



Bexar County IT News

October 2013



Unseen Effort/Unsung Heroes (BEHIND THE DIGITAL CURTAIN)

Consider the numerous computer actions and applications that you run and use on a daily basis as you perform your assigned duties at Bexar County. Multiply that picture by several thousand employees in the many offices and departments around the County and the jobs *they* complete every day - using information technology. The hardware and software to support those activities does not magically appear in place and, afterwards, maintain itself in order to support those functions. It takes an enormous effort on the part of many people laboring in the background to install, upgrade, repair and maintain those systems - on a continual basis. And, in many cases, the end user never has to be involved with that - or even realize that it is happening.

These applications are collections of data and business logic encapsulated in programming instructions and platform components, such as operating systems, databases, hardware, and network infrastructure. New versions of these applications, known as system upgrades, are released on a periodic basis. And after it is determined that a new version should be used by the County, it has to be installed, tested and, finally, implemented. Executing a system upgrade is a major undertaking and fortunately is not required on a frequent basis. In fact, years may pass between system upgrades.

Between the system upgrades, incremental improvements and corrections must be made and are applied in the form of “patches”. These patches have to be installed and tested before being implemented and this kind of system maintenance is continually being performed by your IT department. And although not as complex as a system upgrade, they, nevertheless, take considerable amounts of time and effort.

Here is an example of one such operation that recently took place. A complete systems patching was needed on the Lawson financial, procurement and related systems. These are the systems “owned” by the County Auditor’s Office and the Purchasing Department and used by the entire county to run innumerable day-to-day business processes and interactions.

(Continued on page 2)

Behind the Digital Curtain (con't)

The operation was divided into two main phases. The preliminary phase was conducted in a “test” environment and extended over a month’s time. During this period the patches were applied and tested. Any problems or anomalies that were encountered had to be resolved and then everything retested before moving on to the next step. Only after all the patches were implemented and working properly in the test environment could the process move on to the next phase.

The second phase, applying the patches to the “live” system (Production), was more intense than the first phase. It had to be completed in a very short amount of time and it was “for real”. Done over a weekend, in order to cause the least amount of interruption to County business, it included many of the procedures performed in the first phase and involved additional ones, as well. First, the systems were taken out of service and a complete off-line backup was performed. In addition, the portal through which these systems are accessed had to be taken down. Then, as the backup and patching process continued throughout the weekend, multiple servers and databases had to be checked and rechecked to ensure everything was progressing properly.

The process began on Friday at noon. By 2:00pm Sunday it was “all systems go” for Auditor’s Office and Purchasing staff to give everything a try in order to make sure everything was ready for business on Monday. What takes just a few minutes to read about actually required many hours of work and a heroic effort to accomplish. In fact, one individual worked over 37 hours between Friday and Sunday - with many of those hours coming in the middle of the night!

So, there is a peek behind the curtain at the kind of thing that happens on a regular basis in your Bexar County Information Technology Department. Be on the lookout for further examples in future issues of the IT Newsletter.

Sign Up for Your Bibliotech Library Card



Bibliotech, Bexar County Digital Library, launched on 9/14/2013. The Bibliotech is the country’s first public digital library of its kind. The membership is free to County residents with a variety of services available.

With the opening of Bibliotech, it’s time to register for the Bibliotech Library card to take advantage of all the great services the library provides. Below are the steps needed for yourself, children, and any other Bexar County residents to register for your library card.

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

1. Go to <http://bexarbibliotech.org/>
2. Click on the register here for your Bibliotech Library Card box on the right of the screen
3. Select Bibliotech as your home library and enter your zip code on the next screen
4. Click Continue
5. Select your city and click continue on the next screen
6. Complete your personal, address, contact information
7. Select your preference for receiving library notices (email/text/or none)
8. Create password and submit
9. You will receive a barcode to start using the Bibliotech immediately.

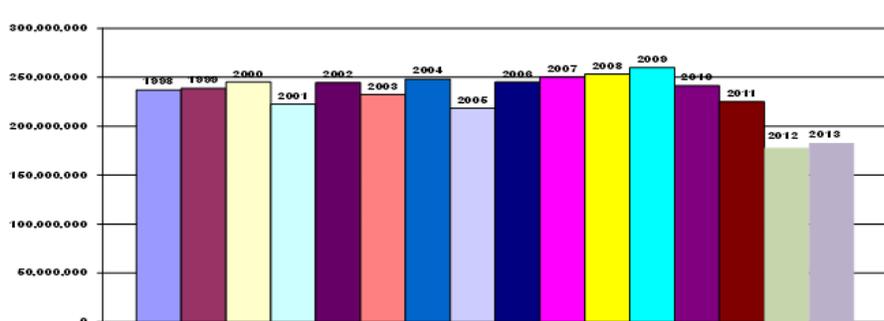
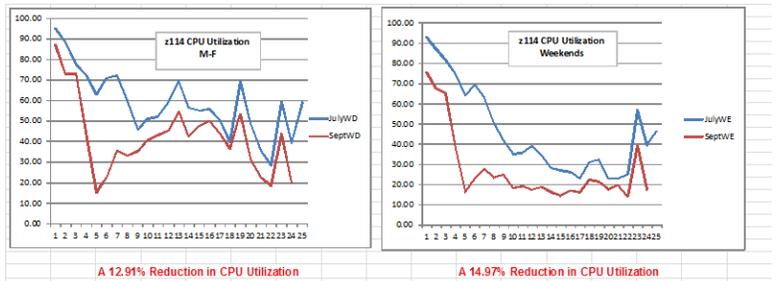
That’s it. The whole process takes less than 10 minutes and the services range from e-books to computer classes. Take advantage of this great opportunity.

EDC z114 News

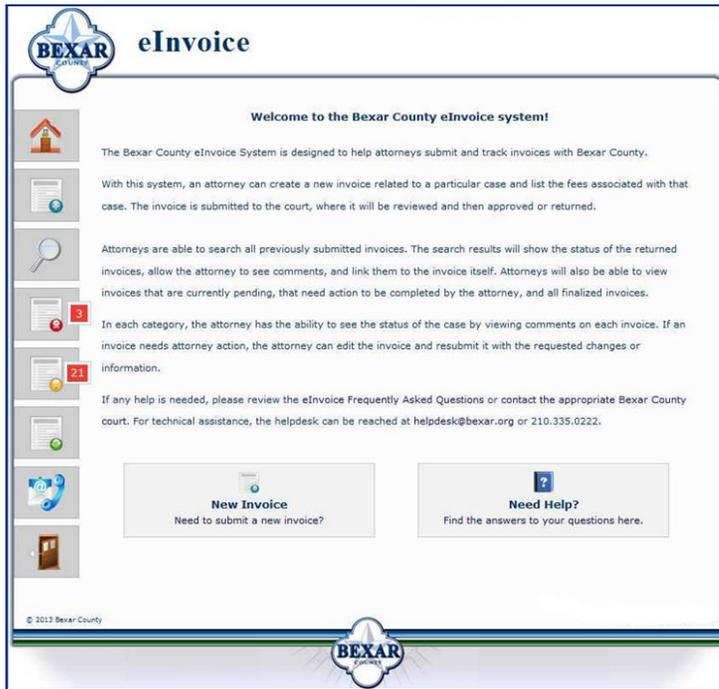
Installed August 25, 2013, the z114 IBM Processor has performed flawlessly, improving throughput of work and reducing the time it takes to get an on-line response for the CICS transaction processor.

As the charts show, an improvement (less CPU for the same amount of work) of over 10% for the month of July versus September, the first full month with a z114. Previously, CICS had a response time for queries (displays) which took one second or less of 98.34%. Now 99.84% of CICS queries are completed in one second or less.

Final counts had been tabulated and fiscal 2013 had a total of 182,716,437 CICS transactions, up 2.76% from 2012.



Welcome to the Bexar County eInvoice system!



The Bexar County eInvoice System is designed to help attorneys submit and track invoices with Bexar County. Previously attorneys used the ALVIE system to submit invoices.

With this new web-based system, an attorney can create a new invoice related to a particular case and list the fees associated with that case. The invoice is submitted to the court, where it will be reviewed and then approved or returned.

Attorneys are able to search all previously submitted invoices. The search results will show the status of the returned invoices, allow the attorney to see comments, and link them to the invoice itself. Attorneys will also be able to view invoices that are currently

pending, that need action to be completed by the attorney, and all finalized invoices.

In each category, the attorney has the ability to see the status of the case by viewing comments on each invoice. If an invoice needs attorney action, the attorney can edit the invoice and re-submit it with the requested changes or information.

If you need assistance, please review the eInvoice “Frequently Asked Questions” at eservices.bexar.org

eInvoice Benefits

- ▶ \$0 System cost to attorneys
- ▶ One time data entry & reduced errors
- ▶ Instant submission of Invoices to courts
- ▶ Courts will have immediate access to invoices
- ▶ Faster approval/payments
- ▶ Real time invoice status
- ▶ Web based - Allowing for external access