Updating SIMS .net using SOLUS 3
Autumn Main Release 2011

The Autumn Main Release of SIMS.net version 7.142 is an essential upgrade delivering files for the Spring (January) School Census in addition to number of enhancements and fixes. Schools must take the Autumn Main release in order to complete the School Census in January.

Schools should not take this upgrade if they have any outstanding issues with School Census which may result in them being asked by their LA to re-create a census return.

This version of SIMS is only compatible with SQL 2008. Workstations and the SIMS server must have Microsoft .NET installed prior to the upgrade Windows 7 is an approved operating system with SIMS software.

It is essential that:

- **this upgrade is carried out on the SIMS File Server or, in the case of peer to peer installation, on the computer hosting the SIMS database.**
- **The user carrying out the upgrade must be logged in as Administrator (or with full Administrator rights).**
- **SQL must be on version SQL 2008**
- **Microsoft .NET 4 has been installed on the server and ALL SIMS workstations**
- **SOLUS 3 is installed and workstations are showing as On Line**
- **SOLUS 3 has been upgraded to version 3.4.103**

The upgrade will be unsuccessful unless these conditions are satisfied.

This document is intended to support the upgrade of your SIMS system to the Autumn Main 2011 release SOLUS 3. SOLUS 2 users should refer to the supporting document on www.capitaess.co.uk

Checking your SIMS version.

Before proceeding with the Autumn Main release, check your current version of SIMS. Go to **Help | About SIMS .net** and check the version and build numbers. Schools on the Summer update are on version 7.140 and database version 749.

The Autumn Main Release 2011 using SOLUS 3

The upgrade must be carried out on the server hosting the SIMS database while logged on as Administrator. These requirements are detailed on the first page of this document.

To upgrade your version of SIMS .net please proceed as follows:

Backups

Ensure that there are no other users logged into SIMS .net in your school.

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It is important that backups are made before the upgrade, both for SIMS.net and FMS (this is especially important for Personnel 7 users where salary commitment information is being passed between SIMS.net and FMS)

Log into SIMS .net on the main machine and open System Manager. Close the Welcome Screen and go to **Tools | Create Backup**. Call the backup Pre SOLUS Autumn Main 2011 and add the current date, create the backup.

When that has finished, close **System Manager**.

A backup copy of FMS should also be taken at this point. Schools with more than one FMS database need only backup the one linked to SIMS for salary commitments, this will be your main FMS database.

A user with FMS Access Rights levels 4 or 5 can carry out the backup. The backup is created on the Server, not the workstation, unless these are one and the same.

1. Select **Tools | FMS Transactions Backup.**
2. A confirmation dialog is displayed. Click the Yes button to continue. The backup is then carried out.

Ensure that you have a current backup of your MIS system on your backup media, usually a tape.

For the Autumn Main release, there is a new version of SIMS.net (7.142). The following notes support the upgrade to SIMS.net 7.142. It is recommended that any upgrade to FMS is taken as a separate download, there is no need to make an entry in the FMS boxes.

Launching SOLUS 3

On the server or the computer hosting your SIMS database, click on the SOLUS 3 icon, this will start the application

The SOLUS 3 Upgrade Overview

SOLUS 3 works in a similar way to SOLUS 2 in that there are a number of stages to the upgrade. There is a download of the necessary files via the internet, the upgrade of the application files, the upgrade of the SIMS database to a new version and the roll out of the new application files to SIMS workstations.

- **The Download Phase** – A file or series of files associated with the upgrade are downloaded. In SOLUS 3, this activity is carried out in the **Manage Updates** Screen. First the web based Capita database holding updates must be accessed to see if there are upgrades authorised for your site. These will be shown as available, they must be selected and downloaded to your site. As with any internet download, the amount of time taken is dependent upon the size of the file and the speed of the internet connection.

- **The Deployment Phase** – once downloaded, files to carry out the upgrade can be selected and then Deployed. The SIMS database will be backed up and then upgraded. Application files required for the new version of the database will then be downloaded and distributed to workstations. It is important that SIMS workstations are on line and that users logged out of SIMS. Messages will give warnings of the upgrade taking place and will give a countdown to the start of each process. The number of stages in the process will vary with

the nature of the upgrade. As each stage is completed, a message saying that no upgrades are available will appear.

- **Viewing the Deployment History** - When the upgrade is in progress, it is possible to monitor activity by watching the messages appearing in the deployment history screen in addition to the pop up messages that appear. Typically an upgrade will take around 15 to 20 minutes. When complete, a successful message will appear in the Deployment History record for the upgrade undertaken

- **Workstations** – unlike SOLUS 2, there will be no need for users to await files to be sent from the server to the a workstation upgrade when first entering SIMS post upgrade. SIMS will be available and upgraded at the first SIMS logon.

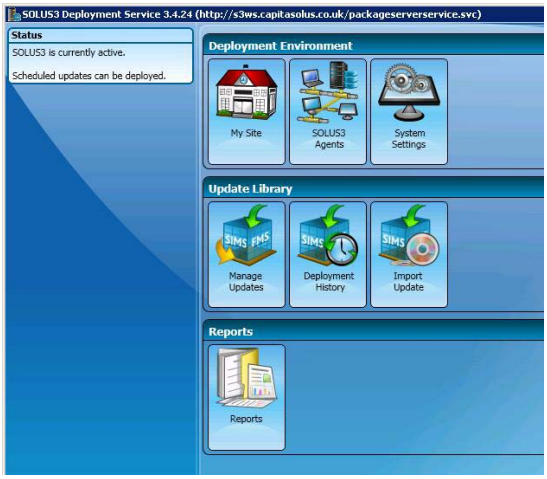
The upgrade should be approached in a series of steps

Step 1 – Checking the SOLUS services are running

- Carry out the upgrade on the SIMS file server while being logged on as Administrator to ensure you have adequate network permissions
- On the desktop, right click on My Computer and choose Manage
- Choose Services and Applications in the right hand panel and then Services
- In the list of services running on the file server, scroll down to the SOLUS 3 services. Check that they are shown as running
- If not, use the Start button to restart them. These services must be in operation for SOLUS 3 to carry out the upgrade.
- Exit the application once this check has been made.

Step 2 – Checking that SIMS workstations are on line

- From the main screen of SOLUS 3, choose SOLUS 3 Agents
- This will show a list of the workstations that have been configured in SOLUS 3. Next to each, there should an indication that the workstation is on line.
- If the workstation is shown as off line, then it may be simply that the workstation is not switched on or connected to the network.
- It may be that the computer is switched on but it is being shown as off line. In this instance, select the workstation and click on the Report Agent button. This will re-establish the link from SOLUS 3 to the workstation.
- Click Close to return to the main SOLUS menu



Step 3 – Checking for and downloading SIMS upgrades

- From the main SOLUS menu, choose **Manage Updates**
- Click on the **Check for New Updates** button, this will result in SOLUS 3 contacting the web Capita server to see if there are upgrades authorised for your site.
- As a result, new upgrades will appear in the list

- In your version of SOLUS 3 is not 3.4.103 (check in the title of the screen), it is necessary to upgrade to that version of SOLUS before proceeding with the Autumn Release
- For the SIMS Autumn Release it will be necessary to download the following files:
    - SIMS Autumn 2011
    - SIMS Database Autumn 2011 (3.61.778)
    - SIMS Summer 2011
    - SIMS Database Summer 2011 (3.61.749)
    - SIMS Database Spring 2011
    - SIMS Database Spring 2011 (3.61.722)

Note *- that if SOLUS 3 has been used previously to upgrade to Summer 2011, Spring and Summer files will be available as they have already been downloaded*

- Select these files and **Click on Downloaded the Selected Update**
- The progress of the download will be shown in the downloaded column. Await the status of all the required elements to be **Downloaded.**

Note *– Although this is the Autumn Release upgrade, SOLUS 3 will need to check if your current version of the database is upgradeable. As a result, the Spring and Summer files are required as part of the process.*

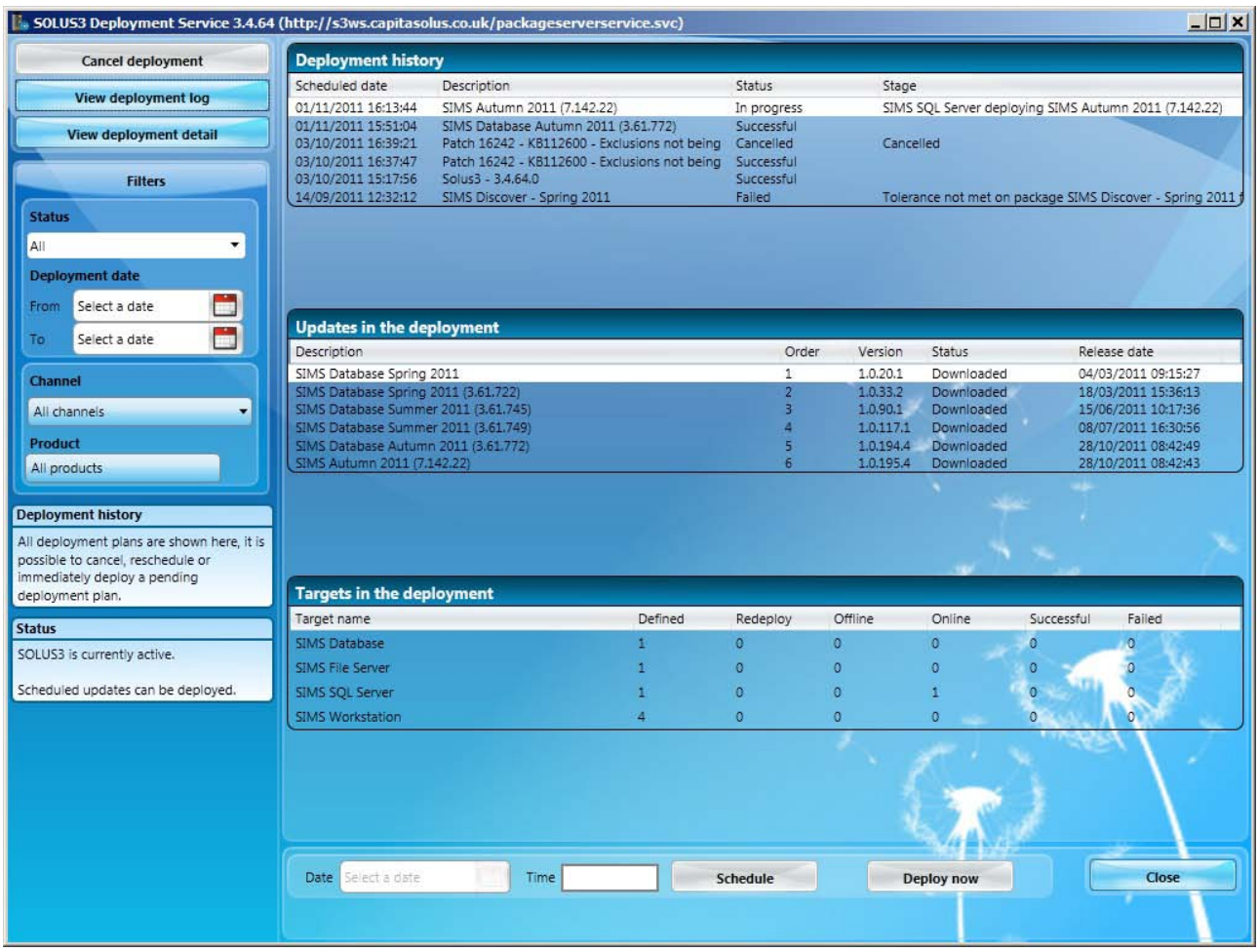
Step 4 – Deploying the Autumn Release

- In the **Manage Updates** screen, select Autumn 2011 and click on the **Deploy Selected Updates** button
- The screen will show the updates to be deployed, in this case the 6 files and the Targets to be deployed to at the bottom of the screen. These are the workstations, their status should be on line
- To continue with the upgrade, click on **Deploy Now**.
- Confirm that the deployment can take place.
- Following that a message that the update will be deployed and that progress can be viewed in the deployment history screen will appear.
- Close the screen to return to the Main SOLUS 3 menu

Note *– it is possible to schedule the upgrade to take place at a later time if required*

Step 5 – Viewing the Deployment History

- Although the deployment is an automatic process requiring no additional user interaction, progress can be followed by viewing the **Deployment History** screen.
- From the main SOLUS 3 menu, choose **Deployment History**



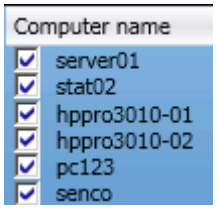
- The main part of the screen is divided into 3 panels.
- At the top there is a list of all previous deployments. As the list grows, it may be necessary to scroll down the list to find the deployment that has just started.
- The initial status for the Autumn upgrade will show as In Progress
- In the middle are the updates required for the deployment, in the case of the Autumn Release, the 6 files previously downloaded.
- In the bottom panel there is a list of the targets for the deployment which includes the SIMS database, the SIMS file server, the SQL server and the SIMS workstation.
- As the upgrade progresses messages change in the top panel next to the deployment being undertaken.
- Additional messages will appear not only on the file server, but also on workstations warning that an upgrade is going to take place. This will happen for each element of the upgrade. Small balloon messages may also appear above the system tray on each computer.
- A warning and countdown is given to all users that the element of the upgrade is going to take place. This is an additional prompt for users to log off SIMS
- As each element is completed, there will be a message that there are no further upgrades available. This message refers to the element just completed, it does not mean that the whole upgrade is complete. In the case of the Autumn Release, six such messages should be expected.

- At the end of the process, the record in the top panel will show as successful. The record in the bottom panel will show the elements of the upgrade which have been successfully upgraded.
- Workstations have been upgraded to the new version and users logging onto SIMS can access the software immediately without waiting for the workstation upgrade to take place as was the case with SOLUS 2.

Step 6 – Post upgrade checks

Although not an essential activity, it is advisable to check the deployment message in the top panel and the targets that have been upgraded in the bottom panel.

- The top panel may show as partially successful and this is likely to indicate that not all workstations have been upgraded as they weren't able to be accessed during the upgrade process. The most likely circumstances will be the fact that they were not switched on or indicated as on line is SOLUS 3 (see Step 2).
- When workstations become available for upgrade, with SOLUS version 64 or later, it is possible to redeploy to workstations without having to repeat the upgrade process. Click on the Redeploy icon next to the workstation entry. This opens a list of workstations, tick the ones requiring the upgrade.



- Files will be delivered to the workstations requiring the upgrade, the usual warning of deployment will be seen.

The What's New Document

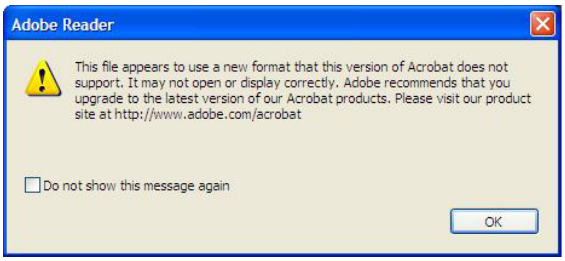
In order to minimise the amount of storage space (and SOLUS download time) taken up by our user documentation, PDF files will be provided that can be read only by the Adobe Acrobat Reader version 6 or above.

The What's New document will only open for the first login, but can be reviewed from the SIMS document menu. The user will be presented with the What's New document instead of the usual SIMS.net page.

The document informs the user that the upgrade has been completed.

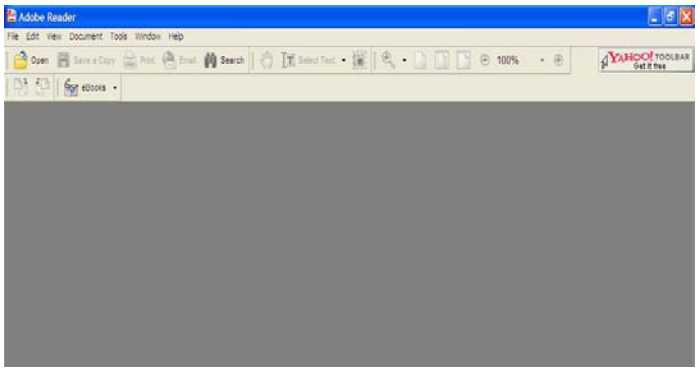
Some consideration for the SIMS manager in schools:

- This document is intended for all schools using SIMS software and refers to release notes available on the SOLUS website. There is no need to visit this site as schools supported by Education Support Services (ESS) as part of Capita Education Services are provided with notes on the content of SIMS releases tailored to the phase of the school. This document may be sent by email or can be downloaded from www.capitaess.co.uk.
- The document is a PDF and opens automatically using Adobe Acrobat reader.
- If Acrobat is not installed, the Welcome Page does not display
- An Acrobat warning message may display encouraging an update of the product. This may be ignored by clicking OK and



the option used not to show the warning message again.

- When the What's New document is Closed, Adobe Acrobat may be left running and will have to be closed manually by clicking on the usual close application icon, before the first SIMS.net screen is seen.
- The What's New page facility cannot be disabled and the document can be revisited via the SIMS documentation menu.



Checking the SIMS Version

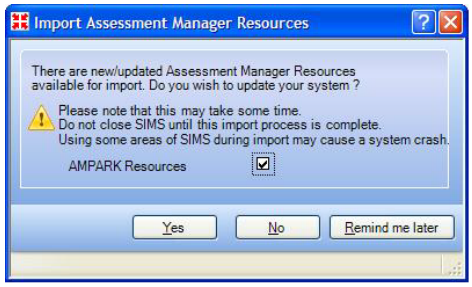
As a final confirmation that the upgrade has completed successfully, go to Help | About SIMS .net and check that you have the correct version. 7.142, and build number, 3.61.772

Importing the latest versions of SIMS .net reports

There are new pre-defined reports in the May release. To ensure that your system has the latest reports available, imported reports by carrying out the following:

- In SIMS .net: **Reports | Import,**
- Click on the **Open** button
- High-light **Predefined_Reports_v7.142.RptDef** and click on **Open**.
- Click on **Import.**

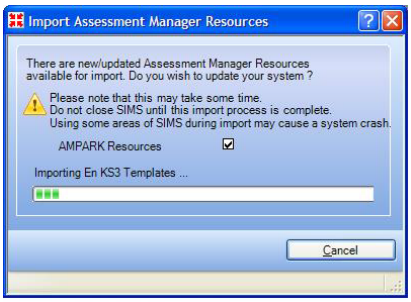
Automatic updates for AMPARK



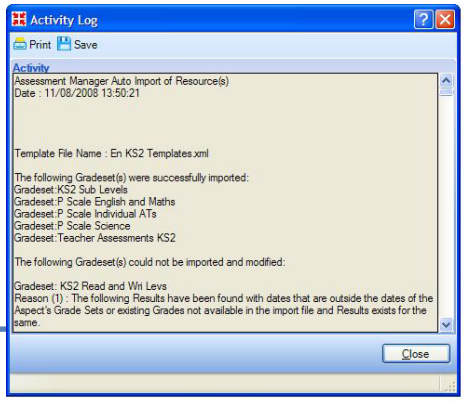
If there are updates to AMPARK available, the following screen will appear when a user with Assessment Co-ordinator access first enters Assessment Manager following the upgrade.

- Click **Yes**. It is recommended that Assessment Manager users are not making changes to aspects or templates while this process takes place.

- The AMPARK resources are imported. The content of the import will vary with the type of school. The appropriate Key Stage files will be imported. Primary schools will have the option of importing the new tracking grid templates.
- This process will only take place after an update to AMPARK and will only need to be undertaken once for all workstations to use the materials.



- The usual report of the imported material concludes the process



Any problems with the upgrade process should be reported to the helpdesk on 0844 893 8000 for assistance