

The CIVA championship scoring system

As outlined to plenary last year the ACRO contest database system has been revised to operate from 2021 forwards with a new and more flexible file structure based on the well-established XML format. This change has been made primarily to ensure stable handling of international characters such as Ø Å æ and å etc. in pilots and officials names. New-style ACRO data files can be recognised by their “.ctx” suffix in place of the previous “.ctf”.



To enable contest files in the previous v4 format to continue to be accessed, the revised software incorporates a ‘translation’ system that automatically creates a new-style v5 data file that is stored in a separate folder – the original file remains available and unchanged. Data files in users own systems, or sourced from ACRO’s online archive that holds almost 300 international and domestic competition files covering the last 15 years, can still therefore be retrieved, opened and quickly updated to 2021 v5 standard for ongoing review.

In practice the upgraded system has been extremely effective; a few early bugs were quickly identified and resolved, while occasional later issues reported by scorers have as usual been tackled without delay on an ad-hoc basis. During re-coding of the many In/Out data points the opportunity has also been taken to improve the handling and presentation of core information in many areas, for example so that forenames are now stored separately from surnames to enable more flexible sorting routines, the judging data for Warm-Up pilots can easily be included or excluded from results output, and the coloured representation of medal positions in the results can now be adjusted with great flexibility. As usual in response to requests and suggestions from scorers a number of improvements have been introduced to enhance or simplify various operations.

The ‘legacy’ v4 version of the software that was previously available has now been discontinued.

Future-proofing

One area of general concern relates to the long-term development and availability of this scoring software. At some time in the future the ACRO system may need to be co-authored or taken over by other parties nominated by CIVA. Time will therefore be committed over the coming months to create a fully detailed technical manual and cloud-stored software backup to enable this process to be invoked when the time arises.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nick Buckenham', is written in a cursive style.

Nick Buckenham
ACRO software author