BULLETIN NUMBER GT600, 29 MARCH 1993

Comms Support Pack Version 7.2 Available

TIS Software is pleased to announce the release of version 7.2 of the Comms Support Pack – a combined hardware and software package that allows remote software support.

FACILITIES OF VERSION 7.2

Comms Support Pack version 7.2 offers more reliable dialling ($DIAL) and file transfer ($FCOMM) facilities than version 7.1.

The main features of Comms Support Pack version 7.2 are as follows:

- A new customisation option in $DIAL allows the attached modem to be programmed directly without the need for the $DIALX co-operating program. This option will circumvent all the problems with $DIAL that result in the "unable to load I/O program" error message. This option is only available if the Console Executive (component +J0EB00 in library +.J0) is dated 31st March 1993, or later;

- The problem that caused $DIAL to fail if other users are signing on has been fixed;

- $DIAL now waits for the modem to confirm a connection;

- If a connection has been confirmed, $DIAL exits completely;

- $FCOMM now works reliably when there is a large speed difference between the two computers linked using Global Comms V7.2;

- $FCOMM checks that the lengths of the Display and Type-Ahead buffers on the remote computer are sufficient for a reliable transfer;

- $FCOMM now copies files that are password protected;

- BCWORK includes an option to enable the 16-byte FIFO on NS16550A UART devices;

The $FCOMM file transfer utility is still susceptible to dropped characters. Although the error detection and recovery in the file transfer protocol will ensure the data is eventually transferred reliably, the error correction will reduce the efficiency of the file transfer and thus increase the transfer time.

On IBM PC compatible computers, accessing extended memory, either disk cache or RAM disk, can disable interrupts for a relatively long period which may result in the loss of received characters. If extended memory is being accessed during the $FCOMM data transfer (eg. if other users are active on the `slave' computer) we strongly advise the use of NS16550A UARTs at both ends of the link. The 16-character deep NS16550A FIFO buffer is enabled on the `master' computer using the BCWORK customisation described above. The 16-character deep NS16550A FIFO buffer is enabled on the `slave' computer using Global Configurator as described in section 5.8.11 of the Global Operating Manual V8.0 (BOS).

The `lost received character' problem can also be avoided by attaching the modem to a Hyperport or, better still, a HyperMx box at the `slave' end of the link.

INTERFACES AND COMPATIBILITY

Versions 7.0, 7.1 and 7.2 of the Comms support pack will each operate at the `master' end with any one of version 7.0, 7.1 and 7.2 of the Comms support pack at the `slave' end. In other words any version of the Comms Support Pack is operable with any other version. However in order to get all the facilities of version 7.2, obviously version 7.2 should be used at both ends.

Version 7.2 of the Comms Support Pack operates on the same computer/System-manager combinations as version 7.1. That is:-
> At the `local' end (also known as the `master' end), this version of the Comms Support Pack operates on any version from 6.1 onwards of Global system manager (BOS) for which the machine code specified in chapter 3 of the handbook is J5. At the `remote' end (also known as the `slave' end), this version of the Comms Support Pack operates with version 6.1 or later of Global System Manager for any computer configuration.

DOCUMENTATION

New versions of both the `Comms Support Pack Manual' (MCLMV7.2) which describes $FCOMM and the `Comms Support Pack Notes' (MCLNV7.2; previously known as the $DIAL manual) which describes $DIAL are available.

SUPPORT OF VERSION 7.1

Version 7.1 of the Comms Support Pack is available until 31st October 1993 and will be supported until 31st December 1994. The default version of the Comms Support Pack will change from 7.1 to 7.2 on the weekend of 24th July 1993.

THE RIGHT TO COPY THE COMMS SUPPORT PACK

As for previous versions of the Comms Support Pack we only ask the reseller to buy version 7.2 Comms Support Pack once (paying only a £30 copy charge). Once this has been done the software for the `slave' end can be replicated indefinitely.