

Division of Responsibility

SUMMARY

There are different ways of deploying a field data collection system, such as ATLAS FieldMan™, within a large organisation, depending upon the amount of control that central management wishes to have over the process.

It is possible for a company to gain centralised control over the process by installing and using FieldMan at the central office, and simply distributing pre-loaded handhelds to crews. Future work can be transmitted through the use of FieldMan Data Interchange files, and the re-combination and checking work is preformed at the central office.

Alternatively, crews can be empowered to manage, check, and re-combine jobs by installing FieldMan at the crew manager level. Communication with the analysts would be via complete job files (e.g. CDI files for ATLAS Cruiser™). This provides for a division along functional lines; collection is performed by field crews, and analysis by Forest analysts. The process would need to be monitored and possibly audited to ensure business rules were followed throughout.

CENTRALISED VS. DISTRIBUTED

Distributed Control

This scenario divorces the Analyst from the process of data collection, with FieldMan installed on each of the Field Crew Managers' computers.

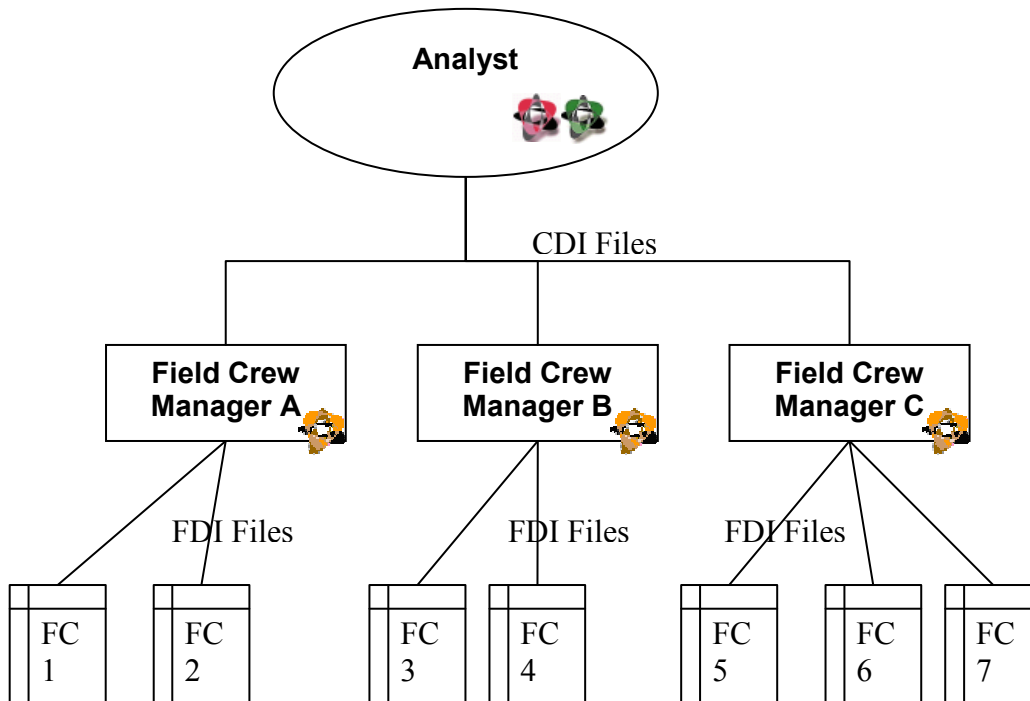


Figure 1: Distributed Control

The Analyst designs the assessment in ATLAS Cruiser, creates a CDI file for it, and sends it to the relevant Field Crew Manager. The Field Crew Manager is then responsible for distributing the job amongst the field crews, re-combining the data,



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and checking that it is complete and correct. The data can be edited by the Field Crew Manager at this point. Once this process is complete, the CDI file is returned to the Analyst.

This scenario would appeal to those companies that use a large number of contractors or field crews, or where the field crews are largely grouped by region. The work of processing is delegated to the Field Crew Managers, allowing the Analyst to concentrate on business issues. The *InboxDirect* plugin could be used to aid the distribution and collection of a large number of jobs being measured by a number of remote Field Crew Managers.

Centralised installation of a distributed process

It is possible to have centralised control of licensing and application versioning even though the process is distributed, if the company has a network that can be accessed by all of the concerned parties.

Both the licence for FieldMan and/or the actual program can be installed on a central server and accessed by the Field Crew Managers through a network. Each user will need to have the supporting frameworks installed on their computers (.Net and Java), and will need to register the computer to use the licence setup on the central server. In this configuration, a centralised IT group can manage licence renewal, software upgrades, and database administration with little participation of the users.

The alternative is to install and licence FieldMan on each of the Field Crew Managers' computers with a fixed number of handheld devices prescribed.

Centralised Control

This scenario involves the Analyst installing both the main ATLAS application (such as Cruiser) and ATLAS FieldMan.

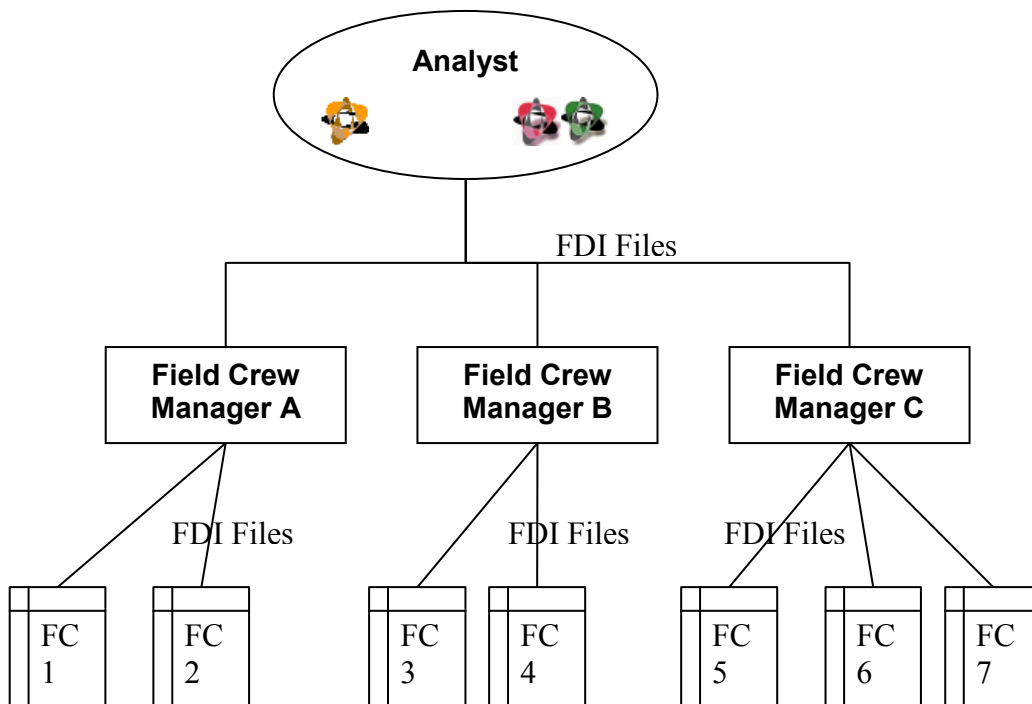


Figure 2: Centralised Control

The Analyst creates the assessments in Cruiser, loads them into FieldMan and distributes them via FDI files to the Field Crews through the Field Crew Managers.



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Once the data is measured the Analyst then recombines and checks the data before transferring it into Cruiser and analysing it. The Field Crew managers simply manage the process of field collection, and have no part in re-combining, checking, or editing field crew data.

This situation would appeal to those companies that desire top-level control of the process and/or don't have a large number of crews and jobs to process. The *CruiserDirect* plugin could be used to aid the analyst in transferring data to and from a local installation of Cruiser and FieldMan in an efficient manner.

REFERENCES

Other white papers in the series:

- Controlling the data collection process with ATLAS FieldMan, Sep 2004.
- Separating Context from Data, Dec 2004.