(U//FOUO) S1221 Visit to MHS Spawns a Bonanza for MESSIAH Users

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This and a follow-on article will highlight ways in which a recent trip to Menwith Hill Station by members of the Reporting Tools Branch spawned an enhancement of the MESSIAH reporting tool and of the training options available to users of the tool. (U)

(U//FOUO) In June of 2004, members of the Reporting Tools Branch (S1221) visited Menwith Hill Station (MHS) to discuss the site's concerns about using MESSIAH as their primary product reporting tool. Station personnel cited a high-priority need to forward robust product report source data and metrics to PLUS -- a need that MESSIAH did not then satisfy.

(U//FOUO) To be sure, MESSIAH allowed users to satisfy the minimum requirements of USSID 369; analysts could forward some 10 fields of source data to PLUS via Product Tip-Off (PTO) Klieglight reports. This solution required, however, that all analysts be trained and proficient in using MESSIAH both for product reporting and for Klieglights.

(U//FOUO) What the station needed and wanted was a feed mechanism similar to that used by SKYWRITER , which employs a Secure File Transfer Protocol for handling sensitive-series reports and allows forwarding of some 40 fields of data. The forwarded information includes report histories, write-to-release tracking, and USSID 18 information. The latter was being stored in manila folders at analysts' desks!

(U//FOUO) When the S1221 team returned home and began investigating options for solving the problem, it became evident that many of the Extended Enterprise elements that will be receiving MESSIAH as part of the HIGHCASTLE suite harbored the very same concerns as the analysts at Menwith Hill Station. Moreover, some sites that were already using MESSIAH for technical reporting were asking for SKYWRITER as well; they were willing to expend the additional support and training effort that would be required for a second reporting tool, in order to obtain less cumbersome access to PLUS.

(U//FOUO) Clearly, then, a solution similar to the mechanism used by SKYWRITER would satisfy users' needs. Such a mechanism had the added advantage of standardizing the process across multiple reporting systems, since it was also incorporated in the Content Preparation Environment, or CPE (formerly SIGINT On Demand -- see related article). S1221 set about to design and implement the interface.

(U//FOUO) MESSIAH's PLUS Feed Service was completed in February 2005 and is currently undergoing beta testing at USA-70. Initial test results are promising, and the service is expected to be available as a standard MESSIAH option in the April-May 2005 time frame. The new interface will mirror the service provided by both SKYWRITER and CPE; it will allow forwarding of the same fields, in an identical format, using a mask template, provided by S1221, that will require only minimal tailoring by each site.

(U//FOUO) The analysts and managers at Menwith Hill Station can be proud that the concerns which they expressed to the visiting S1221 team have resulted in a significant expansion of MESSIAH's capabilities. They can also be proud that the visit sparked a similar improvement in the training offered to new MESSIAH users. A future article in SID *today* will highlight S1221's development of a web-based MESSIAH training course for analysts and reporters -- a course that was requested by MHS and is also undergoing beta testing, with roll-out expected in April 2005.

(U//FOUO) Menwith Hill Station

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