Configuration Logistics Information Program

Critical Information Supporting Shipboard Property Accountability

FREDERIC C. THOMPSON, JR., CPPM, HARBOUR LIGHTS CHAPTER
MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND

The Military Sealift Command (MSC) is a very unique organization for which to work. The complexity of the organizational structure and unique mission provides a setting where database uses supporting logistics and property management are complex and interacting.

This paper provides an introduction of vital, integrated and supported database descriptions that support property accountability. These are the Configuration Logistics Information Program (CLIP), SHIP Configuration Logistics Information Program (SHIPCLIP), Supply Management Program (SM) and the Delivered Property Inventory Database (DBID). Databases are vital to any organization. O'Brien (2001) describes database as "an integrated collection of logically related data elements" (P 145). He stated further "A database consolidates records previously stored in separate files into a common pool of data elements that provide data for many applications". (P 145)

METHOD

Database Analysis 1

The first database is a DOS-based program called Configuration Logistics Information Program or CLIP. CLIP is the central configuration and logistics support database for MSC, which is a program to develop, store, maintain and distribute the ship configuration and logistics support database. Through CLIP, MSC integrates the configuration data management and integrated logistics support functions using a single database and process. CLIP interfaces with and is updated routinely through Naval Inventory Control Point (NAVICP) Weapons Systems File and Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) logistics information updates. These updates include new or revised Allowance Parts Lists and Allowance Equipage Lists, and federal logistics management information for all catalogued parts in the Federal Logistics Information System.

CLIP provides the MSC Configuration Data Manager (CDM) with a database that retains logistics and configuration data on a class, hull and functional level. This configuration data management tool defines and maintains configuration baselines for each hull to the lowest level of replacement or maintenance (component, assembly or piece part). CLIP data is maintained through on-line data entry, batch tape and disk programs with interfaces to several PC based programs, which are briefly described as follows:

Shipboard CLIP (SHIPCLIP) is a hull tailored download of CLIP configuration, logistics and technical information. SHIPCLIP works in concert with CLIP, the repository for MSC configuration and logistics information. SHIPCLIP provides shipboard engineering and supply personnel with a hull-tailored specific reference tool for retrieval of the ship's configuration, logistics and technical information. It also provides a mechanism to record operational feedback in the form of Configuration Change Requests (CCR), Allowance Change Requests (ACR) and Fleet COSAL Feedback Reports (FCFBR). Additionally, SHIPCLIP can create automated issue and requisition documents that can be input directly into SM requirements files.

Supply Management (SM) is a DOS-based program for requisition, receipt, inventory funding and tracking of orders for shipboard repair parts and equipment. The data within SM is manually updated from CLIP, including changes to allowance equipment lists (AEL) or allowance parts list (APL), part number changes, equipment obsolescence and additions to the ship's configuration.

The familiarization process for CLIP, SHIPCLIP, SM and the DPID is extensive and requires the ability to move in and out of these different programs to research the

information necessary. SHIPCLIP retains the requirements, computations and data for all government property onboard, whether the item is part of an operating system, a repair part to be attached or incorporated or an item of property to support operation of the ship.

For example, in the present DOS-based operating system, an AEL can be researched in SHIPCLIP to determine the total quantity of a particular item of property that was put onboard. However, one must be aware that multiple AEL documents may exist and that each one may authorize different quantities for the same item. The property requirements data, such as the AEL, is also (in some cases) listed in the DPID, to ensure there is a direct link between what item was authorized and what was actually delivered. The problem with this whole process is that it is manual and requires extensive human intervention and data manipulation, which leads to an increasing number of errors and non-standard data.

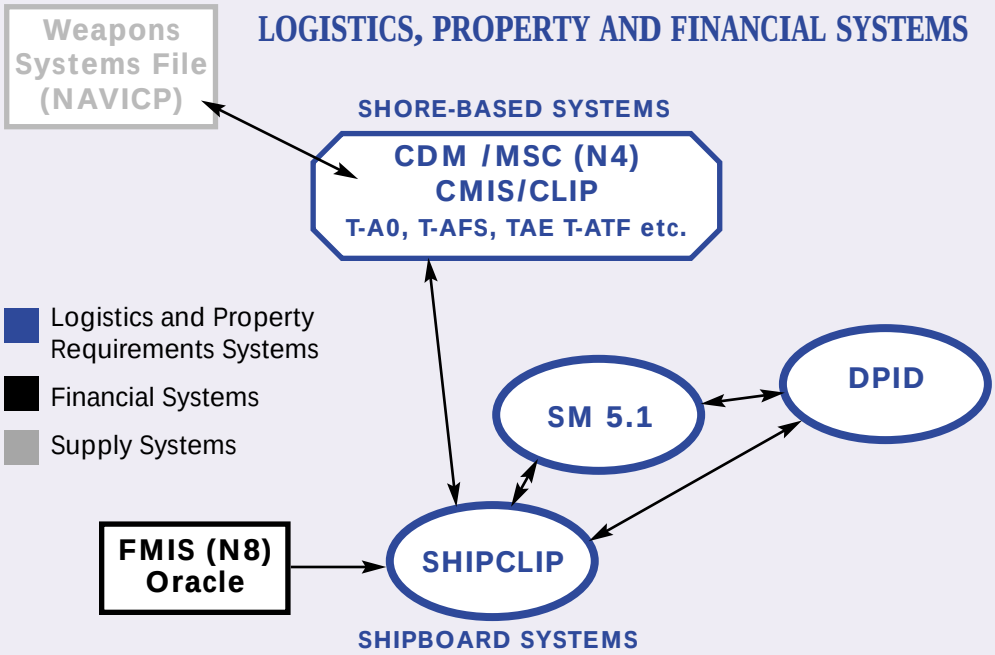

FIGURE 1: **DATABASE ANALYSIS RELATIONSHIP RESULTS**

As the CDM database, CLIP provides SHIPCLIP with hull specific configuration extracts and in turn receives and processes ship generated configuration changes and other feedback. In addition, CLIP also provides SHIPCLIP with an updated hull specific extract, which reflects the ship's new baseline and thereby closes the loop between the ship and shore activities. It also provides life cycle, closed loop Integrated Logistics Support (ILS) data for MSC shipboard equipment and components. Figure 1 illustrates this process.

Database Analysis 2

In the initial database introduction, the integrated process between CLIP, SHIPCLIP, and SM was described. The second database to be discussed is DPID or as I like to simplify it, the durable, movable asset records. This is an Excel spreadsheet with data loaded from a combination of SHIPCLIP and actual receipt and physical inventory results, which is used as a delivery accountability tool. This is also the document developed by the government and delivered to the contract operator for their use in contract performance.

DPID defines the types, kinds and quantities of shipboard durable, movable assets, other than repair parts and materials. The interaction between DPID and the other databases is extensive, and for effective property administration it is necessary to fully comprehend the complexity of the shipboard property accountability system. A detailed analysis over the past fifteen months found that of 25 different DPID databases, there was insufficient standardization of basic accountability information data fields and many were not consistent in the data field completion.

DISCUSSION

In the commercial maritime community, mariners are often not provided detailed tools to assist in maintaining the latest shipboard logistics support and configuration data. The fact such tools as SHIPCLIP, SM, DPID and numerous other shore-based, shipboard and waterfront systems are available are significant milestones in obtaining total contract-operated ships configuration, logistics and property data integration over the long term.

Our combined objective, that is, the vision of both the logistics division and the property administration group, is to integrate the SHIPCLIP, SM and DPID into one system. Our efforts have been focused on this objective recently and we visualize our first testing of this combined system in about six months. There are thousands of commercial software programs available, including those specifically designed for shipboard operations, but none which provide the depth of information and interaction necessary, without substantial cost, to maintain visibility

and accuracy of this data at all times. Conversely, with all the property regulatory changes flowing like landslides and GAO interest in property management continuing to reappear, the development and implementation of this combined system becomes more crucial each working day.

RESULTS

Database management and use in the Military Sealift Command is a uniquely defined and extremely important interrelated process to ensure successful results. The need for an updated client/server web-based system for all of these databases is more important than ever. The new challenge for property administration is how to "normalize" the forty-eight databases of property accountability data, including the twenty-five that have been reviewed, to support development of the combined SHIPCLIP, SM and DPID system. The combined system cannot import property accountability data files until a process is implemented to normalize the test platforms Excel data files because this will be the basis for the master property catalogue by class of ship.

The information contained within SHIPCLIP and SM provides vital requirements for durable, movable assets and our efforts to "normalize the data" must take into account the primary data feeds from SHIPCLIP. Data in SHIPCLIP, SM and DPID must be understood completely to effectively evaluate our shipboard property accountability systems. This whole process is similar to answering the question of "How do you eat an elephant?" It is quite simple really, "One bite at a time." ◆

(Views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of the Navy or the Military Sealift Command)

REFERENCES

O'Brien, J.A. (2001) Introduction to Information Systems Essentials for the E-Business Enterprise (11th Ed) 145

Military Sealift Command (2000) Configuration and Logistics Data Management Guide; Retrieved from the World Wide Web 28 July 2002: http://www2.msc.navy.mil/n4/data

FREDERIC C. "CHRIS" THOMPSON, JR., CPPM is the Team Leader, Property Administration and appointed Property Administrator for the Military Sealift Command in Washington DC. His responsibilities extend across international waters, with 30- plus contracts and charters, amongst different ship missions and classifications. He has 25 years civil service, with 18 of those in Contract Property Administration. He was previously assigned to the Chief of Naval Air Training in Corpus Christi, Texas, performing aircraft and training device maintenance support service contracts. He originally joined the NPMA in 1989 as a member of the Austin Chapter and was the founder and Chapter President of the short-lived Coastal Bend Chapter in 1991. He is presently a member of the Harbor Lights Chapter, NPMA.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The General Services Administration (GSA) is the highest-level promulgator of Federal-wide personal property policy and procedure, with the "vehicle" being the Federal Management Regulations (formerly the Federal Property Management Regulations). As a Federal agency personal property manager (Immigration and Naturalization Service) I have noticed that for some odd reason there is missing from the FMR/ FPMR certain personal property policies and procedures that all Federal agencies must have in place for operating their program. Physical inventorying of personal property and property-surveying, two important areas, come to mind, as I'm sure there are others. Lest Federal agencies be on their own to develop these policies and procedures, ensuring non-uniformity from agency to agency, I would encourage GSA to address these areas, to include, as necessary, contacting the various Federal agencies to identify that Federal-wide personal property policy and procedure are seen as needed.

Myles Schulberg, CPPM
Chief, Logistics Policy, Planning, and Evaluation Section
Immigration and Naturalization Service

