Argos Basic Training

Overview

Argos is a campus reporting tool that allows end-users to access and extract information from various databases in a report format.

DataBlocks are the foundation of Argos. They contain user input forms and queries to retrieve information. Reports in Argos have a DataBlock as the "parent" and each DataBlock can contain multiple reports.

After you have been granted access, you will be able to run pre-defined reports by selecting them from a list. Most of the reports will require that you enter parameters to tailor the report for a specific term, college or course. Once generated, the report can be saved, printed or forwarded via e-mail, all from within the Argos tool.

Argos is designed to run under the latest version of Microsoft Internet Explorer and Mozilla Firefox. Before launching Argos the first time, you may need to disable any pop-up blockers running on your computer. You should re-enable the pop-up blocker once you have downloaded the software.

Argos launches via Java. If you do not have Java installed on your PC, the first time you attempt to launch Argos, you will be prompted to install it and will be sent to www.java.com for download and installation. You may need to work with your Network Administrator to install Java.

Sign in

To access Argos, go to https://sis.siu.edu. Click on Argos under Login Quicklinks.

Your network id and password are used for accessing Argos. Security within Argos is designed to recognize your user type and configure menus and buttons to show only your permissible actions.
Navigation

Menus across the top allow you to take simple actions such as signing in or out and accessing the integrated Argos Help system.

At the very bottom of the screen, the status bar tells you what server you are signed into, your username and user type. Between the top and bottom toolbars is the Argos work area. The work area is broken into two halves. The left half contains the Navigation area while the right half contains the Action area.

Navigation Area

The Navigation area on the left hand side of the screen contains the objects that you can perform actions on. You can navigate using the Explorer view or the Shortcuts view by clicking the desired tab.

The default view for the Navigation area is the Explorer view where a simple menu of available folders and objects are displayed. The Argos objects that can be found in the Explorer include:

- folders - contains objects, including other folders
- datablocks - the "parent" object for one or more reports
- dashboards - display-only reports for quick reference
- csv report - a comma-separated values report
- banded report - a fully-formatted report
- extract report - a text report that meets pre-defined specifications
- schedule - reports may be scheduled to run automatically

Action Area

The Action area on the right hand side of the screen will have buttons for any actions you can take on a selected object. The buttons that show will depend on the type of object you select in the Navigation area.
Explorer View

Within the Explorer tree, reports always reside beneath a DataBlock parent. A DataBlock can have many "child" reports. Any object that has child objects will have a ▶ shape next to it. Simply click the ▶ to expand the object to view its children.

Shortcuts View

The Shortcuts view can be very convenient as it shows only your available shortcuts. A Shortcut is a reference to a DataBlock or Report. If you use a DataBlock or Report frequently, you can right-click on it and choose Add to Shortcuts.
You can rename a shortcut by right-clicking on the shortcut and selecting Rename, or clicking on Rename in the Shortcut Actions box.

To find the original object in the Explorer view, right-click a shortcut and choose Locate.

Deleting or renaming a Shortcut has no effect on the original object. Report viewers only have the ability to control Shortcuts within their own My Shortcuts.
Help

By clicking Argos Help, you will have access to the Argos User Guides and Training videos from your browser. The Table of Contents, Index, Search, and Favorites selections are located at the lower left of the Help interface. Click the desired item to display the fields used for entering Search Criteria, Index words, etc.

Signout

To sign out of Argos, simply click the Sign Out icon.
Executing Reports

DataBlocks

Although Report Viewers do not create DataBlocks, an understanding of the components of the DataBlock aids the Report Viewer in understanding the relationship between DataBlocks and the various report types.

The DataBlock uses Forms and Queries and is the foundation for all reports. Only users with DataBlock Designer privileges can create DataBlocks.

The Queries within the DataBlock obtain data from a database. When results of a query are displayed on a form, this is called a Dashboard. Dashboards are designed to be interactive with data displayed on the screen versus saved or printed. In the case of Comma Delimited and Banded Reports, the results of the Datablock query are used as input to the report design where the results can be displayed, printed or stored. Within the Argos Explorer tree, reports exist as "child" objects of a DataBlock.

Whenever a user executes a report, the form designed as part of a DataBlock will be displayed. The input selections made by the user become query parameters.

Any report type can use the data obtained from the DataBlock queries.
Report Types

Argos reports come in three different types, including Dashboard, Comma Delimited, and Banded reports. Argos reports exist underneath a DataBlock and utilize the data from the DataBlock to generate the report.

Comma Delimited Report

A “Comma Separated Value” or “CSV” report is a relatively simple report. A comma delimited file simply separates the desired columns by a comma or other specified delimiter. This type of report is especially useful when obtaining data quickly for manipulation in spreadsheet software such as MS Excel.

Banded Report

The banded report (listed simply as ‘Report’) is especially useful when a report is needed that contains special formatting, grouping, subtotals, totals, summary information, rich text, charts, graphs, images and other special information. Banded reports can also be utilized to facilitate correspondence in the form of mailing labels or as an actual letter that could be printed or emailed directly to an individual. Dashboard Reports do not produce a separate report file that can be saved, like the CSV or Banded Report. The data is simply displayed on the dashboard.

Executing Argos Reports

Reports can be executed using any of the following methods:

You can click on the Run Dashboard button in the Action area.
You can right click on the report and select Run Report from the menu or from the Report Viewer Actions menu on the right.

Or you can double click on the report in the Explorer tree.

Regardless of the method used for initiating an Argos report, a system Dashboard will be launched. The type of report that launched the Dashboard will determine the available toolbar action items and the defaulted report options.

The following are the possible toolbar icons and the actions they complete.

- Report preview (Banded)
- Save report (Banded, CSV)
- Create and email report (Banded, CSV)
- Print the report (Banded) - select the printer icon in the Report Options area
- Print the image of the form (All report types) - select the printer icon in the Dashboard Options area

Parameters are also populated from the system Dashboard.
Executing reports from the system Dashboard

Once the system Dashboard is initiated by one of the above described methods, any of the reporting options for the DataBlock can be selected.

Selecting a report option will enable the appropriate toolbar action items.

Executing a CSV Report

Once a CSV report is initiated by one of the above described methods, the system Dashboard will launch. Report options should pre-populate with "comma delimited".
Once parameter values are populated, report options for a CSV report include "Save the report and open with the associated application" where you will be prompted to save the file. After specifying the file name, the application (i.e., MS Excel) will open with the report data. Additional reporting options for CSV reports include "Save this report to disk" and "Create and email this report".

**Executing a Banded Report**

Once a Banded report is initiated by one of the above described methods, the system Dashboard will launch. Report options should pre-populate with "report". Report options for a Banded report include "Preview how this report will look when printed", "Save this report to disk", "Create and email this report", and "Print the report to a local printer".

**Executing reports from Shortcuts**

Shortcuts are useful for users who execute the same reports on a regular basis. Rather than navigating through the Explorer tree to find the report you need to run, creating a Shortcut makes it quicker and easier to find what you need.
Executing reports using Shortcuts can be completed using the same three methods used in the Explorer view.

- Clicking Execute from the Action area.
- Right clicking the Shortcut and selecting Execute.
- Double clicking the Shortcut.

**Summary**

You should now be able to:

- Sign in to Argos.
- Navigate the Explorer and Shortcut views.
- Locate Argos Help.
- Sign out of Argos.
- Execute all report type.
- Execute reports from Shortcuts.
- Create and maintain Shortcuts.