eRA Technical Coordinators

Date: October 21, 2004
Time: 1:30–3:00 p.m.
Location: 6700 B Rockledge Dr., Room 1205
Chair: Chip Groh

Next Meeting: November 18, 2004, 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m., 6700 B Rockledge Dr., Room 1205

Action items:

1. (All) Email Tracy Soto if you are interested in being a user volunteer during the conversion of applications in Phase I.

2. (Amir Venegas) Inform group via email of any issues that may arise from upgrade to 10G.

3. (Chip Groh) Email to tech group the changes in TSNNAMES file distribution due to the mandatory port changes; Steve Patton will forward the details to Chip.

4. (Tim Twomey) Find out if the TNSNAMES file changes for November and December can be combined.

5. (Tim Twomey) Provide a query to find a list of users and their roles in each IC and what they have access to.

6. (Tim Twomey) Get details from Mark Siegert about procedure for changing animal subject coding and inform the group.

Kumaran/J2EE Migration Update

Tracy Soto

[J2EE Migration update](#)

Tracy reported that both User Administration and Grants Management programs have gone through integration testing and will be opened today to three ICs—National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) and National Institute on Deafness and other Communication Disorders (NIDCD)—to use for a week. The converted programs will be gradually opened to other ICs. The two client-server applications have been converted to web-based applications prior to being migrated to a web-based platform called J2EE. eRA is on track to shut down the client-server Grants Management application in January 2005. User Administration (UA) will be ready for user volunteers by November 1; bugs identified during testing are still being worked out. No shut down date has been discussed for UA because it is dependent on the glitches being ironed out.

Tracy stated that eRA had reached a decision to convert the remaining client-server applications to J2EE applications. eRA had been debating whether to build these applications from scratch or convert; the latter is seen as more cost-effective and practical since eRA has not maintained

detailed requirements for client-server applications to manually code these applications. Two applications—Quick View and IC Query and Reporting (IQR)—are not being converted, while Special Initiatives Tracking System (SITS) will be converted. Tim Twomey stated that Quick View will be there as long as it can run without maintenance. Tracy stated that eRA will be talking to IQR users so see how they can duplicate the same functionality found in the program. IQR will be around until they find a viable replacement. Chip Groh questioned the wisdom of retaining SITS, which he said should be renamed "sit and spin." Tracy responded that it was a question of usage; they had tracked 93 log-ins to SITS versus 20-plus for IQR.

The client-server applications will be in containment during the five months of conversion, meaning no changes will be made unless they are critical. Tracy noted that they had delivered the baseline for the code conversion to Kumaran, the company doing the conversion, and it would be tough to alter anything after that. The Phase I applications—GUM, Subprojects, ICO, ICStore, Review, Committee Management—are in containment from October 2004 through February 2005. They are scheduled to enter production pilot by May 28, 2005. The Phase II applications—Crisp Plus, Population Tracking, SITS, Trainee Activities and Receipt & Referral—will be in containment from January through May of 2005. They will enter production pilot by September 1, 2005. eRA's goal is to retire all client-server applications by January 1, 2006.

Tracy stated that she would like to see more user volunteers during the Phase I conversion—to make suggestions about screen changes since eRA does have a little flexibility in converting the user interface, to answer questions from developers, and to test the J2EE versions of the applications. Those who are interested should email Tracy.

Action: (All) Email Tracy Soto if you are interested in being a user volunteer during the conversion of applications in Phase I.

10G Migration update

Amir Venegas

Amir stated that eRA database servers in the development and test environment have already been upgraded to Oracle 10G and are in the process of being RAC (Real Application Clusters)-enabled. Development has already been RAC-enabled; the test environment is slated to be RAC-enabled on Friday, October 29. He stated that the relevant change for Technical Coordinators would be when eRA RAC enables its stage environment sometime in mid-to-late November, two weeks before it goes to 10G in production (mid-December). The migration from Oracle 9i to 10G carries many advantages—10G allows you to have multiple instances, a smooth failover and more scalability, all leading to a more stable database environment. A group member wondered what impact the changes would have. Amir replied that the created scripts may have to be different. Chip Groh suggested cataloging each issue and providing a list to the Technical Coordinators in advance of the move to stage environment. Amir stated that they would keep a close eye on issues and email out the list. Technical Coordinators would have two weeks between stage and production to tackle any issues that may arise.

Action: (Amir Venegas) Inform group via email of any issues that may arise from upgrade to 10G.

Port changes

Steve Patton

eRA has been mandated to make changes to database ports by the Center for Information Technology (CIT), which is moving to standardize all ports. Steve Patton noted that the ports that need to be changed have been identified and the change will be implemented the evening of Saturday, Nov. 13. That day happens to be eRA's scheduled downtime day for maintenance, which falls on every second Saturday between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. Steve noted that it would also involve changes to the middle-tier ports. IC Tech Reps will have to update the local copy of their TNSNAMES files. Details will be made available on the IMPAC II website. The information will be released on Friday, November 12, a day before the change. Chip Groh asked why CIT was mandating this change. Tim Twomey noted that the reasoning is that while it is okay to have non-standard ports for conducting business within NIH, standardized ports are necessary when NIH databases are open to agencies halfway across the world. Group members wondered if they could get information on the change in advance. Tim responded that IC Tech reps should not make changes before the Saturday change is implemented, otherwise their access will be disrupted. However, for those savvy enough to understand port changes, the information could be provided in advance. Steve stated that he would forward details to Group Chairman Chip Groh, who could send it out to the group. Steve noted that a second change would also have to be made in December, when the TNSNAMES files have to be updated for the 10G RAC. Group members wondered whether the two changes could be meshed into one. Tim Twomey stated that he would find out.

Action: (Chip Groh) Email to tech group the changes in TSNNAMES file distribution due to the mandatory port changes. Steve Patton will forward the details to Chip.

Action: (Tim Twomey) Find out if the TNSNAMES file changes for November and December can be combined.

Update: Tim stated that it was determined that the TNSNAMES file changes for 10G RAC cannot be combined with the TNSNAMES file distribution for the required port changes.

Tech talk

Council budget module—One group member asked about the status of eRA's spending plan and funding for the creation of a Council Budget module that would allow ICs to develop paylists. Tim Twomey responded that eRA's final budget had not yet been approved. The Council Budget module is scheduled to be designed this year, with requirement gathering already begun. The module is a high priority item on a list of items and could get accelerated if something else is dropped off the list.

Centralized Progress Reports—A group member noted that effective October. 1, NIH implemented a new policy that receipt and initial processing of all non-competing progress reports were going to be centralized and scanned into the eRA database. Extramural staff will be able to view the scanned image in the Grants Folder. The member stated that she looked in the Grants Folder but was unable to locate them. Tim Twomey responded that it was not technically eRA's responsibility, because it was a policy change and eRA had not been asked to build a notification system. The images are supposed to be made available six days after receipt; these images can be viewed through modules like QuickView, Program Module (PGM) and Web

Query Tool. Another group member stated that she was in a meeting with DEAS (Division of Extramural Activities Support) where it was decided that a tool would be made available to search for these grant images by all Institutes and Centers (ICs) and that reminders will be sent that applications have been received. Another member wondered if they could receive a log report detailing items scanned daily into the Grants Folder. Tim responded that it was not feasible to produce such a log; the database does have a development type log file used by contractors to check data but it is dense and unreadable. Tim stated that there was no easy way to translate that log into something that would be user-friendly.

DEAS—Group members expressed confusion about the set up of the newly formed Division of Extramural Activities Support (DEAS) and how DEAS staffers get access to documents in IMPAC II. They stated that their formal requests for DEAS help have not gotten a response in weeks. DEAS, which began operations October 4, represents a major change in the way NIH handles administrative support services. Before the advent of DEAS, each IC had its own administrative support services staff. But now, all support services staffers have been centralized under DEAS under three hub managers and fan out to ICs on an as-needed basis. Tim stated that eRA controls to which ICs the DEAS employees have access through the User Administration module; the Help Desk has been temporarily entrusted with the job. Hub managers have not been given access for security reasons, so they have to go through eRA. Access is granted to staffers whose names appear on a preapproved list. Tim stated that he gets a lot of requests from people not on the list and has to forward them to Zoe-Ann Copeland, acting director of the Office of Administrative Operations, Office of Extramural Research. Carol wondered if the group could be given a list of users and their roles in each IC and what they have access to, so that their requests would go to the right people. Tim stated that he would try and get that list for the group. Group members stated that the DEAS set up was confusing and they did not know whom to call. Chip Groh stated that while he understood that passions ran high over the issue, all complaints should be directed to DEAS.

Action: (Tim Twomey) Provide a query to find a list of users and their roles in each IC and what they have access to.

Update: Tim provided this query that can be pasted into MS Query or run in SQL Plus to find out a list of all DEAS staffers who have any roles in an IC:

```
SELECT IMPACII_USERS.IMPACII_USER_ID, IMPACII_USERS.LAST_NAME,
IMPACII_USERS.FIRST_NAME, IMPACII_USERS.LAST_NAME,
IMPACII_USERS.PRIMARY_PHS_ORG_CODE, IMPACII_USERS.SECONDARY_ORG_TEXT,
IMPACII_USER_ICDS.BUSINESS_AREA_CODE, IMPACII_USER_ICDS.PHS_ORG_CODE
FROM IMPACII8.IMPACII_USER_ICDS IMPACII_USER_ICDS, IMPACII8.IMPACII_USERS
IMPACII_USERS
WHERE IMPACII_USERS.IMPACII_USER_ID = IMPACII_USER_ICDS.IMPACII_USER_ID AND
((IMPACII_USER_ICDS.PHS_ORG_CODE='EB') AND
(IMPACII_USERS.SECONDARY_ORG_TEXT='DEAS'))
ORDER BY IMPACII_USERS.LAST_NAME ;
```
In this instance, he used EB (the two-letter code for The National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering) as an example.

Overview calendar—One group member asked if it would be possible for eRA to post on their website a calendar of software and database changes expected down the road. With an overview, IC reps could keep track of impending changes but they would not hold eRA management's feet

to the fire if the change did not transpire on the projected date. Tim Twomey said that while it was a good idea, there were some inherent difficulties. For instance, in the past year, they have had maintenance releases but not any major releases so there has not been much to publicize. Tim stated that he tries to get the word out as soon as he knows; in some cases, it is difficult because he finds out just a couple of days in advance. Carol Martin wondered if they could get at least two days notice before a release. Tim replied that for client-server applications, the general rule is to give a ten day notice. Tim stated that he has had to break that rule a few times due to extenuating circumstances, such as the release of the Pop Tracking module because there was great pressure from the Advocates to get it out. One deployment coming down the road is that of a change to animal subject coding, expected in the early January/February time range. Carol asked if they could get the code in advance. Tim responded that the way it works is that the code itself does not change, but the business rules do. He said he would verify that with Mark Siegert and get back to the group.

Action: (Tim Twomey) Get details from Mark Siegert about procedure for changing animal subject coding and inform the group.