Supplementing the Numbers

Notes, files, and categories

Peter Keeler

April 18, 2017

Goals

- Know how supplemental data can work for you
- Understand what each option is useful for
- Learn how to set up notes, files, and categories

Topics

- Why all this extra data?
- Notes
- Files
- Categories

What are these?

What is supplemental data?

- **Notes**
  - Written information to or from the budgetholder
  - Multiple kinds of notes at different levels available
    - … From the budgetholder
    - … From the administrator
    - … From XLerant

- **Files**
  - Documents to or from the budgetholder that explain, enhance, or support a budget

- **Categories**
  - Administrator-defined list of topics
  - Used by budgetholder to ‘tag’ accounts that are related to each other

4

Benefits

What are the benefits of supplementing budgets with notes, files, and categories?

- **Better understanding**
  - Your budgetholders are closer to the conditions on the ground.
  - Knowing *why* they made their decisions makes the budget more informative
- **Less follow-up**
  - If your budgetholders have already given their explanations, then you don't need to
  - Roll-up unit budgetholders don't need to ask the base unit budgetholders for details
- **Better budgets**
  - Your budgetholders can better follow the budget process if you provide extra guidance within the system

5

Notes overview

What kinds of notes are available?

Note Types

- User-entered
  - Account notes
  - Budget-level notes
  - Budget-level user notes
  - Context-specific notes
- Administrator-entered
  - Account instructions
  - Administrator notes
- System messages
  - System notes

6

We'll start by going over the different kinds of notes available in BudgetPak. There are three broad kinds of notes: notes that your budgetholders can enter or read, notes that the administrator enters for the budgetholders to see, and notes that XLerant provides. We'll go over each of these in turn.

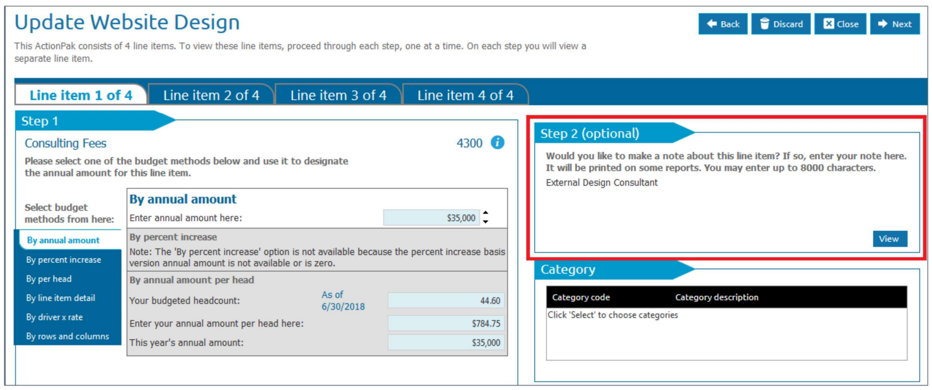
Using Notes

Note types:

- User-entered
  - **Account**
  - Budget-level
  - Budget-level user
  - Context-specific
- Administrator-entered
  - Account instructions
  - Administrator notes
- System messages

Explain a single annual number

- Most precise information
- You can make these mandatory on an account-by-account basis



7

We call accounts ‘line items’ on the user side, but on the administrator side, we call them accounts, such as the Configure Accounts page. Account notes are the most precise, targeted data the user can enter, explaining exactly what their thought process was for a given annual number. If you want to ensure that users *must* justify some particular account, you can mark the account note as ‘mandatory’ on the Configure Accounts page. If you do, then users will not be able to sign off on their budget until they’ve entered a note to explain that account. In this example, an ActionPak named ‘Update Website Design’ is noting that an external design consultant will be required, hence having a ‘Consulting fees’ item. Since all of the accounts in a given ActionPak were selected by a user, it’s often helpful to have the user explaining why they needed to include that account.

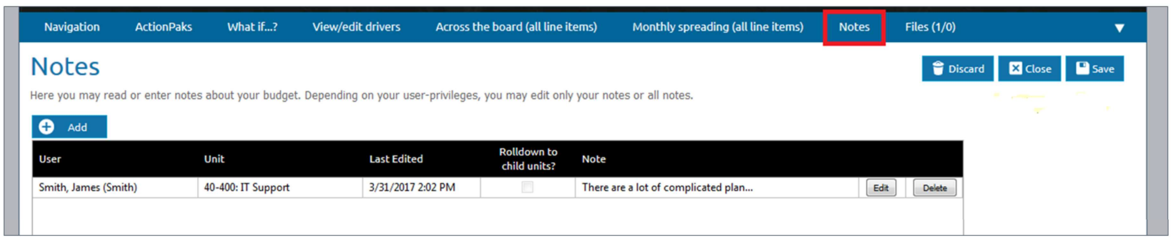
Note types:

- User-entered
  - Account
  - **Budget-level**
  - Budget-level user
  - Context-specific
- Administrator-entered
  - Account instructions
  - Administrator notes
- System messages

Using Notes

Budget process and high-level information

- Info that affects multiple line items
- Info about signing off, approving, etc
- Can be entered by admins ahead of time

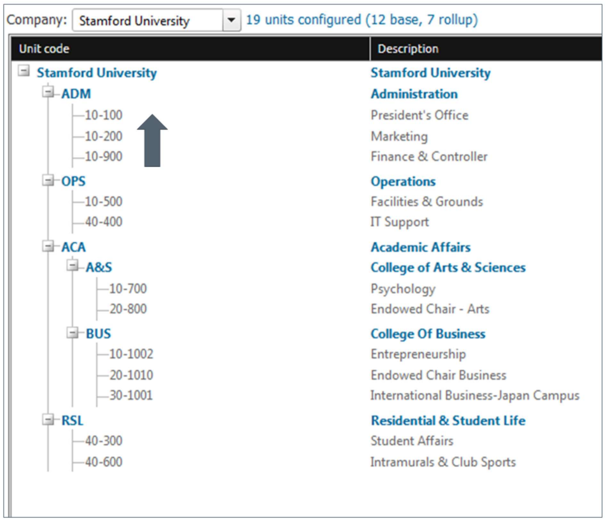


8

These notes are for a single version and unit at a time. For example, a user in the IT Support unit might want to make an overall note that they anticipate a large number of major projects, and so will have many line items that are above the baseline percent increase. Conversely, an administrator might enter a note into the unit before the budget process begins, directing the user to keep their overall total flat, but allowing them to reallocate funds within their unit if needed.

Budget Notes

Budget process and high-level information: rolling up



- In a rollup unit, the notes from any unit below can be seen
- Each note shows who entered it, when, and what unit it was entered in
- Company unit gets perspective on the budget process as a whole

9

Rolling up:
In a rollup unit, you automatically get to see any notes that were entered at a lower level. That way, rollup unit budgetholders can see all of the decisions that went into the lower-level budgets. They can also see how the process went; if people entered notes when they signed off, approved, or revoked either of those, then the higher-level budgetholder can tell whether everything went cleanly or if there was a lot of back and forth. When you look at the company unit, this can give you a lot of company-wide perspective on thought processes and the budget process as a whole.

Budget Notes

Budget process and high-level information: rolling down

Company: Stamford University 19 units configured (12 base, 7 rollup)

Unit code	Description
Stamford University	Stamford University
ADM	Administration
10-100	President's Office
10-200	Marketing
10-900	Finance & Controller
OPS	Operations
10-500	Facilities & Grounds
40-400	IT Support
ACA	Academic Affairs
A&S	College of Arts & Sciences
10-700	Psychology
20-800	Endowed Chair - Arts
BUS	College Of Business
10-1002	Entrepreneurship
20-1010	Endowed Chair Business
30-1001	International Business-Japan Campus
RSL	Residential & Student Life
40-300	Student Affairs
40-600	Intramurals & Club Sports

- Notes entered into a rollup unit can be rolled down to show them in child units
  - Allows rollup unit budgetholders to provide localized feedback about the budget process, either before or after the approval process starts
  - Admin-entered notes can do this too

10

Rolling down:
Notes entered into a rollup unit can optionally be rolled down to show them in child units. That way, budgetholders in higher-level units can give feedback to the users whose budgets make up that higher-level budget. For example, “Everyone needs to reduce consulting costs by 5% this year” or “Remember to factor in the special seminars this fall.” This can happen before or after the approval process starts.

System administrators can also enter notes, which can roll down too. This can be very useful for pre-emptively adding notes to inform users about department-specific decisions that might not apply to the entire organization.

Using Notes

Note types:

- User-entered
  - Account
  - Budget-level
  - **Budget-level user**
  - Context-specific
- Administrator-entered
  - Account instructions
  - Administrator notes
- System messages

Budget-level user-entered notes to self

- Not centrally controlled
- Not part of reporting
- High-level reminders by the budgetholder

Select a version

Here are the different versions you can view and work with for unit 'IT Support':

Save descriptions

Version code	Version	Note	Your description	Status	Signed off	Date modified	Modified by	Your comments					
FY2017-B-3	2017 Draft 1		2017 Draft 1			3/31/2017 2:18 PM	Smith		Edit	View	Erase	Copy	History
FY2017-B-5	2017 Draft 2		2017 Draft 2					Skipped this one.	Edit				History
FY2017-B-11	2017 Draft 3		2017 Draft 3						Edit				History
FY2017-B-6	2017 Final Budget		2017 Budget Submission			1/5/2017 3:18 PM	Administrato			View		Copy	History
FY2017-D-15	2017 Budget - Growth P...		2017 Budget - Growth Plan						Edit				History
FY2017-D-16	2017 Budget - Conserv...		2017 Budget - Conservative...						Edit				History
FY2017-F-9	2017 Q1 Forecast	AD	2017 Q1 Forecast						Edit				History
FY2017-DF-21	2017 Q1 Detailed Forec...		Q1 Detailed Forecast						Edit				History
FY2017-PRE...	2017 Prepop Data	AD	2017 Prepop Data						(No data available)				History
FY2015-R-10	2017 Actuals	AD	2017 Actuals							View			History
FY2015-B-8	2017 Target Budget	B	2017 Baseline Budget							View		Copy	History
FY2016-B-20	2016 Final Budget		2016 Signoff Budget						Edit	View	Erase	Copy	History
FY2014-R-7	2016 Forecast	AD	2016 Forecast							View			History
FY2014-R-12	2016 Actuals	AD	2016 Actuals							View			History

Version-level notes are useful for users who wants to add reminders about the budget process itself, such as ‘need to revise this’ or ‘This came out too high.’ These don’t appear on reports or in the configuration pages.

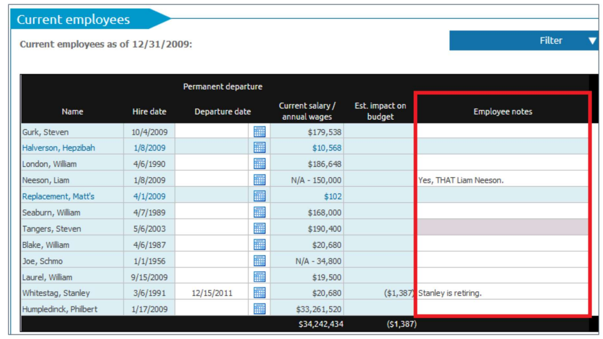
Note types:

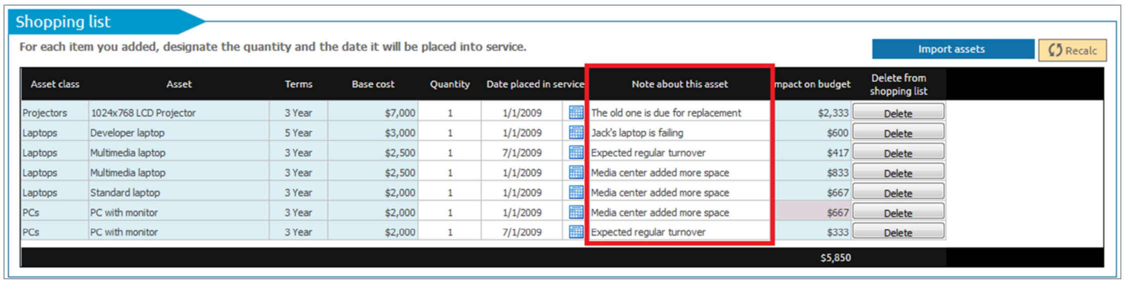
- User-entered
  - Account
  - Budget-level
  - Budget-level user
  - Context-specific
- Administrator-entered
  - Account instructions
  - Administrator notes
- System messages

Using Notes

Context-specific information

- Employee notes
  - Such as ‘Bob is retiring’ or ‘Alice earned a Tier II bonus’
- Driver notes
  - Such as ‘We expect extra travel this year’
- Asset notes





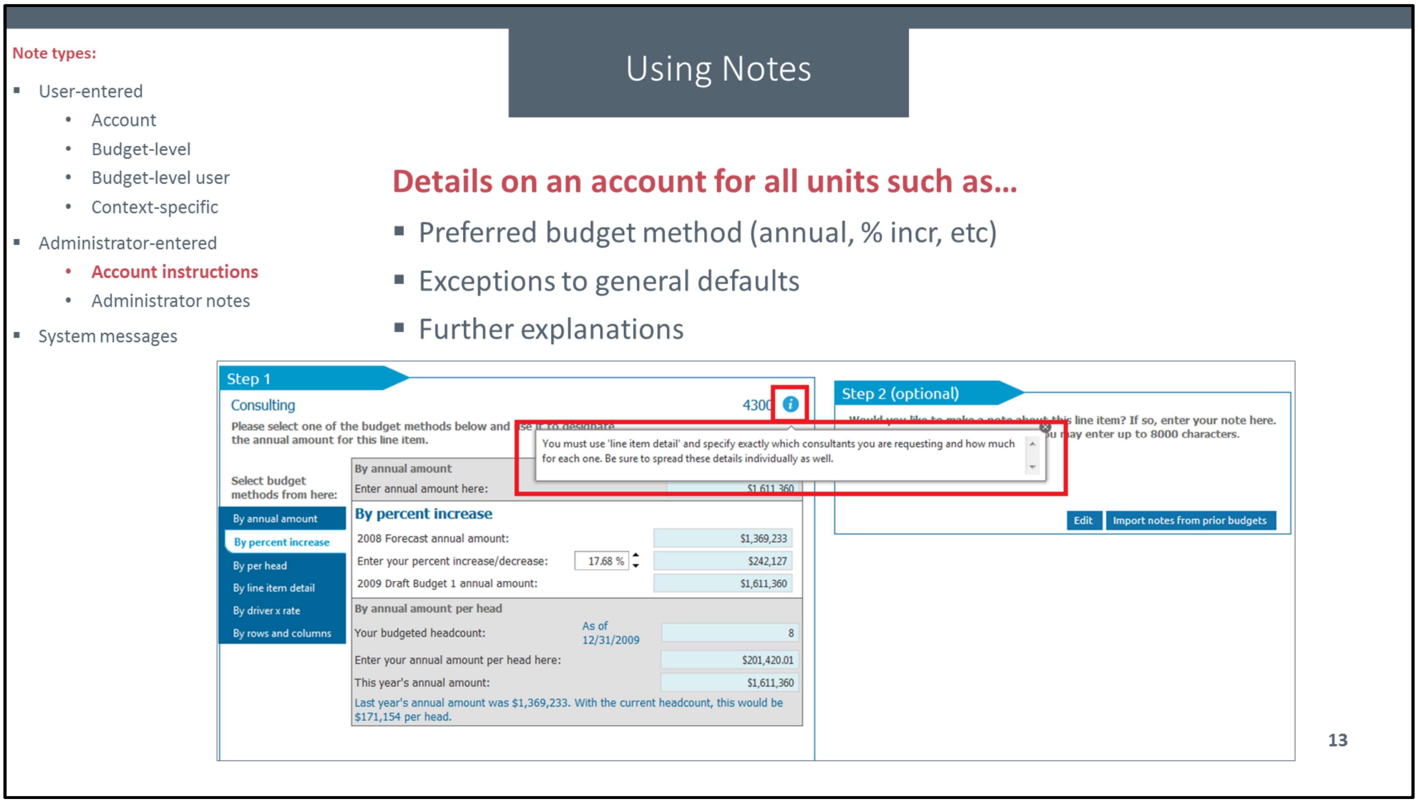
12

Administrators can add instructions to accounts, such as ‘all expenses for this account must be justified’ or ‘always use driver-times-rate for this account.’ These instructions will cause a warning icon to appear on the budget section for the user, which they can hover over to read the instructions.

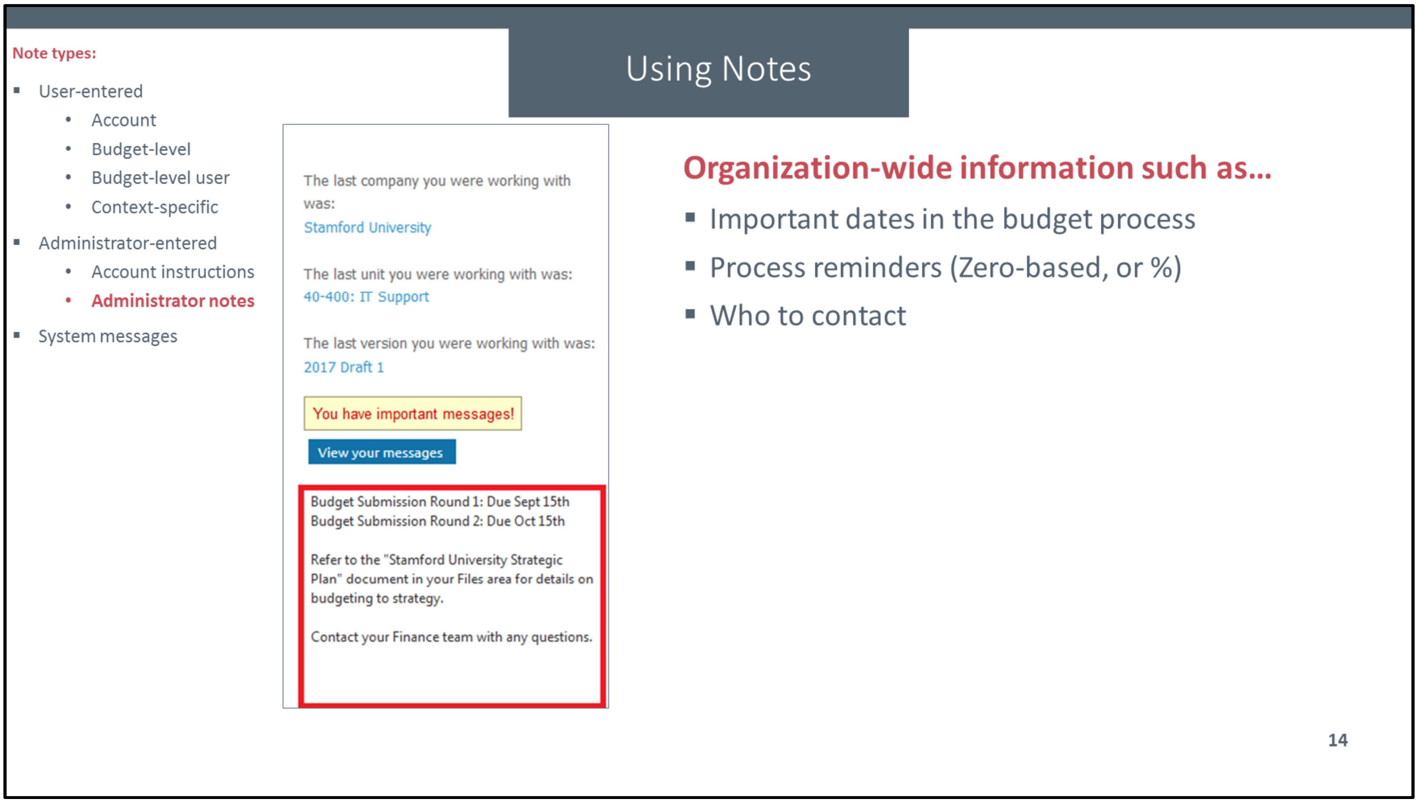
You can add notes to specific employees to explain details like why a new hire was needed, why someone is departing, or why their salary is outside of their salary grade. This can also be particularly useful to explain outliers, such as unusual raises or instances of parental leave.

Another place where you can enter notes is in the drivers. The administrator can mark a driver as being editable in a given unit for a given driver set. If the user then chooses to edit the value of that driver, it can be very helpful to know why. For example, if you have a ‘number of advertising campaigns’ driver that defaults to 0, it could be important to know that the IT Department expects to run an internal campaign warning everyone about the dangers of phishing.

You can also enter notes about asset requests, such as explaining the timing of a purchase or why they were required.



You can attach instructions to specific accounts via the Configure Accounts page. These instructions will be displayed when a user goes into a specific section to do their budgeting. This will apply across all versions and all units that use that account. For example, you might have a 'consulting' account, and want to make sure that your users explicitly tell you which consultants they plan to retain, and how much each one will be paid. You can include an account instruction telling them to use the budget method 'by line item detail' and to include all of that information when they do. Your users can't modify this information.



BudgetPak administrators can set system-wide notes to appear on the home screen, the first thing users see after logging in. You can set this text on the 'Configure notes and files' page, under the 'Notes' tab. This can be a long message, but we recommend not making users scroll through too much. Keep it to the most important details – usually the key dates in the budget process, any system-wide information about the process to use, and who to contact with any problems.

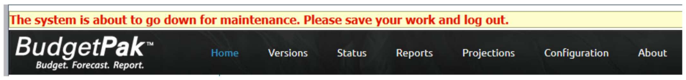
Using Notes

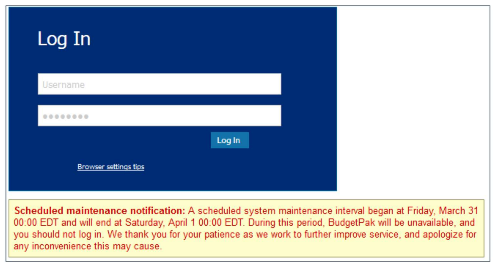
Note types:

- User-entered
  - Account
  - Budget-level
  - Budget-level user
  - Context-specific
- Administrator-entered
  - Account instructions
  - Administrator notes
- **System messages**

Information from XLerant

- Maintenance warnings
- Sysadmin warnings (new) – real-time information visible from any page in BudgetPak





15

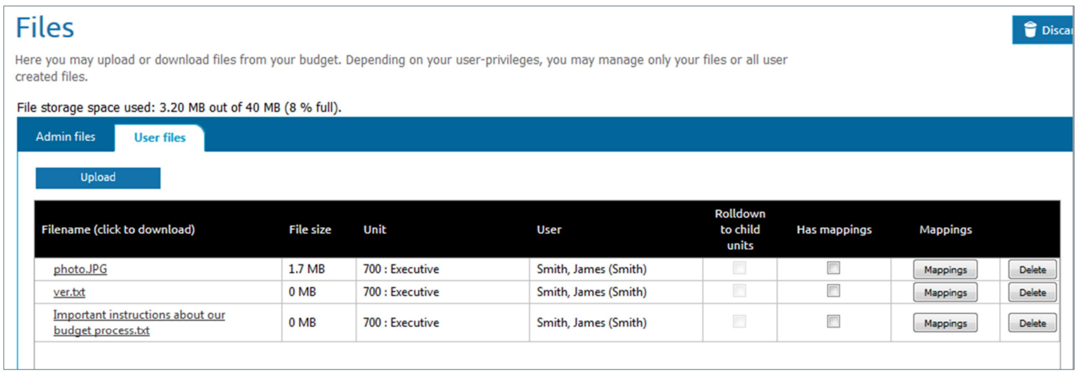
Unlike the other note types, system notes are entered by XLerant. The most common of these are the maintenance warnings that appear on the login screen to indicate when then system will be undergoing maintenance or other special events. If anyone was budgeting on April first this year – and we're sorry you were working over the weekend if you were – then you may have noticed our annual joke warning.

Beginning with our next release, we'll also have a new 'sysadmin warning,' which will appear across the top of the screen. This will be so that XLerant's system administrators have a way to deliver messages in real time to users who are currently in the system. For example, if we're about to update BudgetPak and someone is still in the system despite the maintenance warnings, we can use the sysadmin warnings to let them know that the system is about to be restarted.

Files

Including files in your budget

- Save any type of file inside BudgetPak alongside the budget it relates to
- Finance provides guidance and information to budgetholders
- Budgetholders provide explanation and support for their budgets



16

Moving on to files now, which is another important way to communicate data within BudgetPak above and beyond the raw numbers. You can upload files into BudgetPak, either as an administrator loading files to provide information or guidance to your users, or as a user providing a file that helps highlight some element of their budget. The 'Files' menu is available from within any budget, on the Budget Navigation Toolbar. There's no restriction on what kinds of files you want to upload; you can put up text files, PDFs, images, or anything else that makes your budget process more effective.

You can also map a given file to a specific accounts, to indicate exactly what data is being informed by the file.

Files examples

Example uses for files

- Supplemental information
  - E.g. Travel documentation
- Guidance from Finance
  - E.g. Strategic objectives
- Account details
  - E.g. Directions on budget methods
- Reduces "Versionitis"
  - E.g. Tether a model at a specific point in time to the budget it informs

17

Let users provide supplemental information of any type, including images. For example, if there's a 'User conference' ActionPak, then a user might want to upload documentation listing their travel itinerary and known costs to provide additional justification for that account.

Provide direction across units. For example, an administrator could upload a 'Budget guidelines 2017' document that includes dates, contact information, and instructions on which budget method to use.

Associate files with specific line items. In the 'User conference' example, the user could attach their itinerary directly to that ActionPak, making it clear which accounts are affected by those documents and making it easy for a reviewer in that account to identify the supplemental information that's relevant.

Upload external models to store them with the budgets they affect. A document that gathers together data from multiple sources to provide a final number for some account might be loaded into BudgetPak so that the mathematical reason for that number gets preserved, instead of being left in some network drive somewhere, subject to possibly being altered later and losing the connection between the model's output and the number in BudgetPak.

Differences in using files

Differences between admin-supplied files and budgetholder-supplied files

Admin-supplied files

- **Upload files in advance**
- **Assign files to units**
- **Roll down as desired**

User-supplied files

- **Upload files while budgeting**
- **Part of their own budget**
- **Automatically rolls up**
- **Can roll down**

18

Considerations when using files

Factors to bear in mind

- You have 50 gigs of storage space for *all* of your organization's files across the entire system
- Any user in a given unit can see any file associated with that unit, so don't upload confidential information

What are categories?

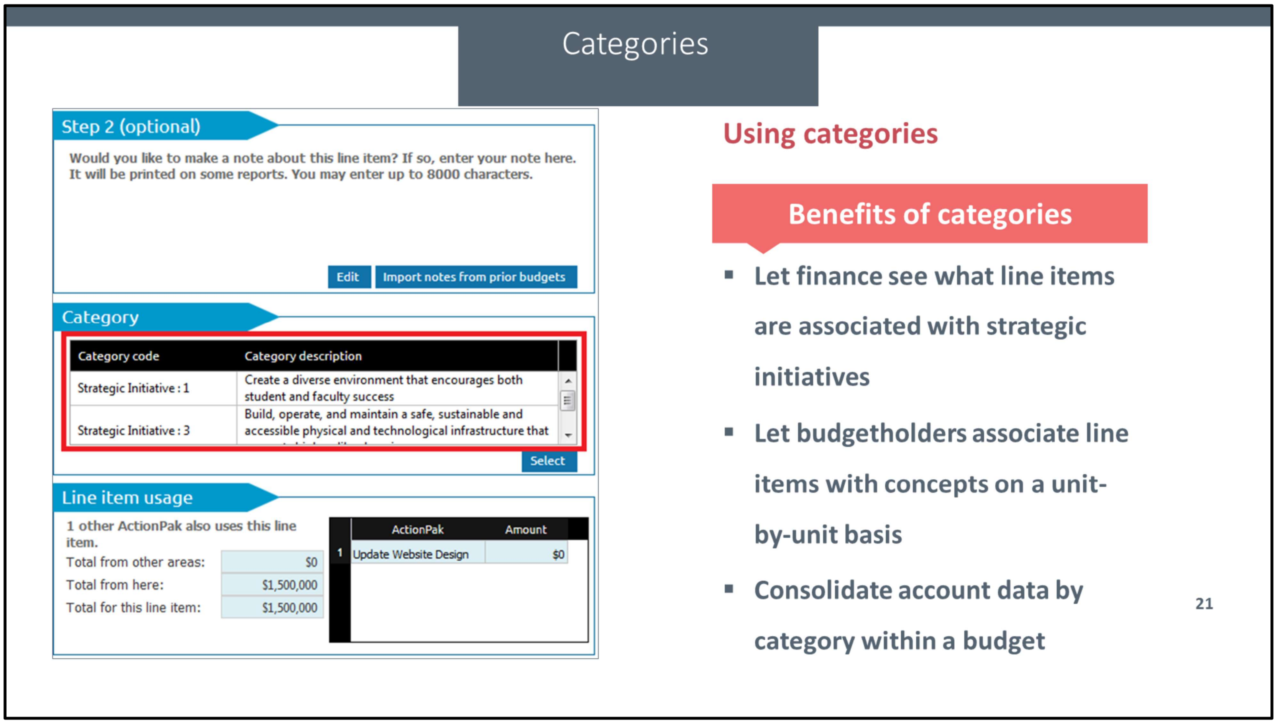
Understanding categories

- Admin-defined groupings
- Budgetholder-defined associations
  - Tag individual accounts with zero or more categories
  - Can tag different accounts in different units or versions

Category code	Category description
Strategic Initiative : 1	Create a diverse environment that encourages both student and faculty success
Strategic Initiative : 2	Promotes the university's distinctive identity to enhance institutional and program recognition at the national level
Strategic Initiative : 3	Build, operate, and maintain a safe, sustainable and accessible physical and technological infrastructure that supports high-caliber learning
Strategic Initiative : 4	Achieve a sustainable financial model that allows the university to realize its' vision while maintaining quality and affordability for the students it serves
Growth	Growth Plan
Transform	Transformation Plan

20

Another useful tool for making your budget more informative is the use of categories. In BudgetPak, categories are pre-defined tags that your users can apply within a budget at the individual account level. On the Configuration side, you create the categories; your users can then select any categories that apply to a given account. You can define as many categories as you want, and your users can associate as many categories with an account as they want.



For example, it might be important to identify which items are paid for by government grants, charitable donations, or by your organization's normal funding process. You can create these as categories – and you can make new categories for every fiscal year, if your categories change. Then in the budget section, your users can associate specific accounts with categories. They can mark more than one category if multiple items apply.

Your users also get the option to assign these categories on a budget-by-budget basis. If the IT department funds salaries from the general fund, but the Community Outreach department funds salaries from charitable donations, your users can indicate that instead of having it be associated with the account in all cases.

By using categories, you can consolidate information across multiple units in a way that the regular account structure and even ActionPaks might not allow. Category data can be retrieved via myXL, or, starting in our next release, you can run the category consolidating report to get your category information across multiple units in one shot.

Using categories lets you have designed flexibility, where you can provide a limited list of options for associations, but let your users provide input within that framework. Account notes are sometimes too flexible, when you want to group your account data into specific 'buckets.'

Q&A

Thank you!