

What's Up - What's Coming

The Quarterly Newsletter for the Fiscal Management Information System

October 1, 2009

Listed below are questions frequently asked by FMIS users, and the corresponding answers. These will be posted on the FMIS web site FUNI under User References in the Frequently Asked Questions section.

Do I need special software to access FMIS 4.0?

The requirements to view and use the FMIS system are spelled out in the "System Requirements" link on the UPACS log-in screen (on the blue menu bar). They are:

- A computer with 64MB of memory and 20 MB of free hard disk space;
- Microsoft Internet Explorer (IE) 6.0 and above;
- JInitiator 1.3.1.22 (for FMIS and other browser-enabled applications accessed through UPACS). (Note: There is a link in "System Requirements" to download that specific version of the plug-in); and
- Adobe Acrobat 5.0 and above.

I was approved for FMIS 4.0, but when I tried to log on for the first time, I just got a white screen. Why?



This error is most frequently caused by not having the correct JavaScript plug-in. You need JInitiator 1.3.1.22; this is *not* the latest version of JInitiator, so downloading the latest version of it does not solve the problem. JInitiator 1.3.1.22 is the one that has been approved to work with FMIS. Ask your IT support to install the correct version from the link in "System Requirements." (There is no need to uninstall any other version of JInitiator.)

I re-installed the correct version of JInitiator, but I still get an error message when I try to log in. Could there be another problem?

Other "add-ons" may conflict with JInitiator. The popular Google toolbar for web browsers is one of them. The following Java plug-ins are known to cause a problem with JInitiator in some instances:

- Java(tm) Plug-in 2 SSV Helper
- JQSIStartDetectorImpl Class
- Microsoft Office Template and Media Control

Ask your IT support for help with either disabling or removing these items.

Continued on Page 4

IN THIS ISSUE:

Frequently Asked Questions, pages 1 and 4 • Organizational Changes, p. 2 •
FMIS Updates p. 3 • Cline's Corner, p. 5

Organizational Changes

Phyllis Jones retired on September 30th, the culmination of more than 42 years of Federal service. Phyllis is known throughout the Federal-aid Highway Program financial management community because, in many ways, her work affected how we do business. She was a valued member of the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Financial Management Division. Ms. Jones implemented legislation and developed regulations, policies, and guidance on the Federal-aid Highway Program. She provided oversight of quality financial management practices and advice on program and project financing techniques.

She worked with many Federal and State agencies on programs such as the Cash Management Improvement Program, the State Infrastructure Bank Program, Financial Integrity Review and Evaluation (FIRE) program, and Improper Payment Review Program. During her tenure with FHWA, she served as a coach and mentor for several participants in the Professional Development Program and Financial Managers.

We will miss Phyllis - her contributions to our programs, her unique personality and her take-charge attitude.



Phyllis Jones retired.



FMIS Team member **Paul Smith** is currently on a detail assignment. He is serving as the Office of the Chief Financial Officer's Financial Management Discipline Coordinator. Questions concerning demonstration

projects, allocated funds, transfers, and reports should be sent to: FMISTEAM@dot.gov. 

FMIS Team Contacts

For assistance, users may email the FMIS Team at FMISTEAM@dot.gov. Individual members of the Team may be contacted by telephone or email:

[Donna L. Jones](#), FMIS Team Leader: 202-366-2924

[Eric Cline](#): 202-366-2864 (Editor of *What's Up—What's Coming*)

[Keenan Hillary](#): 202-366-6254

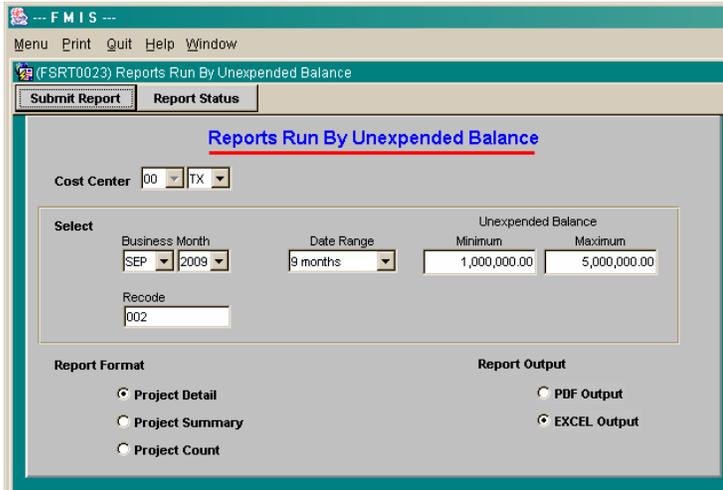
[Edward M. Johnson, Jr.](#): 202-366-2911

[Joy K. Kelly](#): 202-366-2922

[Mark Tessier](#): 1-866-758-8565

[Paul D. Smith](#) is on a detail assignment until further notice.

FMIS Updates



questions please contact Joy.K.Kelly@dot.gov or Donna.Jones@dot.gov.

Business Objects XI:

- Business Objects XI version 3 successfully replaced Business Objects XI version 2. The FMIS Team thanks all of those who checked the new version out in FMIS Test and provided feedback.
- In the query filter, as long as the "equal to" operator is selected, an Object can now be filtered by another Object.
- SQL query language is available for FMIS users to view, query, and edit.
- The State approval and time of approval fields are now available as "State Approved and Authorized By" and "State Approved and Authorized Date." The Division's equivalents have the same titles with the word "Division" replacing "State." This was done to match the field names with those in FMIS 4.0.
- Demo Description, Program Code Description, and Recode Description have been added to all Universes.

FUNI Site Updates:

- The archives of all issues of *What's Up – What's Coming* dating back to July 1, 2007 now have their own dedicated page on FUNI.
- A Point of Contact list for all FMIS Team members is on FUNI under "User References." Users may refer to previous editions for FMIS-related information.



Q40 Reports: Several modifications in the Q40A reports will take place starting in FY2010. Most significantly, Recodes will now be accepted as a parameter. Since all ARRA codes are grouped in Recode 002, this means that users will be able to generate reports on inactive ARRA projects. The reports only will be available for the User's State.

Program Code Lapsing Screen Corrected:

The program code lapsing screen in FMIS did not display accurate information for all program codes. As mentioned in a previous *What's Up – What's Coming* and the Fund Control Training, this area was under development. We have now inserted the proper rules in this screen per period of availability and the lapsing information screen has been corrected. No changes were made to report W10A. However, you may notice an increase in the amount of funds that are subject to lapse that are displayed on this report. If you have any

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Continued from Page 1

I recently was added to FMIS 4.0, but I cannot get into Business Objects XI. Why?

There is an internal login procedure which allows access to BO XI. New FMIS 4.0 users are typically added once a week by the Database Administrator; sometimes, a new user will try to access BO XI before that takes place. This is an issue the FMIS Team is aware of, and we apologize for any inconvenience. The solution is for the user to send a message to FMIS Support (FMISSUPPORT@DOT.GOV), saying that you have access to FMIS 4.0 but not to Business Objects.

What is the difference between FMIS and UPACS?

UPACS, short for User Profile and Access Control System, is a security and gatekeeper system for various applications used by the FHWA. FMIS is only one of several applications within UPACS. Once you have access to one or more applications, those applications will show up as links on the UPACS Production Menu. If you do not have access to a certain system, its link will not appear within UPACS. To see the complete list, go to UPACS Production Menu and click on "Application List."

Will FMIS 4.0 work with any web browser?

The short answer is: Maybe. The long answer is: We do not support use of any browser except IE 6.0 and above. However, some users have reported they were able to use FMIS 4.0 with alternative browsers or other versions of IE.

I can get into FMIS 4.0, but when I try to open a report, nothing shows up. Why?

The most likely cause is that a pop-up blocker on your machine is misinterpreting the report (which opens up in a new window) as an unwanted pop-up ad, and is blocking it. That is an issue local to your computer; you or your IT support should reset your computer's pop-up blocker settings. You can override the pop-up blocker by holding down the CTRL key as you open the report.

Another possible cause of this condition is that Adobe Acrobat Reader is not installed on your computer. The reader is needed to view most FMIS reports. The link to download Acrobat Reader is under "System Requirements."



I was just added to FMIS Test (FMIST), but I cannot find it on the UPACS screen. Where is it?

On the UPACS Menu, click on the "Other Systems" link on the blue menu bar. The subsequent page should have the FMIS Test link.





Wiki Wiki Whoa!

Technology really can help the government deliver its services better. You can sometimes renew your driver's license online ... unless you'd *prefer* to hang out at the DMV?

Today's column is about how that promise, alas, can fall short. Witness the [wiki](#), the software that allows virtually anyone to edit a virtual encyclopedia. [Wikipedia](#) (a registered non-profit, tax-exempt entity), is the most idealistic example of it. It's not just for kids; [Dr. Bob Park](#), physics professor at the University of Maryland, has said he finds Wikipedia to be "[indispensable](#)," to his popular science writing; he was born in 1931.

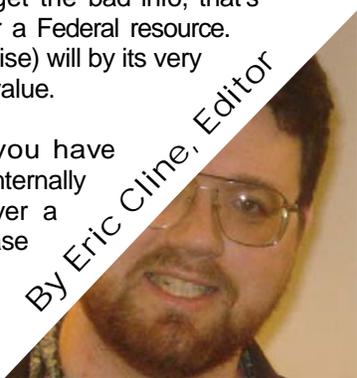
The idea behind a wiki is that if a million people read an article, and a thousand of them spot the same factual error, that at least one of those thousand will correct the mistake, to the benefit of the million. Okay. But what if the audience is a thousand people, and only ten people see a mistake, and those ten disagree on what the mistake is? The "crowd" is too small to generate useful error corrections consistently.

And a wiki can be played for a chump. Wikipedia is notorious because:

- Corporations and celebrities often [delete unflattering true information about themselves](#).
- Anonymous cowards [vandalize entries with slanders](#) of corporations and celebrities. (Humorist [Gene Weingarten](#) [vandalized his own Wikipedia entry](#) to make this point.)

Wikipedia's large community of users always has someone willing to repair the damage. But what if you read the entry *before* the lie has been removed, or the truth restored? You get the bad info, that's what. That won't cut it for a Federal resource. So, the wiki (for all its promise) will by its very concept be of only limited value.

Or am I wrong? If you have successfully used a wiki internally in your office, or to deliver a service to the public, please drop me a line. I may feature your story in an upcoming newsletter.



STYLISH HQ:

The design of the DOT HQ buildings (the newest of any Federal agency) is unusual. The two buildings (called East and West) each have an eight-story high atrium in the center, with a skylight. The FMIS team is on 6th floor East.

Top: Sun comes through the skylight in the East Building.
Bottom: The food court on the floor of the East atrium.

Photos by Gregg Miller