

Alerts

GeoCue

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“What do you mean the elevation data isn’t ready? I have orthos that have to be delivered by Friday! Why wasn’t I told there was a slip in schedule? The customer is going to be pissed.” Sound familiar? As anybody who has been in this industry for a while will tell you, investing in cutting-edge sensor systems and deploying sophisticated production software tools is only part of building a profitable business. Being engineers and scientists, the technical aspects of collecting, processing and manipulating data into a finished product will always be near and dear to our hearts. But the need for timely communication and accurate project tracking across your production team doesn’t go away just because you have a nice shiny new LIDAR sensor. In fact, I would argue it becomes more critical to making sure that an expensive investment provides the expected benefits to your bottom line. You ignore the management side of production at great risk to the long term success of your business. Our experience with our GeoCue customers provides direct evidence of this paradigm. We have seen companies invest in identical hardware and software tools, but achieve very, very different levels of success. We are convinced it comes down to having good people and giving those people effective tools to help them manage their work. And, of course, we believe GeoCue plays a large role in the latter.

The communication aspect of good team management, I would say the timely communication aspect, is something we have always looked at in GeoCue. Running your data production in a GeoCue workflow automatically captures information about completion, effort, status and other critical project management metrics as your projects move through production. But that database of status information is only beneficial to you when it is leveraged to provide timely alerts when you need to take action. One of the often overlooked tools in GeoCue addresses this challenge by improving the communication across your production team with automatic email alerts based on the status conditions you want monitored. These alerts are often configured to be generated upon “completion” and “problem” events. Completion alerts are very useful for making sure data moves efficiently through production. Notifying the ortho manager that elevation data for project XYZ is now ready reduces backlog and keeps data flowing without the need for weekly or daily status checking. Configuring GeoCue to push that information out automatically to the ortho manager based on the status of the data rather than requiring the manager to pull that information from the team is extremely valuable.

Completion alerts tend to be green flags that keep data flowing. Conversely, problem alerts are critical to making sure actions are taken in a timely manner to correct problems that have stopped data flowing through production. Big red flags. Just by their nature they are more critical to implement than completion alerts since knowing things are going as planned is nice, but knowing things need fixing is much more important; it requires action! Having critical issues flagged and delivered to your inbox automatically as they occur saves valuable response time and also helps provide an accurate real-time picture of issues on the production floor unfiltered by the weekly or daily “status meeting”. Examples of problem email alerts that can be configured in GeoCue range from individual failures of a specific data-block, i.e. 1234 just failed final QA/QC, to project metrics critical to senior managers, i.e. the statewide LIDAR project just went 15% over budget on the editing work – to one of my favorites, and the one our ortho manager in the

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discussion at the beginning would have wanted – no work has been done on project XYZ for 5 days (despite what the production manager is telling you!).

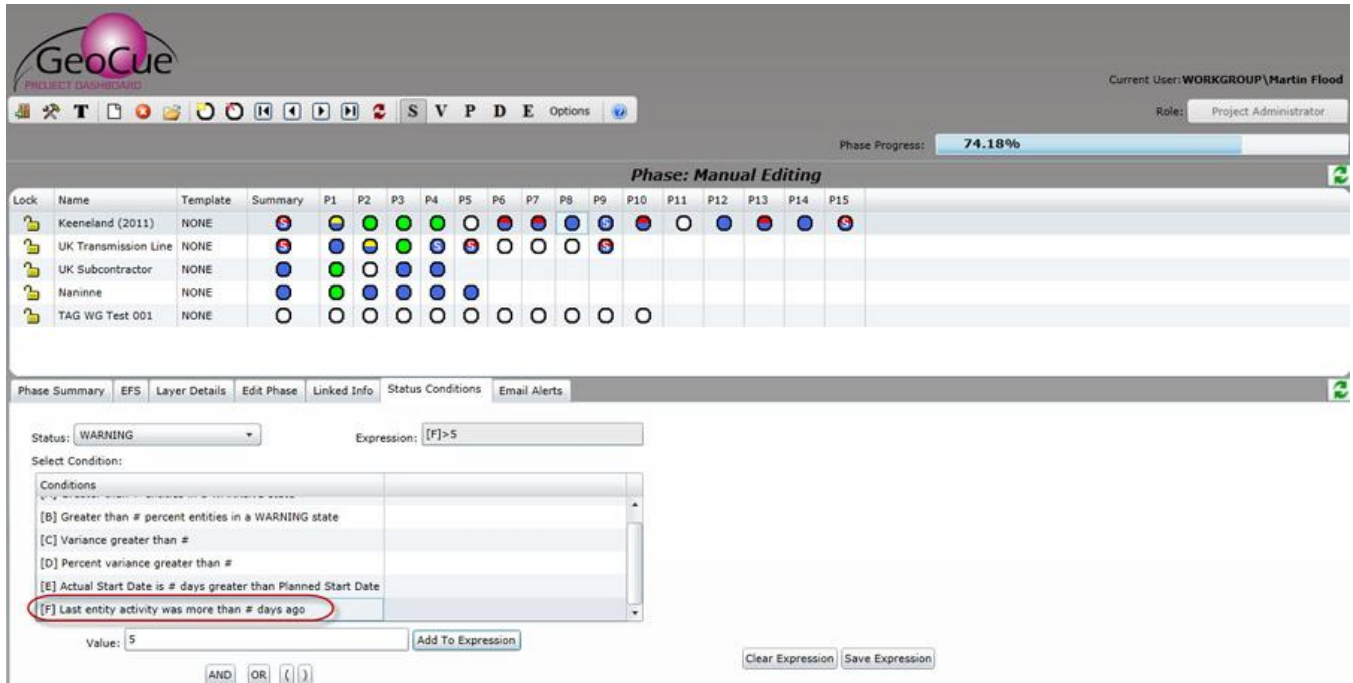


Fig 1: Setting an email alert warning to flag when no editing work has been done on a project for a week

Email alerts like these can be configured in GeoCue at one of several levels. At the strategic level GeoCue Federator’s Project Dashboard allows for email alerts based on aggregate status across an entire project phase. You may not need to know when any individual LIDAR tile fails QC but you sure do want to know if 10% of the tiles are failing, and the sooner the better. For project managers, metrics like % complete or variance against budget can also be tracked for each project phase or the project as a whole and status alerts fired based on these critical parameters as they update in real-time based on work in progress. At a more tactical level, individual steps for individual entities (e.g. LIDAR tile, photo center) can be configured to fire alerts when the status changes to a particular condition, most usually an error condition. So, if a tile fails QA/QC, an email can automatically be sent to the person responsible for reviewing the failure and correcting the tile. In this scenario, setting-up some simple rules in your email client allows for a very effective work queuing system, i.e. here’s all the tiles I need to go fix. GeoCue email alerts are processed using your existing email server and can be configured for individuals or groups so there is a high degree of customization available for how GeoCue pushes the information out and who it goes to. Because these email alerts are generated automatically as work progresses on your projects they are timely and accurate and show-up in the inbox of the person best positioned to take action.

Finally, we have added a new type of email alerting to GeoCue 2014 that extends this alerting system to cover automated processes run through GeoCue’s Command Dispatch System (CDS). Your production team will now be able to get emails as batch processes complete, or encounter an exception, allowing for much more timely response to any problems. Especially for customers who tend to maximize efficiency by

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running 24/7 batch processing, even over weekends, pushing this information out via email is a big time-saver compared to having to interactively check status. And the production manager can get some of their weekend back!

Email alerts are just one example of how GeoCue can help you improve communication across your production team. In combination with GeoCue's Project Dashboard and Project Administrator, the email status alert system makes tracking project status and taking appropriate actions to keep on plan, under budget and on schedule much easier. It is all part of the old adage. "If you aren't measuring it, you aren't managing it". To see more examples of email status alerts in GeoCue or to discuss how your organization could benefit from GeoCue workflow management, please contact Martin Flood (mflood@geocue.com).