

# almis database news

*A Publication of the ALMIS Database Maintenance Consortium*

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**ALMIS Database**  
<http://almis.dws.state.ut.us>

**National Crosswalk  
Service Center**  
[www.xwalkcenter.org](http://www.xwalkcenter.org)

**LMI Institute**  
[www.lmi-net.org](http://www.lmi-net.org)

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It's a bird!  
It's a plane! Never mind, it's only Supersectors...

Last month, the ALMIS Database Maintenance Consortium Structure subcommittee released an addendum to the ALMIS 2.2 Database. Previously, there had not been a coding structure in place within the database to accommodate summary NAICS (North American Industry Classification System) data. This meant you could have stored *detailed* NAICS data but not *aggregate* data unless you had done some tweaking of your own.

If you've studied the make-up of the Sectors and Supersectors you may have walked away with your head spinning. Just when you think things are grouped in an organized fashion—look again! As an example, the

Trade, Transportation, and Utilities Supersector has Sectors 42 through 49 and SECTOR 22?!

Consider the following: Say you are a data user and your ALMIS Database Administrator gave you NAICS data at the 4-digit level but you wanted it at the Sector level to make analysis easier. Thinking ah, this data is just like SIC-based data, you truncate the codes to a 2-digit level and you aggregate based on 2-digit. Everything will fall into place, right? Wrong. Why? Because Sectors 32, 33, 45, and 49 do not officially exist as separate Sectors. Instead, Sectors 31-33, are all rolled into Sector 31 titled "Manufacturing", Sectors 44-45 become "Retail Trade", and Sectors 48-49 are "Transportation and Warehousing". Can't anything be simple?

These are just some of the issues to keep in mind as you use the data and as data is given to customers. Are you including footnotes and documentation on technical considerations when giving the data to your customer?

At any rate, the addendum that was released in February 2003 containing the new table for official BLS NAICS Supersectors and a table for Domains (Goods-Producing and Service-Producing which are aggregates of the Supersectors) are especially useful when sufficient data do not exist to publish at the Sector level. They also reduce the need to suppress information because of confidentiality rules. This alternative aggregation structure has been reviewed by the Office of Management

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## DBA in the Spotlight

### David Adams

Texas Workforce Commission  
Austin, Texas  
David.Adams@twc.state.tx.us



**How long have you been involved in the world of LMI?** 5.5 years.



**How long have you been an ALMIS DBA?** 4 years.

**What is your educational background?**  
Liberal Arts,  
Photography.

**Are you originally from Texas?**  
No.

**What are your interests outside of work?**  
Travel (anywhere), music (most kinds), hiking and biking.

**What is your favorite work-related web site? Why?**  
NCSC and the ALMIS Database Consortium homepage, I use these often.

**What is the strangest job you ever held?**  
I once had a job scraping barnacles off of boats in dry dock on Vancouver Island.

**What is the most rewarding aspect of your current job?**  
The opportunity and freedom to creatively solve database problems, and the people I have met while working with the ALMIS database.

**What is the most challenging aspect of your current job?**  
Coping with NAICS-SIC coding, ALMIS 2.2 structure, and the deployment of a new LMI web site, all in the same year!

**What is fun about your job?**  
Exploring new ways to accomplish the task at hand, establishing requirements for the next generation LMI delivery system, and the people I work with.

**What is the most exotic place(s) you've been?**  
Prague, Paris at Christmas, and inside my own head.

## The Source-er-er: Where Do We Get This Stuff? from Mike (Wizard of Data Sources) Blank

One of the most frustrating tasks facing a new ALMIS Database Administrator (and more than one experienced DBA) is finding non-SESA (State Employment Security Agency) sources of information with which to populate the tables. It is easy to be overwhelmed by the sheer size of the database, with something on the order of 84 lookup, 39 data, and 20 crosswalk tables.

Fortunately, a considerable amount of help is available for both new and experienced ALMIS DBAs. The first stop one should make when populating the database is the National Crosswalk Service Center (NCSC) website ([www.xwalkcenter.org/](http://www.xwalkcenter.org/)). NCSC boasts 3,000 files, in text, delimited text, and FoxPro formats. These tables go back to version 1.0

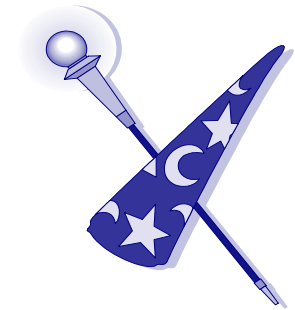
of the database and are as current as version 2.2, the most recent incarnation of the ALMIS Database. NCSC takes much of the tedium out of constructing lookup and crosswalk tables, as the majority of these have already been populated and are available for download. The center also maintains a file of National and State

**"It is easy to be overwhelmed by the sheer size of the database, with something on the order of 84 lookup, 39 data, and 20 crosswalk tables."**

level data for a variety of tables—all in ALMIS format. The ALMIS Database Maintenance Consortium tries to make the task of populating the ALMIS tables as painless as possible. For

this purpose, it has published *ALMIS Data Tables, Suggested Sources*. The LMI Institute normally includes copies of this publication with its ALMIS Database training materials. It can also be downloaded from the National Crosswalk Service Center (NCSC) website ([www.xwalkcenter.org/almisdb.html](http://www.xwalkcenter.org/almisdb.html)).

Until recently, I was having a great deal of difficulty populating and updating the ALMIS tables relating to Education (Progcomp, Programs, Schools). Some States have a dependable source for this information, while others have struggled to find it. Fortunately, the ALMIS Database Maintenance Consortium maintains a ListServ, which DBAs may use to ask and share information. Recently, an enterprising DBA used



the ALMIS ListServ to ask whether institution codes were standardized or state-specific. As it happens, one of our colleagues responded with information about a website of the U.S. Department of Education that contains institution codes for schools in every state—*The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)*, which can be found at <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/index.html>. IPEDS not only contains this information,

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(Continued from page 2) but also updates it frequently. The site also offers free downloadable software that allows access to data relating to postsecondary educational institutions, programs and the number of degrees/certificates awarded.

To subscribe to the ALMIS ListServ, send a note to dbconsort@listserver.iowaccess.org. Leave the subject line blank and paste (or type) the following in the body of the message: subscribe dbconsort.

When I began populating the Iowa ALMIS tables, I tried to find a dependable source of statistics relating to building permits. Iowa has 99 counties, but no centralized reporting requirement. Theoretically, one would have to contact 99 courthouses to compile accurate counts of building permits. However, all was not lost. The Census Bureau collects building permit data quarterly for posting on its website ([www.census.gov/ftp/pub/const/www/newresconstindex.html](http://www.census.gov/ftp/pub/const/www/newresconstindex.html)). Smaller counties may not

report this information quarterly and information for them may not be available at the site. However, even these counties report annually. State LMI shops may acquire annual data in delimited format by calling (301) 457-1321.

The Consortium also funds a specialist who is available to answer your questions. The ALMIS Database Expert can be reached via email at [almis@ncmail.net](mailto:almis@ncmail.net).

The key point to remember when populating the ALMIS tables is that you are not

alone. Somewhere, there is an ALMIS DBA who was once stuck on finding information for the same table that is so frustrating to you. A note to the ListServ or the ALMIS Database Expert can save endless amounts of time.

*Editor's Note: Mike Blank is ALMIS Database Administrator-in-residence at Iowa Workforce Development and has been and continues to be an invaluable asset to the Structure Committee of the ALMIS Database Maintenance Consortium since its inception.*

## DBA in the Spotlight

### Renee Piraino

Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development  
Madison, WI  
[Renee.Piraino@dwd.state.wi.us](mailto:Renee.Piraino@dwd.state.wi.us)



*Editor's Note: It's awfully bright being in the spotlight, hence the sunglasses...*



(Systems Analysis and Programming). It took me 5 years to finish the 2-year program as I was also working full time. I attended school in the evenings. Believe it or not, I hated the Economics course

that was required for my degree. Now that I work with economic issues every day I find it to be most interesting.

### Are you originally from Wisconsin?

No, I was born and raised in the Chicago area. I spent some time in Wisconsin during High School and fell in love with the state. After graduating from HS, I moved back to Southwest Wisconsin and a few years later I moved to Madison. I've lived in Madison since the summer of 1979. When I first came to Wisconsin I had to ask what a "bubbler" was (Do you know?) and roared at the "Do you have ornery sows?" television commercials.

### What are your interests outside of work?

Listening to music, watching movies and reading. I've been reading mostly non-fiction these days, but I'm also a Sci-Fi fan. I have very eclectic taste.

### What is your favorite work-related web site?

The Workforce ATM. I also love reading the periodical "The Economist".

### What is the strangest job you ever held?

I was an order taker at a Sizzler Steak House while in HS. Not that it was really a strange job, but it proved to me that the food service industry was not my bag. I would get so stressed out that I had to step out back and throw up. I think I only lasted about a month.

### What is the most rewarding aspect of your current job?

Right now, developing an Internet application to disseminate LMI from the ALMIS database. It took us

some time to get going, but now it's progressing at a fast pace. We hope to have the whole thing developed and live by the end of this year.

### What is the most challenging aspect of your current job?

Making sense of the diversity and nuances of the Federal programs and all the code changes.

### What is fun about your job?

Dealing with all the professional people in the department and being able to fulfill the need for good LMI.

### What is the most exotic place you've been?

Negril, Jamaica. I was there in 1983 and 1984 when there was still empty beach.

### How long have you been involved in the world of LMI?

Since July 1999.

### How long have you been an ALMIS DBA?

Since July 1999; however, not seriously so until November of 2000.

### What is your educational background?

I have an Associate in Applied Science degree

## ALMIS DATABASE Q & A

### Are all states using the ALMIS Database?

Yes. The Workforce Information Core Products and Services Grant (PY 2002) from the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration (ETA) specifies the population of all tables designated as core tables in accordance with guidelines issued by the ALMIS Database Maintenance Consortium.

The grant also specifies that grantees are required to deploy applications that allow electronic public

access to the state's ALMIS Database and states are encouraged to develop systems that facilitate customer access to information across multiple states and for labor market areas that cross state boundaries. While each state may have their own delivery systems the underlying ALMIS Database is essentially standard across the board.

If you'd like to read more about what is specified as a core deliverable under the grant you can find the current program year 2002's grant

online at <http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/> (select TEG-Training & Employment Guidance Letter).

### Is there a mandate to use a specific version of the ALMIS Database? Do I have to upgrade to Version 2.2?

The Workforce Information Core Products and Services Grant (PY 2002), Statement of Work Guidelines explains, "The most current release of the ALMIS Database structure is Version 2.2. Depending on existing state applications for accessing the database, some states

may need to continue maintaining an earlier version for a period of time. States are required to state in the plan which version of the database is currently being used and the projected date for upgrading to Version 2.2 if an earlier version is being used."

### Is there a central location where states are supposed to send their ALMIS Database data?

No. All states are required to create and populate their own ALMIS Database in whatever platform they choose (e.g. SQL Server, Oracle, etc.).

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and Budget (OMB) and is recognized by the Economic Classification Policy Committee.

If you can't remember where you put the addendum or don't remember receiving the addendum via email, you can download the addendum and relevant documentation at [www.xwalkcenter.org/almisdb.html](http://www.xwalkcenter.org/almisdb.html). (Look under "New in Version 2.2".)

For more information on NAICS, please see [www.bls.gov/bls/naics.htm](http://www.bls.gov/bls/naics.htm)

### Dates to Remember

- **April 2003**  
Release of *2003 1st Edition Employer Database* from InfoUSA (Please see update on page 5)
- **May 19-21, 2003**  
LMI Basic Analyst Training, Milwaukee, WI  
[www.lmi-net.org](http://www.lmi-net.org)
- **May 6-8, 2003**  
ALMIS Database Maintenance Consortium Meeting  
Portland, OR (Details TBA)
- **July 2003 TBA**  
ALMIS Database Core Deliverables: An Educational Seminar (Look for more information coming soon!)

However, the only exception at this point is licensed and certified occupational data that is stored in the license, lichist, and licauth tables. This information is required to be sent to the National Crosswalk Service Center as your data is updated (at least biennially). They, in turn, send quarterly updates to the folks at ACInet for inclusion on their site at [CareerOneStop.org](http://CareerOneStop.org).

*If you have a question(s) you would like to see addressed here, please send them to [almis@ncmail.net](mailto:almis@ncmail.net)*

# NOTES from the ALMIS Database Consortium Meeting, February 2003

*In striving to do our best to keep everyone more informed on issues relevant to the ALMIS Database Maintenance Consortium, we have included some highlights from the latest Consortium meeting.*

The ALMIS Database Maintenance Consortium met in Myrtle Beach, SC on February 11–13, 2003. The group split their time between meeting within their designated subcommittees and the full Consortium group.

Regular subcommittees include:

- Structure
- Policies, Procedures, and Core Elements
- Education and Communication

On an as needed basis, other workgroups are formed to handle projects or issues (e.g. Employer Database Contract).

## Meeting Highlights:

⇒ Members gave updates on various consortia, policy councils, workgroups, ETA, and NCSA work activities.

⇒ Funding and approval from ETA was granted for work to begin on XML definitions on the ALMIS Database. A workgroup is being formed to develop those definitions.

⇒ A notice of intent to award the ALMIS Employer Database was issued by Iowa to InfoUSA. Dun & Bradstreet has filed an appeal. A hearing on the appeal is scheduled for late March in Iowa. Further information will be provided as available.

⇒ The most current version of the Employer Database is the 2002 2nd Edition distributed in October 2002. This set of data can be used until May 15, 2003. However, a six-month extension was granted to InfoUSA and another ALMIS Employer Database CD-set will be released April 2003 to the states. The expiration date for display of data from that CD-set will be November 15, 2003.

⇒ The Education and Communication Subcommittee is focusing their efforts this year on development of an ALMIS Database Web portal, online training, and an annual educational seminar to be held sometime this summer.

⇒ The Structure Subcommittee addressed changes that will be made to the database and identified items to include for the next release. Specifically, the group addressed questions submitted from state DBAs that involved the cescode, iomatrix, propval, cpi, and uiclaims tables. They also reviewed the new laytitle table that is currently being used as part of [www.onetcodeconnector.org](http://www.onetcodeconnector.org). The group also began reviewing the data structure associated with the LEHD project and the cenlabor table from EEOC.

⇒ A workgroup is being formed to work with the Projections Consortium on ALMIS Database extracts from the next release of the Micromatrix software.



Employment Security Commission of North Carolina  
P.O. Box 25903  
Raleigh, NC 27611  
[almis@ncmail.net](mailto:almis@ncmail.net)

*The ALMIS Database is a normalized, relational database structure developed for the storage and maintenance of labor market, economic, demographic and occupational information. The ALMIS Database Maintenance Consortium is responsible for the ALMIS Database structure development, update, and maintenance. Members include North Carolina (lead), Connecticut, Georgia, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Carolina, Oregon, South Carolina, Wisconsin, and ETA, along with support from the National Crosswalk Service Center and the LMI Institute.*