

CONNECTIONS WEEKLY SYSTEM UPDATE



Memo

To: CONNECTIONS Implementation Coordinators
From: CONNECTIONS Communications
CC: LAN Administrators/Security Coordinators, Keyusers, OCFS -Directors of Services, CONNECTIONS Project Team
Date: August 8, 2003
Re: Activities for the week of August 8, 2003 – August 15, 2003

1. CONNECTIONS Build 15.4

Reminder**

CONNECTIONS Build 15.4 is scheduled for release the evening of Friday, August 8th, 2003. To implement Build 15.4, the CONNECTIONS Application will be taken down for approximately 6 hours beginning at 6 PM on Friday, August 8th, 2003. In advance of the Build 15.4, we recommend that all CONNECTIONS users be logged off the CONNECTIONS Application by 5:45 PM. Local staff will not be able to access the CONNECTIONS Application between 6:00 PM and 11:59 PM. During this time frame, CONNECTIONS downtime procedures will be implemented for the transmission of CPS Reports between the SCR, ECS and local districts. We anticipate the CONNECTIONS Application being available on Friday 8/8/03 at 11:59 PM

The CONNECTIONS Build 15.4 Schedule and Release Notes were sent Monday, August 4th, 2003 to CONNECTIONS Implementation Coordinators, Directors of Services, Staff Development Coordinators and others. For reference, all Build 15.4 materials are posted on the CONNECTIONS Intranet Website on the Home page under the "What's New" section, and on the Implementation page. This information is also posted in Public Folders > All Public Folders > Statewide > CONNECTIONS > Build 15.4.

2. NIS Sharepoint

Over the last several months, several Network WinInstall Packages were distributed to CONNECTIONS workstations that contained new client software. An example of this would be LearnLinc. Because NIS Agencies are not part of the Network WinInstall Environment, they are unable to receive software updates through these packages. OCFS IT/CONNECTIONS and OFT are pleased to announce that an NIS sharepoint has been identified that all NIS agencies may start using beginning Friday, August 22nd, 2003. Prior to the above referenced implementation date, any NIS agencies or sites that have a need to update software (CONNECTIONS or Network related) are instructed to contact OCFS IT Operations staff, who will provide instructions on how to access this NIS sharepoint. We will provide the names and phone numbers of the appropriate OCFS IT contact persons in next week's CONNECTIONS Weekly Update.

For those who are not familiar with Network Integration Services (NIS), NIS is an ongoing project coordinated with the NYS Office for Technology's Network Architecture Bureau intended to assist local districts, voluntary agencies and state agencies with the integration of state and local networks. The main objective of the Voluntary Agency NIS initiative is to allow voluntary agency staff access to the CONNECTIONS Application from voluntary agency PCs.

3. NT Accounts/Expired Passwords

The CONNECTIONS Security Coordinator and Implementation Coordinator for each district and agency play a vital role in the overall communication between the CONNECTIONS Project and local district/agency staff, as well as in the facilitation of worker's and supervisor's use of the CONNECTIONS Application. The Implementation Coordinator serves as a point of contact between CONNECTIONS Project staff and the local district/agency for announcements concerning new Builds, new initiatives, project updates, workgroups and committees, and technical considerations. With regard to Security Coordinators, worker's access to, and ability to enter and update casework information depends on the proper assignment and maintenance of security permissions and functionalities. The assignment and maintenance of those permissions and functionalities is the job of the CONNECTIONS Security Coordinator.

A current check of NT accounts for CONNECTIONS Security Coordinators and Implementation Coordinators indicates that a substantial number of the above referenced staff have disabled accounts or accounts that have not been accessed in a long period of time. Such account inactivity critically hampers our ability to provide targeted and timely communication on a wide range of important CONNECTIONS announcements and activities regarding security and other technical considerations.

We think that it is very critical to remind you of the importance of keeping both the NT Login IDs and passwords updated. If the password is not updated in a timely manner, the NT Logon ID no longer becomes useable and is ultimately disabled. The CONNECTIONS Project relies on district/agency Security and Implementation Coordinators to share and disseminate all CONNECTIONS communication information to staff. These roles are essential to the success of the use of the CONNECTIONS Application within districts/agencies. Your cooperation is appreciated in this effort.

On behalf of Jo Shrader, OCFS CONNECTIONS Information Officer, we have been asked to remind CONNECTIONS Security Coordinators and Implementation Coordinators of the importance of fulfilling their obligation to receive and disseminate the information that we are sending. If either the Implementation or Security Coordinator are no longer employed at the district/agency we ask that you designate another individual to serve in the position.

Within the next few weeks you should expect to receive further information related to this issue.

We thank you, in advance, for your cooperation in this important issue.

4. Recent Postings on the CONNECTIONS Intranet Website

Over the last several weeks, several important items have been posted on the CONNECTIONS Intranet Website (Home page under the "What's New" section). The postings are as follows:

- *July 14th, 2003*: Frequently Asked Questions Regarding QuickPAD IR Devices
- *July 16th, 2003*: Build 15.4 Highlights Document;
- *July 25th, 2003*: CONNECTIONS Build 15.4 System Job Aid
- *July 29th, 2003*: OCFS Data Warehouse Report Library Listing
- *July 30th, 2003*: OCFS Data Warehouse News and Notes – July 03
- *August 4th, 2003*: Build 15.4 Release Notes and Schedule
- *August 7th, 2003*: NYPWA Conference Materials

Please take some time to visit the CONNECTIONS Intranet Website so that you can view these latest postings.

5. CONNECTIONS-In-A-Box (CIAB) Replacement Project (CIAB Sites Only)

The plans for the CONNECTIONS-In-A-Box (CIAB) Replacement Project will become finalized within the next few weeks. An announcement and materials will be forthcoming.

As reported in the CONNECTIONS Weekly Update over the last several weeks, as a preparatory replacement project task, CONNECTIONS Project staff began contacting CIAB sites to conduct a CIAB telephone survey beginning the week of June 23rd, 2003. Thus far, staff has completed surveys in Regions 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 (Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Albany and Yonkers). The focus of the remaining telephone surveys will be in the NYC Region.

For those districts/agencies that have already completed the CIAB phone survey, the CONNECTIONS Project extends its appreciation. For sites that have yet to be contacted, we again would encourage IT Staff or LAN Administrators to take the time to gather all your site CONNECTIONS-In-A-Box workstation serial numbers and be prepared to discuss and reconcile the equipment during the telephone survey phase of the replacement project. Any additional instructions will be provided during, and following, the survey.

The information gathered in this survey is extremely important and will help to assist the overall project in the CIAB workstation reconciliation process, as well as to provide us with other important information regarding site contacts, and site infrastructure information.

Please Note: The 2003 CONNECTIONS-In-A-Box (CIAB) Replacement Project only involves the CONNECTIONS-In-A-Box (CONNPC1 Models) that were distributed in 1999 as part of the NYS OCFS Y2K readiness plan. The CONNPC1 CIAB workstations replaced the baseline DW2 model workstations that were rolled out for the implementation of CONNECTIONS in 1996.

6. CONNECTIONS System Down Time

Due to regularly scheduled maintenance CONNECTIONS will be unavailable on:

Friday, 8/8/2003 from 5:00 am - 7:00 am
Tuesday, 8/12/2003 from 5:45 am - 6:30 am
Friday, 8/15/2003 from 5:00 am - 7:00 am

Please make note of the additional downtime (referenced in Item 1) for CONNECTIONS Build 15.4.

7. Microsoft Exchange Servers

Due to regularly scheduled maintenance on MS Exchange E-mail 5.0 servers, all Exchange E-mail 5.0 servers will be unavailable on:

Sunday, 8/10/2003 from 1:00 am - 6:00 am

Sunday, 8/17/2003 from 1:00 am - 6:00 am