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Get Connected: Plug into the Potential of Web-Based Technology

Why and How Point Software Uses This Technology in Our Product Suite

Web-based technology is a powerful tool. It makes information accessible anytime, anywhere. It creates a global marketplace in which business and banking can be transacted instantaneously. It permits the implementation of thin-client architecture for lower hardware costs and faster, easier upgrades. It facilitates collaboration, with the ability to share content and ideas among all departments – no matter how remote. It makes mobile computing a reality, transforming the world into your office.

Recognizing its future potential, Point Software chose to become an early adopter of web-based technology in 2000. We began exploring its possibilities and integrating it into our suite of municipal government products.

Since we began using this technology, we have developed an array of solutions to enhance your operations:

- **TaxValues™ Assessor**, our primary CAMA application, creates a virtual office to manage revaluation projects efficiently by virtue of its mobility to operate the program from any Internet-enabled device.
- **CitizenLink™** places current parcel data at the taxpayers' fingertips, available on the Internet

through their computers or through public kiosks.

- **CheckCache™** supports Check 21 technology through its ability to capture check images and submit them electronically to financial institutions for clearing.
- **Point's Online Payment Exchange Software** bridges our revenue management system with any online payment provider for the automated update of commitment information.
- **ReportNET™** offers the capability to convert municipal data into PDF reports, ready for e-mailing or for posting on the Intranet or Internet.
- **DocumentLink™** provides centralized information sharing among all departments and enables businesses and residents to submit and pay for permits online.
- **The Point Data Center** furnishes secure 24/7/365 off-site data hosting for worry free, hassle free data storage and access.

Connectible Applications

Individually, each of the applications listed above serves as a beneficial tool for municipal



government. Their greatest strength, however, lies in their capacity to mesh their functionality with each other and even with non-Point applications.

Now, instead of running an assortment of products each managing a particular task set, you can acquire a global structure that is exponentially more powerful than its individual pieces. This connectibility comes from the web-based technology on which we built our applications.

Connectible Government

Just like our applications, the various departments of municipal government should have the ability to connect with each other and with the outside

world. The information managed by you and your fellow municipal government officials is vital to a wide range of individuals and groups, including residents, businesses, real estate lawyers and state government entities. That information, therefore, needs to be highly accessible.

In this world of greater expectations and possibilities, you owe it to yourself and those you serve to explore the potential of web-based technology. Get informed and get connected. Point can help you get where you need to go.

To learn more about the web-based solutions discussed in this article, give us a call at 1.800.368.9538.



Calendar of Events

Date(s)	Event	Location
Aug. 5-10	MAAO 52 nd Annual School	University of Massachusetts Campus Center Amherst, MA
Aug. 14-17	MCTA 37 th Annual School	University of Massachusetts Amherst, MA

A Backup Each Day Keeps Disaster at Bay

What a nightmare! You put off doing it because it seemed like such a hassle, but now you wish you had. Now what should have been a minor inconvenience is a disaster.

We're talking about backing up your database – a task that can seem trivial until the day that you lose your data. Then the question of whether you did it and did it right has the utmost importance.

Below are the key steps you should keep in mind when performing a backup of your database:

1. **Choose a suitable backup medium.** Move away from obsolete and fading technologies, as you may find it difficult to get support or find drivers. Point Software discontinued support of HP Colorado tape backups in 1993 and is now encouraging customers to phase out use of the once popular Iomega Zip drive.

Backup mediums currently recommended by Point include:

- Digital Linear Tape (DLT) media cartridges, in conjunction with a server-based backup utility such as Symantec Backup Exec.
- CD-Rs/CD-RWs. One thing to remember about CD-Rs is that because they can only be written to once (i.e. their data cannot be overwritten with new data), they may need to even-

tually be destroyed due to their sensitive information. This can be done with a CD shredder.

- USB memory sticks. This medium is fast, cost effective, and extremely easy to use. The major drawback is that they are also extremely easy to lose, since they are very small and very portable.
2. **Date your backup.** In the event that you do need to restore your data, this allows you to locate the backup from (or closest to) the date of your last known good backup. The closer you get to that date, the less data is lost. For this same reason, you should also maintain a regular backup schedule.
 3. **Test your backup.** Even the most reliable backup mediums fail from time to time. Make sure your database is really there before you put the backup into storage.

For Point's MSM users, verify that the database file "database.msm" exists on the backup medium. For customers that have migrated to the new system, verify that the database file "cache.dat" exists on the backup medium. Make sure the size of the backup database matches that of the original. If it is far less, the backup failed.

Tech Tips

Your municipal software manages a lot of data, but how do you get that data into other applications? One vehicle for accomplishing this task simply is the *tab-delimited file*. A tab-delimited file is a text file that uses the tab character to separate different pieces (or "fields") of information in a record.

To create a tab-delimited file, you will need to export the desired data from your application to that file format. Point Software has designed certain reports to be exported in this manner. In MSM, you export a report as a tab-delimited file by sending it to output device 51, the file services device. Under Caché (available through ReportNET), you run the report then select the "Output as File" option.

Once the tab-delimited file has been created, you can import it into Microsoft Excel as explained in the following procedure. A text import wizard will automatically appear when you open the file. The wizard will place each record in its own row and each field in its own column.

1. Open Microsoft Excel.
2. Select "Open" from the File menu.
3. Select "Text Files" as the file type.
4. Browse to the folder containing the file.
5. Select and open the file. The text import wizard appears.
6. Specify your import preferences. Make sure you use "delimited" as the data type and "tab" as the delimiter. The file is imported into a new worksheet.
7. Save the data as a Microsoft Excel workbook (.xls file). You will be able to use the new workbook as a source for data merges in programs like Microsoft Word.