

May 2003

**Re: ISIR Analysis Tool for Windows 2003-2004, Version 1.0**

Dear Users:

Have you ever wondered how effective your institution's verification procedures are in targeting problematic data elements and student's most likely to correct applicant information? A new FSA software product will help any school answer this question. We are pleased to announce the availability of ISIR Analysis Tool for Windows 2003-2004, Version 1.0, formerly the Quality Analysis Tool for Windows. This letter describes the functionality of ISIR Analysis Tool.

The ISIR Analysis Tool is designed to help schools conduct in-depth analysis of applicant populations using data from initial and paid-on ISIR transactions. The analysis will help schools understand the effectiveness of their own institutional verification program or the federal edits, as well as how changes in student-reported data items affect the EFC and Pell Grant eligibility.

Included in this letter are the following items:

- A list of the product enhancements,
- The results gathered from ISIR Analysis Tool benchmark testing, and
- Reminders on how to back up and optimize your ISIR Analysis Tool database.

**How to Get the Software and Documentation**

We are distributing ISIR Analysis Tool via the Internet. You can download the software and the related user documentation from the U.S. Department of Education's Federal Student Aid Download (FSAdownload) Web site located at **FSAdownload.ed.gov**.

Instructions for downloading ISIR Analysis Tool from the FSAdownload Web site are located in the "Installation Instructions" chapter of the *Installation Guide for ISIR Analysis Tool for Windows 2003-2004*.

If you do not have access to the Internet, or you have trouble opening the FSAdownload Web site, contact CPS/WAN Technical Support at **800/330-5947** or by e-mail at **cpswan@ncs.com**.

**Note:** Some organizations restrict their users from downloading from FTP sites. If you have trouble downloading, try again later. If you are still unable to download, contact your technical support staff to ensure that you have full FTP download rights.

### **If You Have Policy and Technical Support Questions**

If you have a Quality Assurance Program policy-related question, you can post an e-mail on the Quality Assurance Program listserv at **qa-team@lists.air-dc.org**. The Performance and Accountability Improvement staff will respond to your message.

**Note:** Make sure you include your telephone number in your message.

If you have questions regarding ISIR Analysis Tool, such as installation issues, software problem resolution, software functionality, and technical assistance, you can call CPS/WAN Technical Support. You can reach them Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. – 7 p.m. (CT), at **800/330-5947**. You can also e-mail inquiries, comments, or suggestions 24 hours a day to **cpswan@ncs.com**. A representative will respond within 24 business hours.

If you have a question about your participation in the Quality Assurance Program or similar issues, we suggest you call or write to your contact person in the Performance and Accountability Improvement Staff at ED. You can reach your regional representative for more information.

<b>Contact</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>E-mail</b>
Holly Langer-Evans	1, 2, 5	617/223-9603	<b>Holly.Langer-Evans@ed.gov</b>
Francine Reeves	3, 4, 6, 7	404/562-6289	<b>Francine.Reeves@ed.gov</b>
Michael Cagle	8, 9, 10	206/615-2586	<b>Michael.Cagle@ed.gov</b>

You can also e-mail inquiries, comments, or suggestions 24 hours a day to **qualityassurance@ed.gov**. A representative will respond within 24 business hours.

*CPS/WAN Technical Support*

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## **ISIR Analysis Tool for Windows, Version 1.0**

The U.S. Department of Education is pleased to announce the release of ISIR Analysis Tool for Windows, Version 1.0 and encourages all schools to consider using it. ISIR Analysis Tool replaces Quality Analysis Tool for Windows.

Instructions on how to download and install the software are located in this letter, as well as in the *Installation Guide for ISIR Analysis Tool for Windows 2003-2004*.

### **Product Features**

ISIR Analysis Tool for Windows 2003-2004 focuses on *initial* and *paid-on* ISIR data. The software compares these two transactions side-by-side to assist you in determining which fields (if any) were corrected. Using EFC ranges and increments of change, you can analyze a specific student population to determine which fields were corrected most often and how those changes affected the students' EFCs.

This gives you key information about your applicant population, and how well your verification program—either school-designed or federally prescribed—is targeting the right students and data elements. If your school does not participate in the QA Program, the data you analyze will show the effect the CPS edits are having on eligibility and awards for students at your school. Schools can also use the data generated from the reports to identify information on the FAFSA that is often misreported and help students and parents better understand how to respond accurately.

Listed below are changes to ISIR Analysis Tool for Windows 2003-2004:

#### ***General***

- Quality Analysis Tool has been renamed the ISIR Analysis Tool, Version 1.0 for 2003-2004.
- The following changes have been implemented in regard to the Verification Tracking Flag:
  - On the List-Verification Selection Flags by Student report, the Y's for CPS Selected are now the actual Tracking Flags that are listed on the ISIR record for both Initial and Paid On. **Note:** The Y's will print in addition to the actual Tracking Flag value.
  - A summary section has been added to the List-Verification Selection Flags by Student report, to give totals of the various priority flags; for example, Total Number of Priority 1, Total Number of Priority 2, etc.
  - A filter has been added in the Print dialog box, to turn off the detail of the List-Verification Selection Flags by Student report and produce only summary numbers.
  - A predefined query is available for the Verification Tracking Flag.

### ***Import***

- The software moves Prior Year User-Defined Queries and Setup forward from QA Tool based on the same parameters that are currently used in the EDEExpress product for Prior Year Imports.
- The software moves Prior Year User Data Setup forward from QA Tool based on the same parameters that are currently used in the EDEExpress product for Prior Year Imports.

### ***Process***

- The software allows schools to set the Initial School Verification Flag field to blank using Global Multiple Entry.
- An additional dialog box appears after the Data Validation process is complete, suggesting to users that they may want to run the Changes to ISIR Fields report (formerly known as the Field Change Report with Corrected Field Counts) as a starting point when using the software.

### ***Print***

- Summary data is included on the List - Verification Selection Criteria by Student and List - Verification Selection Criteria by Code reports. This includes detail on the number of codes applied to the population, the number of students affected, and the corresponding percentages for both.
- The following report names have been changed:
  - Field Change Report with Corrected Field Counts is now called Changes to ISIR Fields
  - Field Range Report with Corrected Field Counts is now called ISIR Changes by Field Increment
  - Corrected Records in Initial EFC Range is now called Changes to ISIR Fields and Pell Eligibility
  - Pell Corrected Records Report is now called to ISIR Changes by Field Increment and Pell Eligibility

## **Full Data Export Function**

The Export function uses the Full Data Record Layout to create a file of all records from the ISIR Analysis Tool database. This file is for your school's analysis. You can run the Full Data Export at any time.

# ISIR Analysis Tool, Version 1.0 Print Benchmarking Results

## *ISIR Analysis Tool Supports These Printers*

We tested the following printers that are Windows NT 4.0, Windows 98, Windows Me, Windows 2000, and Windows XP compatible:

- HP8150
- HP4
- HP4000N
- HP4M
- HP4Si
- HP4MSi
- HP5SiMX
- HP8000N
- HP4MPlus
- HP5Si

## *Reports*

The benchmarking results for ISIR Analysis Tool reports and lists are as follows:

- These reports were tested in Windows NT, Windows Me, Windows 98, Windows 2000, and Windows XP on HP LaserJet 3 si, 4, 4 si, and 8150DN printers.
- These tests were all completed on a Pentium III 800 with 128 MB RAM.
- The Average Time Elapsed column indicates the measurement of time starting when the user clicks OK in the ISIR Analysis Tool Print dialog box and when the operating system (Windows NT/Me/98/2000/XP) print dialog appears.
- The Benchmarking Volume is the number of records and approximate number of pages that were printed in the test.

<b>Report</b>	<b>Operating System</b>	<b>Benchmarking Volume</b>	<b>Average Time Elapsed</b>
List - EFC Change by Student	NT 4.0	90 recs/2 pages	1 second
List - EFC Change by Student	Windows Me	90 recs/2 pages	1 second
List - EFC Change by Student	Windows 98	90 recs/2 pages	1 second
List - EFC Change by Student	Windows 2000	90 recs/2 pages	1 second
List - EFC Change by Student	Windows XP	90 recs/2 pages	1 second
Transaction Comparison	NT 4.0	5 recs/20 pages	1 second
Transaction Comparison	Windows Me	5 recs/20 pages	1 second
Transaction Comparison	Windows 98	5 recs/20 pages	1 second
Transaction Comparison	Windows 2000	5 recs/20 pages	1 second
Transaction Comparison	Windows XP	5 recs/20 pages	1 second

## Reminders

### Back Up Your Database Weekly

You should back up your ISIR Analysis Tool database file (IAT34.mdb) regularly so you do not lose your data. We recommend that you back up your files at least once a week. You should also back up your data before and after you run utilities as a precautionary measure.

ISIR Analysis Tool does not include a backup utility. You must use your own backup software. Be sure to test your backup software to verify that it can reliably restore your backups.

### Optimize Your Database with Software Utilities

ISIR Analysis Tool contains utilities that allow you to optimize your database to prevent problems. We recommend that you repair, compact, and verify your database once a week. After all three processes are successful, back up the database. See “Back Up Your Database Weekly.”

Run the database utilities in the following order:

- Repair Database
- Compact Database
- Verify Database
- Repair Database
- Compact Database

For specific information regarding repairing, compacting, and verifying, see "Run the Repair Database Utility."

### Run the Repair Database Utility

The Repair Database utility resolves inconsistencies in record storage. Events such as a power outage or a LAN failure can corrupt your database if it occurs while ISIR Analysis Tool updates your records.

ISIR Analysis Tool may not detect database corruption, so if your system functions unpredictably (for example, you start getting database error messages or even something as simple as a missing flag on a record occurs), use the Repair Database utility. Running this utility once a week helps to prevent database problems.

**Warning:** Before using this utility, be sure you have space on your hard drive that is at least equal to three times the current size of the database.

### **Improve Performance with the Compact Database Utility**

The Compact Database utility improves the performance of ISIR Analysis Tool by optimizing the database (IAT34.mdb) file and reclaiming space on your computer's hard drive. As you add, modify, or delete records in ISIR Analysis Tool, the database file can become fragmented.

Running this utility weekly makes the database files smaller and improves system performance. It can also significantly reduce the size of your database. This does not mean that records are removed, only that they are organized and stored more efficiently.

**Warning:** Before using this utility, be sure you have hard drive space available at least equal to three times the current size of the database.

### **Prevent Problems with the Verify Database Utility**

The Verify Database function checks for data relationship integrity in your database. If ISIR Analysis Tool crashes or abnormally halts processing, a record may be missing one of its associated records. Verify Database recreates the missing record.

Running this function weekly helps to prevent problems.

**Warning:** Before using this utility, be sure you have hard drive space available that is at least equal to three times the current size of the database.