

From: abridle (Alan Bridle)
To: rsimon@antarctica.CV.NRAO.EDU (Richard Simon)
Subject: Misc re AHB documentation work for aips++
Date: Fri, 4 Nov 1994 09:27:37 -0500

Richard:

I think I need to do a pilot project that will test several possible approaches, HTML, HyperTex, etc.

I will therefore spend some time soon trying various hypertext systems as frameworks for my VLAPLAN documentation, which anyway needs to be linked into the VLA-Socorro WWW system. This should allow me to start making choices for the aips++ scientific-user documentation on the basis of actual experience, while providing a useful short-term

product.

My schedule for 1995 already has a few roadblocks to continuous effort on aips++ documentation. I have committed to spending most of January in Socorro, starting with the VLA upgrade meeting. My intention was to help Tim and Rick put together some paper for the VLA upgrade plan following the meeting. This time may also be useful in getting ideas and help from the AOC folks re aips++ documentation. But it probably means I won't be able to start working on aips++ things in earnest until I return to C'ville in February.

I have already committed to working on the next Synthesis Imaging Workshop (June) and to editing the proceedings of a workshop on Jets that is being held in Alabama in September. I will also be away from the NRAO for most of July.

These constraints will make it hard to spend more than 50% of my time on aips++ documentation for most of the year.

Realistically, you need to start two documentation efforts anyway. One should begin with programmer-to-programmer/power_user documentation. The other should begin with user-to-novice_user documentation. They should share technologies and expect to meet in the middle to provide "seasoned user" documentation for people who want to do science-driven innovation and customization within aips++.

I'm willing to sign on for the second of these efforts and to stay with it while it evolves into the "seasoned user" stuff, much as I did for Classic AIPS. I also want to integrate the aips++ user documentation with the relevant materials from the Synthesis Workshop courses, and my ongoing involvement with them should be a net plus. I see the whole involvement at a 2- or 3-year effort. I would be willing to consult and closely co-ordinate with the programmer-to-programmer documentation effort as the two should become a seamless whole when the project is mature.

But it's quite clear to me that you need to line up several other people into any documentation effort that is to be both comprehensive and timely.

1. Someone to concentrate on the programmer-to-programmer side.

2. Someone from the single-dish scientific community (I won't have either the specialist knowledge or the time to take care of that).
3. Someone who is a real black-belt VLBI-er to kick in VLBI-specific document sections.
4. Someone who is a real black-belt spectroscopist, likewise.

I'll be happy to take on the "scientific editor" job you suggested for me in 1995 if you can live with my schedule and other commitments and if we can line up the other people who will be needed. We must not try to pretend that I could do the whole user-documentation job on my own on the presently advertised time-schedules for aips++ releases!!

There should be time to think this over before you have to announce anything to your review panel. I am willing to have my firm commitment announced at that time provided the rest of the plan is also in place (i.e. we also have commitments from the other people who will be needed). Otherwise you should announce only that I am helping you draw up a plan for documentation!

I will be attending the aips++ review meeting as an observer in any case, and if there has been time for me to test any concrete suggestions re documentation styles by then I might make a short contribution to it.

A.