

*~The CONNECTIONS WEEKLY~*  
*March 10 ~17, 2006*



***The CONNECTIONS Program Improvement Plan Update...***

As you are aware, in response to concerns related to the performance of the CONNECTIONS system, we have initiated a *CONNECTIONS Performance Improvement Project*, and we are partnering with staff from OFT, OCFS, as well as vendors, to analyze all aspects of the infrastructure design (i.e. servers, network, database, etc.) and application design, to determine the root cause of these performance issues. To improve a system of this magnitude, a representative sample of transactions has been identified to benchmark and focus problem resolution. Other system changes will be controlled to ensure integrity of the problem resolution.

OCFS identified the top 10 transactions for benchmarking. Test plans were created and baseline testing has taken place at the following locations: Albany – 40 North Pearl 6<sup>th</sup> floor lab – (02.13.06), the Albany County Department for Children, Youth and Families – 112 State St. – (02.15.06), and the ACS Manhattan Field Office – 125<sup>th</sup> St. – (02.22.06).

We would like to thank all of the individuals who participated in the testing. Your continued support is greatly appreciated.

***CPIP Activities for the week of February 28 – March 3, 2006***

The Governance Board approval of short-term performance improvements occurred on 02.27.06. A structured test in the Preview environment occurred on 02.28.06 that included a Progress Notes print test with multiple concurrent transactions. A review of test results and ensuing implementation plans took place on 03.01.06. A code fix to reduce network traffic was tested late in the week with the following results: The time to generate a Progress Notes report with 200 Progress Notes was improved.

***CPIP Activities for the week of March 6 – 10, 2006***

An additional code fix to further reduce the amount of data traversing the network during a Progress Notes print was tested with significant results: The

time to generate a Progress Notes report with 200 Progress Notes was greatly reduced. The team completed a review and update of the CPIP Recommendations and Findings on 03.06.06 and defined a resulting implementation plan. Planning sessions for medium and long-term recommendations is scheduled for 03.09.06. The team is in the process of defining the plan for re-testing and monitoring performance improvements (to take place after short-term improvements deployment on 3.17.06).

### ***CONNECTIONS Build 18.7.3...***

CONNECTIONS Build 18.7.3 is scheduled to be implemented on Friday, March 17, 2006, from 6:00PM – midnight. The downtime for implementation of this Build is expected to be six hours. Along with performance improvement enhancements scheduled to be implemented with this Build there will be modifications made to Progress Notes functionality, Vacancy Control, Case Summary, and Address Validation. It should be noted that the modifications, enhancements and fixes in this Build are the direct result of requests for modifications to the CONNECTIONS Application from users.

The Build 18.7.3 Release Notes, a document that describes what will be included in this Build, will be communicated to local district and voluntary agency CONNECTIONS Implementation Coordinators, Security and Back-up Security Coordinators, Resource Users and local district Directors of Service later this week. Please note that the Release Notes will also be posted to the CONNECTIONS website.

### ***The Newly Developed Telephone Search ...***

OCFS Information Technology is pleased to announce the newly developed ***Telephone Search!***

The Telephone Search was designed to meet the expressed user need for access to information, such as phone number and location, for individuals contained in the Outlook/Exchange Global Address Book. With the implementation of the Telephone Search, all system users, whether accessing the system through NIS, SSL or SSL VPN, will be able to search and find all State, local district and voluntary agency staff contained in the Outlook/Exchange Global Address Book.

The Telephone Search:

- provides users who are not able to access the Outlook/Exchange Global Address Book with the ability to locate individual identifying information, such as name, telephone number and work location on those individuals who are currently listed in the Outlook/Exchange Global Address Book
- allows the user the ability to update individual identifying information from the Telephone Search Results page by just clicking on the nyseWebstar link
- includes an intuitive Help feature

The Telephone Search is accessible to users through both the OCFS intranet and the CONNECTIONS intranet.

For more information about how to access the Telephone Search please click on the attachment posted below.



Telephone Search  
Instructions...

### ***Local Commissioners Memorandum ~ 06-OCFS-LCM-01...***

Please note that an LCM (06-OCFS-LCM-01) was issued from the Division of Strategic Planning and Policy Development, dated March 1, 2006. This LCM defines the State Central Register (SCR) intake procedures and the designation of CPS report type. A copy of the LCM is posted to the OCFS intranet. The URL for direct access to the LCM is:

[http://ocfs.state.nyenet/policies/external/OCFS\\_2006/.](http://ocfs.state.nyenet/policies/external/OCFS_2006/)

### ***Build 18 Post Implementation Self-Assessment***

As you are aware, CONNECTIONS Case Management (Build 18) established a single electronic case record for ongoing child welfare services cases and extended critical CONNECTIONS functionality to these cases for the first time.

The project team has prepared a tool to assess and support the current use of the application. This assessment tool is called the Build 18 Post Implementation Self-Assessment. The Post Implementation Self-Assessment covers three main subject areas:

- Staff Access and Security
- Knowledge and Use of the CONNECTIONS Application
- Program and Operational Considerations

Each area represents a specific competency or knowledge area that is necessary to use the CONNECTIONS system effectively and efficiently. The instrument provides a structured format to review areas that are operating successfully, as well as areas that reduce staff effectiveness.

CONNECTIONS Regional Implementation Field Support teams are available to assist in the completion of this tool and are also available to help arrange for training or technical support in any area where a need or gap is discovered.

Please note that the Build 18 Post Implementation Self-Assessment was forwarded to Commissioners, Executive Directors, Directors of Service, and CONNECTIONS Implementation Coordinators on Tuesday, February 28<sup>th</sup>. The Assessment is also posted on the CONNECTIONS intranet website.

### ***CITRIX Client ~ Program Neighborhood Agent Access Update...***

This is just to let you know that as of Friday, March 24th, access to the CONNECTIONS application from the CONNECTIONS website, will no longer be available. The access point for the CONNECTIONS application was changed during the implementation of Build 18. At that time, all users were instructed to use the Citrix Program Neighborhood Agent (PN Agent) as the only access point for the CONNECTIONS application. However, it has recently come to our attention that some users are still using the old method (CONNECTIONS website) as an access point for the CONNECTIONS application. All users must now use the recommended method, the PN Agent, to access the CONNECTIONS Application. Accessing the application through the PN Agent does not change the functionality of the application it only changes the way the CONNECTIONS application is accessed. This PN Agent allows for easier and more secure access to the CONNECTIONS Production and Training environments.

### ***NYS OFT Customer Relations Communication 2006 – CRC – 17 ~ Microsoft Office and Outlook 2003 Update...***

Starting on Friday, March 10, 2006, at 7:00PM, OFT will distribute updated versions of Microsoft Office and Outlook 2003 (Office/Outlook 2003 SP2) to HSEN workstations (state-owned personal computers on the HSEN). This update addresses a variety of security and operation issues. Workstations will reboot one or more times during overnight hours. All installation activity will take place during off-hours to minimize any disruptions. If any issues are encountered accessing these program *after* March 10<sup>th</sup> we ask that you contact the OFT Enterprise Help desk at 1.800.697.1323. Please note that OFT is requesting that users keep their PC powered on after properly closing all programs and logging off.

### ***Management Report Update Form ~ Revised...***

*\*\*Please note that the Management Report Update form is for local district use only and has been revised to delete the Case Status Maintenance report.*

The Management Report Update form and instructions for completion of the form were initially forwarded to Directors of Service in August 2005, and then again in October 2005, with an attached spreadsheet identifying the individuals at the local district who currently receive the management reports. This form allows the local district to identify who they want to receive copies of the following reports:

- OCI Monthly Management Report
- OCI Monthly Management Summary Report
- Summary of Characteristics Report
- To Be Expunged Report
- Expungement Report
- CIN PID

- WMS Discrepancy Report

In order to either initially identify, or change, any of the report recipients we ask that you complete the form (posted below) and submit it to Marie Wiley.

***Instructions for completion of the form:***

1. The form can be completed by tabbing to each field; you can then hit the “enter” key to either add or delete the identified name for each report.
2. After completion of the document hit the “Submit by Email” button, located in the upper right-hand corner of the form;
3. you will receive a pop-up box titled “Submit Email Client” and the field “Desktop Email Application” will be pre filled, click “OK”;
4. you will receive a pop-up box titled “Send Data File”, click the “Send Data File” button. ***Please note: this step only sends the data from the form not the form itself.***
5. you will receive a pop-up box titled “Email Confirmation”; click the “Close” button;
6. you will receive a pop-up box titled “Adobe Acrobat”, the message will ask if you want to save changes to the Management Reports Update Form before closing; click either “Yes”, “No”, or “Cancel”.



Management Reports Update Form..

***New Postings to the CONNECTIONS Intranet..***

The following documents were recently posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet website.

- CONNECTIONS Build 18.7.3 Release Notes
- OCFS Data Warehouse News & Notes February 2006
- link to STARS

***When CONNECTIONS Will Be Unavailable...***

- ***Friday, 3/10/06*** from 5:00AM – 7:00AM
- ***Wednesday, 3/15/06*** from 5:00AM – 7:00AM
- ***Friday, 3/17/06*** from 5:00AM – 7:00AM
- ***Friday, 3/17/06*** from 6:00PM – Midnight *for the implementation of CONNECTIONS Build 18.7.3*