

BASH Reporting



By Derek Nelson

Aviators have always had to watch out for birdstrikes, and the term BASH has been familiar for a long time. But huge changes are coming to the BASH system. For one thing, the program isn't limited to birds, but includes all animals. The occasional deer or alligator can be included (a wild-dog strike was reported recently). More importantly, the technology for reporting and querying has undergone a major upgrade.

When you start using the new BASH reporting system on the Naval Safety Center website, you will be applying the efforts of a development team: Louise Hyatt (lead programmer), Dianne Renn and Patrice Lilley (programmers), Carleen McAndrews and Yvonne Drummond (database administrators), and Laura Bishop (systems administrator). Typically, these teams are unrecognized, and even when their efforts are appreciated, the average user has no clue as to the amount of work required. Ideally, the forms, screens and reports are simple, "like a first-grader could have done it," Hyatt says. But, she adds, that's how you recognize a good program.

Hyatt started on the new BASH system in October 2001 and worked steadily through August 2002. Lilley started on the

query feature last summer. The previous system did offer an on-line form to use as a starting point for a bird-strike report, but after you filled it out, you had to submit it via message as a text file. It included very few mandatory fields or validation, and as a result, it didn't produce very good data. A Safety Center staff member then hand-coded the reports into the database.

The new system offers "select lists" (pull-down menus) to choose from (for aircraft type, for example), which makes reporting easier, quicker and more accurate. You can add records and edit existing ones. Using the old system, you could produce some canned reports of various types, containing a few fields. The data was usually at least a few months old and somewhat unreliable. Using the new system, you'll be able to query by location, time, aircraft and airfield, in a much more interactive way. The resulting data will be much more useful to aircrew, base operations and wildlife managers.

BASH is the first part of the Safety Center's on-going WESS (Web-Enabled Safety System) project, which will eventually allow fleet users to report all hazards and mishaps on-line, and to do custom retrievals of real-time data, as well. 

Derek Nelson is the head, media department, Naval Safety Center.