

# Introduction

## What is the IPAC TRACS Application?

The Treasury **R**eceivable **A**ccounting and **C**ollection **S**ystem (**TRACS**) is the Financial Management Service's (FMS) check claims application. It was developed to expedite the transfer of funds and associated financial information between FMS and Federal Program Agencies (FPAs). FMS partnered with the Federal Reserve Bank (FRB) of Richmond to re-engineer the TRACS application within the **G**overnment **O**n-Line **A**ccounting **L**ink **S**ystem (**GOALS II**). The improved TRACS application streamlines the reimbursement procedure for processing check claims transactions through the Intra-governmental **P**ayment and **C**ollection **S**ystem (**IPAC**) application.

## IPAC TRACS Transaction Types

The IPAC TRACS application has two purposes: to create IPAC bills and to store the detail information associated with these IPAC transactions for access by FPAs. The four types of transactions are:

### **Unavailable Check Cancellations (UCC) credits**

A UCC is a check that has been cancelled for a reason other than that the check has expired. It is issued by the agency and submitted to Treasury using a SF-1184. When Treasury receives and processes the form, it credits the agency back using either an IPAC transmission or a SF-1081. The IPAC/1081 bill is further supplemented with detail information of the individual items involved.

When an agency decides to issue an unavailable check cancellation because the payee reports non-receipt, theft, loss, mutilation, or destruction of the check, or the payee is not entitled to the proceeds, Treasury credits the agency back, using either an IPAC transmission or a hard copy SF-1081. The IPAC/1081 bill is further supplemented with detail information for the individual items involved.

### **Payment Over Cancellation (POC) debits**

A check that has been cashed after it has been cancelled. This occurs when a check, not in the possession of the administrative agency or disbursing office, has been canceled by the certifying agency and is later negotiated/cashed by the payee and presented to Treasury for payment. Since this results in a double payment with the payee being overpaid, action must be taken to reverse one of the credits.

When an agency issues a check, Treasury credits itself and charges the agency for the amount of the check. When the bank presents the check for payment to the FRB, the funds are transferred from Treasury's account to the bank. A Search Report and Claims Document (3858) is generated in the CP&R system. The 3858 contains a claim form (1133) as well as detail information regarding each check.

### **Limited Payability Cancellations (LPC) credits**

LPC credits result when a check has been cancelled because it was not cashed within the timeframe specified on the check. A check can be negotiated to a financial institution only if it is less than or equal to one year old.

LPCs return credits to the agency that authorized the issuance of the check when the check has not been presented for payment to the Treasury within one year of its issuance. During the 14<sup>th</sup> month after issuance, CP&R will identify and cancel all checks that have aged 12 months from the issue date and remain outstanding. Treasury credits the certifying agency for the amount of the check cancellation using either an IPAC transmission or a SF-1081. If the agency does not do business through IPAC, a hard copy 1081 bill is generated and mailed to the appropriate agency by the Accounts Branch.

### **Reclamation Credits (REC)**

It is necessary to generate reclamation tickets requesting refunds from financial institutions when they have processed forged or unauthorized check endorsements. RECs allow collection processing as payments are received from financial institutions made payable to the Government through the Federal Reserve System.

RECs return credits to the agency that authorized the issuance of a check when the check has been presented for payment to Treasury and it determined that the check was cashed as a result of an unauthorized or forged endorsement and the credit has been received from the presenting Financial Institution.

The FMS TRACS system submits UCC, POC and REC transactions on a daily basis. LPC transactions are submitted on a monthly basis.

This application interfaces with the FMS TRACS system and the IPAC application. A summary file and a detail file are sent daily from the FMS TRACS system to the IPAC TRACS application. The detail records are compared against the summary records to ensure consistency and accuracy. The summary and detail information is stored in the IPAC TRACS application so that users may access reports to obtain the details that

support a corresponding IPAC bill. After processing, IPAC TRACS returns a file to the FMS TRACS system indicating the status of each transaction processed.

## This Guide's Audience

This manual is intended for users of the IPAC TRACS application. It describes the TRACS online system in its entirety, though individual users will only have access to the screens and functions that are authorized by their organization.

## Assumptions

It is assumed that the users of this manual are familiar with the following:

- The use of a personal computer in a Windows environment.
- The basics of the Internet and the browser software they are using.
- The accounting procedures unique to their organization.

## Organization

The information in this manual is divided into five chapters, corresponding to the function buttons from the **TRACS Main Menu**. These sections will describe the processes available under each menu choice and will include screen views to ensure that the correct paths are being followed. The manual also contains this Introduction, which discusses the purpose of the manual, its intended audience and some of the functions common to the entire TRACS application. Additionally, there is a table of contents, an index and several appendices.

## Conventions Used in this Manual

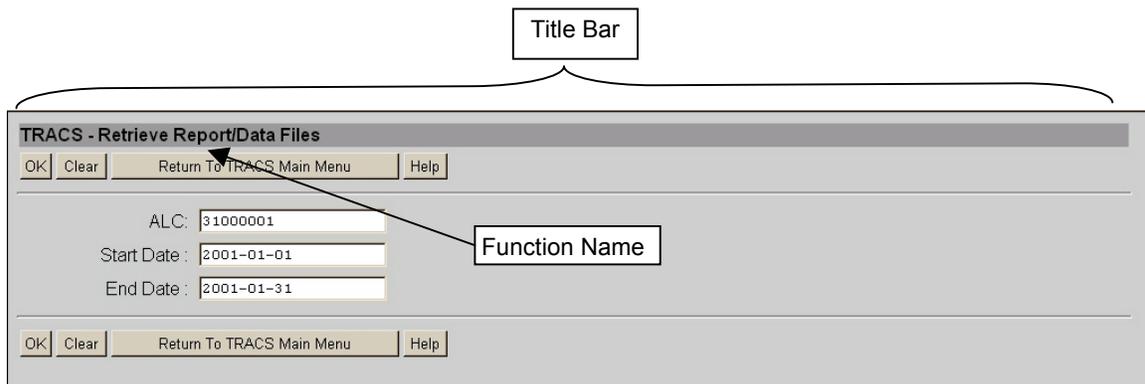
The following conventions are used throughout the manual:

- References to **screen names** will appear in bold print (i.e. **TRACS Main Menu**).
- Names of **screen buttons** will be in "quotes".
- References to **field names** on a screen will be underlined.
- References to **other sections** of this manual will be in *italics*.

## Conventions Used in the TRACS Application

### Title Bars

As you use the TRACS application, the title bars on your screen will help you keep track of your location within the program. Once you leave the Main Menu, the title bar of each screen contains the name of the function in which you are currently working as shown in Figure I.1.



**Figure I.1 Title Bar**

### Browser Buttons

You must **not** use the “Back” and “Forward” buttons of your browser to navigate through the TRACS screens. The program expects data to be submitted in specific sequence and using the browser navigation buttons can result in activation of intruder detection software. If you accidentally hit the back button of the browser, you will be returned to the IPAC System Main Menu with none of the data entered on the most recent screen saved to the database.

### Cursor Movement

When a screen first displays, you must click to position the cursor in the first data entry field or menu selection. Use the “Tab” key to move forward between fields, “Shift”- “Tab” to move backward. You **must** use a button to submit data to the TRACS database.

Hitting the Enter key while in a data entry field is **NOT** the same as clicking the “OK” button or other TRACS screen buttons. If you would like to use the keyboard rather than the mouse to click a button, then use the Tab key to move the focus to the button (“OK”, “Return to TRACS Main Menu”, etc.), then hit Enter.

## Standard Buttons

Standard Buttons have been established for use throughout the TRACS application. Their availability may vary as needed by the function being performed, but when they appear they will behave in a consistent fashion. They typically include **“OK”**, **“Print”**, **“Clear”**, **“Cancel”**, and **“Return to TRACS Main Menu”**. Additional buttons will be included as needed by specific areas of the program.

### Explanation of Standard Buttons

#### **“OK”**

This acknowledges that you have read any message on the current screen and processes any information entered on the current screen. You are returned to the previous screen or to a menu.

#### **“Print”**

You will be forwarded to a report printing screen where the data just entered, a document or a report can be requested. Typically, on this screen, you will be presented with several output options that are discussed in detail later in this Introduction.

#### **“Clear”**

All of the data entry fields which you have modified since the last time the screen was displayed are returned to their initial values. No data is submitted to the database.

#### **“Cancel”**

No data is submitted from the currently active screen and you are returned to the previous screen or to a menu.

#### **“Help”**

A new browser window is opened and page level, context sensitive help for the current screen is displayed. After reading and/or printing the help screen, you should close the help window by using the “Return” button on that screen to return to the previous screen. (The back button on your browser will not be functional on the help screen since this is a new window with no history.)

#### **“Return to TRACS Main Menu”**

Returns you to the TRACS Main Menu without processing any information on the current screen.

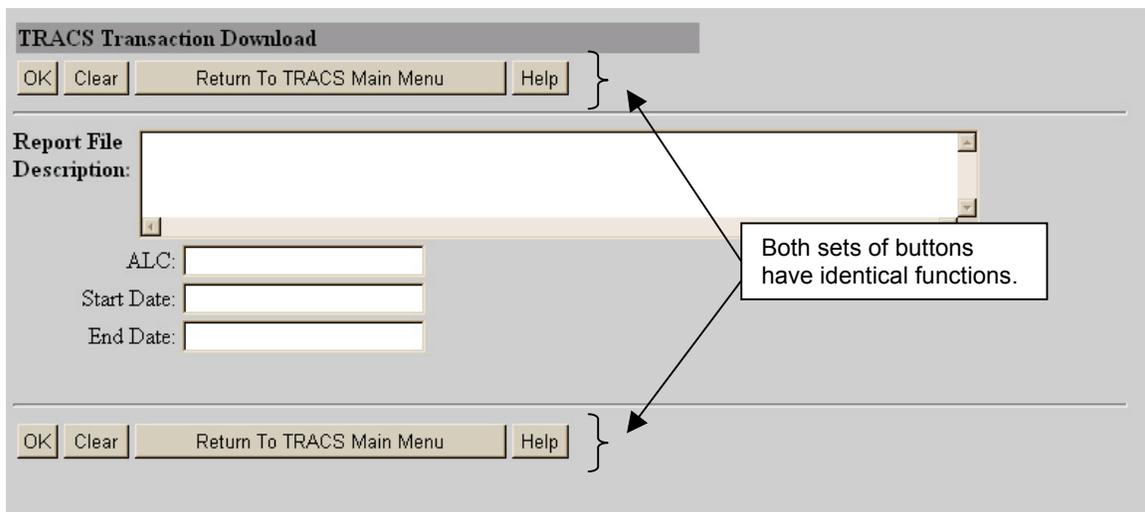
#### **“Return”**

Closes the current help screen and returns you to the previous program screen.

## Formats

### Button Formats

Because screen presentation is influenced solely by your browser configuration, all **function buttons will display at both the top and the bottom of all TRACS screens.** Either set may be used depending on your location and preference, as shown in Figure I.2.



**Figure I.2 Function Button Locations**

### Date Formats

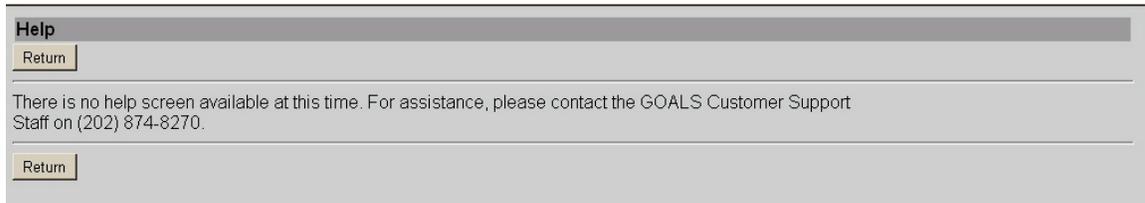
When entering dates in TRACS, the format is **YYYY-MM-DD** (2001-06-22 for June 22, 2001). TRACS will not recognize a date entered in another format as valid.

### Time Formats

When a start or end time is required, enter the time in military time format which uses a 24-hour clock, four digits and does not use punctuation to separate hours from minutes. Military time is told on a continuous 24-hour clock. Rather than distinguishing between morning (AM) and afternoon (PM), the time is read sequentially from 0000 to 2359. For example, fifteen minutes past midnight is 0015, one thirty in the morning is 0130, and two o'clock in the afternoon is 1400. For a military time conversion chart, see *Appendix G*.

## Help Screens

The TRACS application provides page level, context sensitive help. The **Help** screen you see is related to the TRACS screen from which you requested the help. This screen displays in a new browser window, which behaves like any other browser window on your system. The Help screen information may be printed through your browser's print facility. The "Back" button on this window will be dimmed and inoperable since this is a new window with no history. Clicking this button again or clicking another "Help" button, will open another new browser window without closing this window. To avoid confusion and to save your system's memory, Help windows should be closed when you are finished with their information by using their "Return" buttons. A sample **Help** screen is shown in Figure I.3.

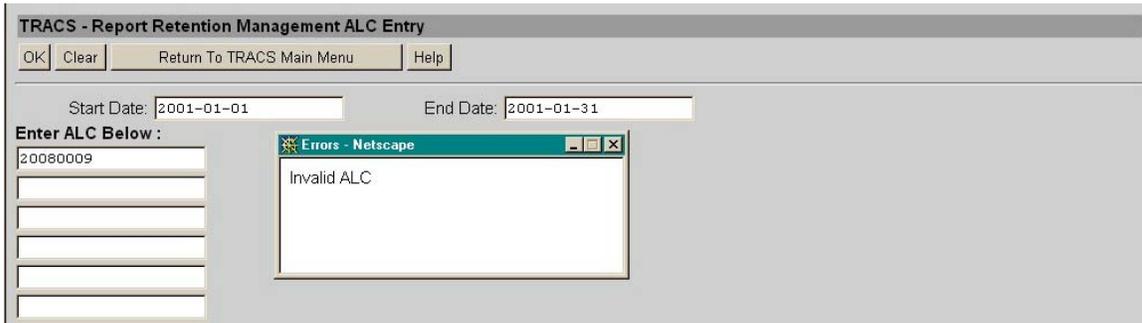


**Figure I.3 Sample Help Screen**

## Error Messages

An error message is generated by the TRACS application to tell you when an action taken is improper or data you have entered is incorrect. Error messages appear in a browser window, just as help information does. The **Error Message** windows are typically smaller, and the same **Error Message** window is reused without being cleared until specifically closed. This allows the user to refer to the error message while resolving the error, but error messages will continue to accumulate as the window is called for message display. Since this can be confusing, it is advisable for you to close the Error Message window by selecting the X box in the upper right hand corner of the window when you have read and understood the information provided. A sample **Error Message** is shown in Figure I.4

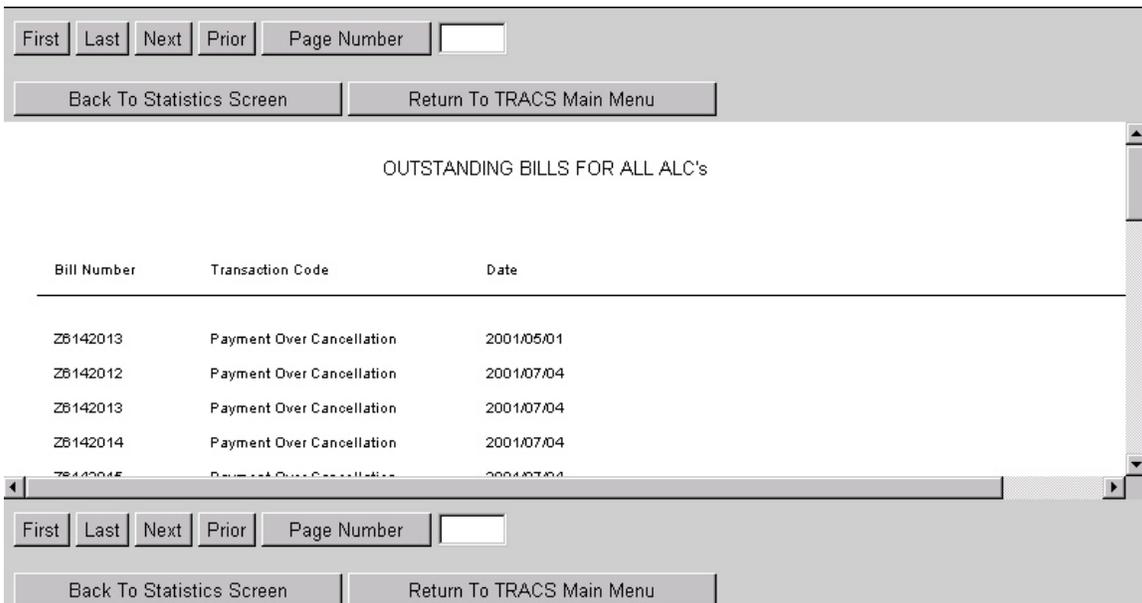
Whenever you receive an error message from TRACS, the submission causing the error is returned to you unprocessed.



**Figure I.4 Sample Error Message**

## Viewing HTML Format Documents and Reports

When a report is generated in HTML format for viewing online, the TRACS Report Viewer is automatically called to display the report as shown in Figure I.5.



**Figure I.5 TRACS Report Viewer**

The TRACS Report Viewer will display the document or report one page at a time with as much of the page visible as your browser will allow. You can see the rest of the page by using your browser scroll bars. If you attempt to print this report through your browser, only the page you are currently viewing will be printed.

The Report Viewer also has standard function buttons, shown in Figure I.6, which appear at both the top and the bottom of the screen.

**“First”**

Moves to the top of the first page (page 1) of the document.

**“Last”**

Moves to the end of the last page of the document.

**“Next”**

Moves to the next page in the document unless you are already on the last page of the document.

**“Prior”**

Moves back one page in the document unless you are already on the first page of the document.

**“Page Number”**

Moves to the page number entered in the Page Number field. If the field is left blank, clicking “Page Number” will move to the first page of the report. If the field is set to a page number greater than the number of pages in the report, clicking “Page number” will move to the last page of the report. The presence of a page number in the field does not affect the operation of the “First”, “Last”, “Next” or “Prior” buttons.

**“Back to Statistics Screen”**

Returns to the **Report Statistics** screen, discussed earlier in this section, where you can choose to display the report in another format.

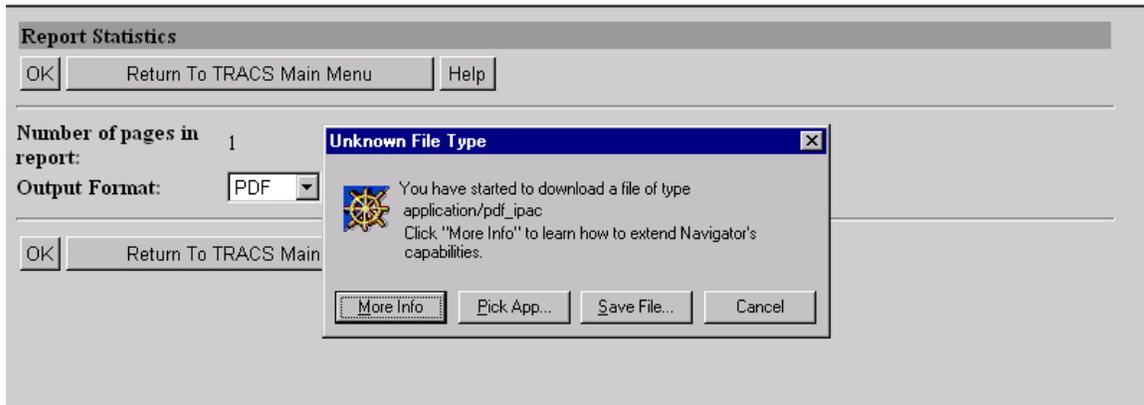
**“Return to TRACS Main Menu”**

Returns to the TRACS Main Menu, saving the report for later viewing through the Retrieve Report/Data Files function.

## **Viewing, Saving and Printing PDF Format Documents and Reports**

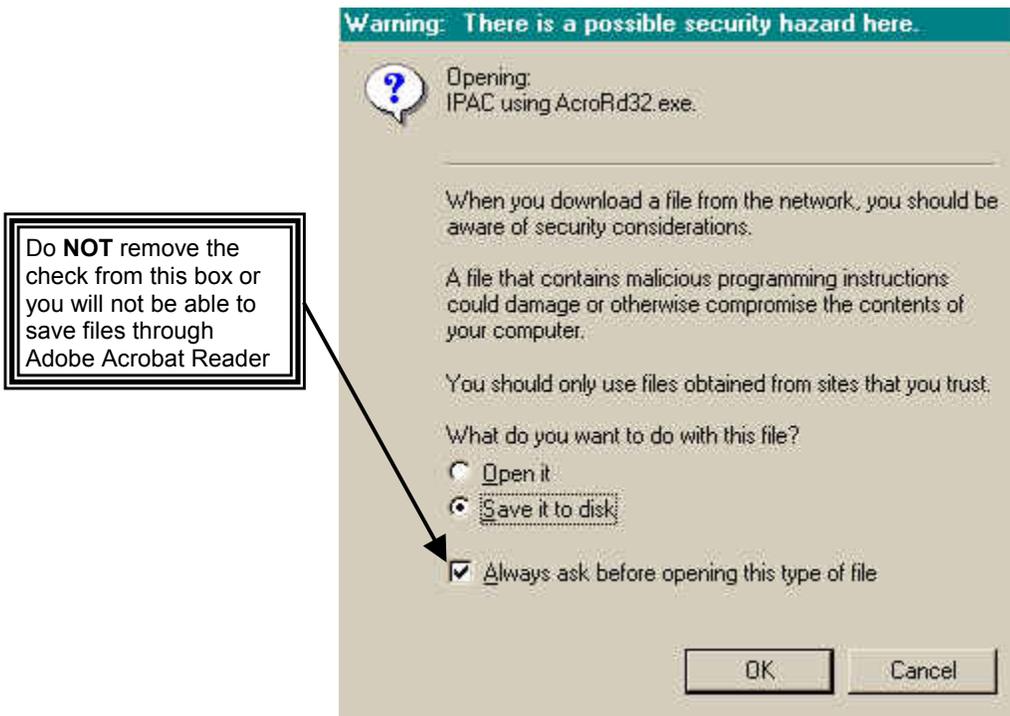
If your system is equipped with an Adobe Acrobat® reader, then a better choice for viewing or printing the report may be the PDF (**P**ortable **D**ocument **F**ormat), read with Acrobat, which allows documents to be displayed and printed in different operating systems while retaining its formatting properties and appearance. There are Acrobat readers available for DOS, Windows, UNIX and Mac platforms.

If you choose PDF as your file output format and see an error message similar to the one in Figure I.6, then either Acrobat is not installed, or your browser is not configured to use it.



**Figure I.6 Adobe Acrobat Error Message**

If your browser is configured to use Adobe Acrobat Reader, the next screen you see should be similar to Figure I.7 This is a warning that some files downloaded from the Internet can be dangerous. It also asks you if you would like to open the file or save it to disk.



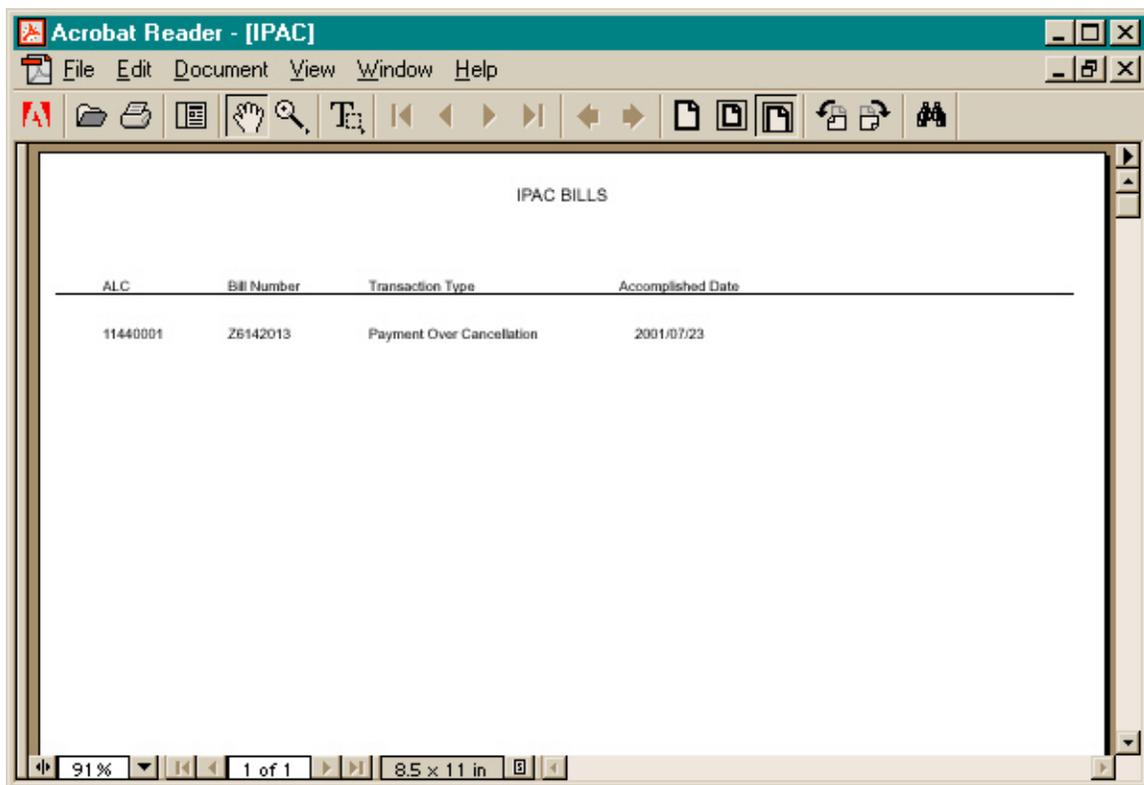
**Figure I.7 File download warning**

Since this report is coming from TRACS, a secure system, you can trust the source of the report. On this screen you must also decide if you want to open the report for viewing and printing, or if you want to save it to disk. Do NOT remove the check mark from the "Always ask before opening this type of file" box or you will not be able to save

files through the Acrobat Reader. If your browser is not configured to use Adobe Acrobat Reader, please refer to *Appendix B* for configuration instructions

## Viewing and Printing a Report with Adobe Acrobat Reader®

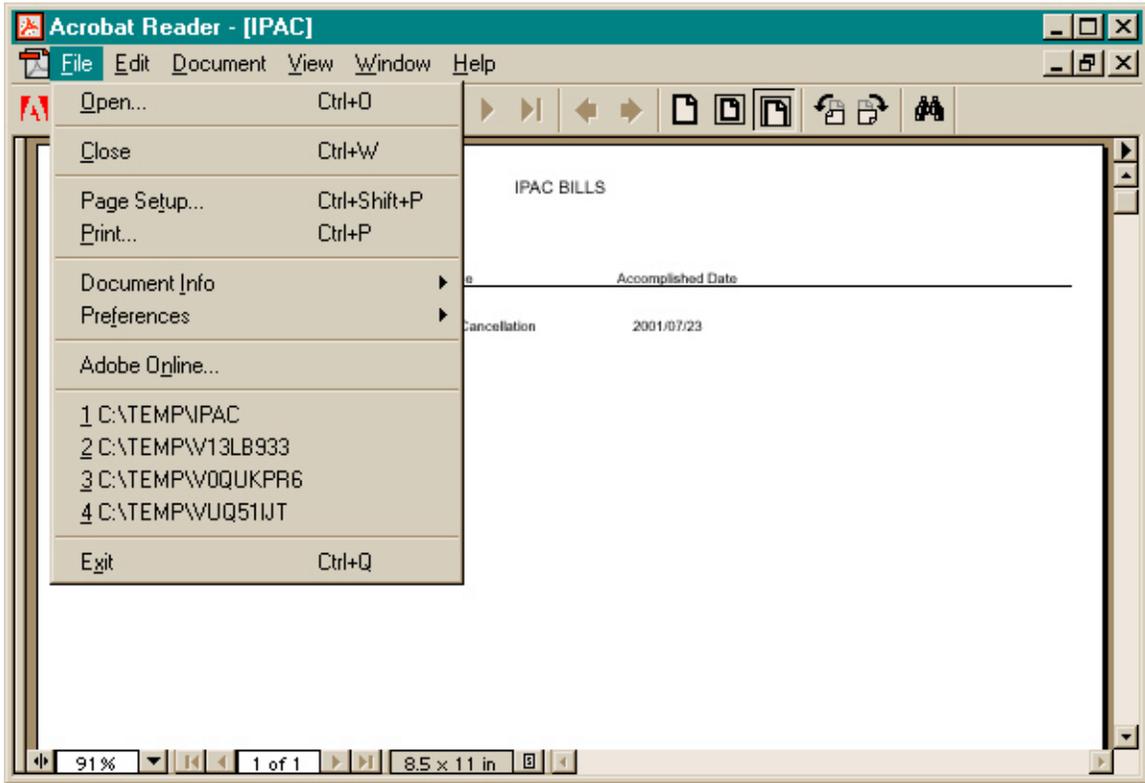
If you choose to **Open** the file, the report will be formatted by TRACS and the Adobe Acrobat Reader will automatically be opened to read the file. Figure I.8 illustrates Acrobat Reader's view of a TRACS transaction.



**Figure I.8 Adobe Acrobat Reader® View of Report**

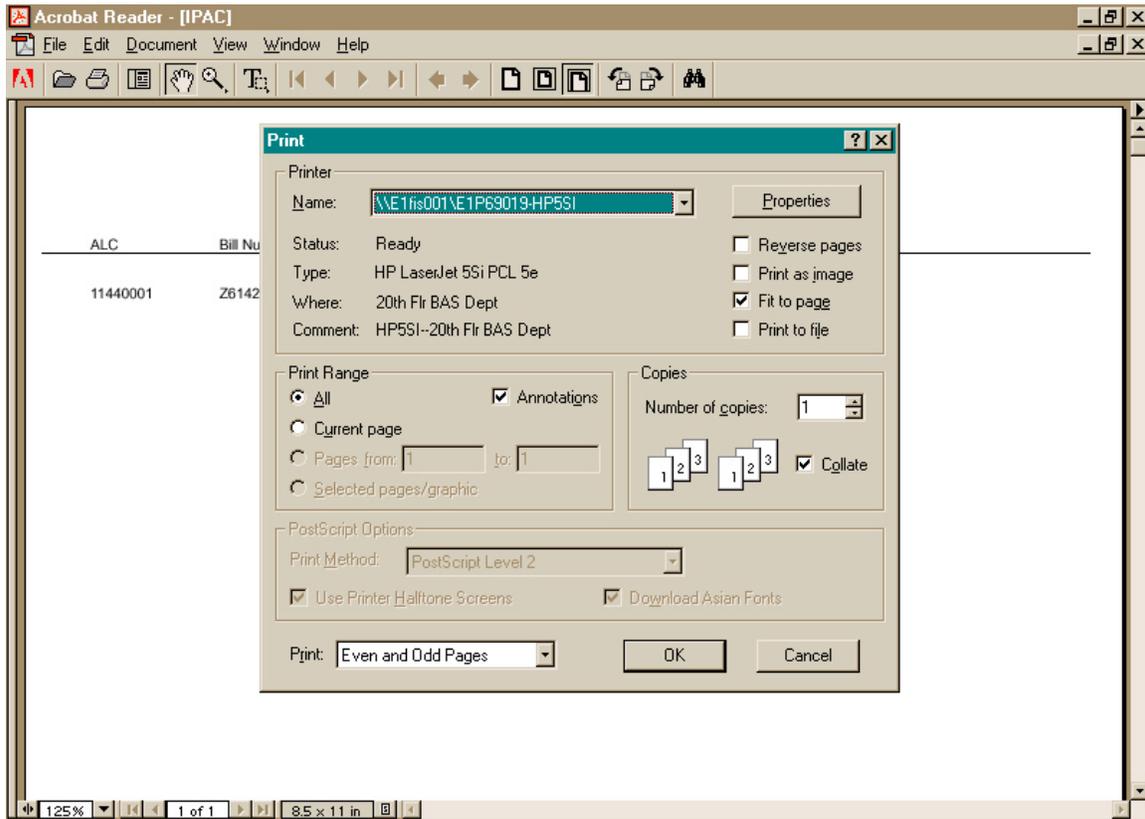
The Adobe Acrobat Reader is an easy to use program, and most of the buttons on its toolbar function as you would expect them to. If you would like further help in using the program, while in Adobe Acrobat Reader click **H**elp, then **R**eaders **O**nline **G**uide, then **V**iewing **P**DF **D**ocuments for further information.

The report can also be printed from within the Acrobat reader. Click the **F**ile option of the Acrobat menu bar to get the menu shown in Figure I.9.



**Figure I.9 Adobe File Menu**

Choosing the **Print** option from this menu will bring you to the menu shown in Figure I.10

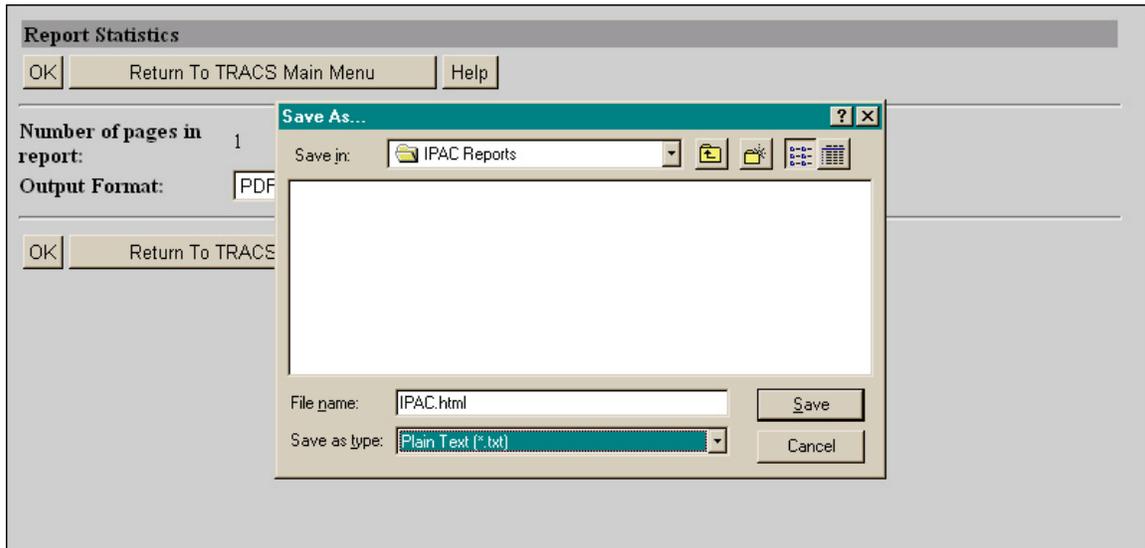


**Figure I.10 Adobe Print Menu**

From here it is possible to print the entire report, the current page of the report or a range of pages to your default printer. If you put a check in the “Print to File” box on this menu screen, the report will be saved to a file in a manner that can be understood by your printer, but will not be viewable by you. If you want to save the file to a disk, choose the “Save it to disk” option on the previous menu. (See Figure I.7 and read below.)

## **Saving a Report with Adobe Acrobat Reader®**

If you choose **Save it to disk** (See Figure I.7) you will see a standard Windows “Save As...” Dialogue Box where you can name the output file, choose the location for the file and specify the type of file to save (See Figure I.11). The location and name you choose for the file will depend on your computer’s configuration and your agency’s procedures. Do NOT remove the check mark from the “Always ask before opening this type of file” box or you will not be able to save files through the Acrobat Reader. Once the file is saved, you will be returned to the **Report Statistics** screen where you can display the report in another format or return to the **TRACS Main Menu**.



**Figure I.11 Windows Save As... Dialogue Box**

## Accessing the System

The IPAC TRACS application is an Internet application that can be accessed using a secured web site address. The on-line version of the manual does not list the secured web site address. For more information contact the GOALS Customer Support Staff on (202) 874-8270.

## Security Logon

When you first open the IPAC System in your browser, you will be presented with a Logon Screen similar to the one in Figure I.12. The actual appearance of this window may vary with the browser you are using to access the IPAC System, but the data entry boxes will remain the same. You must enter your User Name (Logon ID) and Password to be allowed through the security layer and into the IPAC web site.



**Figure I.12 Security Logon Screen**

When you are authorized as a user of TRACS, you will be assigned a Logon ID and a one-time-use only password. Your Logon ID will tell TRACS about your authorization to access various functions within the program. It will also tell TRACS the ALCs for which you are authorized to do business. The first time you log onto the IPAC System you will be required to change your password. IPAC is a secure system and has specific requirement for passwords.

## Passwords

Passwords must contain:

1. A minimum of 8 characters
2. At least 2 alphabetic characters
3. At least 3 non-alphabetic (numeric and special) characters
4. At least 5 unique (different) characters
5. A maximum of 2 sequentially repeating characters
6. A maximum of 32 characters
7. Passwords are case sensitive (**A** and **a** are not the same character in passwords)

An example of a valid IPAC password is “test123\$”

- Passwords are aged and expire automatically every 30 days.
- The user will receive warnings that the password is about to expire for the last 5 days of the password life.
- Passwords will be disabled after 3 unsuccessful attempts.
- The system will not let a user reuse any of the last 5 passwords
- The same password cannot be reused within 120 days.

## “Must See” System Messages

IPAC and its component applications contain facilities for presenting messages to the entire system or to specified ALCs. The “Must See” messages are transmitted system-wide to all users of the IPAC System, and may contain general IPAC instructions, training announcements, new reporting requirements or other administrative information.

When you first log onto the IPAC System web site, if there is a current “Must See” message, you will be presented with a message screen similar to the one in Figure I.6 though the actual appearance of the message window will depend on the browser you use. Once you have read and noted the message, you may close that window.

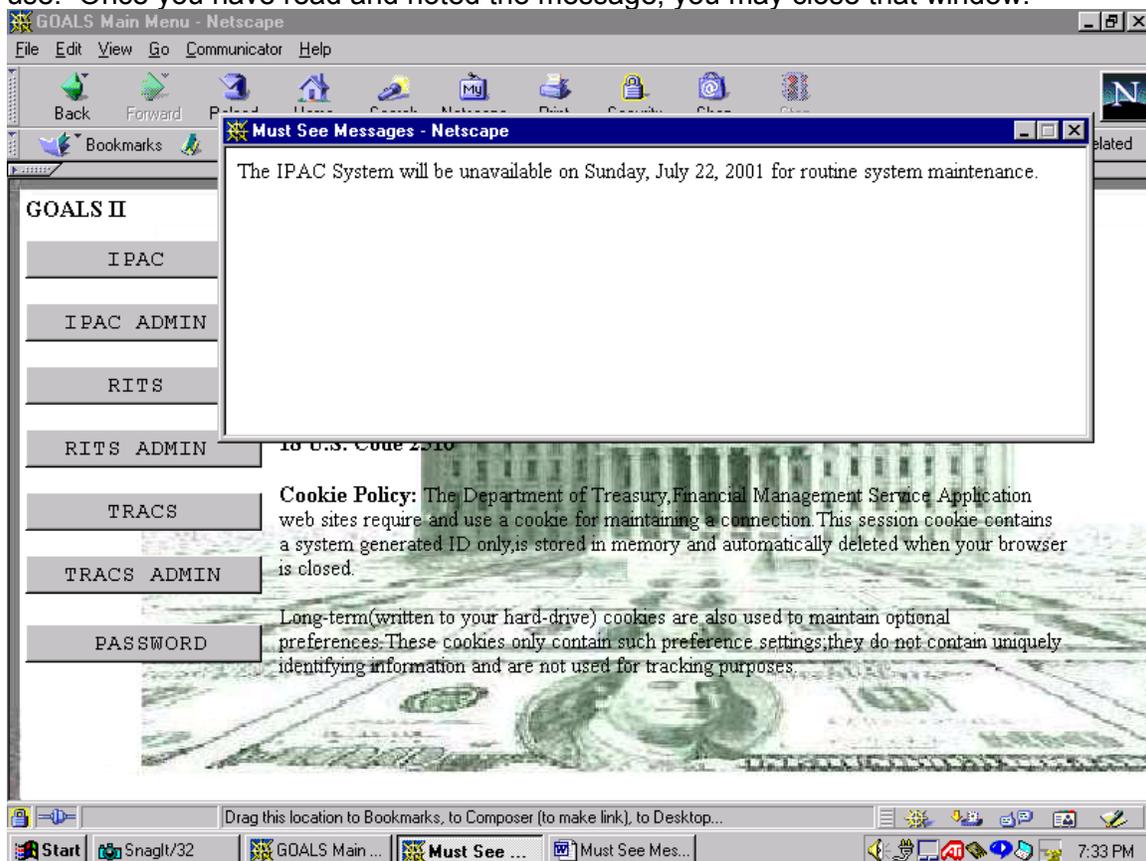


Figure I.13 Must See Messages

There is another messaging system for “Broadcast Messages”. These messages are distributed to either groups of ALCs or an individual ALC. These messages are viewed through a button on the **TRACS Main Menu** and will be discussed later in this manual.

## IPAC System Main Menu

Once you have completed the Logon Screen and closed any system messages that display, you will see the **IPAC System Main Menu** screen shown in Figure I.14.



**Figure I.14 IPAC System Main Menu Screen**

### Security Warning

This screen contains a Federal Government **Computer Security Warning**. The IPAC System is restricted to authorized users. Use of the system constitutes the granting of permission for the user's actions to be monitored and recorded. Any evidence of criminal activity uncovered through such monitoring will be provided to law enforcement officials.

### Cookie Policy

The screen also displays the IPAC System cookie policy. To access the IPAC System programs, **cookies MUST be enabled**. *Appendix C* contains information regarding cookies and proper browser settings to accept cookies for both Netscape® Communicator 4.75 and Microsoft® Internet Explorer 5.

## TRACS Main Menu

To enter the TRACS application from the **IPAC System Main Menu**, select the “**TRACS**” button. This will bring up the screen shown in Figure I.15, the **TRACS Main Menu**.

GOALS II

Treasury Receivables Accounting Collection System

Select:

ALC

Function:

TRACS ==> Report Retention Management ==> Reports

TRACS ADMIN ==> Retrieve Report/Data Files ==> Display Messages

PASSWORD ==> Admin Processing Status

Extract And Create TRACS Reports

**Figure I.15 TRACS Main Menu**

The **TRACS Main Menu** is your primary interface with the TRACS application.

### ALC

The data entry field on this screen is the **Agency Location Code (ALC)**. This is the ALC of your agency or of the agency for which you are doing business. Your Logon ID will determine the ALC(s) for which you are authorized to do business within IPAC.

If you are only authorized to act on behalf of **one ALC**, that ALC will display in the ALC data entry box.

If you are authorized to do business for **multiple ALCs**, those ALCs will display in a drop-down list box for the ALC.

If you are authorized to do business for **more than 25 ALCs**, the ALC field will display as a blank data entry box.

### Option Buttons

Sections 1 through 5 of this manual discuss the functions accessed through the buttons on the **TRACS Main Menu** as follows:

1. **Report Retention Management**
2. **Retrieve Report/Data Files**
3. **Admin Processing Status**
4. **Reports**
5. **Display Messages**