



Update from Intersect Systems

Software Systems for Records Management

Arlington, Texas

Winter 2015

Cloud Services and Safe Harbor

The question of using Cloud resources for a records database, where an organization's data may reside in another state, or even in another country, in a different legal jurisdiction, is one of concern to records professionals. On Oct. 6, a new dimension was added to this when the Court of Justice of the European Union struck down "Safe Harbor," an international legal arrangement concerning privacy of business and personal data that moves "across the Atlantic" between the U.S. and E.U. member nations, a decision the Court attributed to disclosures over the past two years by Edward Snowden, described as demonstrating a "massive overreach" by U.S. authorities in the areas of data access and privacy rights. Subsequently, Brad Smith, President and Chief Legal Officer of Microsoft, underscored this and related concerns, pointing out in a recent blog post that privacy rights are not meaningful if they change every time that data moves from one jurisdiction to another, and observing that new laws adapted to a new technological world of portable devices and cloud resources are needed. Cloud computing is important to Microsoft, which is engaged in a legal battle with the U.S. Government over access to data stored on Microsoft Cloud servers in Ireland. See <http://fortune.com/tag/>

Update — Software Source Code Escrow

Almost twenty years ago, Intersect Systems first arranged for software source code escrow of Intersect's records management system with an area city as beneficiary. Source code escrow is an arrangement that, in the event of a business failure, a merger, or discontinuance of a software product, would insure the availability of the software source code to the beneficiary, allowing the beneficiary the means to continue to maintain and update the software. Software source code escrow is not commonly available for most software applications, and is usually applicable only to mission-critical applications. A software specialist with appropriate experience, either an employee or an outside contractor, would be able to maintain and even do custom updates to the specific software in the event that it became necessary.

Recently, the bankruptcy of Kodak,[®] at the time a supplier of hardware and software systems for records management applications, brought the issue of insuring the continuity of software for critical or essential applications back into focus, and underscored the fact that this issue is not one limited to small companies. Other recent examples of companies licensing software applications that have abandoned products, or gone out of business, have generated more interest in software source code escrow as a means of protecting an investment in software and insuring continuity of related operations.

Intersect Systems offers customers the option of software source code escrow for that customer's licensed Intersect RCAMS and RSM applications for records management, on completion by the customer of an Escrow Beneficiary Agreement. The customer must participate in the Annual Support Program (ASP) to insure access to the current supported version. There is no additional charge to the customer for the escrow arrangement. If you have questions or would like additional information, please contact Intersect at intersect@newintel.com or at (972) 641-7747 or (972) 641-4445.

Windows 10 Compatibility for Intersect Software Applications

As our customers may know, Microsoft[®] has announced "end of life" for consumer versions of Windows 7,[®] meaning that although support for consumer versions of Windows 7 will continue, it has been discontinued and is no longer available from Microsoft. Windows 7 Professional and Enterprise versions were not included in the announcement; however, it is generally anticipated that a similar announcement will follow for these versions in the near future now that Windows 10 has been released.

Windows 8.1 has had very limited acceptance in the commercial world, achieving only about a 10% penetration in business Windows installations since its introduction, according to a recent survey. In view of Microsoft's misstep with Windows 8.0 / 8.1 and the very limited acceptance of 8.1 with our customers, Intersect delayed release of our new version of our Retention Schedule Manager (RSM) and Records Control and Management System (RCAMS) records management applications suite to insure compatibility with Windows 10. In early January Intersect will begin scheduling updates with our users to the new 2016 version of RSM and RCAMS. The Intersect records management applications, as well as Intersect's new MSI installer, are compatible with Windows versions XP, 7, 8.1, and 10. Intersect will schedule customer installation updates as is convenient with our users' schedules.

One interesting comment concerns the familiar RSM and RCAMS user interface, which is oriented around screens organized by specific functions, as opposed to fewer screens with numerous menu dropdown lists. The new Microsoft development platforms include a ribbon option, as will be familiar to Word and Excel users. Intersect conducted an informal survey of some of our customers, primarily those with numerous RCAMS Accession stations, to ask about the ribbon option for the new implementation of RSM and RCAMS. The response was universally to stay with the current interface. One typical comment: "Please, please don't change the user interface. Retraining all of our users of RCAMS Accession, many of whom aren't experienced with using and customizing the ribbon, would be a major hassle."

New Free Publication Available From Intersect

Recently, Intersect published a new information guide titled "Twelve Things Every Texas Local Government Should Know About Managing Records." The publication was initially intended to help new users of Intersect records management applications, many of whom are new to records management, gain an initial overview of records management practices for Texas Local Governments. The publication has the additional goal of emphasizing the need for close cooperation between records managers and IT personnel in addressing technology-related issues. A focus related to technology and IT departments is on long-term records maintenance, and avoiding problems by anticipating and planning for future transitions and conversions that become necessary with the inevitable obsolescence of existing applications, operating systems, and network and storage infrastructures.

We were somewhat surprised when several existing, long-term Intersect customers asked for quantities of the new information guide, citing their continuing need to train individuals such as new employees, new department heads, and new administrators joining their Local Government in some of the basics of records management.

As a result, Intersect has printed an additional quantity of the guide, to be provided without charge to our users, and to anyone interested in records management and related areas. Distribution of this issue of Update includes a sample of the Guide. For additional copies, please e-mail us at intersect@newintel.com with your request and your mailing address.

The Guide is currently oriented to the Texas Local Government Records Act of 2009, but the basic principals of records management, as well as the technology-related sections, are generally applicable to other states as well.

Intersect is planning a second, more generic version of the Guide, suitable for our customers and interested individuals in other states, to be available this Fall.

OCR Scanning and Indexing, Tab and Template-assisted Indexing, and now Speech-to-Text Indexing...

Intersect will release an update to the RCAMS OCR module in December, which features a new point-and-click user-configurable OCR template and related index field selection options for one-pass scanning and indexing into an image database.

Coming in January 2016 is a new Speech-to-Text indexing option, allowing speech inputs for document fields containing handwritten information, or speech-assisted text inputs for standardization of variations in entries in existing text fields. Direct speech-to-text inputs as well as speech-to-text driven lookups, are supported. Speech recognition systems have improved remarkably in the past few years, and Intersect has been using the text-to-speech process extensively for several in-house projects for the past year with very good success.

If your organization might have a need for possible Speech-to-Text data entry in an application of RCAMS, please contact Intersect Systems at intersect@newintel.com, or call us at (972) 641-7747 for additional information.

M-DISC™ — New Alternative to Standard DVD's?

Intersect is testing the new M-DISCs as an option for backing up certain data where extended retention is required. For instance, Local Governments are required to retain accessible lists of records that have been destroyed, including record series number, title, and dates, as well as the date and method of destruction. The destroyed lists maintained in an RCAMS database can become quite large over the years, and an option allows these to be printed for archiving, clearing the corresponding server-based file. The next release of RCAMS will include an option to print the list, and also save a copy as a CSV file or an HTML file to an external M-DISC drive, allowing the file to be opened for later searches in Excel or in a web browser if necessary.

Why an M-DISC? Recordable CD's and DVDs burn data into an organic dye layer, which start to degrade as soon as they are written, a condition called "digital decay". The National Archives warns that the *reliable* shelf life of a standard recordable DVD is somewhere between 2 and 5 years. The M-DISC contains no organic dyes; the patents protecting the M-DISC technology assert that the data layer is a "glassy carbon" that is substantially inert to oxidation, with a melting point between 200°-1000 °C. Testing by the U.S. Department of Defense demonstrated superiority to archival optical discs in resistance to extreme conditions of light, temperature, and humidity. Available in DVD format with a 4.7 GB capacity, and in Blu-Ray format with a 25 GB capacity, the discs are read-compatible with standard DVD and Blu-Ray drives, but require an M-DISC ready drive to write DVD's. Once an M-DISC is written and closed, the disc cannot be overwritten or erased, and is extremely resistance to corruption by natural processes.

Digital Decay and Digital Asset Preservation

Intersect's PowerPoint presentation CD, "Digital Decay and Digital Asset Preservation," has been revised and published as a new edition on CD, and is available free to our customers. E-mail us (with your mailing address) for a copy at intersect@newintel.com, or call Intersect at (972) 641-7747 and ask for the new edition of the "Digital Decay" CD.

Intersect's Update newsletter is published periodically for users of Intersect records management systems with news, announcements, and update notices as appropriate. The Intersection is published periodically with more comprehensive articles on topics related to records and document management, as well as features of general interest on selected users of Intersect's records management systems.

Contact Intersect by e-mail at intersect@newintel.com. Visit our web site at www.intersectsistemas.com

Microsoft and Windows are trademarks, or registered trademarks, of Microsoft Corp.

Copyright © 2015 Intersect Systems Inc.