

Starlink Project
Starlink User Note 19.1

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SPICA - Spectral Data Reduction System

The purpose of this note is:

1. To announce the availability of the SPICA package.
2. To give brief information about the history and characteristics of SPICA.
3. To point to sources of further information about SPICA.

This note is not a primer for SPICA. You must refer to the other sources of information in order to find out how to use it.

SPICA, formerly known as DRUGS, is a VAX implementation of a system written at UCL on a small Perkin-Elmer machine. It was selected by the Starlink spectroscopy Special Interest Group for development as an interim spectral data reduction and analysis facility, to be superseded in the fullness of time by the official Starlink n-D system. SPICA is especially suited to the reduction of IPCS data; other types of spectral data can be handled, but not always in an optimal way (an example is IUE data).

Programmers at UCL, Manchester and RCO collaborated in the implementation. Further improvements and enhancements are being made; these will probably be released piecemeal. When you initiate SPICA you should receive a message saying which version you are using. The latest modifications may be described in response to a SPICA command 'HELP MODS'.

Bugs should be reported to Dave Terrett at the University of Manchester (MAIL address: 'MAVAD:OPER').

The SPICA package is stored in directory 'DRUGDIR:'. A lot of documentation is contained in files in this directory. You can type or print out these files for reference. The following files are especially significant:

FIRST.AID	This gives a brief introduction to SPICA.
DEMO.TXT	This specifies a series of exercises in the use

of SPICA and is a very good way of getting a feel for the system. You will need access to the SPICA test data tape which your Site Manager should have.

A complete SPICA manual should be available for reference at each site. Ask your site manager for it. You can print the whole manual out on the line printer by typing @DRUGDIR:MANUAL but be warned, it is several hundred pages long! SPICA itself has a HELP facility which can be used from any terminal to browse for information. All you need do is login, type 'SPICA' and then type 'HELP' and take it from there. You can also type or print files of type 'AID' in directory 'DRUGDIR:'. These contain documentation on their associated commands. Note that SPICA generates LOG.TXT files in your default directory. You will also need the ability to create about 5 Mbytes of filestore unless SPICA has been installed as a known image with special privileges at your site. Ask your site manager.

The introduction and exercises mentioned above are very helpful documents and should be read by anyone considering using SPICA.