

The Centralized Survey Experience at the National Agricultural Statistics Service

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The Growing List of Surveys

- IBUC XIII
 - 1 survey – Mink (April 2010)
- Currently Centralized
 - 10 surveys converted from decentralized to centralized
 - 15 surveys that were never in Blaise before
- By the end of 2012
 - 25 surveys (combination: converted and new)

Changes in the CASIC Group

- 18 months ago
 - 6 Blaise programmers & 1 section head in HQ
- Now
 - 4 Blaise programmers & 1 section head in HQ
 - 7 Blaise programmers in National Operations Center
 - 3 had never coded in Blaise or any other language
 - 3 ½ day Blaise Programmer Course

Survey Challenges

- Weekly Surveys
 - Never attempted in Blaise at NASS
 - One week survey cycle
 - Ability to update a previous weeks' data
- Coordinated Surveys
 - Five separate prices paid surveys
 - A respondent could be sampled for multiples
 - Virtual Survey Coordinator was developed

Prices Paid Survey Coordinator

Prices Paid Coordination

Prices Paid Survey Coordinator

Select Records to View:

- CATI Records
- NonCATI Only
- Disconnects
- Appointments
- ALL of the above

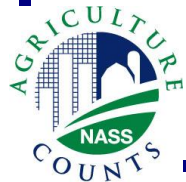
1461 grouped records returned as CATI
 1461 records to call; 0 checked in
 No current appointments exist
 No future appointments have been made

[Refresh Table](#)

Action	Record	Survey	OPER Time Zone	Time Diff (Hrs)	Total # Calls	Recent History	Last Dial Date	Last Dial Time (ENUM)	Last Dial Time (OPER)	Last Dial Result	Last Dialer	APPT Start Date	APPT Start Time (ENUM)	APPT Start Time (OPER)
Get Dial Screen	1 300003840 1 1	FEED	CTZ	-1		Detail								
Get Dial Screen	1 300003840 1 1	FERT CHEM	CTZ	-1		Detail								
Get Dial Screen	1 300671440 1 1	FEED	CTZ	-1		Detail								
Get Dial Screen	1 300671440 1 1	FERT CHEM	CTZ	-1		Detail								
Get Dial Screen	1 300671440 1 1	RETAIL SEED	CTZ	-1		Detail								
Get Dial Screen	1 300671450 1 1	FEED	CTZ	-1		Detail								
Get Dial Screen	1 300671450 1 1	FERT CHEM	CTZ	-1		Detail								
Get Dial Screen	1 300842560 1 1	FERT CHEM	CTZ	-1		Detail								
Get Dial Screen	1 300842560 1 1	RETAIL SEED	CTZ	-1		Detail								
Get Dial Screen	1 300842580 1 1	FEED	CTZ	-1		Detail								
Get Dial Screen	1 300842580 1 1	FERT CHEM	CTZ	-1		Detail								
Get Dial Screen	1 300842580 1 1	RETAIL SEED	CTZ	-1		Detail								
Get Dial Screen	1 300941520 1 1	FEED	CTZ	-1		Detail								
Get Dial Screen	1 300941520 1 1	FERT CHEM	CTZ	-1		Detail								
Get Dial Screen	1 300941880 1 1	FERT CHEM	CTZ	-1		Detail								
Get Dial Screen	1 300941880 1 1	RETAIL SEED	CTZ	-1		Detail								
Get Dial Screen	1 300942790 1 1	FEED	CTZ	-1		Detail								
Get Dial Screen	1 300942790 1 1	RETAIL SEED	CTZ	-1		Detail								
Get Dial Screen	1 300952850 1 1	FEED	CTZ	-1		Detail								

Time Zone for user SCHORO: MTZ

start | 2 Microsoft Office... | My Menu | Microsoft PowerPo... | CASIC Survey Me... | Prices Paid Coordi... | 10:42 AM



Virtual Call Lister



Call Lister for ORGANIC PD

Select Records to View:

- CATI Records
- NonCATI Only
- Disconnects
- Appointments
- ALL of the above

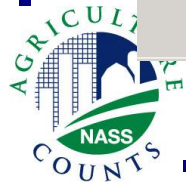
Virtual Call Lister

4269 records returned as CATI only
6 current appointments, shown below and highlighted
 No future appointments have been made

Action	Record	OPER Time Zone	Time Diff (Hrs)	Total # Calls	Recent History	Last Dial Date	Last Dial Time (ENUM)	Last Dial Time (OPER)	Last Dial Result	Last Dialer	APPT Start Date	APPT Start Time (ENUM)	APPT Start Time (OPER)	APPT Who Made
Get Dial Screen	8 300005600 1 1	MTZ	1	1	Detail	04/18/2012	1:10PM	12:10 PM	Appointment	caroem	4/18/2012	3:15PM	2:15 PM	caroem
Get Dial Screen	8 300016910 1 1	MTZ	1	3	Detail	02/17/2012	1:50PM	12:50 PM	Busy	CaroEm	2/15/2012	9:30AM	8:30 AM	caroem
Get Dial Screen	8 300112800 1 1	MTZ	1	1	Detail	02/13/2012	8:40AM	7:40 AM	Appointment	caroem	2/13/2012	12:45PM	11:45 AM	caroem
Get Dial Screen	8 300534990 1 1	MTZ	1	4	Detail	02/13/2012	12:00PM	11:00 AM	Appointment	caroem	2/13/2012	1:30PM	12:30 PM	caroem
Get Dial Screen	8 300125210 1 1	MTZ	1	2	Detail	02/13/2012	1:20PM	12:20 PM	Appointment	caroem	2/13/2012	3:25PM	2:25 PM	caroem
Get Dial Screen	27 300340170 1 1	CTZ	0	1	Detail	02/03/2012			Appointment	caroem	2/3/2012			caroem
Get Dial Screen	8 300004410 1 1	MTZ	1		Detail									
Get Dial Screen	8 300125610 1 1	MTZ	1		Detail									
Get Dial Screen	8 300270510 1 1	MTZ	1		Detail									
Get Dial Screen	8 300283510 1 1	MTZ	1		Detail									
Get Dial Screen	8 300308260 1 1	MTZ	1		Detail									
Get Dial Screen	8 300468160 1 1	MTZ	1		Detail									
Get Dial Screen	8 300495390 1 1	MTZ	1		Detail									
Get Dial Screen	8 300496720 1 1	MTZ	1		Detail									
Get Dial Screen	8 300510340 1 1	MTZ	1		Detail									
Get Dial Screen	8 300528470 1 1	MTZ	1		Detail									
Get Dial Screen	8 300529370 1 1	MTZ	1		Detail									
Get Dial Screen	8 300532220 1 1	MTZ	1		Detail									
Get Dial Screen	8 300539180 1 1	MTZ	1		Detail									
Get Dial Screen	8 300545750 1 1	MTZ	1		Detail									

Time Zone for user SCHORO: CTZ



Detail

More Info for 8 300005600 1 1

Recent Call History

Date	Time(Enum)	Time(Oper)	Dial Result (Who)
04/18/2012	1:10PM	12:10PM	Appointment (CAROEM)

No other calls were made

Appointment Info

Type = CertainDate appt, set by user CAROEM

Start date = 4/18/2012

ENUM Start time = 3:15PM

OPER Start time = 2:15PM

Remark: remark

Close

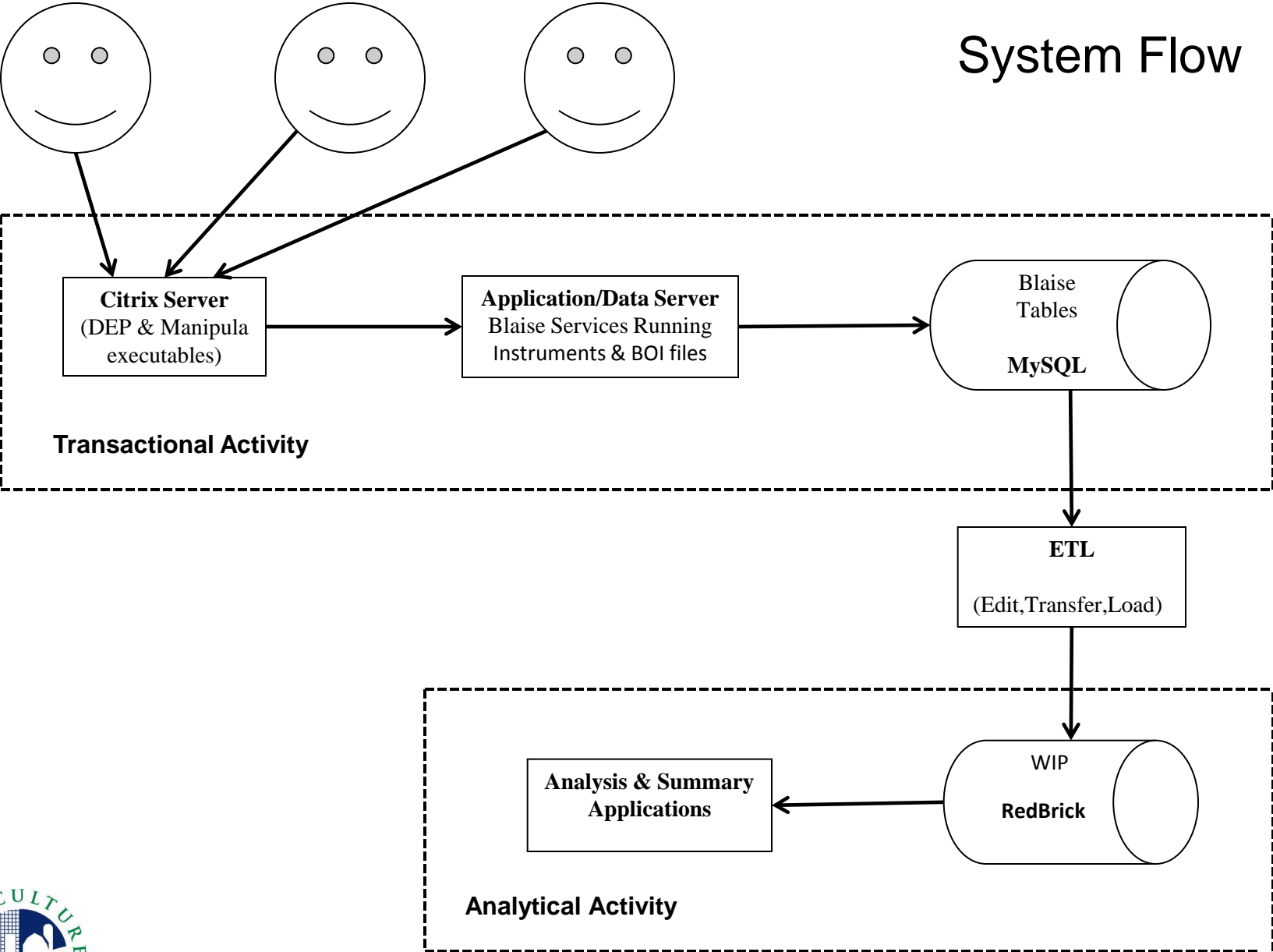
Decentralized Blaise

- Physical Blaise dataset located in each field office
- Six Data Collection Centers
 - Collecting data
 - Physical transfer of Blaise datasets back to the Client States
- Maintenance rested almost entirely on the CASIC Section

Centralized Blaise

- Many more players
 - Citrix server
 - Data/Application server
 - Database servers
 - MySQL database on Dev, Beta, and Prod
 - WIP database (RedBrick) on Beta and Prod
 - Storage
 - Communications
 - ETL extracts data from MySQL to RedBrick
 - Windows Active Directory Table

System Flow



Determining Rights

- VB.NET menu system
- Check Windows Active Directory Table
 - If any info is missing, user is not allowed in
- Access granted based on AD Table values
- Three flat tables in addition to the eight Blaise tables from Generic boi
 - CASIC_SurveyInfo
 - CASIC_Management
 - CASIC_FAT

CASIC_SurveyInfo

- Information about each survey
 - Survey code
 - Year, Month, and Day values
 - Instrument name
 - Assorted survey type indicators
 - Data collection dates
 - Other useful information

CASIC_Management

- Fields that are often used for sorting or limiting the dataset
- Fields used in Record Filters
- Indexes built on these fields
 - Quick and efficient queries

CASIC_FAT

- FAT = FIPS Assignment Table
- DCC = Data Collection Center
- EC = Estimation Center
- CS = Client State

- Any given survey may have any combination of DCC, EC, and CS

VB.NET Menu

- Buttons appear dynamically based on roles and location of user
- Access to Centralized Blaise controlled entirely by the menu
- User only sees what it needed

Data Collection Menu Tab

The screenshot displays the 'CASIC Survey Menu - COTTON FARMER DEALER PR' application window. The interface includes a header with fields for 'Survey Folder' (CTFDPR120400), 'Survey Date' (04/01/2012), 'Shell' (L7), and 'Cameleon' (I). A 'Documentation' section contains 'Survey Specific Docs' and 'Generic CASIC Docs' buttons, along with an 'EXIT' button. A navigation bar at the top shows 'Setup & Maintenance', 'Transactions', 'Data Collection' (selected), 'Survey Processing', and 'Reports'. The main content area is divided into three sections: 'Live Data Collection' with buttons for 'CATI Specifications', 'Conduct Interviews', 'CATI Management', 'Get Form for CATI', and 'Enter Paper Forms with CATI Screens'; 'Practice Interview Management' with 'Create Practice Dataset' (highlighted in green), 'Practice Specifications', 'Practice Management', and 'Practice Interviews'; and 'Enumerator Management' which includes a 'CASIC Survey Information System' box with a 'Run CASIC SIS' button, a 'Blaise History File' box with 'Browse' and 'Browse with Sort Options' buttons, and an 'Enumerator Dataset' box with 'View/Update Enumerators' and 'Create .IGL File' buttons. At the bottom, there are fields for 'FIPS' (48), 'Role' (Stat), 'Server' (PROD), and a 'Within Survey Test Area' indicator.

Survey Processing Menu Tab

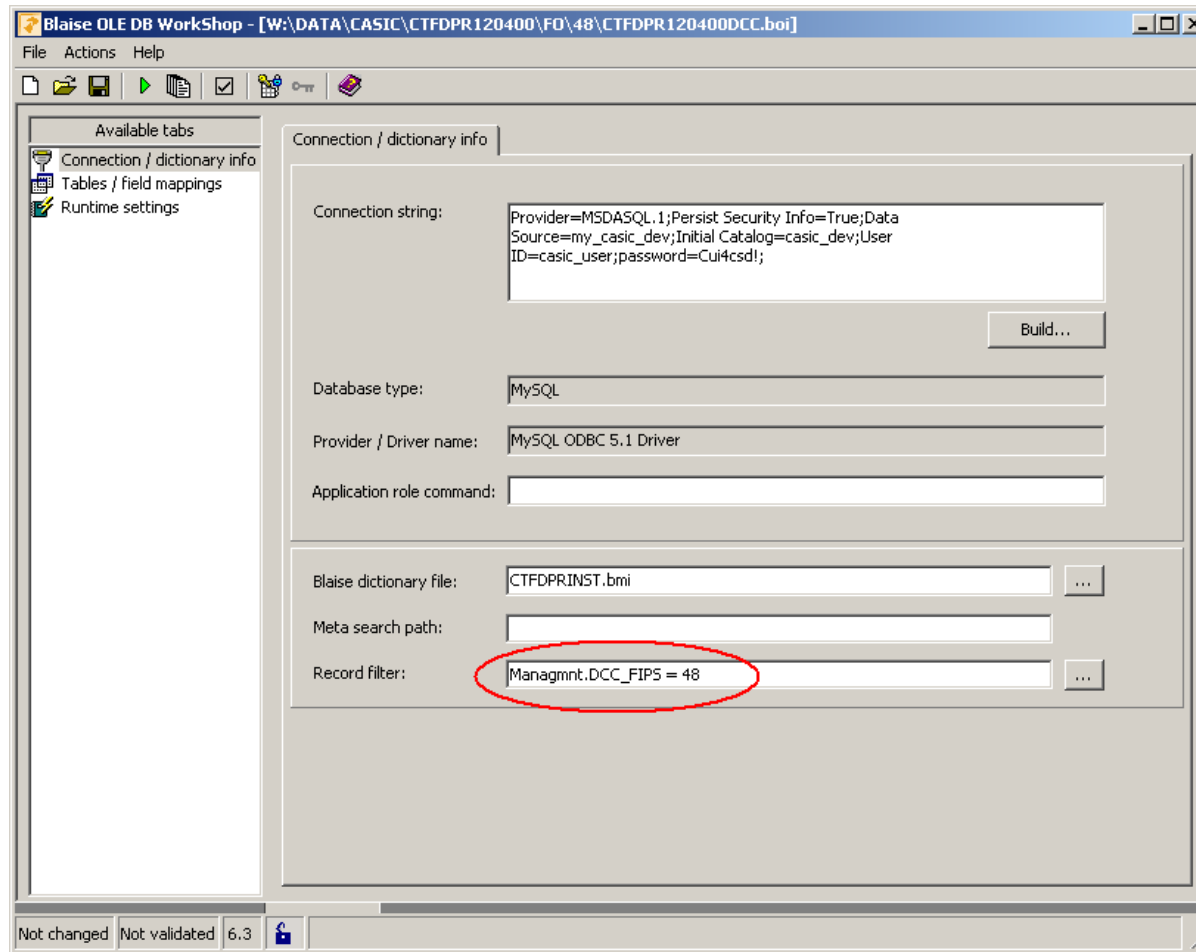
The screenshot displays the 'CASIC Survey Menu - COTTON FARMER DEALER PR' application window. At the top, there are input fields for 'Survey Folder' (CTFDPR120400), 'Survey Date' (04/01/2012), 'Shell' (L7), and 'Cameleon' (I). Below these are fields for 'Instrument Name' (CTFDPRINST) and a 'Documentation' section with 'Survey Specific Docs' and 'Generic CASIC Docs' buttons. A yellow 'EXIT' button is also present. The main menu bar includes 'Setup & Maintenance', 'Transactions', 'Data Collection', 'Survey Processing' (the active tab), and 'Reports'. The 'Survey Processing' area is divided into three columns: 'Edit' (containing 'Interactive Edit', 'Integral Check', 'Batch Inaccessibles', and 'Delete a Record'), 'Read In' (containing 'Read Code Data IN' and 'Read EDR Data IN'), and 'Review Data' (containing 'Browse a Completed Record'). At the bottom, there are fields for 'FIPS' (48), 'Role' (Stat), and 'Server' (PROD), along with an orange 'Within Survey Test Area' button.



BOI Files

- Each survey has a main .BOI file defined for the entire sample
 - Used by most of the Manipula setups
 - Record filters declared within Manipula
 - Unaware of the secondary .BOI files
- Secondary .BOI files
 - Restrict CATI Management and limit daybatch
 - Record filter defined in the .BOI file

OLE DB Workshop – Record Filter



Centralized Blaise Time Zones

- Time zone of the respondent
- Time zone of the interviewer
- Time zone of the database
 - Crew Times uses the database time zone
 - Not necessarily where the interviewer is sitting
 - Time zone differentials
 - Database time zone is the “home” time zone which is the one with a differential of zero

Split-State Scenario

- StateA wants to send part of its sample to StateB
- StateB is not defined as a DCC for StateA in CASIC_FAT
- StateC is defined as a DCC for StateA in CASIC_FAT

Split-State Solution

- New column in CASIC_SurveyInfo called Add_Func (added functionality)
- StateB was assigned a 1 in Add_Func
 - This gave StateB all of the data collection buttons
- A Manipula program updated the DCC_Fips field on each of the forms assigned to StateB
- Manipula record filters took care of the rest

Growing Pains

- One of the first groups to move toward a centralized solution
 - Bridges needed to legacy systems to maintain functionality
 - New links to other pieces that become centralized
 - Bridges and new link run together so parallel testing is possible



Growing Pains - 2

- Pre-survey processes in beginning stages of centralizing
 - Front end process for CASIC will need to be altered to handle one national set of files instead of multiple states' files
 - Future: directly reading the Survey Management System database to get info

Growing Pains - 3

- Blaise services bug – “The Big Freeze”
 - Services would lock up and freeze all of the users until the services were restarted
 - Halted most of our forward momentum
 - Faith in Blaise Team never faltered
 - Stat Neth diligently tracked down the issue
 - Set up a survey in the closest environment to NASS ever implemented outside of NASS
- Bug is solved in Blaise 4.8.4!!

Why? Why? Why?

- “Why can’t these ASCII files be eliminated?”
- “Why can’t this database be aware of this other database?”
- “Why can’t this information be stored in a common table shared by all?”



The Challenge

- While overall staffing numbers decline at NASS, we strive to continuing the integrity of the on-going survey programs.
- The challenge: reigning in those who want to implement these ideas immediately.



The Goal

- Create a sound survey process utilizing all of the efficiencies possible with enough forethought that the systems communicate with each other effectively and minimal rewrites are needed.



We want to avoid the feeling that we have jumped into a rowboat and started floating only to realize that the oars are still on the shore.



Questions

