

REPORT by Jacqui Griffiths

ONE-STOP SHOP FOR LONDON INSURERS

INDUSTRY LEADERS JOIN MICROSOFT IN INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIP



THE LONDON MARKET NETWORK OFFERS PRE-INTEGRATED SOLUTIONS FOR INSURERS

Leading technology suppliers have joined forces to launch a 'one-stop shop' providing integrated solutions for insurers in the London Market. Sequel Business Solutions, Moore Stephens, CIBER, Finsbury Solutions, K2 and Autonomy Meridio have joined forces with Microsoft to launch the London Market Network, after recognising that many insurance companies were solving the same problems using similar approaches and technologies.

Launched in late February 2008, the network brings together complementary solutions that have been pre-integrated to address business and technology challenges in the London Market. Insurers can choose the solutions they need in the knowledge that the combination of technologies, and any future updates to it, will work together efficiently.

"Most companies have a number of projects on the go at any one time, that align to a multi-year IT strategy" said Bruce McKee, insurance business development manager at Microsoft UK. "They will also be planning work for the next six to twelve months, and in many cases will have legacy systems that cannot or will not be upgraded in the first phase of a refresh. For many, updating all infrastructure at once is simply unfeasible, however the business requirements constantly change due to external factors such as competition or regulation."

Technology that is inflexible, complicated and difficult to support can hamper companies' competitive situation and ability to innovate, but the impact of upgrading one system can ripple through the business. "The trouble is that there are so many touch points for applications and business process that by upgrading one system you find dependencies elsewhere

in the infrastructure that need to be upgraded," said McKee.

The companies in the London Market Network all have solutions based on Microsoft technologies, and forming a partnership that combined these with insurance industry expertise was a logical step. "For the types of businesses in financial services, and specifically in the London Market, the concept of providing pre-integrated solutions made perfect sense," said Jeremy Wood, director and co-founder of Finsbury Solutions, which brings its spreadsheet management and compliance expertise to the network.

"The London Market is the biggest insurance centre globally," said Paul Latache, consulting director at Moore Stephens. "There was a need for a group that focused on London, rather than the global insurance initiatives there have been before. As a performance management specialist in the insurance

industry, with a vast knowledge of the London Market, Moore Stephens can advise companies on how to get the best out of their business, and then use the pre-integrated solutions to help deliver those benefits."

"Organisations can save a lot of time and money on implementation and support, while the ongoing relationships between the London Market Network partners help to minimise the risk of integration or compatibility issues in the future," said Wood. "There's been a lot of interest over the past few months, and since the launch we've started to see real demand."

- www.meridio.com
- www.ciber.com
- www.finsburysolutions.com
- www.k2.com
- www.bintelligent.co.uk
- www.sequel.com

FLEXIBLE AND PRE-INTEGRATED

The London Market Network partners bring together key areas of expertise, enabling insurers to take what they need:

- Autonomy Meridio - records management solutions
- CIBER - Microsoft Dynamics CRM, SharePoint and K2 workflow
- Finsbury Solutions - spreadsheet management and compliance
- K2 - workflow and business process solutions
- Moore Stephens - business performance management
- Sequel Business Solutions - broking, underwriting and accounting solutions
- Microsoft - Insurance Value Chain focusing on developing standards-based solutions to integrate systems.

All the partners build their solutions on Microsoft technology, including .NET, Windows Server 2003, SQL Server 2005 and SharePoint Server 2007.

"When brokers and underwriters look to renew elements of their infrastructure, these are strong solutions, and we have spent time working to prove integration between them. This reduces risk for the clients," said McKee. "Organisations don't have to implement all the technologies we're offering, but by using a pre-integrated solution, they build flexibility into their architecture for future projects."

"For example, a project might involve deploying a collaboration and workflow tool, for which CIBER could implement a solution based on SharePoint and K2. The customer may not want to look at other parts of their infrastructure at that point, but once the workflow infrastructure is in place, it becomes easier to integrate other solutions such as underwriting or broking solutions from Sequel Business Solutions, business intelligence from Moore Stephens, records management from Meridio or spreadsheet compliance from Finsbury Solutions."

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