eMARS NEWSLETTER
FEBRUARY 19, 2021

Issue 9- Report Developer Addition

If you torture the data long enough, it will confess. –Ronald Coase

EMARS REPORT DEVELOPER COMMUNITY

Report developers are strongly encouraged to join the eMARS reporting discussion forum hosted on the MyPURPOSE platform. This forum will be the primary vehicle for dispensing information to the developer community. The days of email blasts are over (well, aside from this occasional newsletter). And there are a lot of important announcements on the horizon.

In addition to announcements, the forum is comprised of an expanding array of resources, including how-to guides, universe abstracts, universe modifications and additions, and statewide report query changes. It is also a centralized location for developers to collaborate and share development experience and knowledge.

Locate the MyPurpose icon on your desktop and select the MyCOMMUNITY option, and join eMARS Reporting Central.

Agencies and users who do not have access to the MyPURPOSE site may alternatively access guidance documents, TEAMS links for training, and announcements on the Finance website for Functional Areas/eMARS Reporting. This area is currently under development, but will eventually provide some of the same resources as the MyPURPOSE forum.

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WEEKLY TRAINING SESSIONS

Beginning February 26th and continuing every Friday at 11am, weekly eMARS Reporting training sessions will be conducted. Each week will feature a new topic. The intent is for sessions to be approximately 30 minutes in duration, but scheduled for one hour. An attempt will be made to record the session and post it in an accessible location.

The sessions will be conducted on TEAMS. Accessthe TEAMS session via the link provided in the eMARS Reporting Central post or via the link provided on the Finance page under Functional Areas:

Training: Relative Positioning

Dave Sumner posted 2/15/2021 1:12 PM

I will be conducting a weekly training session ev
brief how-to guides on areas identified as comn
typical session will have a duration of thirty min

The first of these sessions will be Friday, Febru

The subject will be **Relative Positioning**. You
tables appear like one continuous report, how t
to delete Excel column A / row 1 from your repo

The intention is to record the session, so if a de
approximately one hour after the conclusion of

Follow the link below to join the meeting on Tea

Please do not engage audio or video functions
addressed at the conclusion of the session.

Microsoft Teams meeting
Join on your computer or mobile app
Click here to join the meeting

Ky.gov An Official Website of the Commonwealth of Kentucky

KENTUCKY FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION CABINET

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Finance and Administration Cabinet > Services > eMARS and Accounting Support > eMARS Functional Areas

eMARS Functional Areas

The Finance & Administration Cabinet administers various eMARS functional areas for the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

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Report Development

Subject: Relative Positioning: Treating tables like Lego blocks
Date: February 26, 2021, 11am (EST)
Estimated time: 30-60 minutes
Note: Recurring weekly every Friday at 11am.

Click here to join the meeting

Attendees will need to add the meeting (and link, if desired) manually to their Outlook calendars

NEW STATEWIDE QUERIES

- **Multi-view Expenditure & Revenue transaction report**
  - *YTD Reports* folder
  - Provides a list of expenditure and revenue transactions, includes many COA values and offers a number of different filter options by COA as well astime-based elements.
- **Retainage by Contract Document**
  - *Retainage* folder
  - Provides a list of all contract documents with a retainage balance

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UNIVERSE ABSTRACTS AND GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS

Report developers have several universes at their disposal. Only a few of them are actively used. SAS has been reviewing each of the universes provided by our business objects vendor (CGI), and, determining their usefulness to Kentucky report developers, and drawing out their details in abstract form. The abstract details are now posted on the Community Forum.

The abstracts provide the following basic information:

- The purpose of the universe
- Notable object classes
- Notable eMARS source tables
- Reasons why developers would utilize this universe
- Limitations presented by this universe
- Other considerations
- List of statewide queries built in the universe

COMPARISON OF KENTUCKY CUSTOM UNIVERSES TO STANDARD BASELINE UNIVERSES
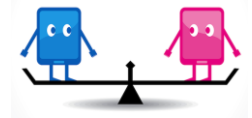
An offshoot of the universe analysis process has been identifying baseline universes that are more useful for a specific reporting goal than the Kentucky custom universe originally built to serve that reporting need.

> A refresher: Baseline universes are standard issue, and provided by our business objects vendor (CGI) to all clients. Kentucky custom universes are built on site in a collaboration between our local CGI staff and Finance personnel. Kentucky custom universes are necessary when baseline universes don't address a Kentucky reporting need.

Many (if not all) of the Kentucky custom universes were created back at the outset of eMARS (2006), to fill in the gaps of baseline universes. However, over the course of time, the improvement of existing baseline universes and the addition of new baseline universes better address the changing needs of the eMARS client community. An excellent example of this is checkwriter reporting. Back in 2006, Kentucky was the only client utilizing this functionality. As such, checkwriters weren't a focus of baseline universes, and as a result, the Kentucky custom universe **KY-Accounts Payable** was built. KY-Accounts Payable is a slim universe whose only purpose is to report on checkwriter documents. It has some, but not all, of the eMARS table fields that constitute a checkwriter file or process. Based on user feedback, the universe is a little bit too slim. However, over time, the adoption of the checkwriter process by Advantage clients has instigated the creation of a universe to address the expanded usage. In the coming weeks we will be announcing a new baseline universe that is specifically intended for checkwriter reporting. It will be more robust than the current Kentucky custom, and will provide developers a much wider array of reporting options. As a result, we will begin the process of redeveloping existing reports that utilize the custom universe and point them, instead, to the new CGI baseline universe.

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There will be several similar projects of this nature, which will be announced in the coming months. Training sessions and guidance documents will be provided for this process, as well as a list of the specific reports and locations of the queries that will require modification.

The goal is to retire all custom universes that are better served by a baseline universe.

QUERY FOLDER CLEANUP

A great many agencies have a lot of clutter in their query folders. A review of the query folders within various departments reveals many queries that are useless, broken, or duplicative of other queries in the folder. It is in the best interest of the report developers of any one department to work with their agency reporting lead to do some clean-up of report queries. Less clutter will make it easier for report users to select the report query most appropriate, but it will also highlight areas of report need.

If additional motivation to work on this task is necessary, there's a big eMARS conversion lurking on the horizon a few years from now, so the more that an agency is able to weed out unnecessary and disabled queries, the less work that will be required in the lead-up to the conversion.

PURGE YOUR DATA

If data is saved on the face of an EBI report query, that information needs to be purged by a report developer. Permanent copies of report results should be exported as PDF or Excel or CSV documents, *never saved on the query itself*. Allowing data to be saved on the face of the report can cause several problems:

- **Sharing of unauthorized data**

Security roles set permissions on the data each user is authorized to view. Report queries reflecting saved data on their face bypass those security role settings. Queries purged of information prevents unauthorized users from viewing discretionary data.

- **Storage cost**

If the user wishes to keep static data of report instances, then the best option is to export the data, either as a PDF or to Excel, and save that information to a network folder.

- **System functionality**

When report queries are saved with sizable amounts of data, those reports use up system resources each time they're opened, which could have the effect of slowing system processes.

- **User confusion**

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Failure to purge the data could result in confusion for the user if the report automatically opens with data presented to them.

The Purge Data function is located on the Data Access tab, in the Data Providers sub-tab.
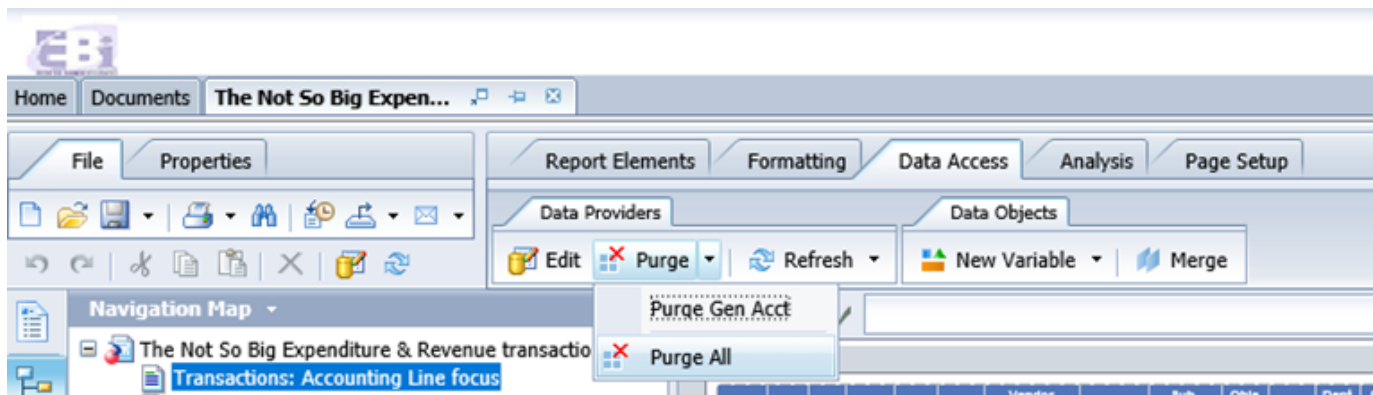
Developers are strongly encourage to invest a little bit of time every week scanning the department's report inventory for queries that reflect saved data. It is all but guaranteed this will become a hot button topic down the road, so it's a wise course of action to insulate a functional area now rather than later.

> Note: It is expected developers will have a garage of unfinished report queries in their personal folders. These are queries whose goal is to augment report development activities, not as actual reports for use in day-to-day activities. There are instances where it is helpful for a developer to reflect some information on these personal reports from time to time. The necessity for purging reports doesn't apply to this kind of scenario. The purging advice is directed at publicly accessible, finalized queries.

KERNEL UNIVERSES

Kernel universes are seed universes. They reflect a narrower focus, typically on one specific eMARS table, and are inserted in appropriate baseline universes. It is a convenient way to populate a range of baseline universes with a particular eMARS table by building an outside source to include in the universe rather than having to build that table in each individual universe. Think of kernel universes as centralized warehouses that feed products to individual stores as needed (as opposed to each individual store having its own warehouse).

It is easy to distinguish the kernel universes from other universes because they have the word 'kernel' in their title and are located in the kernel universe folder (except when there's a problem):

[Type here]

Univ Kernel - Accounting Journal	270	@EBI42\eMARS Financial\Baseline universes\Kernels
Univ Kernel - Budget Vs Actual Measures	114	@EBI42\eMARS Financial\Baseline universes\Kernels
Univ Kernel - Chart of Accounts	826	@EBI42\eMARS Financial\Baseline universes\Kernels
Univ Kernel - Chart of Accounts	766	@EBI42\CGI infoAdvantage R3111 Financial Universes
Univ Kernel - Chart of Accounts (old)	665	@EBI42\eMARS Financial\Baseline universes\Kernels
Univ Kernel - Commodity	184	@EBI42\eMARS Financial\Baseline universes\Kernels
Univ Kernel - Common Reference	47	@EBI42\eMARS Financial\Baseline universes\Kernels
Univ Kernel - Document Catalog	322	@EBI42\eMARS Financial\Baseline universes\Kernels
Univ Kernel - GA Measures	92	@EBI42\eMARS Financial\Baseline universes\Kernels
Univ Kernel - Geographic Location	53	@EBI42\eMARS Financial\Baseline universes\Kernels
Univ Kernel - Pend Actual Measures	74	@EBI42\eMARS Financial\Baseline universes\Kernels
Univ Kernel - Procurement Reference Info	318	@EBI42\eMARS Financial\Baseline universes\Kernels
Univ Kernel - Time	195	@EBI42\eMARS Financial\Baseline universes\Kernels
Univ Kernel - Vendor	463	@EBI42\eMARS Financial\Baseline universes\Kernels

Report queries should never be built in a kernel universe. Kernel universes lack the relationships and contexts present in baseline universes. Furthermore, when queries are built in a kernel universe, it prevents Finance from updating the universe inventory with the latest versions of the kernel universes. That is an obstacle Finance is currently encountering with the recent eMARS 3.11.D/EBI 4.2 conversion.

In March, a list of all queries currently built upon a kernel universe will be posted on the developer's MyPurpose forum. Each of those queries must be redeveloped to point at a different universe. Training sessions will be conducted (TBA) on the tool that will make the process much easier. But it's something which will have to happen soon. Thankfully, there aren't too many of these queries, and most belong to just a few agencies.

The details will be posted on the report developer forum sometime in March.

FEATURED UNIVERSE: FIN-PENDING TRANSACTIONS

Purpose: The primary benefit of the FIN-Pending Transactions universe is for reporting of financial transactions that reflect a phase of pending.

Reasons to use this universe:

- Financial effect
  - Though not finalized, Pending phase transactions may still have the effect of increasing or decreasing measure amounts, including but not limited to cash balance, expenditure/revenue totals, and budget and appropriation balances. These amounts, thus, could affect an array of reporting areas.
- Processes & workflow
  - eMARS transactions should not remain in Pending phase for an indefinite amount of time. A report that tracks outstanding Pending phase transactions might expedite their finalization.

Statewide Queries built in the FIN – Pending Transactions universe

- *Pending transactions by date and department*

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AGENCY REPORTING LEADS

If a developer requires assistance, and it can't be provided by other developers in their functional area or department, their next point of contact is their Agency Reporting Lead. These are the individuals assigned this role based on their experience and expertise, and who are provided the resources by the agency to focus on the reporting function.

Agency Reporting Leads will not only be able to advise on business objects processes and functionality, but will also have a strong familiarity with their agency's query inventory, and thus, be able to point report users and developers to the queries most suited to their needs.

Please refer to the Agency Delegation and Contact Information on the Finance website to identify your particular point of contact.

Customer Resource Center
502-564-9641
877-973-4357
Finance.CRCGroup@ky.gov

https://finance.ky.gov/services/statewideacct/Pages/default.aspx

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