The Data-Capture and Retrieval Passport Issuing System (IRIS)

In 1994, the Passport Office made a large capital investment to implement the automated passport issuing system we call IRIS. The IRIS system combines enhanced security with sophisticated photo-scan and reliable data-capture and retrieval capabilities. IRIS responds to client requests for greater convenience, more flexible service delivery and allows for the development of a more sophisticated passport booklet.

Examiners have received training to prepare them for an all-IRIS office. In the meantime, as we work to fine-tune the automated system, passports can still be processed manually when necessary. The rollover to IRIS began in the Spring of 1999. By March 2000, about one third of the offices were equipped with the electronic system.

> The IRIS system combines enhanced security with sophisticated photo-scan and reliable data-capture and retrieval capabilities.

This year, 28 of our 29 offices were fully IRIS-functional and 78 percent of all passports were issued using the automated system. Our new office in Richmond, BC is the first to operate exclusively with IRIS. The implementation process is on schedule and beginning in June 2001, all passports issued in Canada will be processed using IRIS.

With IRIS, examiners input applicant information, scan the applicant's photo, the guarantor's declaration and the documentary proof of citizenship and store them in the electronic data-capture and retrieval system while the applicant waits.

But the real benefits of IRIS will be realized when the first IRIS-processed passports are due for renewal beginning in 2004. When the passport is about to expire, a new passport can be re-issued by retrieving the stored data. The applicant will no longer have to re-submit the required birth or citizenship documents. Canada now enjoys international recognition as a leader in the technological development of passport design and processing systems.