

TECHNOLOGY UPDATE - DATA MANAGEMENT

Welcome to the latest technology update. This edition discusses DATA – and how to manage it. It might be getting data in and out of your systems, so as to minimise any re-keying, or just getting it in a format that your business requires for reporting purposes. Or maybe you need to change your underlying data structures or configuration due to changes in your business. This edition outlines

- **System Operability – what is it?**
- **How you can potentially streamline the Management of Data and its flows in and out of your systems**
- **What can you do in COINS? – What standard routines are available to import data into your COINS system.**
- **Connecting to your supply chain -The COINS eCommerce processes currently available**
- **Managing your COINS database – do you need to change or manipulate your current COINS based data is it out of date for your business needs?**

We hope you find this technology update both interesting and informative.

SYSTEM INTEROPERABILITY

The interoperability of software and systems is an important part of today's business world. The term interoperability is used to describe the capability of different programs to exchange data via a common set of exchange formats, to read and write the same file formats, and to use the same protocols. In an ideal world when systems are truly operating in a fully interoperable manner there exists the capability to communicate, execute programs, or transfer data among various functional units in a manner that requires the user to have little or no knowledge of the unique characteristics of those units.

The re-keying nightmare!

The re-handling or keying in of data that has already entered into another system is a major area of inefficiency in all areas of business today. The drive for interactive systems and interoperability, or at least the ability to import and export data, is an ever-more growing requirement so that businesses can achieve greater process efficiencies.

COINS –Importing and exporting data

The development of COINS OA has seen the development of WEBSERVICES. Essentially webservices provide a method by which two systems can talk to each other and for these systems to be able to transfer data based on criteria held in the webservice and thus ensure the systems are in sync at the desired touch points.

Whilst the scenario outlined above, of seamless integration, is the ideal world the importing / exporting of data from systems is often a manual task using programs and routines available in the software, COINS is no different to this. There are many basic import routines readily available within COINS that could help you reduce the time and effort to update your COINS system from third party sources. Whether it is for a one off data migration exercise or the regular importing of data from other systems, such as timesheets into Payroll, these import routines could help you to achieve greater efficiencies in your day to day operations.

Exporting data from COINS

Getting data out of COINS is relatively straightforward. Most standard reports can be exported to excel / pdf if the system is set up correctly. The use of COINS OA Reporting or configurable reports will allow you to create your own reports. If you have the in-house capability to write the reports this will then enable you to access the data you require. COINS OA provides a very straightforward way of exporting data by using the "excel" button that is on most of the standard enquiry screens. You can also export data quite easily from COINSplus by using the "[Esc]+P" operation that was outlined in our previous technology update "COINS-Quick Hints and tips".

IMPORTING DATA

As has been outlined above, getting data into COINS is a lot more difficult than getting data out. That said there are standard import routines or techniques available in COINS plus and COINS OA that make the entering or importing of certain data a straightforward process. As long as you obtain the correct file formats and

adhere to these then getting data into COINS on a regular basis ie for Payroll timesheets, could provide you with significant processing efficiencies. The following table outlines some of the standard routines that are available in COINSplus to import data into COINS.

Data Import Routine	When to be used / Notes on use
Central Repository Head offices –	If you want to import Head office company information (eg: suppliers or subcontractors) companies from another system to update your COINS system. (NB: This will only load head office details)
Unpaid Purchase Ledger Items	Unpaid Invoice can be imported from third party system
Subcontracts	Subcontract details can be imported from a third party systems
Subcontract Balances	Subcontract balances can be loaded when setting up new subcontracts in COINS that existed in a third party system
Unpaid Subcontract Certificates	Unpaid subcontract certificates can be imported that have been created in a third party system
Unpaid Sundry Sales Invoices	Unpaid sundry sales invoices can be imported from third party systems
Unpaid Contract Sales Invoices	Unpaid sundry sales invoices can be imported from third party systems
Contract Sales Balances	Unpaid sundry sales invoices can be imported from third party systems
Employee Data	Employee data can be imported into Payroll in order to set up new employee for example to be used when merging employees from a company takeover
Contract/General Ledger Journals	Journals can be loaded from excel based files to automatically create the journal details in COINS
Commodity Items / Codes	Import new commodity codes in COINS – note you have to enter the Company specific Cost Code mapping manually
Fixed Assets	Create new Assets by importing all Asset details into the Fixed Assets register of COINS
Payroll Timesheets	Import weekly paid timesheet into Payroll from an excel based file

IMPORTING DATA USING COINS OA

COINS OA has more flexible import routines than COINSplus often using the “bulk” update functionality that is on many enquiry screens. You still need to get the data in the correct format for importing but the process is usually pretty straightforward.

Here are just some of the areas where you can import data into COINS OA. This is purely to provide you with an idea as to what you can do and is by no means exhaustive. If there is a particular data set that you want to import into COINS then please contact COINS for more details on import routines or perhaps we might be able to help you.

The list is split into 2 areas:

The first shows examples of those data loads that are for System Data, used to transfer core system data from a TEST system into the LIVE system when implementing new areas of COINS.

The Second is for Operational based data, where routines can be used to load data on a day by day basis to speed up their processes.

COINS System Data	Operational data imports
User Group menu structures	JC Timesheets
Document definition formats	Payroll Timesheets
User Group Function Security settings	FM Jobs
Report definition formats	Contract Budgets
Commodities codes / items	PO Budgets
Contract Standard Cost Heads	HR- Personnel data
Procurement Standard Clauses	Commercials – CVR data
	CIS verification data (HMRC link)

Please Note:

It is important to note that all COINS standard routines are run by the client at their own risk. Very few of the standard COINS programs come with any recovery option included and as such once the data has been loaded there is no reversing of the data load process. It is important therefore that thorough testing of the data loads is undertaken in a TEST Environment. When preparing to use the data import routines the client is expected to extract, reconcile, format, and place the data exactly into the relevant file formats according to coins instruction and initiate the programs manually.

COINS eCommerce

The COINS eCommerce solutions provide you with the opportunity to achieve complete interoperability with your supply chain. The efficiencies that can be gained by implementing the COINS eCommerce processes can be substantial. In today's "electronic age" all companies should at least be adopting an eInvoicing strategy. There should be no technical barriers that should

stop businesses implementing the eCommerce solutions as the COINS eCommerce solution have been in use for over 8 years so the technology is robust and the processes defined. There are various eTrading HUB in place that can provide quick links to suppliers thus speeding up the ROI of any such project.

The COINS eCommerce processes covers all aspects of the Procure top Pay Process including:

eCommerce Process	When to be used / Notes
eOrders - Punchout	To be used to create electronic order form web based catalogues. Ideal for simple commodity type products eg: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
eOpen Orders	To be used on a call off type order where staff visit supplier branches and or call direct to order goods from site. This provide complete transparency of this process and empowers site to order regular small items whilst providing control back at the centre
eGRN	Receive eGRN "tickets" from suppliers direct into COINS Procurement system and auto GRN the delivered goods
eInvoices	Receive eInvoices from Suppliers and have them auto registered into the Purchase Ledger. The eInvoices can then be auto-matched to the eOrders thus creating improved efficiencies in your back office

BESPOKE INTEGRATION ROUTINES

Following demand in connection with ongoing projects from various clients, Build IT Consulting and our partner companies have developed a number of COINS based bespoke data integration routines that can be run as one off routines or can be set up and

scheduled to run automatically in the background so as to appear invisible to the end users. The following table outlines some of the data sets that have been loaded into COINS using bespoke data integration routines.

Data to be imported	Areas of use
Suppliers	Importing of head and branch offices and all related data held within the Central Repository
Customers	Importing of head and branch offices and all related data held within the Central Repository
Subcontractors	Importing of head and branch offices and all related data held within the Central Repository
Subcontractor CIS	All Subcontractor CIS based data
Subcontractor Insurance	All Subcontractor insurance data
Buyer Views	Creation of the Buyer views of the suppliers and subcontractors by kCo
Subcontract Purchase orders	The creation of subcontract orders in the procurement module
Material Purchase orders	The creation of material orders in the procurement module
Purchase Ledger history	Importing of full or partial (summarised) PL history of suppliers
Sales Ledger history	Importing of full or partial (summarised) Sales Ledger history
Contracts	Importing of Contract data to create new Contracts in COINS – including the creation of WBS codes and then the updating of these as an on-going process
Projects	Importing of Project data to create new projects in COINS
Contract Costs	Importing of Contract Costs in detail or as balances
Contract Revenue	Importing of Contract Revenues in detail or as balances
Fixed Assets	Importing Fixed Assets and all relevant data behind the asset
Employees (Payroll)	Importing employee records into Payroll including all Pay Item set ups and history
Cashbook	Importing Cash book items to automatically create entries in the Cash Book
Pay Items	Payroll Pay Items can be imported to automatically create Pay items in COINS
All captions	The importing of data to fill captions

All of the above routines have been used on COINS systems and are available to clients. Build IT will fully support any data load including extraction, reconciliation, formatting, and placing the data, as well as automatic initiation.

OTHER DATA SERVICES

Whilst integration of data from third party systems, using the routines outlined in this document, can help the data to day operational activities within your business, there may be a need to look at more fundamental data management services.

You might want to ask yourself these questions:

- **Is your Central Repository full of redundant data**
- **Does your Central Repository have duplicate entries**
- **Has the structure of your business changed since you first implemented COINS**
- **Would the merging or splitting of your current COINS Companies (kCo's) into other COINS Companies provide you with better control and transparency of your current business structure**
- **Would you benefit from recoding your COINS system whether it be your core GL structure or your cost coding and commodity codes**
- **Would the restructuring of your contracts help you run your business better and thus provide you with the visibility of operational performance**

Many COINS user companies have asked these questions and then benefited both operationally and technically (as COINS will usually run more efficiently following the data projects that have been undertaken) following the commissioning of a Data Management based project. We consult with our clients and then project manage the full process to ensure data consistency and reconciliation is maintained throughout.

A sample of the some of the Data projects that have been undertaken over the last 12 years for COINS users have included:

- **Central repository cleanse - full de-duplication, re-allocation of head office accounts, company merges and office moves, removal of unwanted companies**
- **Full Coins company merges**
- **Full Coins company splits**
- **Contract moves and re-allocations**
- **Cost code restructuring**
- **General Ledger code restructuring**
- **Full house keeping and archiving of redundant data**

Please note this document is purely intended to provide an overview as to the potential areas where you import or export data to and from COINS. Any functionality or routines mentioned should be checked as to their applicability to your requirements and tested in full before using in your LIVE system.

The "Other Data Services" highlighted in the document are only available through Build IT Consulting Ltd. If you wish to discuss any of these areas do not hesitate to contact us at - www.builditconsulting.co.uk