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But things did begin to get sticky when we were required to out secretarial support. The longstanding relationships between officers and support staff

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came unglued. With some disgruntlement, officers had to start getting out their own stuff. They began to realize what a mailout to 500 selected individuals really means, or just how difficult a printer can be when you send it a document with a bizarre paper size, or how much fun it is to find a file again when all of your files have been given pretty much the same name. Some of the LES officers developed a nervous twitch and were often heard muttering about "inefficient use of my time".

The arrival of Small Mission SIGNET seemed to staff to be a mixed blessing. The ease and informality of e-mail alleviated many of the formatting problems they had preparing paper mail, and e-mail finally made it obvious why they had to send their own messages. On the other hand, it was yet another thing that had to be learned. In the few weeks since SIGNET landed on us, staff have received Lotus Organizer, we acquired a scanner, and faxes to Canada are sent over MITNET

directly from the workstation. And COSMOS just arrived. And ICONDESK will be upgraded to version 4.4 soon.

What has really happened is that the Munich office has become a do-it-yourself adult education centre. We have been forced to become self-reliant because we are largely on our own. Venerable procedures in all areas are being questioned (why register outgoing faxes if no one does it for e-mail?) and re-vamped. Attitude adjustment has helped a lot. The person who exhibited the most initial resistance just acquired a modem for his standalone PC and surfs the "Infobahn" for information in his areas of professional interest (although he still types everything only in upper case because it is more "efficient"). The initial fear of doing something wrong has yielded to impatience when something does go wrong. There is also a growing determination not to accept any nonsense from the system. Instead of allowing the printers to go on strike while they

look around for help, staff independently figure out how to quick-march the printers back to work. This is real empowerment and is one of the major benefits SIGNET brought us. The evolution of our working procedures has only just begun. And the changes are being introduced by the staff who

The main benefits of "SIGNETization" are familiar to anyone who has experienced it. Instant communications take almost no time to accept as normal.

must make them work. Our new calling cards, which include our individual Internet addresses, are cause for comment in Germany. We're on the leading edge... thanks to SIGNET.

**Small Mission SIGNET -
the Other Side of the Story**

We are very pleased that Small Mission SIGNET (SMS) is running smoothly in Munich, our pilot installation. A number of other SMS sites have now been installed and some have not yet reached the successful stability of Munich. Problems continue with login and with the messaging system.

We've learned valuable lessons from our experience in Munich and from other Small Missions. We are working hard and fast to find ways to improve the performance of Small Mission SIGNET, but it will take time. We hope you will be patient with us as we develop needed solutions to the problems at hand. Our goal is for SMS to work as well in all Small Missions, as it does in Munich. It's our job to ensure that it does.