

READINESS TESTS OF OVERSEER NETWORK INSTALLATIONS

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Overview

The *Overseer* applications were designed for easy installation on stand-alone computers, but with the potential to run in a network environment with the *Main* school database on a network server.

Network installations are more complex because of the unique features of each network and the need to set up shared directories and controlled access rights for staff. Also, since *Overseer LAN* is a multi-user application for teachers, a shared directory must be established to handle file and record locking centrally.

Before attempting an *Overseer* installation on a network, schools are advised to identify the person (or persons) who will be responsible for fulfilling the following roles: *Network Specialist* and *Staff Specialist*. These are not onerous roles, but they are vital to a successful implementation. If the persons filling these roles are given clear mandates, and accept responsibility for the timely installation, testing and support of *Overseer* in your school, then you are likely to have a positive experience with the product. If teachers install their own applications without any centralized administration, your school invites chaos.

The *Network Specialist* must understand and support your network, including installation of the software, management of user directories and access rights, installation of printers and support of school PC configurations. He/she should take the lead role in installing *Overseer* for your school, then provide basic installation support information to the *Staff Specialist*.

The *Staff Specialist* should have a general knowledge of the network, but should be more expert in the *Overseer* applications themselves. He/she needs to focus on the potential support issues which could arise during a school day when the *Network Specialist* may not be available. Your resident computer expert on staff, preferably a user of *Overseer*, is a good candidate for this position.

Both specialists need to have the support and trust of the school administration, and have ready access to the *Overseer 1.9 Primer* manual, license certificates, the installation CD, network server(s) and *Overseer Admin*. The expertise of the *Network Specialist* will be self-evident when users try to access the *Overseer* applications. The *Staff Specialist* needs to do some independent reading of documentation, and experimentation with the applications in order to be prepared to fulfill his/her role successfully. Appendix A includes a set of test questions which the *Staff Specialist* can address to assess whether or not he/she has a good grasp of support issues.

Readiness Tests

The following steps are recommended to prepare a school for use of the *Overseer* applications and OACS report cards for a new school year commencing in early September.

1. Install and test *Overseer 1.9* on a stand-alone PC, or on the network, to enable the school secretary to create a current school database, including enrolling all students, recording essential family information, adding staff and teachers, assigning students to classes, and assigning classes and teachers to the correct home-rooms.
2. If not already on a network, install and test *Overseer Admin* on at least one network PC and transfer the *Main* database to a server directory for central access. This should be completed before the first day of school.
3. Install *Overseer LAN* and *Grades* on one or two network PCs. Grant access to these applications, as well as *Overseer Admin* to the *Network Specialist* and *Staff Specialist* so that they can cooperatively test the complete cycle of installing OACS report cards for all classes, assigning staff responsibilities for all classes, creating a *Grades* database for one test teacher only, entering representative grades and test marks for one student, importing the data into *Overseer LAN* and printing report cards. This should be completed before the end of September.
4. If successful, install *Overseer Grades* and *LAN* on all remaining staff computers in readiness for wider staff training. Resolve any outstanding issues before continuing.
5. Arrange a staff training day for the *Staff Specialist* to demonstrate the methodology for recording student grades, transferring data to the *Main* database and printing report cards. Angela Kaptein (akaptein@tcc.on.ca) may also be available to assist with training.
6. Commit a full day for all staff to go through all of the steps up to and including the printing of a simulated report card for one student per class. Alternatively, teachers may do this at different times as long as they go through the complete exercise for one student per (*Overseer*) class. Be sure to include *subject areas* and *components* which are not taught by home room teachers. This should be completed before the end of October.
7. Resolve any outstanding issues in readiness for live generation of real data for term 1 reporting in November or December.

Schools with active support agreements with RSI may secure email support, which is typically overnight support, via email address support@robustsoftware.com. Your *Network Specialist* and *Staff Specialist* must be prepared to handle any issues which arise during reporting days. In responding to email support requests, RSI will expect to deal with one or the other of these specialists.

APPENDIX A: Test of Familiarity with Overseer Network Installation

The local *Staff Specialist* for *Overseer* within a school should be able to answer the following representative questions if he/she is responsible for resolving operational issues with the *Overseer* applications.

These questions may seem rather daunting at first, but the answers will come with time as the person involved reads the *Overseer* documentation, browses the applications and exercises the relevant features. **Most staff members do not need to know the answers to all of these questions, but it is important that someone in-house does.** While RSI offers email support (typically overnight), the *Staff Specialist* will have to trouble-shoot issues which will come up from time to time.

If responsibilities are shared between two people, then at least one of them must be knowledgeable of, and have full access to, *Overseer Admin* and the school's *Overseer* license certificates.

1. Do you know how to install/uninstall each of the *Overseer* applications on a PC?
2. Do you have access to the *Overseer* license certificates? Have you ever installed a primary (i.e. *Admin* or *Suite*) site license on a PC?
3. Do you have access to *Overseer Admin* for your school? Without it you cannot provide full support?
4. Do you know how to verify/edit teachers login IDs and passwords for use within the *Overseer* applications? (Remember that these only take effect immediately on the *Main* database. They only propagate to *Grades* databases when *Grades* databases are created or synchronized.)
5. Do you know how to verify/edit which teachers have access rights to *Overseer LAN* and *Overseer Grades*?
6. Where is the *Overseer Main* database located on your school's network?
7. Where is the *Demo* database stored on each PC.
8. Where is the Borland *BDEAdmin.Exe* program located on each PC? For what purpose is this program used?
9. What are the alias names of the *Main* database and *Demo* database within the *BDEAdmin.Exe* application?

10. How can you determine whether or not the location of the *Overseer Main* database is correctly specified on a PC? Can you edit it so that it is correct?
11. How can you determine whether or not the location of the *Overseer Demo* database is correctly specified on a PC? Can you edit it so that it is correct?
12. What is the purpose of the *NetDir* directory within *BDEAdmin.Exe*? Where is it specified on each PC? What is the correct designation for this directory? Do you know how to edit it so that it is correct?
13. Where in the *Overseer* documentation can you find directions for resolving an issue when users cannot access *Overseer* applications?
14. Where are the *Grades* databases located on your school's network?
15. Does every user of *Overseer Grades* have an assigned network drive mapping to enable him/her to specify the location of his/her *Grades* database? How do you assign such a drive mapping? How do users specify the location of their *Grades* database?
16. If teachers share a PC for accessing their *Grades* databases, do they know that they have to verify/edit their *Grades* database location every time they start a new session?
17. Do you know how to use the backup and restore capabilities of *Overseer Admin* and *Overseer Grades*?
18. Who is backing up the school's *Main* database on a regular basis? Is it being stored off-site periodically? Do you have multiple backups in case one is not readable?
19. Do you know how to rebuild a database in the event of corruption of index files (which can occur in the event of a PC crash)?
20. There are 3 menu options in *Overseer Admin* and *Overseer LAN* for interfacing with *Grades* databases. Each of these makes changes to *Grades* databases and/or the *Main* database, but not both. Which two create or update *Grades* databases? Which one updates the school's *Main* database?
21. How can the school's secretary lock-out all teachers from using *Overseer LAN*? What purpose does this capability serve? Is there a scheduled time when the secretary has exclusive rights to do editing on the school's database? Are there scheduled times when teachers have access?
22. If your school is using the OACS report cards, are you familiar with the *Overseer User's Guide to OACS Report Cards*?

23. Do you have a copy of the *Overseer 1.9 Primer* available for your use, when needed? If not, then print off copies of the relevant documentation from the *Overseer* installation CD, so that it is available when you need it.
24. What is the difference between the *Active Date* and *Current Date* within *Overseer*? How do you change the *Active Date*?
25. How can users of *Overseer Admin* or *LAN* know whether they are using the *Main* database or the *Demo* database? How can they change their selection?
26. How can teachers add *tests* to *subject components* within *Overseer Grades*?
27. How do teachers ensure that the correct marking scheme is assigned to each *subject area* and *subject component* before importing marks from *Overseer Grades* into *Overseer LAN* at the end of each term?
28. If a teacher wants to install *Overseer Grades* on his/her home PC, how does he/she create, then assign directories to be used to accommodate the *Grades* database, database backups and the dictionary files (if different from the *Grades* directory)?
29. Which key combinations (*Windows* standards) are used to *Cut*, *Copy* and/or *Paste* selected text to/from the clipboard and text fields in *Overseer* applications?
30. Which keyboard key invokes on-line help from the active screen of an *Overseer* application?
31. How can you determine the amount of free disk space on the C drive of a PC? What is the minimum amount of free disk space which must be maintained at all times in order for *Overseer* applications to run reliably?
32. How do teachers correctly specify the properties (legal size, landscape, double-sided etc) of the printer to be used to print report cards at school?