

2004 Calendar

February

- ROSS Team Meeting
2/24-26 Lakewood, CO
- ROSS Partners
Conference Call 2/19
- Testing Version 2.0

March

- National Logistics
Meeting 3/9-11
Reno, NV
- ROSS Partners
Conference Call 3/18

April

- ROSS Partners
Conference Call 4/15

New Versions to be Released This Year

Two new versions of ROSS are in the development stages for release in early 2004. **Version 2.0**, expected to be released around the beginning of March, will have fairly transparent changes to the user. Behind the scenes, however, significant improvements have occurred. Several new, more powerful servers have been added at Kansas City and the server configuration has undergone substantial reengineering. At the same time, system software, such as Oracle, Versata and BRIO was upgraded. Many security enhancements are also implemented with this release (see *Question of the Month* on page 3). The focus of Version 2.0 is to improve the performance of the system. While network issues are outside the ability of the ROSS Team to affect, a network performance review will be conducted along with the 2.0 rollout.

Version 2.1 is scheduled for a June 2004 release. The focus of this version is to address critical software problems or bugs, additional development within the approved scope and improvements to reporting needs. The “to do” list is much longer than the available programming time, so priorities were set based on input from users. Some of the highlights of Version 2.1 are:

- **Release to home** – dispatchers with the proper role will be able to release their resources from non-local incidents.
- **Ordering chain improvements** – all units in a request’s chain will be able to view the request on Request Status; edit travel and reassign resources during mob and demob; and the home dispatch will be updated on status changes.
- **Search for a resource** – users will be able to search for aircraft, crew, equipment or overhead items by resource name including resources managed by other dispatch centers even when the resources are not assigned.
- **Name Requests** – users will be able to create and place name requests for a specific overhead resource (ROSS or non-ROSS) on the New Request screen; change a regular request to a name request until it is placed; and edit the requested name while request is pending.
- **Pending Request** – qualified EFF/ADs will be displayed on the available tab; problems with reassignment of group requests will be

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New Versions to be Released

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corrected; users will be able to create a manifest for a request filled by a status-only office; “fill with new resource” will be restricted by role; options to “fill with EFF/AD” and “fill with agreement” will be added.

- **Edit Request** – requesting units will be able to edit the requested catalog item as long as the request is pending. This includes requests to other units.
- **Preposition** – duplicate display of prepositioned CWN resources will be corrected; problem causing locked resources will be corrected; users will be required to select a release option when filling a non-local request with a prepositioned resource.
- **Web Status** – Government non-dispatch units (such as rural fire districts) will be able to use web status for their Aircraft, Crew, Equipment and Overhead non-Service and Service items; remote supervised employees and nested supervisors will be permitted.
- **Reports** – a dispatch center workload report will be added; which includes all pending and filled requests generated by the user’s dispatch center no matter where they are pending or where they were filled; all pending requests placed with the user’s dispatch center; and all closed requests generated by the user’s dispatch center.

A complete list of version changes will be issued with the release.

ROSS Change Board Activated

Do you ever wonder how changes are made to an application? In ROSS, the recently activated Change Board will be the first stop for suggestions, changes requests, and new functionality for the future.

The ROSS Change Board’s first meeting occurred in November 2003 at the ROSS Project Office in Denver. In attendance included members Ray Nelson, Beth Mason, Kathy Miles, Sheri Fox, Dave Hart, Rod Chaffee and Jon Skeels. Grant Kemp and Dave Hendren were unavailable for this first meeting. The group reviewed the Change Management Plans and processes along with a visit to the Lockheed Martin (LM) development facilities, with LM Project Manager Paul Condit providing an overview of the Lockheed Martin change process.

The group was given an overview of the Capital Planning Investment Control (CPIC) process with in-depth discussion on how the board contributes to this planning process. Jon Skeels provided a project update with scheduled version releases and items included in each version. The board then reviewed the investment segments currently submitted for fiscal year 2004 and 2005 and the items suggested for fiscal year 2006. All 140 pages of suggestions received to date from the field were then handed out for the board to review and make recommendations for future investments.

Ray and Beth gave a meeting overview presentation at the National Coordinators Meeting in December. The board has since conducted one conference call to accept the suggested FY06 investment segments for submission to the Forest Service Investment Review Board (IRB). The next planned meeting scheduled for mid-spring will include updates to and continued work on the FY06 investment segments submission and beginning discussions for FY07 investment segments. A listing of the members and contact information can be found on the ROSS home page under the *Change Board* link.

Updated reference cards!

Be sure to print out the new reference cards updated for Version 1.2.6 on the web at http://ross.nwcg.gov/user_support.htm



Questions of the Month

What's new with Security and when will changes occur?

Improved security measures are not only required by law, but it's also just a good idea to ensure that our data and infrastructure is secured from those who are always looking for weak areas in our networks and computer systems. Several security enhancements will be implemented over the next year including:

- New formats for username and password – a minimum length and a character/number/letter combination will be the standard password configuration.
- Users will be required to change their password at specific intervals. A pre-expiration notice will be given to users to remind them to change their password, and a specific process will be implemented to restore a password if it is allowed to lapse.
- User accounts will be disabled if not used for a specific period of time.
- The application will automatically log a user off if there is no use for a specific period of time.
- Accounts will become inactive after a specific number of unsuccessful logon attempts.
- Account managers will have a greater role in account management than they currently have.

Beginning this spring, the ROSS application and supporting systems will go through what is known as Certification and Accreditation. This is a process to assure that all of the requirements for security are either planned for or completed. This review will include all aspects of the system (hardware, software, computer facilities, policies, regulations and user guides).

What is the status of 2003 ROSS data clean up?

The Lockheed Martin (LM) data folks have been working with dispatch offices identifying lists of potentially “suspect data” that may be duplicated in the database. Dispatch Offices, working with ROSS Subject Matter Experts, have been reviewing these spreadsheets and determining which duplicate data items should be consolidated. LM will then run scripts against the database to put the proper records “back together”. Once the data is cleaned up it will be stored and can be used for historical and year-end reporting. The goal is to complete this step within the next month.

Once the duplicate records have been consolidated, dispatch centers will be provided a process by which they can clean up (or delete) unwanted data. This process will help to prepare units for the 2004 season by having a relatively up-to-date database by which to work from.

Data clean up is a time consuming process, but the benefits of doing a thorough job will be realized when users begin dispatching this season and query historical reports.

note: on February 14, 2004, LM ran the scripts referenced in the first paragraph.

Report Tool Improves Data Access

This season, a new reporting feature will begin to be implemented for ROSS users. Data will be stored in a “data warehouse” that can be queried to generate reports.

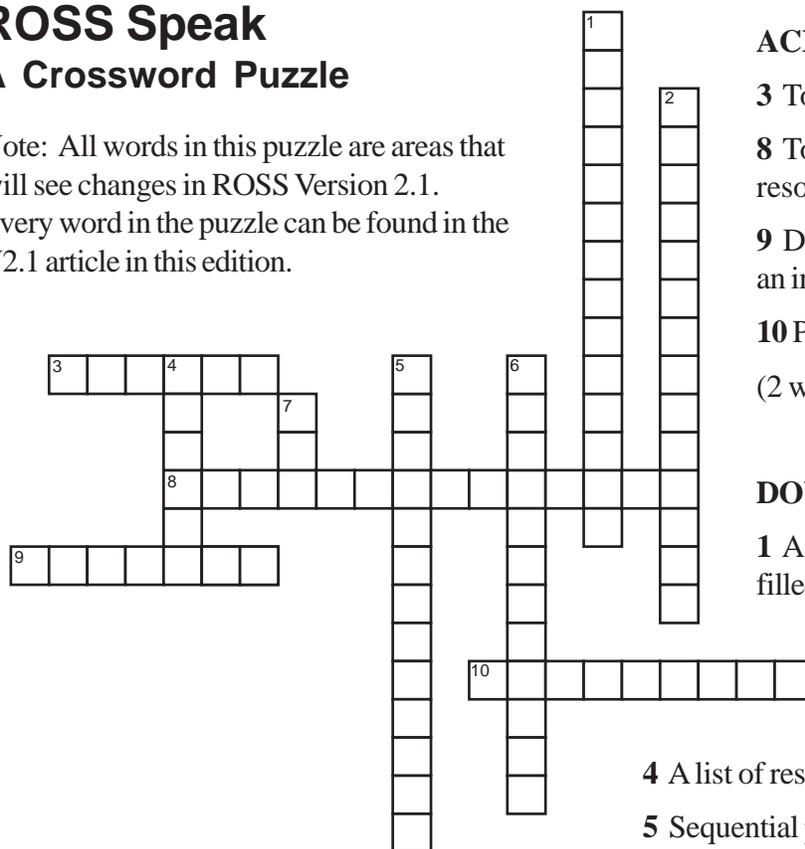
A data warehouse is a copy of transaction data structured in “themes” for querying and reporting. Themes will be flexible and can evolve through time. The initial data source for the warehouse will be periodic updates from ROSS; however,

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ROSS Speak

A Crossword Puzzle

Note: All words in this puzzle are areas that will see changes in ROSS Version 2.1. Every word in the puzzle can be found in the V2.1 article in this edition.



ACROSS

- 3** To look for a specific resource
- 8** To change a provider for an overhead resource (2 Words)
- 9** Data that describes information about an incident or resource
- 10** Process to set one's own availability (2 words)

DOWN

- 1** An order that has been placed but not filled (2 words)
- 2** Placing a resource at a location prior to need

- 4** A list of resources in a group
- 5** Sequential path of Dispatch Offices a request/order passes through (2 words)
- 6** To order specific people (2 words)
- 7** Call When Needed acronym

Answers can be found page 3

Report Tool

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eventually data from other sources such as weather, preparedness levels, etc., could populate the warehouse allowing users to create both informational and analytical reports. Data structure will be flexible enough that users can create high level summary reports or "drill down" to specific details.

There are many advantages of using a data warehouse for creating reports, such as:

- The data warehouse is separate from the ROSS application, so the workload of reporting does not compete (i.e., slowdown) with the dispatch processes performed within the application.
- Data can be stored for a long duration, allowing for eventual historic reporting.
- Users can save their favorite reports to be run as often as necessary. Also, some standard reports will be stored in the data warehouse, sorted by theme.
- Users can utilize any data output tool they are familiar with. Examples include Microsoft Access, Brio, Oracle or spreadsheet applications such as Excel.
- Having a data warehouse provides the additional security of having a back up of ROSS data.

The data warehouse will be accessible with a username and password. Initial access will be limited but is expected to be available in 2004.

Helpdesk Corner

by David Kee



Wow!!!! What a year. The first full year of ROSS production use is in the books. As fire season 2003 came to a close, the ROSS Helpdesk call volume began to decrease, the staff was able to begin clean up activities and preparation for next year and was also able to get some much-needed rest. Call volume for the last quarter of the year totaled 608 calls. The total call volume for the year was 12,792 calls.

I would like to thank all of our customers for their patience and understanding during some of our busiest times this summer. I would also like to thank the entire helpdesk staff: Priscilla Eddy, Dave Kent, Ed Negron, Dan Perkins, Robert Player, Craig Sharrer, and Joyce Shingler for their tireless efforts and outstanding work during 2003.

Below are some highlights and milestones from this year:

- Highest monthly call volume – July (3, 333 calls)
- Highest daily call volume – July 16 (189 calls)
- Busiest day of the week – Wednesday (2,392 calls)
- Busiest hour of the day – 1300-359 EST (1,283 calls)
- Most calls in 1-hour time period – July 4, 1400 EST and July 18, 1600 EST (28 calls)

The helpdesk web page has been updated!!!! Please check it out. You can find the helpdesk web page from the ROSS home page (<http://ross.nwcg.gov>) and then by clicking the user support tab and the ROSS Helpdesk logo.

The Knowlix® knowledge base on the helpdesk web site has been brought up to date. The knowledge base now contains 249 ROSS entries and 27 DMS entries. To use the knowledge base

follow these instructions. Go to the ROSS homepage, click on the User Support Tab, then click on the “UTA ROSS Helpdesk” logo, and then select the link to the Knowlix® knowledge base.

That’s all for this time, please give us a call if you need any assistance or if you have any suggestions for fire season 2004. The helpdesk is waiting for your call at 866-224-7677, or your email at helpdesk@dms.nwcg.gov.

Need training?

Check out the training schedule on the web at <http://ross.nwcg.gov/training.htm>

Transitions

Neal Hitchcock has passed the reins of the Business Lead for the ROSS project to new NICC Center Manager **Kim Christensen**. Neal will continue to be involved with budget and political issues that affect the project, and Kim will support the project by representing the business community. The ROSS Project Team presented Neal with a bronzed “ROSS Buddy” for his unwavering support of the project during his tenure as Business Lead. Welcome Kim!

Sue Roussopoulos, ROSS Subject Matter Expert from the Southern Research Station in Asheville, NC, is the new ROSS Project Partner Coordinator. Former Partner Coordinator **Andy Gray** is now the Project Manager for the Incident Cache Business System reengineering project. Congratulations to Andy and welcome to Sue in her additional role for the ROSS project!

Answers to ROSS Speak from page 4

7 CWN	10 Web Status
6 Name Requests	9 Reports
5 Ordering Chain	8 Transfer Person
4 Roster	3 Search
2 Prepositioning	1 Pending Request
Down	
Across	