



# Softwords

A&L Computer Software Limited

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◆ The Future Is Now...

## Ministry Of Health Year 2000 Software Upgrades

Year 2000 is coming! And along with it will come changes from the Ministry Of Health affecting the way physicians submit their claims to OHIP.

Medical offices and clinics will have recently received **Bulletin 98-003** to this effect, indicating that software vendors will be complying with these changes within the next ten month period.

A&L Computer Software Limited has also recently received the Ministry Of Health's requirements regarding the new protocol (format) for the Year 2000.

Our programming and testing is now nearing its completion and will soon be available to all current subscribers of our **Annual Maintenance Contract**. DOS users with an up-to-date maintenance contract will be issued disks containing the necessary software updates, while our Windows based software users will be able to download the changes through their modem from our network.

The Ministry Of Health has specified that between April and May of this year they would be accepting non-live claims for testing. Beginning on June 1st, 1998 (by the time you receive this newsletter) they will commence the testing of live claims. This date marks the beginning of the 10-month transition period for the phasing in of the new protocol. **By the end of March, 1999 all billing software must comply to the new format.**

In addition to date format changes, Bulletin 98-003 referred to other

software changes that will be implemented at the same time.

These include:

1. The introduction of a **Technical Specification Release Identifier**.
2. The introduction of a **Location Code**.
3. Changing some specifications of the **EDT Electronic Outputs**.
4. Changing the **Facility Numbers** from numeric to alphabetic (to be assigned by the Ministry Of Health).

Beginning on June 1st, 1998 A&L Computer Software Limited will begin its own test phase by selecting a number of clients for testing. All changes will be minor, and will be transparent to the user.

As reported in the April issue of *Softwords*, and repeated here for your convenience, there are other factors having an impact on the successful operation of A&L's software on your computer. These include the nature of your operating system and the Basic Input Output System (BIOS) it uses.

Your BIOS is that part of your computer which allows it to start up. It determines the date, checks the memory and instructs the computer to allow access to all of your drives.

It is a part of your startup process regardless of whether you have a DOS or Windows operating system. Chances are that if you have a Pentium computer that was purchased since late 1996 or 1997, you should be OK. However, some of the older BIOS computers may not be capable of handling four-digit date fields.

You should contact your hardware dealer for further details.

**YEAR 2000 IS COMING!**  
*Make sure your computer system is not on shaky grounds.*



## The User's Corner

## A&L In The News

### Document Console... Patient Document Handling

### What's New At A&L

Users of A&L's document imaging software, Document Console, have several features now available for the storage and retrieval of patient records.

Once a patient master record (**chart**) has been established, all documents pertaining to that patient can be stored in **Categories** which can be defined in a way which suits your particular practice. Think of a **Category** as a 'file folder' where related documents for a particular patient can be stored.

Examples of such **Categories** might include Annual Physicals, X-rays and scans, prescriptions, laboratory reports and reports from referring physicians. The **Document Menu** shown here lists the various types of operations that can be done with patient documents.

Add New Document	Ctrl+N
Append Document	Ctrl+A
Delete Document	Ctrl+D
Create New Text Document	Ctrl+T
Create New RTF Document	
Edit Document	Ctrl+E
Save Document Changes	Ctrl+U
Cancel Document Changes	Ctrl+X
Import...	Ctrl+J
Export...	Ctrl+G
Copy to Clipboard	Ctrl+C
Paste from Clipboard	Ctrl+V
Document Info	Ctrl+I
Edit Document Info	Ctrl+W
Scan	Ctrl+S
Print	

Each document filed within a **Category** should be given a meaningful name to serve as a means for its retrieval.

Hard copy documents can be scanned into the patient's file and either **Added** to an existing **Category** or **Appended** as another page to an existing document already on file. Alternatively a new **Category** can be set up for an incoming document, if appropriate.

Documents can be **Deleted** should they no longer be required. They may also be **Imported** from other files in your computer (e.g. Excel, Microsoft Word files) and saved in the appropriate patient file. Should you wish to **Export** a patient document to another location and/or program, simply select this item from the menu of options presented.

Text documents pertaining to patients may also be **Created** from this menu and **Added** either to an existing **Category** or to a newly created one. Subsequently they may be **Edited** or **Deleted** if necessary. **Copying to** and **Pasting from Clipboard** is also possible from the Document menu.

The **Document Info** item allows you to view the **Title** and **Category** of a specific document, the date it was created and entered and who entered it. It also displays the **Number of Pages**, the **Save Format** and the **Record Location**.

If necessary, stored documents may be printed at any time using Document Console's **File** menu. They may be faxed, without printing, directly from your computer by selecting the **Fax option** from the **Select Printer** item on the **File** menu.

Patient document storage, creation and manipulation is as simple as a few clicks of the mouse using the capabilities provided by A&L Document Console.

### President Alex Yuan Recognized

In the last issue of *Softwords* you read about A&L's president, Alex Yuan, being cited as the 1998 Entrepreneur of the Year by the Association of Chinese Canadian Entrepreneurs.

As a result of this recognition and subsequent media coverage Alex was appointed as a member of the Town of Richmond Hill's Business Ambassador Team. In addition, Premier Mike Harris invited him to join the Ontario Jobs and Investment Board which Harris chairs.

A further result of the media coverage of the Entrepreneur Award was the interest of a Malaysian company in A&L's document imaging software, Document Console. This led to the subsequent signing of an agreement for the company, Titi Kembang Kaya Sdn. Bhd., to be the exclusive dealership for A&L Document Console in Malaysia and Singapore (see announcement on page 2).

This increases A&L's international presence which already includes a US distributor in California. Congratulations Alex!

### Community College Alliances

On May 7th A&L Computer Software Limited signed a strategic alliance with Seneca College in North York for the use of A&L's Windows based medical software for the training of Seneca's Medical Secretary students. Graduates from this program will be entering the job market during the fall of this year.

A similar contract was signed with Georgian College in Barrie on May 21st, and a request from a third college is currently being processed. It is anticipated that training will commence at these two colleges during the fall 1998 semester.

### \*\*\*S'port For Kids\*\*\*

All day June 13 is **Heritage Village Day in the Town of Richmond Hill** and the S'port For Kids Foundation will have an exciting booth at the event for the second year in a row.

Come and **visit our dunk tank** where Richmond Hill celebrities will be lined up to 'take a bath' in the name of raising money for this worthwhile cause.

The S'port For Kids Foundation provides a unique avenue for individuals, business and funding organizations to reach youth and to take an active role in their development and the development of their communities.

We invite all our readers and their friends to join in the festivities. Come and meet **Yvonne Toucek, Canada's Olympic gymnast**. Have her autograph a S'port For Kids poster for you. **Tee-shirts, Frisbees and fun** are all available.

# My Paperless Office - *Dr. Rose Kung*

I operate an ob/gyn practice at Women's College Hospital in Toronto. As my practice grew, the storage and retrieval of patient charts along with their associated examination documents became a burdensome task, not to mention the cost of filing cabinets, file folders and my assistant's time to access and file the relevant material for each patient's visit. Also, it was not uncommon for an occasional document to be misplaced or misfiled, resulting in additional time to locate the missing material.

Since we were already using computers in the office to handle such administrative tasks as our billing procedures I began to consider whether a computer could also be used to speed up the process of storing, accessing and archiving all data in our patient files. When discussing this with our software vendor, A&L Computer Software Limited, they informed me that they had developed a document imaging program which would allow us to scan into our computer all our hard copy documents, charts and even photographs. Once scanned, they could be accessed at any time for review, addition of further documentation or even printing, should another hard copy ever be required. Thus, we were introduced to **A&L's Document Console**.

Any changes to our procedures would need to improve the operational efficiency of our office without adverse effects on the quality of patient care. We had achieved this objective upon adopting A&L's medical billing system several years before, and because of this experience we decided to go ahead with the implementation of the new document imaging software.

It has since proven to be a good decision. Our office efficiency has improved and there have been no adverse effects on patient care. A further important benefit has been an improvement financially. For the number of patients I service I would need two large filing cabinets to store their charts and documents in the traditional manner. With the document imaging system I have no need for filing cabinets. I also save costly floor space. Likewise, there are no hanging files or file folders to purchase. The cost saving thus realized paid for the **Document Console** software.

My assistant has estimated it used to take an average of two to three minutes to locate, retrieve and re-file each patient's file for every appointment using the manual method. Bringing the information up on the computer takes just seconds. Instead of having to store hard copy documents they can easily be scanned into our database and later destroyed. With the new system this process takes my assistant about one hour each week, thus freeing up more of her time to attend to other administrative duties.

For new patients it is a simple procedure to create a new chart record. Once established, any documents pertaining to that patient can be scanned and attached to their chart. For my daily appointments there is no need for my assistant to pull any of the patients' files and stack them on my desk. During the consultation I simply pull up their file on my computer, giving me instant access to all the information from previous appointments. Notes made during the consultation can be keyed into the patient's file immediately. Likewise, any letters written to or about the patient using a word processing package can be imported electronically by **Document Console** and attached to the patient's file. Test results are scanned into the appropriate patient file, accessible for my reference or that of my assistant, nurse and hospital residents to respond to patient inquiries.

A further benefit is the capability to access patient profiles from home without having to take patient charts and documents away from the office. This avoids the risk of losing or misplacing patient information, or accidentally leaving a chart at home, a situation I am sure many physicians have experienced at one time or another. Remote access also provides the ability to respond to patient queries when we are away from the office. My assistant is able to access patient files on our office computer from home using a laptop with a modem. Security of patient information is not an issue since password protection is provided by the system. Also, different types of access capabilities can be assigned to staff at the time their passwords are established.

Another advantage the system provides is the ability to send copies of patient documents to other physicians anywhere in the world directly from my computer, as long as that physician has the capability to receive information electronically. This can be done by fax or by an e-mail attachment eliminating copying and mailing costs. In the same manner, electronic documents can be received from other sources and easily added to a patient's file in my database.

Clinics, specialists who see a patient only once or twice and new physicians can benefit in different ways from the features of this system. Clinics will find it easy to establish a standardized charting method that everyone can adhere to, thus making it easier for new doctors and locums to adjust to the characteristics of the system in a particular clinic. Physicians starting up their practice can establish and build their database from scratch in a systematic way that will provide built in efficiencies as their practice grows. Specialists have an efficient method for archiving patient files, and establishing a conveniently accessible database for research use at any time.

The convenience and time saved by using this system has been a great advantage to our office operations. It also presents an efficient way to archive inactive patient files, and in my type of practice they are in the majority. Having used this system for over three years, I would not want to return to the manual method for storing patient charts and files.

*(Rose Kung, MD., FRCSC practices Obstetrics and Gynecology at Women's College Hospital in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. She is also an Assistant Professor at the University of Toronto Medical School).*

**Don't forget to keep up to date with what's happening at A&L by visiting our web site at [www.anl.com](http://www.anl.com)**

