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ABSTRACT

The use of multiple mailnodes -- and hence multiple Notice Boards -- presents a problem of providing the arbitrary user with the ability to share a 'notice' with others not on his or her mailnode. An HPDesk user does not have direct access to Boards other than the one on the same mailnode.

Procedures developed at The Ohio State University (described herein) allow any user to post Notices on any/all of 6 Notice Boards located on four 3000 processors. Functionality includes automatic removal after a week, early deletion at the request of the author and confirmation of postings/deletions from each mailnode.

Several HPDesk scripts are used to send messages to and from "Notice BOARD" users installed on each mailnode, having noticeboard capability. Processing is done via scheduled batch jobs, some of which are scheduled over DS-lines. The HPDesk Administrator needs only to monitor the Boards when a message received advises of a possible problem, or when there's suspicion of something posted in 'bad taste.'

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OBJECTIVE

Provide HPDesk users with a means
to post Notices on any of several
Notice Boards at multiple locations.

RATIONALE

Satisfy the need to distribute
information widely without

maintaining lengthy distribution
lists

or,

impacting the database with
messages sent to numerous persons

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DESCRIPTION

... for the USER, scripts provide:

- easy access to his/her Notice Board

- means to get text to Boards of choice, including immediate explanation of those choices and other policy

- means of removing Notices from all the Boards

... to facilitate the process, scripts:

- execute during batch jobs scheduled throughout the day

- post Notices, schedule them for removal and delete Notices on request or according to schedule

- recognize 'privileged' postings and handle them accordingly

- inform the submitter, by sending notification of postings, removals or problems with requests

- notify the HPDesk administrator of problems

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ENVIRONMENT

Numbers of:

Sites = 4 (Columbus, 3; Wooster, 1)
CPUs (3000's) = 5 (Two 70's, one each of 68, 42, XE)
Mailnodes = 7 (6 are Notice-Board-automated)
HPDesk users = 700 (approximate)
Max. mailnode = 285 (users)

HPDesk Administrators:

For the four Columbus sites, there is one person (with student assistant) monitoring the 6 Notice Boards on four processors. There are, however, additional persons who add and delete users. Locally-written commands (scripts) are installed, as are help screens, to enhance the HPDesk product.

At the 'distant' site (Wooster), administration is independent. At this writing, that site has not yet committed to automating its Notice Board according to the procedures described herein.

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THE SITES

- Computer Center - serves the Administrative offices of the University.
- provides electronic mail access to its customers and provides them with access to other administrative offices.
 - has two 3000's with 525 HPDesk users
 - uses two mailnodes for Department personnel
 - uses two mailnodes for customers
 - requires its employees to use HPDesk
- Two other Columbus sites - has one mailnode per location
- uses HPDesk to reach Administrative Offices
- Wooster location - uses network to reach Campus Agriculture and Administrative offices
- is not "Notice-Board-Automated"

(Notice Boards enable communicating status and schedules about computer runs, general University Announcements and other notices to widespread audiences without loading the database with messages to large numbers of persons.)

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THE ENTITIES

ON EACH
3000 PROCESSOR ... jobs scheduled at timely
intervals, perhaps every
75 minutes, to do the
processing

ON EACH MAILNODE ... a Notice BOARD user with
"noticeboard" capability

... public distribution lists
for sending to other nodes
(i.e., to the Notice BOARD
users and to Admin. accounts)

... an item 'hidden' in a Board
for a general-use command

WITHIN EACH
COPY OF HPDESK ... three general-use scripts

... four scripts for Notice
BOARD users

FOR EACH
NOTICE BOARD USER ... three folders in Cabinet:
"Purging Folders", "Folder
Holder" and "Package-to-Post"

... WorkArea text for generating
messages (8 items)

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USER FUNCTIONALITY

"NEWS"

- Command - provides easy access for getting the user to his/her Notice Board
- eliminates the need for new users to know where the Board is, and how to open folders...

"NOTICE"

- Command - prepares appropriate number of messages for sending item-to-be-posted to the desired mailnodes for posting
- prompts user concerning Boards on which the posting is to occur; informs what mailnodes are available
 - informs user that the item will be deleted in a week; tells how he/she can delete early
 - ensures that the item is of TEXT type

"DISCARDNOTICE"

- command - must be invoked within the user's Board
- ensures the user = Board-item's creator
 - sends a message to all Boards, so that there will be attempts to delete the item from each (that message carries a unique subject; the subject of Part 2 (text) matches the title of the item to be deleted)

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NOTICE BOARD PROCESSING - 1 OF 2

Batch jobs are scheduled throughout the day. The Notice BOARD user at each node signs-on to execute four (script) commands. The first two are described below. They are daily setup commands; hence, they're exited immediately if they had been successfully executed earlier the same day.

"VERIFYNOTICES"

- Command - if today's Purging Folder exists, terminate
- check that each (non-privileged) posted item is in some Purging Folder (i.e., scheduled for delete)
 - if not, schedule for deletion today and send message to submitter informing of action

"SETDATE"

- Command - if today's Purging Folder exists, terminate
- purge week-old Notices; inform affected users of delete, providing copy of removed item
 - attempt to do same for 8-day-old Notices (in case system was down previous day)
 - setup today's Purging Folder

The two scripts which do the posting and deleting of the Notices sent to the Notice BOARD users are described on the next page. They are executed about every 75 minutes during prime time.

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NOTICE BOARD PROCESSING - 2 OF 2

"POSTMGMT"

Command - clean-up if previous execution of this failed

- process InTray messages as follows:
 - * REPLY's are deleted
 - * DELETE REQUESTS are left in the Tray
 - * other messages are opened and processed according to item-type of its Part 2
 - TEXT is posted on the Board; confirmation is sent to the submitter;
 - if 'privileged' item, old version is removed; else, present version is scheduled for delete
 - PACKAGES are replenished if subject matches existing package; otherwise, sent to Administrator
 - all others sent back to submitter
- statistics are printed on activity

"DELMGMT"

- Command - upon finding a DELETE REQUEST in the InTray, obtain subject and creator from its Part 2 to match some Notice Board item; if found:
- * delete from Board
 - * notify sender of removal
 - * delete from first Purging Folder in which it's contained.
- purge DELETE REQUEST from the InTray
- leave all other messages in InTray

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B A T C H J O B S -- B O A R D P R O C E S S I N G

Sample - scheduled every 75 minutes from 6 am to 11 pm

```
!JOB BOARDSET,BOB.MYERS;OUTCLASS=LP,1
!RUNDESK BOARD,NOTICE/COLMBS/US
password
▶ VERIFYNOTICES
▶ SETDATE
  WORKAREA
  COPY "CONFIRMATION" TO CLIPBOARD
▶ POSTMGMT
▶ DELMGMT
  INTRAY
  9
  YES
  BOARD,NOTICE/COLMBS/OT
  password
  ▶ VERIFYNOTICES
  ▶ SETDATE
  ▶ POSTMGMT
  ▶ DELMGMT
  INTRAY
  8
  !EOJ
```

NOTES:

- ** the "YES" is answering the question about clearing the ClipBoard
- ** ergo, the "COPY ... TO CLIP" is to ensure the ClipBoard contains an item
- ** going to the InTray before exiting eliminates being asked if you wish to go there to see new mail

Managing HPDesk Notice Board Over Several Nodes: Remote or Local

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ITEMS REQUIRED WITHIN NOTICE BOARD USER

WORK AREA of NOTICE.BOARD

Item	Subject	Type	Created
1	CONFIRMATION	TEXT	04/27/87
2	CONFIRMING DELETE	TEXT	02/19/88
3	DELETE NOTICE	TEXT	03/18/88
4	SETUP PROBLEM	TEXT	05/29/87
5	INCORRECT PROCEDURE	TEXT	06/09/87
6	PURGING FOLDER MISSI	TEXT	10/09/87
7	UNAUTHORIZED PKG FOR	TEXT	10/15/87
8	Please Understand	TEXT	01/22/88

FILING CABINET of NOTICE.BOARD

Item	Subject	Created	Content
1	Incoming Day File.	04/23/87	0
2	Outgoing Day File.	04/23/87	0
3	Public Distribution Lists.	10/07/84	13
4	Notice Board.	10/07/84	14
5	Waste Basket	04/27/88	0
6	Purging Folders	05/29/87	7
7	Folder Holder	05/29/87	3
8	Package-to-Post	02/19/88	0

Folder.

Subject: Notice Board.

Item	Subject	Type	Creator
1	Using this N.BOARD	FOLDER	BOARD,NOTICE
2

Folder.

Subject: Using this N.BOARD

Item	Subject	Type	Creator
1	HowTo Read Folders	TEXT	BOARD,NOTICE
2	Getting to Notice Bo	TEXT	BOBMYERS,DESKMGR
...
n	Delete IItem#	TEXT	MYERS,BOB

INSTALLATION STEPS

For each HPDesk Installation:

- modify scripts before installing
 - * revise node descriptions in NOTICE command dialogue
 - * edit nodal parameters (4 commands)
 - * revise name(s) of HPDesk Administrator
 - * adjust time items on Board (optional)
 - * recode handling of 'privileged' items
- install seven scripts
- install Notice BOARD user with noticeboard capability

For the Notice BOARD user, each node:

- enter 8 TEXT items in Work Area, editing for node
- create 3 Cabinet Folders
 - Purging Folder (initialize)
 - Folder Holder (initialize)
 - Package-to-Post (empty)
- put 'privileged' Board items at top of list
- insert special "Delete IItem#" text in some Folder
(may need to edit DISCARDNOTICE command)
- create public distribution lists (at least 2)

Within some MPE account:

- edit jobs for signing on to the Notice BOARD user
- Schedule the jobs periodically throughout the day

For promotional or didactic reasons, optionally install:

- HELP screens
- Welcome message
- Notice on the Boards themselves

Perform Testing ... perhaps on a temporary mailnode

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CLOSING COMMENTS

User complaints

- dislike name of "DISCARDNOTICE" command (ANS. wish to avoid one that has abbreviation coinciding with other commands; e.g., DELETE)
- do not like waiting to see my Notice on the Board (comment: this was only an initial complaint)
- confirmation messages from ALL Boards is confusing (ANS. it is believed the benefits outweigh the objections; the text of these messages was revised to offset much of the confusion)

User commendations

- appreciate policy of automatic clean-up
- like convenience of the "NEWS" command
- appreciate "NOTICE" command informing about nodes
- regard HELP screens as crucial

Desk Administrator comments

- The effort 'grew' as more ideas surfaced; hence there is some inefficiency in the code (but inconsequential)
- The overall set of procedures is now 'solid'; we would not want to do without them! We regard this as a successful endeavor.

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SAMPLE SCRIPT - D I S C A R D N O T I C E

```
&COMMENT          ..... DISCARDNOTICE Command .....
&COMMENT          Verify in Notice Board
&FORWARD 3 <NOT <AND <EQUAL <TRAY> 6> <EQUAL <AREA> 11>>>
&FORWARD CHECKPARM <REF <FIND "Using this N.Board" "" 1 -101>>
&COMMENT          Failed tests for not being in Notice Board
&PRINT This command is executable only in the Notice Board, To
&PRINT get to the Board, enter "NEWS".
&EXIT
&COMMENT          Check for numeric parameter with value
&COMMENT          between 1 and the 'last'.
$CHECKPARM
&FORWARD THREE <AND <PARMPRES 1> <EQUAL <PARMTYPE 1> 4>>
&PRINT This command requires a NUMERIC item number.  <CHR 7>
&EXIT
$THREE
&SAVE ITEMNO <PARM 1>
&FORWARD FIVE <REF <VAR ITEMNO>>
&PRINT
&PRINT The number you specified does NOT refer to a valid item in the
&PRINT Board.  Enter 'LIST' to see the valid items; then try again.
&EXIT
&COMMENT          Verify that the person calling the delete procedure
&COMMENT          is the same person that created the item.
$FIVE
&SAVE SENDER <CREATOR <VAR ITEMNO>>
&FORWARD FOUR <STREQUAL <VAR SENDER> <QUOTE <USERNAME> / <NODE>>>>
&PRINT Sorry, you can only delete an item which you created, the item you
&PRINT specified is one for which you are not the 'creator'.  <chr 7>
&EXIT
```

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```
&COMMENT          Sends message to all N. Boards requesting delete
$FOUR
&PRINT
&PRINT -----
&PRINT Your Notice will be deleted from ALL Notice Boards. Each Board
&PRINT will send notification as it's able to delete your Notice. BUT,
&PRINT there will be NO provision to save a copy of it. If needed, you
&PRINT can copy it to your WorkArea upon completion of this command.
&PRINT -----
&PRINT
COPY <VAR ITEMNO> TO CLIP
OPEN "Using this N.Board"
SEND "Delete Item#" TO "ALL BOARDS" OF "PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION"
&PRINT
&PRINT The information shown on your screen above pertains to
&PRINT copying done to send messages to each Notice Board, for
&PRINT requesting that your item be deleted. Please IGNORE.
&PRINT However, you will now be asked to respond to a question.
&PRINT
&PRINT =====
&PRINT Press the 'return' key to bypass the following question: <CHR 7>
&PRINT
COPY FROM CLIP
DELETE 2
MAIL
CLOSE
&PRINT
&PRINT -----
&PRINT The specified item will be removed from ALL Notice Boards within 75
&PRINT minutes. Please WAIT !! If you need to retain a copy, enter the
&PRINT following command immediately: <CHR 7>
&PRINT ----- COPY <VAR ITEMNO> TO WORKAREA -----
&PRINT
&EXIT
```

