

Stabilizing SIGNET: An Update

Where We Were: On June 14, 1995, the Director General of the Information Systems Bureau (STD), Richard Kohler, announced that any non-essential changes to SIGNET would be postponed until after October 2. The purpose of this freeze was to enable STD to isolate and identify, in a static environment, the problems which were contributing to the instability of SIGNET (see *SIGNET News* of August 14).

Where We Are: The SIGNET stabilization freeze ended on October 2, and a key question being asked is, "Does STD know what the problems are?" The simple answer to the question is "Yes." "With one exception, we know what the problems are that are contributing to the instability of SIGNET," said Mr. Kohler. "We also know what has to be done to fix each of them."

Some of the problems will be fixed immediately (see schedule below);

▶▶▶ **Continued from page 1**

"Close communication between the developer and SIGNET is essential during application development," comments Ms. Hardy. It is STC's responsibility to facilitate this process to ensure that the client's requirements are understood by the developer. In cases where the developer is a private sector consultant, it is also STC's responsibility to ensure that they are provided with the necessary technical information and contacts to guarantee a smooth integration of the application onto SIGNET. It remains the client's responsibility, however, to plan and manage the development itself.

Doug Rosenthal emphasizes that his staff brings expertise to the business of working with clients. They have a user's perspective (from both Headquarters and missions) on how SIGNET functions, and they

others will require more time to resolve because additional effort is needed to develop, integrate and then test the solutions (e.g., upgrading the version of the UNIX operating system on all the servers).

Clients who have waited until October 2 to have their applications put onto SIGNET are asked to be patient a little longer. A back-log has built up and applications are being implemented in order of priority.

The schedule of what STD will be doing this fiscal year to provide needed long-term stability to SIGNET is as follows:

October 1995

- Release of fixes to improve the reliability of the SIGNET servers.

Third Quarter Fiscal Year 1995/96

- Release of a fix to ICONDESK to address "XPM" errors and

know and are interested in the business of the Department. In these times of constant change, they understand and appreciate how technology is reshaping DFAIT into a stronger, more productive Department. "Their particular combination of skills and experience, together with a knowledge of the SIGNET organization, makes STC a valuable partner in the application development process," says Mr. Rosenthal.

If your work group has a business process that you think would be better served on SIGNET, please contact Sue Hardy at 995-2803 or by e-mail. STC welcomes the opportunity to work with you.

[The second in this series on application development will focus on Application Development (STED) and its role in the application development process. This article will appear in the November 27 issue of *SIGNET News*.]

"Cannot Execute Command" errors and a number of lesser problems which contribute to the general instability of the e-mail environment.

Fourth Quarter Fiscal Year 1995/96

- Release of UNIX upgrade for SIGNET servers.

- Release of Windows for Workgroups. This software will improve workstation performance and provide a more reliable desktop environment. Note: due to unanticipated technical problems, the software cannot be released any earlier.

SIGNET News will keep you informed about these key developments.

What We Are Committed To: The Information Systems Bureau has a commitment to ensure the on-going stability and reliability of SIGNET. Many users are therefore asking the question, "Is SIGNET stable now?" — with the expectation that as of October 2 the problems with the system would have been fixed. While the freeze was lifted on October 2, the above schedule details the timeframes in which fixes to the system will be released. The SIGNET Stabilization Project will, therefore, continue until all known stabilization problems have been resolved.

"A great deal of effort has been invested in addressing the problems which have contributed to SIGNET's unreliable performance," commented Mr. Kohler. "Client support and patience during the stabilization freeze have been most appreciated. Your help in identifying the problems will result in a more reliable product for all of us."