

WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION

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RA-V WORKING GROUP ON THE PLANNING
AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WWW

ITEM: 6.5

THIRD MEETING
SYDNEY, 3 to 7 DECEMBER 2001

ENGLISH ONLY

OPERATIONAL INFORMATION SERVICE

(Submitted by the Secretariat)

Summary and purpose of document

This document provides information on the WWW Operational Information Service and further activities recommended by the Commission for Basic Systems (CBS).

ACTION PROPOSED

The meeting is invited to:

- (a) Note the information and CBS guidance in this document on future requirements related to the OIS;
 - (b) Take into account the information and CBS guidance in developing relevant action plans, and to consider the recommendations given in paragraphs 21 and 23.
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OPERATIONAL INFORMATION SERVICE (OIS)

1. The twelfth session of CBS (CBS-XII) (Geneva, 2000) recalled that the objective of the Operational Information Service (OIS) was to collect from and distribute to WMO Members and WWW Centres detailed and up-to-date information on facilities, services and products made available in the day-to-day operation of the WWW. This Service includes WMO Publication No. 9, Vols. A, B, C1, C2 and D as well as WMO Publication No. 47, METNO messages and the Operational Newsletter.

2. Several elements of the operational information are maintained on data bases operated on PCs, which facilitates the maintenance of the relevant Publications and provides much greater flexibility for dissemination, in particular through the Internet. Information related to the WMO Publication No. 9, Volumes. A and C1, WMO Publication No. 47 and RBSN lists are available on the Internet via the WMO home page at the following site: <http://www.wmo.ch/web/ddbs/publicat.html>. It is also possible to access to the information via FTP from:

Pub.9-Volume A: <ftp://www.wmo.ch/wmo-ddbs/Pub9volAymmdd.flatfile>

Pub.9-Volume C1: ftp://www.wmo.ch/wmo-ddbs/OperationalInfo/VolumeC1/From_WMO/VolC1/

Publication 47: ftp://www.wmo.ch/wmo-ddbs/Pub47_ships.yymmdd.data

RBSN lists: <ftp://www.wmo.ch/wmo-ddbs/rbsn.rax>

The WWW Operational Newsletter is also available on the Internet at the following site: <http://www.wmo.ch/web/ddbs/jen/Newsletters/index.html>

WMO Publication No. 9, Volume A – Observing stations

3. CBS-XII noted with concern that despite repeated appeals made to Members to notify the Secretariat of the changes in their observation networks, there were discrepancies in the information contained in Pub. No. 9, Volume A and the real operation of the observing stations. CBS-XII recognised that there was a necessity to re-examine the structure of Volume A, its contents and the procedures for updating the information submitted by Members. CBS-XII agreed that this task should be referred to the OPAG/IOS to work in collaboration with the Secretariat to ensure that an improved Volume A would serve the purpose for which it was intended. In addition, due to the importance of validated information on observing stations for operational purposes CBS-XII noted a proposal for developing and making available to NMHSs, a master reference operational catalogue of observing stations. The information in the catalogue would be based on that provided by Members as input to Volume A, but would also take due account of the information provided by quality monitoring lead centres as well as quantitative information with respect to the actual implementation of observing programmes. CBS-XII agreed that the OPAG/IOS further develop the concept in co-ordination with other OPAGs and the Secretariat as appropriate.

4. CBS-XII considered possible measures for improving the accuracy of Volume A of WMO Publication No. 9 in order to make the publication more useful to Members. It noted that the updating of Volume A was not always possible in an adequate and timely manner. CBS-XII recommended therefore that Members should designate focal points in NMHSs, who are authorised to directly inform the WMO Secretariat of any changes. The Commission also agreed that the following matters should receive attention:

- The re-use of index numbers and the limitation of the index numbering system;
- Changes in co-ordinates which may be the result of either corrections or station moves;
- History of station changes;
- The need for station elevations.

5. CBS-XII appointed Mr H. Daan (Netherlands) as Rapporteur on the improvement of Volume A. The rapporteur will work closely with lead centres and the WMO Secretariat to develop measures for improvement of the utility of WMO Publication No. 9, Volume A with emphasis on completeness, accuracy of the information and adding indications of operational performance as derived from monitoring results. Such measures may refer to:

- Procedures for the exchange of information between individual Members and the WMO Secretariat;
- Procedures for monitoring the information quality and initiating corrections;
- The layout of the information, including presentation;
- Insertion of information from lead monitoring centres.

WMO Publication No. 9, Volume B – Data processing

6. Information on the Global Data Processing System is yearly included in a Technical document – WWW Technical Progress Report on the Global Data Processing System. Further information on the processed information exchanged on the Global Telecommunication System is available in Volume C1 – Catalogue of meteorological bulletins. This information supersedes the information included in Volume B - Data processing – of WMO Publication No. 9. The ICT on Data Processing and Forecasting Systems is considering a proposal to suppress Volume B from Publication No.9.

WMO Publication No. 9, Volume C1 - Catalogue of meteorological bulletins

7. CBS-XII recalled that CBS-Ext. (98) (Karlsruhe, 1998) had decided that as part of their responsibilities, WMCs and RTHs on the MTN were to review the catalogue of meteorological bulletins as regards bulletins issued by their relevant zones and notify the Secretariat by transferring updated files, of changes to be included in Volume C1. The Secretariat is tasked with maintaining a global database of Volume C1 accessible on its FTP server, and with issuing regularly METNO messages and the updated editions of Volume C1.

8. The Secretariat developed and ran a PC-based application to maintain and update the comprehensive catalogue of meteorological bulletins and to automatically prepare METNO messages, on the basis of the information (advanced notifications and relevant catalogue part) provided by the MTN centres. The application was developed using the database software Microsoft Access-97 under Windows 95 or 98. The application included tools for maintaining the parts of the catalogue for which the respective MTN centres were not yet providing the expected information files. CBS-XII noted with appreciation that the PC-based application was made available to MTN centres which had not yet implemented the new procedures agreed by CBS-Ext.(98), with a view to facilitating their implementation.

9. CBS-XII noted with appreciation that eight MTN centres (Bracknell, Melbourne, Moscow, Nairobi, Offenbach, Sofia, Tokyo and Toulouse) had implemented the procedures for the comprehensive catalogue of meteorological bulletins (Volume C1). This implementation had already resulted in significant improvements of the information on actual GTS bulletins. This confirmed that the comprehensive catalogue procedures would enable a major improvement of the content of the catalogue, and the Commission invited all MTN centres to implement these procedures with a view to achieving a complete catalogue.

10. The Secretariat is developing a project for an interactive access to the catalogue of meteorological bulletins. The objective of the project is to facilitate the access of the users to the catalogue from the WMO server through queries. The RTH focal points are invited to participate in the tests of the application.

WMO Publication No. 9, Volume C2 – Transmission schedules

11. The Implementation Co-ordination Meeting on the MTN (ICM-MTN 2001) (Geneva, June

2001) reviewed the status of Volume C2. The information provided in Volume C2 includes a heading and a part "contents" for each distribution system. The heading contains the name of the country, the name of the centre, the specific area in which the broadcast is intended to be received and the technical specifications (call sign, frequencies (including hours of operation, class of emission, bandwidth, transmission for RTT, power). The part "contents" contain:

- For RTT, the transmission programmes, i.e. the lists of abbreviated headings
- For radio-facsimile, the transmission programmes including the abbreviated headings, the time of transmission, the duration of transmission, the drum speed/index of co-operation, the map area and further detailed information.

12. During the last ten years, several Members discontinued the operation of RTT and radio-facsimile broadcasts, which had high recurrent operational costs and a limited efficiency, in some instances replacing them by satellite distribution systems. CBS-EXT.(98) noted that there might still be requirements in some areas and in particular the maritime community (ships) still had requirements to receive products by HF broadcasts. At present all the radio-facsimile broadcasts contained in Volume C2 are also contained in Volume D of the Publication No. 9 – Information for shipping. With a view to avoiding this duplication of information between Volume C2 and D, the ICM-MTN 2001 recommended to delete the existing part "contents" in Volume C2 and to replace this information by a summary.

13. In compliance with section 2.10.3 of Part II of Volume I of the Manual on the GTS, a GTS centre should include in its routing catalogue the abbreviated headings of all bulletins received and/or transmitted on any GTS circuit connected to this GTS centre (GTS point-to-point circuits, GTS point-to-multipoint circuits such as satellite distribution systems, including the remaining HF broadcasts). For RTT the information included in the part "contents" should therefore be included in the routing Catalogue of the GTS centre.

14. The ICM-MTN 2001 therefore recommended:

- To keep the existing presentation of the headings of Volume C2, and to replace the existing parts "contents" by a text summarising the contents.
- To invite the GTS centres:
 - To include the lists of bulletins transmitted through distribution systems in their routing catalogues,
 - To continue providing updates for the headings,
 - To provide a summary of the contents of the transmission programmes in an electronic format.

The recommendations of the ICM-MTN 2001 will be considered by the CBS/Implementation Co-ordination Team on the ISS, which should submit a proposal to the extraordinary session of CBS in 2002.

WMO Publication No. 47 – International list of Selected, Supplementary and Auxiliary Ships

15. An extensive redesign of the Publication No. 47 was under way to expand the type and enhance the accuracy of metadata provided by the publication on the size, identity and meteorological instrumentation of the mobile ship stations included in the surface-based synoptic network subsystem of the GOS. Publication 47 metadata is increasingly being incorporated into various ocean observation and climate research programmes, including in a new JCOMM programme set up to merge the new Publication 47 metadata set with the observational weather data transmitted by VOS ships, in order to incorporate updated calculations of biases and corrections into the processing of observed data.

Issues concerning the presentation of and access to the of WWW Operational Information -

WMO Publications No. 9 and No. 47 – and of the Manuals on the GDPS, GOS and GTS and the Manual on Codes

WMO Publications No. 9 (excluding Volume B) and No. 47

16. CBS agreed that the objective of the OIS should be to provide interactive on-line access services.

17. The use of Information Technology makes it now possible for the WMO Secretariat to quickly receive updates from the WWW centres and update WMO Publications No. 9 and No. 47 in an electronic format.

18. The WMO Publications No. 9 and No. 47 are at present distributed to the WMO Members in a paper format. The production and dispatch of these Publications on CD-ROMs would be much more cost-effective than the paper format. Those WMO Members, who still prefer to receive the paper format, could be provided with the paper copy upon individual request.

19. Parts of the WWW operational information are already available on the WMO server. This makes it possible for the users to access directly the information updated in quasi real time by the Secretariat. This satisfies better the requirements of the users who need to receive as soon as possible updated information. Interactive access with search tools are also being developed, and are already available on an experimental basis for Volume C1 (<http://ALTO-STRATUS.wmo.ch/WWWOIS/>). It is proposed to use the Web access as the main distribution means for WMO Publications No. 9 (excluding Volume B) and No. 47, and to provide once a year, a new edition of the Volumes (excluding Volume B) on CD-ROM .

20. Parts of the WWW operational information were dispatched to subscribers on diskettes with a view to satisfying the requirements of users to receive the information in an electronic format. As the requirements of the subscribers of the diskette service can be best satisfied through direct access to the WMO server, backed-up by an annual CD-ROM, it is planned to discontinue the diskette subscription service.

Action proposed

21. The meeting may wish to express its concurrence on:

- Distributing the WMO Publications No. 9 (excluding Volume B) and No. 47 on a CD-ROM as from 2002. Those WMO Members, who still prefer to receive the paper format, could request the paper copy;
- Continuing developing the presentation of the WMO Publications No. 9 and No. 47 on the WMO server, and ;
- Discontinuing the diskette service.

Manuals on the GDPS, GOS and GTS and Manual on Codes

22. The Manuals on the GDPS, GOS and GTS and Manual on Codes, which are Annexes to the WMO Technical Regulations, are not made available in electronic format. This is not only unsatisfactory to users but hampers the activities of those working on changes to the Manuals, including experts from CBS and Regional groups. Availability of the Manuals in Microsoft Word would eliminate the problem. Once the revised/updated editions of the Manuals are ready for publication they would also be posted in Word and pdf-format on the WMO server for easy access by the WWW centres as reference for the implementation and operation of the WWW. The ongoing revision of the Manual on the GOS, which entails a comprehensive rewriting, would offer a good opportunity to move to the new procedure. Another possibility exists in the Manual on Codes, Part B, which is already handled in Microsoft Word. The Manuals could also be distributed on CD-ROM, if so requested.

Action proposed

23. The meeting may wish to express its concurrence on publishing the Manuals on the GDPS, GOS and GTS and Manual on Codes in Microsoft Word and pdf formats and posting them on the WMO Server and making them available on CD-ROM.