



eRA Technical Coordinators

Date: October 16, 2003
Time: 1:30–3:00 p.m.
Location: Rockledge 6700B, Rm 1205
Chair: Chip Groh

Next Meeting: November 20, 2003, 1:30–3 p.m., Rockledge 6700B, Rm 1205

Action Items

1. (Tracy Soto) Change expiration dates for passwords to Wednesday; reschedule first set of expirations (usernames A-D) to December 12 if November release is delayed.
2. (Chip Groh) Change the name of the IMPAC II Technical Coordinators to the eRA Technical Coordinators; inform the eRA Communications and Outreach Branch.
3. (Chip Groh) Change the name of the IMPAC II Technical Coordinators listserv to eRA Technical Coordinators.
4. (Chip Groh) Talk to Scarlett about current OPDIV outreach and training efforts.
5. (Chip Groh) Organize training and education of OPDIVs at/or before eRA Technical Coordinators meetings; consider combining ADEP/eRA Technical Coordinators meetings.
6. (Chip Groh, Steve Hughes) Draft group charter for eRA Technical Coordinators group and bring to next meeting.
7. (Chip Groh) Work with OER to obtain technical contacts at the various OPDIVs; add these names to the eRA Technical Coordinators listserv; use listserv to invite OPDIVs to eRA Technical Coordinators meetings.
8. (All) Contact Tim Twomey to report difficulties with CANs for 2004.
9. (Dave Chicchirichi) Investigate problems with disappearing Program Class Codes and changing subject lines for eSNAP notifications.

Handouts

1. eRA Password Policy Update for IMPAC II Technical Coordinators
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Architecture Update

Tracy Soto

The eRA Project is in the midst of transition: contractors are re-competing and the eRA Project is working to set priorities for FY04. A main priority for eRA is the conversion of client-server applications to J2EE applications. Currently, the Architecture team is evaluating tools for converting Oracle Forms to J2EE. These tools may prove helpful. Tracy will provide updates as developments occur.

eRA Password Policy

Tracy Soto

The eRA Password Policy will be implemented November 7. The policy is posted on the eRA Web site at http://era.nih.gov/docs/NIH_eRA_Password_Policy.pdf. The main points of the policy state that—

- ❑ Users must change their passwords at least every 180 days.
- ❑ Password length must be at least eight characters.
- ❑ The password must contain a mixture of letters, numbers, and special characters.
- ❑ The first and last characters cannot be numbers.
- ❑ The password cannot contain the user's login name.
- ❑ Passwords cannot be reused for a period of one year.
- ❑ The account will be locked after five consecutive unsuccessful login attempts.
- ❑ Unless created by the user, initial passwords are pre-expired.
- ❑ Accounts associated with passwords that have been expired for more than 45 days will be deleted unless there is a business reason to retain them.

Tracy distributed a handout with helpful information concerning the implementation of the policy, including grace periods, password generation and expiration, password changes, and the types of errors messages that may occur for IC extension systems.

During the November 2003 deployment, expiration dates will be set for existing IMPAC II accounts and will be phased in monthly over a 6-month period. Usernames beginning with—

- ❑ A–D will expire November 19, 2003
- ❑ E–H will expire December 12, 2003
- ❑ I–L will expire January 12, 2004
- ❑ M–P will expire February 12, 2004
- ❑ Q–T will expire March 12, 2004
- ❑ U–Z will expire April 12, 2004

Carol Martin asked if the expiration dates could fall on a Wednesday rather than a Friday. Wednesday expiration dates would ensure that users are present at the office to change their password; Fridays are not always a guarantee. The group agreed that expiration dates should fall on a Wednesday.

Finally, the group agreed that the first set of expirations (usernames beginning with A–D) may have to be pushed back if the November deployment is delayed a week. Tracy said that she will move the first set of expirations to December 12 rather than November 12 if the deployment is rescheduled.

Action: (Tracy Soto) Change expiration dates for passwords to Wednesday; reschedule first set of expirations (usernames A–D) to December 12 if November release is delayed.

Group Charter/Name Change Discussion

Chip Groh

Chip Groh said that the name of the IMPAC II Technical Coordinators group needs to be changed to better represent eRA as one unified system. Chip recommended that the group be renamed to the eRA Technical Coordinators; group members agreed. Chip said that he would change the name of the official group listserv.

Chip also asked group members to define the purpose of the IMPAC II Technical Coordinators group. Originally, the group tackled technical issues concerning changes to the IMPAC II database; however, recently the ADEP group and IMPAC II Technical Coordinators groups have seemed to cover similar information. Chip asked the group to make a distinction between the two groups. The group agreed that IMPAC II Technical Coordinators cover technical issues at a specific IT level while ADEP covers more general information at a user level. Occasionally, the same topics may occur on the agenda of both groups, but ADEP should approach the topic from a general perspective and the IMPAC II Technical Coordinators from an IT perspective. However, the group also suggested the possibility of holding a joint ADEP/Technical Coordinators meeting if both groups intend to cover similar information. There needs to be better communication between both groups. Chip said that he would take this into consideration.

Chip also explained the need to expand membership to several of the OPDIVs coming on board with the eRA system. He said that several of these new members will require basic training and information. Chip said that OER is looking to the Technical Coordinators to educate OPDIVs about the eRA system. He asked the group if educating OPDIVs should be part of the Technical Coordinators group mission and the group agreed. Specifically, Technical Coordinators should facilitate the learning of the OPDIVs by helping assemble resources and tips on how to handle the eRA system. Group members also suggested dedicating the first thirty minutes of every meeting to providing tutorials and presentations that will “get the OPDIVs up to speed.” Finally, the group recommended combining both the ADEP and IMPAC II Technical Coordinators meetings so that OPDIVs only have to attend a single monthly meeting. Chip said that this was a good idea and suggested renaming the combined group the ADEP/eRA Technical Coordinators group. He will look into these possibilities.

Chip asked Dave Chicchirichi and Tracy Soto what OER was currently doing to train OPDIVs. Dave explained that he will be conducting outreach and training at CDC headquarters in Pittsburgh; Tracy said that she has already held a session for sharing applications and that she will be visiting CDC in Atlanta the second week in November. Tracy also advised Chip to talk to Scarlett about additional outreach efforts.

Finally, Chip said that he would work with Steve Hughes to construct a group charter for the eRA Technical Coordinators group. He will also work with OER to obtain technical contacts at the various OPDIVs so that he can add those contacts to the Technical Coordinators listserv. He said that the listserv could be used as a learning tool, where OPDIVs could post their questions and the more experienced ADEP and Technical Coordinator community could provide answers.

- Action:** (Chip Groh) Change the name of the IMPAC II Technical Coordinators to the eRA Technical Coordinators; inform the eRA Communications and Outreach Branch.
- Action:** (Chip Groh) Change the name of the IMPAC II Technical Coordinators listserv to eRA Technical Coordinators.
- Action:** (Chip Groh) Talk to Scarlett about OPDIV outreach and training efforts.
- Action:** (Chip Groh) Organize training and education of OPDIVs at/or before eRA Technical Coordinators meetings; consider combining ADEP/eRA Technical Coordinators meetings.
- Action:** (Chip Groh, Steve Hughes) Draft group charter for eRA Technical Coordinators group and bring to next meeting.
- Action:** (Chip Groh) Work with OER to obtain technical contacts at the various OPDIVs; add these names to the eRA Technical Coordinators listserv; use listserv to invite OPDIVs to attend eRA Technical Coordinators meetings.

November Deployment

Dave Chicchirichi

The deployment will most likely be delayed a week. November 14 is the estimated date. Tim Twomey will provide updates as developments occur.

Dave explained that several users in BIB were having difficulty with CANs for 2004. Dave asked group members to contact Tim if they are experiencing the same problem.

- Action:** (All) Contact Tim Twomey to report difficulties with CANs for 2004.

Helpdesk

Dave Chicchirichi

The Helpdesk is in the process of transitioning to a new system called Remedy that is designed to track work tickets. Once the transition is complete, the Helpdesk will begin working with the Center for Information Technology (CIT). CIT will serve as the receipt point for all glitches, bugs, and questions about the eRA system and will generate and send work tickets to the Helpdesk who, in turn, will address problems.

Program Class Codes, eSNAP Notifications

The group reported missing Program Class Codes (PCC) on several grants. Apparently, the PCCs are disappearing at random times. Several group members reported the problem at the time of the Award. Dave agreed to look into this problem.

Finally, several group members reported different subject lines for eSNAP notifications. They were unsure if this disparity indicated a glitch with the system. Dave was unsure but agreed to investigate the matter further.

- Action:** (Dave Chicchirichi) Investigate problems with disappearing Program Class Codes and changing subject lines for eSNAP notifications.