

DEAMS

Current Account

Financial Management at Your Fingertips

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Part 1

Officials release AMC survey results, response

Officials from the Defense Enterprise Accounting and Management System and Air Mobility Command have released results from an AMC survey of 271 staff and 375th Air Mobility Wing DEAMS users at Scott Air Force Base, Ill. It was conducted in February to measure user attitudes and opinions about DEAMS, and to assess its performance and mission impact.

Sixty-three people responded, for a 23 percent return rate (64 percent from AMC, 36 percent from the 375th AMW). To put those numbers into perspective, DEAMS had almost 1,200 users in early March; AMC surveyed 271 of them, or roughly 23 percent. The 63 who responded represent roughly 5 percent of all DEAMS users.

“We applaud AMC for touching base with their users to get feedback,” said Randy Newcome, Air Force Functional Manager for DEAMS. “Although their survey was more limited in scope than the one we conducted shortly after DEAMS deployed, we will continue to survey a broad base of users after DEAMS deploys at each site. For those who responded to the AMC survey, we thank you for your input. Your ideas matter and we want to work with you to help make DEAMS a success.”

The survey presented 36 statements covering demographics, system performance, training, user confidence, workload impact, audit readiness and overall perception. Users selected their responses from a five-point scale with options of Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral or Not Applicable, Agree, and Strongly Agree. They could also enter comments corresponding with each statement.

System performance and user confidence results and responses are summarized here. The remainder will be published in July. Authenticated computer users on the Air Force domain can access the survey results and FMO response at <https://eim.amc.af.mil/org/amcfm/DEAMS/Shared%20Documents/Survey>. Others may request copies from troy.sanders@us.af.mil.

System performance

“I am able to run Discoverer reports at least as quickly as in CRIS.”

The majority of respondents strongly disagreed that reporting is as quick as in the Commanders’ Resource Integration System. Besides retrievals running slowly, users expressed frustration with not being able to save search criteria.

Response: Discoverer Viewer was designed to execute previously developed queries with limited options to modify the queries. It has a limited functionality in terms of options that can interact with the primary DEAMS database.

One consideration that is being explored is to move Standard Financial Information Structure-compliant data from DEAMS to CRIS. A working group began assessing this option and building an implementation strategy in April. The Program and Functional Management offices also are exploring the feasibility of selecting another tool that will improve the DEAMS user experience.

“I am able to process documents or transactions in DEAMS at least as quickly as in legacy systems.”

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The majority of users found processing documents or transactions in DEAMS slower than in legacy systems. However, we do not know if this is due to system environment issues (e.g. network latency, poor connectivity, system processing cycle saturation) or process issues (e.g. routing, data validation, business rules).

Response: There are significant differences in the way DEAMS and legacy systems process data that account for differences in the speed of transactions. With legacy systems, users were segregated onto many different computer platforms, so data was transmitted over varying distances. DEAMS users are working in the same common operating system environment. Their experiences will be impacted by local network and security policies, and traffic loads that control the data transmission. As a result, DEAMS user experiences may be different within the same building or operating location.

In addition, the lifecycle of manual legacy forms from cradle to grave should be considered. One cannot simply look at the submission of a manual form; consider its lifetime from user initiation to final processing by DFAS and being available at all steps along the way to support audit readiness. With the lifecycle taken into consideration, DEAMS performs this entire process much more quickly and makes it easier to retrieve historical documents.

“I find DEAMS easy to navigate and use.”

The majority of users do not find DEAMS easy to navigate and use. Although the user comments are sprinkled with evidence of improvements in usability, most described difficult navigation, slow response, and lack of intuitiveness.

Response: We believe the user navigation experience will improve with time as people transition from legacy to DEAMS.

One suggestion that is often made is that DEAMS should have a more user-friendly interface into Oracle. However, the Department of Defense directed that DEAMS be developed

using a commercial off-the-shelf solution. Oracle, an industry-standard enterprise resource planning system with a broad range of capabilities, was selected. Changes to the interface have to be considered by Oracle and tested to ensure operability across all of its customers' platforms.

User confidence

“DEAMS defects (Remedy tickets) are satisfactorily resolved in less than 30 days.”

The majority of users do not think DEAMS resolutions are timely. Fail backs and new problems created by patches continue to shape user opinions negatively. Also, although patches may be promoted successfully to production, not all patches fix the identified defect.

Response: Tickets that require DEAMS code or configuration changes go through an approval process and therefore cannot be resolved within 30 days, even if they are a high priority. However, since January, tickets that can be resolved within the functional management office are averaging seven days or less to resolve.

Those that cannot be resolved at the FMO go through a rigorous approval process that includes associated cost and schedule impacts. The system integrator develops patches, which must be tested before being installed. Patches are installed into production monthly, where users then validate whether they are working correctly.

“The DEAMS Help Desk answers my questions satisfactorily.”

The majority of users think the DEAMS Help Desk answers questions satisfactorily.

Response: The DEAMS Help Desk has had extraordinary success in assisting users. Between May 27, 2010 (when DEAMS went live with full capabilities) and June 7, 2012, the Help Desk had closed 9,514 customer queries, which is 93.7 percent of those received.

“I receive timely information regarding DEAMS issues, procedures, patches, and workarounds.”

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More than three out of five users reported receiving timely information about patch schedules, manual workarounds, and scheduled system downtime. However, comments suggest that solutions to problems in DEAMS are implemented without communicating with users.

Response: We communicate information to users or designated representatives via several methods. All solutions to DEAMS issues that involve patches are communicated to users before the patches are installed. The DEAMS Strategic Communications team sends a User Update email to each DEAMS user describing the issues and solutions contained in each patch. The updates also include the Remedy ticket numbers, the FMO Teams involved, and which users are affected. If users are not receiving the User Updates, they can request to be added to the distribution by sending an email to: ustc-deams-stratcomm@ustranscom.mil.

Points of contact for the Remedy tickets are notified when a patch contains their solution and asked to validate if it is working correctly.

We can provide the Daily Remedy Ticket Status List to unit points of contact to pass information to their users. Users can also call the help desk and ask about specific tickets.

“DEAMS processes travel vouchers accurately and quickly.”

Respondents were split almost evenly in their perception of how well DEAMS processed travel vouchers. They commented that DEAMS processed travel vouchers far too slowly by treating them as “transactions by others.”

Response: We analyzed 21 months of DEAMS travel payment data. After full DEAMS capabilities deployed in 2010, travel payment postings to DEAMS took almost 60 days; however, the average over the past 12 months is only 10 days. A review of travel obligation posting timeliness is pending as part of internal controls of financial reporting efforts.

“DEAMS accurately reports status of funds.”

There was no statistical difference between those who agreed with this statement and those who did not. Respondents commented that DEAMS’ status of funds for reimbursements remains problematic and that DEAMS and CRIS sometimes do not match.

Response: The bottom line is that DEAMS is the system of record 100 percent of the time, so rely on the data you extract from DEAMS versus CRIS. The DEAMS status of funds function (excluding reimbursements) is working properly. There is a definite timing issue between DEAMS and CRIS due to the fact that both systems rely on a refresh process. Depending on the timing of each DEAMS or CRIS refresh, there can be discrepancies between DEAMS and CRIS data. We are still working toward a fix for both the reimbursement issue and the DEAMS refresh period, which would alleviate most of the discrepancies between DEAMS and CRIS.

“I can quickly find the information I need in DEAMS to do my job.”

More than half of users reported that finding information in DEAMS took too long. Comments centered on difficulty building reports, slow system retrieval of information, too many steps to pull information, and inadequate training.

Response: DEAMS has a drop-down menu system that requires repetition to become efficient. Users generally become more proficient with functions and the sequence of menu items as they log more time using DEAMS.

To aid users, one option being explored is to move Standard Financial Information Structure-compliant data from DEAMS to CRIS. In April, a working group started reviewing this option and building an implementation strategy.

As DEAMS begins to stabilize, training courses will be updated and refined, and training topics will be aligned more closely with user roles.



On guard!

Brig. Gen. Willie Cobetto, Illinois National Guard Assistant Adjutant General for Air; and Col. Michael Cheney, National Guard Bureau Comptroller; visit the DEAMS Functional Management Office June 8 to discuss the DEAMS rollout to the Air National Guard and receive updates on deployment-related issues.

AF announces new civilian pay system

The Air Force has selected a new time and attendance program to process civilian employee timecards, replacing the Oracle Time and Labor module that was to interface with the Defense Enterprise Accounting and Management System.

The change to a different system is, in part, a matter of timing. To meet Financial Improvement and Audit Readiness objectives by 2014 as set by Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, a new time and attendance system is needed, but OT&L will not be ready in time. An alternative already in use at several joint installations was selected.

According to an article published in a recent "FM Systems Newsletter," the Automated Time, Attendance and Production System is

a Web-based, Common Access Card-enabled program that electronically routes civilian timecards from employee to supervisor or certifier and then to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service for payment. The program has been implemented at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va.; Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska; and Pope Air Force Base, N.C.

The article also states that representatives at each Air Force major command have additional information regarding the implementation of ATAAPS at their installations.

ATAAPS is expected to be used until DEAMS is fully deployed. At that time, options include interfacing ATAAPS with DEAMS or using DEAMS' inherent timekeeping capability.

DEAMS attracts interest at PDI



Left: Dave Thurston and Sam Runnels, DEAMS Functional Management Office, answer questions at the DEAMS display during the American Society of Military Comptrollers' Professional Development Institute in Anaheim, Calif., May 30.

Bottom: Randy Newcome (second from left), Air Force Functional Manager for DEAMS; and Lt. Col Tracy Watkins, Scott Air Force Base, Ill., comptroller; explain the DEAMS deployment strategy during an Air Force service day session at PDI May 30. Looking on are Michael V. Sorrento, Chief Information Officer for the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Financial Management and Comptroller; and Master Sgt. Felmer Navarro, a PDI volunteer from the Pacific Air Forces Financial Management Directorate at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.

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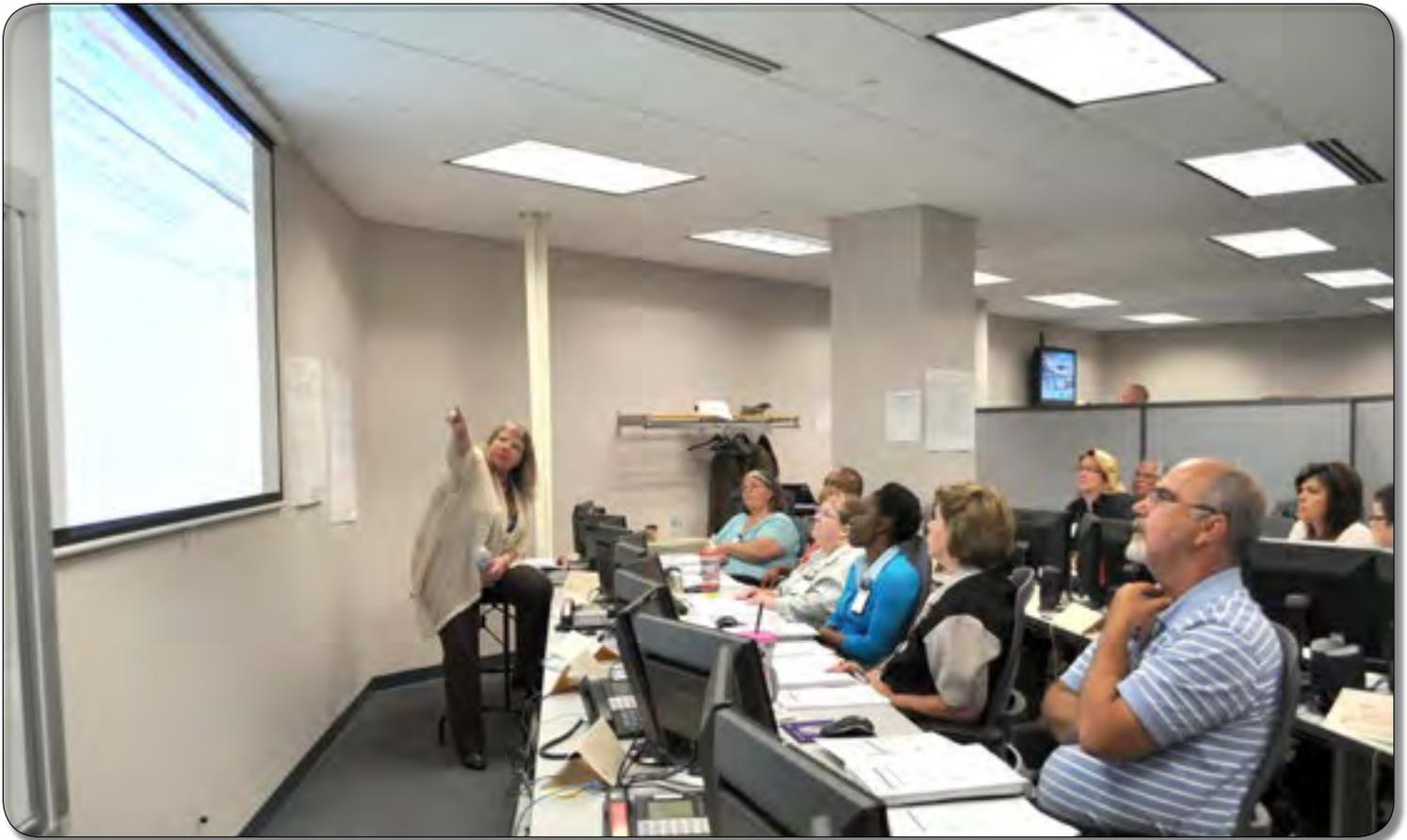
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(Right) Scott Steber, DEAMS Functional Management Office, talks with a potential DEAMS user at the DEAMS PDI display May 30.



(Below) Dr. Jamie Morin, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Financial Management and Comptroller, stops by the DEAMS exhibit May 31 to discuss DEAMS with Pete Gavornik, Dave Thurston and Sam Runnels.





Focus on training

Laurie Bosley points out key fields in a screen shot of the DEAMS iProcurement training course to a focus group at the DEAMS Functional Management Office in Fairview Heights, Ill., June 5. The course was recently revised around user roles versus DEAMS responsibilities. The focus group consisted of users from Scott Air Force Base, Ill., and subject matter experts from the FMO.

Status Update

Deployment prep continues

The DEAMS Training Team held a focus group June 4-7 to review the revised requisition course.

User registration was completed for McConnell AFB, Kan. The DEAMS Training team is reviewing their registration forms and will notify individuals of their required training based on the DEAMS roles and responsibilities they requested. Users will self-register for training online. Training is tentatively scheduled to begin in August. DEAMS is scheduled to go live at McConnell in October.

The DEAMS Deployment team is reviewing the Integrated Master Schedule for the next four Air Mobility Command bases (Grand Forks AFB, N.D.; Fairchild AFB, Wash.; Pope Field, N.C.; and Little Rock AFB, Ark.). They are also developing a desktop guide for dual processing.

The DEAMS Site Activation Task Force is working with Air Reserve Components to incorporate them into the major command rollout schedule.

DEAMS Transitions

Arriving

Ram Prasad Chilukuri

Accenture
Interfaces

Krystal Frazier

Kearney & Co.
Project Accounting

Lesley Sauls

Kearney & Co.
Training

Lori Tucker

Government
USTRANSCOM Functional Manager

Departing

Jeff Klipp

Emtec
Sustainment

Russ Mielke

Government
USTRANSCOM Functional Manager

Quotable

“Auditability is a goal that every commander, every manager, and every functional specialist must understand and embrace to improve efficiency and accountability at the DOD.”



DOD photo

Leon Panetta
Secretary of Defense

“We need to transition to a modern financial system that is audit compliant, and getting DEAMS fully functional and deployed is our solution.”



USAF photo

Dr. Jamie Morin
Assistant Secretary of the Air
Force for Financial
Management and Comptroller

DEAMS Outreach

Do you have an upcoming event? Regional conference? Mini-PDI? Speakers are available to update your group on the status of DEAMS.

Contact the DEAMS Functional Management Office at (618) 622-5700 or via email at ustc-deams@ustranscom.mil.

Visit the DEAMS public website at www.deams.af.mil

Questions about Web content may be addressed by email to:
ustc-deams@ustranscom.mil

The DEAMS Help Desk can be reached at 1-877-332-6753 or help@deams.org.



DEAMS

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