

LESSONS LEARNED FROM ROSS IMPLEMENTATION 2003

Many of the lessons learned from the summer of 2003 will correct themselves as dispatchers become more comfortable and familiar with ROSS and dispatch offices establish a modus operandi for using the new technology. With training, established operating procedures, and continued improvements to the ROSS program, many of the issues below will be mitigated or eliminated. Until then, helpful hints and solutions can be found in the fix column.

AREA OF CONCERN	THE LESSON	THE FIX
DMS Profiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missed important info sent by e-mail, like application upgrades and .mobs. • Offices that do not use ROSS may use DMS for .mobs. • The only way to communicate issues about ROSS, pertinent to everyone, is via DMS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify to other office the DMS profiles your office will monitor. • Identify who in your office will monitor the profiles: for example, one person could monitor all messages, or tasks could be broken down by function.
READY OR NOT		
Getting ready	<p>Some offices in general weren't ready for ROSS in 2003.</p> 	<p>Review and complete the Readiness Review Checklist on the ROSS web site (ross.nwcg.gov). It will help so you won't be surprised on some dark and stormy night.</p>
Office Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)	<p>SOPs weren't edited for the use of ROSS. There was confusion when it got busy as to how an office was going to handle certain things in ROSS (Statusing, dispatching aircraft, CAD vs. ROSS, etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss 'what if' scenarios to refine office SOPs to incorporate using ROSS. • Things to think about: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Do you use CAD? b. How will you keep up the resource status in ROSS while using CAD? c. What are the pros and cons of entering incidents as they happen into ROSS? d. How often do you need to status your resources? e. Who will status the resources?

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Staffing	IRM personnel were not always available to set up expanded when needed.	A 24 hour mission critical application is new to us all. Make sure your IRM staff understand the importance of their support and have agreements with your office's IRM staff for after hour's assistance.
	There wasn't always someone available with ROSS admin rights to keep up with new user profiles, new resources, and quals in ROSS.	More than one person in your office should have ROSS admin rights. Someone should be available for expanded dispatch 24 x 7.
	Expanded struggled if there wasn't someone who spoke fluent ROSS to get them through the learning curve when new people came in.	Have local ROSS experts trained and available to work in expanded for OJT and general questions until the expanded is up to speed.
Computers	Not having enough computers available caused some delays and backlog.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure the IRM folks are aware of expanded needs to support ROSS (# of computers, Internet access, dial up if necessary). • Review the Disaster Recovery Plan and the minimum requirements to run ROSS. Both are on the web.
Initial Attack (IA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IA was often frustrating if it wasn't decided ahead of time how ROSS would be handled. • It was time consuming if there wasn't a definite plan for committing resources in ROSS as a result of IA (trying to release something in ROSS that had never been ordered in ROSS). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Are you going to use ROSS for any part of IA? b. Would it help to have an EDRC there just to enter CAD info into ROSS? Some offices worked this way and it was helpful if the incident went expanded. c. Does everyone know the process?

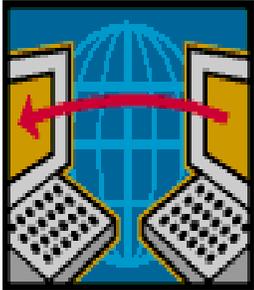
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RESOURCES		
Resource Status	Resources weren't available for dispatch because they weren't statused as available or statused for the right area (local, GACC, or national).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a system to monitor status. • Monitor those offices that are status only and resources using web status. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Are they statusing as planned? b. Is there a designated time frame for statusing? (Once a week, daily, etc.) c. Is one person identified to status the resources. d. Do they need instruction? • Check on the status of resources that have returned from an assignment. They have to be made available again <u>manually</u>.
Finding a resource on a known incident.	<p>I know the thing is on the incident but don't know the request number or what it is out as.</p> 	<p>With ROSS vs. 2.1, there will be a new search for resources screen that will allow you to search for resources by name.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incident resources screen. Use the “%” in the request number field to bring up all the resources in a particular catalog. (Use this prudently as it uses system resources and may take some time if the incident has lots of requests.) • There is now a ‘print list’ on the Request Status screen. This lets you print all the requests without having to highlight each one.

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<p>Finding a resource somewhere in the system.</p>	<p>Got a call to get a message to a person thought to be in my area. I don't know which incident the person is on or a request number. (We call this the "Where's Waldo?" search.)</p>	<p>With ROSS vs. 2.1, there will be a new search for resources screen that will allow you to search for resources by name across all open incidents.</p> <p>Until then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the incident resources screen of any incident, click the "set filter criteria for individual resources" and "resource name" radio buttons, then the "pick resource" icon. Enter the resource name, click "search". (Be creative with wildcards (*s) to get the name you're looking for – Tip - Enter the last name first, then first name. For example, if looking for John Doe, type in "Doe*John*", making sure you use the second * because the unit identifier follows all names.)
<p>Qualified Resources</p>	<p>I know I have a resource qualified as what is being ordered, but it doesn't show up on the available resources tab.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests are often ordered with more features than needed. Order with the minimum features you will accept. Additional features will excludes resource that might otherwise work. • Classify all your resources with every feature they have.
<p>Contracts</p>	<p>Dispatch offices held contracts, but they couldn't access them in ROSS because they weren't entered or were not entered correctly. This resulted in lots of 'new resources' being entered and reporting wasn't accurate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide how to deal with contracts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Will you enter all the contracts? b. If you don't, will it show favoritism? c. If you enter them all and have a bunch, could a contracting agent help you enter them in ROSS?

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Data Entry	Sometimes I couldn't find certain resources.	Data entry needs to be consistent. Following the established resource naming standards helps prevent duplicate resources and helps find your resources. (See data entry standards the ROSS web site.)
	Some resources were entered twice.	Some resources are not qualified as many ways as they should be. (E.g. a Type 2 crew should be qualified as a 'Type 2', 'Type 2 or 3' and 'Type any'.)
	Sometimes things didn't show up on the available resources tab. It was very frustrating to know you had resources available, but not be able to get to them	ROSS doesn't know if you're an EDSP that you are also qualified as an EDSD and an EDRC. If you want to go as all those things, each qualification must be listed in ROSS.
Resource Item	The same resource shows up over and over on the available resources tab. Can make for a long list.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a resource item is mistakenly in ROSS more than once, each entry will show up on the available tab. It is best to delete all but one entry before more than one gets used on a request. • If they have already filled a request, delete qualifications from the one or ones you don't want used. Now, only the remaining ones will show up on the available resources tab and be available for dispatch.
New Resource vs. External Resource vs. d-base Resource.	Lots of resources were entered as new resources that didn't need to be. They clogged up the system, made it hard to find what you wanted, and made it possible to dispatch the same resource twice from different files. Big problem, big mess.	Have a well known SOP for entering resources into ROSS. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Who has authority to enter a new resource? b. What criteria are used to determine if a resource should be entered as a new resource? c. What are the two checks prior to entering a new resource? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Is it already in ROSS, but not qualified or available? (2) Is the name spelled correctly? d. Discuss how you want non-tracked resources entered (rental cars, resources to only be used one time, etc.) See appendix A.

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Releasing Resources	<p>Resources were showing up at home unannounced and were unable to be dispatched because they hadn't been released in ROSS.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot be totally fixed in ROSS as we don't always get the notifications of release or departures. The difference with ROSS vs. paper is they can't be dispatched again until they are released and statused as available. • Mitigations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Make sure all resources released from the incident in ROSS. b. Double-check all released resources to ensure that travel has been 'set' in ROSS.
	<p>I would release everyone off a roster (the subordinates) but still couldn't close the incident.</p>	<p>Releasing the resources off a roster doesn't close it. You have to also release the 'parent' or it sits there thinking you are going to add more people to it. The parent is a request in itself and you won't be able to close the incident with it open.</p>
Changing a Resource's Name	<p>I changed the name of a resource, but it didn't follow through to the incident.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An edited resource item name doesn't follow through to previous incidents. When running a report on the corrected name, the only info you will get is for the assignments under that name. Information dealing with the name before the change must be found using the prior name. • If you have to edit the name of a resource, note the corrected name in the record before you change it so you can get accurate reports later.
Name Requests	<p>People kept showing up that weren't the name request I ordered.</p>	<p>In ROSS vs. 2.1 you will be able to identify name requests on the New Request screen. Until then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name requests need to be entered in the 'Special Needs' block and a phone call made to the office receiving the order. Right now the name request can't be seen without looking at each request.

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Roster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It took us forever to figure out how to dispatch with a roster. Things got backed up and the requests were delayed. • We didn't see the request for a roster member and we should be in the ordering chain for that resource. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can dispatch a resource with or without a roster. • You can dispatch a resource with an NWCG standard configuration or an improvised configuration. • Rosters can be set up ahead of time to save time on the dispatch. • Rosters by-pass the selection area. This is why an order for an IMT member in the NW can be sent to EA without going through NICC or EACC.
Pre-Orders	<p>Items were sometimes ordered twice because not everyone was aware of an existing pre-order.</p> <p>It took a long time to enter pre-order requests during the dispatch because they had to be created one at a time.</p> <p>We got a new employee from another forest and wanted all their assignment history to come with them. We imported them OK but they didn't have any of the ROSS history with it.</p>	<p>Be sure to name the pre-orders something everyone will understand (e.g. Blacks Type I short team pre-order).</p> <p>Create pre-orders ahead of time (hence the name '<u>Pre-Order</u>').</p> <p>The previous home unit needs to unlink the resource from the current provider and the new office needs to link the new resource to the new provider.</p>

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INCIDENTS		
<p>The Right Incident</p>	<p>Oh crimony, I just entered four new requests on the wrong incident!</p> 	<p>The fix: If you entered requests on the wrong incident you must cancel the requests, note the reason in documentation and recreate the requests on the correct incident.</p> <p>Things to watch for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You didn't match up the incident in the "Most Recent" pull-down list (located at the top of the ROSS screen, below the menus) with the incident on the New Request screen. Double-check you are working on the right incident. The incident numbers reset to "1" for the 2004 calendar year, it is now possible to see duplicate incident numbers on the "Most Recent" pull-down list. (E.g. an incident numbered "000001" from 2003 and another incident, "000001" for 2004.) To verify the correct incident, go to the Incident List screen and check the creation date. <p>In the future, there will be a "remove from most recent" function to edit the "Most Recent" pull-down list. Currently, entries on the "Most Recent" pull-down list will fall off when the list reaches 20 entries. Once the 21st entry is added, the least used entry (the one at the bottom) will fall off the list. (Frequently used entries stay towards the top of the list.)</p>
<p>Closing Incidents</p>	<p>Couldn't find incidents. They seemed to disappear.</p>	<p>Once an incident is closed you can't search, print, or add to the incident. The incident Host must re-open the incident for it to be modified.</p>
<p>Unannounced Orders/Filled Orders</p>	<p>Nothing new here. We still have requests we don't know about and people showing up to fill orders we didn't know were filled.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telephone and let people know they have a new order. Do travel in ROSS. The receiving unit will get a notification.

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TRAVEL		
Travel	<p>Lots of units didn't get the travel info on resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Things showed up at home and no one knew. ○ Things showed up at the incident with no notification and with no transportation. ○ Resources couldn't be assigned to new incidents because travel had been started but not completed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel must be 'set' for the travel clock of a resource to start ticking or ROSS doesn't recognize that the ETD/ETA has passed, and the receiving unit will not get the information. • Double check ETA time zones are set correctly; or receiving units will get times that aren't for their time zone. • Use the travel itinerary. It is critical receiving units know how, when and where resource will arrive. • Don't forget to complete a resources' "Travel to be Arranged" or "Travel (Itinerary)". If you don't the resource cannot be released or reassigned. • Commercial airline; enter the carrier name, flight # and arrival airport in the 'Mode of Travel' block so receiving unit knows where/ when to pick them up.
REPORTS		
Requests for reports	Some offices got bombarded with requests for reports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show managers, MAC groups, and others asking for reports how to run their own. • If "highest level" organization doesn't have a reporting and agency affiliation, reports won't work.
Erroneous reporting	My reporting says our dispatch office sent out three people on incidents. They should have shown as going out for the district.	The resource as most likely shows the dispatch off as the provider. Insure that no dispatch organization is a provider on the Resource Item screen.
ODDS AND ENDS		
Searching	I can't count how many times I searched for something and it didn't come up because I hadn't clicked all the right search criteria buttons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay close attention to the different search criteria. • Services and external fills were often missed because the search buttons for them were not checked.

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Notifications	<p>I get so many notifications I can't get the little flashy things in the upper right of the screen to stop.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only set notifications that you are going to use. It takes system resources to get these notifications and during 2003 very few people kept up with all the notification settings they had selected. • Remember that if you set up notification for crews or teams, you will get notification for each crew or team member when it is filled and travel is entered.
Views and Printing	<p>We sent copies of the printed resource order form to the incidents and it didn't contain all the info we could see on the screen.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all information you see on the screen will print. This will be changed in a later version. <p>Until then: Write in additional info the incident might want.</p>
#%*! Working Bar	<p>Sometimes the working bar would not stop working. I didn't know if it was really doing something.</p>	<p>Clicking on the 'x' of the working bar doesn't stop it (yet), and sometimes it appears to be working when it isn't (same as people). If you hover over a tool tip and the icon comes up you can usually nudge it loose by either clicking somewhere else on the screen Or switching to another screen and then back</p>