



The Experience of a Mature Company: Point Software Turns 18

Point Software is excited to celebrate 18 years in business this month, and proud as well. We are a municipal technology provider now in adulthood and that landmark represents a wealth of experience.

Our experience does not come from the passage of time alone. It comes from being devoted solely to the municipal government industry; it comes from learning about and exploring new technologies; it comes from becoming and staying active in professional organizations for local officials; and it comes from communicating regularly with our customers about their needs, challenges and goals.

Experience has proven to be an excellent teacher. We would like to share with you some things we have learned from it.

How to Choose Technologies

Technologies are tools and it is essential to select the right tool for the job. This is a concept we grasped from our early years, but grew to appreciate more and more over time as we listened to what the marketplace had to say about both our products and those of the competition.

We also honed our understanding of what it means to have the “right” tool. The best technology is not necessarily the most prevalent, but rather is the best at producing solutions that are flexible, efficient, powerful and easy to use.

A prime example of this is our decision in 2000 to engineer our new products with a browser-based design instead of building Windows applications like our rivals were at the time. A key advantage this gave us is the ability to rapidly and naturally disseminate public information on the Internet. We were also free to implement thin client architecture, which trims costs by shifting the bulk of hardware expenses from several workstations to one or a few servers.

How to Build Bridges

Data is the lifeblood of municipal government. For our company to help you realize the true value of that vital asset, we need to furnish data produced not only by our own software but from a variety of external sources. It is no small feat to retrieve and translate information from foreign systems, but one we have become adept at through our technological expertise and our proven practices. Effectively, our experience has taught us how to be bridge builders.

Among the earliest data bridges we had to build were the ones that import assessment data into our collection system in order to generate tax bills – that perennial process known as tax conversion. This is a complex task not only because each CAMA software vendor uses their own, unique data format but also because the data we receive often has

some issues that require us to do “housekeeping.”

Following the creation of our tax conversion utilities, we have built many other data bridges. These include a bridge from a third-party solution to TaxValues™ Assessor to achieve integrated property sketching; a bridge between our collection system and any online payment provider in the form of our online payment exchange software; and bridges from the customer’s CAMA and GIS systems of choice for presentation within DocumentLink™.

How to Lead

Point has a history of being a pioneer in the municipal government software industry. Our decision to innovate leading-edge applications rather than ones that just “did the job” was a difficult one, one that at times seemed foolhardy from a business perspective. Innovation, after all, demands a huge investment in time, energy and resources.

However, we determined that local officials needed more than products. With all of the demands on *their* time, energy and resources, they needed *solutions* to make their jobs easier and their offices more efficient.

Over 90% of our customers have continued to use our products since they were initially installed. We attribute that achievement in part to the



fact we have remained true to our mission of delivering exceptional software backed by professional expertise and service. Our performance record speaks volumes about our stability and the commitment we sustain with our customers. We have worked hard to deliver the kind of services municipal government needs. This has resulted in being first many times as we originated, tested and implemented new ideas and new concepts. The worthiness of these efforts was easily validated as our competition continues to copy many of the innovations we have brought to the marketplace.

What It All Means for You

We are certainly proud of our accomplishments, but we believe their real importance lies in their ability to benefit you. By choosing the right technologies, by building bridges and by leading the way, Point is able to offer solutions that will continue to take municipal government into the future.



Calendar of Events

Date(s)	Event	Location
Apr. 5	MCTA Spring Meeting	Basketball Hall of Fame 1000 West Columbus Avenue Springfield, MA
Apr. 23-24	MAAO Spring Conference	Marlborough Conference Center 280 Locke Drive Marlborough, MA
Apr. 29-May 2	NRAAO Annual Conference <i>Visit us at our booth!</i>	Hotel Viking One Bellevue Avenue Newport, RI
May 7-11	IAAO Course 400: Assessment Administration <i>Sponsored by the Massachusetts Chapter of IAAO</i>	Framingham Town Hall Memorial Building Public Meeting Room 150 Concord Street Framingham, MA
May 17	CTx Member Meeting	Aqua Turf Club 556 Mulberry Street Southington, CT

Start Preparing for MAAO's New USPAP Requirement

Beginning October 1, 2007, the Massachusetts Association of Assessing Officers (MAAO) will require MAAO designees seeking recertification to complete the 7-Hour National USPAP Course. As a precursor to that course, MAAO is holding a workshop titled "Introduction to Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP) for the Assessor" on Monday, April 23, 2007.

MAAO is offering the introductory USPAP workshop during its spring conference at the Marlborough Conference Center. The workshop is worth 5 recertification credits and is available to conference attendees at no additional fee.

To register for the MAAO Spring Conference online, go to:

<http://www.maa.org/Reg/regp.asp>

2007 NRAAO Conference Offers Learning Opportunities

This year's Northeastern Regional Association of Assessing Officers (NRAAO) conference, to be held April 29 – May 2, 2007 in Rhode Island, offers area assessors a wide range of learning opportunities. These include the 7-Hour National USPAP Course, two IAAO forums, and NRAAO's own seminars covering the valuation of everything from hotels to wind farms.

The IAAO forums offered at the conference are 907 "Valuation of Wireless Communication Towers and Sites" and 932 "Restructuring Income/Expense Statements." The forums are worth 7

credit hours each.

Assessors will also have the opportunity to learn about new tools and features to help them in their offices, during the vendor demonstrations on the morning of April 30. We invite conference attendees to stop by the Point Software booth and discuss what DocumentLink™ and the TaxValues™ CAMA suite can do for their municipalities.

For more information, visit the conference web page at:

<http://www.nraao.org/2007.htm>

Tech Tips

In this issue's "Tech Tips" column, we'll learn how to set passwords to protect Microsoft Office files.

Word / Excel / PowerPoint Files

1. Open the file.
2. Open the **Tools** menu.
3. Select **Options**.
The "Options" window appears.
4. Select the **Security** tab.
5. Enter the password to open or modify the file.
6. Select **OK**.
The "Confirm Password" prompt appears.
7. Reenter the password.
8. Select **OK**.
The "Confirm Password" prompt and the "Options" window disappear. The password is set.
9. Save the file.

Microsoft Access Databases

1. Open the **File** menu.
2. Select **Open**.
The "Open" window appears.
3. Navigate to the database you wish to password protect.
4. Click the arrow on the right side of the "Open" button.
A menu appears.
5. Select **Open Exclusive**.
The database opens.
6. Open the **Tools** menu.
7. Select **Security**.
8. Select **Set Database Password**.
The "Set Database Password" prompt appears.
9. Enter the password then reenter it to verify.
10. Select **OK**.
The password is set.