



## Survival of the Fittest: Is Your Software Adapting or Going Extinct?

The course of software development is influenced heavily by the current and emerging technology trends of the computer world. Operating systems, programming languages, database engines and even Web browsers all make up a development environment to which the software must adapt. Otherwise, it runs the risk of becoming obsolete due to its use of old technologies that now have little or no support.

In the last decade, a significant shift in software development occurred when Microsoft introduced its .NET technology. This resulted in programming language diffusion where the programming language no longer mattered. Under this .NET platform, SQL Server databases became the expected standard and anything that wasn't SQL and/or .NET compliant was slated for termination by Microsoft. That included Visual Basic 6 (VB6) and Visual FoxPro, which enabled the applications that incorporated them to be self-contained and use database storage embedded in the software products.

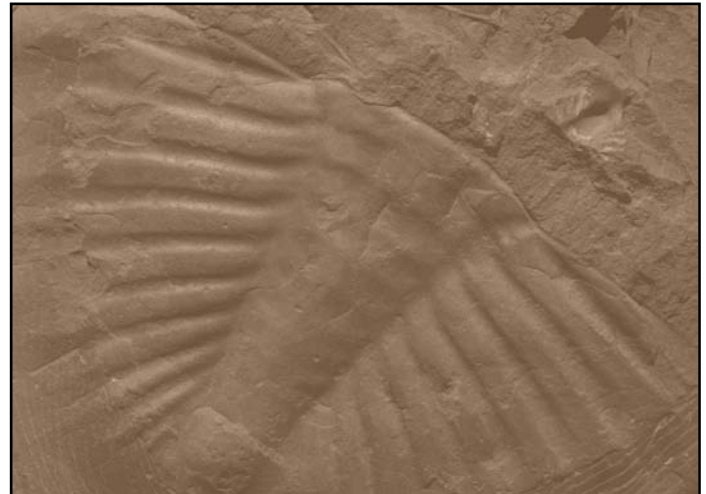
The phasing out of these legacy technologies will impact municipal government in cases where this technology is either still in use or being considered. In short

order, programs that are based on either of these technologies have a limited shelf life and will need to be retooled to update them to a current specification.

This presents a problem as rewriting software is both expensive and time consuming. Having done it, we know working with new software standards is not cut and dry, as change doesn't come from an announcement by a computer industry giant but rather from choosing the right technology amid an array of options. Such was the case when we introduced applications using browser-based user interfaces in 2001.

This resulted in a response by some vendors that continues today where their legacy products are made to look like Web-based applications through the use of terminal services. While giving the appearance of an Internet application, these are in most cases the legacy product wrapped in a browser shell that has no other purpose than to make a connection using the Internet.

By comparison, Point Software has spent the last decade heavily investing our engineering efforts in integrating emerging technologies into our product line. Consequently, we have the



tools and framework in place to continue support of our existing systems while offering upgrade options that won't break the budget or disrupt operations.

As an example, when we released ReportNET™ over five years ago in combination with the Caché database, we set a new standard for performance and scalability. Not only is Caché a post-relational database engine making it fully SQL compliant, it is also a .NET technology with advanced features including native Web-based architecture. This has allowed us to transform ReportNET™ from a VB.NET application to an integrated browser-based solution that has all of the capabilities and performance of the original Point system including a Web interface and integrated

PDF and HTML reporting.

Our customers have come to expect Point Software to offer innovative applications that advance the technology of municipal government forward. We are secure in the knowledge that we can continue to fulfill that expectation in the coming years, as we possess a unique blend of municipal experience, technological expertise and innovative thinking. Equally important is the technology we are using today is capable of meeting these needs for future expansion of our software solutions.

This is readily seen in our newest products, including the CitizenLink™ On-line Tax Portal that will offer taxpayers the ability to look up billing information and view copies of actual bills.



## Calendar of Events

Date(s)	Event	Location
Jan. 19, 2010	CAAO BOA Appeals Workshop	Darien Town Hall Auditorium 2 Renshaw Road Darien, CT
Jan. 20, 2010	MAAO Winter Meeting	Lombardo's 6 Billings Street Randolph, MA
Jan. 26, 2010	CAAO BOA Appeals Workshop	Bloomfield Town Hall Council Chambers 800 Bloomfield Avenue Bloomfield, CT
Jan. 28, 2010	CAAO BOA Appeals Workshop	Thomaston Town Hall Lena Morton Gallery 158 Main Street Thomaston, CT

### DocumentLink™ Now Offers Project Management

Point Software, Inc.'s software development team recently enhanced its DocumentLink™ technology by adding project management tools to the Web-based application. With these tools, DocumentLink™ allows municipalities to create a project then add related forms and documents to it. This enables everyone working on the project to see all associated documentation at a glance.

While the project is active in DocumentLink™, submitted forms and uploaded documents can be linked to the project as a central reference point and the project's title and description can

be revised as necessary. When a project is complete, the municipality can update the project's status to "Closed." The project is then treated as an archive repository. No further changes or additions can be made to the project at that point, but it can continue to be viewed.

Point believes project management will prove to be an invaluable asset to municipal government. Through this feature, cities and towns gain high-level control and tracking of their tasks as well as a detailed record of their work.

### 2010 Point Holiday Schedule

Point's offices will be closed on the following dates in 2010. Please be aware of these dates so that you may update your office calendars accordingly.

Friday, January 1, 2010	New Year's Day
Monday, February 15, 2010	President's Day
Monday, May 31, 2010	Memorial Day
Monday, July 5, 2010	Independence Day (observed)
Monday, September 6, 2010	Labor Day
Monday, October 11, 2010	Columbus Day
Thursday, November 11, 2010	Veterans Day
Thursday, November 25, 2010	Thanksgiving Day
Friday, November 26, 2010	Day after Thanksgiving
Friday, December 24, 2010	Christmas Eve

## Tech Tips

A *backflow device* is a vital component of a sprinkler system. The job of this valve is to prevent water sent out into the external piping from contaminating the internal water supply of a house or other building. It is important to check that backflow devices are functioning properly through testing procedures that often are subject to billing. Billing for backflow testing is easily managed in the water/sewer module.

To add the backflow device testing charge to the applicable water/sewer bills, you first should verify that a service code exists for that charge. Access the Service Codes Table in the Water/Sewer Billing Module to check. If you need to add a new code to the table, be sure to indicate you want to bill that service code as a fee charge rather than a water or sewer charge. This distinguishes it for reporting purposes.

These amounts can either be billed separately or in combination with bills issued for flat rate or consumption based billing. If the fees are to be included with standard billing, it is recommended these amounts be added after establishing the billable amounts.

If your municipality is using auto flat rate billing or an electronic or radio meter reader to collect the consumption data, you should establish the billable amounts first before adding the service codes. You then use the billing input function to access and edit the individual billing records as needed.

If your municipality manually enters its billing data, you would create the billing records directly through the billing input function as always and enter the service codes and fees as needed.

Using any of these methods will allow backflow testing to be billed within the water and sewer application.