is especially helpful when an employee does not have access to a computer or when a single employee provides property support to a group of people.

The benefits of the PRISM/Web Interface are nothing less than incredible. Scores of forms have been replaced and property personnel are no longer tied to their keyboards performing data changes to existing property items. Now we spend our time managing property instead of managing a database

HIGH RISK PROPERTY CHECKLIST

What is High Risk Property? High Risk Property consists of equipment, components, or materials especially designed for nuclear application. These items are on the "Trigger List" because they trigger the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Equipment, components, or materials which have both nuclear and non-nuclear applications are listed on the "Dual-Use List" and are known as dual use items. Finally, information of any kind that can be used or adopted for use in the design, production, manufacture, utilization or reconstruction of items on the Trigger or Dual Use List is also considered High Risk.

The Trigger List and the Dual-Use List have been compiled by the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), a group comprised of the United States and 30 others countries that are dedicated to averting the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Each NSG nation has agreed to control exports of items on the Trigger List and the Dual-Use List. DOE-sponsored activities often entail the transfer of property to the private sector. When such transfers occur without restriction, the beneficiaries may be nuclear proliferants or adversary countries. Therefore, all purchases, loans, and dispositions of property must be reviewed for high-risk status.

A High Risk Property Checklist is now available to the public via the World-Wide Web. This checklist will assist you in identifying proliferation sensitive property. LMER/LMES employees access the necessary information via the Web when conducting a High Risk Review on items being purchased, loaned, or excessed. First, the Trigger, Dual-Use, and Exception Lists (items that are never high risk) are easily reviewed. After this process is completed, a form is generated and printed with the review results. This automated checklist positively "uncomplicates" the high-risk review.

There, you have it - the secret of why our employees claim that "property management at LMES/LMER is actually fun!" These Web programs will be demonstrated at both the NPMA's 1997 National and Eastern Region Seminars. If you have ever dreamed of using the latest technology to upgrade your property system, I invite you to attend our workshop (with the same title as this article). Come see for yourself how you can utilize the Web to improve property management at your site. ♦

Cheri Cross is the Property Manager at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, operated by Lockheed Martin Energy Research for the Department of Energy. She currently serves as a National Delegate for the Great Smoky Mountain Chapter. Special thanks goes to Debra Simerly for her help in completing this article.