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ITSC News

IHS Information Technology Support Center

News from the ITSC Teams

Web Team's New Consolidated IHS Jobs Vacancy Database

Len Thurman

The Web Team is embarking on an effort that should make finding a new job one "mouse-click" away from your desktop. Plans are under way to consolidate the existing IHS Jobs Vacancy Database and the IHS Health Professionals Jobs Database into a single, dynamic web application that will have powerful search and sort capabilities and new, secure socket layers (SSL) downloading and uploading of documents. The site will be customizable to each professional discipline and the individual user. Additionally, the system will be able to email users about specific job opportunities as they are posted.

The new application will be a complete rewrite, but will take advantage of the best features of the existing applications. Elements of the new IHS Web Infrastructure, such as universal login, will allow easy access for personnel officers and health care professionals recruiters to add and remove vacancy listings online. Sophisticated, secure uploading capabilities will enable potential candidates to submit applications and resumes online.

The application will be built using Cold Fusion and SQL Server, the anchor elements of interactivity on the IHS Web. It will be hosted on the Internet server at www.ihs.gov and will be available to job seekers worldwide, 24 hours a day.

Negotiations are under way with other programs that maintain their own unique job vacancy databases or lists to consolidate them into the new application. It is envisioned that any organization or program desiring a unique front end (page) to the database may be able to create one that automatically searches for and displays jobs specific to the Area, Office, Tribe, Urban Program or professional discipline involved.

Telecommunications News

Tom Fisher

Firewall Update

The ITSC telecommunications group has ordered the new Cisco Firewall and VPN solution for the Indian Health Service.

The firewall will provide the IHS with increased security to its wide area private network and will allow the Telecommunications team to identify security vulnerabilities. This firewall solution will enable the team to analyze each TCP/IP packet and assure that it is a true data pack and not a hacker trying to break into the network.

This solution includes a firewall for each Area. We will also implement

the Cisco security policy manager by which we will define, distribute, enforce, and audit network-wide security policies.

Virtual Private Network (VPN) is a term used to describe a connection between two or more private, or trusted, networks when the connection is carried across a public, or non-trusted, network. A VPN isolates private traffic while it is on the public network so that the connection seems to be private, or is considered 'virtually' private.

The VPN offered in the Cisco solution is software to be loaded on every PC outside the firewall that requires access to within the IHS network. Thus if a PC outside the firewall wants to appear as a user insider the firewall, the necessary software and firewall/VPN router are set to allow that specific user into the IHS private network.

FTS 2001 Status

The FTS 2001 team is continuing to move services over to MCI's FTS 2001. Here's the percent complete to date:

Federal Calling Cards	100%
Dedicated Transmission Service	0%
Virtual On-Net (VON) Service	100%
Frame Relay	25%
Packet Switched (31 sites)	0%
Audio Conferencing	100%
800/877/888 Service	25%

Most FTS orders are waiting on Local Exchange Carriers to complete the last mile of wiring to the IHS Health Facilities.

Wide Area Network Upgrade

We are studying the use of ATM to the health facility level to ensure that it is cost effective to combine voice, data, and video services over the same network.

Firewall and Internet Monitor

Session Wall III is in full operation and allows the ITSC to check for viruses and other attacks to the IHS network such as PING and address spoofing.

Modem Pool

The a-sync dial up 800 number has been configured to allow only registered users to access the network. Call Team management to obtain your network login and password.

Wide Area Networking

The Team has solicited vendor price quotes in an effort to make wide area network maintenance available for the FY 2001 time period.

E-Mail Gateway

The E-mail gateway server and software is now at ITSC and will be made operational within the next month. The E-Mail gateway will allow the ITSC to check all in-bound/outbound e-mail and assure that all e-mail is virus free.

National Patient Information Reporting System

HCFA Interface

Stephanie Klepacki
Sean Fagan

NPIRS staff is currently working on a data comparison project with HCFA. This will determine the Medicare eligibility of patients registered in NPIRS/RPMS and provide updates to the facility registration files.

HCFA will provide NPIRS with the patient's current enrollment data, including eligibility number, type of coverage, and coverage start and stop dates. Staff will update the national database and forward the

information to Area Offices so they can update their databases.

This project will:

- Ensure more accurate databases at the Area and national level.
- Reduce the number of IHS Medicare claims rejected by HCFA fiscal intermediaries due to errors in Medicare eligibility data.
- Enable HCFA to better identify American Indian and Alaska Native beneficiaries in its Enrollment database.

This project is currently in the testing phase and is anticipated to be operational by the end of calendar year 2000.

NPIRS DB2 Project

Mike Carver
Stephanie Klepacki

NPIRS is moving to the IBM DB2 Universal Database. The previous Informix database was not fully compatible with the high availability software on the RS6000 servers, which resulted in severe data loss. We have fully restored the lost data from backup tapes and are now confirming the data integrity with the Areas.

We selected the DB2 Universal Database for its reliability, scalability, and enhanced support for Java, SQL-based stored procedure language, built-in data warehousing, On-Line Analytical Processing (OLAP), and XML. Combining the NPIRS powerful RS6000 with DB2 will provide the scalability and performance to support a high-end data warehouse for IHS and ensure a quality data delivery system. Completion is expected by September 30, 2000.

FY98 and FY99 Workload

Verification

Paul Golis

The NPIRS staff is verifying Inpatient and Ambulatory workload data for FY1998 and 1999 with headquarters and the Area offices. The process involves verifying that all export files from the Areas have been received, processed, and reported accurately into NPIRS.

This verification process follows the data storage conversion associated with the retirement last year of the old NPIRS mainframe computer. This verification process is a check on the data integrity after that conversion.

Currently, the Areas have received Inpatient workload for these fiscal years and comments are being accepted. The Ambulatory export files are now being reviewed to ensure all records received are processed into NPIRS.

The Statistical and Planning Officers have scheduled weekly conference calls and assembled six workgroups between NPIRS, IHS headquarters, and the Areas to maintain constant communications and rapid resolutions to Area concerns. New technologies will provide real-time updated reporting via an Intranet web site.

The process is not only verifying the workload data, but also creating avenues for better understanding of the total data movement between the Area's RPMS systems and the NPIRS database.

Demo of Crystal Info Cube

Application

Paul Golis

NPIRS staff demonstrated an On-Line Analytical Processing (OLAP) Data Cube at the Joint Conference

of the IHS Statistical and Planning Officers on August 8-10 in Phoenix. The data cube is a new analytical tool being implemented on the IHS Intranet web site for Area statistical officers. On-Line Analytical Processing (OLAP) is a significant leap from static report viewing and the two-dimensional limits of traditional spreadsheets.

Data cubes allow analysts to make decisions based on a multi-dimensional view of their respective NPIRS data. The OLAP Data Cube allows statistical officers to "slice" data in different ways in order to get answers to many of their data issue questions. Data cubes can be structured, and the corresponding data dimensions can be organized, into a hierarchy of subgroups and totals. A user can view data at the top level, or by drilling down, at lower and lower levels of detail, making it possible to discover the precise source of a particular variation in the data.

We hope, through the introduction of data cubes, to help everyone gain a better understanding of the NPIRS database and workload reporting by viewing, comparing, and working with information in ways simply not possible before.

From Application Development ...

Ray Willie/Carl Gervais

Accounts Receivable

The Application Software Development and Support team has placed Version 1.3 of the Accounts Receivable package into beta

testing. This version contains a new menu option, which allows you to post an electronic remittance advice from Medicare.

Patch Releases

Third Party Billing (ABM) V2.4

Patch 1 includes dental codes that print with leading zeroes, display the new modes of export on the charge summary, limit the length of EMC filenames, allow updating of the parent claim with children visits from PCC, display and print value codes, generate itemized outpatient claims, provide inclusion of claims under a parent facility without loss of parameters, and a Claim Editor request for the UB-92 "Admitting Diagnosis."

Patch 2 now prints the hardcopy UB-92 with 2 alphanumeric characters and strips out leading 0s in the Admission Source and Type fields on the electronic formats; it corrects the electronic HCFA carrying over a previous record; and it enables reprinting of the new UB-92 and HCFA electronic formats.

Pharmacy V6.0 Patch 8 provides the latest quarterly update on average wholesale pricing.

Taxonomy (ATX) V5.1 Patch 1 adds the capability to automatically trigger a complication into the CMS Complications file from PCC Data Entry.

Administrative Resource

Management System (ARMS)

V2.0t1 Patch 25, in beta, prevents final approval of a training request that doesn't have a vendor. It also

Check out the revised RPMS website at www.ihs.gov/CIO/RPMS

It gives you easier access to software distributions and documentation by applications name (Downloadable Files). You can find out the status of projects being done by the ITSC (Project Status). And, you can join online conversations using the new Discussion Board option.

restricts user access to travel orders and creates an airfare de-obligation DHR on a request cancellation. It displays all Training Procurement Official information when printing an ARMS user profile and prevents missing and duplicated payments in the Treasury ECS file.

Standard Table Updates Package (AUM) V99.1 Patch 14 automates the addition of 16 new Cost Centers, as developed by a national workgroup, and approved by IHS Headquarters. ARMS is the only generally known application user of Cost Center, but for those sites needing to run the Cost Centers to support other local applications, it is all right to run it without ARMS.

Women's Health (BW) V2.0 Patch 7 contains a code change in the export process and adds an additional form used for certain diagnoses. It also adds code entries to comply with CDC requirements. It contains modifications to the community screen on the procedure statistics report, the Medicare display in general retrieval, and the age general retrieval item.

Supply Administrative Management System (SAMS), V2t2 now provides all active options at the top of the menu path. Table maintenance options are rearranged to make the user and requisition add/edit functions easier to use. Transactions are now posted in real time and updates are replaced by "closeout" procedures. If a previous closeout failed, it can now be restarted. Data entry screens display additional information pertaining to the current record. Backorders are generated automatically if an issue exceeds the quantity on hand.

Site Visits

Members of the ASDS team have visited sites to assist users with the

RPMS packages, their setup, and sometimes, when requested, their business processes. Onsite assistance was provided to PIMC with their instrument interfacing and to the business offices at Ft. Defiance and Northern Navajo. A representative from the ASDS Business Office team also provided training at the recent IHS Business Office/Medical Records Partnership meeting in Denver.



IHS 2001 Information Technology Architecture

Capt. Jim McCain
ITSC Tucson

The 2001 IHS Information Technology Architecture (ITA) document was recently completed by a workgroup consisting of senior IT leadership, ITSC Team Leaders, and contract technology architects. Development and documentation of the IHS ITA meets requirements of the Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996 which defines the ITA as, "an integrated framework for evolving or maintaining existing information technology and acquiring new information technology to achieve the agency's strategic goals and information resources management goals."

The completed ITA document ensures adequate interoperability, redundancy, and security of information systems. It also provides a collection of standards (including technical standards) by which the agency evaluates and acquires new systems.

The ITA institutes an adaptive architecture that aligns with and enables IHS/Tribal/Urban (I/T/U) business requirements. It also provides a blueprint to guide planning of both work efforts and IT acquisitions. It ensures standardization of the IT environment, provision of a common understanding of IT resources, and confidence that systems designed with ITA guidance will be supported now and in the future. The ITA is broad in scope and includes an Enterprise Architecture, a Technical Reference Model, and Standards Profiles.

Enterprise Architecture

The Enterprise Architecture is an explicit description of the current and desired relationships among business and management processes and information technology. It describes the "target" environment the Agency will create and maintain. The IHS ITA consists of business processes, information flows and relationships, applications, data descriptions, and technology infrastructure.

Technical Reference Model (TRM)

The TRM identifies and describes the information services (such as database, communications, and security services) used throughout the agency. For example, Data Interchange Services support the exchange of data and information between applications. In this example, the information service would identify the various ways the agency enables the exchange of data, such as plain text, spreadsheets, databases, graphical information over Intranet/Internet, and video.

Standards Profiles

IHS will adopt the minimum standards necessary to support all components of the desired Enterprise Architecture. These profiles describe technical standards that enable services, such as operating systems, networks, and data interchange services, and prescribe interfaces between those services. As such, these standards will enable interoperability,

portability, and scalability in Agency systems. They also contain specifications and minimum criteria for hardware, software, data management, communications, user interfaces, and implementation approaches.

Specific standards for security cover such services as identification, authentication, and non-repudiation; audit trail creation and analysis; access controls; cryptography

management; virus prevention; fraud prevention, detection and mitigation; and intrusion, prevention, and detection.

The 2001 ITA document will be made available on the IHS Website. For more information on the ITA and how it affects your site, contact Capt. Jim McCain at James.McCain@mail.ihs.gov or (520) 670-4815.

More Online Professional Development Courses are Coming Your Way!!

Keep your eye on the ITSC Training Website: home.training.ihs.gov

VA Developers Conference

In early August, several staff members of ITSC/ASDS Team attended the Veteran's Administration Information Technology Conference. This annual event brings together thousands of employees and visiting technologists to share new information technologies. The conference featured more than 280 topics with over 350 individual sessions covering virtually every aspect of information technology within the VA. IHS representatives to this conference returned with some very helpful information. Here's a sample:

Outlook 2000: Ways to integrate Outlook with other Office applications and greater understanding of its new features.

Building Interactive Web-based Applications Using Cache: How Web application development techniques and client/server interfaces can be combined with the Cachè environment.

GCPR Framework Project Overview: An overview of the project, its goals and objectives coupled with a technical overview including CORBA interfaces and an update on the telecommunications infrastructure.

The Next Generation of VISTA: The work efforts underway to move VistA to Cachè, object technology, Web front-ends, common toolsets.

Distance Learning Network: Exploration of the VA distance learning network including Intranet/Internet, Video Teletraining, and multimedia learning environment.

Clinical Repositories: One session attended by IHS people presented information and demonstration of a clinical database repository system. Another session presented an assessment of the VA's Interactive Clinical Repository, discussing real-time clinical data exchange, archiving data, and centralized patient records.

Staff members from the ITSC business office team attended sessions concerning Medicare, Inpatient and Outpatient Hospital Services, Third Party Debt Collection, and team building.



Excerpts From the SANS Institute...

Gene Robinson

Mistakes People Make that Lead to Security Breaches

Technological holes account for a great number of the successful break-ins, but people do their share, as well. Here are the SANS Institute's lists of silly things people do that enable attackers to succeed.

The Five Worst Security Mistakes End Users Make

1. Opening e-mail attachments without verifying their source and checking the attachment type first.
2. Failing to install security patches-especially for Microsoft Office, Microsoft Internet Explorer, and Netscape.
3. Installing screen savers or games from unknown sources.
4. Not making and testing backups.
5. Using a modem while connected through a local area network.

The Seven Worst Security Mistakes Senior Executives Make

1. Assigning untrained people to maintain security and

providing neither the training nor the time to make it possible to learn and do the job.

2. Failing to understand the relationship of information security to the business problem-they understand physical security but do not see the consequences of poor information security.
3. Failing to deal with the operational aspects of security: making a few fixes and then not allowing the follow through necessary to ensure the problems stay fixed
4. Relying primarily on a firewall.
5. Failing to realize how much money their information and organizational reputations are worth.
6. Authorizing reactive, short-term fixes so problems re-emerge rapidly.
7. Pretending the problem will go away if they ignore it.

The Ten Worst Security Mistakes Information Technology People Make

1. Connecting systems to the Internet before hardening them.
2. Connecting test systems to the Internet with default accounts/passwords
3. Failing to update systems when security holes are found.
4. Using telnet (software which provides connectivity between different systems) and other unencrypted protocols for managing systems, routers, firewalls,

and Public Key Infrastructure (PKI.)

5. Giving users passwords over the phone or changing user passwords in response to telephone or personal requests when the requester is not authenticated.
6. Failing to maintain and test backups.
7. Running unnecessary services.
8. Implementing firewalls with rules that don't stop malicious or dangerous traffic-incoming or outgoing.
9. Failing to implement or update virus detection software
10. Failing to educate users on what to look for and what to do when they see a potential security problem.

And a bonus Number 11:
Allowing untrained, uncertified people to take responsibility for securing important systems.

The SANS (System Administration, Networking, and Security) Institute is a cooperative research and education organization through which more than 96,000 system administrators, security professionals, and network administrators share the lessons they are learning and find solutions for challenges they face. SANS was founded in 1989. The core of the Institute is the many security practitioners in government agencies, corporations, and universities around the world who invest hundreds of hours each year in research and teaching to help the entire SANS community. The SANS web site is

www.sans.org.



scheduled for this time has been cancelled due to lack of enrollment.

10/5-6/00 -- International Classification of Diseases (ICD-9-CM) Coding Basic, CRIHB.

10/16-20/00 -- RPMS Laboratory package--Introductory Level, ITSC Albuquerque.

10/16-17/00 -- RPMS Patient Registration; ITSC and NPAIHB co-sponsors; NPAIHB Training Facilities.

10/16-18/00 -- RPMS MAS Scheduling and ADT, ITSC and Phoenix co-sponsors; Phoenix Area Training Facilities.

10/16-18/00 -- Scheduling and Admission/Discharge/Transfer (ADT) V 5.0, Phoenix Area.

10/18/00 -- RPMS Scheduling in MAS, ITSC and CRIHB co-sponsors; CRIHB Area Training Facility.

10/18-20/00 -- Mini PCC Data Entry, NPAIHB (fee for non-Area).

10/19/00 -- RPMS Patient Registration, ITSC and CRIHB co-sponsors; CRIHB Area Training Facility.

November

11/6-7/00 -- Contract Health Services, Portland Area/NPAIHB.

11/8-9/00 -- Referred Care Information System, Portland Area/NPAIHB.

11/8-9/00 -- Site Manager's Training, CRIHB.

11/13-15/00 -- RPMS Laboratory Package, ITSC and Portland Area/NPAIHB co-sponsors; Portland Area Training Facility.

11/14-15/00 -- Data Quality Improvement, Phoenix Area.

11/14-15/00 -- RPMS Radiology Package, ITSC Albuquerque.

11/14-15/00 -- Referred Care Information System (RCIS) V1.0, CRIHB.

11/16/00 -- Billing for Site Managers, ITSC Albuquerque.

11/16-18/00 -- RPMS Contract Health Management System (CHMS) V3.0, CRIHB.



ITSC Call Center Stats

Len Kulleseid

The Call Center received 355 calls from 6/1/00 through 8/31/00. They closed 337 orders in that same period (246 – 69% - were closed within 14 days. Here's how that breaks down:

Same Day:	124
One Day:	37
Two Days:	10
3-14 Days:	75



Let us hear from you!

ITSC Call Support Center
888-830-7280

You can also access the Call Support Center online via the RPMS home page at www.ihs.gov/Cio/RPMS.

ITSC Director, Russell Pittman
(505)248-4189
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NPIRS, Notah Begay
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ASDS, Ray Willie
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Web Team, Len Thurman
(520) 670-4767
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GCPR Project, George Huggins, (520) 670-4871
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SDST, Bruce Parker -
(505) 248-4804
bruce.parker@mail.ihs.gov

Important IHS Websites

Internet: www.ihs.gov Intranet: home.ihs.gov

ITSC: home.itsc.ihs.gov

Training: home.training.ihs.gov

WAN: home.wan.ihs.gov

Web: home.webteam.ihs.gov

Telecomm: home.tmt.ihs.gov

Systems: smt.hqw.ihs.gov

NPIRS: dpsntweb1.hqw.ihs.gov/ciweb/main.html