

Syllabus Plus Users Information Update – July 2004 Edition 2

Introduction

Welcome to the second edition of this monthly information sheet. This update is being sent to all users of Syllabus Plus Course Planner across the University of Melbourne. The aim of this sheet is to give you information on what is going on in the world of Syllabus Plus, and to provide you with hints and tips in your everyday usage of the program.

Current Syllabus Plus Issues

As discussed in our previous issue, we have been having some problems with the Write-Back Error in Syllabus Plus over the last few months. In an effort to reduce the frequency of this problem occurring, and the number of users affected, the timetable office 'rebuilt' the 2004 database late last week. We apologise for the inconvenience caused by the downtime on Friday afternoon, and also having to download fresh images from the server after the rebuild. Although this is not a long term solution, we hope that it will minimise problems over the short term. If we find that the Write Back error rate has once again increased to a significant level, we will once again follow the procedure used late last week to 'clean up' the system. As such, could you please let us know straight away if you are experiencing any problems with the Write-Back error, so that we can more easily determine how often we should be 'cleaning up' the database.

As mentioned in the previous issue, we hope that the Write Back issue will be resolved with the introduction of the Updated version of the program for the 2005 database (see below). For more information on the Write Back Issue, please refer to last month's edition, or contact our office

Syllabus Plus Developments

As discussed in our previous edition, we are in the process of upgrading Syllabus Plus from version 3.1.2 on an Ingres based server to 3.3.2 on an Oracle based server.

We can report that since the mailout of our last edition, progress on the development of the new database has been positive. We are now successfully running a test version of 3.3.2 on a remote server. Over the next couple of weeks, members of the timetable office will attempt to 'break' the program, to determine if it has any significant problems. If we are unable to spot any significant problems we will push ahead with the construction of the 2005 database on the new version.

Training in the usage of the updated program will start to take place over the course of the next few months, depending upon what you use the program for. For those who have read-only access, we would expect to be running training in November at this stage, whilst for those who have more extensive access, we will be starting training within the next couple of months. We will get in touch with you on an individual basis to arrange training for you. If you have any queries about our planned training program, please feel free to contact us.

Handy Tip – Using Filters

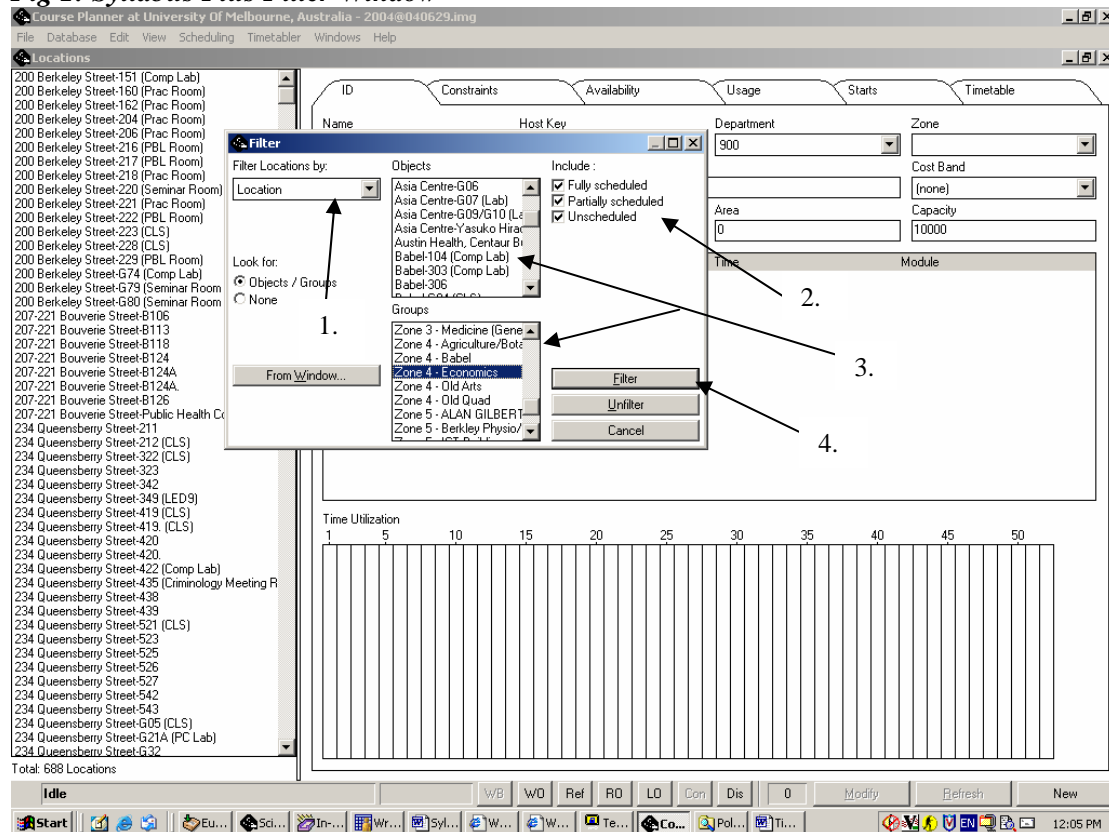
In each edition, we will include a Handy Tip to assist you in your day to day usage of the Syllabus Plus program.

The Syllabus Plus database contains a substantial amount of information. So much so, that it can be quite time consuming to pick through long lists of data searching for the particular piece of information that you after. This is where filters come in handy.

In this example, we will concentrate on filtering for locations, but you can also use the filter function for many other Syllabus Plus entities, such as Activities, or Modules.

1. Go to the 'Timetabler' menu and select 'Locations'
2. Go to the 'View' menu and select 'Filter' (or use the shortcut 'Ctrl' + 'I')
3. The filter window should now appear. (see Figure 1 below)

Fig 1: Syllabus Plus Filter Window



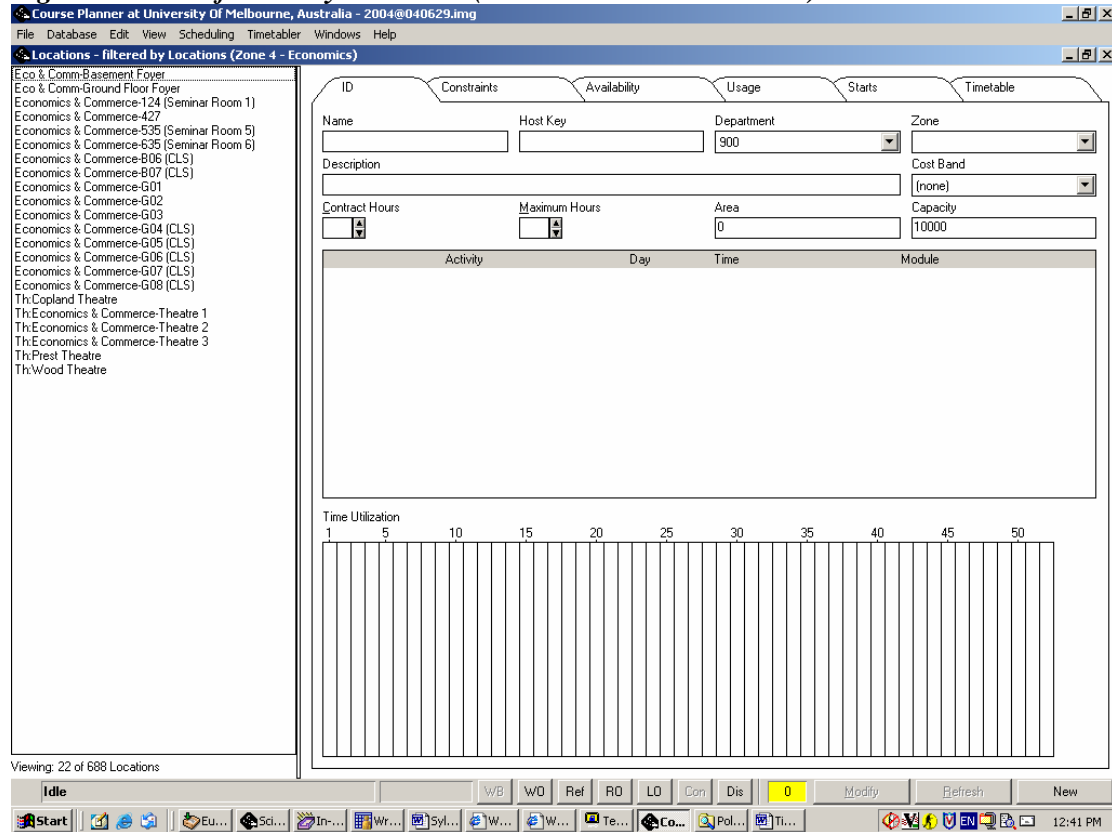
4. You can now choose how you would like to filter the locations. One filter that we use quite often in our office is filtering locations by locations. Translated, this means that you're finding locations of a particular type. In order to do this, you will first need to select 'Locations' from the 'Filter Locations by' list (1.).
5. Next you will need to decide if you wish to view all object types, or only those that are properly scheduled on the timetable (2.). It is irrelevant for the most part when filtering by locations. (This feature is most useful for identifying activities that are unscheduled).
6. The last step is to determine if you would like to filter by a single object or a group of object. In this case we will filter by the Group Zone 4 – Economics (3.). This will show us all of the (timetabling) locations in the Economics and Commerce building.
7. Click on Filter (4.). You should now see the filtered list of locations, as in Fig 2 below.
8. In order to remove the filter, select 'View' and then 'Filter'. Click on the 'Unfilter' button

Note that there are a whole range of Syllabus entities that can be filtered. The filters that our office finds most useful are

- Activities by Locations
- Activities by Departments

Note that the performance of Syllabus Plus is usually poorer (i.e. slower) when you are using filters. We therefore recommend that you 'unfilter' data before moving onto other tasks.

Fig 2: Locations filtered by Locations (Economics and Commerce)



Contact Us

If you have any questions, or would like to give us some feedback, please feel free to get in touch with us. You can email us at sa-timetable@unimelb.edu.au or give us a call:

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