

Plans Manual Questionnaire Report



**REGISTERS OF SCOTLAND
EXECUTIVE AGENCY**

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Contents

BACKGROUND	1
METHOD OF COLLECTING DATA.....	2
SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS	3
RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE.....	4



Background

The Plans Working Group (PWG) was tasked in May 1999 to formulate and implement a strategy to update the Plans Manual. A team was formed and an editor appointed to co-ordinate the Project.

The existing manual was taken and divided into various sections, which were allocated to the team members to edit out information that was no longer applicable or update the remaining material accordingly. The material was then collated and formatted to produce an updated manual.

After much discussion and consultation with PWG members and Team Leaders it was decided to launch the manual electronically and provide each Team Leader with a hard copy. At this time a decision was taken that the electronic copy would be updated by the Plans Manual Team and that the onus would lie with the Team Leaders to update the hard copy.

The launch of the Manual took place on the 18th September 2000 since then there have been numerous updates to the manual brought about by feedback from the users and changes in procedures.

In January/February 2001 Netscape Navigator was added to all DMS workstations giving all DMS users direct access to the ROS Intranet, which includes the Plans Manual site. As a consequence an E-mail was sent to all Team Leaders asking that all hard copies of the Plans Manual be destroyed

Phase two of the project tasked the Plans Manual Team with identifying parts of the manual, which required major change. Before this exercise could begin, it was agreed that users would be asked for feedback and confirm whether or not the changes proposed by the team were warranted and/or if there were any additional sections that required attention but had not been identified.





Method of Collecting Data

A draft questionnaire was prepared and made available electronically via the Plans Manual site on the ROS Intranet. An e-mail was sent to all Team Leaders to publicise the questionnaire. The questionnaire could be completed and submitted from either a DMS workstation or a PC.

The survey was available to staff for a two week period over which a total of 77 staff replied representing a response rate of 33%. It should be noted that the questionnaire was also open to non-Plans production staff who may have used the manual. Therefore the response rate above may not reflect an accurate %





Summary of Recommendations

The following is a brief summary of recommendations, based on the information collated from the questionnaires, which require action.

- **Search engine to be refined.**
Section file sizes to be made smaller, resulting searches produce less information, more relevant to criteria searched.

- **Section on the more common problems and how to action them to be designed.**

- **Investigate whether all sections are appropriate**
Are they relevant? (Day to day problems encountered)
Can the information be found elsewhere? E.g. Plans Manual- Section 16
"Correspondence and Enquires" policy is also held on the Bias For Action Site. .
"Sasines and the Feudal System" are these required on the plans site?

- **Provide Information to users on creating bookmarks**

- **Provide guidelines and tips for users on searching**

- **Investigate printing capabilities and provide guidelines for users**

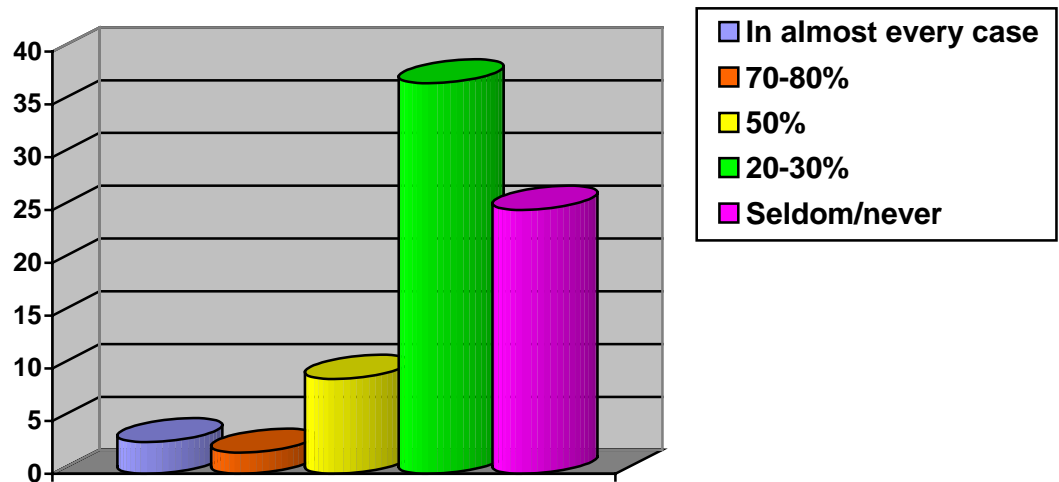
- **Provide links to other sites with relevant information**
i.e. when searching cancellation, the result would link to the Bias for Action site on cancellations



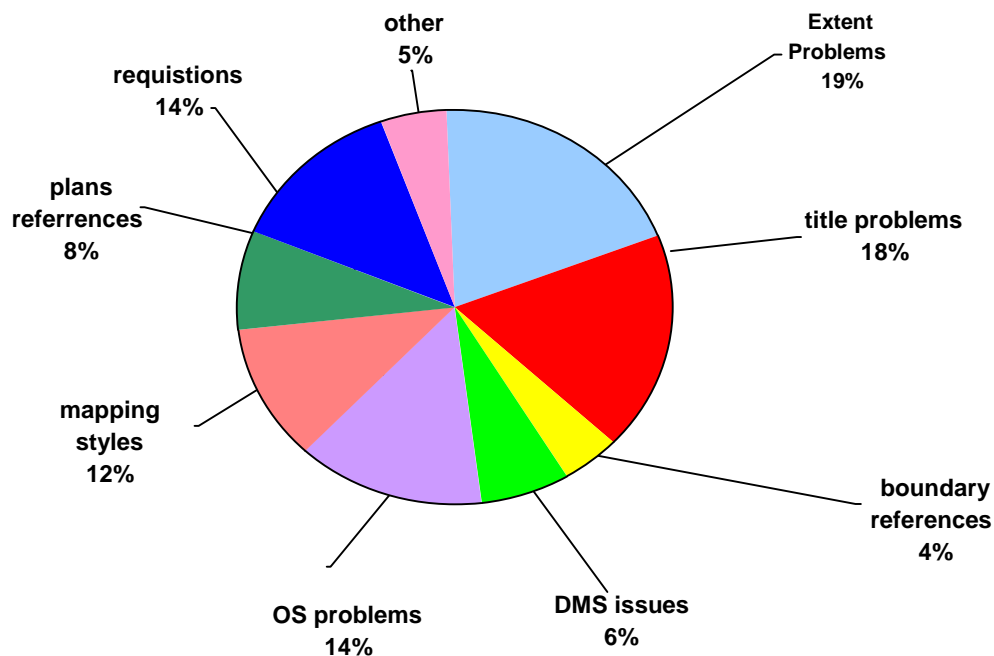


Results of questionnaire.

1. On average, how often do you need assistance with Plans casework?
(Assistance includes referring to the manual, consulting colleagues etc.)



2. Please give brief details of the types of problems you most frequently come across





3. Please rate the following options in the order you use them when you have a plans problem

Chart showing first choice

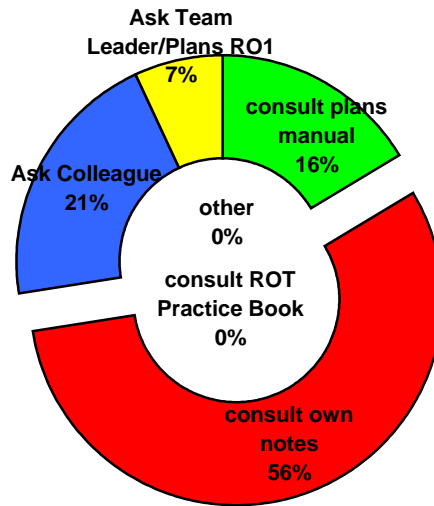
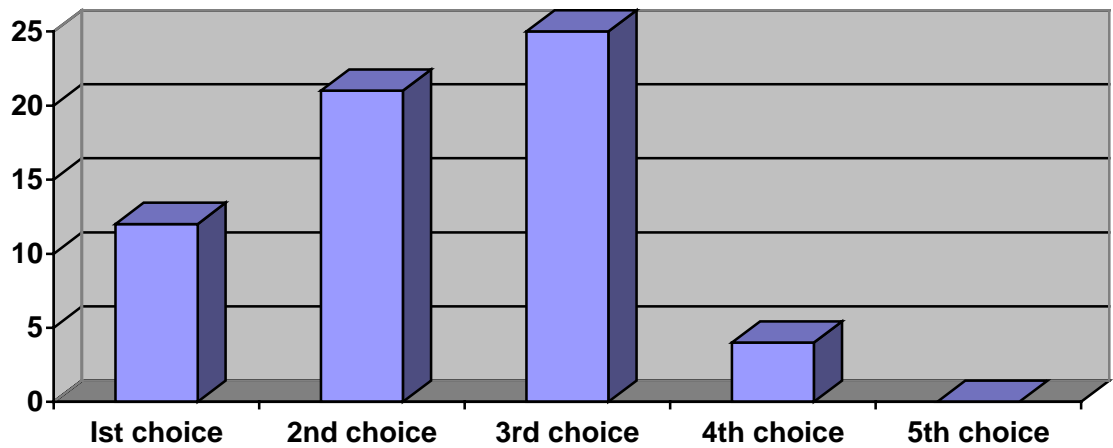
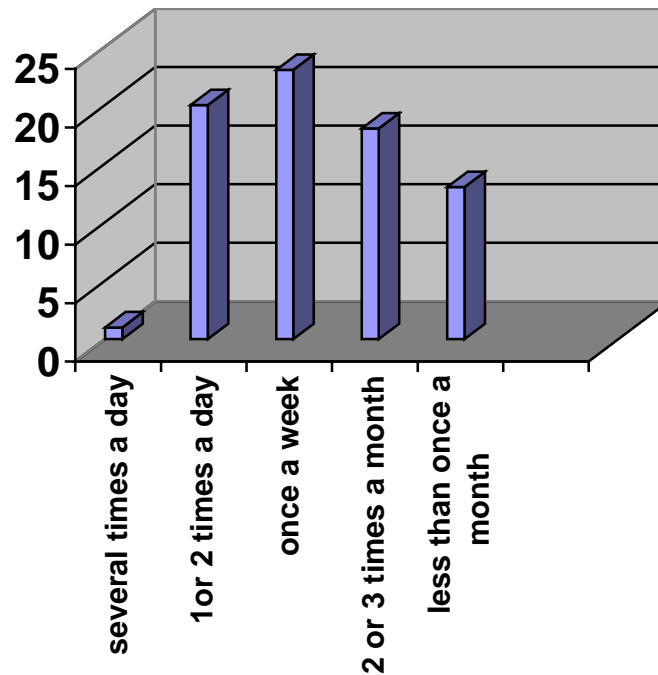


Chart showing when staff would choose Plans Manual

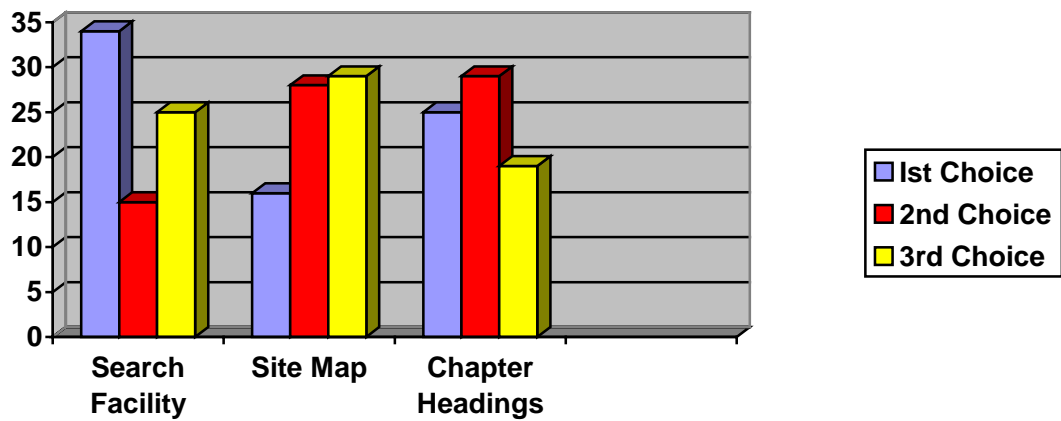




4. On average, how often do you use the Plans Manual?

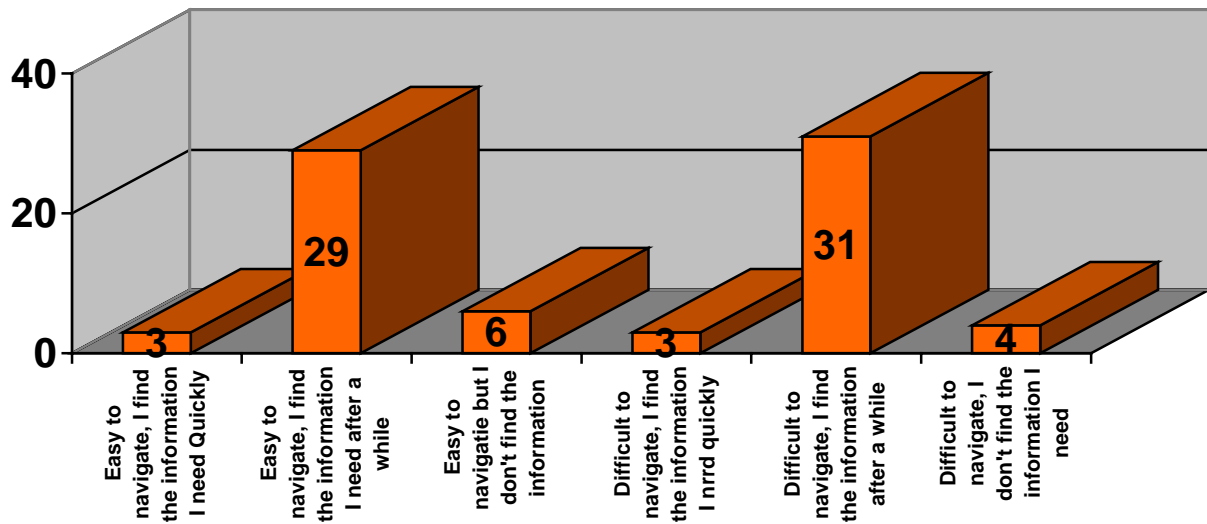


5. How do you find the information in the Plans Manual? Please rate in order of choice, 1 as first choice etc>





How easy is it to use the Plans Manual and find information?



Comments.

45% of the questionnaires returned also included comments. Not all the comments have been reproduced in this report but a selection, which reflect the points raised.

- ◆ The biggest difficulty is finding the section covering the information required-always takes a considerable amount of time, searching & reading areas that are not pertinent to the query in hand. It would be helpful if the user had access to their own "index page" where they could note sections/areas they are particularly interested in or use more frequently than other sections, which they could add to or remove info as & when required
- ◆ It would be helpful if bookmarks could be put in the most used chapters.
- ◆ The illustrations do not appear and when this is fixed could we have more illustrative examples. It would be handy to have a section of the plans manual devoted to problem solving, perhaps a flow chart pointing you in the right direction.
- ◆ Improve the search facility to include further likely words searched on
- ◆ In principal, the search engine is simple to use, but, in practice, it is very difficult to find the piece of information you are actually looking for. For instance, if you are trying to find out the procedures for canceling cases,





you type in cancellation, you are given several options, but none of them actually tell you what to do. Instead, you have to refer to Bias For Action. In other instances, you type in RA (a very commonly used abbreviation within the Agency, and you get no search results found. There are so many different sources of information (Plans Manual, Bias For Action, Plans Memos, Plans Updates) that one of the biggest problems is deciding which of these is most likely to have the information you need. Can we not have an integrated source of information for settlers?

- ❖ paper copies for everyone
- ❖ Clearer headings. When using search facility too many options appear and categories are not always specific.
- ❖ As most officers probably use the same sections the most, a list of most frequently visited sections could be useful
- ❖ I find the search facility not very user friendly and never use it, this could be improved to make it quicker and easier to find information needed. Would it be possible to give examples of problems encountered with cases and give specific answers to exactly how/why/what was done to resolve the case.
- ❖ except for things like conversion tables (very useful incidentally, if absurdly precise in some cases) I find it very hard to read and absorb information from a screen; I therefore like to print off relevant sections when needed; however, there seems to be little control over the amount that can be printed - could the print facility be arranged so that sub-sections (rather than whole chapters) can be printed off? Of course it could be that I just don't know how to do that.
- ❖ perhaps making more staff aware of the plans manual on the intranet
- ❖ More examples of unusual cases would be a great help as often the information is there but it lacks the step by step procedures on how to carry it out.
- ❖ The search engine is not user friendly. The facility is not word specific and always brings large amounts of irrelevant text with the section you are looking for.
- ❖ Plans manual should include diagrammatical information as a supplement to the written word. Search tool could do with an overhaul - not just word search, full text or extract. A search which can deliver more options should be available too. i.e. link certain key words in plans areas which impinge on each other - boundary, juts, ROS tolerances, OS Criteria.

