

The HPGSUG Contributed Software Library

How to utilize it in your shop

Wayne E. Holt
Director of Data Processing
Whitman College
Walla Walla Wa 99362

It is unfortunately typical that the average member of HPGSUG joined the group for the explicit purpose of "getting a special routine that he heard about" when he was ordering his machine. The Library tape comes, the routine is pulled, and the tape is then shelved until "later".

This paper will not debate the philisophical merits of joining a group dedicated to the idea of Information Through Interface and INVOLVEMENT, then maintaining a passive stance in regards to contributing substantively.

Rather, the purpose of the paper is to concentrate on the fallacy of "getting that one routine". Simply put, the Library is a very real resource to almost any type of shop - to not become familiar with it's contents or evaluate it's potential is to subscribe to the "not invented here" or "I always re-invent the wheel" theory. Simply put, it is a matter of getting your money's worth or not.

The obvious merits of "the one routine" cannot be challanged. If it is so important to have it that you buy an entire Library to get it, then by all means rip it out of the tape as soon as you get the chance. But what of the rest?

There are at least three other valuable classes of software on the tape besides the obvious:

1. Similar Software. Unknown to you when you sent for your tape, there were other programs or systems that do roughly the same thing your "gem routine" does - only maybe they do it better, or in a manner more suited to your environment.
2. Other Software. It is next to impossible for a new User to install a system and not experience problems of one sort or another. All too often, such Users suffer in silence until "the explosion". Frequently, the solution was in the Library all that time, but no one had bothered to check.
3. Sample Software. It is often useful to examine the source code of a program that uses a technique or subsystem such as KSAM, VIEW, or IMAGE before trying to impliment such a program on your own for the first time. The Library can be provide those kinds of examples.

If you can accept the idea that the Library has a lot more to offer than "that routine", then several topic areas emerge.

With Release 06 of the Library, a first-draft issue of a Guide to the Library was provided. I will not attempt to repeat the valuable information that was presented there. I will point out, however, that a thorough understanding of that material is essential to knowing what is available and how to get at it.

Perhaps just as important as getting the material that you want off the tape is knowing what to do with it once you get it. How should it be organized? Where should it be stored?

There is no one method that is best - however, there are several that have gained a wide acceptance. First of all, it is a rare site that can :RESTORE the entire Library on their system. Those that do simply use the existing account structure with no changes.

More common are the sites that carefully pick and choose what software will be transferred to their system from the tape. They use either the Abstracts or the simply default to "I want that routine" in picking candidates for transfer.

Regardless of the selection method, there are two structures most commonly used to store the software, neither of which are mutually exclusive. The first is to put all of the "Library" software in one account, usually called LIB, whether it is from HPGSUG or is internal in origin.

The second method is to install the software selectively into existing accounts. For instance, performance software goes into a special operation account, programmer aids go into the development account, and execution utilities go into the production account. At Whitman, we use a combination of both methods. The important point is that we considered very carefully the type of structure BEFORE installing the software, rather than allowing it to be decided by happenstance.

The following list of Contributed Library software is basically my own personal list of "few shops should do without" material. The efficacy of the list within your shop is subject of course to the type of environment that you maintain.

- BROADCAST - A useful utility for sending messages to every terminal in the system, even if they are logged off.
- SOO - Although potentially dangerous, this program is an effective monitor of what programs are being run.
- TUNER - a valuable aid in tuning the HP3000.
- DREECTG - An entire system of programs devoted to the system job accounting function.
- DBCHANGE - For IMAGE shops, a quick way to alter the size of the data base.
- DBREBILD - For IMAGE shops, a data base restructuring program.
- PROGSTAT - Presents a good picture of code and data stack usage.
- KSAMRBLD - The easiest method for cleaning up a KSAM file.
- COBOLIB - Allows fast maintenance of a KSAM copy library for use by COBOL.
- CPROMPT - This routine lets COBOL programs prompt the User at a terminal without annoying extra line feeds.
- PSCREEN - Makes a copy of an HP264x screen to the LP.
- STAN - Essential aid for determining the contents of a :STORE tape, including lockwords, creators, and accounts.
- GETFILE - Best way to quickly remove files from a :STORE tape and put them in any account.

