eRA Technical Coordinators

Date:	April 22, 2004, Thursday
Time:	1:30–3:00 p.m.
Location:	Democracy 2, 7th Floor NIDDK Conference Room
Advocate:	Chip Groh

Next Meeting: May 20, 2004, Thursday. Location TBA.

Action Items

1. (All) Bring examples of queries that do not work in Web QT to the next eRA Technical Coordinators meeting.

2. (Steve Hughes, Tim Twomey) Investigate possibility of implementing new functionality in the eRA system to handle the withdrawal of non-funded pending awards; report findings at the next eRA Technical Coordinators meeting.

3. (eRA Technical Coordinators) Meet with your Chief GMO is discuss the possibility of using an OER script to handle the withdrawal of non-funded pending awards; identify any issues with this proposed solution and report findings at the next eRA Technical Coordinators meeting.

4. (Chip Groh) Include a discussion about the withdrawal of non-funded pending awards on the agenda for the May eRA Technical Coordinators meeting.

5. (Chip Groh) Meet with a few GMOs to discuss the possibility of using of an OER script to withdrawal non-funded pending awards; arrange to present this proposed solution at the next GMAC meeting.

eRA Architecture Update

Steve Hughes

J2EE Conversion—The J2EE conversion of User Administration and the Grants Management Module is going smoothly and will be finished within the timeframe initially estimated. There is a possibility that these modules will be fully converted two months ahead of schedule, in which case users will be granted access to the newly converted applications sometime this summer. No additional functionality will be added to these applications; they simply will be converted so that the eRA system has a uniform, Java-platform architecture. The conversion of these two applications will not affect the redesign of the Grants Management module; ongoing business-process modeling will continue as planned. Once Grants Management and User Administration have been converted, eRA will evaluate the success of the conversion. If the conversion is successful, eRA will convert the remaining client-server applications to ensure a single-platform architecture. Finally, client-server applications will not be retired until the converted J2EE applications are fully functional.

eRA Data Mart—The first and second iterations of the data mart will be completed this summer. These iterations involve converting the data mart built by the National Cancer Institute (NCI) to a data mart suitable for NIH eRA purposes. After the second iteration is complete, the data mart

will be available to users. At this point, the Architecture Team will customize the data mart for user needs. Steve said that he will be working closely with the eRA Technical Coordinators to identify these requirements. Steve reminded the group that the goal of the data mart is to provide users a more intelligent means of extracting reporting information from the eRA system. More specifically, the data mart will give users a better alternative than going to the OLTP database for reporting information, allow greater flexibility, and provide a "refresh" time of minutes as opposed to the hours required when working with the current IRDB.

Steve hopes that the data mart will help to ensure that users across the NIH are using consistent data. Finally, he emphasized the importance of making the data mart a more flexible backend for a wide range of tools, including but not limited to QVR.

Oracle Enterprise Manager (OEM)—Al Graeff has asked that NIH systems develop a way to monitor system performance. Currently, eRA is alerted to problems when a critical mass of users report bugs to the Helpdesk. However, a more proactive method of pinpointing system glitches needs to be implemented. Steve explained that the Oracle Enterprise Manager (OEM) may be a solution, since it scans most of the components that "touch" Oracle. This tool can monitor the Oracle database, the network, and operating systems and identify problems well before users ever pick up the phone to contact the Helpdesk. The Helpdesk could use this program to monitor problems without having to rely on a user's description of the issue at hand. This program is part of the Oracle 10g server upgrade which includes agents that could be deployed on PCs and/or servers in each of NIH's office locations (e.g., Executive Blvd, Democracy). This upgrade and deployment would have to be arranged with the eRA Technical Coordinators. Steve said that eRA will move to the 10g platform as the benefits, risks, and cost of the new platform are determined in a testing environment. The deployment of specific elements of 10g and the latest release of OEM to accomplish the above tasks will also be evaluated and reported. He will update the group as developments occur.

Group Feedback on Web QT Pilot

All

At the March meeting, Steve asked group members to encourage their respective ICs to "try out" Web QT. He explained that Web QT is the only front-end tool available that was initially designed to "test out" the backend engine that is currently being developed by the Architecture team. He reminded the group that the purpose of the engine is to funnel all queries and other reporting requests that use the OLTP; in other words, rather than multiple engines and tools building *differen*t queries, the backend will ensure that a *single* query is constructed. The group agreed to "try out" Web QT so that Steve could obtain a good idea of how well the backend was functioning. After a month of working with Web QT, the group provided the following feedback:

- Web QT does not collect or present enough reporting data to effectively test the backend engine. A different front-end tool needs to be developed.

- The interface is not sufficient.

- Data in the eRA data mart needs to be refreshed every six hours.

Chip Groh said that Patti Gaines, the Analyst for Web QT, will present a demonstration at the May eRA Technical Coordinators meeting. Chip asked group members to bring examples of queries that do not work in Web QT so that they can share their concerns with Patti.

Action: **(All) Bring examples of queries that do not work in Web QT to the next eRA Technical Coordinators meeting.**

Withdrawal of Non-Funded Pending Awards

Chip Groh

Currently, there is no documented procedure for withdrawing non-funded, pending awards—that is, grants that have been through council, have "Pending Award" status, but have never been funded. Initially, Jim Tucker was given the task of addressing this issue; however, there has been no development thus far. Chip asked the group how the withdrawal of non-funded pending awards should be handled.

Steve said that there are two issues to consider. First, it is essential to reexamine the functionality in the system to see if withdrawals can be handled automatically. New functionality may need to be implemented. The second is to consider appointing an individual in OER to run a script that would "sweep clean" all non-funded pending awards. In this second scenario, all pending awards that have not been funded 18 months after the council letter has been sent out would be withdrawn from the system. Grants Management Officials in each IC would then be responsible for reviewing the list of withdrawn grants and identifying any grants that should be reactivated.

Steve and Tim agreed to look at the possibility of implementing new functionality in the system that would handle withdrawals. In the meantime, Chip encouraged eRA Technical Coordinators to discuss the OER script solution with their respective Chief GMOs and identify any potential problems. The group agreed to discuss this matter further at the next meeting.

Finally, the group suggested that Chip discuss this potential solution with GMAC. Chip said that he would meet with a few GMOs to arrange the inclusion of this topic on the GMAC agenda.

Action: **(Steve Hughes, Tim Twomey) Investigate possibility of implementing new functionality in the eRA system to handle the withdrawal of non-funded pending awards; report findings at the next eRA Technical Coordinators meeting.**

Action: **(eRA Technical Coordinators) Meet with your Chief GMO is discuss the possibility of using an OER script to handle the withdrawal of non-funded pending awards; identify any issues with this proposed solution and report findings at the next eRA Technical Coordinators meeting.**

Action: **(Chip Groh) Include a discussion about the withdrawal of non-funded pending awards on the agenda for the May eRA Technical Coordinators meeting.**

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Helpdesk Hours

Tim Twomey

Helpdesk hours will be extended to the following:

- Monday-Friday: 7 a.m.–8 p.m.

- Saturday: 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

Round Robin Discussion

All

*Scanning—*The group asked for an update on scanning. Tim Twomey explained that six pilot applications have been successfully uploaded by the National Eye Institute (NEI). He also said that many scanned applications have been showing up in the system as eSNAPs; an emergency patch is being released to remedy this glitch. Tim also said that disk space in the production level for scanned applications is rapidly disappearing. There are plans to install a new server in two weeks. Finally, Tim said that Mike Loewe is looking to establish a central point for all scanned Type 5s. Tim will update the group as developments occur.

*Summary Statements—*The group expressed concern about glitches regarding Summary Statements. On March 17–19 and during the first week of April, there were several failed jobs concerning Summary Statements. These failed jobs were not cleared out of the queue and subsequently created confusion. Tim said that he is not sure what caused this glitch, but recommended that the group visit the *Queue Status* located on the Cool Tools page under the "Systems Queries" tab. The *Queue Status* will allow users to check the status of various jobs in the queue and quickly view dates, times, and user IDs. Finally, Carol Martin said that several Summary Statements that have been uploaded have failed. She asked what should be done regarding this glitch. Tim recommended that she report these instances to the Helpdesk and continue to ask SRAs to upload the Summary Statements again.

*Type 7s—*The group asked about the problems concerning Type 7s in the IRDB. Tim said that he has fixed the data issues concerning this glitch but hasn't fixed the glitch itself. Tim will provide updates as developments occur.

*Missing columns in OLTP—*Carol Martin said that she is concerned about missing columns in OLTP. Apparently, when the IMPAC I bridge was retired, several columns were not populated and remained empty. She asked what eRA intends to do about this problem. Tim said that no action has been taken thus far.

*People Data—*It was asked whether there are any plans to allow NIH staff to update people data. Right now, only Principal Investigators (PIs) update their own person data. If PIs do not update their information accordingly, then NIH staff must contact the IC Data Quality/Control representative to change the data. Steve said that there are no plans to grant NIH staff this authorization because allowing NIH staff to update this data may disrupt the consistency and format of the interface.