

ElectraLink Summer 2020

Data Transfer Service Training Webinar Series — Report

For information

Report by: Marketing and Engagement Team

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Introduction

Every year at ElectraLink, the Data Transfer Service (DTS) Operations team hosts in-person training days and invites DTS customers to participate in live hands-on sessions. Customers are provided with training laptops where they can follow the training and perform live exercises and learn about the data transfer solutions that support the flow of information across the energy industry.

These are provided to DTS users under the Energy Market Data Hub (EMDH) platform, which brings together all of the products, services, and solutions ElectraLink offers for the benefit of Britain's utilities industry. All of these products and solutions available allow our customers to tap into a wide range of market intelligence and services to benefit their businesses.

Due to current government restrictions on large gatherings as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have transformed the usual in-person training sessions into two Webinar Training Series, one in the summer and another to be held in the Autumn 2020.

These are aimed at providing DTS users with the knowledge and expertise to manage the different data transfer tools and applications to ensure they can immediately apply the latest best practices while also offering another opportunity for direct engagement with the DTS Operations team.

ElectraLink's first DTS training webinar series was comprised of four online sessions, which included live Polls and Q&As. These were hosted from 23rd June 2020 to 4th August 2020, and this report summarises this online event.

About the webinars

The DTS Operations team delivered four training sessions focused on the following topics, for which live demonstrations of the tools and applications were provided:

- **Introduction to Webtools and the Automated Configuration Management Tool (ACMT) (23rd June 2020)**
About this webinar: In this webinar, we provided an introduction to Webtools and ACMT. Participants were trained and also shown a demo of the functions within Webtools and on how to use the ACMT tool to create new routes to receive data flows.
- **Auditing Using FTP and Recollect/Resubmit Function (30th June 2020)**
About this webinar: In this webinar, participants were shown how to send a flow via the FTP, how to audit Data Flow history, all the functions within the Audit tool, and how to use the resubmit/recollect functions of Webtools.
- **File Creation and Transfer via DFlowMaster and Flow Portal (7th July 2020)**
About this webinar: In this webinar, we reviewed the DFlowMaster function of Webtools. We also demonstrated how to create and send a flow from the DFlowMaster to our DFlowPortal. Finally, we ran through the Portal function and demonstrated how to utilise it as a way to send data.
- **FlowBuilder and other EMDH Solutions (4th August 2020)**
About this webinar: In this webinar, the following EMDH solutions were presented:
 - FlowBuilder as a tool that allows customers to design, amend, test and share data flow templates;

- RGMA Connect as a tool that supports Gas and Dual Fuel suppliers and commercial metering agents to create and send RGMA flows over the DTN;
- DUoS e-Billing as an efficient alternative of transferring and validating paper or PDF bills between a DNO and a Supplier for Distribution Use of System charges, recognised by HMRC as official invoices;
- File Cloner allowing Data Transfer Network Users to send and receive copies of data flows to additional DTS destinations without adversely impacting their daily operations;
- The E-Learning platform where users can access training materials free of charge and on-demand; and
- Our brand new DTS Market Entry Portal website, automating the whole DTS market entry process and allowing customers to accede to the DTS online.

The next section includes several questions posed by webinar attendees to instructors and the DTS experts on each of the topics. These were submitted during the event. It also includes the responses to the questions we were unable to answer at the webinar due to time constraints.

Panel questions and answers

Training Session 1: Introduction to Webtools and the Automated Configuration Management Tool (ACMT)	
Questions	Answers
In the event of deleting the routes and then restoring these, there will be a period where the inbound flows would not be visible as our gateway does not want these. Therefore, the recipients will get an error code 012. Is there a function to recall these without going back to the sender or to yourself at Electralink?	If the flows have been delivered, then you can use the recollect function within Webtools to collect the flows again. Please see our video, which demonstrates this function.
Hi there, I am new on the DTS. I presume the ACMT act as a normal network router. Where is the hardware installed?	ACMT is an s/w function which will be added to your privileges. Webtools as a suite of applications sits within the DTS cloud. You will access through your browser via a secure VPN connection, which ElectraLink sets up for your company.
What happens to flows which don't meet any routes?	If there is no live route for the DTS to deliver the flow, the flow will fail with an error code "Gateway not configured to receive file". Those flows will not be delivered until the route is set up. The DTS will send the sending party a negative acknowledgment, and the flow will have to be resent once the route is set up.
Training Session 2: Auditing Using FTP and Recollect/Resubmit Function	
Questions	Answers
Why do you put the file into the TEMP folder and not straight into the OUT folder?	The reason we do this is to protect the files. In most cases, the files are placed in TEMP and then re-named into the 'in' directory. As the 'in' directory is polled once every minute, any files dropped directly into this could potentially become corrupted if the DTS is pulling these out at the same time. The 'Out' directory is for 'incoming files' as you are pulling files 'Out' of the DTN.
Are you able to search for MPRN yet?	We have requested this as an enhancement to Webtools for 2021.

At one point, the DTS tool stated the earliest date you could go back -rf - why was this function removed?	You can go back to 14 months to search for files in line with the reconciliation period.
Are you able to do a multi-search for user file ID?	Yes, you can. There is an option in the drop-down menu called 'User File Identifier'. If you list the file IDs in a notepad file. One column with no header, you can perform the search, but please ensure you enter your criteria in the main audit page first.
For how long is the file available?	You can go back 14 months to search for file history in line with the electricity reconciliation period.
Is there a purpose for the recollection/resubmission reason field? Or is this just for future internal auditing purposes?	It is more for internal auditing and finding out who resubmitted or recollected a file and the reason why. It helps when you have a large team of Webtools users.
What do the numbers indicate on the status of the files?	The numbers are codes that either confirm the files have been delivered or error codes for the different types of failure reasons when a file fails delivery, for example.
Can we edit the failed flows before resubmission?	Yes, these can be edited either in D-Flow Master or within your own flow applications.
Out of interest, does it validate the full file against the RGMA flows, not just the header row?	Gas validation, for now, is limited to Supplier Gas flows, where there is an option to validate the full gas flow, including the group structure within the flows.
Will the DTS be looking to provide CSS flow audit in the future?	Yes, in order to support the CSS Connect Adaptor flows.

Training Session 3: File Creation and Transfer via DFlowMaster and Flow Portal

Questions	Answers
Does D-FlowMaster calculate checksums in the footer? Is there an option for this?	Checksums are only in Pool Format. The DTS does not carry these over when translating to variable or fixed file formats.
Are there plans to add RGMA flows to the DFM?	Yes, there are plans to add RGMA format flows to DFM. These will be the Supplier Flows such as NOSI, RET SAR, and DAP
I'm guessing that this will also apply to gas flows?	There are plans in the development pipeline to add regulated gas flows such as NOSI, RET, SAR and DAPs, etc. to this. We do not have a development timeline yet but will keep users informed.
Is it possible to import a flow file created externally for validation (without actually sending the flow)?	You can import an externally created file into D-flow Master to view and further edit if needed. The file will not be sent unless you send it yourself.

Training Session 4: FlowBuilder and other EMDH Solutions

We received no questions from participants during this session.

Webinars polling results

During each webinar, we have run some polls to gain more insight into attendees' perspectives on our data tools and applications. Below is the summary of the key points uncovered by this polling:

- **Training Session 1 – Introduction to Webtools and the Automated Configuration Management Tool (ACMT):**
 - Attendees consider awareness and training to be a barrier to using Webtools.
 - In terms of Webtools usage, most attendees state that they use this often.
 - When asked 'how can we help you to make better use of the ACMT function', most attendees said they would like to have access to more e-Learning options.

- **Training Session 2 – Auditing Using FTP and Recollect/Resubmit Function:**
 - When asked if they would be looking to use the Flow Alert function in the future, 86% of poll respondents said 'Yes'.
 - 60% of attendees stated they do not know who their User Group Representative is.
 - Following a demo of the Flow Alert Function, when asked if they would be looking to continue to use it in the future, 73% of respondents said 'Yes' followed by 20% who stated that they currently do not use it.
 - The majority of the poll respondents said that within all the Audit functions available to them (Audit, Multisearch, Extract Data, Extract Audit History), 'Audit Search' is the one they use the most.
 - Following a demo of the Audit Functions, attendees were asked which of these they would be looking to use in the future. Respondents said the following: (Note: This is ranked below by order of preference)
 - Saved queries;
 - Audit Search;
 - Multisearch;
 - Extract Data; and
 - Extract Audit History.

- **Training Session 3 – File Creation and Transfer via DFlowMaster and Flow Portal:**
 - After seeing a demo of the functionality of DFlow Master and when asked 'how likely is it that you will use this tool in the future', respondents said the following:
 - Likely – 48%;
 - Very Likely – 35%; and
 - Need further information – 17%.
 - Most attendees stated they would like further assistance with the 'Extract Data' function of the Audit tool.
 - 86% of attendees have never used DFlowMaster before.
 - 90% of attendees have also never used the DFlow Portal, but after being shown a demo, around 80% stated they would be using it in the future with 10% indicating they will require further training.

- **Training Session 4 – FlowBuilder and other EMDH Solutions:**
 - 95% of attendees have never used but are aware of FlowBuilder.
 - For 64% of the respondents, a limited understanding of the benefits is one of the main barriers to using FlowBuilder, followed by the need to have access to further training.
 - After being shown a demo of FlowBuilder, attendees stated they would like more information to be able to use it.

- Finally, the majority of attendees do not currently use RGMA Connect, DUoS Flows or File Cloner tools.

Attendance rates

The attendance rate recorded for Training Session 1 stood at 82% (out of a total of 49 registrants), and 90% for Training Session 2 (from a total of 61 registrants). For Training Session 3, we recorded an 85% attendance rate (out of a total of 48 registrants), and the rate for Training Session 4 stood at 44% (out of a total of 45 registrants). These attendance rates were retained for the duration of each webinar.

Feedback from attendees

- We collected feedback from attendees through online post-webinar surveys.
- Overall, 100% of the respondents found the webinars useful, with over 60% wanting to participate in future sessions.
- 90% of the respondents also expressed interest in receiving a copy of the webinar materials.
- Respondents also thanked us for organising the series. We will process and incorporate constructive feedback data into our preparations and themes for future webinars.

Contact details

- For more information on ElectraLink's Summer 2020 DTS Training Webinars, please visit our [website](#) or contact communications@electralink.co.uk
- For queries about our data transfer service and solution, please email: helpdesk@electralink.co.uk
- Follow us and keep checking our social media channels for updates, reminders and news on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).
- Keep checking our website for more information on governance services, our work, software and data solutions: <https://www.electralink.co.uk/>

Useful Links

- FlowBuilder – Register [here](#) to use FlowBuilder.
- E-Learning Platform – Register [here](#) to use ElectraLink's online E-Learning Platform.
- DTS Market Entry Portal – Register [here](#) to view our new automated market entry portal.
- RGMA Connect – Learn more about our RGMA Solution [here](#).
- DUoS e-Billing – learn more about our e-Billing service for HH Suppliers [here](#).
- File Cloner – learn more about our File Cloner Service [here](#).
- DTS Address Book – To access the DTS Address Book please register on www.electralink.co.uk and then log in to access the Downloads Area where this is hosted.