PIMS 9.0.3 Release Notes   (updated 1/9/2020)

Appearance and Useability Improvements

All screens in PIMS have been updated with a new color scheme and a less busy appearance. The arrangement of the main menu has changed, but the same options are there. Other forms are essentially the same with some minor layout revisions.
The scroll wheel on your mouse will now be useful in more places.

Spell Check

Spell checking is now available in any text field. You need to press the F7 key to request the spell check though - it doesn't do it automatically.

Quick Participant Access

On the Participant Search screen, SiteID has been moved to the last column so that you can jump to participants by typing the first letter of their last name as soon as the search screen opens. Note that it jumps to the first person with a name that starts with that letter. Then you can scroll to the desired participant from there.
The behavior of the search boxes has also been updated to search automatically when you enter something in any search box.

Report Selection

You can now choose "ALL REPORTS" as a report category and the complete list of reports will be available to select from.
There is a new selection list that allows you to select a report by its report number. If you know the report number, this is a much quicker way to find it back again.

Delete Home Visit and Delete Termination

The home visit form and the termination form both have a Delete button available now to allow you to easily delete a record. This allows easier correction of mistakenly entered home visits, and for "un terminating" a participant who was incorrectly terminated or changed their mind shortly after terminating. The functionality is the same as before, but before you had to know where on the screen to click to select the record, and then press Delete.

Home Visit Narrative Fields - Enter key behavior

I've changed the behavior of hitting the Enter key in the narrative fields on the Home Visit form. Previously it would bring you to the next field. Now it will bring you to a new line in that field. This allows you to format your entry into separate lines if need be.
Use **TAB** to move to the next field (which works anywhere and on any form).

New Access File Format

The file format that PIMS uses is being upgraded from ".mdb" to ".accdb" format. This change brings the database up to the current technology level, and enables the ability to take advantage of some new features. However, it also comes with one side-effect that is significant. Microsoft abandoned the Access based security system when they moved to .accdb. As a result, the current way that PIMS is secured is changing with this release. There are more details in the Database Security section. Due to this file format change and security change, the process for completing this upgrade is more complicated than normal. But future updates will be simpler than past updates.

Database Security Change

Database security for PIMS is changing due to the removal of support for Access based security by Microsoft. PIMS will now utilize your computer login name to identify who you are and what access you have. There is no separate login step anymore Also, rather than having a Staff setup screen and an Account setup screen, you will now maintain staff login information in the Staff setup screen. That setup will involve just two new items - indicating a staff person's login name, and indicating if they are a "user" or an "admin" in PIMS. Only staff who have their login name entered in the Staff table will be able to use PIMS. If they try to open it without being setup, the main menu options will be disabled and they will receive a message saying that they need to be setup in order to be able to use it.

When you update your PIMS data file, you will be asked what your PIMS staff ID number is, and it will automatically update that staff record with the login name that you're logged in as and will automatically make you a PIMS admin. You will be the only person, initially, that can update other staff records to allow others to use it.

While access to PIMS functionality is controlled by your computer login, the data itself CAN be accessed outside of PIMS if someone is well versed in Access databases. Steps have been taken to obscure that ability, but you should also utilize network security to limit access to the PIMS data files to only those who have a need to access them.

Licensing

Licensing of the PIMS database is now verified through a license file that must reside on your workstation in your PIMS folder. These will be individualized licenses per organization, but to get started, everyone will get a generic license good through July 2020. So you'll have several months to obtain the license file specific to your organization.
The licenses will be updated on a yearly basis. If your license expires, PIMS remains COMPLETELY operational with the exception of the ability to add new participants. So if you miss your expiration date, you will be able to continue to do 99% of your daily work.

PIMS Shortcuts

You will no longer need to make your own PIMS shortcuts. If you try to start PIMS without using a shortcut, it will automatically create one for you and instruct you to use it instead. You can copy the shortcut it creates to your desktop or wherever you find useful.

PIMS Config File

After using PIMS 9.0 once, you'll notice a new file called "pims.config" in your PIMS folder. This file stores the path to your PIMS data file. When you upgrade PIMS next time, the new version of PIMS will read this config file and automatically reconnect your data file. This will make doing updates a little less of a hassle and is one step closer to making updates more automatic.

Support for 64 bit Access

The programming has been updated to support running PIMS using the 64 bit version of Access. At the moment, it has not been tested yet. If you have 64 bit Access installed and can test it, please communicate with me regarding the success of your testing. I still recommend using the 32 bit version of Access in most situations.

Data Database Suffix

The PIMS data database (that holds your data) will now have a "**.pims**" suffix instead of "**.mdb**". This will help PIMS know which database files it may attach to.

Automatic Update Checking

PIMS will automatically check if there is a newer version of PIMS available. This will only happen for a PIMS Admin user. The status will show in the upper right hand corner of the main PIMS window.

Automatic Network Deployment

PIMS can automatically deploy program updates to workstations. It looks for an "install" folder in the same folder as the data database is stored in. If it finds that, it looks there for newer versions of the pims.accde file, and will automatically copy that to the workstation if it's newer. It will also copy license files and the template database. So when you get a new version of PIMS, just drop those files into that folder and it will deploy from there. Note that if the upgrade involves table changes, the PIMS admin should be the first person to update so that the database update can occur before other users try to use it.

END OF RELEASE NOTES