

TO: ALTOUSERS

February 24, 1975

FROM: B. Hunt

SUBJECT: THE MAINTENANCE AND DOCUMENTATION OF ALTO SUB-SYSTEMS.

The following are some ideas which I have regarding the implementation of new releases of alto software. I would appreciate any suggestions which you may have which would be beneficial in establishing an acceptable procedure for handling the maintenance and documentation of alto sub-systems.

1. The Maxc Directories.

The maintainer of a sub-system, when he has a new release, would submit the following package to me:

- a) The name of the source file(s).
- b) The name of an @-file which may be used to create the new executable file(s) from this source.
- c) A message describing the changes which will be effective with this release. The subject of this message should be the name of the sub-system.

In the case of emergency changes, he may update the <ALTO> directory and send the message to ALTOUSERS. At the same time, the items listed above should be sent to me.

He will keep development copies on his personal directory.

I will maintain the following:

- a) The <ALTOSOURCE> directory, from which the current <ALTO> files were created. This directory will contain both the source files and the @-files for new releases. It will also contain the source files for library subroutines.
- b) The <ALTO> directory, which will include only binary files. The source files which are currently stored on <ALTO> will be moved to <ALTOSOURCE>.
- c) The <ALTODOCS> news releases, by copying the MESSAGE.TXT which has been sent to ALTOUSERS. The subject and date of the message will be used to selectively copy the appropriate message.

2. The Alto Disk.

At the suggestion of Ed McCreight, as a future consideration, I

would like to implement a disk update procedure which would compare the dates of the files on the <ALTO> directory with those of the corresponding file on the alto disk and copy all new releases to the alto disk.

The user would be able to execute the disk update procedure, with omissions as desired.

I have discussed this plan with a few people. The feeling is that the file maintenance could be done via sub-commands of the successor to ETHERMCA.

3. <ALTODOCS> File Formats.

As the Alto is distributed to users outside of PARC, the problem of easily creating a documentation package becomes more critical. It should be possible to print the documentation files which are available without regard for file formats. (i.e. with a single list command specifying <ALTODOCS>). I would like to hear about any problems which would be created by establishing a single file format for <ALTODOCS> files.