OCIO CHRONICLES

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GLAAS Performance Promises to Be Better This Year

At the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2010, users of the Global Acquisition and Assistance System (GLAAS) experienced degraded performance which affected their efforts to complete acquisition and assistance actions before the September 30 deadline. These issues were most significant during the last three days of the FY, when actions that should have taken seconds took minutes instead. Although users were able to successfully process more than $5.6 billion in awards during the fourth quarter of FY 2010 using GLAAS, these end-of-year system performance issues left many users frustrated and kept USAID from being able to obligate almost $10 million in expiring funds.

In response to these performance issues, a team under the CIO conducted a comprehensive performance analysis to determine the root causes of the performance issues, identify and implement the necessary corrective actions, and validate the effectiveness of the corrective actions. CIO made several changes to the system that have improved the GLAAS' performance to more than meet the projected end of the fiscal year 2011 peak workload.

Along with our technical improvements, users can help ensure that GLAAS' performance will handle the EFY 2011 processing workloads by taking some basic actions:

- Submit acquisition and assistance actions for processing as early as possible.
- If possible, submit transactions from complex documents earlier. Long, complex documents with many accounting line items will still require relatively long processing times.
- When renewing contracts, try to create more streamlined contracts with fewer CLINs (if practicable).

Please contact GLAAS Support (USAID) at GLAAS_Support@usaid.gov for help.
Go to http://inside.usaid.gov/GLAAS/ for news, FAQs, tips, and more.

Inside this issue:

Google Apps Tip!

Google Apps for USAID puts even more tools at your disposal! Google Docs (Documents, Spreadsheets, Presentations, Drawings, and Forms) together with Microsoft Office Suite (MS-Word, PowerPoint, Excel, etc.) allow you to work in more collaborative and innovative ways than ever before. Directly log in at docs.usaid.gov, even from home *without* SBC, and start using Google Docs today to collaborate, brainstorm ideas, or even edit a document with up to 50 of your colleagues at once!

If you would like to submit an article or you have an interesting story to tell us, please send an email to **cionewsletter@usaid.gov**

Questions, comments and concerns are also encouraged as we strive to make our newsletter better.

Please note that Google Docs and Chat are currently available to all Agency staff, and will now be easily accessible through one click on your desktop.

Chrome Web Browser on your Desktop

On September 19, 2011, M/CIO installed the Google Chrome Browser on all Agency computer desktops. Google Chrome is a web browser specifically designed by Google for optimal use of Google Apps (including Mail, Calendar, Contacts, and Chat, where available) . This enhanced web browser helps support the exciting technology changes occurring within USAID and meets the demand from users for an innovative web browser. Google Chrome, as compared to Mozilla Firefox or Internet Explorer, allows Google Apps to run more efficiently – operating at faster speeds and enabling desktop notifications. Staff should use Google Chrome for accessing Google Apps (i.e., USAID Mail, Chat, Calendar, and Docs), but continue to use Internet Explorer for all Corporate Apps (ACTS, PHOENIX, GLAAS, etc). Moving forward, Corporate Applications will be designed or updated to operate successfully in different browsers.

Questions concerning the Google Chrome Browser or Google Apps should be directed to the CIO Help Desk (USAID), 202-712-1234.

SARs for SaaS

For almost a decade, USAID has published a list of software applications that have been approved by the CIO for general or restricted use on Agency computers. Now, with the government-wide emphasis on 'cloud' solutions, our list of installed software includes "Software as a Service" (SaaS) in addition to applications that are physically installed on equipment within USAID.

SaaS is basically an arrangement that enables the consumer, in this case USAID staff, to access applications from an external provider 's cloud infrastructure. SaaS applications are accessed from various client devices through a "thin client interface," such as a web browser (e.g., web-based email). The user does not manage or control the underlying cloud infrastructure including network, servers, operating systems, storage, or even individual application capabilities, although in some cases the user can specify individual application configuration settings.

The consequence of using SaaS is that Agency users will need to submit a Software Approval Request (SAR) before acquiring and using cloud-based software, just as they have been required to do for software installed on Agency computers. SAR reviews help to ensure that Agency records remain secure, personally-identifiable information is not made public, and the CIO gains insight into the kind of services being provided through SaaS arrangements. Because SARs provide CIO with an overall picture of the software needs across the Agency, they can help to eliminate duplication of services. For example, a SAR review might show that a group within USAID is trying to move a function to one cloud provider, while the Agency is already using another provider for the same function. By keeping track of the external software services used, the Office of the CIO can serve as a clearinghouse to counsel other Agency staff about the availability of these services and introduce those who are seeking the solution to those who are already experienced with it.

If you need software functionality that is not already available from the USAID Software List, you should submit a SAR that identifies you as the contact person and specifically identifies the application you are requesting. A Configuration Management team member will be available to work with you on your request and help point you to similar applications or services that have already been reviewed and approved.

You can access the USAID Software List and learn more about the software approval process at http://software.usaid.gov. Please contact the CIO CM Manager, Steve Polkinghorn (spolkinghorn@usaid.gov), for more information on this topic.

Our Largest Group of Fellows to Date!

This past month, CIO hosted its largest group of CIO fellows to date. The class consisted of seven systems managers from all around the world. Each one was able to use their individual skills to make the Google Pilot a success. By using the Fellows to assist with the Google implementation, USAID CIO is able to leverage the knowledge, skills, and abilities from the field to tailor the deployment to each Mission's needs. In addition, the CIO fellows receive valuable insight into Washington operations, get a chance to learn about new initiatives first hand, and are able to network with Washington IT and other staff. If you have questions about the program, please contact Shirl Hendley at shendley@usaid.gov.

Pictured from left:
Alain Kagabo (Rwanda), Hong Sok (Cambodia), Shrikant Bhonsle (India), Shirl Hendley (CIO Fellowship Manager) Andrey Postavalov (Russia), Jackie Ahouansou (Benin), Dragoljub Jetvic (Serbia) and Arsen Arustamyan (Armenia)

Alain Kagabo Mitali

Born and raised in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, Alain returned to his home country Rwanda with his parents one month after the end of the Rwandan genocide. He graduated from high school in 1996, then obtained his BA in Management Information Systems from the Adventist University of Central Africa in 2000. He has received extensive additional training in Information Communications Technology in South Africa, Cameroon, the U.S., and Kigali, Rwanda. Before he joined USAID/Rwanda in June 2002, he worked for two years at FINA Bank (Rwanda) as an Information Systems Manager. Alain is proficient in Kinyarwanda, French, English, Swahili, and Lingala. He is attending the Fellowship program here from July 25th to September 2nd, 2011, and has been deployed to the Google Apps team. He is preparing the migration to Google tools for his Mission. Alain is married to Irene and they have two young children, a boy and a girl.

Arsen Arustamyan

Arsen is a system engineer with extensive management skills and experience. He has worked for USAID/Armenia for 10 years, where he is responsible for LAN administration, systems analysis, operations and security. He also installs, maintains and troubleshoots computer hardware; ensures continuous operation of all equipment; maintains security for both equipment and data storage; compiles the annual IT budget for technical offices; and works with procurement staff to ensure IT-related items are purchased on time. Arsen has an MS in Computer Sciences from the State Engineering University of Armenia (1997). He is married and has two sons.

Andrey Postovalov

I've been working in the Information Systems Center of USAID/Russia for more than 16 years. My entire professional career has been devoted to the US Government. I came to USAID as a Computer Operator after graduation from one of the top technical universities in Russia, Moscow State Technical University. I've progressed through the entire FSN career ladder and since last year, I've been working in the position of Information Systems Manager responsible for USAID/Russia telecommunications and computer operations. I have been able to attend two IT Conferences, one in USAID/Washington (2008) and one in USAID/Cairo (2010). These events were great opportunities for me to share IT experience with my colleagues from other Missions and OCIO.Since 1994 I have witnessed a lot of changes in USAID's IT arena, from Banyan Vines and Blue Mail to Clouds and Gmail. I appreciate my role as an IT systems manager in improving IT availability and productivity for customers and helping them to gain the benefits from using new techniques and technologies, allowing them to perform their jobs effectively. IT helps people to share information, collaborate with each other in many fields such as human rights and democracy, healthcare, and environmental protection, and breaks down many borders and stereotypes in human relationships.

Shrikant Bhonsle

Shrikant has been managing USAID IT in the New Delhi Mission since 1982. Over the years he has seen many technology shifts; his main focus has been to deploy appropriate technology solutions for customers at the Mission and bring about IT convergence with Development. In recent years the Mission has piloted and implemented ground-breaking technologies and services which have also been replicated elsewhere. Shrikant sees his role as a manager, enabler, and change agent; he enjoys integration and adaptation/adoption of IT solutions in the workplace. Shrikant has a Master's degree in Business Management with cross-training in IT, and he enjoys nature photography and music (absolutely any kind).

Jacqueline Gomez Ahouansou

I'm a Benin citizen, and I completed my post-graduate degree in Computer Engineering and Integration: Information Systems at the Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers, France. I started working with USAID/Benin in 1993. For the past 18 years, I have worked as an IT specialist and have witnessed a lot of changes in the Information Management field. My duties cover a full range of IT services including network infrastructure management, computer security, corporate application support, communication and telephone system maintenance, and distance learning coordination for Mission staff. I also serve as webmaster and coordinator of the Documentum ASIST application, and am the Coordinator of the FSN Advisory Committee at USAID/Benin. I feel very fortunate to have been offered this opportunity to participate to the FSN Fellowship program.

Dragoljub Jevtic

I'm a Systems Manager at USAID/Serbia. I've been with USAID for seven years, where I have had the opportunity to participate in various interesting projects, such as implementation of the Gigabit LAN infrastructure in our Mission and setting up systems for USAID/Serbia Field Offices. I also had the pleasure of attending the Emerging Leader Program at the Federal Executive Institute, which gave me an opportunity to see things from a different perspective and to learn about myself and other people. I speak English, Spanish, Russian and Serbian (Croatian, Bosnian, Montenegrin).

I've been meddling with computers since elementary school. I love gadgets; my Androids (HTC Desire HD and Galaxy Tab 10.1) are my favorite companions lately. My favorite Operating System is Linux, but I'm also proficient with Windows and OSX. Security is my favorite area of interest.

Hong Sok

Hong Sok has worked for USAID/Cambodia since 1995, where he is currently a Computer Management Specialist. At USAID/Cambodia, he implements automation standards and policies for systems security and computer system usage. Hong earned a BS in Mathematics and a BA in English for International Business from the Royal University Phnom Penh, and a MS in Information Technology at Sikkim –Manipal University. Hong speaks English, Chinese, Khmer, Thai and Vietnamese.

Safer Email: Part of OCIO's Strategy to Protect the Agency

Wireless, public, and business enterprise networks are increasingly used to communicate, collaborate, and process information. While the availability of these technologies increases productivity, it also introduces sensitive organizational information into environments that are vulnerable and difficult to protect. This expanded access can often lead to data breaches or data losses.

USAID has developed a layered approach for protecting sensitive information. The first phase of development of our layered approach was the implementation of the Data Loss Prevention System (DLP). The DLP system prevents exposure of sensitive agency information by identifying content, tracking activity, and potentially blocking sensitive information from being transmitted.

Starting in the first quarter of FY 2012, the Chief Information Security Office and the Chief Privacy Office will begin the second phase by implementing an encryption mechanism which will automatically encrypt e-mail messages containing sensitive information. Intended recipient(s) will be directed to a web site where they can retrieve the information securely. We will provide users more information and training as we move closer to the implementation date.

Technology such as DLP plays a very important role in preventing data breaches and data losses. However, please remember that information security and protection is EVERYONE's responsibility. Every employee must remain diligent in protecting the Agency's information assets.

If you have questions about our layered security program, please contact CISO at isso@usaid.gov.

Did you know?

According to several recent research articles from http://www.spendonlife.com/guide/identity-theft-statistics**:**

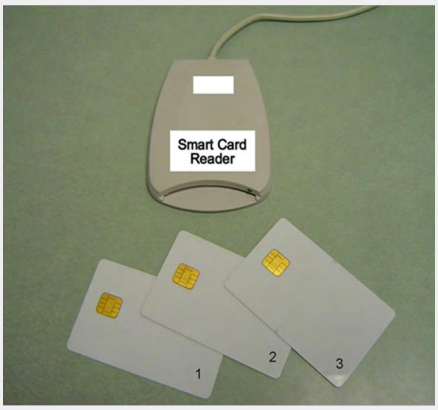
- There were 10 million victims of identity theft in 2008 in the United States. 1 in every 10 U.S. consumers has already been victimized by identity theft
- 1.6 million households experienced fraud not related to credit cards (i.e., bank accounts, debit cards)
- It can take up to 5,840 hours (the equivalent of working a full-time job for two years) to correct the damage from ID theft, depending on the severity of the case. The average victim spends 330 hours repairing the damage
- It takes 26-32% of victims between 4 and 6 months to straighten out problems caused by identity theft; 1-23% of victims spend seven months to a year resolving their cases
- The responsible individual(s) as well as the organization can be held legally liable for certain types of data breaches.

Tech Updates!

Security Testing in the Pre-Production Lab

A new security access feature will soon be coming to USAID! Currently, the Federal government has wide variation in the quality and security of identification used to gain access to secure facilities and systems. In order to eliminate this variation, the Federal Government is establishing a mandatory, Government-wide standard for secure and reliable forms of identification that will apply to all employees and contractors.

The Office of the CIO's Pre-Production Lab (PPL) is an isolated test environment that validates system hardware, software, and data deployments that will be implemented on the USAID production network. The PPL is also required to evaluate new and existing technologies that will benefit USAID. PPL is testing the functionality of new user identification technologies provided by Smart Cards, also known as Common Access Cards (CAC), for user logon as well as cross-domain authentication. Working closely with the Department of Defense, the Joint Interoperability Test Command (JITC) program, and the Department of State (DoS), the PPL is the perfect test bed for this effort. Look for future initiatives containing new and existing technologies coming out of the PPL.



Configuration Management Upgrade Project

The System Center Configuration Manager (SCCM) Upgrade Project is an M/CIO initiative to replace the Agency's existing configuration management tool, Microsoft System Management Server (SMS), which Microsoft no longer supports. The new system will be deployed enterprise-wide over a six-month period. Project engineering and testing started in August 2011, and deployment will be final in January 2012.

The tool which we are deploying, SCCM 2007, is a wide-ranging configuration management and software package deployment tool that assesses, distributes, and updates servers and workstations running the Windows operating system. SCCM 2007 meets USAID's IT software deployment needs and aligns with the Agency's "Green IT" goals. SCCM 2007 incorporates new tools that allow M/CIO to manage power use on the Agency's workstations and servers, reducing power consumption and resulting in cost savings and environmental benefits. For example, SCCM 2007 can make workstations and non-critical servers turn off, hibernate, or sleep during normal non-working hours. However, because SCCM 2007 also incorporates Wake on Lan (WoL) technologies, "resting" systems can receive patches, software updates, and virus scans, then go back into sleep mode until normal working hours.

To maintain configuration management for non-Windows based systems, such as UNIX and Mac OS, the SCCM Project will incorporate Quest Management Xtensions (QMX). The tethered SCCM/QMX solution will provide the Agency with the following additional benefits:

- Update the existing patch management system with a proven, mainstream supported technology.
- Deliver better asset management and asset intelligence.
- Incorporate end client health reporting as well as Active Directory Delta Discovery.

For more information regarding SCCM 2007 and its features and benefits, please see the following link:

http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/server-cloud/system-center/configuration-manager.aspx