The CONNECTIONS Program Improvement Plan Update…

The CONNECTIONS PIP (CPIP) team continues to monitor the system to track performance and asks that if users experience any issues with the application they report them to the NYS OFT Enterprise Help Desk at 1-800-NYS(697) -1323. The CPIP team thanks you for your continued assistance in this regard! The CONNECTIONS PIP team is currently modifying the plan and expects to have further information relative to the plan content within the next few weeks.

Activities for the month of August 2006

Four business cases as well as project plans were submitted and approved at the August meeting of the Governance Board. They were: CONNECTIONS SCR Standby Environment, CONNECTIONS Citrix and Windows Upgrades, CONNECTIONS Oracle Upgrade, and CONNECTIONS FCP Upgrade. The Bureau is currently focused on developing an integrated schedule for the latter three projects. In addition to this focus, the team is also involved in activities related to the forthcoming Build.

NYS Office for Technology (OFT) Customer Relations Communication (CRC - 102)…

Subject: Microsoft Vector Mark-up Language Unpatched Vulnerability

A communication from the Office for Technology Customer Relations team, dated September 25, 2006, was forwarded to local district LAN Administrators earlier this week. The following identifies the issue, as well as the prescribed action to be taken. If there are any questions related to the content of this communication we ask that you contact your agency LAN Administrator.

Issue

Microsoft has issued an advisory confirming that a public exploit exists that compromises an unpatched Windows vulnerability. Of particular concern are _laptops_ that are often off the network. The vulnerability in Vector Mark-up Language (VML) exists in Internet Explorer and in some versions of Outlook. An attacker can take advantage of this vulnerability to execute code on vulnerable

PCs. We are aware of an exploit that installs a key logger, stealing user IDs and passwords. Microsoft has not yet released a fix and so all Windows PCs are vulnerable.

Action

PCs that are permanently connected to the HSEN customer network are blocked from malicious websites by Websense and are additionally protected from malicious e-mail attachments by Symantec Anti-virus. However, PCs must have current anti-virus signatures to block exploits of this vulnerability. ***It is critical that, as soon as possible, all VPN-connected laptops and PCs and all other laptops (which are allowed to be directly connected) be connected to the HSEN customer network for at least 90 minutes to receive the latest antivirus signatures***.

Build 18.8.5…

Build 18.8.5 Release Notes

The Build 18.8.5 Release Notes were communicated on Friday, September 15th. The Release Notes describe the content of the Build and are posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet on the Home page.

Build 18.8.5 Implementation Date Change

There has been a slight change in the implementation date of Build 18.8.5 and the implementation date is scheduled for *Friday, October 13th*. The reason for the brief postponement is due to the necessity of the Office for Technology (OFT) to perform switch replacements during the weekend of September 29th (which was the original implementation date of this Build). Information about the date change was forwarded earlier this week in a communication to Implementation, Security and Back-up Security Coordinators, Directors of Service, Resource Users and other designated district and agency staff.

Got Equipment…We Have Forms…

It appears that there has been a lot of activity recently related to CONNECTIONS equipment moves and we just wanted to remind you that there are forms that must be completed and returned to the "comctrup" mailbox when a district or agency needs to either return, or move, CONNECTIONS equipment. These forms are titled as the following:

- CONNECTIONS Moving Form ~ OCFS-4820
- CONNECTIONS Equipment Return Form ~ OCFS 4819
- Other Request Form ~ OCFS 4818

Please note that these three forms are posted to both the OCFS intranet at the following address: http://ocfs.state.nyenet/admin/forms/it, as well as the CONNECTIONS intranet at the following address: http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/projupdt/sys.asp (under the title Equipment Change Forms). These forms should be submitted to the comctrup@nysemail.state.ny.us mailbox when completed. We thank you for your cooperation!

Permanency Regulations Info...

We are pleased to announce that the Permanency Regulations were published for public comment in the State Register on September 13th, 2006. The comment period extends from that date until October 30th, 2006 (45 days). Any comments received during the 45-day public comment period will be addressed through an Assessment of Public Comment before this regulatory proposal is adopted as a final regulation.

It should be noted that these regulations were previously filed, and have been continuously in effect on an emergency basis. The most recent re-filing on an emergency basis was on September 25, 2006. That notice will appear in the State Register on October 11th, 2006.

A summary of the regulations is posted on the CONNECTIONS intranet website on the Home page. The text of the regulations and supporting documents are posted to the OCFS internet site at the following address:
http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/legal/legislation/permanency/prop_perm_regs.asp

News from the OCFS Data Warehouse Team...
The SPR Outstanding Detail Report...

The Data Warehouse Team is pleased to announce a new predefined report in the Cognos ReportNet environment. The title of the report is the "SPRs Outstanding Detail" report and this report provides a list of Service Plan Reviews that have been recorded in CONNECTIONS since 7/8/06 and have no accompanying "Date Held."

The report is similar to the existing FASP reports in that there is a local district version and a voluntary agency version and users must complete several prompts in order to run the report. For your reference, there is an SPR Reports Step-by-Step Guide, as well as an FAQ document that has been created to answer questions that may arise when the report is viewed. These documents are available on the Data Warehouse page of the CONNECTIONS Intranet site.

If you have access to the Cognos ReportNet environment and the FASP reports, you can find the new SPR report in the "OCFS DW – SPR Reports" folder. If you do not have access to the Cognos ReportNet environment, you can request access by emailing the Data Warehouse Team at data.warehouse@ocfs.state.ny.us. We ask that you include your full name and HSEN ID and "cc" your Director on the email.

The Training Database...

Just a reminder, that the training database will be unavailable on Friday, October 13th, in preparation for the implementation of Build 18.8.5

New Postings to the CONNECTIONS Intranet...

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

- The CONNECTIONS Weekly
- CONNECTIONS Build 18.9 Classroom Training Schedule ~ October-December 2006 ~ Upstate
- Summary of the Permanency Regulations

Weekly System Maintenance…
CONNECTIONS Application Downtime…
** Please note the additional 6 hours of CONNECTIONS application downtime on Monday evening, 10/2/06. This downtime is necessary so that the Office for Technology (OFT) can replace and upgrade core switches at the Data Center.

- ***Friday, 9/29/06*** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM
- ***** Monday, 10/2/06*** from 6:00 PM – 12:00 AM Tuesday, 10/3/06
- ***Wednesday, 10/4/06*** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM
- ***Friday, 10/6/06*** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM