

Centralizing the Mink Survey at the National Agricultural Statistics Service

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The Ghost of CASIC Past - Dissemination



- Menu System
 - VB 6
 - Numerous .exe files (12 frequently used)
 - LAN updates required in each Field Office
- Decentralized Blaise
 - Blaise 4.80
 - Up to 43 Blaise datasets for a survey
 - No national-level survey administration tools

The Ghost of CASIC Past – Dissemination (cont.)

- Six Data Collection Centers
 - Calling is more centralized, but Blaise datasets are still disseminated
 - Continuous physical movement of Blaise datasets to and from Data Collection Centers
 - Still no national reports



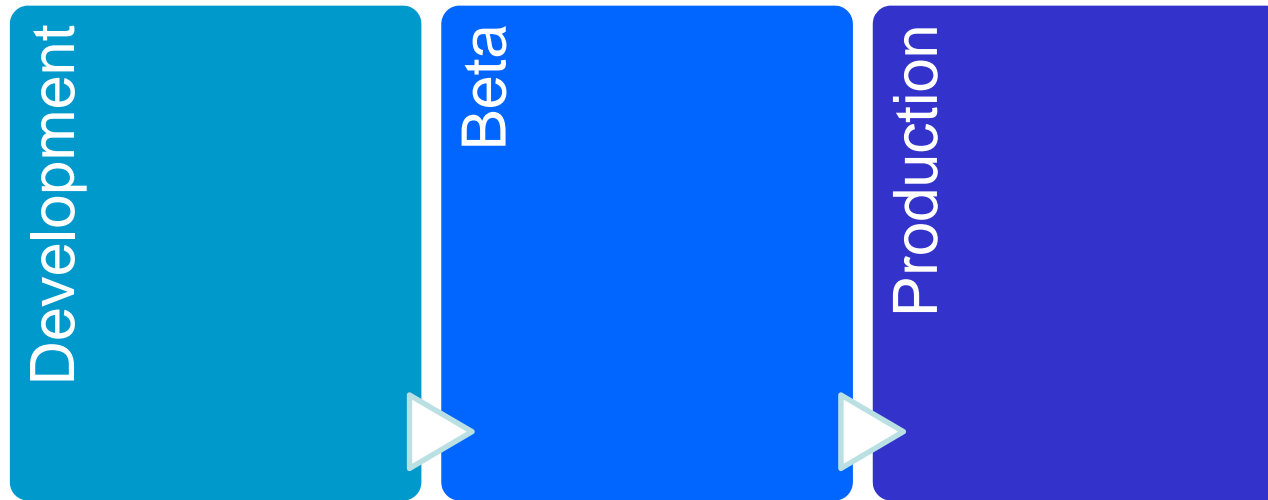
The Ghost of CASIC Present - Centralization



- April 2010 – Mink Survey Conducted
 - All data collected and edited in Blaise in two states (Utah & Wisconsin)
 - Small sample size (415)
 - Longer data collection window
 - Used Blaise 4.82 build 1529



Platforms



MySQL Database

- Central database in MySQL
- Generic .BOI files used
- In-depth data partition type
- Versioning was turned on



CASIC Menu

- Visual Basic .NET
 - One set of source code
 - Can be updated without LAN Updates
- WEB-enabled
- Dynamic - based on user's role and state's responsibilities
- Reads the Windows AD table



Client Requirements

- .NET Framework had to be installed
- MySQL Driver had to be installed
- ODBC System data sources had to be set up to provide connection info to MySQL
- Eight Blaise .DLL's had to be registered
- All of this was pushed out prior to the survey



CASIC Tables

- MySQL tables in addition to the 8 generic tables created by Blaise
 - CASIC_SurveyInfo
 - CASIC_FAT
 - CASIC_Management



CASIC_SurveyInfo

- Critical info about each survey
- Survey code, year, month, and day
- Instrument name, data collection dates
- Survey type and other indicators to aid in managing the survey
- Allows selective display of surveys based on user and date
- Info used by the survey menu



CASIC_FAT

- FIPS Assignment Table
- Controls who sees which surveys as well as certain areas of the menus, based on their role
 - Responsible for data collection
 - Responsible for editing
 - State which “owns” the data



CASIC_Management

- Fields within the instrument that will be used to filter or sort the dataset in Manipula or the Data Center
 - DCCFips, ECFips, FOFips, Batch, ProcessSwitch, State, and County
- All fields are indexed



Issues Encountered CATI Service Errors

- Large number of CATI Service Errors
 - Initially solved by downing the service
 - After communicating with our database experts and members of the Blaise Team at Stat Neth, we changed some ODBC settings
 - Also got a new version of Blaise
 - This drastically reduced the number of CATI Service errors



Issues Encountered Performance

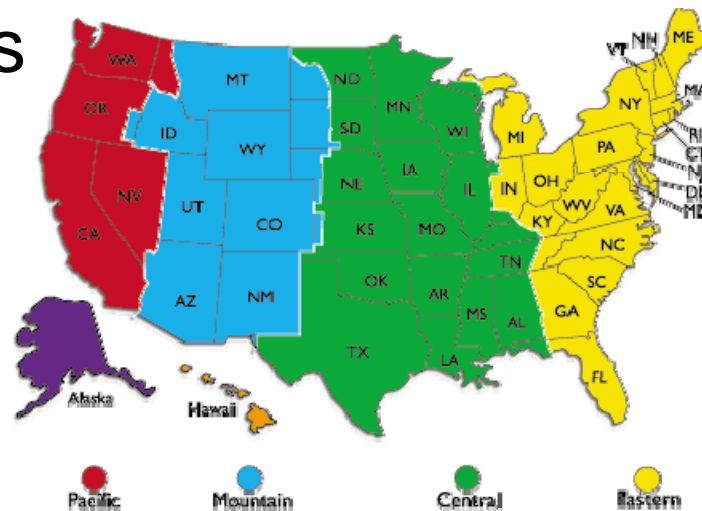
- Performance did not start out as ideal
 - Originally, Blaise software was accessed from the central application server
 - Part way through, we began accessing it from the local FO LAN.
 - Changing the location and the updated version both helped with the performance.



Issues Encountered

Time Zones

- The central database is physically located in the Eastern Time Zone
 - Therefore, the “home” time zone for all states is Eastern Time Zone
 - All states will use the same time zone differentials



Conversion Schedule

- Beginning in November 2010 with one survey
- Continue adding surveys through December 2012



The Ghost of CASIC Yet to Come



- Citrix
 - All Virtual Workstations by summer of 2011
 - Eliminates the need for specialized workstation installs (DLLs, NET framework)
- No Versioning to keep the database smaller
 - ETL to store all iterations of the data
- Insure proper system failover is in place

The Ghost of CASIC Yet to Come (cont.)

- ETL process to pull data from MySQL database to Work In Progress (WIP) database
- UDL file to accommodate the requirement of the password changing every 30 days
- The use of CRON jobs to do some of the processing overnight
- One .BTR file versus multiple .BTR files



Conclusion



- Centralization is moving forward
- National-Level Reports
- Other systems are centralizing
- Operational Efficiency is key



Questions

