



It's never too late to send us a copy of your data sets and RO data. This small effort now can save you time and a significant effort later. Providing us with updated data helps to ensure we're testing the formats being used and is beneficial in case there is an instance when you need to contact Customer Service. The preferred method for sending us data is on CD, but we can also receive zip files via email – just make sure to call us first to make sure the file isn't too large to receive through our ISP & to let us know it's being sent!

Let's Meet!

A number of year's ago we stopped having formal VE-PROMS User's Group Meetings. We hope you know that you are always welcome at our offices or we will meet you in town. If you believe that a User's Group Meeting is warranted please suggest a topic or topics and we'll poll the users and try to identify a funding source. We hope to see many of you when you come to Pittsburgh for the Owner's Group the week of August 19th.

Email Us:

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Update on the Release of Version 8

- * We released the RO Editor upgrade in April. As noted during the installation and in the installation documentation, keep in mind that the .NET Framework must be installed on the computer before you can run the new RO Editor.
- * We will be sending out updated pages of the VE-PROMS User's Manual. When you receive the new chapters, the generic release notes from the back of your manual can be discarded. The updated chapters can also be found on each release CD in Word and .PDF format. To keep VE-PROMS maintenance costs down for you, all future User's Manual transmittals will be electronic only (unless you specifically request a hardcopy).
- * If you are modifying field definitions in the new RO Editor and experience problems modifying field width or making edits to the definitions (including field names), please contact us. We have a fix for this problem that will be included in your next release.

Printing VE-PROMS Output through Adobe Distiller

An easy way to create .pdf files from VE-PROMS is through Acrobat Distiller[®] which comes with the full version of Acrobat. If Acrobat Distiller is installed on the computer, you just select it as your default printer while generating procedures or select it as your printer through the VE-PROMS Printer Setup option during a session. You then repaginate and print the procedure as you normally would, but will be prompted for a location to save the .pdf file.

How VE-PROMS Maintenance Money is Used

Some of the uses of the VE-PROMS Maintenance Program include: Help Desk calls, updates to VE-PROMS documentation, basic format requests, support to fix problems, testing based on individual plant items, baseline testing, plant specific changes, generic VE-PROMS work, and costs associated with User's Group meetings (see side bar). The upgrade portion is just that – it is used to support the upgrades to VE-PROMS for each year's new version or multi-year upgrades such as 32-bit.

The 2003 VE-PROMS Upgrade Plan

We are committed to ensuring that the VE-PROMS infrastructure will provide a stable platform for VE-PROMS for many years to come. Updating the software environment periodically is necessary to ensure that we are able to meet the future needs of all VE-PROMS customers. Last year, we upgraded the RO editor to a new 32-bit environment that will permit us to maintain and improve the functionality of this module in a more cost-effective manner. The new user interface is much improved and the initial feedback from the customers has been very positive.

We are currently evaluating the scope and resource requirements for the migration of VE-PROMS to a 32-bit program. The 32-bit environment allows for the development of a more user-friendly interface and for the use of current Microsoft database technologies such as Microsoft Access.

There are a number of reasons why Volian believes this project should be undertaken. Microsoft has said that 16-bit may not be supported in future operating systems. So far, all of the VE-PROMS programs have run within a 32-bit operating system (such as Windows 2000), but at some point we may encounter a problem. In addition, some of the benefits of converting VE-PROMS to a 32-bit program include: long file name support; better communication among VE-PROMS modules; better database technologies; new functionality such as email links, links to Volian's website, etc; satisfying your IT/IS Group (some IT/IS Groups may not want to support a 16-bit program); better software tools/support for developers to maintain and upgrade VE-PROMS. All of this means improved support for you.

Unfortunately, the conversion of a complex software program with as many capabilities and customized features as VE-PROMS can be very time consuming. Therefore, we have determined that the project must be done in phases. The next phase, which will take us to the end of the year, is the conversion of the DMAS. We plan on using OLE DB within ADO.NET to access the data stored within the current database structure. (This is technical jargon

people might be interested in!) From the procedure writer perspective, you will see a new user interface that will make the DMAS module easier to comprehend and to use.

Future phases will upgrade the remaining modules as well as the underlying database to 32-bit.

What Does the Upgrade Program Cover?

As most of you are aware, Volian Enterprises continues to improve VE-PROMS yearly through our Upgrades and Maintenance Program. The upgrades are used to improve three areas of VE-PROMS:

- Procedure Maintenance – The main focus of VE-PROMS has been and will continue to be the procedure writer by providing the tools needed to get his/her job done.
- Expanded Functionality – This includes functions that allow VE-PROMS to interact with other software tools. For example, exporting procedures to .RTF, .PDF or hand-held devices.
- VE-PROMS Infrastructure – We must ensure that the development tools and underlying databases used by VE-PROMS can handle our customers' needs.

It is also likely that you may need added functionality to VE-PROMS that is either unique to your plant or is something that you want but is not in the current VE-PROMS upgrade plans. In that situation, we can add the needed function on a plant-specific basis under a separate contract if it is a significant effort and too large to be handled within the Maintenance program. Please let us know what you have in mind and we would be happy to develop a quote for you.

VE-PROMS Code Cleanup

We are currently performing a detailed review of all of the VE-PROMS code to gain information for the 32-bit VE-PROMS estimates. During this process, the code is cleaned up to remove unnecessary links and unused code. This effort is part of this year's upgrade. The information gathered from this task will allow us to be more efficient in maintaining and improving VE-PROMS in the future.

VE-PROMS For Security Procedures

With the heightened alert that all nuclear plants are under these days, security is more important than ever. One Volian customer has decided that having the Security department procedures in a two-column format maintained by VE-PROMS is a good idea. Later this summer, Volian will set up a specific format for these procedures and will train the procedure writer on the use of VE-PROMS.

Potential New VE-PROMS Customers

We have received several inquiries recently from nuclear plants that do not currently have VE-PROMS about possible purchase.

Many of these potential customers stated that they heard of VE-PROMS from existing customers like you. We'd like to thank all of you for spreading the word on the positives for using VE-PROMS to maintain procedures. If the use of VE-PROMS increases to more plants, we all benefit, as we can share the costs of VE-PROMS generic maintenance and upgrades to more customers.

VE-PROMS Training: Customized to Fit Your Needs

Over the past few months, Volian has provided customized VE-PROMS training to several of our clients.

There are numerous reasons why VE-PROMS training may be needed. For many, it is due to general personnel turnover that occurs. For some, it may be that training is needed to fully utilize all of the features of VE-PROMS. For others, there may be specialized training on the role of a VE-PROMS administrator or training on a specific feature of VE-PROMS, such as ROs.

If you have the need for VE-PROMS training, give us a call and we will determine the most appropriate type of training for you. We can determine if you want the training on-site or at the Volian office.

Extending the Use of VE-PROMS Information

Volian was happy to assist Wolf Creek with a program that will place information referenced in their VE-PROMS procedures, such as equipment tags, on a handheld computer. We worked closely with Data Systems & Solutions (DS&S), the vendor of AutoAlign, to export the necessary information onto their application.

One of the problems was that VE-PROMS actually builds a procedure with the information stored in several databases in the VE-PROMS environment. To help them with their hand held effort, we provided a customized export function that exports only the needed equipment information to a simple text file. This text file is read by their program and places the equipment information in a database used by the handheld computers.

If you are interested in more information on this project or on how Volian could assist you on other projects at your site, please contact us.

What You Should Know About Volian's License Agreement

With every release of VE-PROMS, we provide the VE-PROMS License Agreement (EULA). As with other software products, this agreement must be agreed upon to install the software. Once it is installed, it is easy to forget about the license agreement. It is worthwhile to read and understand the agreement to protect both your company and Volian. In that sense, we suggest that all contactors who use VE-PROMS read and agree to the License Agreement. In the 18-year existence of VE-PROMS, we've never had a problem and we hope that we never do! Please help. A copy of the license agreement can be found on our website.

More Volian Engineering Work in Eastern Europe

Volian's Engineering department is in the final contract negotiation stage of a two-year project to develop Severe Accident Management Guidelines for a Russian designed RBMK reactor in Eastern Europe. We will build upon the work that we completed for several of our U.S. customers several years ago. Between this effort and the program to help several Ukrainian plants on portions of their EOP development, Harry and Paul plan to be in Europe several times over the next few years.

*The Volian offices will be closed on
Thursday and Friday, July 3rd and 4th
for the 4th of July holiday.*

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