

# Distance Support / NIAPS Newsletter



March, 2012

## Message From the Navy's Distance Support Assistant Program Manager

Hello, I am CDR Cord Luby, the Assistant Program Manager for Distance Support and Fleet Liaison assigned to Program Executive Office for Enterprise Information Systems Sea Warrior Program Office (PEO EIS PMW 240).

Welcome to our first Distance Support/Navy Information Application Product Suite (NIAPS) newsletter to the Fleet! You can expect future newsletters with useful and informative updates as our program continues to support the Fleet.

The target audiences for this newsletter are COs, XO's, Department Heads, COMMOs, TRAINOs, Personnel Officers, Command Career Counselors and NIAPS System Administrators (SYSADs) and of course, distribution as desired.

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## Navy Information Application Product Suite (NIAPS) Overview

How can Sailors fulfill training and readiness requirements while underway in a "disconnected" environment when the Internet has become such an indispensable part of their lives? The answer is through NIAPS, which provides afloat access to essential applications while reducing reliance on Internet connectivity.

NIAPS comprises more than 40 applications and databases launched from a single distance support portal. NIAPS runs applications specifically tailored to individual afloat units for training, career management, maintenance, technical drawings, logistics, human resources, as well as morale and welfare support, all of which are produced by various Navy functional organizations.

NIAPS uses the combination of processes called replication and data compression technology to overcome bandwidth limitations. Replication uses special software to compare shipboard data files with those held ashore and when bandwidth becomes available, only exchanges the data required to update differences between the two files. Traditional web-based applications can be re-hosted locally within the NIAPS software which resides on your existing ship's server, shortening the time needed to run an application. It's an important distinction that NIAPS is not a stand-alone server (i.e., hardware) but is a "software suite" that is hosted on your existing server. The data exchange occurs automatically between NIAPS afloat software and the Knowledge Management Center (KMC) at Crane, Indiana, six times a day at pre-determined times (i.e., normally off-peak hours) or when Internet connectivity is available and during a manual replication that is required one time per day by your SYSAD.

NIAPS data compression technology further reduces bandwidth requirements by using special algorithms to reduce or compress the number of information bits which need to be

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## Navy Information Application Product Suite (NIAPS) Overview

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transmitted. To illustrate, rather than download an entire Navy Electronic Learning (NeL) online course—a large file requiring significant bandwidth—Sailors can access the same course through NeL Afloat via NIAPS. Once the Sailor finishes the course, records required to document completion are compressed and uploaded through NIAPS and sent ashore to update the Sailor’s Electronic Training Jacket (ETJ).

NIAPS is a complex information technology software suite that uses the latest software technology. Applications are owned and maintained by more than 20 different Navy functional stakeholders. Keeping these applications operationally available is a daunting challenge that falls to a key individual on each platform, the NIAPS SYSAD. SYSADs are responsible for monitoring NIAPS system status, replication processes, program updates, database installation and—most importantly—conducting a daily manual replication and regular system backups! These two steps alone will resolve the majority of issues encountered by the Fleet.

SYSADs also help members access the distance support portal on the ship’s network so they can use locally-hosted applications. Consequently, SYSADs significantly impact a platform’s readiness and the crew’s ability to meet their daily requirements. Current references listed below are available for download on Navy Knowledge Online (NKO) at the following location:

<https://wwwa.nko.navy.mil/portal/careermanagement/home/navycareertools>

- COMNAVNETWARCOM 061140Z Aug 09
- COMNAVSURFOR 252356Z AUG 10
- NIAPS 1.2 System Administration Guide
- NIAPS 2.0 System Administration Guide
- NIAPS 2.1 System Administration Guide
- NIAPS 2.2 System Administration Guide
- NIAPS 2.3 System Administration Guide
- NSIPS and NIAPS Routine System Checks (COMMO-ADPO) (27JUN2011)
- Global Distance Support Center (GDSC) Essentials (user aid)

## NIAPS Best Practices at a Glance

If you are:	You need to know:
Command Leadership (CO, XO, CMC, and Work Center Supervisors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Your ship’s NIAPS should be automatically replicating changes in the database six times a day. Auto replication downloads high priority files only.</li> <li>■ Your NIAPS SYSAD should perform a manual replication once per day to view medium and low priority files that are available for download.</li> <li>■ Key applications are TORIS, MFOM SKED, eSOMS, ATIS, ICAS, NeL Afloat, Fleet Training Management and Planning System (FLTMPs) Afloat, and the Distance Support Portal.</li> <li>■ Your ship’s NTMPS Afloat (NAFL) Datamart should arrive weekly via NIAPS replication and should be verified by your NIAPS SYSAD. The NAFL Datamart delivers UIC-specific data that updates FLTMPs Afloat, NeL Afloat, and determines which e-Learning Afloat courses are available onboard.</li> <li>■ Your ship should designate one primary and at least one secondary (i.e., trained) NIAPS SYSAD.</li> <li>■ Your NIAPS SYSAD should receive system training.</li> <li>■ NIAPS “eAlerts” are sent to NIAPS@hull#.navy.mil and contain important information. This address should be established as a distribution list that includes the ITC, COMMO, ADPO, and TRAINO.</li> <li>■ The Navy Help Desk (GDSC) is available to your crew 24/7 for issues that cannot be resolved onboard (see contact information on the last page).</li> </ul>
NIAPS System Administrator (SYSAD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ensure crew has access to Distance Support Portal and understands NIAPS and Internet differences.</li> <li>■ Your ship’s NIAPS should be automatically replicating changes to the database six times a day.</li> <li>■ You should conduct one manual replication every day per NETWARCOM policy. If any Learning Management System (LMS) publications are present but too large to download, inform the TRAINO and then download at the earliest opportunity.</li> <li>■ Your ship’s NTMPS Afloat Datamart (NAFL) should arrive weekly via replication.</li> <li>■ Content Health Indicator Tool (CHIT) verifies NIAPS replication status and data currency.</li> <li>■ NIAPS “eAlerts” are sent to NIAPS@hull#.navy.mil and contain important information. Ensure distribution list includes the ITC, COMMO, ADPO, and TRAINO.</li> <li>■ Installation training is provided when NIAPS is installed on your ship. Periodic training is offered annually onboard through ship visits and in San Diego and Norfolk every six months, or you can take the NIAPS NeL course A-150-1800.2.</li> <li>■ NIAPS System Admin Guides are available on the NKO Navy Career Tools page, listed under the yellow “Career Management” tab at the top left of your NKO home page.</li> </ul>
Communications Officer (COMMO) and ADP Officer (ADPO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Monitor NIAPS performance daily to support your crew, TRAINO, PERSO, and CCC.</li> <li>■ See information above for NIAPS SYSAD.</li> </ul>

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## NIAPS Best Practices at a Glance

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If you are:	You need to know:
Training Officer (TRAINO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Over 1,100 NeL Afloat courses are available on NIAPS. Routinely verify the NeL course catalog is available to the crew.</li> <li>The NIAPS SYSAD can check if any LMS publications are awaiting manual replication to the NeL library. If the file is too large to download, contact the Navy Help Desk and request that a DVD be mailed to the ship.</li> <li>Maintain relationship with COMMO/ADPO and NIAPS SYSAD to ensure a high degree of the NIAPS application's currency and reliability.</li> <li>Monitor and report to the Chain of Command the currency of Navy Career Tools data (i.e., inbound NAFL Datamart, inbound LMS amendments/e-Learning content, and outbound e-Learning completions).</li> <li>Key applications are NeL Afloat, including the AILE/LMS, ETJ Afloat, TORIS, NTMPS Afloat Datamart (NAFL), FLTMPMS Afloat, and Navy COOL to Go.</li> </ul>
Command Career Counselor (CCC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key applications are the Afloat Navy Career Tools Suite (NeL Afloat, ETJ Afloat, FLTMPMS Afloat, and Navy COOL to Go).</li> </ul>

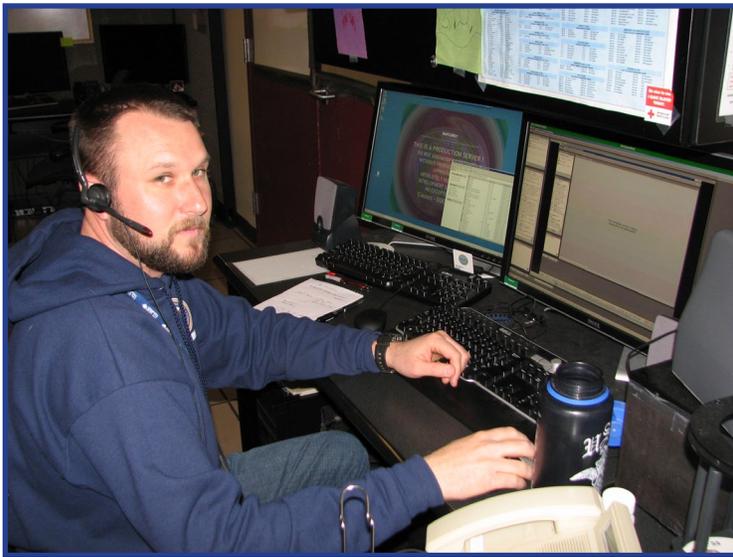
## NIAPS Version 2.4 Update

It has been approximately 1.5 years (Q3 FY10) since the launch of the previous NIAPS release to the Surface Fleet. Having said that, the Distance Support/NIAPS Team is excited to announce the release of NIAPS 2.4 is right around the corner. Beginning in Q2 FY12, the Distance Support/NIAPS Team will be engaging in operational system tests across a limited number of ships. Once testing is complete, Fleet-wide release of NIAPS 2.4 will begin in early Q3 FY12 and be installed across the Surface Fleet by the end of calendar year 2012. This will ensure every surface ship and aircraft carrier has the most up to date applications and significantly reduce application version variances (from 173 down to 91) by reducing down from five versions of NIAPS to one.

This release includes new applications to NIAPS, as well as updates to existing applications. One example of an upcoming capability new to NIAPS is EdgeService. This application enhances retrieval and management of navigational charts by allowing the navigation team afloat to manage Maritime Safety Information (MSI) and Digital Nautical Chart (DNC) updates from the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency (NGA). Another example of an upcoming capability new to NIAPS is STAT!Ref, which is a custom search and document viewer application for medical content. Many existing applications will also be updated during the NIAPS 2.4 upgrade process including Maintenance Figure of Merit (MFOM), Planned Maintenance System scheduler (SKED), and Total Ships Information Management Systems (TSIMS).

The NIAPS 2.4 release will be the largest release to date. The total expected size will be over 9 gigabytes. In preparation for the release, the Distance Support/NIAPS Team will be pre-staging this content prior to a Fleet-wide release. The NIAPS SYSAD will have the option to initiate the download of the content pending when that bandwidth is available and sustainable (most likely while in port). In the event that bandwidth is not available, the Distance Support/NIAPS team will distribute DVDs containing the update, as requested.

To see when your ship or carrier is scheduled for the NIAPS version 2.4 update, visit [www.distancesupport.navy.mil](http://www.distancesupport.navy.mil), click on the CONTENT tab, and then click on NIAPS Installation Schedule under NIAPS Quick Links. Also, the latest NIAPS policy message was recently released (DTG 091849Z MAR 12) ...look for it in your traffic!



**Mr. Dave Whorral is one of the many call center professionals standing by to provide support and assistance through the NIAPS Help Desk in Crane, IN. Contact information:**

**The NIAPS Help Desk**  
**E-mail: [anchordesk@navy.mil](mailto:anchordesk@navy.mil)**  
**Phone: 1-877-418-6824**





## Afloat Navy Career Tools Suite Updates (Maintenance Update 1B-5 patch)

The Distance Support/NIAPS Team is currently finalizing testing of the latest Navy Career Tools applications hosted within the NIAPS software suite. These applications consist of NeL Afloat, which is commonly referred to as the Afloat Integrated Learning Environment (AILE), the ETJ Afloat, and the FLTMPs Afloat.

For the past year, course content within the Learning Management System (LMS), which includes Navy e-Learning accessed via the Internet, has been developed to a standard not compatible with older versions of the AILE. Because of this incompatibility, the Navy e-Learning team has been developing an update to the AILE application (called the MU1B-5 patch), which will support the most recently developed LMS content.

Furthermore, enhancements to the ETJ Afloat and FLTMPs Afloat will allow shipboard personnel to monitor status of NeL Afloat courses completed onboard and pending formal documentation in the ETJ and FLTMPs ashore. In addition to the AILE update, the ETJ Afloat and FLTMPs Afloat applications are also undergoing an update to support remote monitoring of the application.

In order to provide the Fleet with these enhanced capabilities, the Distance Support/NIAPS Team is working diligently with the application owners in verifying and validating the upgrade's progress across all NIAPS platforms. Between October 2011 and February 2012, an operational system test was conducted on a controlled number of ships. As a result of these tests, improvements were identified and are now being incorporated into the upgrade process.

The MU1B-5 patch release is targeted for all platforms with an anticipated Fleet-wide release starting in Q3 FY12. The MU1B-5 patch will be installed immediately after your NIAPS 2.4 update.

## Distance Support Overview

The Global Distance Support Center (GDSC, or also known as the Navy's Distance Support Help Desk) is available 24/7/365 to get the answers you need to any question or problem. On the shipboard NIAPS, use the web form to contact the GDSC with your request (do not use this form if NIAPS is experiencing replication issues). You may also e-mail your request to [anchordesk@navy.mil](mailto:anchordesk@navy.mil), as well as use text or online chat. The personnel at the GDSC will answer your question or find the right person to answer it.



***The GDSC team in Norfolk, VA is ready to answer questions and provide support 24/7/365. The GDSC serves as the Fleet's single source of support on any topic for all military, their families, plus government and contract employees.***

No problem or question is out of bounds—from requesting a tech assist or technical publication, finding part numbers, getting help with requisitions and finding shipping status, contacting ChaplainCare, or getting answers to questions about pay, detailing, and your Navy career.

The GDSC is your first and only necessary stop to get help on anything during your deployment or while ashore. Fast, efficient and private, you can depend on one thing: GDSC is your advocate, making sure you have what you need to do your job and to live your Navy life.

Help at your fingertips:  
[www.distancesupport.navy.mil](http://www.distancesupport.navy.mil)  
Answers: Right. Now.

***The Sea Warrior Program (PMW 240) manages a complex portfolio of information technology (IT) systems to recruit, train, pay, promote, move, retire, and support Navy personnel and deliver Distance Support IT to the Fleet. The PMW 240 Program is part of the Navy Program Executive Office for Enterprise Information Systems (PEO-EIS) which develops, acquires, and deploys seamless enterprise-wide IT systems with full lifecycle support for the warfighter and business enterprise. The editorial content of this newsletter is edited and approved by the Public Affairs Office of the Sea Warrior Program.***

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