

# Minutes of the Data Administration Constituent Group

EDUCAUSE '99

Long Beach (CA) Convention Center

First session: Tuesday, October 26, 1999, 4:00-6:00 pm

Follow-up session: Wednesday, October 27, 1999, 12:45-2:15 pm

Leader: Ron Spangler, University of Kansas

## Introductions

### Data Administration at EDUCAUSE '99

Those attending were provided with a list of sessions at EDUCAUSE '99 related to 'Data administration and data warehouses' – (3 track sessions, 3 constituent group sessions, and 1 current issues meeting).

#### Track Sessions:

Metadata Integration	Wednesday	3:45PM - 4:30PM
A Data Warehouse Solution Using University Consortia and Business Outsourcing	Thursday	3:45PM - 4:30PM
A Warehouse Design: Making It Simple	Friday	9:30AM - 10:15AM

#### Constituent Group Sessions:

Data Administration Constituent Group (First Session)	Tuesday	4:00PM - 6:00PM
Data Administration Constituent Group (Follow-up)	Wednesday	12:45PM - 2:15PM
Decision Support / Data Warehousing Constituent Group	Thursday	12:45PM - 2:15PM

#### Current Issues Roundtable:

Data Warehouse Administration: Can You Have One Without the Other?	Wednesday	4:45PM - 6:00PM
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## DASIG listserv group

The lack of postings to the DASIG listserv group was discussed. The consensus was to try to revitalize the list. Announcements encouraging subscriptions and postings by data administrators will be sent to the following lists: DASIG, CIO, DS, and AIR-L. Participants agreed to be more proactive in posting to the DASIG list.

## Other Resources for Data Administration

We reviewed three other resources for information about data administration:

**DAMA** – Data Administration Management Association – <http://www.dama.org>

While predominantly composed of private industry, this organization has international, national, and local levels. There are useful references, conferences, and links at the DAMA web site.

**TDAN** – The Data Administration Newsletter – <http://www.tdan.com>

Another effort that largely reflects efforts in private industry, but most is applicable to higher education. Again there are useful articles and links at the TDAN web site. Robert Seiner publishes this newsletter on a quarterly basis and welcomes articles from those of us in higher education. Issue 10.0, November 1999 has just been posted to the web site; please check it

out at <http://www.tdan.org>

**EDUCAUSE Information Resource Library** — [http://www.educause.edu/asp/doclib/subject\\_docs.asp?Code=25](http://www.educause.edu/asp/doclib/subject_docs.asp?Code=25)

A list of over 80 titles (“Items with an index of Data Administration/Info Management”) was distributed to demonstrate the wealth of information available within our own organization.

### **Current Issues in Data Administration at our Institutions**

Discussion of current DA efforts at our own institutions focused on two issues: ‘What are measures of success in data administration?’ and ‘How do we certify data?’ Highlights of both discussions are listed below.

#### **What are measures of success in data administration?**

This question is applicable to organizations with established DA functions and to those trying to justify the creation of a DA function. Following are the suggestions that we developed. They are not necessarily in priority order nor are all in direct measurable form.

- Data warehouse support
  - availability
  - integrity
- Data dictionary support
  - availability
  - use (no. of times accessed)
  - completeness
- Data models
  - completeness
  - accuracy
- Identification of data problems (not fixing them)
- Getting data used by more people (bringing data to the attention of more people)
  - hits on web sites
  - no. of reports distributed
- Comprehensibility of definitions/models to users
- Requests from users to get access to:
  - data dictionary/data models
  - application systems
  - query tools
- Requests from developers for assistance with definitions/models
- Backlog of requests

#### **How do we certify data?**

This question arises from the increasing trend for data requests to be sent in electronic file format. When a paper report was used as the reply, it was easier to mark it as being ‘official’. Without the paper, how does an office certify a data file as being official? Following are the highlights of the group discussion.

- Use ‘frozen’ files or census databases to respond to requests.
- Passwords and date stamps are not solutions because they can be easily circumvented.
- Prepare the data before ‘freezing’ so it’s the best possible source of data
  - Run analytical reports prior to the ‘freeze’.
  - Meet with data stewards prior to the ‘freeze’.
  - Publish ‘census’ dates well in advance so everyone is informed.
- Establish the office (DA or IR) as the authority for accurate and reliable institutional data reporting.

## Data Administration Tools

Toward the end of the first session, we identified tools that our institutions are using in each of two areas: Metadata/Data Dictionary and Data Warehouse. This is just a cursory review and only represents those institutions attending the DA Constituent Group session.

Metadata / Data Dictionary		Data Warehouse	
Tool	Count	Tool	Count
Home-grown	7	Brio	9
Oracle tables	4	SAS	5
Java applet	1	MS Access	3
Sybase tables	1	SPSS	2
SELECT SE	2	Oracle	1
Designer 2000	1	Crystal Reports	1
Erwin	1	FOCUS	1
Power Designer	1	Seagate	1
		Uniquery	1
		Looking at:	
		Arden	1
		Informatica	1

## CHES (Consortium for Higher Education Software Services) Data Definitions – NCHEMS

(<http://www.nchems.org/Publications/chessdatadef.htm>)

John Porter, ASU, led a discussion of a proposal for EDUCAUSE to take on the challenge of updating and distributing the 'Data Definitions for Colleges and Universities' published in 1996 by Charles Thomas through NCHEMS/CHES (Consortium for Higher Education Software Services). Mr. Thomas will no longer be updating these definitions, so both the DA Constituent Group and the DS/DW Constituent Group discussed the options for having EDUCAUSE become involved.

The CHES Data Definitions include 781 data elements. Thirty-eight percent of these elements had standard definitions from sources such as: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), U.S. Census Bureau, SPEEDE Data Elements, International Standards Organization (ISO), and American National Standards Institute (ANSI). The remaining 62% of the data elements were defined only by individual institutions.

The consensus of the DA Constituent Group was that these definitions, particularly those with standard sources, would be of value to many institutions. The time saved in collecting the definitions from national standards organizations would be a significant value since it would save duplicating this effort at many individual institutions. Specific suggestions from the group will be incorporated into the forthcoming proposal.

## Follow-up session

As an experiment, we held a first, more formal session on Tuesday, then a follow-up, more informal session during the lunch break on Wednesday. The follow-up session was well received and provided 1) valuable additional discussion time and 2) time for individuals to talk to each other about DA projects and solutions. A total of 30 people attended two different sessions. If at all possible, the group would like to use a similar format next year.

**Attendees:**

<b>First and Last Name</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>E-mail Address</b>	<b>(Tues.)</b>	<b>(Wed.)</b>
Jeanne Alexander	Univ of Alabama – Birmingham	jeanne@uab.edu		✓
Ron Allan	Georgetown Univ	allanr@gunet.georgetown.edu	✓	✓
Stan Bailey	New England Inst. of Tech.	sbailey@neit.edu	✓	
Linda Bair	Univ of Illinois System	lbair@uillinois.edu		✓
Lore Balkan	Virginia Tech	lbalkan@vt.edu	✓	✓
Ron Basich	Kern City Supt. of Schools	robasich@kern.org		✓
Betsy Blythe	Virginia Tech	bblythe@vt.edu	✓	
Meg Brosey	Univ of Oklahoma Health Science Ctr	meg-brosey@ouhsc.edu	✓	
Ed Chapel	Fairleigh Dickinson Univ	chapel@fdu.edu	✓	
Elaine David	Univ of Connecticut	edavid@uconnvm.uconn.edu	✓	
Mike Glasser	Univ of Maryland	mglasser@acccmail.umd.edu	✓	
Roy Heynderickx	Univ of Portland	heynderi@up.edu	✓	
Barbara Hope	Univ of Maryland	bhope@deans.umd.edu	✓	
Dustin Landagora	Maricopa Community College District	landagora@maricopa.edu	✓	✓
Maribeth Mattingly	Univ of Maryland	mmatt@deans.umd.edu	✓	
Jan Paulson	Calif. Comm. Coll. Chanc. Off.	jpaulson@cccoco.edu	✓	
John Porter	Arizona State Univ	john.porter@asu.edu	✓	✓
Jim Repa	MIT	repa@mit.edu	✓	
John Rome	Arizona State Univ	john.rome@asu.edu	✓	✓
Maureen Romey	Vassar College	maromey@vassar.edu		✓
Ron Spangler	Univ of Kansas	spangler@ukans.edu	✓	✓
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John Streeter	Kansas State Univ	jws@ksu.edu		✓
Neil Sturm	Fairleigh Dickinson Univ	sturm@fdu.edu	✓	
Chuck Thomas	NCHEMS	crt@nwu.edu	✓	✓
Scott Thorne	MIT	thorne@mit.edu	✓	✓
Barbara Torney	Teachers College, Columbia Univ	bt42@columbia.edu	✓	✓
Rebeca Valenzuela	Univ Nacional Autonoma de Mexico	rebeca@alpha.dgscs.unam.mx		✓
Steve Webb	Univ of Houston	sfwebb@central.uh.edu	✓	
Corazon Wong	San Francisco State Univ	coraw@sfsu.edu	✓	
Count			23	16

Minutes submitted respectfully by  
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11/05/99