

205
/FORM DEFINITION LANGUAGE
FOR
INTELLIGENT DATA OBJECTS/

by

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B.S., Christian Brothers College, 1970

A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree


MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Computer Science

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1986

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A11202 664144

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To Chuck D. Kissner, for identifying and supporting me as a candidate to the Summer-on-Campus Program.

To Robert G. Reeves, Jr., for his support during my participation in the Summer-on-Campus Program.

To my wife, Denise, and our two sons, Peter and Philip, for their support and understanding during my absence to partake in the program.

To Dr. Elizabeth A. Unger, for her advice in the preparation of this report and accessibility for consultation.

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1. CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 WHY OFFICE INFORMATION SYSTEMS (OIS)

The goal of Office Information Systems (OIS) has been to accomplish the mission of the office efficiently by reducing costs, enhancing the quality of work, and extend the workers capabilities. In order to achieve this goal, companies in 1982 purchased approximately \$6 billion of office automation equipment with projections of \$27 billion to be purchased by the end of the decade [Wint85]. These purchases are typically for electronic equipment: word processing systems, electronic data processing (EDP) systems, communications equipment (telephone sets, private branch exchanges(PBX), modems, enhanced services, etc), and manufacturing control systems. For the most part, these systems are not integrated and thereby lead to potential problems and inefficiencies (e.g., manually transferring data from an EDP system to a word processing system). The challenge of OIS is the integration of the above components [Elli80, Tsic82] in order to reduce the complexity of the users interface to the system and control the flow of information to achieve increased efficiency in the office.

1.2 WHAT IS AN OFFICE

An office consists of people interacting in an environment to carry out the mission of a business by handling information dealing with the business [Baum80, Deog83, Elli80, Hamm79]. To achieve its mission in an orderly fashion, office procedures are defined. An office procedure is a structured framework by which the individual tasks and activities performed by office workers are organized [Hamm80]. The procedures insure that the office can operate in a predictable and repeatable fashion. This last point should not be taken to mean that all office procedures are fully specified and deterministic. Most office procedures are composed of both structured and repetitive tasks and by unstructured tasks which are characterized by their judgmental nature (e.g., negotiation, decision making, etc.).