The Military Sealift Command (MSC) is a very unique organization for which to work. The complexity of the organizational structure and unique mission provides a setting where database uses supporting logistics and property management are complex and interacting.

This paper provides an introduction of vital, integrated and supported database descriptions that support property accountability. These are the Configuration Logistics Information Program (CLIP), SHIP Configuration Logistics Information Program (SHIPCLIP), Supply Management Program (SM) and the Delivered Property Inventory Database (DPID). Databases are vital to any organization. O’Brien (2001) describes database as “an integrated collection of logically related data elements” (P 145). He stated further “A database consolidates records previously stored in separate files into a common pool of data elements that provide data for many applications”. (P 145)

**Method**

**Database Analysis 1**

The first database is a DOS-based program called Configuration Logistics Information Program or CLIP. CLIP is the central configuration and logistics support database for MSC, which is a program to develop, store, maintain and distribute the ship configuration and logistics support database. Through CLIP, MSC integrates the configuration data management and integrated logistics support functions using a single database and process. CLIP interfaces with and is updated routinely through Naval Inventory Control Point (NAVICP) Weapons Systems File and Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) logistics information updates. These updates include new or revised Allowance Parts Lists and Allowance Equipage Lists, and federal logistics management information for all catalogued parts in the Federal Logistics Information System.

CLIP provides the MSC Configuration Data Manager (CDM) with a database that retains logistics and configuration data on a class, hull and functional level. This configuration data management tool defines and maintains configuration baselines for each hull to the lowest level of replacement or maintenance (component, assembly or piece part). CLIP data is maintained through on-line data entry, batch tape and disk programs with interfaces to several PC based programs, which are briefly described as follows:

Shipboard CLIP (SHIPCLIP) is a hull tailored download of CLIP configuration, logistics and technical information. SHIPCLIP works in concert with CLIP, the repository for MSC configuration and logistics information. SHIPCLIP provides shipboard engineering and supply personnel with a hull-tailored specific reference tool for retrieval of the ship's configuration, logistics and technical information. It also provides a mechanism to record operational feedback in the form of Configuration Change Requests (CCR), Allowance Change Requests (ACR) and Fleet COSAL Feedback Reports (FCFBR). Additionally, SHIPCLIP can create automated issue and requisition documents that can be input directly into SM requirements files.

Supply Management (SM) is a DOS-based program for requisition, receipt, inventory funding and tracking of orders for shipboard repair parts and equipment. The data within SM is manually updated from CLIP, including changes to allowance equipment lists (AEL) or allowance parts list (APL), part number changes, equipment obsolescence and additions to the ship's configuration.

The familiarization process for CLIP, SHIPCLIP, SM and the DPID is extensive and requires the ability to move in and out of these different programs to research the
information necessary. 
SHIPCLIP retains the 
requirements, computations 
and data for all government 
property onboard, whether 
the item is part of an operat-
ing system, a repair part to be 
attached or incorporated or 
an item of property to sup-
port operation of the ship. 
For example, in the pre-
sent DOS-based operating 
system, an AEL can be 
researched in SHIPCLIP to 
determine the total quantity 
of a particular item of prop-
erty that was put onboard. 
However, one must be aware 
that multiple AEL docu-
ments may exist and that 
each one may authorize dif-
ferent quantities for the same 
item. The property require-
ments data, such as the AEL, is 
also (in some cases) listed in the DPID, to ensure there is a 
direct link between what item was authorized and what 
was actually delivered. The problem with this whole 
process is that it is manual and requires extensive human 
intervention and data manipulation, which leads to an 
increasing number of errors and non-standard data.

As the CDM database, CLIP provides SHIPCLIP with 
hull specific configuration extracts and in turn receives and 
processes ship generated configuration changes and other 
feedback. In addition, CLIP also provides SHIPCLIP with 
an updated hull specific extract, which reflects the ship’s 
new baseline and thereby closes the loop between the ship 
and shore activities. It also provides life cycle, closed loop 
Integrated Logistics Support (ILS) data for MSC ship-
board equipment and components. Figure 1 illustrates 
this process.

Database Analysis 2

In the initial database introduction, the integrated 
process between CLIP, SHIPCLIP, and SM was described. 
The second database to be discussed is DPID or as I like to 
simplify it, the durable, movable asset records. This is an 
Excel spreadsheet with data loaded from a combination of 
SHIPCLIP and actual receipt and physical inventory 
results, which is used as a delivery accountability tool. This 
is also the document developed by the government and 
delivered to the contract operator for their use in contract 
performance.

DPID defines the types, kinds and quantities of ship-
board durable, movable assets, other than repair parts and 
materials. The interaction between DPID and the other 
databases is extensive, and for effective property adminis-
tration it is necessary to fully comprehend the complexity 
of the shipboard property accountability system. A detailed 
analysis over the past fifteen months found that of 25 dif-
ferent DPID databases, there was insufficient standardiza-
tion of basic accountability information data fields and 
many were not consistent in the data field completion.

DISCUSSION

In the commercial maritime community, mariners are 
often not provided detailed tools to assist in maintaining 
the latest shipboard logistics support and configuration 
data. The fact such tools as SHIPCLIP, SM, DPID and 
numerous other shore-based, shipboard and waterfront 
systems are available are significant milestones in obtaining 
total contract-operated ships configuration, logistics and 
property data integration over the long term.

Our combined objective, that is, the vision of both the 
logistics division and the property administration group, is 
to integrate the SHIPCLIP, SM and DPID into one sys-

Our efforts have been focused on this objective 
recently and we visualize our first testing of this combined 
system in about six months. There are thousands of com-
mercial software programs available, including those 
specifically designed for shipboard operations, but none 
which provide the depth of information and interaction 
necessary, without substantial cost, to maintain visibility
and accuracy of this data at all times. Conversely, with all the property regulatory changes flowing like landslides and GAO interest in property management continuing to reappear, the development and implementation of this combined system becomes more crucial each working day.

RESULTS

Database management and use in the Military Sealift Command is a uniquely defined and extremely important interrelated process to ensure successful results. The need for an updated client/server web-based system for all of these databases is more important than ever. The new challenge for property administration is how to “normalize” the forty-eight databases of property accountability data, including the twenty-five that have been reviewed, to support development of the combined SHIPCLIP, SM and D PID system. The combined system cannot import property accountability data files until a process is implemented to normalize the test platforms Excel data files because this will be the basis for the master property catalogue by class of ship.

The information contained within SHIPCLIP and SM provides vital requirements for durable, movable assets and our efforts to “normalize the data” must take into account the primary data feeds from SHIPCLIP. Data in SHIPCLIP, SM and D PID must be understood completely to effectively evaluate our shipboard property accountability systems. This whole process is similar to answering the question of “How do you eat an elephant?” It is quite simple really, “One bite at a time.”

(Views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of the Navy or the Military Sealift Command)

REFERENCES


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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The General Services Administration (GSA) is the highest-level promulgator of Federal-wide personal property policy and procedure, with the "vehicle" being the Federal Management Regulations (formerly the Federal Property Management Regulations). As a Federal agency personal property manager (Immigration and Naturalization Service) I have noticed that for some odd reason there is missing from the FMR/ FPMR certain personal property policies and procedures that all Federal agencies must have in place for operating their program. Physical inventorying of personal property and property-surveying, two important areas, come to mind, as I'm sure there are others. Lest Federal agencies be on their own to develop these policies and procedures, ensuring non-uniformity from agency to agency, I would encourage GSA to address these areas, to include, as necessary, contacting the various Federal agencies to identify that Federal-wide personal property policy and procedure are seen as needed.

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