



# NEWSLETTER

Volume 2, June 2000

## **H**ow to avoid catching computer viruses on DMS. By Barbara Smith, ROSS Infrastructure Team Member

The recent "VBS Love Letter A" virus shut down many corporate and government offices around the world, but narrowly missed the DMS network, thanks to the quick work of the folks at NITC.

Viruses are insidious, in that they force a computer to run specific operations, which overloads its capacity and eventually decreases all ability to function.

Unfortunately, it's very easy to infect other people in your network, so beware. Here are a few tips to help keep your DMS or any network virus-free.

1. If you do not know for sure that an attachment or link (to a document or web-page) is official business, keep these three things in mind.
2. Do not open the attachment or double click on anything in the message.
3. Do not print or file the attachment. Printing basically opens the file. Filing can also cause problems.
4. Contact the sender and verify they sent the message. Viruses like "Love Letter" and "Melissa" use MS Outlook address books to send out a message automatically, without the senders' knowledge. If the sender doesn't know about it, there's a good chance it may contain a virus.

Whenever in doubt, right-click on that message in your inbox and select DELETE. Then go into your trash and delete it again. If in Netscape Messenger, select file, compact this folder, and then empty trash.

You should back-up your files on PCs and laptops on a regular basis, especially after an outbreak like the "love bug" virus. The BLM has a corporate license for McAfee VirusScan that can be loaded on PCs and AIX workstations. Also, the Forest Service has a corporate license for Norton's Anti-Virus that helps protect against viruses. For more information on viruses, see <http://www.symantec.com/homepage.html>. Your e-mail provider is also a good source for more information on viruses on any personal accounts.

## **R**OSS Partners make significant contribution to project by Andy Gray, ROSS Partner Coordinator



The ROSS Partner's Class of 2000. To find out a complete list, check out the ROSS website at [www.nwcg.gov/ross](http://www.nwcg.gov/ross)

**H**ow many times have you purchased a product that didn't meet your needs? As you tossed the garden tool/automotive accessory/ kitchen gadget/software program in the trash, have you ever said under your breath, "Whoever designed this sure didn't do their homework?" To avoid this type of catastrophe, the ROSS Project Team took the offensive.

Once the ROSS Project was under way and development by the primary contractor had begun, the Project Team faced a significant challenge. They needed to gain "buy-in" from

hundreds of dispatchers from around the country for a new system that would revolutionize the way the business of dispatching is conducted. But it had to meet dispatchers' needs. From this complex challenge, the **ROSS Partner Program** was born.

The ROSS Partner “**vision**” is for a group of product champions, selected by their Geographical Areas, to represent the interagency dispatch community's interests as ROSS is developed and implemented. These stakeholders, or partners, would become very familiar with the project and would provide critical input to the ROSS project team as the whole fire community was readied to implement the ROSS application.

This vision was realized in March when 45 ROSS Partners and the ROSS project team met in Kansas City. A full-time ROSS Partner Coordinator, **Andy Gray**, was introduced to the Partners. Andy has been the Southern Area Coordinator in Atlanta since 1995 and has worked as a dispatcher or coordinator in eight of the eleven Geographical Areas of the country since 1983.

At this meeting, the Partners were given a thorough briefing on ROSS. They learned about the scope of the project, the organization of the ROSS project team, the development process, infrastructure requirements of the system, how ROSS will interface with existing applications, project funding, and some ideas on training and implementation. The ROSS Partners and the Project Team also had several brainstorming sessions to consider training and implementation strategies and to identify how the ROSS Partners felt they could be most successful in their new capacity.

These sessions identified three key areas where the ROSS Partners could help the most:

- **Communication**
- **Testing**
- **Training**

**Communication** runs the gamut from telling co-workers the real scoop about ROSS to conducting formal briefings at various workshops and meetings in their area. It also entails authoring a column in this newsletter every month so everyone in the fire community can hear what Partners consider most important.

**Testing** is something the Partners said they were very anxious to get involved with. It was first thought that several Partners might help with the ROSS usability testing at Lockheed Martin Information Support Services in Denver. Given the high probability that Partner involvement would delay the delivery of ROSS, the Partners would serve an invaluable service by conducting testing from their own offices to get a clearer picture of multiple users from across the country. This segment of testing is expected to begin mid-summer.

**Training** is an area in which the ROSS Partners will make a huge difference, particularly to the Implementation Team. This team is developing training strategies and the Partners will prove invaluable for customizing the strategy for their Geographical Area. They will also help train and coach other ROSS users once the system is functional.

Already, the Partners have provided very astute ideas and solutions. They have pitched in whenever needed, and will continue to provide priceless service and solutions long after ROSS is implemented.

**Current activities:** These days, ROSS Partners are focusing on communicating with their peers and with other fire and “all-risk” management stakeholders in their areas. **Kathy Wiegard** (Western Great Basin), **Laura Samudio** (Eastern Area), and other Partners have developed ROSS briefing papers for specific groups and audiences in their areas. Kathy also developed a ROSS Power Point

presentation for one such meeting. **Pat Boucher** and **Sue Roussopoulos** (Southern Area) have used these materials, and other Power Point presentations found on the ROSS website (<http://www.nwccg.gov/ross>) at various state interagency co-op meetings this spring. **Sandi Allen** (Northwest Area) used a variety of briefing materials on the web for a dispatchers' workshop, and will do a similar briefing at a "spring warm-up" for Washington State dispatchers.

Partner created briefing materials and "lessons learned" on what works and doesn't work is shared with all of the Partners so everyone doesn't have to make discoveries through trial and error.

In mid-May, it became apparent that the Southwest Area was experiencing significant network and computer hardware problems which were significantly impacting the use of the Dispatch Messaging System (DMS). Rocky Mountain Area ROSS Partner **Flint Cheney**, who has an extensive background in networks and web applications, was sent to Albuquerque with DMS Team Leader **Beth Grey Cloud** to help trouble-shoot the situation and learn how to prevent future slow-downs.

**Future activities:** The ROSS project team is currently finalizing an ambitious data request that will go out to all of the dispatch and coordination centers that plan on using ROSS. The main reason for collecting this information is so that when ROSS becomes available for testing and user training, the system will be loaded with *real data*. The questionnaire will also provide valuable data for Information Resource Management (IRM) specialists who are preparing to support ROSS, and for the ROSS Implementation Team that is focusing on training and implementation. With over 400 offices from which to gather information by the end of July, the Partners are expected to play a key role. Additionally, the ROSS

Data Migration Team will be using ROSS Partners for assistance this summer.

As software users, all of us have, at one time or another received an application that had not been adequately tested by the users and/or did not meet our needs. ROSS Partners represent a "safety valve" for ROSS users, helping to ensure the application is what dispatchers need, and is not released before it is time

## Fires in Southwest Area put DMS through tests

photos courtesy of Beth Grey Cloud



SWCC computer guru Jouquin



Brian Lee at SWCC Aircraft Desk



SWCC Overhead Desk

## Frequently asked Questions and Answers

**Question:** *Is ROSS being tested for usability? Where is user acceptance being addressed? What are the acceptance criteria?*

**Answer:** Yes. Users and business specialists are extensively involved in the screen development during the build phase of the contract. Acceptance criteria are determined by majority consensus.

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**Question:** *Is any attempt being made to duplicate the screen look and feel (icon looks, behavior, placement, order, location, etc.) of the Microsoft products that are common in the workplace?*

**Answer:** Yes. ROSS operates in a windows environment.

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**Question:** *What accommodations for people with disabilities are built into the application?*

**Answer:** Accommodations at a minimum will incorporate the features now used by Microsoft. These are found on your desktop by clicking My Computer/Control Panel/ Accessibility Options. Additional options are being explored.

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If you have any questions about the ROSS Project or how it is being implemented, please let us know so we can bring the issue to everyone's attention. Contact Rod Chaffee at 208.373.4099.

**Involvement and support of the IRM community is essential to the success of the ROSS Project. The editors encourage articles from the IRM community in upcoming issues of this newsletter.**

To learn more about ROSS, the Dispatch Messaging System, or to become involved, check out the ROSS web page at <http://www.nwcg.gov.ross> or call (208.373.4099).



## How to get rid of all those messages with red X's on them...A helpful hint for Netscape mail users.

If your inbox is full of old messages that you have marked for deletion, but they just will not go away, try the following:

- Get into your **Inbox** on DMS
- Select **File** from the main tool bar
- Choose **Compact this Folder**
- A small **Compressing Files** window will come on and then disappear.
- All of the messages you have marked for deletion will be **permanently removed from the system.**

### For you Netscape mail users who want to make compacting automatic:

- Get into DMS
- Select **Edit** from the main tool bar
- **Choose Preferences** (this will bring up another window)
- Select **Mail & Newsgroups**
- Select **Mail Servers**
- Edit your mail server(s) by **highlighting the mail server in the window on the right and pressing Edit**
- In the edit mode of your mail server(s) press the **IMAP tab**
- On the IMAP tab, under the "When I delete a message" menu select the **Move to Trash Folder** option (a black circle will appear when selected)
- Also at the bottom of the window select the **Empty Trash on Exit** box (a check mark will appear when selected).

With these changes, when you mark a message for deletion (using the delete icon or delete key), the message will automatically be removed when you close DMS.