ELECTRONIC SOLUTIONS

A centralised filing system with a difference

Glenn Lawson ... 'CoreArchive module allows any authorised user to extract documents real-time.'

A centralised filing system where nothing can get lost or misplaced once inserted on the file is now a reality for Core Freight Systems customers.

For organisations using the CoreFreight software, the CoreArchive module allows any authorised user to extract documents real-time, review them on the screen, e-mail them direct to a client or, as a last resort, print them to his local printer. These documents can be used during the actual processing of a file and to provide a historical record for future reference, if required.

"The electronic document file is created as the operator first registers a primary file on the CoreFreight application," explains Glenn Lawson, head of client services at Core Freight Systems.

"The document file structure, including sophisticated search and retrieval criteria, is created automatically in CoreArchive. Relevant CoreFreight generated documents (for example a bill of entry or client invoice) are immediately inserted on the file as they are produced in CoreFreight during the processing of a file in the normal course of events, without any further user intervention.

"E-mail correspondence, including attachments, standard Excel and Word documents, scanned images and the like are also easily filed by the users by simply e-mailing them to a given address, with the CoreFreight file number as a standard reference. This provides the ability to duplicate the traditional hard-copy file in its entirety, but with none of the restrictions associated with the physical storage of data. For example, spreadsheets containing supplier invoice data can be saved electronically on the file and are simply extracted when appropriate for easy data import into CoreFreight, without the need to recapture the data." While the idea of document imaging is not new, the integration of the CoreArchive functionality into the CoreFreight application presents some distinct advantages to agents, in Lawson's view. "Not least of these is that their users operate in a single application environment.

"This is not 'pie in the sky' or 'vapour-ware', it is in production usage. While the reality of a 'paperless office' may be some way off, the CoreArchive functionality provides a practical initiative for forward-thinking operators," says Lawson.

He believes freight forwarding and customs clearing agents need software that goes beyond simply the production of hard-copy documentation or EDI messages, in the case of communication with Sars. "Agents make a big investment in the recording and processing of data and it makes sense to leverage this effort to improve both internal efficiencies and client communications."

The electronic filing solution is one example of the functionality available within the CoreFreight application, "which moves its users beyond the ordinary in terms of electronic solutions," says Lawson.