



Talis Support Newsletter - Issue 6

March 2005

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Welcome to the sixth issue of the **Talis Support Newsletter**. In this issue, we will discuss server hygiene. We welcome any queries or suggestions that you may have for this or future newsletters. Please use the Support Forum (www.talis.com/forums) to post your views.

Important Announcements

Talis Alto 2.0 - Available to Download Now

You can upgrade to Talis Alto 2.0 immediately by downloading either from the ftp server, or from <http://alto.talis.com>.

Options for Upgrading

As always, those of you who are taking advantage of our automatic upgrade facility will be able to simply apply the new version to your server, in order to automatically update all your PC's. A manual upgrade is available for libraries that prefer to upgrade PC's individually. Regardless of whether you are running Talis Alto 1.2 or 1.3 you will be able to upgrade straight to version 2.0. For detailed instructions on upgrading please refer to the Release notice which you can find at <http://alto.talis.com>.

Try Before You Upgrade

Last year we introduced a unique facility for you to download a trial version of Talis Alto 1.3 and familiarise staff with its features before transitioning from Talis Text to Talis Alto. With an impressive 70% of customers now migrated or in the process of migrating to Talis Alto, the Talis Alto trial will be valuable as a tool for preparing staff for new functionality. Therefore, we are pleased to announce that a new trial version of Talis Alto 2.0 is now available from www.talis.com/customer_area/alto/previews.html.

Is Your System Adequately Backed Up?

It is paramount that you back up your system, databases and file systems, on a regular basis. As mentioned in previous issues, Talis recommends:

1. On the Main server, make sure you:
 - a. Back up prod_talis everyday
 - b. Carry out full database backup using full_dbdump -tALL weekly
 - c. Back up all file systems weekly
2. On the MIS server, make sure you:
 - a. Backup bo_repository and talis_aggregates weekly
 - b. full_dbdump -tALL monthly
 - c. Backup all file systems monthly

Please use the above list to ensure that your system is adequately backed up. In the event, ensure that your system is adequately backed up so that in the event of hardware problems or data corruption we can restore your system safely and quickly. If you do not make adequate back ups, we will charge to restore your system. You will lose data and it will take much longer to rebuild your system.

Support for Talis Text

We encourage all customers to upgrade to Talis Text 12.5 as soon as possible, as support for all previous versions ended on 28th February 2005. If you require assistance, contact the Talis Consultancy team at consultancy@talis.com or +44 (0) 870 400 5415 to discuss the options available to you.

Improvements to Talis Support and Talis Solutions

As part of the continued development and improvement to Talis Support, we have merged the Talis Solutions login with the Talis Support pages. When you log onto <http://support.talis.com> it will now provide access to Talis Knowledgebase as well as giving you access to the Talis Solutions login. The Talis Knowledgebase is under continuous development and we would appreciate your feedback. Please visit the Forums to discuss this at www.talis.com/forums/viewforum.php?f=70.

New Talis Forum Discussion for System Managers

At the request of a number of customers we have now a new section on the Talis Forum dedicated to System Managers. You can find it at www.talis.com/forums/viewforum.php?f=73. The forums are a place where you can search topics, watch topics that are of interest to you, and edit your responses - all without cluttering up your email inbox. These forums are publicly available; once you have registered, you are free to post on any of the available forums. You can also be notified of new posts if you subscribe to the RSS service. www.talis.com/forums

Talis Support Day Success

This was a great success! The aim was that customers would leave understanding how Talis Support works and what we do. We received a number of positive comments including "very worth while day, good to put faces to the names". Sue Hartell from Staffordshire commented "...thanks for hosting yesterday's Support Day at Talis. Please pass my thanks on to all members of Talis who participated & made everyone feel so welcome. I found the day very informative/beneficial & will do my best to ensure you receive correctly detailed calls with the relevant information, once initial problem solving has been completed at Staffs."

This was a worthwhile exercise enjoyed by both customers and Talis staff. We will be organising these on a quarterly basis and we will confirm dates in the next Newsletter. If you wish to register your interest in attending a Talis Support Day, please contact maria.dawson@talis.com.

Talis Training in 2005: Forthcoming Courses

25th April 2005 - Database & SQL

26th April 2005 - Perl: Running & Modifying Perl

27-28th April 2005 - Business Objects

9 May 2005 - Talis List

10 May 2005 - System Manager: Advanced

15 June 2005 - Financial Year Rollover

16 June 2005 - System Manager: Alto parameters & configuration

23 June 2005 - Alto to Prism: Cataloguing for Quality

24 June 2005 - Authority Control

For full details and pricing, please see www.talis.com/training. If you would like to see more courses scheduled or if you are interested in any, please contact Maria Dawson on +44 (0) 870 400 5419 or email maria.dawson@talis.com.

Tips and Tricks – Server Hygiene

Various UNIX directories are written to as processes are executed on the system. If not monitored and maintained, directories may fill and ultimately, so may the disks. This can lead to system performance issues and even to the seizure of Talis programs.

Therefore, it is important to monitor your disks to ensure there is sufficient free space, and to periodically clear out obsolete files. In this issue, we will consider some Unix commands that you can use to identify candidate files and directories for deletion. In our next issue, we will discuss what files and directories can be deleted from various file systems including /scratch.

df

The **df** command displays information about total space and available space on a file system. We usually use the **-k** option so display statistics in units of 1024-byte blocks.

Examples

1. **df -k** displays statistics for all mounted file systems. Here is a typical output:

Filesystem	kbytes	used	avail	capacity	Mounted on
/dev/dsk/c0t0d0s0	96391	13280	73481	16%	/
/dev/dsk/c0t0d0s3	336871	198536	104655	66%	/usr
/dev/dsk/c0t0d0s5	96391	43512	43249	51%	/opt
/dev/dsk/c0t1d0s0	192799	29371	144158	17%	/usr/opt/sybase
/dev/dsk/c2t0d0s0	962983	219398	647295	26%	/usr/opt/blcmp
/dev/dsk/c2t1d0s0	96391	916	85845	2%	/users
/dev/dsk/c3t0d0s0	1925934	570408	1162936	33%	/scratch

The capacity column indicates how full is your file system.

du

The **du** command displays the number of blocks used for files. If the *File* parameter specified is actually a directory, all files within the directory are reported on. If no *File* parameter is provided, the **du** command uses the files in the current directory.

Examples

1. Typically the **du** command is used in conjunction with the **sort** command:

```
du -sk * | sort -n
```

This will list all files and subdirectories in ascending order by size.

rm

The **rm** command is typically used to remove files, however you can use the **-r** option to delete directories. You have to have the correct permission to delete the files.

Examples

1. **rm /var/tmp/full_dbdump.02052003.log**

This deletes the full_dbdump.02052003.log file from the /var/tmp directory.

2. **rm -r /scratch/blcmp3**

Delete all files and sub directories from the blcmp3 directory.

rmdir

To delete a directory, use the **rmdir** command. However, if the directory is not empty then you might get the following error message:

```
rmdir: `TEST': Directory not empty
```

In this situation, you can either delete all files/sub-directories and then use the **rmdir** command or you can use **rm -r <directory name>**.

WARNING: Please ensure you do NOT have any spaces after the first slash e.g. `rm -r / scratch` should never be issued so be very careful when using the `rm -r` command.

ls

This lists files and directories. The most common options are:

`-l` (lists output in long format)

`-lrt` (lists output, sorting by time of last modification).

Examples

1. `ls -l *` (list all files and directories).

2. `ls -lrt /var/tmp/full_dbdump*` (lists all files and directories starting with full_dbdump).

Frequently Answered Questions (FAQs)

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

How do I Set nologin in Talis Text?

All users can be prevented from logging on to Talis if a file with the filename nologin exists. Set super user on and move to /user/opt/blcmp/unix/etc.

Create a file called nologin using the vi text editor. (You may already have one that simply needs renaming). Example contents of this file might be:

"TALIS is temporarily unavailable while 'Fund rollover' is being run. Please try again later".

This will not prevent users from logging on to Talis Alto. See FAQ for Talis Alto nologin.

The nologin file will need to be renamed afterwards to take off nologin and allow users back onto talis.

Control numbers beginning with 'ba' are not displaying in Talis Alto but they are ok in Talis Prism, why?

This is a known defect in Alto for BNB control nos beginning ba. Defect 4370. This is fixed in Talis Alto version 2.

What details do I need to give if another customer wants to access us as a ZTarget?

IP address of Prism

Port (by default 2121)

Database name: talislms

record format: ukmarc

Further information can be found in the ZTarget release notice on our web site.

Why can I see a value in expenditure within the supplier form in Talis Alto and running FYR?

Expenditure should be zero in the supplier form after FYR.

Please check to make sure that you have run sup_totals.pl after FYR has run.

Why am I not seeing all the contents of a borrower's Loan History on Talis Alto when I can on Talis Text?

Check the settings you have for the environment variable TAL_BOR_LOAN_BROWSE within the Talis Alto Configuration Setup program. In Talis Text the default setting for this variable was 1000, but in Talis Alto it is 250.

When compiling the Loan History of the a borrower in such instances, the system will not return

the 250 newest loans; rather, it will return the first 250 it can find in the database - not necessarily the same loans. Therefore, relatively recent loans can be absent from the list.

A new value can be set by adding TAL_BOR_LOAN_BROWSE to all (via the Global Default) or just some of your users, e.g.

TAL_BOR_LOAN_BROWSE=1000

Fuller details on adding variables are given under the F1 Help facility within Talis Alto Configuration Setup.

Why does a search limited by site pick up works which do not list any copies for that site because there are copies at a withdrawn status?

Talis Prism limit by location will select a work if it matches the limited location but because of the way the indexes currently work will display the copies regardless of whether the relevant copies are withdrawn or not. This can look misleading if you do not allow withdrawn copies to display in Opac. Defect 2409. This should be resolved by a change of indexing with the marc21 project.

Why are our Interloans to the British Library routinely taking fourteen days to be transmitted, and are not appearing in the Pending mailbox at all?

Assuming the script ill_art_new is being run correctly, the likeliest cause of the problem is that someone is manually altering the Status field on the Interloan form from Pending to Requested when creating a new Interloan request. As ill_art_new will only pick up new requests still at Pending status, this causes it to ignore requests altered in this way.

Fourteen days later, the script ill_art_chase will re-check any Interloans for which no evidence of transmission has been noted during that period and will send a chaser to the British Library. That chaser contains all the details of the original request and is handled by the BL in the same way. The request then proceeds along the usual lines, albeit a fortnight later than if the Status had not been changed at inception.

Did You Know?

This section highlights some of the new and interesting features of our products. In this issue, we will look at some Talis Alto features.

Did you know that in Talis Alto Bib. Search, you can use the '...' 'more' icon at the end of the search field to display an index if your search was unsuccessful? This allows you to browse the index.

Did you know that you have three different options for printing/exporting information from Talis Alto? If you select the Print icon at the top of the screen, in the main toolbar, you can print out a snapshot of the Talis Alto form you are viewing. If a Print button is offered at the bottom of the screen it means we have also set up a predefined 'report' view of the data in the form - so you get a better printout. If you right click on a list or 'grid' within Talis Alto you have an 'Export to.CSV' option, this allows you to export the entire contents of that grid to a file which can be opened, manipulated and printed within Microsoft Excel. Refer to the Help topic 'Printing in Talis Alto' for more details, and please encourage your colleagues to take advantage of these features.

For further information about Talis Alto, please refer to the documentation available at www.talis.com/documentation.

Events

Talis is pleased to announce the running of another series of Talis Customer days in April and May 2005. The day will provide you with the opportunity to hear strategic, product and research

updates that are relevant to your market sector, plus keynote addresses from Talis and guest speakers. The events will also give customers the chance to question Talis staff directly, input ideas and feedback on current Talis development plans and research projects. To register your interest or request more information about any of the following events please email events@talis.com.

For academic customers

13th April 2005 Manchester
27th April 2005 Reading
4th May 2005 Birmingham

For public customers

14th April 2005 Manchester
28th April 2005 Reading
5th May 2005 Birmingham

For Irish customers

17th May 2005 Dublin

For full details, visit www.talis.com/events.

Meet the Team

In this issue, we present a profile of Andy Harley:

Name: Andy Harley (B.Lib (Hons.), M.A.)

Role: Support Analyst

History at Talis: Andy joined in November 1983 and has worked in a wide variety of roles, including technical and product support, product development, system installation, customer training and documentation.

Speciality: Andy specialises in Unix system administration and database support, but also helps support a variety of Talis products such as Talis Prism, Talis Offline and Talis Mobile.

Hobbies and interests: Andy's interests include sport, history, music and wildlife. One of his main hobbies is looking after his pet rats. He is a founder member, along with Kevin O'Shea, of the "Zimmerposse", the Talis cross-departmental lunchtime discussion group, and, like the rest of the 'posse, he enjoys sampling the finest wines available to humanity. He has also appeared on several radio and TV quiz programmes, including University Challenge (four times), Mastermind, Brain of Britain and Winner Takes all.

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. You can contact us via email support@talis.com or call +44 (0) 870 400 5400.

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Telephone: +44 (0) 870 400 5000 Fax: +44 (0) 870 400 5001 www.talis.com

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