



Talis Support Newsletter - Issue 1

13th October 2004

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Welcome

Welcome to the first edition of the **Talis Support Newsletter**, published fortnightly. The main purpose of this newsletter is to provide you with support updates so you can resolve issues more quickly, run your systems efficiently and get the best value from the Talis products you use.

We welcome any queries or suggestions that you may have on this or future newsletters. Please use the Services forum to post your views: www.talis.com/forums

Talis Support on the Web

You can contact Talis Support through three channels: Talis Solutions, the Support Line, and Talis Forums.

Talis Solutions

Talis Solutions, a web-based service, is our recommended channel. It provides call logging and tracking in real time, driven by an up-to-date knowledge base of solutions and frequently asked questions. As common problems are solved, our analysts update the knowledge base so you can quickly find an answer to your questions. Click here to go directly to Talis Solutions:

www.talis.com/customer_area/talissolutions/about_talissolutions.shtml

For more information about the support team, visit the support team pages using the link below:

www.talis.com/services/support.shtml

These pages have recently been upgraded to list common problems with their solutions. We would strongly recommend all System Managers look at the FAQs before logging calls with Talis. If you would like to see a specific FAQ on there, do let us know.

The Support Line

You can also call our support desk on **+44 (0) 870 400 5400** Mon - Fri 8.30am – 5.30pm.

Talis Forums

Talis Forums is another channel you can use to collaborate, share information and get help with tricky problems. We encourage you to contribute to the Forums, and there is a wide variety to choose from. Each Forum has a moderator at Talis so you can always expect a reply whether from your peers or from Talis staff. Why not use the Services Forum to post your views on this newsletter? Or discuss any tricky issues you have encountered or solved recently.

The Support Pages on our web site are currently being improved and we would value your feedback on what you would like to see on these pages. Please post any queries or suggestions on the Services Forum: www.talis.com/forums

Watch this space in the next newsletter for other support improvements we plan to make soon!

Important Announcement - Changes to Amazon Target for Talis Prism Customers

From 16th April 2004, Amazon changed the URL required to access their interface via Talis Prism. If you use the Amazon data source through Talis Prism then you need to reconfigure the Amazon.co.uk data source using Webmin. If you do not apply these changes, the Amazon data source will stop working.

These are the steps required:

1. From the main Talis Prism configuration screen in Webmin, select the Data Source option.
2. Pick Data Sources Target page with the option to create access to a new target and a list of all data sources.
3. Go to the list of data sources. Click on the link for Amazon.co.uk by selecting the Display Name of the Existing Target. You will get the Data Source Target page for Amazon.co.uk.
4. You will find the Service url is set to /onca/xml2. Change this to /onca/xml3.
5. Submit and then apply your changes. Your Amazon data source should now work.

Tips and Tricks – Are You Following ‘Talis Best Practice’?

A critical task for system administrators is to carry out regular preventative maintenance. This includes scheduling maintenance tasks to keep your hardware and/or system software in good operating condition. In this first issue of the newsletter, we make recommendations and encourage you to incorporate these into your existing best practices.

We categorise Talis best practice into three categories for system administrators, Daily Tasks, Weekly Tasks, and Monthly Tasks. This edition we will look at **daily tasks**:

1. Backup Databases

All relevant databases should be backed up, ensuring that they complete successfully. At a minimum, you must backup the prod_talis database on your main system. To back up only the prod_talis database, use the following syntax: `full_dbdump -d prod_talis`

You also need to be aware of other databases on the system like prod_list and tutor_talis. These need to be backed up on a regular basis but not necessarily daily. For more information, please see:

www.talis.com/customer_area/documentation/docs/legacy/sysman2/SM-119-RM-01.pdf

2. Check all log files

The log files produced by the full_dbdump run need to be checked. These report the amount of database space used and whether the dump has completed successfully. A typical path of a log file is /var/tmp/full_dbdump.20041006.log.1, where "20041006" is the date extension for the day the full_dbdump was run. The database space used is shown as a percentage.

3. Check system log

Check system messages in /var/adm/messages for system errors.

4. Check trandumps are running

Check that trandumps are completing successfully by looking at the trandump log files in the /var/tmp directory. The trandump script should run hourly or half hourly.

5. Check disk space usage

Use df -k to make sure that file systems are not filling up. In particular, look at the capacity column, which indicates the amount of space used as a percentage.

6. Reboot Talis Prism

It is strongly advised that Talis Prism customers should reboot the system every morning. This can be done early in the morning via the cron.

You can find further information on this and other recommended best practice by attending the 'Talis System Management' course. Details of Talis System Management and other courses can be found at: www.talis.com/services/training_courses/training.shtml

You may have your own best practices. Why not share them with other customers by posting them on the Talis Services Forum? www.talis.com/community/talis_forums.shtml, or let us know and we will publish them in future communications.

We will look at weekly and monthly recommended best practice in forthcoming issues.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Talis Support receives a vast number of questions and has a large knowledge base. In this section, we will be covering some of the most frequently asked and topical questions.

Deleting obsolete log files

To delete files in a given directory (and any directories underneath it) that have not been modified for more than, say, 60 days, use the following command (all on one line):

```
find {directory-name} -name '{file-template}' -mtime +{number-of-days} -exec rm -r {} \;
```

For example: `find /scratch -name 'loa_odue*' -mtime +60 -exec rm -r {} \;`

WARNING - Please note that this command will delete files in any subordinate directories as well as the specified directory.

Obviously all such "blanket" file deletions should be carried out with great caution. Before carrying out any deletion please be absolutely sure you know which files you are getting rid

of. If you are at all unsure the best way to do this is to list them out screen-by-screen first by using the above "find" command without the remove command, e.g.

```
find /scratch -name 'loa_odue*' -mtime +60 | pg
```

N.B. You should never use "" as the template. This will delete all files regardless and may be dangerous, especially as some directories, such as /scratch and /usr/opt/blcmp/data/utls, may contain essential parameter files as well as "expendable" report files.*

Meet the Team

The Talis Support Team is committed to delivering the highest possible standard of service and support. We are trained to understand your business, your operational environment and your technology platforms, and provide you with a choice of support channels including the web, email and telephone. We strive to ensure you receive quality, best practice feedback and reliable resolutions at all times.

The Support team comprises nine analysts: Mark Summers, Imraz Mohammed, Mohammed Hossain, Andy Harley, Sandra Wong, Danisha Bathia, Jeremy Grayson, Claire Singleton, and Sue Bennett. Caroline Kerlin is currently on maternity leave. In future issues we will be presenting a brief profile of each member of the team.

We are a multi-talented team with many years of support experience between us, and have a vast knowledge of both Talis and other third party products, including Talis Alto, Talis Prism, Talis Mobile, Business Objects, UnityWeb, Unix (Solaris), Linux and Windows.

Comments, Feedback and Contacts

Please let us know what you think of the Talis Support Newsletter. We want to hear your views and contributions so we can share them with our community of customers, and of course use them to improve our products and services to you. You can contact us via email support@talis.com or call +44 (0) 870 400 5400.

If you feel any of your colleagues would benefit from reading the Talis Support Newsletter, please feel free to share it with them.

Talis Insight 2004

We look forward to meeting you at Talis Insight Conference 2004, 9 – 10th November, NEC. In the Talis Zone, there will be demonstrations of our products and services and the opportunity to talk to us about what you want from Talis Support.

To unsubscribe from the Talis Support Newsletter, please email mohammed.hossain@talis.com

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