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Training Management System (TMS) 6.003 Upgrade What's New!

By

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What is TMS?

The Training Management System (TMS) is a Microsoft Access based software application designed to aid Security Assistance Offices (SAO) throughout the world in managing all aspects of their international training program. This application allows the SAO to view their country's Standardized Training List (STL) which identifies the training courses that have been requested or approved. TMS also enables the SAO to look up training courses available to foreign countries in the Military Articles and Services Listing (MASL). The program even allows the SAO to create the Invitational Travel Order (ITO) which authorizes an international military student (IMS) to take part in Security Assistance Training from the United States. DISAM has been the program management office for this application since development began in 1991. To make the program the best it can be by meeting the needs of the user, comply with policy changes, and keep up with advancing technology, TMS is ever evolving. Keeping this goal in mind, DISAM is proud to announce the latest upgrade to TMS, TMS Version 6.003, which will be distributed during the summer of 2003. The remainder of this article is devoted to outlining some of the more noticeable enhancements the user can expect to see in this newest version of TMS.

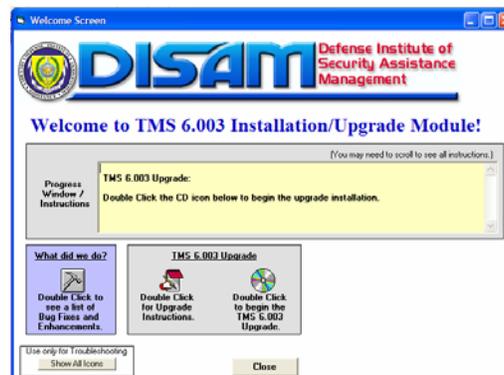


TMS Main Menu

What did we do?

Installation

As many users know, the previous versions of TMS 6 should not be loaded on a Windows NT computer due to problems during installation. TMS can now be installed on Windows NT computers, using the "TMS 6.003 Upgrade & Full Install" CD. DISAM designed a new front end installation screen as well as new installation procedures, just insert the CD



Installation Welcome Screen

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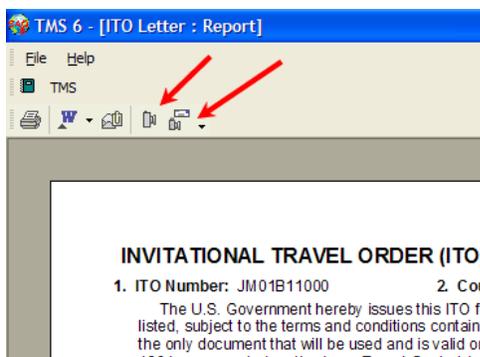
and follow the directions provided on the Welcome Screen that automatically appears. This single CD will accommodate users who are upgrading from a previous version of TMS 6 or doing a Full Installation of TMS 6.003, no matter what operating system they have.

Scrambled ITO

Many times, the SAO needs to forward/e-mail a copy of a student's ITO to the schoolhouse, country program manager, etc. To do this, the ITO is converted from MS Access to MS Word or directly attached to an e-mail message. Often during this conversion process Microsoft Access scrambles the ITO. To avoid this, use Snapshot (a Microsoft Product) to "take a picture" of the ITO and save it on your computer without converting it to MS Word. This method also prevents the receiver from altering the ITO. Here is how it can be done with TMS 6.003.

- Create the "Official ITO" in TMS.
- Instead of clicking the W in the top left corner to send the ITO to MS Word, Click:

- The "Camera" icon
- Microsoft's "Output To" form will appear.
- In the "Save In" block select a folder location.
- In the "File Name" block accept the default name or create a new name.
- Click the "Export" button to save the file to your computer. (Make sure you know the location of where you saved the file AND what the file name is.) The file will be saved to your computer with a .snp extension. The Snapshot Viewer will also appear displaying the ITO. Close the viewer when you are done.
- Attach this file to an e-mail message and send it to the appropriate individual(s).



Save as Snapshot Format:
"Camera" and "Camera w/ Envelope" Icons

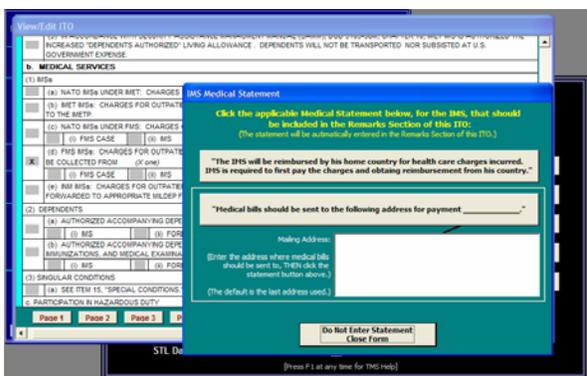
- To automatically attach the ITO (in Snapshot format) to an e-mail message, Click:
 - The "Camera with Envelope" icon
 - An e-mail message form should appear with the ITO already attached as a .snp file.
 - Address the e-mail and send it to the appropriate individual(s).
- Note:
 - The above procedures can be used to create Snapshot files of any report created with TMS.

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- To create Snapshot files, you must have the Report Snapshots program installed on your computer. (This comes with Microsoft Access 97 SR-1, Microsoft Access 2000 and Microsoft Access XP.) [When following the above procedure, if you do not see “Snapshot Format (*.snp)” in the dropdown box for the “Save As Type” block then the Report Snapshots program is not installed on your computer.]
- To view Snapshot files, the user must have the Snapshot Viewer program installed. (This comes with Microsoft Access 97 SR-1, Microsoft Access 2000, and Microsoft Access XP. It can also be downloaded for free from Microsoft’s webpage. The file download for Snapshot Viewer and additional information about Snapshot can be found at the following address:
<http://www.microsoft.com/accessdev/articles/snapshot.htm?gssnb=1>

Policy Change: Medical Care Coverage Statements

One policy change that came about this year is the requirement for proof of coverage for the cost of health care for International Military Students (IMS) and authorized family members (DSCA Policy Memo 02-42). This memo requires that specific Medical Care Coverage statements be added to the Remarks section of the ITO.



Responsibility for health care costs (i.e. the IMET Program, the Student or the Foreign Country) drives what statement(s) should be entered into the ITO Remarks. At the request of several users, we have built these canned statements into TMS. When checking the boxes in section 12.b, Medical Services of

Select Medical Coverage Statement

the ITO, screens will automatically appear allowing the user to select the appropriate medical coverage statement to add to the Remarks section. The goal is to narrow down what medical coverage statements are applicable and eliminate the need for the user to manually type the sometimes lengthy statements.

TMS Lite (Less filling but navigates great!)

TMS Lite is a new feature designed to help novice users or those with small training programs who do not need to access TMS often, but still must use TMS to accomplish their mission. The lite version eliminates the extra/advanced option buttons on the Main Menu and focuses the user on the most



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important functions of TMS. Operations the user must know in order to effectively manage their training program include: Updating the STL, Updating the MASL, viewing the STL, viewing the MASL and creating an ITO. These are the options shown on the TMS Lite Main Menu. Not displaying the advanced/“nice to have” functions (which experienced users desire) should make it easier for the inexperienced user to navigate where they need to go and get done what they need to do. The TMS Lite version is accessed by clicking the “Switch to TMS Lite” button on the main menu. To change back to TMS with full functionality, simply click the button labeled, “Switch to TMS Heavy”.

Other Miscellaneous Fixes and Enhancements

Early versions of TMS 6 had incorrect references to the Fund Cite and Special Remarks block numbers on the ITO. DISAM has corrected this.

DISAM has also created a “Positions of Prominence” report which lists past International Military Students (IMS) who are now holding positions within their country that are considered significantly important. The students are grouped together by their service. This report is separate from the one that appears on the Two Year Training Plan (TYTP) and can be accessed by clicking the “Position of Prominence” button on the Single Country Reports screen.

Several requests from users in the Pacific Command led to the development of another new report, “Country FMS Training Program (Analysis Codes)” also located on the Single Country Reports screen. This report breaks out the training received under Foreign Military Sales (FMS) by analysis code much like the “IMET Training (AN)” report that already exists. Click the button labeled “FMS Training (AN)”.

User Roles have been established to let TMS know if you are an SAO user or another type of user (i.e. MILDEP, Unified Command etc.). Setting the role to non-SAO allows the user to exit TMS without being asked to upload data to the Security Assistance Network (SAN). Since SAOs are the only ones who should upload information to the SAN; this will prevent non-SAO users from accidentally doing an upload. The User Role setting can be found under the “Tools Menu”.

Bugs and Behind the Scenes

Many other small bug fixes and behind the scenes programming modifications, that the user will not readily see, should enhance the performance and outputs of TMS.

Testing

The first major test of TMS 6.003 came at this year’s three Training Program Management Review (TPMR) conferences. All the Military Departments (MILDEPS) used TMS to conduct line by line reviews of each country’s training program. The system received favorable reviews.

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Following the TPMRs several SAOs were give a beta version of TMS 6.003 to use. DISAM would like to thank the SAO offices in Canada, Croatia, Italy, Japan, Norway, and the Philippines for testing the new software.

The Only Thing Constant is Change

TMS 6.003 is scheduled to be mailed to SAO offices later this summer. This is expected to be the last upgrade to TMS Version 6. The next major release of TMS, planned for October 2004, will be the Defense Security Assistance Management System (DSAMS) version of TMS, TMS 7. (This version is already in development at DISAM!) Stay tuned for more information about TMS 7, which will allow even more data to be shared and transfered between the MILDEPS, SAOs, and International Military Student Offices (IMSO) at the schoolhouses.

About the Author

Mr. Aaron Prince is an instructor at the Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management and has been one of the software programmers for the Training Management System (TMS) since 2001. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Miami University, Oxford OH.