IBM Cúram Social Program Management
Version 7.0.0

Cúram Communications Guide

IBM

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Cúram Communications Guide

Communications are phone calls, emails, and letters. Communications have a correspondent. Communications relate to a case or participant and are stored as client interactions. They can be free-form or based on templates. Incoming and outgoing communications can be recorded.

Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to provide a high-level overview of managing the communications between the organization and all outside parties.

Communications can include phone calls, emails, and letters. Communications can be free-form or based on templates. Additional communication features include the management of both incoming and outgoing communications, as well as support for displaying lists of communications that relate to cases or participants.

After reading this guide, the reader should have a basic understanding of the different communications that can be issued to correspondents. The reader should also understand the concepts of using templates to create communications.

In order to best understand these concepts, the guide should be read in full. The guide is not intended to be used as a training or user guide.

Audience

This guide is intended for business analysts employed by the organization. It is assumed that this audience has a strong knowledge of the organization's business requirements. Readers do not require knowledge of the application.

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for reading this guide. Note, however, this guide does refer to cases and participants. It may be helpful to read the `Cúram Integrated Case Management Guide` and the `Cúram Participant Guide`.

Chapters in this Guide

The following list describes the chapters within this guide:

Communication Categories
> This chapter provides a description of the different communications that can be sent or received by the organization.

Communication Templates
> This chapter provides an overview of how Extensible Stylesheet Language(XSL) and Microsoft Word templates are used to create communications. XSL templates are used to automatically generate pro forma communications; Microsoft Word templates are used to manually create Microsoft Word communications.

General Communication Features
> This chapter provides information on maintaining communication information for cases and participants. This includes an overview of

communication correspondents, communication exceptions for the
correspondents, and client interactions.

General Communication Features

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of general communication features. The
following features apply to all communication categories:

- All communications have a correspondent.
- All communications relate to a case or a participant.
- All communications are stored as client interactions.

In addition to the above features, this chapter also describes communication
exceptions. These ensure that only the appropriate communication methods are
used to contact correspondents.

Correspondents

The individuals and businesses that the organization communicates with are called
the correspondents. Types of correspondents include client, employer, agent, and
public representative.

Correspondents are selected during communication creation. They can be selected
from previously registered participants or a new correspondent can be added.

The system automatically retrieves communication details for correspondents
previously registered on the system. For written communications, the system
retrieves the correspondent's mailing address; for phone calls, the phone number;
for emails, the email address.

When adding a new correspondent, the system will automatically create a
representative participant role for the correspondent. The information saved for the
correspondent is also saved as information for the new representative.

Case and Participant Communication Information

All communications relate to a participant or a case. The place a communication is
created from determines whether that communication is related to a participant or
a case. Communications created within a case automatically relate to that case. This
includes communications created from a case participant's list of communications,
a case member's list of communications, or from the communication list for the
case itself. Communications created from a participant's list of communications
relate to that participant.

One of the main differences between case and participant communications is
determining on which lists a communication will appear.

When a participant communication is created, it will only appear on that
participant's list of communications, even if the participant the communication
relates to is not the correspondent. For example, if an email is sent to a person's
employer, the email communication will only appear on the person's list of
communications and not on the employer's list of communications.

When a case communication is created, it will appear on the case's list of
communications and on the correspondent's two lists of communications: the first,

the list of communications for the case participant, and the other, the list of communications for the participant outside the case. This is to facilitate searching for case communications outside the case. For example, a person receives a case communication and calls the organization about it. This person would not normally have any other information about the case. In this scenario, the user can search for the person and look at the person's communication list. The user can then locate the relevant case communication as he or she is the correspondent. If case communications were only displayed within the case, this would not be possible.

Client Interactions

In addition to the list of communications, all client interactions are stored. This provides a more comprehensive overview of a participant's contact with the organization. Client interactions include all the interactions between a participant and the organization.

All communications, payments, and phone calls retrieved by a call center are automatically added to a participant's list of interactions. Interactions are useful because they form an overview of a participant's contact with the organization. For example, if a participant calls about a specific payment, a user can quickly access the general information about that payment and any communications relating to it.

Communication Exceptions

Communication exceptions are communication methods that should not be used for contacting a participant.

If the correspondent has an active communication exception, the user will not be able to use that method to create a communication. For example, if a client has a hardcopy communication exception, then the hardcopy method will not be available when creating communications for that client.

Communication Categories

Introduction

The organization communicates in a number of ways with external individuals and businesses. Four categories of communications are supported: recorded, email, pro forma, and Microsoft Word. Each of these addresses a unique way in which the organization communicates with outside parties.

The email, pro forma, and Microsoft Word categories are used to issue communications. The recorded category is used to record information about communications issued outside the system or received by the organization. The following subsections contain additional information about these categories.

Recorded Communications

Recorded communications are used to capture details about communications that are issued outside the system. Occasionally, these communications are populated automatically as part of a workflow activity. More typically, these are communications received by the organization. For example, when a client returns a completed application form, the user can scan the form and attach it to the communication as an electronic file.

There are, however, circumstances when the organization issues communications without using the application to create them. For example, a user may phone a client and follow up this phone conversation with notes. The application provides the ability to enter the details for this phone call, such as the date and time of the phone call and the topics discussed.

All recorded communications have a subject and a direction. The direction indicates whether the communication was issued by the organization or received from an outside party. They also have a communication method which is one of the following: data transfer, email, fax, hard copy, and phone. Certain information can be entered according to the method. For example, information regarding the physical location of a fax or hard copy communication can be recorded, so that the original communication can be retrieved easily.

Documents that are associated to recorded communications as an attachment can also be integrated with a content management system through the configuration of application properties as part of administration. If an organization chooses to integrate attachments with a content management system, the document will be stored in and retrieved from the content management system. Information about the recorded communication can also be stored in the content management system along with the document. For example, the reference number of the case in which the recorded communication was created, the date the communication was sent, and information about the correspondent of the communication can be stored along with the document.

For more information on integration with a content management system, see the `Cúram System Configuration Guide` and the `Cúram Content Management Interoperability Services Integration Guide`.

Email Communications

Email communications are used to send emails to any individual or business. Certain information must be entered to ensure the successful issuance of the communication. Most importantly, the user sending the email and the email recipient must have valid email addresses. Also, the subject and text of the email must be entered. This business requirement provides a small protection against irrelevant or blank emails.

The communication method is always email. Note that this method cannot be used if the email recipient has a communication exception set up for emails. Communication exceptions are covered later in this guide.

To allow for modifications, emails can be saved as drafts and sent at the appropriate time.

Pro Forma Communications

Pro forma communications are standardized communications generated from XSL stylesheets which are saved as pro forma templates. (Pro forma templates are covered in the next chapter.) These communications are used to send bulk communications via batch processing. In particular, they are used to issue communications created as part of specific business processes. For example, a large number of registration acknowledgment letters can be created for all new persons registered within a defined time period.

Typically, pro forma communications do not require editing by a user. These communications will include standard text, as well as variables which will be

populated by existing data when the communication is created. For example, a registration acknowledgment letter would include standard text regarding the registration, as well as variable information for the registered party, such as a name, address, and registration number.

For pro forma communications that are created automatically by the system as a result of either online or batch processing, the address information is populated with the primary address of the correspondent. If the end date of the primary address of the correspondent has passed, the system continues to select the primary address for the pro forma communication. Agencies may choose to implement their pro forma communications to obtain address information for the correspondent in a different manner if required.

When a pro forma communication is created, the template is merged with the data and the status of the communication is set to 'Sent'. Information regarding the template version used to create the communication is saved. This allows for the reprinting of the same communication at a later date. For example, if a registration acknowledgment letter is lost in the mail, the user can retrieve the original letter and resend it.

Pro forma communications can also be integrated with a content management system through the configuration of application properties as part of administration. If an organization chooses to integrate pro forma communications with a content management system, the generated communication is saved to the content management system. The communication is then retrieved from the content management system when the communication is reprinted or a user chooses to preview the communication. For more information on integration with a content management system, see the Cúram Content Management Interoperability Services Integration Guide.

Pro forma communications can also be created manually by a user. During the manual creation process, the user is presented with templates available to the participant or case. More information about how the templates are filtered is provided in the next chapter.

The communication method for pro forma communications is always hard copy as these communications are printed and sent. Pro forma communications will not be issued to correspondents who have a communication exception set up to ensure that no mail is sent to their address.

Microsoft Word Communications

Microsoft Word communications are communications based on a template created and maintained in Microsoft Word. All Microsoft Word templates are associated with either participants or cases. When a user creates a Microsoft Word communication for a participant, the list of templates available is filtered so that only those templates associated with participants will appear on the list. The application supports integration with Microsoft Word, i.e., it automatically opens and closes Microsoft Word as required. Note that Microsoft Word communications will not be issued to participants who have a communication exception that prevents them from receiving mail.

Microsoft Word communications can also be integrated with a content management system through the configuration of application properties as part of administration. If an organization chooses to integrate attachments with a content management system, the generated Microsoft Word document will be stored in and

retrieved from the content management system. Information about the Microsoft Word communication can also be stored in the content management system along with the document. For example, the reference number of the case in which the Microsoft Word communication was created and information about the correspondent of the communication can be stored along with the document. For more information on integration with a content management system, see the `Cúram System Configuration Guide` and the `Cúram Content Management Interoperability Services Integration Guide`.

Like pro forma communications, the communication is always hard copy. Unlike pro forma communications, users can customize a Microsoft Word communication before sending it. When a user creates a Microsoft Word communication, the application creates a Microsoft Word document by retrieving text from a Microsoft Word template and then populating additional information from the application, such as participant information, into the document using place holders defined in the template. The application highlights the text that has been populated into the document. The user can then go in and edit existing text or add new text to the document as required before saving and sending the Microsoft Word communication to the correspondent.

Communication Templates

Use this information to understand how to use communications templates. Examples of templates include application forms and registration acknowledgment letters. Support is provided for Microsoft Excel and Word templates.

Introduction

Communication templates are used to create standardized communications sent to multiple correspondents. Examples of standard communications include application forms and registration acknowledgment letters. A communication template contains settings, formatting, and styles that are applied to frequently used communications to retain a similar look and feel. Basing a communication on a template eliminates the need to re-create the communication from scratch. Each template can be modified and used repeatedly.

Support is provided for two types of templates: XSL templates and Microsoft Word templates. XSL templates are stylesheets that are used for generating pro forma communications; Microsoft Word templates are used to create Microsoft Word communications. These templates are managed differently on the system.

XSL Templates

XSL templates are used to generate bulk communications automatically, often through batch processing. An XSL template includes standard text that appears on all communications generated from the template.

It also includes variables that refer to existing data such as the correspondent's name, address, a case number, and an identification number (Social Security Number (SSN) or National Insurance number (NINO)). This data is stored separately from the template. As part of pro forma communication generation, the variables in the template are populated with the data stored in the application's Server.

An XSL stylesheet developer is responsible for the creation and maintenance of these templates. This requirement is because the average business user is not

familiar with XSL stylesheet development. Likewise, a business user cannot modify a pro forma communication created from an XSL template.

Since the system can process pro forma communications without input from a business user, these templates eliminate unnecessary work.

Microsoft Word Templates

Like XSL templates, Microsoft Word templates also can be used to create a number of communications from the same template. However, the creation of a communication from a Word template is done manually. A business user can create a communication based on an Microsoft Word template and make any necessary modifications to the communication before it is sent.

For example, if the business user had a phone conversation with the correspondent before the user creates the communication, the details of that conversation can be added to the communication text.

Microsoft Word templates also can include variable data.

Note: After a Word communication is created from a template, the data becomes part of the communication itself. For example, if the Word template includes variables for the correspondent's name and address, the correspondent's actual name and address, rather than the variables, are stored in the communication text.

Another difference between XSL templates and Word templates is the management of the templates themselves. As stated previously, XSL template creation and maintenance requires XSL development knowledge. Word templates are created and maintained in Word. Thus, any user with administration privileges and Word skills can maintain these templates.

Generating Pro Forma Communications

XSL templates are used to generate many pro forma communications from XSL stylesheets. These stylesheets include variables that instruct the system where to insert specific information.

As part of the pro forma generation process, the specific data that is described by the variables is retrieved from the application's server and merged with the XSL stylesheet into an XML file. For example, the correspondent name is merged into the XML document in place of the variable. This merge is the first stage in the pro forma generation process. During the next stage, the application XML Server converts the XML into PDF format. The PDF document then can be printed to be mailed or faxed to the correspondent.

Using Template Versions for Reprinting

Reprinting a pro forma communication restarts the pro forma generation process as described above. When reprinting a communication, the system uses template versions to ensure that the exact same communication is created each time it is printed.

The first time a communication is printed, the template version number is assigned to it. Any time the communication is reprinted, the same template version number will be used. For example, a pro forma communication is created from the most recent template version for the registration acknowledgment letter. That same registration acknowledgment letter can be reprinted any time in the future, regardless of the changes made to the template version.

Templates versions are controlled separately from the pro forma communications. When an XSL template is added to the system, it is saved as the first version of the template. A new version is created each time a developer checks out the XSL template, makes changes to it, and checks it back in. Thus, if a pro forma communication is created from a template, and that template changes in the future, the version number will ensure that the correct version is used, rather than the most recent version.

If an organization chooses to integrate pro forma communications with a Content Management System, the generated PDF document is saved to the Content Management System and retrieved from the Content Management System for printing or previewing purposes.

Creating Microsoft Word Communications Using a Template

Microsoft Word templates are used to create communications where most of the information is standard. This process might include text that appears in all communications that are created from the template, in addition to variables that are populated with data.

During the creation of a Word communication, data is retrieved to populate the variables in the template, for example, the actual correspondent name and address is retrieved for these variables. Unlike pro forma communications, all standard text, including the data, can be changed by a business user, if the communication is still in draft form. After a Word communication is marked as sent, changes no longer can be made.

Filtering Available Templates

XSL templates and Microsoft Word templates can be associated with certain information. This association is used to filter the list of templates available when users create pro forma and Word communications.

All Word templates are associated with participants or cases. When a user creates a Word communication for a participant or a case, the list of templates available is filtered so that only those templates that are associated with participants or cases appear on the list.

More options are available for filtering XSL templates. For example, XSL templates can be associated with specific participant and product types, for example, the person participant type. An XSL template that is associated with the person participant is not available to any other participant types. To use this template, a user must be creating a pro forma communication for a person.

Conclusion

Summary

The following is a summary of the main concepts covered in this guide:

- Communications are exchanges of information between the organization and participants. These exchanges can be in many different formats, e.g., phone calls, fax, e-mail, etc.
- The categories of communications are recorded, email, pro forma, and Microsoft Word.
- Communications can be incoming (received by the organization) or outgoing (issued by the organization).

- All communications have a correspondent and relate to a case or participant.
- Pro forma and Microsoft Word communications are created from templates.
- Pro forma templates are XSL stylesheets; Microsoft Word templates are Microsoft Word documents.

Additional Information

This guide is a supplement to the information covered in the core business guides. They are as follows:

Cúram Participant Guide
> This guide covers the basic concepts of participant functionality.

Cúram System Configuration Guide
> This guide covers the basic concepts of system administration.

Cúram Financials Guide
> This guide covers the basic concepts of financial processing.

Cúram Workflow Overview Guide
> This guide provides an overview of workflow.

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