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# eRA 13.808.01E upgrade project changes the face of eRA application implementations [1]

May 20, 2016 by UIS Communications [2]

The applications used by the CU electronic Research Administration (eRA) teams just got upgrades, fixes and enhancements under the guise of the eRA 13.808.01E project (808 project) that went live April 22 2016. Although the project included thousands of enhancements, new features and bug fixes, the real win was the process innovations that strengthened the relationship between eRA teams, UIS and the vendor that permanently changed how these teams will interact on all eRA work in the future.

Going by its name alone, the eRA 13.808.01E upgrade project brought eRA's *Info*Ed Global application up to date, including over five releases, with over 1,500 vendor fixes and enhancements. Upgraded eRA modules included Proposal Development (AMC / CU Denver), Proposal Tracking (AMC / CU Denver and CU-Boulder), Award Tracking (AMC / CU Denver and CU-Boulder), Financial Tracking (CU-Boulder), Conflict of Interest (AMC / CU Denver) and Human Subjects (AMC / CU Denver and CU-Boulder). This upgrade also brought the eRA Oracle database into vendor support compliance by upgrading to the latest database offering from Oracle, Version 12C.

This extensive project didn't stop with the Oracle database compliance requirements. Since the original implantation of eRA, there have been over two thousand issues opened with eRA's vendor *Info*Ed [3] Global. The problems with this important vendor were so severe that CU was worried about their ability to support our ever-growing research administration function services on the campuses. With the 808.01 project, campus eRA teams, the vendor and UIS closely collaborated to develop new business and project processes that are now in place for all future projects and operational interactions between the teams. Here are the practices that will ensure the strong collaboration between these partner groups that will continue the exceptional growth eRA is experiencing at Anschutz Medical Center, CU-Boulder and CU Denver.

| eRA 13.808.01E upgrade project statistics | |
|---|---|
| # point releases included | 5 |
| # vendor fixes | ~,1500 |
| # documented tests by UIS | 600 |
| # documented UAT tests | 200 |
| # identified issues during testing | 77 |

**Stakeholder engagement**

With the 808.01 project, the key was collaboration at all levels, every step of the way. UIS reviewed hundreds of requirements with AMC / CU Denver and CU-Boulder during the analysis phase of the project and work didn't start until the teams knew exactly what the expected end result was when the project completed.

The campus and UIS project team met weekly, with status reports going to project sponsors at each campus on their preferred schedule. The team also met with the vendor weekly, ensuring that the campuses were kept in the loop and had an equal voice at the table.

The collaborative effort between all parties resulted in new tools that will be used in future projects, like an impact summary that shows how each change will affect current functionality, a prioritization process as described below, and a proof of concept showing how the current systems will be affected overall. (Refer to Image 1 for an example of the impact summary.)

13.808.01E Upgrade ▸ Impact Summary.xlsx

FILE | OPEN IN EXCEL | SHARE | DATA | FIND

| | A | B | C | D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Task | Description | Notes | Relea |
| 2 | All-1407-003 | ENT > Progressive text is not populating for Workflow roles | | 806.0 |
| 3 | All-1407-001 | A new Connection String has been added to point to a separate InfoEd Database to allow for report data to be pulled from that database instead of the InfoEd Database the overall InfoEd application is pointed to. This will allow clients to run bigger and more reports during the business day without taxing the normal InfoEd database. It will keep the application running smoothly and keep business flowing. | Very interesting | 807.0 |
| 4 | Ent-1307-012 | ENT > Stopper role not being respected when it comes to "Create New" option | Role definitions that included stop were not being used. Updated the SQL to get stop/sequence and the code to use the fields appropriately. Test steps: Admin > Security Admin > Locate your profile > Give yourself multiple roles in baseline security (Mod. Admin., Investigator & Investigator with Management)<br>New Portal > Any module > Workflow Admin > Role Definitions > Set Module Administrator at the top of the list and make it a stopper role > Save > Set access to objects > Set radio buttons for "Create New" to "No" > Save > Option to create new should not be available. | 806.0 |
| | | ENT > Link between the external entities database and the subcontractor /consultant database needs to be restored | Added Subaward checkbox for Org Admin (i.e. non-PM) form. Adapted form to update attribute=06 if Subaward box is checked. Changed nomenclature from "Subcontractor" to "SubAward"<br><br>Ent - External Entities Database and Subcontractor/Consultant Database. | |

Image 1. eRA 808.01 upgrade project imact summary example

**Aligning the project process**

In the past, eRA projects were not handled in the same manner as other UIS projects. Beginning with the 808 project, eRA projects will now align with the UIS project process, including following a three-level configuration migration from a development environment (DEV, which is completely new for eRA), a test environment (TST) and a stage environment (STG) before the application updates are moved into production for use on the campuses.

The 808 project also saw extensive testing prior to going into production. Load testing through UIS's Quality Assurance (QA) team was implemented, as was a two-stage functional testing process. With functional testing, the UIS eRA team tested and discovered as many issues as

possible and sent them to the vendor to be fixed before sending them to the campuses. This way, campuses could perform User Acceptance Testing (UAT) with a near-complete application, which significantly reduced their testing time and the time for them to be comfortable signing off on the application.

**Vendor prioritization process – ITEMs Tracker**

A new process was developed to collaboratively prioritize 180 issues that had been on *Info* Ed's books since 2013. Called ITEMs Tracker, this spreadsheet and process will continue to be used to manage open issues and keep the newly-rebuilt relationship with *Info*Ed strong. The following is the process. (Refer to Image 2 for an example of ITEMs Tracker).

1. Campus eRA teams and UIS developed the issue prioritization spreadsheet to aid with determining which of the 180 issues that had been open since 2013 would be agreed on as most critical by all campuses.
2. The eRA teams met weekly to determine the Top 10.
3. All teams met with the vendor to discuss weekly and define the vendor goals for the week.
4. The vendor focused on only those goals, ensuring that the needs of the campus teams were met and that they vendor had a solid roadmap to follow.

| | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | R | S | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Goals W/E 5/26 | Priority 5/19 | PRD Blocker | PRD vs Prj | Module | Items ID | Status | Severity Level | Campus | |
| 2 | RES | 1 | | 808 | PT | 2709 | In Dev | 2 | ALL | 808 - B-PT Requested Project Period Dates Sa |
| 3 | RES | 2 | | PRD | PT | 2798 | In Dev | 2 | UCB | B PT Short Form Table UDF Does Not Save Wh |
| 4 | TST | 3 | X | PRD | HS | 2806 | In Dev | 1 | UCD | HS - D system not stamping the correct docu |
| 5 | TST | 4 | | 808 | HS | 2749 | In Dev | 1 | UCD | 808 - D – HS – When stamping existing stamp |
| 6 | DEV | 5 | X | PRD | HS | 2824 | Vetting | 1 | | 808 - From Addressee when sending Batch c |
| 7 | DEV | 6 | X | PRD | HS | 2821 | Vetting | 1 | UCD | 808 - Documents are visible in Original Subm |
| 8 | | 7 | X | 808 | PT | 2702 | Dev Q | 2 | ALL | Performance Issue Adding to Personnel Scre |
| 9 | | 8 | | 808 | HS | 2751 | Dev Q | High | UCD | 808 – D – HS: Admin Items when building ag |
| 10 | | 9 | | PRD | PD | 2825 | Need Info From Client | 1 | UCD | D-PD Unable to load Adobe subcontract |
| 11 | | 10 | | PRD | PT | 2766 | Test | Critical | UCB | B PT F&A Base Amt for Subcontracts Does No |
| 12 | | 11 | | PRD | HS | 2457 | Dev Q | Critical | UCD | D-HS-Selected Person function doesn't work |
| 13 | | 12 | | PRD | PD | 2683 | Vetting | High | UCD | D PD Javascript in Budget Justification |
| 14 | | 13 | | PRD | HS | 2674 | Need Info From Client | Critical | UCD | D – HS - Adding an Addendum or other subm duplicate entry on the Agenda > Items scree |
| 15 | | 14 | | PRD | PT | 2715 | Need Info from Client | High | UCD | D-PT PI Multiple Status History Entries |
| 16 | | 15 | | PRD | PT | 2758 | Dev Q | Critical | UCB | B PT F&A Master Rate incorrect for converted |
| 17 | | 16 | | PRD | HS | 2728 | Dev Q | Critical | UCD | HS - D - Multiple documents on reviewer scr |
| 18 | | 17 | | PRD | HS | 2644 | Need Info from Client | Critical | UCD | D-HS Documents replaced with incorrect doc |
| 19 | | 18 | | PRD | PD | 2545 | Triage | Critical | UCD | D-PD Performance for large proposals is aby |
| 20 | | 19 | | PRD | HS | 2383 | Dev Q | Medium | UCD | Coordinators no longer sort by board on Rev |
| 21 | | 20 | | PRD | HS | 2570 | Dev Q | High | UCD | HS - D Access History functionality is not in c |
| | | | | Prod | HS | 1855 | Closed - | Critical | UCD | ENABLE - Field level security |

Items Tracking | InfoEd Cycle Info | Sheet1

Image 2. eRA 808.01 upgrade project ITEMs Tracker example

The new prioritization process has shifted the relationship with *Info*Ed from one of contention to CU becoming an *Info*Ed strategic partner, with both organizations eager to partner on more projects in the future.

Was the 808.01 project perfect? No. We had some database and other issues post- go-live that needed to be worked and that we're still focused on. However, the difference is that the vendor is being highly responsive and is actively working tickets. Following go-live, we had the largest release we've ever had with a combined 17 fixes for the month and enhancements we had decided to defer until after go-live -- and these fixes and releases were implemented less than four weeks after go-live!

The new practices and processes have resulted in outcomes, tools and relationships that never would have happened without the collaboration between campuses, the vendor and UIS in every aspect of this project. The 808.01 project significantly impacted direction for this product and many of the outcomes were bundled into future *Info*Ed releases as part of the application for all *Info*Ed customers. CU is presenting best practices and innovations from the 808 project at the *Info*Ed Global User Group Meeting (UGM) May 23-May 26.

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