

ASSIST Data Maintenance Over the Internet Workshop Outline December 2 and 3, 1997

I. Introduction

Purpose of developing software to allow data maintenance over the Internet:

- Provide campuses with software that uses mainstream and current technologies and does not require a significant amount of campus resources to maintain.
- Allow more immediate updating and distribution of articulation information.

Timeline:

- Complete development by December, 1998 and distribute new software to campuses in January, 1999.

II. Important Features of ASSIST Maintenance Over the Internet

The Central Database

- There will be one central copy of the ASSIST database, housed at the ASSIST Coordination Site. The database uses a product called Sybase.
- When changes or additions are made to the data, they can be immediately added to the database and available for viewing over the World Wide Web.
- The ASSIST Coordination Site will manage the maintenance of the database, including backups.
- Campuses will not have separate copies of the data at their institution.

— The central database will eliminate many of the difficulties campuses have in installing and maintaining software and data.

At Each Campus

— Each campus will use ASSIST software and a web browser to enter data, make changes and view maintenance displays of the data.

— The ASSIST Coordination Site will provide the ASSIST software to each campus. There is no need to purchase any third party software.

— Each campus will use the ASSIST software to connect, via the Internet, to the central database at the ASSIST Coordination Site. This will allow users to enter and maintain data on the central maintenance database at the ASSIST Coordination Site. Data will be moved from the maintenance database to the regular ASSIST database when campuses determine data are ready to be released.

— To view maintenance data before it is available on the regular ASSIST database, campuses will use a web browser (Netscape or Internet Explorer) to view maintenance displays of the data.

— No data is actually stored on computers at your campus.

III. Technical Requirements for Using ASSIST Data Maintenance over the Internet

Hardware

- a pentium-based microcomputer
- an Internet connection of T1 or better. You may not use a modem.

There will no longer be a need for a large hard disk dedicated to ASSIST, for a tape drive or modem.

Software

- Windows 95 or Windows 98 or Windows NT
- Netscape Navigator or Microsoft Internet Explorer 3.0 or higher
- ASSIST Client software (provided by the ASSIST Coordination Site)

There will no longer be a need for Revelation or Close-Up software.

The ASSIST Coordination Site staff will help with the initial installation and configuration of the client software when it is distributed in January, 1999.

Security

- A critical issue because campuses will all be working with the same database. We are currently working on the details of how the security system will operate.
- Each campus will register the names of those responsible for data entry and maintenance with the ASSIST Coordination Site. Each of those persons will be provided with a logon ID and a password.
- Each person will only be able to work with data for the institution(s) for which they are registered. Campuses will not be able to change or enter data for another institution.

Log File

- ASSIST will keep track of all changes made to the system. This log file will help the ASSIST Coordination Site track what changes were made and when. It will also help end users know what changes were made to the system. We are currently working on the details of how this log file will work and when information will be posted to the file.

IV. Data Issues

- The Revelation version of ASSIST allowed users to enter inconsistent data. The new software will help correct that. There will be a number of data issues that are raised as we convert the database from Revelation to Sybase.
- One very primary change for the new maintenance system is that it will put more emphasis on course curriculum information to provide data for other components of the system. Currently there are four places in ASSIST where course names are stored: Course List file, IGETC/CSU-GE/Breadth file, UCOP TCA file and Articulation Agreement file. All of these can have different information. In the new system, the course curriculum information will provide the data to all of the other places where course information is needed. Campuses will not be able to overwrite this information with different data.
- All institutions must provide course curriculum information to ASSIST and the quality of that data is critical.

V. What Campuses Can Do During Software Development (Prior to December, 1998)

- Make sure your campus will be able to provide course list information to ASSIST.
- Print current course information. Verify accuracy and correct any problems.
- Make sure your campus meets the technical requirements for using ASSIST Maintenance over the Internet.
- Work with the ASSIST Coordination Site to resolve other data inconsistencies — accurate course prefixes, departments, majors and articulation data. We will be working with campuses individually over the next year to clean up data problems.

VI. Next Steps

- In Spring, the ASSIST Coordination Site will preview the new data maintenance software, including a first look at the entry screens.
- As necessary, the ASSIST Coordination Site will host workshops to discuss any important data issues which might arise.