



Department of Information and Communication Services

March 2004

BITS & BYTES

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WebWatchers Ride Again! -- Those of you who have been around a while remember the WebWatchers from the early days of Auxiliary use of eCommunications. Just like Paul Revere, they spread the word to the other members. In the "olden" days (mid 90's :-), they were often the only ones in the Flotilla who had email, or Internet access so they would browse the web and relay information to members who were not yet connected. Well, times have changed, with many Flotillas now approaching 90% of their members on the Internet. However, even with these higher percentages, we still have to remember our fellow members who are not yet connected.

That's why the WebWatcher is as important as ever. The next Flotilla meeting you go to, bring a copy of Bits and Bites or the new National newsletter AUX eNews and share it with those that may not be connected. Encourage everyone with an email address to get it to your FSO-IS using a form 7028, so that it gets into AUXDATA! Have them check out the eDirectory <http://www.auxedirectory.org/> so that they can enjoy the full benefits of seamless eCommunications. You'll be glad you did!

Jeff Mahl

AuxInfo in New Clothing

Those of us logging onto AuxInfo after March 1 were presented with a new and improved version of the software. This has been anticipated since January and was necessary due to the upgrade of the COGNOS software and server. Other than some minor differences in the initial screens, the changes hit us when we selected one of the cubes and saw our screen split into two sections. On the left side of the screen is the "Dimension" pane with the "Data" pane looking much like it did before on the right. Users may well have discovered the new software even before signing on as none of the carefully constructed "Favorites" would work any more. After we get over our initial reaction to change of any sort I think we will like the new software quite a bit and appreciate the upgrade. In this article I'll try to point out some of the changes in the new version. (**See Full Article Below**)

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AUX-04 "C" School Reminder - AUX-04 DISTANCE EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY TRAINING (BASIC) applications for the East Coast session held at the Coast Guard Academy *must* be in the hands of your DIRAUX by **30 April 2004**.

(Short Term Training Request <http://www.uscgaux.org/~forms/archive/a7059f.pdf>)

The West Coast session in Alameda CA *must* be received by 30 June 2004! Be sure to review the complete course prerequisites and additional details prior to application at:

http://www.cgaux.info/g_ocx/training/c-training.html

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Welcome Aboard! -- Two new members have joined the I-CS Department Staff! William Helton will be our new Branch Chief Electronic Conversion (BC-IFE), and Mary Gibbons will be our new Branch Assistant for the National Website (BA-IWW). Welcome Aboard and we appreciate their contributing time and effort at the National level.

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Adobe deal still available!

Yes, AUXCEN is still offering great deals on ADOBE products at *considerable* discounts! For many of our members, Adobe Acrobat **Approval** is an excellent choice for using Adobe forms. It allows you to save completed forms, use eSignatures, and most of the other functions a typical member needs. All for a low-low price! There is even an 800# provided where you can get additional information.

Check out: <http://www.uscgaux.org/~auxcen/auxcen/adobespecial.html>

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Factoid

Operation Patriot Readiness III now has 16 District Coordinators and the OPR-III "CD" have been sent to every Flotilla Commander in the Auxiliary, detailing the program. This is a major step in implementing OPR at the local level.

For additional details about OPR III check out: <http://www.uscgaux.org/~opr/index.html>

Cyber Spot of the Month

A great way to test security on your computer is now available. This site is provided by Symantec (Norton) and runs various tests on your Firewall, Antivirus, even your Windows Operating System. It will tell you if you're OK, or you are just a sitting target for some hacker. They test for the major Antivirus and Firewall software available, and the FREE service is recommended by various trade magazines.

Check out: www.symantec.com/securitycheck

Did you know?

There is a painless way to learn about your Browser or your Operating System. It's offered by dummies.com (yes the same people that did the yellow and black books which got you through high school :-)) You get FREE periodic tips emailed to you on subjects you select. It's almost as good as learning in your sleep!

Check out: <http://etips.dummies.com/>

Reminder:

This mail system is for use only for the distribution of Bits & Bytes, and other I-CS Department information. It is not to be used for any other purpose. Thanks for your cooperation.

Viewing problems?

Check the Bits & Bytes Archive for a complete list of *all* issues at:
<http://www.cgauz.org/cgauzweb/infoserv/BandB.htm>

Bits & Bytes

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AuxInfo in New Clothing Continued.....

The Dimension Pane

The AuxInfo database is a gigantic table containing public information extracted from AuxData. As the table is much too large to display it is viewed in slices or “dimensions.” We used to select the desired dimension by using pull-down menus at the top of the data pane. We can still do that but it has been made more straightforward by adopting the file folder concept most of us are used to from Windows and other operating systems.

Each folder represents a dimension of the data and we drill down to the desired level by clicking on the “+” signs in front of each folder. Having reached the desired level for our data we must learn a new skill – **that of “right-clicking”**. This reveals a pop-up menu from which we can select “Filter.” Then “left-click” to select the filter action which retrieves our data. From this menu we could also select the familiar “Nest” function by row or column.

Using the Units dimension we can drill down through districts, divisions and flotillas until individual members are displayed. The Date (All Years) dimension allows us to specify data for a year, quarter, month, week or specific day. It works the same for all dimensions of course. As the lower levels of folders is indented for each level we will often have to resize the dimension pane by moving the cursor over the dividing line until it turns into a double-ended arrow, then moving horizontally while holding down the left mouse button. This can take up quite a bit of the screen real estate but the leftmost icon on the data pane’s menu bar can be clicked to allow the entire screen to show just our data while leaving the folders expanded for subsequent change. Another click on the same icon will restore the two panes to allow additional selections.

Just want to find data for a particular member? Without painstakingly drilling down you can simply highlight any of the dimensions, **right-click** to activate the pop-up menu but this time left-click on the “Find” option. A window will open that will allow you to enter the member’s name. The system will return a set of choices for that member showing activities in the flotillas, on each facility, etc., and you can select the one you want then click “filter” and all relevant information will be returned. This is sort of a “bottom up” method of specifying a dimension and may require you to start over at the beginning to select a different member. The thing to do is to explore the options – there are many more now.

The Data Pane

The data pane looks quite like it used to with some differences – some obvious – some not. At the top of the screen the pull-down menus for selecting or refining dimensions are still usable if you prefer these to the dimensions pane. They may not all be visible depending on your screen size and the hidden ones can be seen by clicking the arrow buttons on either side. One major difference is that the upper-left row/column header that identifies which Measure dimension is being viewed has a very thin menu bar below and to the right. You may miss seeing them but dragging your cursor makes them highlight when passed over. When the menu bar is highlighted, we again use the **right-click** to activate a pop-up menu. While the dimension pane pop-ups gave us the ability to “Nest,” the similar functions of “Down a Level” and “Expand” are

located on the data pane pop-up. By using the menu below the measures display, you are operating on the row headers and can achieve the same effect on the column headers by using the menu to the right. **Expand** is a new term and works much like Nest. If you are displaying the divisions, for example, and click "Expand" your display will now show the divisions as well as the subsidiary flotillas. Had you chosen "Down a Level" the divisions would disappear and only the flotillas would show. As a hint, the menu bars are much easier to see if you select the Indented Crosstab option for the display from the Crosstab icon in the lower toolbar.

We should discuss some of the icons at the bottom of the data pane. Each icon reveals its name when the cursor is dragged over the icon.

- **Display Options** is a new icon that is very important. While the old version had a separate icon for the number of rows and columns to display/export, these functions are now located within the Display Options icon along with the commands for displaying values or percentages.
- **Calculation** is not a new option but is made much easier to manipulate in this version of the software. When calculation is mastered it allows the user to create new rows and columns showing the result of extensive arithmetic computations on other selected rows or columns.
- **Show/Hide** activates a window that displays each row or column header, depending on what was selected, and allows them to easily be selected for inclusion.
- **File** covers the selections that enable you to export the data in PDF or CSV format. It also contains a command that allows you to "Get Data Later" which can allow you to get your rows and columns set exactly as you want them then populate the data area as specified. When transmitting quite a bit of data over a phone line, this can be a very useful tool.

We should note that many of the functions performed by the toolbar icons can also be executed by right-clicking on a row or column header. They may be easier when the icon is used as there is less chance of inadvertently selecting a row or column as the only data to be displayed.

Other Benefits

One of the best things about the new version of the software is that it caused Bob Platt, N-AM, to create a rather extensive set of PowerPoint presentations on using the software. Unlike a textbook, these presentations select some of the more common database inquiries that are being made and take you through getting to the desired results step-by-step. Following some of these presentations are practical ways that many of the features of the software can be exploited to make your jobs easier. Topics such as using the Awards cube to find out which awards have been given to a member or which members have received a particular award – and when – are covered. There are many such queries defined which takes you through a wide range of use of the tools available. The presentation on How to Display Instructor and Aide Hours on MT and PE Missions, for instance, includes examples on the use of Show/Hide, Sort and Calculation operations.

These presentations have been converted to the Flash format and can be viewed via the Chief Director's website. Oddly they are accessed via the FAQ link in the AuxData section but they are well worth the viewing time.

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