

BENEFITS OF CUSTOM APPLICATIONS DEVELOPED USING MS ACCESS

In automating your information processing, many companies struggle with which program or application to use. There are many "canned" programs ("CP"), both computer-based and web-based, to choose from. The other alternative is to use a custom-designed database application ("CDA") created by a professional MS Access developer. In this white paper, we review the different choices and the benefits of the various possibilities.

First of all, let's look at what a canned program is and what it delivers. When we say canned program (CP) we are referring to any software that does not provide your company with all ownership and source code rights. A CP must cater to hundreds, if not thousands, of various business models. It becomes so generic that you need to fit your business processes into it rather than having the software mold to yours. A CP could have one or more of the following:

- Licensing Fee (for the actual use of the software)
- Annual Maintenance Fee (to pay for upgrades, bugs, and fixes)
- User Fee (each computer or user is charged a fee or seat license)
- Hard to customize to your business
- Has many features that you will never use/Is missing some features that you would like to have
- You have to download data from it to do more information processing
- A Web-based CP needs to have an Internet connection all the time
- You have little control over how it gets installed and maintained
- You have to pay for upgrades whether you want/need them
- You have to rely on the software vendor for technical support (with added fees)

There are many, sometimes large, costs associated with purchasing and using a CP. A CP's use must be justified in terms of total dollar outlay over a number of years and the benefits achieved in that time frame.

A CDA can benefit your company or department in a number of ways. Here are some of the ways:

- There are no Licensing, Maintenance, or User fees to contend with
- It is totally customized to your business needs and has all the features you will use
- Because it is MS Office-based (Access, Excel, Word, etc.), you OWN the files that are created
- There are no mandatory upgrades to pay for, you don't have to rely on a specific software vendor for support, and you have, at your disposal, thousands of MS Access developers
- Also, this means you can add more users to it, install it at multiple branch offices, have us change the design, or do anything you want with it!
- The only costs you incur are the development costs from CAS; you don't waste employee time/money on design
- The application runs on your network which you have paid for and you have licenses for everyone running the MS Office, incurring no extra costs

You can also set up remote access to your application. One misconception about a web-based solution versus a CDA is the remote capability. With a web-based solution, it RELIES ON the Internet. If your internet connection goes down, you will not have access to the system AT ALL. At least, with a CDA server solution, you will be running internally until the remote connection becomes available.

We have numerous success stories of CDAs for clients. These are clients who opted to spend a few thousand dollars on a CDA versus spending tens of thousands over the life of the application on a canned program. Don't be fooled by what a canned program offers unless it meets a specific, targeted need that a CDA can't address cost-effectively or technologically.