Focus On:
Dallas County Community College District
Dallas, Texas

Conversion to RCAMS SQL and Workflow Implementation; District-wide Accession Training

Founded in 1965 by a group of visionary Dallas civic leaders for the purpose of providing convenient and affordable quality education to the Dallas community, the Dallas County Community College District today includes seven colleges that enroll more than 100,000 credit and noncredit students every semester. Four decades of growth have seen DCCCD become one of the largest higher education institutions in Texas, with an annual total operating budget for 2007-2008 of $390 million.

In addition to the seven colleges, in 1991 the DCCCD opened the R. Jan LeCroy Center for Educational Telecommunications. Today, the LeCroy Center is one of the largest producers of distance education products in the nation.

The DCCCD Records Center, located at the District Service Center in Mesquite, is a long-term user of Intersect Systems' records management software. The Intersect Retention Schedule Manager (RSM) and Records Control and Management System (RCAMS) were licensed for use by DCCCD in 1995. Intersect converted the original DCCCD records database to the Intersect RCAMS format, and following an initial testing period the District transitioned to the Intersect system, which has been used continuously by the DCCCD Records Center since.

Tara Kirk, Records Management Officer for Dallas County Community College District.

Intersect provides users with periodic software updates under the Annual Support Program. Updates frequently include new features and functions suggested or requested by Intersect customers, and the DCCCD has been the source of a number of suggestions for additions and enhancements to the Intersect system over the years.

During early 2007, representatives of DCCCD began evaluating the future requirements of the District's records management program in view of a growing records inventory and increases in volume of records requests.

After a detailed evaluation period, including visits to other Intersect customers in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, the DCCCD made the decision to upgrade the Intersect RCAMS installation to Intersect's RCAMS SQL system, which uses the Microsoft® SQL Server® database for central data storage.

SQL Server was an important consideration for DCCCD. Each Microsoft SQL Server database has a capacity of up to 32 terabytes (32 trillion bytes) of data. However, 32 terabytes is not a limit for RCAMS SQL's total capacity, since RCAMS SQL can manage multiple SQL Server databases — Intersect RCAMS SQL users will be familiar with the point-and-click selection of databases from the RCAMS *Connect* function. Since RCAMS SQL doesn't limit the number of SQL Server databases that RCAMS SQL can manage, the only limit to capacity for any RCAMS SQL system is the capacity of the physical server(s) and of the network infrastructure. This connection feature makes RCAMS SQL capable of managing massively large collections of information in SQL databases.

Another factor in DCCCD's decision was the RCAMS Accession and Accession Monitor Workflow components. Accession is a read-only version of RCAMS SQL that installs in various departments within an organization and allows an individual in a department to view online in read-only mode the records for only that department. Once a desired container or document is located, a request function allows the person to immediately transmit a request for the record to the Records Center with a point-and click operation.

The Records Center receives the request immediately at the Accession Monitor program through the wide area network, and can process the request, which then enters the checked-out record and a due

DCCCD Records Center Staff.
From left: Diane Yates, Tara Kirk, Arcavia Tinsley, Pam Johnson, Mina Thacker, Linda Newton, and Wilma Allen.

Mina Thacker working at scanning and filming station.

date for its return into an RCAMS check-out tracking function.

RCAMS Accession also includes a transmittal function, which allows a department preparing to send records to the Records Center for storage to do the preliminary data entry for the records being transferred. A unique template feature allows any existing similar record entry in the live database to be used as a template, greatly reducing the amount of keyboarding required for data entry.

The Accession Monitor program runs at the Records Center, monitoring records requests and transmittals. When received, requests and transmittals are stored in a temporary file. After transmittals are reviewed and approved at the Records Center, they are entered into the live database. The use of the transmittal function effectively distributes the data entry function throughout the participating departments, while still allowing the Records Department to review and approve entries, assign retention periods, and assign storage spaces to processed records.

The DCCCD Records Center plans to install the Accession module throughout each of the District's seven campuses, as well as in various other DCCCD location offices, as training progresses over the next several months.

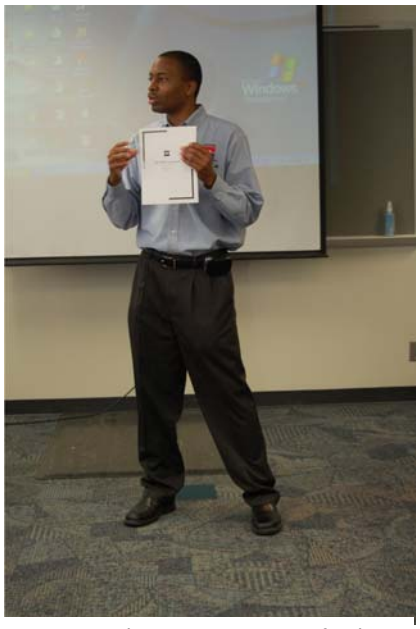
An important part of the deployment of Accession throughout DCCCD locations is training users to use the system for records requests and records transmittals.

In preparation for an extensive training program for Accession users, the District's Software Training and Support Department has been developing a hands-on training class to introduce users to the system. Beginning in May, the Software Training and Support Department will begin conducting training classes in using Accession for the various DCCCD locations. As each location is trained, the Information Technology personnel will then roll out the Accession program by installing the application on computers in departments at that location.

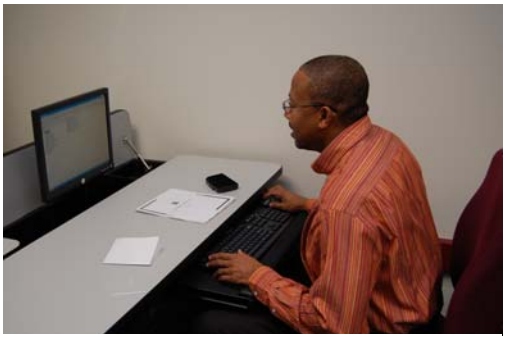
Ms. Kay Hampshire, of the DCCCD Software Training and Support Department, has developed a comprehensive seventy-page Accession instructional guide for use in the Accession training classes. The guide is extensively illustrated with screen images, and goes through a thorough step-by-step introduction to the software. Class participants will retain the guide after completing the class to use as a custom Accession User's Manual.

The prototype Accession User Class was conducted in the well-equipped training room at the District Service Center in Mesquite. Each computer system is on-line to the central server system, allowing participants to interact directly with a special training database that has been prepared to illustrate the various operations addressed in the class.

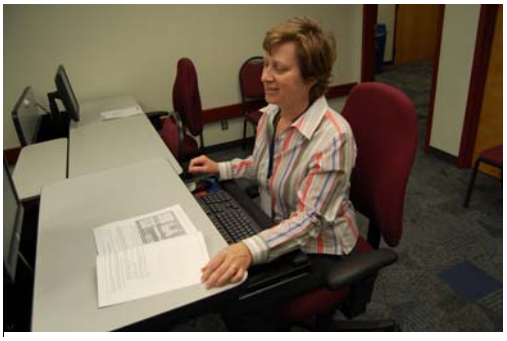
Ms. Tara Kirk, Records Management Officer for DCCCD, indicates that about thirty-five persons will be trained on Accession for each campus, leading to over two hundred trained users throughout the system when the training series is complete by the end of the year. The planned deployment of Accession to over two hundred computer stations throughout the seven campuses and other DCCCD office locations will make the DCCCD installation the largest implementation of Intersect's Accession / Accession Monitor Workflow system.



Tommy Thompson, Instructor for the DCCCD Software Training and Support Department, teaching the prototype Accession User Class in January 2008 to test the concept as well as the specially developed Accession instructional guide.



David Tyler, DCCCD Administrator for RCAMS, installing Accession on classroom station.



Kay Hampshire of Software Training and Support, preparing for prototype class.

Prototype Accession Training Class session in progress in DCCCD classroom.

Vickie Magee of the Business Affairs department at computer in training class.