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Integration Updates across Construction

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A year from now could the term 'interoperability' be more than just hearsay for construction technology? Of course, such a notion is hard to predict, but new efforts from a few leading groups associated with the topic are giving hope for the long term.

The topic is front and center once again in construction technology thanks to the call for responses to the second annual CTI (Construction Technology Integration) Survey being conducted by JB Knowledge Technologies, www.jbknowledge.com, Bryan, Texas. The first iteration of the survey was announced during the 2012 Associated General Contractors of America IT Forum in Chicago. According to JB Knowledge, more than 400 industry professionals provided feedback to questions related to cloud-based construction software usage, mobile expectations, and application integrations.

The company says this upcoming survey hopes to draw year-to-year comparisons of trends related to cloud solution adoption within construction. Could fears of security related to the cloud conflict with builders' needs for customization, integration, mobilization, and collaboration? This is one question in particular the company hopes its survey can shed light upon.

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James Benham, president, JB Knowledge, says such surveys have a way of confirming some assumptions while also providing some surprises along the way. In particular to last year's survey, Benham says one of the trends that came as a surprise was the way in which companies were implementing technologies associated with BIM (building information modeling).

JB Knowledge heads up COSA (Construction Open Software Alliance), a grassroots interoperability group made up of various cloud and desktop-based technology companies which demonstrate integration amongst each other's software offerings using XML and JSON, among other technologies.

As Benham described to *Constructech* in the feature 'Interoperability Intrigue' in the May/June issue, "When software companies integrate with each using open standards they create tremendous value for their clients and can save money and time on implementation. We want to standardize (this practice). We view COSA as an industry group that will adopt open standards and act in the best interests of the end customer."

"WE LINKED MEP TOOLS SO HARD WORK IN THE OFFICE ISN'T LOST IN THE FIELD." **DAVID BURCZYK**
SEGMENT MANAGER - FIELD SOLUTIONS
14 YEARS IN THE INDUSTRY

Interoperability remains on the agenda for the construction industry at large thanks in part to the buzz associated with agcXML, the set of XML (extensible markup language) schemas that enable the reliable exchange of transactional data involved on a typical construction project.

With efforts being lead by Burger Consulting Group, www.burgerconsulting.com, Chicago, Ill., the group seems to be making good progress in its development and promotion of the standard. According to updates the group recently took a deep dive into some of the version one schemas for agcXML, and identified opportunities for extending and improving the schemas. With business processes being documented and existing schemas looking to go through the same workgroup process as new schemas, the agcXML group is knee-deep in working towards refining the standard.



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The group has also formed an advisory board and is working with a large group of CIOs and CTOs in construction. Both parts are very important to the progress, as Christian Burger, president, Burger Consulting, tells *Constructech*, these members have a strong interest in seeing the schemas develop.



These days there seems to be much happening on the integration front. It will be interesting to see what shakes out from both the survey as well as the group efforts by the end of the year. Stay tuned.

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