



NATIONAL INTEGRATED BALLISTIC INFORMATION NETWORK

Technical Note: BrassTrax Acquisition Reminders



Users at most sites do not typically receive a full range of region of interest (ROI) types for acquisition into the BrassTrax system. The nature of what NIBIN users do is like anything else in life: if a certain set of protocols for acquisition isn't regularly used, they tend to be forgotten. This technical note is to serve as a reminder that protocols *are* in place for everything that may be encountered and that it may be valuable for each user to take a couple minutes out of the day to refresh their memories about the proper way to make acquisitions into the systems at all sites.

A concise document that outlines guidelines for making proper acquisitions is located electronically on each BrassTrax system. The document can be accessed by logging on to the IBIS application on any BrassTrax sys-

tem and accessing the 'Help' file. This can be accomplished by any one of three ways:

1. pressing 'F1' OR
2. clicking the icon with a question mark on the Toolbar at the top of the screen OR
3. clicking the Help tab on the Menu Bar at the top of the screen

Once the Help file is open, a search for 'Region of Interest Guidelines' should be done. The first item that should be returned from the search should be a 7 or 8 page document (mostly consists of tables and pictures, so it's really not that long to read over) that does a nice job of covering protocols for general positioning, outlining, and proper blue and red ring placements for different scenarios that any user should be prepared to encounter. Printing this document out and having it on hand for easy accessibility can be very helpful.

The importance of following acquisition protocols cannot be understated. It is extremely important that all NIBIN users refresh their memory regarding all of these rules so that each system throughout the

country is being used correctly. With each item entered on a daily basis, the NIBIN database grows; as it grows, the importance of each user to put in items the same way (and incidentally, correctly) grows also. Think about it for a second; if an item is added to a database that is 10 items big, an error is not a huge deal. If the same item is added to a database that is 1,000 items big, an error can be a pretty large deal. The NIBIN database is over *two million* items big. Granted that each item is filtered so that a search against a portion of the database is performed, an error still certainly adversely affects the chances of a user getting optimal search results – and that does not just apply for that one item. Errors adversely affect search results for all future items as well; as an error remains in the database for new entries to refer to as *their* correlations are done.

Written by Stephen Garten, IBIS Specialist, Atlanta ATF Laboratory

International Correlation Server (ICS)

The International Correlation Server (ICS) has been tested, validated and ready for use. The ICS will allow US IBIS sites to conduct correlations against any or all IBIS sites within Canada. The ICS correlation site has been added to the site selection box of your RDAS, MPO or MPP, allowing the IBIS user to select that site in the same manner as a regular manual correlation request. Upon completion of the correlation, the results will be returned to your system and appear in the same format as your current automatic and manual correlations configuration. Should you experience any problems in conducting the correlation request, or have any issues regarding the correlation results please contact either Ron Nichols at (925) 364-8453 or Martin Ols at (202) 648-6303.

Becoming a NIBIN Trainer

Budgets are a concern for all and with the closing of the Largo training facility, the NIBIN Branch has worked diligently in finding alternative solutions to provide low-cost training to our partners. Two methods have always been available – contract with FTI or send the trainee to one of the three NIBIN sites for training. A third means we were looking at was to have authorized trainers at sites wishing to have them. Currently, the third option is not as viable as we had hoped.

As we have reviewed potential trainer applicants, we have recognized systemic and recurring concerns with image quality that had gone previously unobserved because there was no systematic way for the Branch to regularly review images that were being acquired. In addition, it has been observed that not all regions of interest are being acquired and, in some instances, certain calibers are not being acquired. Finally, there is more to being a trainer than simply the ability to capture images according to protocol. There is the need to have sufficient knowledge of the NIBIN Program itself (especially as it is changing and evolving), what can be expected when images are submitted for correlation, current software and hardware updates, and expectations with regard to image acquisition. An authorized trainer should not only be highly skilled in acquisition but knowledgeable in all aspects of the NIBIN Program for that site.

We will still be pursuing the option of having authorized trainers at sites wishing to have them. However, the process by which we were doing that, e.g., having applicants submit applications and then reviewing their images, will have to be modified. If a site wishes to have an individual authorized for training at their site, the site (agency) will be required to send those individuals to one of the three NIBIN sites (Ammendale, Atlanta, or Walnut Creek) to receive the training necessary to obtain authorization to perform the training on-site. The training will be one week at no-cost but, the travel expenses for the trainer applicants will have to be borne by the parent agency.

In evaluating potential trainers, sites should consider individuals who have: excellent acquisition skills; are skilled and trusted in correlation reviews; are personable; are teachable; and have very good communication skills. If you have any questions or wish to pursue this option, please contact Ron Nichols, National Technology Coordinator at (925) 364-8453.

If you would like to be included in the NIBIN Newsletter, feel free to submit an article. This is a great way to highlight your lab, department, or an event. All submissions may be edited and are not guaranteed to be included in the newsletter. Suggestions and articles can be sent to Kendra Mingo at Kendra.Mingo@atf.gov.

NIBIN Hits and Hit Reports

Thank you to all our partner sites for your hard work and diligence. NIBIN had a 3.7% increase in the number of confirmed hits along with 178,449 entries made during fiscal year 2013. We have high expectations for FY 2014.

Top 10 Sites for FY 2013

1. Phoenix Police Department, 7,391 acquisitions
2. New York Police Department, 6,928 acquisitions
3. New Orleans Police Department, 5,562 acquisitions
4. Miami-Dade Police Department, 4,246 acquisitions
5. Illinois State Police Forensic Science Center- Chicago, 4,244 acquisitions
6. Georgia Bureau of Investigation, 4,183 acquisitions
7. Dallas Police Department, 3,920 acquisitions
8. Houston Police Department, 3,315 acquisitions
9. Chicago Police Department, 3,256 acquisitions
10. Los Angeles Police Department, 2,944 acquisitions

Please continue to send in your monthly hits to nibin-monthlystatistics@atf.gov. In addition to the number of hits confirmed each month, we will begin tracking unconfirmed hits for FY 2014. Please include the number of unconfirmed hits along with your confirmed hits in each of your monthly submissions to the NIBIN Monthly Statistics email. If you have any questions regarding NIBIN Monthly Statistics, feel free to reach out to Kendra Mingo at (202) 648-6305.

As well as sending in unconfirmed and confirmed hits to the NIBIN Monthly Statistics email, continue sending in your monthly Hit Reports to nibinhitreports@atf.gov. Questions about hit reports can be directed to Brenda Harper at (202) 648-7172.

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WWW.NIBIN.GOV

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