

TOOL HELPS EMPLOYEES MANAGE THEIR BENEFITS

PlanAdvisor, a benefits management tool from Milwaukee-based Zywave Inc., features a Plan Selector module to enable employees to review their own health costs. PlanAdvisor generates management reports without carrier data feeds, analyzes the effects of changes in the plan design and calculates projected plan costs, based on trend and claims information. It also offers benchmarking, modeling, and analysis to allow brokers to deliver information based on industry comparison data and actuarial factors, which can help clients make informed decisions.

CCC OFFERS INDEX THAT MEASURES CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Chicago-based CCC Information Services Inc. has added the customer satisfaction indexing services of CSi Complete to the CCC collection of collision repair and automotive claims tools. CCC will market and sell all new CSi Complete accounts in the automotive claims industry, says CCC Senior Vice President Jim Dickens. The agreement enables CCC "to provide our customers with a customer satisfaction solution to help provide a clearer picture of their operations," Dickens says. "The ability for our customers to take that data and affect a positive change to their businesses is an invaluable asset, whether it's for individual measurement or the desire to monitor direct repair performance." John Webb, senior vice president for marketing and new business development at Plain City, Ohio-based CSi Complete, adds that "combining our 11-plus years of experience in providing automotive claims satisfaction reporting with the breadth and depth of CCC's sales and service channel will allow us to accelerate our growth."

SUNGARD LAUNCHES POLICY ADMINISTRATION SOFTWARE PACKAGE

SunGard has launched iWORKS FrontTier release 6.5, a version of the Armonk, N.Y.-based company's policy administration software that incorporates changes in integration, report generation, Web enablement, business process modeling and services oriented architecture, the company says. The software is intended for property and casualty work, including quotes, policy administration, claims processing, billing and accounting. Compared with earlier versions, 6.5 provides greater interoperability through a Web services architecture and offers more rapid implementation, helping to improve speed to market. The software has a new WYSIWYG front-end layout designer that eliminates the need for a team of developers to design and code custom front-end screens. Combined with user-level APIs to gain access to business rules, the software helps business analysts develop Web portals. The software shortens development cycles, helping to reduce the costs associated with system application projects, the maker says.

MAJESCOMASTEK SOFTWARE MANAGES INCENTIVES

Edison, N.J.-based MajescoMastek has introduced the Elixir Incentive Compensation Management Solution (Elixir ICM) to allow carriers to manage complex distribution channels, motivate producers with customized reward systems and integrate with established systems. The new service-oriented architecture (SOA), Web-based system handles producer servicing, allowing insurers to concentrate on developing insurance products and launching them faster, the company says. "When carriers are competing amongst each other to attract distributors, motivating and retaining them has become a strategic challenge," said Vijay Chavan, worldwide head, Insurance and Financial Services Vertical, MajescoMastek. Most system-in-house and COTS-can't manage complex channels or scale up as required, according to Chavan. Easily customized incentive plans with lower sales-to-reward time have become necessary to keep producers motivated, he says. "Thus, administrative and servicing demands are putting a lot of pressure on carriers," says Chavan.

INTERLINK ELECTRONICS' SIGNATURE CAPTURE DEVICE

Camarillo, Calif.-based Interlink Electronics Inc. is offering what the company calls the industry's first-full color LCD handwritten signature capture device. The ergonomic ePad LS is designed for an interactive and secure signature process, the company says. The device is the newest member of Interlink's family of ePad e-signature capture devices, and it is integrated with Interlink's IntegriSign Signature Software Suite. While meeting or exceeding compliance requirements for internal business processes as well as state and federal legislation, the product also fits the customer experience, the company claims. Its bidirectional color display allows interaction and communication with the customer during the signing. Support for rich text format makes it possible to display content and affirmation text during the signing. The color screen also supports marketing messages promoting additional products and services.

WOLTERS KLUWER OFFERS AUTHENTICWEB FOR CLAIMS

Minneapolis-based Wolters Kluwer Financial Services has expanded AuthenticWeb for Claims, a database of claims-specific regulatory information and forms, to help carriers identify requirements affecting the workers' compensation claims process. With more than 25,000 regulations affecting claims, the task of ensuring claims transactions are completed to meet customer needs and regulatory requirements can be time consuming and costly. The product's database search tools help users save time by finding the information they need to identify claims-specific requirements. The database is updated monthly, helping ensure access to the most recent information needed to process critical claims transactions. Besides workers' compensation claims, AuthenticWeb covers property/ casualty, long-term care, and Medicare supplement lines. The product also offers a searchable database that breaks down content by line of business, topic or sub-topic; summaries designed to help users understand regulatory requirements and determine their effect on operations; e-mail alerts that inform users of regulatory changes by subject matter, jurisdiction and line of business; and forms for completing critical company transactions.

E-MAIL MESSAGES MADE LEGALLY BINDING

Agents and brokers who rely on marked up faxes to negotiate deals now have a paperless alternative that makes documents legally binding. An agreement between RPost Registered E-Mail and SettlementRoom has embedded RPost's Registered E-mail service in the SettlementRoom listing and transaction management platform. Settlement-Room's 80,000 registered users can track, record and verify the content of their e-mails. Users can conduct business by e-mail and retain a verifiable and legally valid Registered e-mail record of their correspondence, the company says. According to Zafar Khan, CEO of RPost, "Once people start using e-mail for serious negotiations and confirmations, which most of us do even without realizing it, it's just a matter of time before one ends up in a dispute about the content of an important e-mail - or whether or not the email was ever sent at all." The product provides the sender with a receipt that can legally verify the content of the e-mail message, the time it was sent and the time received. Jonathan Cutler, president of SettlementRoom, adds that "thousands of our clients are trying to move toward paperless offices, and surely the first step is to reduce use of the fax machine. With the Registered Email service, many of the faxes we normally send become unnecessary, saving time spent standing at the fax machine, and reducing the need for filing, storage, toner, and so many other associated costs."

CONTENT MANAGEMENT ACROSS THE ENTERPRISE

AllwaySync 4.6.10, the latest version of a tool for automating data exchange routines across multiple computers, is available from Usov Lab, Ashburn, Va. Compatible with most Windows versions, the application is designed to enable synchronization of multiple files and folders stored in one or more computers and keeps them updated regularly. Synchronization can be performed in one or both directions, via a network connection or any removable drive, including USB keys, flash drives, CDRW disks, MP3 players and digital cameras. AllwaySync features an interface with two path selection fields for building a sync association between two folders. Once the association is set, the user can use the program to analyze what files has been modified recently and propagate the modification to their counterparts in other folders.

MONITORING SYSTEMS FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM BUSINESSES

Jumpline monitoring solution, available from Jumpline Systems LLC, a Minneapolis-based developer of hosted network management and monitoring solutions, offers enterprise-grade coverage for small and medium businesses, enabling real-time management of networks. The solution does not require a software-based server, which is intended to increase reliability and decrease maintenance. Redundant network connections are designed to ensure that monitored systems are visible even when external network connections may be down.

ACTUARIAL SOFTWARE

The Tillinghast business of Towers Perrin, New York, released TAS-MoSés, an actuarial software application that uses the MoSés financial modeling software platform. The software is designed to provide enhanced goal seeking, stochastic pricing and principles-based approaches to valuation. The application is fully transparent, allowing insurers to see the actual code used to make the calculations and, in turn, trace the calculations and ease audit ability. The MoSés platform also supports distributed processing and grid computing technology to provide scalability for very large projection tasks.

SOA-ENABLED BI

InsFocus BI is an insurance-specific business intelligence suite pre-configured for the content, calculations, definitions and data structures of the insurance world. Released by Israel-based InsFocus, Ltd., the new version enables users to deploy InsFocus BI as a Web Service. The service-oriented architecture (SOA) allows other SOA-enabled software applications to retrieve analyzed information from InsFocus BI. The data produced by InsFocus BI is designed to enable a user to leverage essential business input for applications, portals and Web sites, thus enhancing information management and decision-making.

CAT MODELING ACCESS

Boston-based AIR Worldwide added new functionality to its catastrophe risk management system, CLASIC/2, the company reports. Its latest release, Version 8.5, features AIR ExportExpress, a utility designed to simplify the export of company exposure and loss data. The product enables users without knowledge of SQL to export exposure and loss data from CLASIC/2 for reporting and analysis. AIR ExportExpress makes data available at a variety of resolutions and providing a series of filters to refine the results.

AML, SURVEILLANCE SOFTWARE

SunGard, Wayne, Pa., launched Protegent Surveillance, a compliance solution designed to help retail broker/dealers reduce regulatory and reputation risk by automating trade and account surveillance, client suitability and auditing. The software includes enhanced modules for daily account risk review, alert management, consolidated client data auditing, and transaction and account based anti-money laundering with exception workflow and case management. Protegent Surveillance features an anti-money-laundering module that monitors transactions associated with the movement of securities and assets, and examines client profiles to help firms identify, assess and manage suspicious activity associated with potential money laundering activities. The system alerts appropriate personnel of candidate accounts for further due diligence as required under current rules and regulations.

TRINTECH EXTENDS FUNCTIONS OF ASSURENET GL FOR COMPLIANCE

The latest version of Trintech's AssureNET GL offers more functions to support accounting compliance requirements. The Addison, Texas-based company specializes in financial software and technology services, such as transaction verification, reconciliation process automation and compliance. The product, Version 3.2, takes AssureNet GL beyond general ledger reconciliation and certification to include variance, trending and balance flux analysis, review and approval of manual journal entries, and task management for the accounting close process. The enhancements were driven by requests from Trintech clients who wanted help in managing other accounting compliance processes, says Trintech general manager John Harte.

MAPINFO IMPROVING GEOCODING ACCURACY

MapInfo Corp., Troy, N.Y., a provider of location intelligence, has introduced MapMarker Plus v12.0, a geocoding tool with a patent-pending algorithm that identifies locations more precisely than ever before, the company says. The newest version includes the optional MapMarker ParcelPrecisionT data set, ground-level data containing forty-four million address points. Geocoding, the adding of geographic coordinates to every record in a database, is the critical first step for an organization to visualize business data on a map and discover trends and patterns not apparent on a spreadsheet. Precise geocoding is critical for the insurance industry, where corporate location data is a vitally important enterprise asset and carriers must accurately geocode policy information for underwriting, actuarial, risk management, claims, sales, marketing and distribution. The insurer's business decisions can be only as accurate as the underlying data, says MapInfo. The product delivers data-building tools and interpolation methodologies that bring companies as close as 75 feet on average to a given address-closer to its actual location on the ground. When even more accuracy is required, ParcelPrecision delivers points to the parcel center or street location. Common needs for parcel level precision in the insurance industry include accurate rating territory assignment, regulatory compliance, policy risk proximity analyses, risk aggregation and catastrophe modeling and efficient claims adjustor routing. When territory assignments are based on precise parcel level geocoding, carriers can easily demonstrate regulatory compliance and the accuracy of their policy rating process to state insurance auditors, MapInfo says.

SCENE GENESIS PROGRAM CONNECTS INSURERS AND CLAIM INFORMATION PROVIDERS

Rochester, N.Y.-based Scene Genesis Inc. (SGI) launched the SceneConnect Partner Program for property-casualty information providers. Initial partners include Copart Auto Auctions, Carfax and Metro Reporting and Insurance Auto Auctions. Their applications and data will be available to carriers through the program. The program was created following the recent launch of SceneConnect, which connects multiple outside systems to carrier systems through a single Web service, the company says. Under the SceneConnect Partner Program, SGI creates and maintains a link between the partner's application and SceneConnect. SceneConnect makes all the data available from the partner's application to the carrier's internal systems. Electronically integrating that information can help insurers adjust claims more accurately and promptly. Partners have to maintain one link with SGI instead of separate links for different customers. That helps them extend their services and increase the volume of electronic transactions, says Ian Cunningham, SGI CEO. SceneConnect also gives carriers a single environment to develop, deploy and manage their connections to information providers. Initial partners pointed to business and technology benefits.

"The cost of technical integration is a major consideration for our customers and prospects," says Eric Nesson, Carfax director of sales. "SceneConnect is an excellent opportunity for carriers to utilize new information providers such as Carfax without committing additional IT resources."

ISO TOOL STREAMLINES UNDERWRITING RISK EVALUATION

ISO, which has headquarters in Jersey City, N.J., has improved its Automobile-Property Loss Underwriting Service (A-PLUS) system by adding Claim Standardization Codes, a tool designed to eliminate the need for underwriters to review loss history reports manually. The Claim Standardization Codes allow carriers to automate and improve underwriting risk evaluation and rating. The codes are available for A-PLUS property and auto loss history reports delivered through the ISO Passport delivery platform to network-to-network and batch users.

"The Claim Standardization Codes will enable users' systems to interpret information in underwriting loss history reports more easily and apply business rules to automate underwriting business decisions," says Steven Craig, A-PLUS general manager.

The Claim Standardization Codes will eliminate the need for company systems to interrogate each field in the data stream, saving processing time and streamlining the workflow, he says. The A-PLUS system will create a claim standardization code for each claim in an applicant's or location's claim history. The codes will summarize information about claim features, such as policy type, loss type, age of claim and loss amount. ISO also offers customizable claim codes where companies can define dozens of custom loss range values and claim feature codes.

"This enhancement to A-PLUS underwriting loss history reports is part of our ongoing initiative to help carriers better evaluate and rate risks," Craig says.

The claim standardization codes can combine the accuracy of manual claim review with increased uniformity in policy decision making, greater compliance with company underwriting guidelines and increased efficiency, says Craig.

XAWARE ALIGNS SOA WITH NEW ACORD STANDARDS

Xaware Inc., a Colorado Springs, Colo.-based enterprise software company specializing in service-oriented architecture (SOA), is offering reusable business service Xcelerators created to support the ACORD (Association for Cooperative Operations Research and Development) standards. The services increase efficiency and agility, and are applicable for key aspects and processes of the insurance industry, says Steve Horneman, product and marketing manager for XAware.

"Since there is no code to maintain in these collections of business services, maintenance costs are substantially lower than SOA built with traditional tools and reuse is immediate," Horneman says.

By examining common actions of insurance companies through client engagement and industry involvement, XAware has created business service Xcelerators that cater to the needs of each discrete insurance business function through SOA. XAware then took the common actions and united them with ACORD's new Standards Framework and common messages, providing an SOA solution.

KODAK SCAN STATION 100 WITH DOCUBASE INFOSUITE

Docubase Systems Inc., Clearwater, Fla., is supporting the Kodak Scan Station 100 for use with the Docubase Information Suite. The device will improve capture capabilities at the departmental level for authorized users who want to scan documents, use the shared device and store the documents in a Docubase Digital Warehouse, the vendor says. Mike Mansperger, Docubase general manager, says that the Kodak equipment will help corporations use a network-shared device to capture paper documents with a single investment in hardware.

"By adding support of this device to the Docubase InfoSuite," he says, "We have paved the way for departmental users at all levels to add information to their corporate repository in a simplified manner, making it possible to further increase operational efficiencies which will have a more positive impact on their business process improvement initiatives."

ADEPTIA UNVEILS DATA MAPPING PRODUCT

Chicago-based Adeptia Inc. introduced the Data Transformation Server, software that combines data transport with metadata management and data transformation. The product is designed for use in a collaborative environment by business analysts and developers. The product consists of three components. A Web-based "Design Studio" provides wizard-driven, graphical ability to document data rules as they relate to validations, mapping and edits.

Multiple users with varying rights and permissions can log in to work together on mapping objects. The second component, the "Central Repository," is where all the rules and mapping objects are saved.

The third component is the "Run-time Execution Engine," where the mapping rules and data flow transactions are executed on incoming data files and messages.

Detailed logs are maintained and audit trails are available to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements like Sarbanes-Oxley. The product is standards-based and it leverages service-oriented architecture (SOA) and process-based approach to create flexible and loosely coupled data flows that suit any aggregation or data warehousing solutions, according to the company, and is suited for an Extract, Transform and Load scenario.

QSTAR TECHNOLOGIES OFFERS HSM-LITE FOR SMALL- AND MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESSES

QStar Technologies Inc., Mary Esther, Fla., a supplier of compliance, archiving and data protection software, announced the availability of QStar HSM-Lite, an archive management software designed for the archive and regulatory needs of small- and medium-sized businesses that are required to meet industry compliance. HSM-Lite is designed to help small businesses manage large pools of data through a seamless tiered storage management structure, supporting disk, tape and optical.

QStar HSM is designed to use high-speed storage devices, such as disk arrays, as a cache and move data automatically to less expensive, slower removable storage devices, such as optical discs and magnetic tape drives. While it would be ideal to have all data available on high-speed devices all the time, that is prohibitively expensive for many organizations. Instead, HSM manages the enterprise's data on slower devices, and then copies data to faster disk drives when needed.