



IT – quo vadis?

by Jonathan Sims CA(SA), Core Freight Systems (Pty) Limited



“ . . . the information age continues changing the way the world operates for ordinary people . . . ”

For many of us the start of a new calendar year provides the impetus for examining the status quo and planning change. Within this context I find it interesting to consider the environment within which we live, at the start of 2011. There are obviously an infinite number of views on what our world presents to us as individuals or as we fulfil our role in business. However, I am fascinated by a number of comments I jotted down during a presentation I attended last year, and which I found pertinent in reviewing my understanding of the current world. These comments included:

- China will soon become the country with the largest English speaking population in the world
- One out of eight marriages in the United States last year was between couples who met online, over the internet
- Facebook has over 500 million members, which means that if it were a country it would be the third largest in the world, after China and India
- The number of text messages sent each day exceed the total population of the world
- Google processes 88 billion searches a month, between 15 and 20 queries for each member of the human race
- The top 10 in-demand jobs in 2010 did not exist in 2004

I do not know exactly how the above were derived but they do provide some food for thought. All the observations given are a function of technology evolution, but clearly the impact is not restricted to a bunch of “techno-geeks” – the information age continues changing the way the world operates for ordinary people. Technology is being woven into the very fabric of society as it develops and, although some of us may not describe ourselves as “technical”, our lives are irrevocably changed by it. Although we may personally resist setting up our page on Facebook, using our cellphone as a TV or Twittering our daily musings for the benefit of the world I believe that we would be remiss in ignoring technology as we review our options for the year ahead, particularly with regard to any responsibility we may have from a business perspective.

Given this, some common generalisations regarding technology are worth repeating:

- Technology will continue to evolve at an increasing rate
- This evolution in technology provides the opportunity to do new things and/or to do old things in different ways
- The relative cost to functionality ratio provided by technology is going to continue to decrease
- Competitors will take advantage of opportunities through technology to provide better service, differentiate their offerings and grow their businesses.

If these are only partially true it takes a brave individual who ignores the impact of technology in evaluating the appropriate action to be taken to remain relevant in the year ahead, whether personally in the fulfilment of their obligations within an organisation. This is as true in the supply chain world as it is in the realm of every other aspect of information technology hardware and software. ♦

Validity of roadworthy certificate

Please note that the validity of roadworthy certificates was changed with effect from 25 November 2010 from six months to 21 days. Some members have already faced situations where licence renewals were refused due to the roadworthy being older than 21 days.

The Road Freight Association (RFA) has engaged the Minister of Transport directly on this issue (as the regulation was proclaimed on 25 November 2010). The RFA feels that due consideration and consultation was not followed and, as such, has requested that the regulation be urgently amended back to its original wording regarding the six month validity period for freight vehicles above 3 500 kg.