

## **Interfacing Two Systems Electronic Personnel Action Form (ePAF) Auto Separation**

The State of Tennessee  
Department of Finance and Administration  
Division of Strategic Technology Solutions

**NASCIO Award Category: Business Process Innovations**

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Strategic  
Technology Solutions

## **Executive Summary**

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The State of Tennessee employs 38,000 individuals across three branches of government. During the course of a year, hundreds, if not thousands, of state employees are compelled, voluntarily or otherwise, to find employment elsewhere. When separation occurs, a 24-hour turnaround time for removing employee access to internal systems is required by state policy.

Before the implementation of this project, employee separations were a slow and manual process with a convoluted series of paper, scanned forms, and data entry. It lacked any efficiency, which made it almost impossible to meet the 24-hour mandate required in state policy. Prior to this automation, the manual process for removing employee access took indefinite amounts of time, which left room for potential security breaches and ultimately led to audit findings.

A collaborative and creative approach to finding the solution brought forth an auto ePAF separation process, which integrates two systems and boasts tremendous efficiency, along with greater security. The new system includes the newly designed/implemented "Remove TN Security Access" page along with the "ePAF Reminder." The Remove TN Security Access page resides within the state Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System (Peoplesoft/Edison). The ePAF Reminder is a logic-driven reminder for HR personnel that automatically checks if an Auto Separation Request already exists for the employee they are terminating via ePAF.

The implementation has been a great success and has produced significant results, dramatically decreased audit findings, provided real-time cost savings, and most importantly left far less room for potential security breaches, which means that State of Tennessee's data and assets are more safe and secure.

## Concept

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### Business Problem

Because of the size of the State of Tennessee workforce, the number of employee separations are quite high and can reach the thousands each year. When separation occurs, the state requires that the separated employee's access to PeopleSoft/Edison and Active Directory be terminated within 24 hours of their separation date.

The separation workflow process involved several steps at both an agency and central business owner level, all of which were handled manually. The time it took to complete all necessary approvals in the process was far less efficient than necessary and resulted in a lapse of several days, and sometimes even weeks from the date of separation until the "termination" was reflected on the job record. These delays created security concerns pertaining to potential breaches and resulted in unnecessary audit findings.

### Project Goals

The overall objective of the project was to create a more efficient business process that helped ensure that security standards were met and focused on the timely removal of systems access.



#### Increase Efficiency

Significant increase in efficiency for all those involved including stakeholders and end users.



#### Replace Paper Process

The former paper process was time consuming, required wet signatures, and was prone to human error or missteps.



#### Eliminate Gaps

No more gaps in processing times for around-the-clock agencies.



#### Decrease Resources

Fewer individuals involved in the termination/disabling process freed up resources and eliminated wasted time and the possibility of human error.



#### Comply with Security Policies

Helped agencies comply with state security policies/standards and avoid audit findings.



#### Safeguard Accessibility to State Data

Helped ensure that state data was only accessed by those with permission.

## Collaboration






An onboarding/offboarding taskforce was established to identify challenges, pain points, and opportunities.

### The Onboarding/Offboarding Task Force Participants

- |   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Active Directory team</li><li>• Department of Human Resources (Central HR business owner)</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ERP team</li><li>• State Security office</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• TN ServiceNow team</li><li>• Agency Auditors</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• HR community</li><li>• Auditors from TN Comptroller of the Treasury</li></ul> |
|---|--|--|---|

### Outlining A Successful Implementation

Recommendations from the taskforce were evaluated by functional and technical teams, STS, and the Edison ERP team.

 <p><b>Process</b> The process works as designed.</p>	 <p><b>User Adoption</b> User adoption happens organically.</p>
 <p><b>Results</b> Proof is in the results.</p>	 <p><b>Policy</b> The new process is not optional, it is policy.</p>
 <p><b>Around the Clock</b> Having an around-the-clock option to disable system access is a critical component for the State of Tennessee's many 24-hour facilities.</p>	

## Solution

The solutions below were designed by cooperating STS/ERP functional teams which utilized a waterfall project management approach.

### 1. Creation of a custom "Remove TN Security Access" page

(Auto Separation) within Peoplesoft/Edison.

### 2. Creation of an ePAF Reminder

A logic driven reminder for HR personnel which checks if an Auto Separation request already exists for the employee they are terminating via ePAF.



#### If Yes

A confirmation message Displays.



#### If No

A warning message displays and an acknowledgement checkbox is required before the termination can be submitted.

### Logic Based Reminder

- A logic-based reminder displays to HR personnel regarding qualifying separations, reminding them to submit an Auto-Separation request.

### Comparison of Effective Date

- The reminder compares the effective date of the employee separation contained within the ePAF, capturing the effective date of the Auto Separation entry in a Peoplesoft record.
- The same is true if the Auto Separation exists with an effective date which is less than or greater than one day prior to the effective date of the ePAF/Job Record termination.

### Entries Captured

- All entries are captured in Peoplesoft records, including audit records which capture not only the requested effective dates/times but also the date/time the submission occurred.

**Step 1 of 2: Submit Status Change Data**

Please enter the effective date, complete fields in the Form Data section, and upload any DOHR required attachments. You may also add comments if needed.

**Selected Person**

<b>Name</b>	Christopher Riggs	<b>Empl ID</b>	00105145
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[View Current Job Details](#)

**Form Data**

<b>*Effective Date</b>	07/11/2020	<b>eForm ID</b>	1758143
<b>Action</b>	Termination		
<b>Reason</b>	Resignation		

**File Attachments**

	Upload	View	DOHR Required	Attachment Description	Doc ID	
1	Upload	View	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Separation Notice		Delete
2	Upload	View	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Resignation Letter		Delete
3	Upload	View	<input type="checkbox"/>			Delete

[Add File Attachment](#)

**Form Messages**

	Message Text	Description
<input type="checkbox"/>	Security Access Termination Reminder	We did not find a request to remove this employee's security access the day prior to termination. After submitting this ePAF, please ensure a TN Terminate Security Access request is submitted for this employee, if appropriate.  (By checking this box, I acknowledge I have received this reminder.)

### 3. The Remove TN Security Access Page

The Remove TN Security Access page is custom-built and by-passes the workflow approval process associated with the employee's job record and allows for immediate revocation of systems (PeopleSoft/Edison and AD) access.

- The custom auto separation page captures the desired effective date and time of employee access removal.
- The ERP system evaluates entries at the end of every hour, at which point roles, entitlements, and department access are removed and user accounts are locked and disabled.
- The ERP system also sends a file with effective dates and times to a server where a Powershell script disables the employee's Active Directory account.

### Continuing Oversight

For the oversight of this initiative, STS/ERP owns the processes and their functionality. Agencies are responsible for following the procedure and utilizing the functionality. Access is granted via custom Peoplesoft roles. Roles are provisioned via the ERP User Rights team only with approval from the agency's Appointing Authority or their designee. The ePAF Auto Separation Reminder was implemented to encourage agencies in this area. The initiative is in a constant and ongoing state of assessment which consists of but is not limited to:

- Internal review of processing results.
- Comparing timely removal of Peoplesoft access and disabling of Active Directory pre/post enhancement.
- Internal agency auditors evaluate performance on an ongoing basis.
- State auditors from Comptroller of the Treasury evaluate performance on an ongoing basis.

### Education, Awareness, and Adoption

Several avenues were utilized to educate users and promote awareness and adoption.



#### Frequent Outreach

There was frequent outreach from the ERP functional team to the State of Tennessee Human Resources community, via semi-monthly HRO meetings.



#### Human Resource Meeting

A statewide event attended by HR directors and HR staff from all state agencies /departments.



#### Educational Materials

Quick Start and End User Guides were developed, distributed to the HR community, and posted in the Peoplesoft/Edison system.



#### Notifications

Once the new process was in place, any agency who submitted paper requests were notified by the ERP User Rights teams of the new, more efficient process.



#### Overview Document

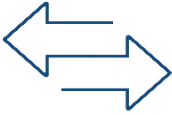





A very thorough AD Auto Disable Process Overview document was developed by STS for documenting the process for IT professionals internally.

## Impact

The immediate impact was a shift in thinking on behalf of end users/agencies, bringing a realization of how “small” process changes can have a big impact. This effort was received so positively that it led to a similar “phase II” for employee transfers within the state. This effort focused specifically on reducing PeopleSoft/Edison access to self-service levels and included an option to disable Active Directory, if necessary.

ePAF Auto Separation has been used 32,500 times since August 2019 (date of implementation). There has been significant positive feedback from agencies on how efficient this process is, as compared to the paper world that was in place prior to ePAF Auto Separation. This also reduced errors in that it is a smart form that prompts you with appropriate selections and will not allow the submission without having the appropriate documentation. Terminations (and therefore lump sum payments) are processed much faster than before.

Beyond the positive impact in cost savings realized by eliminating manual processing, the potential savings from preventing a potential data breach or data theft are immeasurable. This effort aligns perfectly with a gubernatorial priority of “Fiscal Strength/Efficient Government”. Ensuring state data remains secure is paramount, not only for the owners of the data but for constituents whose trust we must earn and maintain daily.

 <p><b>Interface</b> For the first time we were able to get Peoplesoft/Edison to interface with the Active Directory system. A very simple, easy-to-use interface facilitated end user adoption.</p>	 <p><b>24-hour Option</b> The solution provided a 24-hour/around-the-clock option that largely eliminated the human element from the removal of systems access and account disabling.</p>
 <p><b>Process Improvements:</b> Major process improvements and efficiencies realized for all parties involved. Also, a standard process for the entire enterprise to follow.</p>	 <p><b>Elimination of Paperwork:</b> Significant amount of paperwork eliminated.</p>
 <p><b>Better utilization of resources</b> Fewer hands/individuals involved in the tasks.</p>	 <p><b>Increased efficiency</b> More timely removal/disabling of systems access.</p>