NWX-US DEPT OF COMMERCE

DECCS Tips and Tricks

December 9, 2020

1:00 pm CT

Coordinator: Welcome and thank you for standing by. For the duration of today’s conference, all parties will be in listen-only mode until the question-and-answer session of the conference. At that time, you may press Star 1 on your phone to ask a question. I would like to inform all parties that today’s conference is being recorded. If you have any objections, you may disconnect at this time. I would now like to hand the conference over to Ms. Wendy Peebles. Thank you, you may begin.

Wendy Peebles: Thank you operator. Good afternoon everyone. My name is Wendy Peebles, Lead Outreach Coordinator, Census Bureau Economic Management Division. Today, Karen Wrege from the State Department, Director of Defense Trade Controls, Chief Information Officer, will continue the discussion on the tips and tricks of the desk.

The census team is happy to collaborate with the State Department to provide you this webinar. Thank you all for joining today. We have an informative webinar planned and would like to go over a few items before we start. The webinar today is being recorded and for confidentiality reasons, we ask that during the question-and-answer period that will occur at the end of today’s webinar that you do not disclose your company’s name or any other sensitive information. You may submit your questions via the chat to all panelists. The chat will be monitored during the webinar.

The presenter will address as many questions as possible during the webinar. And the contact information will be provided for further follow up. Approximately 7 to 10 business days following the webinar the transcript, recording and presentation will be posted to the Web site. Lastly, we value your feedback so please complete the evaluation form as it assists in planning future webinars.

And before the State Department comes forth with their presentation, I would just like to share a few resources that the Census Bureau offers. The resources involve the COVID-19 datahub, Census Business Builder and the Trade Source (newsletter).

So quickly the COVID-19 pandemic with the pandemic the Census Bureau developed an interactive datahub and resource page to help decisionmakers understand the social and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This COVID-19 interactive datahub has a dashboard that contains demographics, social, economic and business data at the state and county level to help guide your business operations. So, I encourage you to visit the site.

Next, we have the Census Building Builder - the Census Business Builder excuse me. The Census Business Builder is a suite of services that provide selected demographic and economic data from the Census Bureau tailored to specific types of users in a simple to access format. It provides data for business owners who need to make key decisions for business plans and better understanding of their markets.

And lastly the Trade Source newsletter is published twice a year in January and July. The newsletter is a resource tool to keep businesses informed on expanding business operations globally. The newsletter will include articles on compliance, international trade statistics and also featured articles from our partnership agencies on financial support, export licensing and export resources and tools for business growth.

So I just wanted to share with you just a few of those items, so please visit the Census Web site at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov). Place one of those headings in the search and you can find more information. So, at this time I’m going to pass it on to Karen. Thank you.

Karen Wrege: Thank you so much Wendy and it’s so good to be here this afternoon. Really appreciate everyone coming on. I know everyone’s probably fatigued of all these virtual opportunities for learning and information. But I do appreciate being on today.

This is just an introductory slide. I think most of you probably know me by now. We’ve done these sorts of webinars every quarter since we launched and even before that in anticipation of the launch of the Defense Export Control and Compliance System or DECCS.

So, let’s go ahead to the next slide. So first I wanted to just kind of go through what we’re going to be talking about today. I’m going to do a very, very brief DECCS reflection, sort of the state of the union of DECCS, you know, in the next slide. And then I’m going to talk a little bit about a user group that we just received approval for from OMB. And we’re going to talk a little bit about that and how that’s going to work in terms of our roadmap planning for the external components of DECCS. And then I’m going to talk a little bit about how your development process works for enhancement and bug fixes. And then I’m going to turn it over to one of my colleagues, (Chris) who’s going to do a demonstration of DECCS, little pieces of it that we’re still getting a lot of question on. And then we’ll have plenty of time for questions and answers, you know, so be thinking about what questions you have. And then we’ll either do that through the chat or we’ll also have a live operator taking questions from you. So please, you know, if you think of a question as we’re going through this jot it down and they’ll be plenty of opportunity. About half of the time will be spent answering your questions.

Next slide. All right. So, this has been a really big year I think for all of us. Users of DECCS and also the directorate, you know, we basically launched right before COVID started in February. And, you know, thank goodness that we did because it would have been a lot more difficult to work with our legacy systems when everybody was at home and still for the most part are at home doing telework.

So, believe it or not we’ve had almost 40,000 helpdesk tickets. This is not, you know, a great number because it’s an enormous number. And it means that a lot of people, you know, had questions and needed help to get enrolled in DECCS and also to get affiliated with their company and to sort of learn the ins and outs of how DECCS works. So, it doesn’t really surprise me. But that is a lot of calls.

I would say that this webinar, you know, is trending downward which is good news. We, you know, had 1,000, 1,200 attendees and I’m looking at the attendee list and we’re at 150. That might be good news because people are more comfortable and more familiar with DECCS. And so, you know, they don’t feel like they need to attend this webinar or maybe it’s December and people are taking user leave so it’s hard to say. But it’s really all about for me DECCS for industry and DECCS for DDTC. And true it’s all about the data. And that’s why I sort of, you know, look at these trends, you know, to see sort of where we are.

But what I can say is that I feel like we’ve together adapted to the new system. Although I think it’s been painful for a lot of people. And I really have a lot of gratitude for everyone’s patience in getting in and getting setup. But we’ve got a little over 23,000 enrollees - people that have enrolled in DECCS from 16,701 unique companies.

So that includes our registrants. It includes users that don’t need to be registered. It includes folks - not US persons that might be doing retransfer, re-export applications, people who are wondering if, you know, their particular commodity is even under our control. So, doing a commodity jurisdiction request for example. Or someone not really understanding the ITAR that might be doing, you know, a request for an advisory opinion.

So, all sorts of different use cases. But the enrollees come from 16,700 unique companies. We published, pushed out 631 knowledge articles or learning guides. That’s a lot of material. You know I think it’s great that we have it all there. But I do recognize that’s a lot of material and, you know, sometimes it’s just easier to do a service request you know. But I would encourage you these - these knowledge articles and learning guides are very well written and they’re very well vetted and they give you a lot of information. And there’s ways to search for those. So, you may not have to do a helpdesk ticket because the information may well be available on the Web site.

We have processed 11,872 registrations since we launched in February. And the licenses that have been issued and available for industry to pull down have been almost 19,000. So, I would say those numbers are tracking with what we’re used to doing. And I think that, you know, the demographics I hope of the helpdesk tickets will continue to trend down because it means that things are working better for people and people are, you know, getting more and more familiar with it.

So, let’s move onto the next slide. So now this is, you know, we’ve been at this for, you know, several months. And we have been primarily focused on bug fixes although we have created some enhancements that have been based on information that we’ve received in our helpdesk tickets and also information that we’ve received from the Defense Trade Advisory Group which has been really helpful in terms of prioritizing what they think we should be doing on behalf of industry.

But we also got some recommendations from the Defense Trade Advisory Group about starting a DECCS user group. And so, we are starting that DECCS user group that was recommended. And the plan is, you know, to put out - and I don’t know if it’s gone out yet but we’re going to put out a Web notice inviting industry folks to express their interest in being part of this user group. You’ll have about two weeks to do that. And then if we - the idea is that we’re going to have up to 50 members of this group.

So, it’s going to be a pretty large group. But we want to have a wide variety of companies, entities, small businesses, you know, different user types. And, you know, we want to make sure that the group is well represented. And then we’re going to launch the group in January 2021. We’ll have quarterly meetings to discuss what should the priorities be and have discussions about different things that we know that the industry wants us to look at and wants us to be making some enhancements. But we’re going to have those kinds of discussions that will be facilitated so that we can get a much better sense of actually what we ought to be doing and how we should be handling those types of enhancements.

So enough about that. We’ll hear more about that. You should be looking on the Web site with respect to, you know, the timelines and it will identify exactly when the meetings will be so that if you decide you want to be part of it you’ll know whether you can swing it with your calendar.

So, let’s go ahead and - yes, all right. And I also want to just very briefly explain how we go about our development process now that we’ve done the full deployment. Since March we’ve done 16 different releases. The releases as I mentioned before they include both bug fixes and enhancements. I would say more bug fixes than enhancements for the external group although there have been some really important enhancements that we’ve put together.

And then, you know, we basically have two-week sprints. We use an Agile development method. So, we don’t save up a whole bunch of requirements and, you know, build something over a series of months and then deploy it. What we’re trying to do is do bi-weekly releases. They don’t always happen every two weeks because some things are bigger than a two-week period. But those releases are scheduled on Monday. So, from 6 to 8 am are our planned releases. And we provide some notice about that on the Web site when we’re about to do one.

So that’s sort of how we - that’s how we go about it. So, you know, looking at the Web site is always important. That is the primary way in which we communicate with users.

So anyway, I’m going to turn it over to (Chris) Radcliffe for the demo portion of today. And then we’ll have a lot of time for the Q&A so thank you.

(Chris) Radcliffe: Thanks Karen. So, I will go over a few very important aspects in DECCS including some DECCS tips and tricks. Regarding enrollment. Part of the reason that we’re going over this portion is that we’re still receiving tickets where people are struggling to get connected with their company in DECCS. And so, as a friendly reminder we want to take people through the process again so that people know how to get properly associated with the company index.

This is the user enrollment page found on the login in the DECCS industry service portal. When enrolling with DECCS always remember to show the information at the bottom of the page which will associate your enrollment with any existing company. This will ensure that when you navigate DECCS you’ll do so as your company, corporation or entity that you’re affiliated with.

If you end up having questions about enrollment or any other facet of DECCS, remember to head over to the FAQ and help guide section. It’ll be here that you’ll get easy access to the DECCS application or COVID response measures using events and other links to helpful FAQs and information.

Navigating to the FAQ Webpage is pretty straightforward. Simply click on the review FAQs under the get help from the DDTC section and you’ll be brought to the frequently asked question Webpage. It’ll be from here that users have a litany of categories to choose from such as corporate administrators, advisory opinions, (unintelligible) and more. For the purpose of this demonstration though we’ll focus on licensing as an example section.

You will now notice that there are a lot of FAQs for licensing and we’re continuously updating them based on our feedback and questions from the helpdesk to response team. So, we’ll choose “how do I un-sign a license” as an example. So, each FAQ is formatted, like, this one here beginning with the question at hand and following with the answer. If you have any lingering questions about licensing always feel free to click through and see what’s already out there.

And if you weren’t able to find the answers in the FAQs and help guides or are looking for more answers on applications overall, the user guide documentation can be found within the industry portal’s learning tool section. This will be an area within the portal available to all logged index users. This is also where we keep all of our user guides and other helpful information.

So, once you’ve clicked the learning tools dropdown menu, you’ll have several options to choose from. Again, for the purpose of this demonstration we’ll choose the licensing section to keep it all congruent.

As you can see this is where we house all of our licensing user guides. And for your awareness we’re currently in the process of updating all of our documentation and creating individual guides for each licensing form. As these are finished, they’ll be posted here and in our FAQs. If you were a corporate administrator who wants to learn more about access groups, click the licensing access group user guide for step-by-step instructions. This is the same for all of the other guides that are here and there will be step-by-step instructions regarding any of the topics that are listed.

And then if you have a question that hasn’t been answered or by any of the available resources I previously mentioned, self-service will be the greatest resource. You’ll want to login into DECCS to be brought to the industry portal homepage. And to access the self-service tool you’ll click create a support case within the need help box to start a helpdesk response team inquiry that’s listed on the right side of the screen.

We’d also at this time like to take some time to give a few reminders about the service portal index. We definitely recommend everyone to submit a support case for each individual issue. There have been instances where users will follow up with new questions to cases which have already been resolved. And we want to make sure that all questions are answered clearly and to ensure that questions about specific issues are assigned to the correct individuals to address them.

So, if your case has been answered already or you have another question, following up with that case via email is not the best way to get it answered. It might cause more confusion than providing a solution. So always remember to submit a separate case for separate issues. Also, this is a big one. In an attempt of making ticket resolution quicker, please do not duplicate issues by creating additional pieces addressing the exact same issue in the hopes of trying to make things move faster. This will actually slow down the helpdesk because analysts will only be able to answer tickets in the order received and this backs up the queue.

So, if it’s taking a while for your case to get answered it’s not because nobody’s looking at it because there are a lot in the queue. And duplicating these cases in the hope of trying to make them go faster will slow it down.

Moving on. After clicking create a support case begin filling out the form with relevant contact information as well as information about the issue. Click on the dropdown menu titled subcategory and begin filling out the form with relevant contact information as well as information about the issue. Once you click subcategory this will allow you just to narrow down the issue to a more refined topic.

As you type in the description of the issue you might be facing it’s important to note that useful information will populate in real time under the DECCS help search header. The second key the populated information answers any of your questions before submitting your case. Odds are that it will.

Also be sure to fill out all required information before submitting your case. There are sections here that have an asterisk preceding it and that means that that section is required for you to answer. After you’re finished you can hit submit. Once you’ve submitted your case it’ll generate a case number. On this page you can view the status of your support case and you can add notes to your case to chat with your helpdesk agent.

If you’d like to reference your support cases, simply click view my cases in the need helps box on the right side of the portal or you can click the support dropdown to navigate to that page. You’ll then be redirected here where you can see all of your completed and in progress applications.

Additionally, we have one last update. Recently the DDTC email address has been changed. And so to contact the helpdesk and response team you always want to create a support case first. But if you have the DDTC email address on file and in an address book somewhere, we definitely recommend updating that email with the new address listed here at the bottom stand on the contact desk page of the DDTC Web site.

And so now I’ll pass it over to (Charlie) for some questions.

(Charlie): All right, thanks (Chris) that was excellent. As promised folks we always say when we have these presentations we want to make sure we leave plenty of time to hear from you our users and here we are with almost 40 minutes of a meeting session dedicated just to question and answer. So please we have a smaller number of folks online today. This is an excellent opportunity. You’ve got the CIO of DDTC ready and available to answer questions. So, this is an excellent opportunity to take advantage of and get that question you’ve always been well maybe I should ask, maybe not. This is the chance to ask it. We are here for you guys today.

With that in mind I should start with the first question that we pretty much always get with these presentations is are these materials going to be available after this presentation wraps? Normally just so everybody knows the procedure. The slides will be available on the DDTC Web site and the Census Web site. I believe (Gina) may have that link out in the chat already. If folks can’t see that let us know.

And also, like, Wendy talked about it in the beginning we will have a recording of this session. That will be provided once it is made available to us, once it is all cleaned up and made appropriate for distribution and that will be made available on both Web sites as well. So, lots of links to look out for in the future there. We will have more information for you along with this to make sure you can get to these links as well.

Okay with that Karen you ready, feeling good?

Karen Wrege: I’m ready.

(Charlie): All right. We’ve got a good one to start. This one’s a classic I feel like. So the user’s asking about accounts and how to sign up. So, the question is we have several clients that use decks and need to link their account to ours. Are we able to link to each of our clients using one email address? The understanding was that I will need separate email addresses to be linked to each company. Is that correct?

Karen Wrege: Yes, that’s a great question (Charlie). And, you know, whoever asked it this is a classic question. And it’s up to - there’s some debate about really how this should work. But I will tell you that you’re right that you need a separate email address for each of your clients.

And I’m going to just walk through why that decision was made and also, you know, sort of preview my thinking about how it might look differently in the future. And it’s certainly going to be I think a topic that we’re going to talk about in that user group that I explained earlier in this webinar.

So, you have to have separate email addresses because out of an abundance of caution I was worried about a single pane of glass for a third party to be working multiple cases from different entities. I was concerned about the security of the data. And so, I said well, you know, I recognize that there are third parties that do work for multiple clients. I completely understand those relationships and how that works.

But I was worried that making it too easy to make a mistake was somehow potentially going to create problems, you know, broadly in the ecosystem but also for the government. And, you know, I’ve had a lot of time to think about this. And I do think that it’s really cumbersome as a third party to have all these email addresses and all these separate enrollments and so on and so forth. I mean I really, really do understand how complicated that can get if you have many, many clients.

And so, I do want to talk about this in the user group, you know, what are ways that we can modify the system such that I can take care of my concerns about the single pane of glass. You know for example and I mean this is something I’ve thought about, you know, for about 10 minutes so bear with me here.

But, you know, the idea of having a single email, enrolling ones but then having some sort of way that you have to authenticate of your clients, right? So, it’s not just tied to an email. It’s tied to you having to, you know, do something extra to get into that client’s records for example. You know that’s something that I’ve been thinking about.

And I’m sure that that the user group may have other ideas about ways that we can architect this so that it's both convenient and secure because this whole balancing act about developing systems is, you know, you want to make it user friendly but you don’t want to make it so user friendly such that it is not secure enough. So that’s kind of what I’m thinking about. But I am punting this to the user group that’s going to start in January.

(Charlie): Yes. And at least hopefully to the person who has asked the question I think Karen said we had related the fact that this has been a topic we’ve been thinking of for so long that, you know, like you said we see all the sides of it. We’ve set security as a priority. The user group’s going to be able to help guide us, you know, through those possible solutions hopefully to provide, you know, more opinions and more options and more opportunities for us. So, I think that’d be great.

Perfect. Along with the security question as long as we’re on that topic we did have one user ask a digital certificate question. So (Lisa) I’m going to actually ask you this one. (Lisa) for those of you have not joined us on these presentations before (Lisa) is the lead of our Communications and Outreach Team here at DDTC.

So (Lisa) the question came in. A user has not gotten into DECCS yet but will need to soon. The question is if you could please explain what we need to do once we purchase and install a digital certificate and do we need to connect the certificate to our user ID somehow?

(Lisa): This is a great question and I feel like almost every webinar we do there are questions about digital certificates. So, I’m actually going to point everyone back to the FAQs that (Chris) showed us how to get through. And the only reason is because we do have some good information out there specific to digital certificates.

So, if you’re on our Web site and go to the FAQs under licensing there is a question for “how do I check or verify my certificate email.” That will walk you through everything you need to know about setting up your digital certificate to best work for DECCS. We do ask users to go through the vendor instructions for maybe how to actually install IdenTrust on your workstation or the ORC wide point certificate just because we do want to make sure that they are installed correctly per the vendor’s instructions. But there are the steps for making sure that you are logged in correctly.

And as a reminder for who needs a digital certificate. It would be your empowered official for who will be in charge of signing and submitting your license applications in DECCS. So once again it’s a great chance to look around a little bit on our learning portal Web site and FAQs for empowered officials and digital certificates. But we do have step-by-step instructions for how to set it up and to tie your account index.

(Charlie): There you go. Look how you tied it back in (Lisa). Right back into the presentation, perfect.

All right Karen I think this may have gone out in the advertisement, but I think somebody’s interested in it. Not terribly surprising. It’s usually a popular topic for us. It’s the One Form. And the general question is just can you please provide more information on the One Form? Specifically, what is it, what does it do, availability, et cetera?

Karen Wrege: Wow okay. Well this is the long and this is a very long project for me. And we have - and we’ve just to give some context and some history on the One Form. It was intended to consolidate the requirements of really eight different licensing forms. The 5, the 6, 61, 62, 73, 74, 85 and now the new form is 6004.

And then, you know, we had the notion of a notification’s form which, you know, so it’s meant to sort of consolidate all of that into a single information collection. And to streamline the data collection because as many of you know, you know, there’s some duplication, there’s some redundancy and there’s some checking between this block and that block and all this other stuff. So, we want to kind of streamline the process.

And when I say the process, we want to streamline first of all the information collection that goes through the process of getting approved by OMB. And then we want to build to that information collection so that it’s simpler to actually put the information in that you need to put in in order to get an approved license.

So, you know, that’s sort of the intent of it. We went out on two separate occasions for a 60-day comment. And both times we got a lot of comments. And we addressed the first batch of comments and cleared out for another 60-day comment period. This is all under the Paperwork Reduction Act which is a requirement for federal agencies to not just ask for more and more and more data. But you have to get approval to ask for whatever data you’re trying to get from the industry or the citizenry or whoever it is you’re asking it for.

And so, then we got a second set of really good comments. And we are finalizing our review of those comments. And then because these things have taken us a long time to both review and update the form in each instance, I talked to our OMB representative and they’re recommending that we go out with another 60-day comment period.

So, we are hoping to finalize the modifications that we’ve made based on the comments. And we’ll have to do another supporting statement which really identifies exactly what we’ve done and how it differs from the information collections that we have approved already which is all the individual data collections. And then we’ll be going out with another 60 day. That gets followed by a 30-day comment period and hopefully the time that it takes us to, you know, respond to those 60-day comments will be shorter than in the previous two iterations.

You know and then OMB has an opportunity to, you know, look at the comments from the 30 day and then eventually it gets approved. And this process of OMB approval normally takes no less than five months from start to finish and we are - what I’m here to tell you is we’re starting over again with a better product than we had the last time or the time before that. But we are starting over which I don’t think is a bad thing because my own view is more public comment, the better we understand the industry’s perspective which is the one thing that we don’t have entirely.

And, you know, what we have, you know, the idea here is that once that form gets approved, we’re going to be modifying the rules to point to that form. And we’ll be building out the interactive application in DECCS and then we’ll deploy it. And so, all of those things sort of have to meet together.

So, the first step is to get the OMB approval. And then the next step is to have the rules point to that new collection and the system itself be built and tested by industry which I recognize will take time especially for those industry folks who use the, you know, that are sending us batch filings. And so, it’s one thing for a smaller company that is doing it interactively, you know, to get used to it. It’s another thing when we have to, you know, fundamentally change the way that our batch filers conduct this. We recognize that that’s going to take more time.

So that’s kind of where we are right now. So, it won’t be released until 2021. I don’t know the exact timing, but we are nearly complete with our review and we are finalizing the form. But then we have to write the supporting statement. So, I’m hoping first quarter, first calendar year quarter of 2021 it will be going back out again.

(Charlie): All right. For something this significant though, for those folks or for the person who asked the question and for other folks who may be wondering, I think Karen the stress here is that this is a big shift. I think like you said this isn’t just an individual Webpage we’re changing. This is a fundamental shift in how we’re collecting this data, but the timeline does make sense. Like we want to make sure that we’re getting this right and that we’re covering all of our bases.

So for anybody who’s excited and interested in this One Form coming up know that we are working on it but we’re making sure that we’re being thorough and getting all the feedback we can to make the system work as effectively as we can. Is that a fair statement Karen?

Karen Wrege: (Charlie) I think that’s a good point. And for anybody who’s interested in development timelines, you know, I think that what we’re looking at is while this is out on public comment, we’ll be developing the documentation for the batch filing. And we won’t release that until the form is approved. So, I mean let’s just take an illustrative timeline, like, I mean let’s just say and I’m not saying that this is what’s going to happen but let’s just say that we were able to release this in January.

You know when we release it, we’ll start doing the documentation. And we’ll update the documentation when the 60-day comment period ends with whatever changes we’re going to make. And then we’ll update it again after the 30-day comment period. And we’re going to be in a position within 30 days of approval we’ll get all the approvals to push that out.

That will tell you that we are starting to build right? Because if we push out the documentation to you then we’re ready to build and that would be your time to build. So, in terms of coming up with budgetary line items and that sort of thing I would say that we will start to build in 2021. You know that’s my goal, that’s my aspiration, that’s what I’m hoping. And you will know though when we publish those, you know, requirements.

(Charlie): Final requirements, yes.

Karen Wrege: Yes.

(Charlie): Nice, all right. So, keep an eye out for that folks and then you will have the benchmark as to where we are in the process. That’s a perfect check. Thank you, Karen.

All right I’m going to shift back over (Lisa) based on the last question about licensing I’m going to go back to you because somebody asked the related question of do you need to be an empowered official to submit a registration?

(Lisa): That is a great question so no. You need to be a senior officer to submit a registration. The empowered official is the term that is defined in the ITAR in Section 120.25. That this is the person who must be the empowered official and have the digital certificate to submit a license. And another key thing to remember here and it is available in some of our recorded webinars in sort of the how do you submit a license as an empowered official.

Make sure that your corporate administrator has given you the role in user management of empowered official. So, for a few pieces. You need to meet the ITAR definition of an empowered official. Have that digital certificate as well as the role in the DECCS system. But to answer your question it’s not the registration except for licensing.

(Charlie): Thank you. And then a related question (Lisa) same thing. Does a commodity jurisdiction submission need to be submitted by an empowered official?

(Lisa): To my knowledge it’s just licensing.

(Charlie): Just licensing, yes.

Karen Wrege: I can confirm that it is only licensing that an empowered official needs to sign.

(Charlie): Yes, because commodity jurisdictions and advisory opinions can all be submitted without even being registered. So, you don’t need to be an empowered official. It’s just licensing, yes.

All right, Karen. Related I think a little bit to the One Form conversation, the general question came in here about general correspondence. So, the question is will general correspondence move to DECCS submission in the foreseeable future?

Karen Wrege: That’s a good question and there’s lots of variety of general correspondence. So, some general correspondence is already indexed through the DS6004 form that was originally for re-export and retransfer application. But since COVID we have expanded its use. And I don’t know all the rule parts. (Charlie) you may know all the rule parts. I don’t know all the rule parts. But it was in the notice where we actually expanded it.

And we went to OMB under the Paperwork Reduction Act and asked for this expansion. And we asked for it in an exigent circumstance sort of way because of COVID. We got approval and, you know, we’re extending - we’re trying to extend that authority so that more people can do those actions electronically through DECCS. There may be some other requirements, notifications, you know, a bunch of other, like, little things that you’re accustomed to doing with general correspondence. And literally everything that we can automate and make part of DECCS we intend to do so.

So that’s sort of the general view about general correspondence. I do not like general correspondence. I recognize that there are some things that you can’t put in columns and rows but in general I don’t like general correspondence. It’s easy to get lost. It’s easy for these things to, you know, not get responded to. So, if it has to do with licensing, you know, it behooves all of us to make it sort of electronic and have it be in electronic form and an electronic process or a digital process. So that’s sort of the way that I look at it.

I don’t know what percentage of general correspondence we’ve covered already and what we’re going to cover later. But suffice to say everything that we can we will put into DECCS.

(Charlie): Yes. If nothing else it is a goal of the system right that is what DECCS is intended to do is to keep these as standard and as trackable, auditable as possible so yes.

Karen Wrege: Absolutely, (Charlie). That’s exactly the way, that’s exactly it.

(Charlie): Yes. Okay. Just a quick one. (Lisa) which is always a fun one. Again, as we are talking about this outreach thing I think (Chris) mentioned it. Working on updating the licensing application user guide. Is there a date in mind when those will be completed? And is there any chance the licensing guide is getting prioritized? And will that also include updating the agreement guideline?

(Lisa): That’s a great question. So as (Chris) mentioned we are breaking out and creating individual user guides for each of the license applications. Keep in mind that this is more for the DECCS system. So, it’s how to get through it and less about what to fill in because that is more of the licensing office’s size. But they are all in draft and currently in review. Not to give myself too harsh of a deadline but, you know, that should come up very early in the new year, all of the new licensing guides posted.

(Charlie): We always know that licensing is always a popular topic. And especially with the variety of forms and things we are trying to put out as much information on each individual form as well to give people as much help as we can with the system side of it right? But yes, don’t give us that assignment too much. Come on we’ve got lots of docs (Lisa), lots to do.

All right Karen another one on something that might fall on the DDTC priority list. Specifically, the digitization of the voluntary disclosure form and submission via DECCS. Is that coming up sometime in the future?

Karen Wrege: Yes, we are again this is, you know, a high priority because there’s a lot of them, right? It’s not something that just happened from time to time. It happened quite a lot. And so, we are currently - I mean that form was approved and then we actually made some changes to it. I think that was approved. I know - I mean we have an approved form that we are working on voluntary disclosures.

Now I will point out that, you know, after COVID we had made, allowed people to electronically, you know, submit disclosures via email. And so that’s kind of a new process. And so, you know, I’m interested to find out from industry, you know, how high a priority the voluntary disclosure submission - the digital piece of the submission is for people. We do have - we’re currently in development on that.

And just are trying to figure out where in the roadmap that should get deployed because, you know, we do recognize that there’s been a large learning curve to use DECCS. And we want to make sure that people are comfortable with our deploying voluntary disclosures. And I think that’s another topic that we’ll discuss and that’s a question that I’ll ask during the DECCS user group, like, what the prioritization of that form is.

(Charlie): Yes, absolutely. That’s a great question for them. And then I think and I’m hoping and is really my hope Karen is that, you know, like, you said people are still getting used to DECCS. Like you said you’re talking about the learning curve. The hope is as people are renewing, we should be coming up on a year of DECCS in February of next year.

So hopefully we are going to have most folks who are going to be exposed to DECCS are going to have that first introduction at least by February. So hopefully that learning curve, you know, more and more people are going to be further along on that curve very soon. So hopefully some more of these more advanced functionalities can be put out there and people can take advantage of them as they get more comfortable with the base system.

Karen Wrege: Yes, and I would totally agree with that. But, you know, a lot of the folks who, a lot of the companies that do licensing should already be pretty well acclimated to the system. And so, it’s just I don’t want to overload and bring too much on too quickly if it’s not going to serve everybody’s interest. And so that’s why I raised the question you know.

And the other thing that we want to do is we want to allow companies to not just put in data enter in their disclosures but actually submit those disclosures if they want to in a batch. So, without data entry from system to system. So, you know, we want to also incorporate that functionality in that release.

(Charlie): Yes, that would be great. All right, thank you. All right speaking of potential future work Karen and this may be another question for the user group. But somebody out there asked if there’s any chance now that we’re submitting DSP85’s via DECCS, is there any talk about an amendment to a DSP85 if the concern is that minor change in the form now still requires a brand-new license for placing the existing one? So, are there any thoughts on potentially a DSP86?

Karen Wrege: Yes, I’m actually trying to reduce the number of forms. But I think it’s a really good point. And I never really completely understood the new form number when there’s an amendment or small amendment to, you know, a form that you filled out. And so, I’m just - I’m wondering if in the interim, you know, we couldn’t go to OMB and, you know, it’s basically changing the purpose, right? It’s either a new or it’s an amended and then whatever you’re allowed to amend you’d be able to amend.

So, I haven’t actually heard this before. But I’m glad the question came up because I’ve always been a little bit, you know, a little perplexed by, you know, the fact that it’s a whole another form as a business process in 2020. And I made a commitment to not make changes in the initial deployment of DECCS to the licensing forms because I really felt it was too much change.

I’m a little bit - I’m a little regretful of my reluctance to do the - to be worried about too much change because since COVID most of the folks inside and the external users seem, like, they want more and more change. Like, you know, we have such a huge backlog of requests because, you know, people have really embraced DECCS in a way that I was not expecting. But I also wasn’t expecting COVID.

And I think just across the globe, you know, companies are noticing that their users are, you know, have accelerated in their adoption of new technology. And so this is something that, you know, I think because we are teaming up the user group we can talk about in terms of what is the prioritization of that that could take a little bit of time because we do have to go back to OMB on it. They would certainly think it was a good idea because it would reduce burden because to have to do it all over again makes no sense really. But it would take time for us to deploy such a change.

(Charlie): Yes. So more to come on that. But it is part of maybe even a deeper philosophical conversation about what is the right way to collect that type of change of information to that level.

Karen Wrege: Yes, and I mean that’s really what the One Form is all about right…

(Charlie): Yes.

Karen Wrege: …is that it doesn’t matter if it’s a permanent export or a temporary important or a temporary export, classified, unclassified, new, amendment. It doesn’t matter. It’s all the same stuff. So why force people to continue to duplicate the data over and over and over again depending on what they’re doing. And so, you know, that’s really the philosophical shift with the One Form is to just whatever it is you want to do there’s, you know, a purpose.

And, you know, it’s a new or it’s an amend or it’s a cancel or it’s, you know, one of those things. And it’s a temporary import, it’s a temporary export, it’s a permanent export. You know it’s just those few questions at the beginning. And then it’s really, like, all the other information is largely the same in these forms.

(Charlie): Yes. We don’t want more hoops than we need.

Karen Wrege: Exactly.

(Charlie): Yes. Okay well speaking of making the process easier, I guess. There’s another question on here Karen about future plans. Specifically, is there a plan to provide API management and industry access to DECCS in the future?

Karen Wrege: Absolutely, yes that is our plan, that is our priority. But, you know, I’d like to do it sooner rather than later. But I do want to hear people’s feedback on how important is that to users. And so yes that’s the plan because, you know, that’s going to be - and also I mean a long with that and I’ll just bring this up along with that is a discussion about whether or not there’s a better way, whether there’s a more modern way than the digital cert for authentication and for identity management and identity proofing.

So those are topics that I want to have conversations about and get a sense of what some of the concerns are or, you know, who’s championing what, who’s the champion of what technology, why, you know. But just sort of as an ecosystem having conversation so that we can, you know, not build something, make a seemingly right decision that turns out that we need to change it in a year because it’s not the best solution.

(Charlie): Right. Take the time upfront, plan the path…

Karen Wrege: Exactly.

(Charlie): …correctly, right?

Karen Wrege: Yes.

(Charlie): Okay. Sounds, like, we have maybe somebody we would highly encourage to volunteer for the user group if they are, you know, interested and want to be part of that conversation…

Karen Wrege: Yes.

(Charlie): …that would be a good place to do that. Speaking of which Karen then somebody’s asking if I do volunteer for the next user group, what is the time commitment actually? Like am I expecting another meeting on my calendar every week?

Karen Wrege: Yes, no, no. We all - I don’t need another, you know, appointment in my schedule every week. So, the idea is that we want to facilitate these conversations. We want to provide you with notice about what we’re going to be talking about and we want to have quarterly sessions. And then, you know, there may be opportunities between those quarterly sessions for people to get together to maybe report out on a particular type of technology or a particular pain point that industry is having to make some recommendations to us.

But it is not meant to be a time suck. It’s meant to really get some information from people where you can do some thinking and then you can be part of this facilitative conversation. And then, you know, if there’s follow up questions, you know, and you want to be part of some interim group to have another maybe discussion in between the quarter. So at most we’re talking about maybe a two-hour quarterly meeting and then, you know, maybe an hour or two between those quarterly meetings if you decide that you want to be part of, you know, a group that’s doing some follow up work.

(Charlie): Right. Hopefully not overwhelming but definitely all appreciated and valued for the time that can be provided. We’ll keep it (unintelligible).

All right (Lisa) I think one more for you here, specifically focused on DECCS enrollment. So, does DECCS recognize a company registering code from a company whose registration has lapsed?

(Lisa): That’s a great question and the answer is that so what you saw when (Chris) demoed is that we tied to your company, you could enter your company name and registration code. But it is important to note that that needs to be an active registration. It will not recognize expired or lapsed registrations.

(Charlie): Okay there we go. All right then as we’re getting close to the end time here, Karen I think I’m going to ask one that I’ve seen come up in other situations. I think this is applicable still back to the user group now. So specifically, if I join the user group, is the user group really going to have any impact? I’m very used to asking for updates only to be told there’s a technical reason that my suggestion can’t be done.

Karen Wrege: Yes. I think it’s going to be really very valuable. I think we’ve already made changes that have been better than what we deployed. I am very interested in what industry has to say about the system because you’re the primary users. And so, you know, will everyone be happy? Probably not because, you know, you can’t make everybody happy. But the idea is that we really want people’s feedback and, you know, I worked in the government before and then I went and I worked in the industry that we were regulating.

So, it was in the telecommunications (unintelligible). And then I worked as a consultant to the telecommunications industry. And I remember saying God if I’d only known when I was working at the SEC, like, what goes - what telecom companies went through, like, I would have done things differently. And I said to myself if I ever go back, I’m not going to make that same mistake twice.

And so, you know, it’s really important to me that we listen to the industry and that we do what we can where it makes sense to make the process as painless as possible. Still making it secure, still making it, you know, getting the information that we need to do our work. But certainly where there can be efficiency gains we want to make them.

(Charlie): There we go. All right I think that was a good one to end on. Thank you, Karen. (Lisa) final reminder for the group.

(Lisa): Sure. So just wanted to let everyone know thank you for your questions. We actually got through I’d say over 90%. If we did not get to your question, please enter - follow the steps for entering it on the self-service. And we will have the appropriate helpdesk, a response team agent help wrap it up for you. So, we’ll turn it back over to Wendy to close us out.

Wendy Peebles: Okay great, thank you all. Once again thank you for your participation in today’s webinar. And a special thanks to the team from the State Department - Karen, (Chris), (Charlie) and (Lisa) great job. Provided a thorough overview and demo of the DECCS system. And just created a welcoming platform for your questions to be asked. So, we certainly kind of structured it a little different today when we did allow more time for your questions which was needed. So, a lot of good questions with thorough responses.

So once again please visit the State Department Web site for the materials, the presentation, transcript and recording or the Census Academy the link that was provided via the chat. So, if there are no additional questions this completes the webinar for today. Thank you for joining and please be safe.

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