

Softwords

A&L Computer Software Limited

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Educate Yourself...

Web Applications 101

The latest buzz in our office (if you haven't heard already) is our new A&L Document Console web-based or ASP.NET version. Now before we get into the new and exciting changes we should probably touch on some of the basics.

One of the words used these days are 'web applications' or 'web-based' versions. Now you may be asking yourself what the big fuss is about. Hopefully you'll be able to walk away with a better understanding after reading this article.

Web applications are simply applications that are executed and run over a network. For the non-technical individuals, here's a practical example; most people are familiar with the operations of Microsoft Word, to use it you simply go to your computer and click on the icon to open up the application and edit/save/print whatever you may be doing. Now imagine opening Internet Explorer (or Firefox) and being able to do all the same things. It's that simple; open the web browser and go!

So why on earth would any company want to make a web-based product? Well here are just a few good reasons why more and more companies are:

1. A single install is good for multiple computers – The program only needs to be installed onto the main server to host the application, all the other workstations need is a web browser.
2. Easily Accessible – along the lines of the first reason, with the proper security settings you can access a web-application from any authorized computer in your office.

The process in which web-based products work is on a "Client-Server" model

or in the old days a similar process was used for 'dumb terminals'. In short simple words it means that the server machine will do all the work, meaning the workstations (or clients) will be more or less a messenger between the server machine and the client. Much like searching for something on Google, the user is required to input the search item, and then the browser will return the results. In the same way the user would login to an application and the server machine would send the necessary data over for the client to run the application on their end.

Now that you have the basics in hand you can probably start to see the "how and why" our new A&L Document Console is now web based. Not only is it web based but also packed with many new features, such as OCR, Task Administration, Digital Signing, Version History, Security Auditing, Access Control and Electronic Locking. In addition, it comes with the ability to import ANY kind of file format (image, text, audio and video), read DICOM compatible files, export to PDF (natively inside our application), integrate with Microsoft Office forms, and so much more.




For more information feel free to contact our main office to see how the A&L Document Console can make your office work for you.

Upgrading Your Computer

It's official...Microsoft has retired "public and technical support, including security updates" for Windows 98, Windows 98 Second Edition, and Windows Millennium (ME), as of July 11, 2006. The reason stated is that these products are outdated and can expose customers to security risks. This means, if you are an A&L HERO* user, at some point in the future you may not be able to communicate to the HTN network with these operating systems. As time moves along, Microsoft will continue to upgrade their current software. Many, if not all, updates are due to security concerns that help prevent unauthorized access to your computer. As a company that sends and receives files from different forms of communication, we are obligated to ensure security is a top priority to ALL A&L clients. As such, our operating systems are updated regularly as Microsoft makes them available.

Operating Systems such as Windows 98, Windows 98 Second Edition and Windows Millennium (ME) are in a precarious situation. When Microsoft provides updates to current operating systems, they provide a general overview of the update; however, it does not indicate any warnings or possible problems until it actually occurs to administrators, analysts, and users. Subsequent updates, at times, have prevented new installations / re-installs to the three aforementioned operating systems. Meaning if you have to reload for ANY reason, you will NOT be able to connect to the server. Support for even older operating systems such as Windows 95 and NT have already been removed.


If you have Windows 98, Windows 98 Second Edition, or Windows ME, it's time to upgrade your computer and operating system to Windows XP Home or Professional (32-bit). The most recent release of Windows XP (64-bit) should be avoided. Hardware manufacturers are still catching up to the new technology, meaning many drivers for attachments, otherwise known as peripherals may not work. A similar issue occurred during the initial release of Microsoft Windows XP. Information regarding the end of support for Microsoft Windows 98, Windows 98 Second Edition and Windows ME (Millennium) can be found at the web link, <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/support/endofsupport.msp>. 

Technology change within MOHTLC

Computer technology continues to change the face of the world at a wondrous pace. To stay abreast, A&L is monitoring the advancements of all technology, continuing to adapt within the environment. What you use today may not be what you will be using tomorrow. Although some changes happen slowly within MOHTLC, other departments are moving along very quickly.

One of the more recent announcements from the Ministry states they will no longer accept 3.5" double (low) density IBM or Mac diskettes for claim submissions or provide the


remittance advice on double (low) density diskettes. As long as you are using high density disks you are still fine. MOHTLC is encouraging the use of EDT (sending and receiving files electronically).

A&L may have information, knowledge and programs that can help you adapt to changing working conditions. Many offices are using the A&L programs for the simple task of patient registration and billing only. If you have questions concerning your application and how it's being used within your office or if you want to know if your program is capable of performing certain tasks, please feel free to contact us. 

Fee Schedule Update

As you may already know, A&L has recently forwarded the latest Schedule of Benefits for Physician Services update from MOHTLC to be updated on the A&L software programs. Please note that in many cases, it does not include definitions of new service codes. The electronic file submitted to MOHTLC contains the fee code and dollar amounts only as the definition is not required for payment. The update from MOHTLC also does not include the changes to premium percentages and most service codes regarding CCM (Comprehensive Care Model), FHG (Family Health Group), FHN (Family Health Network), FHT (Family Health Teams), and AFP (Alternate Funding Plan) models.

MOHTLC releases bulletins pertaining to your practice. For those that are participating in one of the aforementioned Primary Care groups, you may have to enter some of the new service or tracking codes or update premiums and percentage increase on your own. Please remember that if it's not physician wide, it will not be included as part of the electronic fee updates. You will also note that none of the 'Q' codes for CCM, FHG, FHN, FHT or AFP are listed in the 2006 Schedule of Benefits from the Ministry of Health.

Claim submissions going to the Ministry of Health do not have descriptions on the service code, so if a service code does not have a description or says "@Added via update process", it will not affect the claim in any way. However, if you want to alter or enter the description, you are more than welcome to do so. 



Update Regularly

Users Corner

New Explanatory Codes

HM: Invalid number used on date of service

MOHLTC has redefined and released new facility numbers, Hospital and facility numbers are now referred to as Master Number. If you are using an old facility number, MOHLTC will pay the claim, but with an explanatory code of "HM". Please call your hospital, facility, or MOHLTC to get the new number.

New Error Codes

EP4: Enrolment restriction applied A Q200A code submitted for a patient who has attempted to enrol with another family physician before six weeks has passed or attempted to enrol with more than two physicians in the same year.

EP1: Enrolment transaction not allowed A Q200A code submitted for a patient with an incorrect version code, or who is either enrolled with another physician with the same effective date, or for a patient enrolled prior to March 30th, 2005 or for a patient who should contact their local MOHLTC office regarding their eligibility.

Medical Billing Tips

With all the wonderful types of billing and payments within the healthcare system, you will need to keep an eye on this one.

Defaults that occur in your billing are wonderful. Bill a patient and have the computer remember what you billed, and the type of billing you did the last time, but can it be too convenient? There maybe slight problems for those of you who bill for services at the hospital and office, which tend to be overlooked.

If you are using A&L HERO*, if you bill a hospital patient, the program will remember which hospital/facility/master number the patient was seen and the 'admit' date. This is great if you are billing a hospital claim again. However, if you are seeing the patient in your office, you need to remove all signs of the hospital type billing. Why? Many service code and procedures for hospital and office are the same. But if you also bill for services at your office that can be identified as technical or professional components, the hospital will get credit under their global budget. Why? You had a hospital/facility/master number in the field. As for the A&L Medical Systems program, it all depends on the service code. If an office visit is billed, A&L Medical Systems will not automatically fill in the hospital number.



Primary Care

It has come to our attention that MOHLTC has issued some new rejection / explanatory codes. Some are specifically for the FHG, FHT, and CCM model. Others refer to the new hospital / nursing home facility numbers, which are now called "Master Number" by MOHLTC. However, let's deal with the FHG, FHT, and CCM's first.

The two main rejection errors occurring are 55/57 and I6. The 55 and 57 codes are technically not rejections but fall into the explanatory codes and is defined as 'A deduction on an earlier account' and 'An adjustment to an earlier account' respectively. The explanatory code 55 is simply MOHLTC taking money back for what they already paid you, usually the wrong amount. The 57 is to pay you the new higher amount that you should have received in the first place. Why does this happen? Two reasons:

1. The first can be due to MOHLTC and the OMA ratifying a new contract after the fiscal year, April 1, has already past and MOHLTC has already paid the old amount. Once the new increases have been implemented, MOHLTC will remove the original money paid and pay the new amount.
2. The second is to do with the rostering of patients for FHG, FHT and CCMs. At the time billing is completed and sent, MOHLTC may not have processed the patient rostering form. If you've billed an after hours premium along with the procedure, you might get an error code of "I6" (not globally funded or not found to be rostered) for the premium while they pay the normal fee-for-service amount. Once the patient is found to be rostered, they may implement the 55 and 57 explanatory codes. The 'I6' explanatory code is starting to appear less due to the billings of 'Q200'. This service code acts as a trigger or warning mechanism that the patient has been rostered for billing purposes and any subsequent billings after the Q200 service date should be paid at the higher fee rate for rostered patients.

One of the new explanatory codes is "HM". A little history is required to understand how this new explanatory code works. Hospital and Facility numbers will now be known as "Master Number". It is still a four-digit number. "HM" is defined as "An invalid Master Number used on Date of Service", however the claim will be "paid unless the claim payment is affected by other business rules". It does not state how long they will continue to pay the claim so please change your old facility number to your new "Master Number". Please contact your hospital, facility, or local MOHLTC department to find out your new Master number.



If you have any tips or workflow suggestions to share for future issues of Softwords, please let us know by emailing us at solution@anl.com with details.

Understanding Spyware, Malware and Adware

Spyware, malware and adware are programs designed to infect a computer and often hamper the owner's activity. Spyware is often thought to solely describe a program that examines a computer user; however the implications are much greater. These stealth applications often gather information through the user's Internet connection without his or her knowledge, transmitting information in the background to someone else. As for the avoidance and elimination of spyware, there are numerous programs designed to thwart these applications.

Malware, short for malicious software, is designed specifically to damage or disrupt a system, such as a virus or a Trojan horse. Malware includes things like spyware or adware programs, such as tracking cookies, which are used to monitor your surfing habits. It also includes more sinister items, such as keyloggers, Trojan horses, worms, and viruses. A good anti-virus application can be configured to scan for any type of malicious code, and alert you to its existence, even if it is not currently known malware. However, remember that your anti-virus software, security application or even computer operating system is only as good as its last update. To get full protection, on a regular basis you MUST update with the latest virus definition files, scanning engines, patches and fixes. They can often overlook certain types of malware. It is a good idea to run at least one anti-adware application in combination with your anti-virus software. In addition, utilizing a firewall can be helpful. While it won't keep malware out, it can help to stop such programs from accessing the internet and sending your personal information to the intended target.

Adware, while not necessarily malware, is considered to go beyond the reasonable advertising that one might expect from freeware or shareware. Typically they're designed for commercial gain and are appropriately titled as a program that routinely shows advertisements to a PC. Adware will regularly continue to produce ads even when the user is not running the originally application installed. Usually bundled into another program, adware is considered a way for many developers to recover programming costs since a program since shareware or freeware is offered at little or no costs to the user. Adware and spyware are sometimes grouped together because the computer user's internet activity is frequently tracked, recorded and may even be sold to a third party. Software is available to help block advertisements and/or remove adware programs altogether.

Remember to always take time to be web wise and keep informed. If spyware, malware and adware destroy nothing else, they destroy your confidence in your PC or network, which is something that is quite valuable.

We're Updating Our Database!

Help us keep informed so we can provide better service for you



Clinic /Dr. Name:

Address:

Postal Code: _____ Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____