



An Interview with the President of Point Software, Inc.

Jim Regan Speaks to The Point about the Company's New Ideas and Plans

The Point: Point Software has always promoted itself as an innovator. Can you describe some of the new innovations the company has in the works?

Jim: We promote ourselves this way because we have always created solutions by embracing new technology. Yet, I have to admit innovation is a risky proposition. Sometimes you pay a “pioneer penalty” because if the innovation doesn’t pan out it costs you lots of money. On the other hand, when the innovation works it gives you a real competitive advantage.

If you look at where Point Software is compared to as little as two years ago, you would be amazed at how many new products we offer. Despite lean budgets, Point has invested heavily in building and testing products that add value. For example, we have upgraded our Collection reporting by adding ReportNET, a .NET point and click based framework and converted the database model into a post-relational SQL connectable architecture – a fully connectable footprint that can be exposed quickly and easily.

We have also built a very unique solution to provide centralized document management, using our Internet expertise gained through our CAMA

development. Documents can be scanned, dynamically created from template based forms and/or fed by our existing back office solutions. Then there is RevenueNET, which will upgrade the existing collection platform. This product includes a special “Bill Picker” feature that I think will set a new benchmark for how Collectors search and select unpaid items. Other initiatives include Electronic Bill Presentation and the elimination of some forms cost by implementing ReportNET.

The Point: Why do you feel that embracing new technology is important?

Jim: There are two philosophies in business: lead or follow. We have always chosen to lead by integrating technology that gives us competitive advantage. This isn’t always easy, but it is critically important if you intend to stay competitive as a software provider. I consider Point an expert at providing software solutions for government. We play the role of a research center and bring the ideas we unearth to our customers. The unfortunate part is municipalities sometimes lack the funding to obtain the new technology, so it is essential to find and/or engineer cost effective solutions that stand the test of time.

The Point: Are there any drawbacks to being an innovator?

Jim: Yes, sometimes despite your optimism and best efforts the product doesn’t catch on as you predicted. We saw that with our on-line payment services website TaxValues.com. Frankly, we were too far ahead of the curve and after a nine month trial discovered that despite the supposed demand for this technology very few taxpayers actually used on-line payments. Four years later, that is finally changing. We also still have high hopes for CheckCache, which offers in-house scanning of check images with the ability to upload MICR data to a banking partner. As the banking industry comes to terms with third payment processors, I expect this product to play a pivotal role for receipt administration. Over time, I’ve learned you just need to be patient when defining new technology.

The Point: How have you recently applied technology to your own operations in order to improve them?

Jim: We constantly apply technology to our operations. About three years ago, the Town of Natick showed us a tool called GoToMyPC that provided us with 24x7 access

to support them. This eliminated the need to support dialup lines on both ends and enabled us to transfer upwards of 800mb of data between our offices in minutes. Now many companies use this product and we highly recommend it. We also use GoToMeeting for hosting Internet-based training and even development sessions with one of our software developers who now lives in California. What we have learned is the Internet and the right tools make the world a very small place. In fact I leave my computer on at the office all the time and can connect to it as if I am at my desk from any location in the United States by simply having access to the Internet.

We have also added some new error reporting to our products by using Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP). This means that if an error message appears, it is automatically emailed to our customer service center.

Overall, I am extremely proud of what Point Software has achieved and the relationships we maintain with our customers. I feel we have stayed true to the founding principle of the company. Simply stated, we deliver on our promises. We did that when it was just me and we do that now.



Calendar of Events

Date(s)	Event	Location
Jun. 11-14	MCTA Conference <i>Come see us at Booth 5!</i>	Sea Crest Resort 350 Quaker Road North Falmouth, MA
Jun. 14-15	PUG Summer Conference	Sea Crest Resort 350 Quaker Road North Falmouth, MA
Jun. 20-23	MAAO Summer Conference	Red Jacket Beach Resort 1 South Shore Drive South Yarmouth, MA
Aug. 6-11	MAAO 51 st Annual School	University of Massachusetts Campus Center Amherst, MA
Aug. 15-18	MCTA 36 th Annual School	University of Massachusetts Amherst, MA
Sep. 27	MCTA Fall Meeting	The Log Cabin 500 Easthampton Road Holyoke, MA

Point Welcomes New Collectors

Point Software, Inc. asks you to join us in recognizing two new collectors. These collectors were accepted to their positions in May 2006.

- **Beth Ann Scheid** is the new Tax Collector for Ashby, Massachusetts. She replaces Lee Mikola, who has retired.
- **Susan Glowatsky** is the new Town Collector for Hadley, Massachusetts. She replaces Jessica Hebert, who now works in the Chicopee Treasurer's Office.



Let us all wish Beth Ann and Susan good luck in their municipal government endeavors. Congratulations!

Massachusetts Association of Assessing Officers 51st Annual School

Location	School Dates
University of Massachusetts Campus Center Amherst, MA 01003	August 6-11, 2006
	Registration Deadline
	July 21, 2006

Registration Form/School Program Available At:
<https://www.aux.umass.edu/forms/conferenceservices/assessors/index.htm>

Specialty Course
 IAAO Course 159: Market Analysis for Income Valuation



Q: How do I set up municipal lien certificates for the new tax year?

A: You can set a number of defaults to be applied to municipal lien certificates (MLCs) generated in a particular tax year. Use the following procedure to set the defaults to the desired values.

1. Select **LIEN CERTIFICATES** from the main menu. The "LIEN CERTIFICATES" menu appears.
2. Select **STARTUP FILES**. The "INITIAL SETUP CHOICES" menu appears.
3. Select **CERTIFICATE DEFAULTS**. The "LEVY YEAR" prompt appears.
4. Enter the levy tax year for which you want to set default values. The "(E)dit or (D)delete this Information prompt may appear. If it does, type **E** then press **Enter**. The "MUNICIPAL LIEN SETUP" screen appears.
5. Enter the number to be used for the first MLC generated in the selected tax year.
6. Enter a default cost to be charged per MLC ordered.
7. Indicate whether your municipality issues real estate tax bills on a quarterly or a semi-annual basis.
8. Enter up to five standard comments that can be automatically inserted in the apportionments section of an MLC.
9. Enter the number assigned to the printer you want to use as the default for printing MLCs. The "SAVE THIS INFORMATION" prompt appears.
10. Enter **Y** to save the information.

TIP: If you are a semi-annual customer that has not been converted with the new fiscal year data, you will have to set up the Interest Base File (IBF) and initialize that levy year in Utilities.

From the Help Desk to Your Desk