

FAD e-News

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Volume 1, Issue 7

An electronic newsletter for users of Harvard University financial systems, policies, and procedures.

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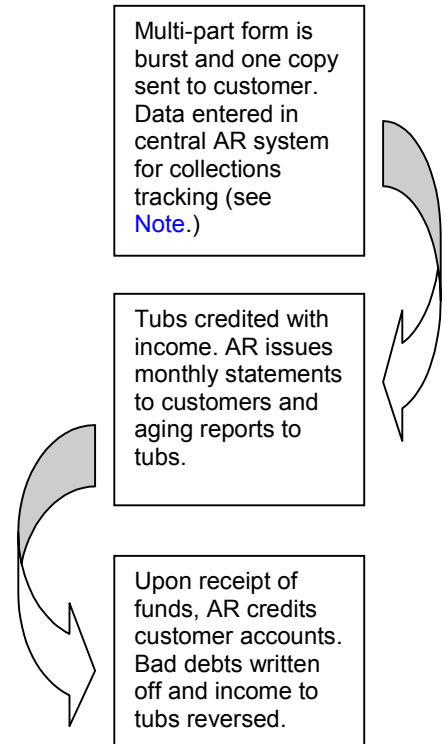
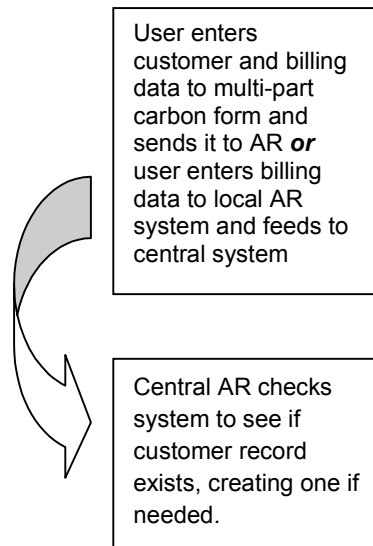
Accounts Receivable Project Advances [Back](#)

As discussed in earlier issues, the project to implement Oracle Accounts Receivable at Harvard is in full swing and on target for go-live in January.

This project is likely to affect you if you:

- ✓ bill customers or institutions outside of Harvard;
- ✓ prepare invoices and send them to central Accounts Receivable for processing and mailing to customers;
- ✓ own or use a local receivables system that “feeds” central Accounts Receivable.

Here’s how the business process works now:



Note: This process step is slightly different for feeder systems, which flow data into the AR system in an automated fashion. Invoices are then printed and sent to customers by central AR.

How will the new process work?

Step One: For go-live, recent or “outstanding balance” customers will already be in the system. Setup of new customers can be requested from the AR Customer Hotline (like the AP Vendor Hotline).

Step Two: Billing data will be entered to the system in one of three ways:

- from existing feeder systems;
- direct entry to Oracle AR by departments; or
- filling out an Excel-based form and sending to central AR for

entry to Oracle (departments with <10 invoices per month).

When AR transactions are posted, departments will provisionally receive the associated revenue.

Step Three: Invoices and monthly statements will be printed and mailed to customers by AR. AR will also apply payments received.

Step Four: Using data available through online inquiry in the AR system and ten reports available on demand in the Harvard Data Warehouse (HUDINI vs. AWS2 to be determined), departments will manage their own collections and receivables.

Benefits of this new process include elimination of some duplicated data entry between central AR and local units, local access to collections data through Oracle AR (online and in real time), and a much better range of reports. Departments will also be able to recognize these revenue transactions at the full 33-digit level of detail.

The project will have as its by-product other improvements that will reduce Harvard's business risk, such as a long-overdue cleanup of the customer file, writing off uncollectibles, and bringing the process under the Oracle "umbrella."

What can you expect over the next six months? Here's a month-by-month timeline:

August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrap up of business process and policy design • Training scope and strategy determined based in part on user learning needs survey • Technical work to get system,
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	<p>reports, and data conversion processes ready</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of local feeder systems begins
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New business policies presented to Financial Deans for signoff • User data collection begins • Development and testing of local feeder systems completed • AR system ready for testing • Training development begins
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release 11 of Oracle financials (must be implemented for AR project to proceed) • AR system testing • Local business processes determined
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training pilots conducted • Users set up in system • System testing completed
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central AR staff and key users trained • Legacy customer data converted • Final version of system software installed and configured
January - February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go-live (January) • User training • System stabilization

Still need more information about how the project will affect your office or department?

Below is a list of local unit representatives on the project team whom you can contact to find out more details.

If your school or department is not represented below and you need information about the project, or you wish to sign up for an AR e-mail distribution list to be kept informed going forward, please contact Lisa Malkasian, AR project leader, at:

lisa_malkasian@harvard.edu

AR PROJECT LOCAL UNIT REPRESENTATIVES	
OSR	Andrew Kim Margaret Carayannopoulos Gwen Miner (OTTL)
Harvard Medical School	Sharon Reine Mike Harty
Faculty Club	Kevin Cullen
UIS	Dave Murphy
UOS	David Kirby
Harvard College Library	Ellen Cohen
Benefits (Retiree Direct Billing)	Irina Josefson Rosemary Rudnicki
Faculty of Arts & Sciences	Gail Pisapio Martha Homer Helen Flagg (OEB) Irene Coyle Cristina Brigham Charles Smith Larry Knowles (CFA) Andrew Kalford (Media Services) Lisa Ball

	Heather Connery (Chemistry) Robert Schiller (MCB)
UHS	Mac Howland
HUAM	Marsy Sumner

LAST CALL: If you will be a central or local user of the AR system, please take a few minutes to tell us about your learning needs and preferences:
http://www.zoomerang.com/survey_zqi?735DYB3M64TE4QV1MCNQA8WW

Preventing Performance Problems

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Harvard's new financial systems have made our reliance on technology greater than ever.

Some users have experienced system performance problems (in particular, slowness) since go-live. Calls to the Helpdesk to report these kinds of problems are encouraged and investigated.

Problems can occur anywhere in the technology "stack" – the layers of technology that get data from our personal computers to Harvard's enterprise financial systems.

The "Stack"	Personal computers	↓
	Local area networks	
	University network	
	Internet	
	University servers	
	Enterprise financial systems	

When you call a Helpdesk (either central or local), the analyst will ask you questions to try to figure out where the problem is in the stack – usually through a process of

elimination – so that she can refer the call correctly.

Root causes, level of business interruption, and problem fixes will be very different depending on the location of the problem.

While problems in the layers of the stack from your LAN to central financial systems are probably out of your control, there are some things you can do to improve the performance of your personal computer.

1. Make sure you don't have a lot of different applications open. Keep in mind that running multiple applications at the same time will negatively affect the performance of your system. If you are using Oracle applications, it is recommended to open them *before* opening any other desktop application such as Eudora or Meeting Maker. Oracle applications require significant memory resources. By opening them first, your system can allocate enough system memory to them.
2. Meeting Maker and Eudora require a lot of system memory to run. When using Eudora it is best to keep the messages in your "in" and "out" boxes to a minimum and to empty your trash periodically. If you have messages that you would like to save, create a new mailbox and transfer the messages you want to save into this mailbox. To create a new mailbox select **Mailbox --> New...** from the Eudora main menu.
3. If you are using a web-based application like Web Voucher or STAR, remember to clear your browser's cache every 7-10 days (depending on usage). The cache holds the contents of all the web pages that you visit during a session, and so can get full quickly. A substantial

improvement in Web Voucher performance can sometimes be realized by clearing the cache. Below are the steps to clear your Netscape cache:

Open the **Edit** menu and select **Preferences**.

Click the Advanced category and select Cache.

Click the Clear Disk Cache button and the Clear Memory Cache button.

Click OK.

Reminders Regarding July Financial Transactions and Reporting

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The FY00 year-end balance forward process, as well as the FY01 Treasurer's Distribution process, were run during the week of August 7. The transactions generated by these processes are now available in the HDW.

Since the FY00 balance forward process is complete, financial reports that include beginning balances will now properly reflect them.

In particular, please note that the Detail Listing will now include the beginning balance as a July 1st line item. As such, the beginning balance will be included in any Detail Listing output that is run for a period beginning with a July 1 date. These periods include: Prior Fiscal Year, Current Fiscal Year to Date, Current Fiscal Year Thru Last Closed Month, and Other Specified Period when July 1 is the start date.

Release 11 Training Needs Assessment

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What is the range and frequency of the different tasks you perform in Harvard's financial systems? How easy or difficult do you find these tasks? How do you prefer to receive information about changes in Harvard's financial systems, processes, and procedures? Do you have any unmet training needs?

Release 11 of the Oracle financials this fall lets us revisit these questions, which were initially posed to a group of 125 end users during a training needs assessment conducted at the beginning of Project ADAPT.

The answers drive what gets documented in ABLE, what gets covered in new hire training, and how continuing education is delivered to current users.

To help us understand more about your work and learning preferences, please complete the web-based survey at:

<http://www.zoomerang.com/survey.zqi?4B7J68D8H2GJCC50HJTBKF5S>

The survey has twenty questions (less if you don't use some systems) and should take about fifteen minutes to complete.

All users of the fiscal and sponsored budget tools, AWS2, HUDINI, General Ledger, InfoMaker, the PCard settlement system, STAR, and Web Voucher are asked to respond by August 31st.

All survey respondents will be eligible to win a prize, as described on the survey's home page. Thanks in advance for your participation!

Other training news

The FAD Training web site is up and running. It has course descriptions and dates, local registration contacts, directions to our training facilities, and a site map for ABLE.

Click on our link at the bottom of the Financial Applications page:

<http://vpf-web.harvard.edu/applications/>

or go directly to our site at:

<http://vpf-web.harvard.edu/training/>

As always, your feedback on our site, ABLE, or training courses is welcome at:

fad_training@harvard.edu

STAR Blackout Period Announced

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As you may be aware, there have been several production issues with the STAR system. A system upgrade is needed in order to correct these problems. Therefore, **STAR will be shut down at 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 16 and will be available again on Monday, August 21. No transactions will be processed during this time.**

If you have questions, call your local STAR administrator or Priscilla Campbell, Director of Travel, at 6-4599.

About This e-News

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Here at FAD e-News central, we have received a number of questions about the newsletter itself that seem to be of general interest.

1. How can I get back issues of the FAD e-News? I think I missed a few.

The current and back issues are available at:

<http://vpf-web.harvard.edu/training/enews.html>

There is also an index available if you remember the topic but not the issue or page number. We publish on or about the 12th and 26th of each month. Unlike the nice people in Payroll, if these dates fall on a weekend, we'll publish later.

Anyone with an Internet connection, a browser, and version 4.0 or higher of Adobe Acrobat Reader can read the e-News.

2. How do I get **off** the distribution list? (Or: How do I get **on** the distribution list?)

A notification e-mail is sent out when each issue is published. It goes to two electronic mailing lists ("listprocs"): one for all users of the online transaction processing (OLTP) systems, and one for users of the HDW only. Duplicates within and between these lists are eliminated – but if you have two aliases or e-mail addresses, you'll probably get two announcements. Other duplicates can be reported to us.

Because of their size (there are about 4,000+ users), the listprocs are maintained in an automated fashion via a query that draws data from the Harvard Data Warehouse of all registered users. The lists are refreshed semi-monthly.

The only way to get off the listproc is to have your access to University financial systems disabled. The only way to get on is to have your access to University financial systems activated. To do either, contact your local security administrator.

Our rationale? If you are an active user, we need a way to communicate with you about system updates, outages, as well as changes in business policies and processes that you should know about.

You will be sent an e-mail twice a month when we publish and the listproc may be used on rare occasions for emergency announcements.

We hope you find it a useful reminder, but if you don't please just delete the e-mail.

3. I use STAR and PCard but I don't get a reminder e-mail. Why not?

User data for these systems is managed in modules of the systems themselves and is not in the HDW. Therefore, we can't get at it with a query. So STAR- and PCard-only users won't get a reminder e-mail.

4. Why couldn't I read the information contained in boxes in the last issue?

About twenty-five readers reported this kind of problem. In some quick tests, we confirmed that the newsletter works perfectly from either a Mac or a PC with Adobe Acrobat Reader 4.0 or higher and sufficient memory (sometimes improved by clearing your browser's cache or rebooting).

We reproduced the problem with machines equipped with Acrobat Reader 2.0 and 3.0, so we are recommending an upgrade.

Please contact your local desktop support organization for an upgrade.

We have put up a hotlink on the FAD e-News home page to the Adobe Acrobat site, so users who do not have desktop support can download and install the Acrobat Reader plug-in themselves.

An upgrade should allow you to read the FAD e-News and to download forms from both ABLE and the VPF web site.

5. What's up with the 3-column format? The scrolling is making me dizzy.

The e-News started as a very traditional paper-based newsletter, intended for photoduplicating and distribution via local financial offices.

It is morphing into an online publication. The three columns, which worked so well for hard copy, are now driving online readers nuts.

We're thinking about the tradeoffs and a possible redesign.

Please send comments, questions, or suggestions for improvement by e-mail to us at:

fad_communications@harvard.edu

If of general interest, we will attempt to answer your questions about University financial systems, policies, or procedures in future editions.