The Point

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Exploring Remote Deposit Capture Technology: What to Consider

First introduced as a concept in October 2003 when the Check 21 legislation was passed, remote deposit capture technology has become a hot trend for both banks and businesses over the last few years. Now that it has caught on, it is taking off like a rocket with an abundance of solutions surfacing in the marketplace. Between our own tracking of this technology since its inception and recent reports from Business Developer Scott Choiniere of growing and widespread interest in our customer base, we anticipate remote deposit capture will be the "next big thing" in municipal government technology.

Looking at the Benefits

Before adopting any technology, it's important to consider the value it brings to your operation. We engineered a solution for check capturing four years ago that was compliant with the requirements of Check 21. While that application proved to be too early and too independent a solution to mesh with the banking industry, that experience taught us many things and illustrated for us the benefits of this emerging technology.

We believe that remote deposit capture can be a valuable asset for cities and towns by its ability to yield the following benefits:

- Capture an image of the check that can be stored for archive and permanent recall
- Provide faster access to deposited funds
- Expand your banking options by removing physical proximity from the equation, as deposits are done via the Internet

Choosing a Solution

The options for adopting remote deposit capture technology are many and growing. In our own research, we found that banks offering this service offer nearly identical functionality. Most will provide you with the requisite software and scanner, sometimes for free if you give them your business.

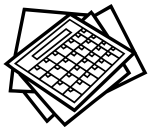
So how do you distinguish between all these competing propositions? One thing to look at closely is the technology behind their solutions and how well it will meet your needs and requirements. Here are some factors to consider:

- The substitute check image required for Check 21 processing *must* include a bitonal (black and white) image of the front and back of the check at 200 or 240 DPI resolution. Verify that the scanner you are getting can yield that result.
- Some software solutions need to run locally on your machine while others run over the Internet. From our observation of early remote deposit capture adopters in our customer base, Internet-based solutions typically have the least impact on other installed applications.
- Usability of the product should be a key concern as it is a program you will be using on a high-volume basis. Ask for a demo so you can determine ease of use.
- Even though it will likely be a bank that you will be doing business with, you should hold your remote deposit capture service provider to the same standard of service as any other technology partner. Find out whether they have a call center and if it is staffed by technically proficient personnel.

Internal Check Handling

When implementing remote deposit capture in your office, you will need to determine the best way to handle the processing of checks internally. One thing to keep in mind is that after being captured the original check *must* be destroyed within a specified time period. Checks should also be endorsed in order to ensure they are not inadvertently deposited again. You will need to consider the best timeframe and practice for the check's destruction.

Finally, remote deposit capture can be performed using lockbox-like service centers. If this interests you, Point expects to be offering these services within the next few months. To learn more about this service or remote deposit capture in general, just give us a call at 1.800.368.9538. We will be happy to share our ideas and expertise on these subjects.



Calendar of Events

Date(s)	Event	Location
Feb. 27-28	IAAO Workshop 155: Depreciation Analysis *Sponsored by the Massachusetts Chapter of IAAO*	Holiday Inn 242 Adams Place Boxboro, MA
Feb. 29	MAAO Workshop: Introduction to USPAP for the Assessor	Shrewsbury Senior Center 100 Maple Street Shrewsbury, MA
Mar. 26-28	CTx Annual Seminar	Hartford Marriott Hotel 15 Farm Springs Road Farmington, CT
Mar. 30-Apr. 2	InterSystems DEVCON 2008	Renaissance at SeaWorld 6677 Sea Harbor Drive Orlando, FL

Customer Site Visits Uncovering Beneficial Ideas

In our November 2007 issue, we profiled Point Business Developer Scott Choiniere and his mission to help each of our customers develop a plan for success custom-built for their municipality. Since that time, Scott has been busy making on-site visits to discuss their goals and how to achieve them.

Through this dialog, Scott and our customers have jointly explored the benefits of a number of concepts available for implementation in municipal government. They have also looked at how to make those concepts a reality through Point's software solutions.

Scott reports he is seeing great interest in a few solutions in particular. ReportNET is generating a lot of demo requests due to its ability to offer better review capabilities, reduce the need for paper, bridge into the future of Point's collection software and save money in the long term. Also garnering a great deal of attention are Point's Deputy Services, which integrate with our excise posting application, and our lockbox services for remote deposit capture.

Point customers that have not yet taken advantage of this opportunity to develop a plan for success should make a point to contact Scott in the near future. You may call Scott at 1.800.368.9538 (office) or 1.413.478.5285 (cell) to make an appointment for your plan for success.

Massachusetts Department of Revenue Course 101
Assessment Administration: Law, Procedures, Valuation

Class Dates: March 11, March 20, March 25, April 1, April 8, April 15, 2008

Class Time: 6-9 PM on all dates

Class Location: Middlesex Community College Campus Center, Bedford

Registration Deadline: Friday, February 21, 2008

Registration Form: Go to http://www.mass.gov/dls and visit the DLS Newsroom. The registration form (2008-01B) is available under "Bulletins."

Tech Tips

By using Microsoft Word's mail merge feature, you can quickly and easily produce mailing labels and form letters. For any mail merge you do, you will need a data file to use as your source. While this file could belong to any number of file types, let's look at using Excel since most PC users have that program. Here are some tips on creating a highly-usable data file in Excel:

- **Get rid of the extra spreadsheets.** Every new Excel workbook you create starts off with three spreadsheets, ambiguously named Sheet1, Sheet2 and Sheet3. Unless you are controlling multiple mailing lists through one workbook, you only need one spreadsheet. You will want to delete any unused spreadsheets to prevent confusion when you get to the mail merge. The mail merge wizard will ask you which "table" (spreadsheet) you want to use, a difficult question to answer if your choices are Sheet1, Sheet2 and Sheet3. If you do find you need multiple spreadsheets, then rename them to something more intuitive.
- **Use the first row of the spreadsheet for column headings.** These headings will be used during the mail merge to label the database fields you wish to place. Make sure each column has a unique heading so that you can easily recognize them when selecting fields for placement.
- **Format the ZIP code column as text.** By default, Excel treats cells containing all numeric characters as if they are number fields. This means you lose any zeroes at the beginning of the "number." Make sure you format the column for text *before* you start adding the ZIP codes; otherwise you will have to go back and add all those zeroes back in. To format a column for text, right-click the letter at the top of the column, select **Format Cells**, then select **Text** at the "Number" tab.