1. INTRODUCTION

NoteCards

NoteCards is a computer environment designed to help people work with ideas. Its users are authors, researchers, designers, and other intellectual laborers engaged in analyzing information, constructing models, formulating arguments, designing artifacts, and generally processing ideas. The system provides these users with a variety of tools for collecting, representing, managing, interrelating, and communicating ideas. NoteCards is based on the notion that creative intellectual work is a hand-craft, a uniquely human skill that cannot be easily automated.

Notecards provides the user with a "semantic network" of electronic notecards interrconnected by typed links. This network serves as a medium in which the user can represent collections of related ideas. It also functions as a structure for organizing, storing, and retrieving information. The system provides the user with tools for displaying, modifying, manipulating, and navigating through this network.

From: *NoteCards in a Nutshell*, by Frank G. Halasz, Thomas P. Moran, Randall H. Trigg of the Intelligent Systems Laboratory in the Xerox Palo Alto Research Center, Preceedings of the ACM CHI+GI ’87 Conference, Toronto, Canada April 1987

System Overview

Functionally, the NoteCards system for the Sun Workstation consists of the following parts:

emulator — A SunOS executable program which executes the NoteCards system contained in the sysout and provides access to the Sun host’s hardware.

sysout — A virtual memory image (the *sysout*) containing both the NoteCards program and its data structures. The sysout provided can be used both on the Sun Workstations and on the Xerox 1100 series workstations.

notefiles — A file containing your cards on a particular topic and all their links. This is your data and its organizational structure.

fonts — Data describing the "looks" of printed characters used by NoteCards’ graphics, windowing, and hardcopying subsystems. Font directories are in four groups, display fonts, PostScript printer fonts, Interpress printer fonts, and Press printer fonts.

Useful SunOS and UNIX Conventions

SunOS is Sun Microsystems' version of the UNIX operating system. For users unfamiliar with the Sun Workstation, the following SunOS (and UNIX) conventions, are used in the manual.

For complete information on UNIX and SunOS, refer to your Sun documentation set.

case, filenames — Type-in to UNIX is case sensitive. Typically, input is in lower case. When UNIX searches for a name, it is case sensitive; it distinguishes between lower and upper case characters. By convention, most names are lower case characters.

shell — Command interpreter; the commands shown are in the C-Shell, unless otherwise noted.

NoteCards Device Conventions

NoteCards allows users to interact with SunOS file systems (including file systems mounted from other machines) by using host device names. The device names are

`{DSK}` — A host name which gives you access to the SunOS file system using Xerox workstation local disk conventions.

`{UNIX}` — A host name which gives you access to the file system using normal SunOS conventions.

The `{DSK}` device name provides an interface to the Sun Workstation for users who want to maintain compatibility with existing development tools and applications originally developed on a Xerox workstation. The `{UNIX}` device name provides a way for new applications to interact naturally with UNIX. Chapter 4, System Use Issues, explains, in greater detail, some important exceptions and restrictions to the `{DSK}` and `{UNIX}` device name.

Stylistic Conventions

Text marked by a revision bar in the right margin contains information that was added or modified since the last release.

Prompts

All examples which include SunOS dialogues use the following conventions for the SunOS prompt:

A number sign (#), as part of the system prmpt, indicates that the user is logged on as root or is running su; e.g.,

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prompt #
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A percentage sign (%), as part of the system prompt, indicates that a user other than root is logged on; e.g.,

prompt %

Font Usage

`Bold text in TITAN font` indicates text you should type in exactly as printed.

`Regular text in TITAN font` indicates what the system prints on your workstation screen. UNIX files and programs are shown in TITAN FONT.

`Italic text in Titan font` indicates variables or parameters that you should replace with the appropriate word or string.

Bold text in Modern font is used to indicate menu commands and NoteCards parameters.

Italic text in Modern font is used to indicate emphasis.

Quote marks are used to indicate window titles, parameter values, and when refering to the names of section headings within chapters; e.g., The "Stylistic Conventions" section in Chapter 1, Introduction.

Keyboard Conventions

Keys that you press are in uppercase (e.g., COPY, for the Copy key). A carriage return is displayed as <RETURN>. Instructions that ask you to press two or three keys simultaneously are indicated as follows:

"Press CONTROL-E"

Note that on some Xerox machines, the CONTROL key is labeled PROPS or EDIT, but has the same function as the CONTROL key.

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