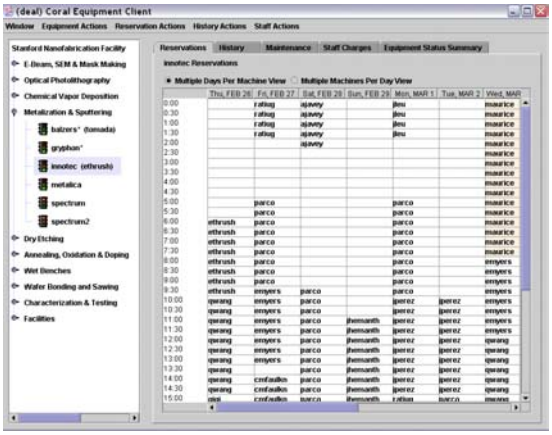
(10) Coral Software System

Coral lab software stations



Coral interface to reserve equipment in advance

A “smart card” used to carry a Coral session from one station to the next

A software system, called “Coral,” is used to run the SNF lab. It was developed at Stanford by SNF staff, and has been implemented in other university clean room facilities across the country as well as in SNF.

Each piece of equipment in the clean room is connected and interlocked to the Coral computers. Coral has several key features:

1. It insures that only people who are trained and qualified to use a particular piece of equipment have access to it. Lab users are trained by SNF staff and must prove that they can competently and safely operate each piece of equipment before the system allows them to use it.

2. It tracks equipment usage by individual lab members. The user’s billing account, such as a research contract, is then automatically billed for the equipment use.

3. It allows lab members to reserve equipment so that equipment use may be allocated and shared in an efficient manner.

4. It communicates both equipment and process problems to other lab members and SNF staff.

There are about 20 Coral stations throughout the clean room. Coral can also be accessed over the internet. **A nice feature of Coral is the use of “smart cards”** from SUN Microsystems. Instead of re-logging in at each station, a user can take, or carry, his or her session with them from station to station by using the smart key card.