

ACRES launches Customer Service Guarantee

Paul Trezise

On 1st of May 1995 ACRES launched its Customer Service Guarantee. This initiative is designed to give ACRES distributors and direct customers added confidence in the level of service they can expect. Through improved service to distributors, all customers will benefit.

Over the last few years ACRES has set challenging performance targets in all areas of its production operation. While these targets have sometimes not been achieved, they have undoubtedly served to focus attention on problem areas and to achieve significant improvements. The ACRES Customer Service Guarantee is designed to put the same discipline on the cutting edge of our operation, customer service. The 8 elements of the guarantee are designed to be challenging but achievable – we have had to change the way we operate in a number of areas in order to be confident of meeting these targets.

The ACRES Customer Service Guarantee is not intended to be a static document. We intend to update it at least annually to reflect improvements in our capabilities and the desires of our customers. With this in mind, I would like to point out a couple of items in Version 1 that we anticipate improving upon in future versions.

ORDER DELIVERY

Delivery time for orders will naturally vary due to the overall workload at the time, the level of processing required and whether photographic processing is involved. Many simpler orders routinely are delivered well inside our 10 working day deadline. For example, over 50 percent of orders for products from the archive are delivered within 5 working days. Due to projected improvements in ACRES production management system, we plan to introduce a new arrangement in January 1996. From that time, all order confirmations for ACRES products will include a guaranteed delivery date. This guaranteed delivery date will then form part of the Customer Service Guarantee.

OUR QUALITY GUARANTEE

I have been concerned for some time that there is no comprehensive, clear and accessible set of product specifications for ACRES products. This often makes assessing whether products meet specifications a difficult and subjective exercise. While we have erred on the side of giving the benefit of the doubt to the customer, and will continue to do so, I have initiated a project to develop specifications to the standard required. These specifications will be readily accessible, probably in an on-line form in conjunction with our new digital catalogue initiative. Our Order Confirmation process will then include recognition by both ACRES and its customers of the exact nature of product that is to be delivered.

I would appreciate any feedback on this initiative. I plan to use the ACRES User Reference Group as another means of obtaining independent feedback.

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Manager's message

Paul Trezise

Our efforts to further improve customer service form the focus of this issue of ACRES Update.

Over the past few years ACRES customers will have undoubtedly perceived a marked improvement in our performance. Through implementing technical and organisational efficiencies, key performance measures have indicated good progress. For example, 92% of orders for products from our archive are currently delivered within 10 working days.

ACRES new Customer Service Guarantee, which is described in detail in this newsletter, commits us to high levels of service to our distributors and direct customers. Our distributors will then be in a position to pass the benefits on to all users of ACRES products. We will be closely monitoring our performance against the 8 elements of the Customer Service Guarantee and reporting back to you on how we shape up.

To mark our new emphasis on customer service ACRES has adopted the new-look logo that features in this issue. The logo and accompanying re-designed stationery are initiatives of ACRES staff Rosalie Booth and Peter Pistor. The new logo has a more modern look, clearly identifies us with the remote sensing business and sits more comfortably with the corporate styles of AUSLIG and the Department of Administrative Services (DAS).

As always, I welcome feedback on these initiatives or on any other aspect of ACRES performance.

Editorial information

ACRES Update is a quarterly newsletter published to provide ACRES customers and the remote sensing community with up to date information about ACRES products and services, international and national remote sensing news and innovative applications of the technology. Articles from readers are welcome and should be forwarded to the Editor:

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ACRES CUSTOMER SERVICE GUARANTEE

1. HOURS OF SERVICE

If you ring our customer service number (06) 201 4107 during ACRES Standard Working Hours you are guaranteed prompt, personal service. ACRES Standard Working Hours are 0830 to 1700 local Canberra time, Monday to Friday, Canberra public holidays excluded.

2. CATALOGUE SEARCHES

If you need us to perform an ACRES catalogue search, you will receive a faxed copy of the search results within 4 working hours of your request.

3. MAPPING UP

If you require us to 'map up' your data request, you will receive a faxed copy of the results within 24 hours of your request.

4. ORDER CONFIRMATION

We will enter your order into our production system and fax you an Order Confirmation within 4 working hours of receiving your official order.

5. INTERNATIONAL ORDERS

If you place a completed order with us that requires processing by one of our international partners, we will place your order with them by fax the same day, provided we receive your order before 1600.

6. PROGRAMMING REQUESTS

If your order involves a satellite programming request, we will advise you by fax of the success level of the acquisition attempt by 1700 on the 3rd working day following the attempt.

7. ORDER DELIVERY

We deliver over 90% of all orders for data from our archive within 10 working days of Order Confirmation. We can provide faster delivery on specific request.

8. OUR QUALITY GUARANTEE

If you believe the product you receive does not meet standard ACRES product specifications, we will advise you by fax of our assessment within 48 hours of receiving the returned product from you. If we agree that the product does not meet specifications, we will remake your product free of charge and dispatch it to you via courier within 48 hours, or provide a credit note (at your choice).

New ACRES logo

Rosalie Booth

Although the ACRES staff were very possessive of the existing ACRES logo, it was brought up as an issue at the Total Quality Service (TQS) workshop we all attended during late 1994. This logo issue was taken up as a project by one of the TQS groups.

The existing logo was out of date and did not communicate ACRES activities. The new logo needed to suit our image for the 1990's pushing ACRES into the 2000's plus indicate the association with our parent organisation, AUSLIG.

Peggy Bright from Communication Partners was approached to review the logo. One of their designers, Andrew Rooney, drafted a few options with examples showing how they would be implemented on our documents. After a brief discussion ACRES staff agreed, almost unanimously, that the new logo be accepted!

Over the past six months Peter Pistor, Bob Jones and I have gone through the process of learning the new skills associated with the various design and printing phases for organising the new documentation. We are very pleased with the results, which from now on you will be seeing!



THE EARTH'S SURFACE
AS SEEN FROM A SENSOR
IN SPACE.

RADARSAT

Latest information to hand is that the Canadian RADARSAT satellite is due for launch 20 September 1995, with operational data due to become available early 1996. ACRES is currently in discussion with RADARSAT International (RSI) regarding the possibility of RADARSAT reception in Australia.

New ACRES distributor appointed

Geo Mapping Technologies (GMT) is a Brisbane based company that specialises in the provision of spatial data services, particularly GIS and remote sensing. The company was established by David Moore and Adrya Kovarch in May 1994. David Moore has 8 years experience in the application of GIS and Image Processing, mostly in the fields of ecological modelling, forest mapping and impact assessment. Adrya Kovarch is a qualified geologist specialising in geophysical image processing and the application of GIS for mineral exploration and geological mapping. A third principle, Richard Croome, will join the company in May 1995. Richard has spent the previous three years as manager of the GIS and Remote Sensing department in the Papua New Guinea National Mapping Bureau. Previously Richard worked as a consultant for Dames and Moore Pty Ltd. As a team GMT provides a high level of expertise in spatial modelling and the application of GIS and Remote Sensing technologies in a wide range of fields.

To date, GMT has concentrated its efforts towards the provision of GIS and Image Processing services to the mining industry and has performed a number of innovative projects in this field. This will remain a major activity of the company, the increasing availability and decreasing cost of geophysical and other spatial data sets provides enormous opportunities for the exploration and mining industries in Australia.

GMT is the PNG representative for MicroImages inc., the developers of the TNTmips map and image processing system. However in recognition of the fact that no single GIS or image processing system is suitable for all situations, company policy is to assist clients in selecting the most appropriate system for their specific requirements.

Short and medium term plans include GMT's expansion into PNG and the distribution of spatial data and bundled GIS systems that include software and data. Its recently acquired status as a distributor of ACRES products represents an important advance in this effort. GMT is currently compiling a catalogue of spatial data sets for Australia, PNG and the Asia Pacific region. In future, GMT will promote its multi-disciplinary Remote Sensing and GIS services more generally to include forest inventory, land use mapping, agricultural inventory and monitoring, coastal and near-shore mapping and monitoring, impact assessment and other fields that benefit from these technologies.

For further information contact:

David Moore or Adrya Kovarch

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Everton Hills

Brisbane QLD 4053

ACRES performance improves

In the past few years ACRES has made big strides in improving quality and timeliness of service while at the same time:

- the demand for products has increased significantly;
- the complexity of products being requested has increased;
- the product range has been broadened.

If you are one of our regular customers, you would undoubtedly have noticed these improvements in service.

ACRES has a set of performance indicators which are scrutinised closely on a monthly basis. These indicators include delivery times, remakes (returned products), acquisition success rate and systems up-time. Each year we set new targets that stretch performance a little further, if this is feasible. As an incentive, achievement of the performance targets leads to a bonus for the ACRES Contractor, part of which is passed on to ACRES contract staff. This approach has proved extremely successful.

The table below illustrates current performance against some of our key indicators.

Performance Indicator	Target	Achieved 93/94	Achieved 94/95 YTD
Alice Springs Acquisition	>99% of available passes	99.6%	99.5%
System up-time	>95% of working hours	93%	97%
Delivery	>95% in 10 working days	81%	92%
Remake Rate	<1.5% of all products	2.2%	1.5%

EOSAT team visits ACRES



(LEFT TO RIGHT)

1. ROBERT DENIZE, CHIEF ENGINEER ACRES;
2. EDWARD MOWLE, DIRECTOR SPACE SYSTEMS EOSAT;
3. MICKI BARBER, DIRECTOR INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT EOSAT;
4. TIMOTHY PUCKORIUS, DIRECTOR MARKETING & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT EOSAT;
5. GARY NELSON, DIRECTOR GROUND SYSTEMS EOSAT;
6. PAUL WISE, DIRECTOR OPERATIONS ACRES.

In the last week of March 1995, ACRES hosted a visit by an EOSAT delegation lead by Tim Puckorius, their international marketing director.

Wide ranging discussions were held with the main focus being opportunities arising from the EOSAT partnership with the Indian Space Research Organization. Tim was accompanied by Ed Mowle, Gary Nelson and Micki Barber, the newly appointed EOSAT representative for the Asia Pacific region.

New manufacturing management software installed at ACRES

Computer Associates' MANMAN/X manufacturing software has been installed at ACRES and is currently in the testing phase. MANMAN/X is a comprehensive, order entry, inventory control, production, project control and finance system and facilitates for the users a high level of control over their manufacturing business. ACRES configuration is a customised version of the software running on a DEC Alpha workstation serving a PC network and interfacing to ACRES GICS (production), MQS (cataloguing) and SOSS (satellite programming) systems.

The adaptation of this factory-system manufacturing software to the needs of an earth resources satellite ground station has been undertaken by an ACRES project team working under the Project name 'AMANDA' (ACRES Manufacturing and Distribution Application). The project has been underway for 12 months and is due for completion when the MANMAN/X system goes operational at the beginning of July this year. This will mean the shut down of the present order entry/production system DIPCS which has been operational since the beginning of 1989.

Our customers will be the main beneficiaries of the utilisation of the MANMAN/X software. Greater control of the production queue and prediction of firm product delivery dates to customers will result in a nett improvement of service. Internally, ACRES will gain enhanced knowledge of our business through the flow of costing and performance information from MANMAN/X.

Information on the AMANDA Project can be obtained from the Project Team:

Jenny Weissel
Tel: (06) 201 4108

AUSLIG's quality system accredited

Paul Wise

ACRES Quality Coordinator

The recognition that AUSLIG's products needed to:

- be technically sound;
- be delivered on time and within budget;
- represent value for money; and
- meet or exceed our client's expectations every time;

led to AUSLIG seeking quality accreditation from the international accreditation agency Det Norske Veritas (DNV). DNV is an internationally recognised organisation in the business of providing independent certification. Accreditation signifies AUSLIG's commitment to quality and assures our customers that our products and services conform to the Australian Standard AS/ISO 9002, meet world quality levels, and are consistent.

The AUSLIG quality system has been developed to satisfy the requirements of, and ensure compliance with, the Australian Standard and allows each Office Manager to customise the quality activities for their sphere of operation. The quality model consists of setting up an independent quality system within the business so that the quality system and associated control activities are independent of the day to day management and production.

ACRES has been accredited for over a year and recently underwent a successful periodic check for continued compliance. Adherence to the ACRES system, between external audits, is monitored by ACRES own independent auditors reporting back to the ACRES Quality Coordinator.

However, it is AUSLIG's and ACRES aim not only to maintain compliance with the standard but to use the system developed as a springboard for continuous improvement.

Certification has set up:

- a defined way to do tasks that affect quality;
- a means of assessing where improvement might be focused; and
- a means of measuring the success of any improvement(s).

While all areas of the quality standard affect the customer, the Confirmation Copy and Work Order number have a specific role. The standard ACRES contract with a customer consists of an order form signed by that customer. To ensure that this contract is unambiguous a Confirmation Copy is printed automatically by the system and faxed to the Client seeking their confirmation that the product which the system will now generate is complete, correct and meets their requirements. The system also gives each order a unique Work Order identifier which is provided to the customer and estimated delivery time is also quoted as part of the fax cover sheet.

The Confirmation Copy provides the customer with the opportunity to correct any misinterpretations of their order and the unique Work Order identifier provides the means to track that order. Once a product is made it may undergo a series of checks to ensure that it meets the known requirements. These checks are not exhaustive but are intended to show any major problems in the data or the production process.

At ACRES we now have formally established procedures for:

- the confirmation of an order, establishing our contract with the customer;
- checks on our products;
- focusing customer queries;
- the regeneration of products;
- systems' calibration; and
- handling system hardware and software problems.

In addition, ACRES has its Customer Service Guarantee which sets down the level of service our customers can expect.

New space education underpinned by pilot studies

Space education using locally developed self paced learning software is now a reality following pilot studies involving high school students, university undergraduates and remote sensing specialists. Two new computer aided learning modules covering Air Photo Interpretation and Multispectral Scanner Interpretation have just been released. They complement the earlier *What is Remote Sensing?* and *Spectral Signatures* modules.

Developed by Drs Gail Kelly and Greg Hill and funded by the Australian Key Centre in Land Information Studies (AKCLIS), these two new modules make extensive use of animated computer graphics, aerial photography and satellite imagery. They will be used to show how to apply and make measurements from traditional aerial photos or satellite images.

Two earlier modules created by the same team focussed on developing background concepts and knowledge of Remote Sensing and won awards for excellence from the Australian Institute of Cartographers and the Australian Society for Educational Technology. Previous modules have been sold across the world for use by students and professionals undertaking skills updating.

A unique feature of these new modules involves an innovative games environment which tests the knowledge gained from the classroom. Organised around the theme of a Space Rally, each module offers a choice of three separate game locations and their associated images, to assess different facets of the student's learning. Scores and elapsed times are recorded for entry onto the Rally Honour Board.

Each module can stand alone running on any IBM (or IBM compatible) personal computer with a minimum configuration: DOS environment, 5Mb free hard disk space per module, VGA Graphics card, colour monitor and mouse. Presently the software will not run in a Windows environment.

Five classroom topics and three practical exercises comprise each of the two new modules. The practical exercises are structured around a Remote Sensing Rally theme – each user completes the computer games as accurately and quickly as possible.

In addition to containing interesting instructional techniques in each module, remedial advice is provided to those whose 'rally' performance lags, with informative feedback providing clues to the correct answers.

With each rally conducted in different geographical locations using varying scales of remotely sensed data (ie. photography and scanner images) learning outcomes are assured. Users are exposed to oblique and vertical photography in module 3 while module 4 incorporates 10 and 20 metre SPOT data, and LANDSAT 30 metre data.

Module 3

Air Photo Interpretation
The Air Photo
Air Photo Annotation
Simple Measurements from Air Photos
Radial Displacement
Air Photo Interpretation

Module 4

Multispectral Scanner Interpretation
The Multispectral Scanner
Scanner Platforms
Image Annotation
Image Interpretation
Digital Image Processing

Price is \$185 per module with multiple copy discounts available.

For further information contact:

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ERS-2 in orbit

European Space Agency (ESA) Press Release

ERS-2 was successfully launched by Ariane on Flight 72 during the night of Thursday 20/Friday 21 April 1995 at 22h44 Kourou time (01h44 GMT, 03h44 Paris time) and placed into polar orbit 780 km above the Earth.

The telemetry data received some minutes after the launch at ESA's space operations centre (ESOC) in Darmstadt, Germany even before satellite separation from the launcher showed that ERS-2 was in good working order.

During the first two orbits, a sequence of delicate manoeuvres was successfully completed: in particular, deployment of the solar arrays and the various antennas.

Under the overall supervision of ESOC, seven ground stations around the world were involved in this first phase.

Over the following two weeks, the operational team was scheduled to switch on all the satellite's instruments in turn. A first set of images and data will be available shortly after that.

Following a three-month commissioning phase, ERS-2 – which has a lifetime of 30 months – will operate for nine months in tandem with ERS-1, which was launched on 16 July 1991 and is still in good working order.