

Deploying an Automated Data Read In Process at National Agricultural Statistics Service

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The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) uses multi-mode data collection including CATI, electronic data reporting (EDR), CAPI, and paper data collection. Blaise has been our primary data collection source for CATI, but the other methods exist outside of Blaise and we need to get data from those sources into Blaise for editing. For many years, reading data into Blaise involved users manually kicking off a manipus program and then sitting there to watch it spin. In May 2014 we redesigned the read in process to run in a more automated fashion. This new process has greatly improved performance and user experience on many levels.

This paper will give a brief overview of how we used to read data into Blaise, followed by details of the new automated process. It will include an overview of our current infrastructure of application servers and databases, use of VB.NET for our CASIC Menu and auto read in console applications, and integrating scheduled tasks on the application servers. We will share different challenges we faced while developing the new program, and will highlight improvements we've added since deployment such as building a batch count report, adding more user-friendly sorting in Interactive Edit, and integrating auto generated email alerts to catch errors. We'll close the paper by discussing future plans for further development of the auto read in program.