

## **DMLSS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS PART 1**

### **Q1: What is the status of DMLSS Release 2.0 testing?**

Release 2.0 is in the final stages of testing. Since March 99, seven MTFs (Camp Lejeune, Fort Belvoir, Andrews AFB, Fort Knox, Lackland AFB, Great Lakes Naval Air Station, and Yokota Air Base) have received DMLSS Release 2.0. As test sites, all seven have provided valuable feedback that that is being used to improve the actual software, training process and deployment process.

### **Q2: What's the next step after testing?**

After testing is complete, an evaluation period begins. An independent group of evaluators (DoD Operational Test and Evaluation (OT&E) group) will evaluate all aspects of the DMLSS system including hardware, software, deployment process, training, and degree of system use by test site personnel. They will then produce a report detailing their findings. If they determine that all aspects of the system are satisfactory, DMLSS Release 2.0 will be approved for worldwide deployment. If significant deficiencies are found, these will need to be corrected before worldwide deployment can be authorized.

### **Q3: We currently have DMLSS Release 1.02. When can we expect to receive DMLSS Release 2.0?**

Assuming the evaluators find no deficiencies, worldwide deployment approval is anticipated in early CY 2000. Deployment will begin immediately thereafter. The Air Force goal is to complete all deployments by 30 Sep 2001. The exact deployment schedule is under development and will be determined by HQ AFMSA/SGSL. The OPRs for the AF deployment schedule are Capt Al Manda and Mr. Steve Stiles. They can be reached at DSN 240-4126 or DSN 240-4132, respectively, or the following email addresses: [steve.stiles@usafsg.brooks.af.mil](mailto:steve.stiles@usafsg.brooks.af.mil) and [al.manda@usafsg.brooks.af.mil](mailto:al.manda@usafsg.brooks.af.mil).

### **Q4: We currently do not have any version of DMLSS. When can we expect to see Release 2.0?**

When the first release of DMLSS was approved for deployment in November 1996, there was insufficient funding to deploy to every DoD MTF. A priority list was developed which ranked MTFs according to a number of factors the most important of which was materiel sales. A total of 111 sites (48 Air Force) met the cut-off and received the first DMLSS release between Nov 96 and Jul 98. These same MTFs will receive DMLSS Release 2.0. In accordance with the DMLSS long range plan, the remaining Air Force MTFs that do not yet have DMLSS are slated to receive it at the end of Release 3.0

deployment. Since Release 3.0 will not be completed until the 2001/2002 timeframe, and it will take approximately 24 months to deploy it, these sites will not see DMLSS for several more years. However, there is an initiative underway that may allow DMLSS to be deployed to these sites much sooner. This initiative involves re-configuring the DMLSS software to operate on an NT instead of a UNIX server. The NT server has already proven viable in limited testing related to the Prime Vendor Interface. However, the testing still needs to be expanded to include the full DMLSS software. At this time, there is no estimated completion date for this initiative.

**Q5: There are a number of new applications and modules in DMLSS Release 2.0. What are they?**

- 1) System Services (SS) Application – Encompasses all of the modules that serve more than one DMLSS application or the entire system, e.g., MTF/Org, Table Maintenance Utility, User Privileges, Funds Management, End-of-Period Processing, Archive Utility, and Communications Management.
- 2) Customer Area Inventory Management (CAIM) Application – Allows medical materiel to be tracked within an individual customer area (for example, the dental clinic), and provides a more efficient barcode capability than that found in the SIFA (Stock in Forward Areas) system.
- 3) Drawing Management Module/Drawbase – Links DMLSS-FM data to electronic Drawbase drawings. (This is part of the Facility Management application.)
- 4) Regulatory Compliance/Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (RC/JCAHO) Module – Allows recurring requirements like inspections, drills, certifications, exercises, meetings, assessments, and training to be scheduled and managed. (This is part of the Facility Management application.)

**Q6: Is there anything else new in Release 2.0?**

Yes. Release 2.0 includes numerous changes and upgrades to the Release 1.02 functionality. These include:

- 1) Prime Vendor Interface (PVI) – Uses electronic data interchange to send orders to and receive order confirmations from Prime Vendors. (The Release 2.0 PVI is an upgrade to the Release 1.02 PVI, which is a stand-alone (non-networked), Disk Operating System (DOS)-based application.)
- 2) Customer Support (CS) - Allows medical logistics customers to research and order supplies and to submit work requests to facility management. (CS is an upgrade to the Release 1.02 Forward Customer Support application; however, the work request portion of CS is considered *new* functionality.)
- 3) Facility Management -- Release 2.0 includes numerous changes to the existing FM functionality. These changes include both new features and modifications to correct problems (bugs). The following is a partial list of some of the most important changes included in the Release 2.0 FM application: a) Cost amounts can be entered

in dollars and cents. In Release 1.02, all cost amounts were rounded to the nearest dollar. b) Both the estimate and/or actual cost of a work request can be zero. In Release 1.02, both the estimate and actual cost of a work request had to be greater than zero. d) A new form entitled "Unscheduled Work Request Form" is accessible from the toolbar in the Work Request module. In Release 1.02, you had to use the Documents Utility to print a form for an unscheduled work request. d) Four local use fields are now part of the Room Inventory record. In Release 1.02, there were no local use fields. e) Mandatory fields are denoted with a red dot. In Release 1.02, mandatory fields are denoted with a red field label. f) Closed work requests can be automatically archived. In Release 1.02, work requests had to be archived one at a time. g) Selected records can be unarchived. There was no unarchive capability in Release 1.02. h) The plant replacement value (PRV) for a facility is automatically calculated. In Release 1.02, PRV had to be entered manually.

4) Business Objects -- The commercial-off-the-shelf, ad hoc reporting tool integrated into DMLSS has been upgraded from version 3.1 to 4.1. Business Objects 4.1 is more powerful and easier to use than version 3.1.

**Q7: I keep hearing about Release 1.03. What is this?**

Release 1.03 is a subset of the DMLSS Release 2.0 software. It includes System Services, parts of CAIM (MTF Catalog record and Source of Supply record), PVI, FM (except for Drawbase and RC/JCAHO), and CS (except for CS Work Request). The exact configuration of Release 1.03 depends on whether the MTF had DMLSS 1.02 first. In its simplest form, Release 1.03 is essentially a replacement of the DOS-based, stand-alone PVI in use today. (See **Q14** for more information.)

**Q8: Does Release 1.03 include any changes to the FM application?**

Yes. Release 1.03 includes numerous changes to FM, but only those portions of FM that were part of Release 1.02. (See **Q6** for a partial list of FM changes included in Release 1.03.) Release 1.03 does *not* include the *new* modules within the FM application, i.e., Drawing Management/Drawbase and RC/JCAHO. An MTF that receives Release 1.03 will *not* be able to utilize these two modules. In addition, an MTF that receives Release 1.03 will *not* be able to utilize the Customer Support Work Request module (that portion of the Customer Support application that allows customers to submit work requests directly to FM and receive status updates back from FM). Drawing Management/Drawbase, RC/JCAHO and the CS Work Request module will be turned on when Release 2.0 is deployed.

**Q9: Will all MTFs receive Release 1.03 before they receive Release 2.0?**

Possibly. At this time, the deployment of Release 1.03 to Air Force MTFs is being driven primarily by the changeover of Prime Vendor contracts. If an MTF is scheduled to get a new Prime Vendor contractor prior to the date it is scheduled to receive DMLSS Release 2.0, then that MTF will definitely receive DMLSS Release 1.03 first. Depending

on the success of the Release 1.03 deployments at the first few MTFs, other MTFs may be scheduled to receive it, even if they are not changing Prime Vendor contractors.

**Q10: Which AF MTFs have DMLSS Release 1.03?**

As of 30 Nov 99, Seymour Johnson AFB, Little Rock AFB and the AF Academy are using Release 1.03 on a DG8500 server, and Pope AFB and Bolling AFB are using Release 1.03 (PVI only) on an NT server. Release 1.03 will be deployed to the following sites in the near future:

DG Server: Peterson, FE Warren, Cannon, Hill, Kirtland, Mountain Home, and Holloman.

NT Server: Buckley

**Q11: Why is the Prime Vendor Interface the focus of Release 1.03?**

Over the past few years, DoD MTFs have been transitioning to the “Just-in-Time” inventory method. As a result, DoD MTFs no longer stock weeks and months worth of medical supplies in their warehouses. Instead, they stock only a few days worth of supplies. Using the PVI, they order supplies on a daily basis, directly from their Prime Vendor, who, in turn, delivers supplies usually once a day. Without a large inventory in reserve, MTFs must have a very reliable process in place for ordering and receiving order confirmations from their Prime Vendor. In effect, the PVI has become a mission critical system.

The PVI is the focus of Release 1.03 because the DOS-based PVIs in use today are not 100% reliable. The DOS-based PVIs, while automated, require manual intervention at several points during the process. In addition, only manual error correction capability exists. The DOS-based PVIs are also expensive to maintain and update because each interface is vendor-specific with different hardware and software. In contrast, the PVI in DMLSS Release 1.03/2.0 is designed to require minimal user intervention. Most of the work occurs automatically on the server side of the application. PVI interfaces with the DMLSS Communications Management (DCM) system, which maps requisition and acknowledgment data and transmits requisitions and acknowledgments between PVI and prime vendors (PVs) using an electronic data interchange (EDI) format. In addition to these automatic enhancements, the client/server PVI enables users to correct errors and to generate and print reports. Finally, since the new PVI is standardized, the high cost of custom-coding each individual PVI will be eliminated.

In the next year, many of the Prime Vendor contracts are scheduled to change contractors. Since each contract change involves many sites changing over on the same day, it would be nearly impossible to have every site’s PVI, each of which has a unique DOS-based interface that would have to be re-programmed manually, ready in time. Since the PVI in DMLSS Release 2.0 incorporates a standardized interface, it makes

sense to convert MTFs to the new DMLSS PVI as their Prime Vendor contractor changes.

**Q12: If Release 1.03 is really the Release 2.0 software, why not just turn on all the modules at the same time?**

There are several reasons. First, none of the new functionality in DMLSS can be released until worldwide deployment authority is received from the DoD Operational Test and Evaluation group. Since all functionality in Release 1.03 is considered an upgrade to Release 1.02 functionality, there is no restriction on its deployment. Second, it takes about 3 days to deploy the 1.03 version of the software compared to 3 weeks for the 2.0 version. Since the new PVI is needed now and it can be deployed relatively quickly, a decision was made to deploy the new PVI in the form of Release 1.03. Third, the DG server that is used for Release 1.03 cannot support the CAIM module.

**Q13: Why the difference in the deployment time?**

There are two primary reasons for the difference in deployment time. First, for those MTFs that already have DMLSS, Release 2.0 involves deployment of a new HP 9000 UNIX server while Release 1.03 is installed on the existing DG8500 UNIX server currently used for Release 1.02. Second, Release 2.0 involves training on multiple applications, two of which require training of MTF customers, while Release 1.03 involves training of only those few individuals who are responsible for PVI orders and confirmations. (The FM changes do not require formal training. For those using DMLSS-FM Release 1.02 on a regular basis, the changes are intuitive.) The bottom line is Release 1.03 can be deployed to approximately 3 MTFs in the time it would take to deploy Release 2.0 to one site. This makes it possible to deploy Release 1.03 to all of the MTFs within a given Prime Vendor region when that PVI contract changes hands

**Q14: We do not currently have any version of DMLSS. What happens when we get our new Prime Vendor contractor?**

You will probably receive DMLSS Release 1.03, but your version of 1.03 will differ slightly from that of the MTFs that had Release 1.02 before they got 1.03. First, you will receive the software on a Windows NT server instead of a DG8500 server. (Release 1.03 is loaded on the existing DG 8500 server for those MTFs that already have DMLSS.) Second, your version of 1.03 will *not* contain *any* FM functionality. The reason for this is that the NT server has not yet been fully tested with both the PVI and FM applications running at the same time. The bottom line is that for your MTF, Release 1.03 would simply be a replacement for the DOS-based PVI.

## **DMLSS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS PART 2**

### **Q1: Does DMLSS-FM still require the Windows 3.11 operating system to run?**

No. This problem was resolved one year ago. DMLSS Maintenance Release 1.02 was approved for deployment on 27 Oct 98. Site servers were upgraded between 28 Oct - 2 Nov 98 and the new DMLSS software (on CD-ROM) was shipped to each MTF between 30 Oct - 2 Nov 1998. DMLSS Release 1.02 allowed the *FM* application to be run on a PC with the Windows 95, 98 or NT operating system.

### **Q2: There seem to be so many organizations involved with DMLSS. Who are the organizations and what role do they play?**

You are right. There are quite a few organizations involved with DMLSS. Here's a quick review:

**DMLSS-PMO** – DMLSS Program Management Office. The DMLSS PMO, which is located at the Skyline Office Complex in Falls Church, VA, is part of the Tricare Management Activity. COL Dan Magee, an Army Medical Service Corps officer, is the Director of the DMLSS PMO. He and his staff, who work for DoD Health Affairs, are responsible for program oversight, program budgeting and funding, contracting, and deployment planning.

**JMLFDC** – Joint Medical Logistics Functional Development Center. JMLFDC, located at Fort Detrick, in Frederick, MD, is a tri-service organization consisting of active duty military, civil service, and contractor personnel. At JMLFDC, which falls directly under the DMLSS PMO, the functional representatives write the requirements for the software, and the technical developers (software engineers) write software code to meet the requirements. Col Skip Bonham (AF Medical Service Corps officer) is the Director of JMLFDC. Lt Col Steve Drinan is the AF Senior Service Representative to the DMLSS program. He works directly for Col Jim Moreland, Chief, Medical Logistics Division, HQ AFMSA/SGSL, Brooks AFB, TX. Lt Col Drinan can be reached at DSN 343-3941.

**EDS and IBM** – EDS and IBM are the two lead technical contractors on the DMLSS project. They supply all of the software developers who write the software code and design the screens that you see when you operate the application.

**DMLSS Deployment Team** – The DMLSS deployment team is part of the Medical Logistics Division, HQ AFMSA/SGSL, Brooks AFB, TX. The team currently consists of three active duty enlisted personnel and three contractors. All are experienced in medical logistics operations in the Air Force. Members of the deployment team report through Capt Manda to Lt Col Erickson and Col Moreland. They are responsible for the installation and training of the DMLSS system at Air Force MTFs.

**TMSSC** - Tri-Service Medical Systems Support Center. TMSSC, located at Brooks AFB, TX, is a contracted Help Desk organization. They handle trouble calls on DMLSS as well as all other DoD medical systems. To report a problem with DMLSS call 1-800-600-9332 (CONUS) or Access + (800) 981-5339 (OCONUS).

**AFMLO** – Air Force Medical Logistics Office. AFMLO, located at Fort Detrick in Frederick, MD, provides functional support to the DMLSS program and serves as a liaison between the DMLSS program and Air Force MTFs. The Air Force Prime Vendor Representative is Maj Gil Weston. He can be reached at DSN 343-4168. The Facilities Management Support Team, led by Maj Richard Hart, teaches the DMLSS-FM course at Sheppard AFB and provides support to MTFs as required. Maj Hart can be reached at DSN 343-4081.

**SSG** – Standard Systems Group. SSG, located at Gunter Annex, Maxwell AFB, AL, is responsible for development, testing and support of many Air Force-specific information systems. MEDLOG is one of many systems developed and maintained by SSG. With respect to DMLSS, the MEDLOG team is responsible for developing interfaces between MEDLOG and DMLSS Release 2.0 and maintaining an interface with DMLSS Assembly Management.

## **DMLSS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS PART 3**

### **Q1: When we try to logon to DMLSS, we get a network connection error message. What should we do?**

Whenever you have a problem with DMLSS, the first thing you should do is report it to your local DMLSS System Administrator (SA). Usually, this role is assigned to someone who works in Medical Materiel, but in a few cases, this role has been assigned to someone in the Medical Systems organization. If the DMLSS SA cannot resolve the problem, he/she should call the problem into TMSSC at 1-800-600-9332 (CONUS) or Access + (800) 981-5339 (OCONUS).

### **Q2: What is TMSSC?**

TMSSC is the acronym for "Tri-Service Medical Systems Support Center" and is located at Brooks AFB, TX. TMSSC Help Desk is a fee-for service operation providing seamless Tier I/II/III application, system support services and hardware maintenance utilizing over 120 application and technical specialists. Systems supported include DMLSS, CHCS, DBSS, NMIS, SNPMIS, DOHRS, CCEP, ADS, PHCA, to name a few. TMSSC support hours for DMLSS are 0500-2000 CST, however a customer service representative will be available to take your call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

### **Q3: How does TMSSC handle problems?**

TMSSC will open a "trouble ticket" on your problem in "Remedy" (a database of all trouble and help calls related to DMLSS and other DoD medical systems). By using Remedy, your problem will be tracked until it is solved. The TMSSC help desk personnel can resolve most problems on their own. But if they can't resolve the problem, they will consult the appropriate functional or technical expert. Regardless, your trouble ticket will stay open until the problem has been resolved.

### **Q4: I work in Facility Management. Can I call problems directly into TMSSC?**

It depends. TMSSC is set up to receive calls from any user. But, each MTF usually has a process for reporting and elevating problems related to medical systems. Check with your DMLSS SA and/or your Medical Systems Office to find out what the approved process is. In most cases, you should always inform your DMLSS SA before calling TMSSC. One reason is that in many cases, the DMLSS SA can resolve the problem locally. A second reason is that the DMLSS SA may have already called in the problem. If you and five other DMLSS users from your MTF all call the same problem into TMSSC, it ties up the help desk personnel with creating multiple tickets on a redundant problem. Minimizing the number of redundant problems called into TMSSC helps TMSSC personnel provide better service on those problems that really do require their assistance. As you gain more experience with the DMLSS-FM system your DMLSS SA may authorize you to call TMSSC directly on those problems you are certain are related

to the FM software and have nothing to do with the local network or DMLSS server. Still, you should always keep your DMLSS SA in the loop. Let him know the date/time you called, the nature of the problem and the TMSSC ticket number. A quick phone call or email is all it takes.

**Q5: Does TMSSC have a web site?**

Yes. The address is [www.tmssc.brooks.af.mil](http://www.tmssc.brooks.af.mil).

**Q6: It seems inefficient to call an organization at Brooks AFB to get help with a problem we are having 2000 miles away.**

In most cases, the process is very efficient. Help desk personnel are experienced in resolving many different types of problems. Often, they have received several calls on the same problem. This experience helps them resolve your problems more quickly. They also have access to a number of troubleshooting resources, including EDS and IBM technical personnel, JMLFDC functional personnel, and a database of previous problems along with the steps taken to resolve them. Another advantage TMSSC offers is long-term tracking and trending of problems. All problems called into TMSSC get added to the historical database of issues related to DMLSS. This historical information provides critical feedback on the system and helps the functional and technical developers determine what changes need to be made in the future. It also helps them prioritize changes. Another advantage is that open tickets continuously show up on daily and weekly status reports, so it's unlikely that your problem will get inadvertently "dropped" without being worked.

**Q7: Our DMLSS System Administrator (SA) recently PCS'd. Where should our new DMLSS SA go to receive training?**

For those MTFs on DMLSS Release 1.02, a computer-based training (CBT) course can be downloaded from the AFMSA/SGSL home page (<http://sg-www.satx.disa.mil/sgsl/>). Click on the *DMLSS* button, then click on *Downloads*, then click on *Miscellaneous*. Click on "DMLSS System Administration CBT v1.01" at the top of the screen. While this CBT is officially for DMLSS Release 1.01, it still applies for Release 1.02 as there were few changes in the System Administration procedures from 1.01 to 1.02. Once your S.A. has completed the CBT course, he or she should contact TMSSC at 1-800-600-9332 with any specific questions or problems. For those MTFs scheduled to get Release 1.03 in the near future, Release 1.03 deployments will include some training on SA responsibilities. In preparation for Release 2.0, a centralized training session will be held for system administrators whose MTF will be receiving DMLSS 2.0 within a 60-90 day time period. On-site SA training will also be conducted during Release 2.0 deployment.