

News & Announcements

DBA Training

The ARC is offering a three-day ALMIS Database Administrator training in Madison, Wisconsin on July 26–28, 2006.

The class is currently full but there are plans underway to offer another training in the near future. Be on the lookout for more information on date and location.

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Survey says...

Results from the DBA Survey 2006

The ARC recently completed a Database Administrator's Survey to ascertain the most relevant issues and needs facing ALMIS Database Administrators. We will be using this information to chart our course during the next year. Thank you to everyone who participated! Here are a few preliminary results (25 complete survey responses):

Most critical issues according to DBAs:

- Structure and format of the data (data that is easy to load)
- Keeping the data up to date
- Data integrity
- Data display/delivery systems
- DBA Education and staying current on issues and changing technologies

Data tables most used by customers:

- Labforce
- Industry
- OESwage
- Projections table
- CES

Database Management Software used:

- SQL Server 48%
- Oracle 28%
- Other (e.g. hosted by vendor, Foxpro) 24%

Tables causing the most headaches (for a variety of reasons):

- Oeswage
- Schools
- Programs
- Progcomp
- License
- Industry
- Geog & subgeog

What non-standard tables have you added to the database?

Responses included: PPI, EEO, Food stamps, career center, Oil wells, oeswage_industry, QWI, Community profiles, City-zip-county, industry change, codeconnector-data, O*NET common titles, historical tables, and industry change.



DBA in the Spotlight

Kathy Ermatinger

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Are you originally from Alaska?

No, I grew up in southern California. I moved to Fairbanks, Alaska after a short stint of working in Southern California after college. One day after being passed up for promotion, I decided to move to Alaska and two weeks later I was driving the Alaska highway in my little Ford escort with my trusty dog beside me. I jokingly told friends I was going to Alaska to "Find me a man". Four months later I met my husband and 20 years later we are still here.

What are your interests outside of work?

I love long walks on the beach, candlelight meals...Oh wait this isn't the on-line dating service so I will be honest. I am a plain Jane homebody. I like to occasionally go out on our boat to fish with my husband as long as it's calm and sunny. I am active in our church and prayer group, I love hanging out with friends or working in my craft room on my latest scrapbook page and we try to get to Mexico once a year to dry-out.

What is your favorite work-related web site? Why?

Our web site of course! Actually I don't have a favorite. There are lots of great resources out there and I use whatever best fits my needs.

Do you have any project management tools or tips you'd like to share with other DBAs?

I think the most important tip would be "Think Outside the Box". Sometimes the ALMIS database does not work well with your state's data. The primary keys can play

havoc on some data sets and you have to explore other ways to get your data into the tables. For example our training data is difficult to condense down into one record for each CIP code, completer type and institution. I came up with an alternative to add new codetypes ranging from 50 to 80 that are identified as CIP codes. Generally you think of one codetype for each specific classification taxonomy. By adding new codetypes, we were able to load multiple training programs with the same CIP code for one institution with the same completer type.

What training have you taken recently and would you recommend it to other DBAs?

Due to limited funds, our state has been limiting training opportunities outside of our area. I would love to get more SQL training. Can I suggest Juneau, Alaska as a great venue for training?

What is the strangest job you ever held?

I worked in a small ceramics production shop while in college. It was not so much a strange job as much as a strange employer. I remember ripping one of my nails all the way back while grinding excess glaze off a pie plate. My boss handed me a band-aid and said get back to work. I worked a few more hours before the pain was too much and left for the rest of the day. What can I say, jobs were not plentiful, I was young and I had never heard of workers comp.

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How long have you been involved in the world of LMI?

I have been working in our LMI shop for about 15 years.

How long have you been an ALMIS DBA?

I was lucky enough to get in on the ground floor of the ALMIS project, it's a shame there were no investment opportunities because I would be retired and sipping margaritas on Mexican Riviera instead of the sitting in my 8 x 10 cubicle.

What is your educational background?

I attended Humboldt State University in Northern California with the intention of becoming a doctor. One quarter into the sciences convinced me to seek a new degree option. I did not consult the occupational projections or labor market information to make my degree choice. I just did it the old fashion way: I chose the classes that interested me which happened to be anthropology, Native American studies and ceramics. The final outcome was a BA in anthropology.

ALMIS in Action...continued

Alaska

By Kathy, Ermatinger, Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

We are currently delivering our labor market information through our web site at almis.labor.state.ak.us.

In response to the need to market the ALMIS Database and labor market information over the Internet, a consortium of states combined resources and contracted with a private vendor to develop a web delivery system. The result is a product called Workforce Informer (WI). Currently there are 14 states using this delivery system. WI uses a SQL platform to deliver the data over the Internet.

The most current version of Workforce Informer is using ALMIS 2.3. However, Alaska has not installed the most current version so we are still on version 2.2.

For more information about the product and vendor go to <http://www.ciber.com/services/stategov/index.cfm?id=stategov-workforce>.

State of Alaska > DOLWD > Research & Analysis

Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development

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Wages in Alaska

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Research & Analysis Home

Monthly Unemployment Rate

May 2006

Unemployment for Selected Areas

Area	Rate
Alaska	6.9%
Anchorage	5.6%
Fairbanks	5.8%
Juneau	4.7%
Bristol Bay	7.0%
Valdez-Cordova	8.7%
North Slope	8.6%
Yukon-Koyukuk	13.2%
Bethel	15.4%

Unemployment Rate Falls to 6.9 percent in May 2006

Alaska's unemployment rate fell six-tenths of a percentage point in May to 6.9 percent. The decline was typical for May, a month when a significant number of unemployed workers find jobs in the state's seasonal industries.

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June 2006 Alaska Economic Trends

The Military is Big Business in Anchorage.. Page 4

A long history – 66 years and still going strong

On June 27, 1940, about 18 months before Pearl Harbor was attacked and the United States entered World War II, the first military troops arrived in Anchorage, marking the beginning of a dramatic economic expansion that would last nearly two decades.

Employment Scene.. Page 15

Job growth continues

Total nonfarm employment rose by 4,900 in April to 305,400. Leading the way were seasonal industries such as construction, which added 1,600 jobs in April, and retail trade, which added 900. Leisure and

Utah

By Sudha Rajamani, Utah Department of Workforce Services, Workforce Information

Utah's ALMIS based web site is called Utah Economic Data Viewer.

The URL is <http://jobs.utah.gov/jsp/wi/utalmis/>

It is custom-developed by us (myself and a group of economists and data analysts). It has been around since 2003. The ALMIS database is version 2.2 and is slowly migrating to version 2.3 on Oracle. We do not use state-specific tables.

utah.gov

State Online Services Agency List Business.utah.gov

Search Utah.gov GO

Department of Workforce Services

Utah's Job Connection

for Job Seekers for Employers for Information and Services

UTAH ECONOMIC DATA VIEWER

Welcome to the Utah Economic Data Viewer. Search for Utah economic and demographic data using tools designed to meet your data needs.

Tools

- Utah Occupational Explorer
Job opening projections, wages, skill requirements, training and education information, and current openings listed with the Department of Workforce Services.
- County and Statewide Information **NEW**
Economic and demographic profiles and publications for Utah counties including employment information, population, sales tax, and construction information.
- Utah Occupational Wages
Wage information for Utah jobs at the statewide and selected sub-state areas.
- Utah Labor Force Data Viewer
Utah employment and unemployment data by county and statewide from 1990-2004.
- Utah Population Data Viewer
Census population data for Utah and its counties from 1920-2000 and Utah Population Estimates Committee from 1940-2005.
- Utah Industry Employment and Wages
Industry employment and wage data collected through the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program.
- FirmFind

FirmFind provides names, addresses, phone numbers, industry, and employment size of virtually all firms in Utah. Information is available for specific county, groups of counties, or for the entire

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FirmFind

INFOUSA Employer Database

Veterans

DBA in the Spotlight

Sudha Rajamani

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Are you originally from Utah?

I was born and went to school in Madras, India. But I got most of my college education in Utah.

What are your interests outside of work?

Tennis. It is a family sport for us. For my kids it is a competitive sport. This takes most of our life outside of work.

What is your favorite work-related web site? Why?

I depend on the Crosswalk center to update most of the look up tables. I also like Google and the Wikipedia.

What training have you taken recently and would you recommend it to other DBAs?

I have once taken the ALMIS seminar conducted by the ALMIS Resource Center. It was a great opportunity to meet other DBAs and compare notes.

What is the most challenging aspect of your current job?

Keeping the data and the technology current.

What is the most rewarding aspect of your current job?

When users of the website come and tell me how helpful the information was and how easy they could navigate the system and find the data.

What do you see as future challenges for ALMIS DBAs?

Keeping the data up to date and keeping up with the ever changing technology.

What is the most interesting or awe-inspiring place you've been?

Several years ago, I tagged along with my husband on his work related trip to Helsinki, Finland. After the work was over we took a cruise ship to Stockholm. It was breathtaking to travel in the Baltic sea sailing through, between and around several small and big islands.

Read any good books lately (personal or work-related) that you would recommend others read?

On the fiction side - The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini
On the nonfiction side - Freakonomics By Stephen D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner

How long have you been involved in the world of LMI?

Four years.

How long have you been an ALMIS DBA?

I've been with the Utah Department of Workforce Services for four years. I was hired to develop ALMIS database for Utah and a web delivery system to deliver the data to the customers. I have been wearing two hats: a database administrator hat and a web developer hat.

What is your educational background?

I have a Political Science degree and a MBA

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What is the most rewarding aspect of your current job?

It's the great staff and management in our research shop. At times I spend more time with my co-workers than my husband and having a great staff makes the time together more rewarding and tolerable.

What do you see as future challenges for ALMIS DBAs?

Money, Money, Money Money.. Money or should I say lack there of.

In the current economic climate obtaining funds to maintain these positions and fund the delivery systems will be challenging to the states.

What is the most interesting or awe-inspiring place you've been?

I live in Southeast Alaska and everyday I drive to work I am inspired by its beauty. Well maybe not May 1st this year when it snowed. But every other day. Well maybe not the last week when it rained everyday.

But every other day. Well maybe not... This may be why my husband and I are thinking about moving to Oregon in a year or two (let me know of any job opportunities).

Read any good books lately (personal or work-related) that you would recommend others read?

As mentioned above I am active in my church so of course the bible is a good read everyday and of course the DaVinci code was a hoot.

ARC Meeting Highlights

Members gave updates on various workgroups, policy councils, initiatives, Employment and Training Administration (ETA), and Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) activities. Specific items discussed included: budget, CIPSEA, SUTA-dumping, wage records, LED, LDB, EDP, career readiness certificates, and LAUS.

Policy/Employer Database Subcommittee Update:

Jeffrey Nall explained that the original Employer Database contract had been held by the state of Maine. Iowa currently holds the master contract with *infUSA*. When Iowa initially took on the role they reviewed the Maine procurement and then started from scratch with the added experience of users and usages. Questions come up from users periodically and there were some new questions last week. The group will want to review the questions for the next procurement. During the last procurement process the Employer Database team was responsible for looking at what the RFP contained and the team consisted of both policy and technical people.

The last procurement took over four years to complete. The contract was executed in April 2004 and there was a three-year contract with an option for two one-year extensions. The contract ends March 31, 2007. Release of new data is in October 2006. The workgroup opted to take the first year extension and initiate the next procurement. Items such as who would take on the role as lead state, issues surrounding users and usages, and a thorough

examination of potential state liability would need to be the first items addressed in the procurement process. The workgroup will be notifying ETA that the workgroup is ready to move forward on a new issuance of the RFP.

Several states added onto their Employer Database license and others were interested in doing so. As an example, Florida used the database for special studies related to hurricanes. The group discussed using the database for disasters and emergencies and incorporating the language into future contracts.

In order to clear up some confusion users of the Employer Database are having in regards to the differences between the QCEW data and Employer Database data, the workgroup will be writing a description of what the Employer Database and QCEW (202) data contain, their similarities and differences, and their uses. The information will be made available on the ARC Web portal FAQ section.

The ADAM system has been completed and delivered to pilot states. ADAM is a set of business rules that allow one to address the data in the ALMIS Database. It provides code so objects are allowed to be shared via a metadata server. Pilot states are to analyze for the next six months. The application framework has a choice of display with goal of providing cross-state distribution. The current objective is to determine the best way to support and maintain the ADAM project.

Education and Communication

Subcommittee update: Vicki Boylston said that the Subcommittee had been looking at a significant redesign of the ARC website and asked the workgroup for feedback to help with the redesign. Other items being developed include an annual report, updated fact sheet and newsletter. Please submit all suggestions and content to Marilyn Skalberg.

Due to the number of new DBAs needing training there will be classroom training in Summer 2006. Madison, Wisconsin was decided upon as a tentative training site. Another classroom training would be held after summer. Sites currently under consideration are Texas and California.

The ARC is in the process of obtaining a workshop at Workforce Innovations. We might be soliciting examples where these tools are particularly useful (e.g. Florida mapping Employer Database data for policy purposes). Historically, we have had a booth but that is not necessarily as effective as we would like.

Structure Subcommittee

update: The Structure Subcommittee went summarized numerous issues they were addressing including: versions of look-up tables and whether they recycle old codes, review of the ARC website and discussion of the proposed "DBA toolkit", using RSS feeds for various ongoing structure topics, geography structure issues surrounding continual revisions of

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ARC Meeting Highlights—continued

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geography codes (MSAs), addition of JVS, EEO, QWI, benefits survey to the ALMIS Database, empdbinfo table, changing standard field sizes from 8 char to 12 char for tables and from 10 char to 16 char for fields, and a variety of other edits. In regards to the geography issue (changing geog codes), the tentative solution is to have a geography and year crosswalk table and then new areas would get new numbers and that would let you know which area is for which year. It was suggested to get feedback from states on this approach.

The Structure Subcommittee asked whether it would be possible for the Employer Database Committee to add a "release number", a five character field (e.g. 52006) and relate it to an administrative table with the copyright release date as soon as the April 2006 release of data. Adding this field for every record would help ensure the proper copyright information.

The tentative plan for release of Version 2.3.1 of the ALMIS Database is to resolve issues, make changes, revise structure, and produce a clean and annotated version with notes (e.g. increasing table field lengths). Will also be adding load order table as appendix. Bill Stambaugh suggested that a draft could be made available to structure as soon as two weeks and a release of version 2.3.1 in 6 to 8 weeks from the ARC meeting. It was suggested that the Structure Subcommittee firm up the time table taking into consideration the upcoming Workforce Information grant and any resulting impact to state workload.

National Crosswalk Service Center (NCSC) Update: Steve Rosenow handed out an "Activity Update Sheet" from the NCSC which included updates on recent geography issues, O*NET files revised and released including a

new laytitle file, non-standard files, listing of database management system software, new staff changes, licensing updates, and e-tool updates for ad hoc items. Steve also gave a summary of statistics for the ARC Portal website (aka www.almisdb.org).

Miscellaneous: The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for Montana in August 2006 and the workgroup would continue their usual three-day meeting format as opposed to the two-day format due to the number of issues that need to be addressed and work that needs to be done.

ARC ALMIS
Resource
Center

news

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If you have any questions regarding **ARC news** or would like to contribute information, please contact Marilyn Skalberg (541) 434-0334 or Email mskalberg@yahoo.com.

The ALMIS Database is a normalized, relational database structure developed for the storage and maintenance of labor market, economic, demographic and occupational information. The ALMIS Resource Center is responsible for the ALMIS Database structure development, update, and maintenance. Members include North Carolina (lead), Connecticut, Georgia, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Carolina, Oregon, South Carolina, Wisconsin, and ETA, along with support from the National Crosswalk Service Center and the LMI Institute.