Cargotester.com LIMS Shared Application Feature

ASP Model of Sale

Cargotrader, Inc. has adopted an *ASP* business model for selling its Cargotester.com software to clients. "ASP" refers to **Application Service Provider**, and indicates that the client is using the software only as an Internet-ready service. Cargotrader, Inc. hosts the application online itself so that clients may use the software over the Internet.

Client Benefits

Clients benefit several ways from a shared application. There are the reduced costs, not only from the lack of the administrative IT hosting expenses, but also from sharing the costs of administering the application with several other clients. There is the benefit of better security, as the server farm is professionally managed and maintained, with backups and other physical protections. Security from hackers, disgruntled staff and buggy software (not properly updated to fix flaws) is also better when managed by the vendor. Not only is the application itself safer on a remote server, but so is the client's own internal computer network. Then we have the benefits of joint usage. By sharing an application, clients essentially have a common "watering hole" to meet at and conduct business. This greatly enhances the efficiency of work done on the site and eliminates the need to create bridges from one computer system to another. Another benefit is the assurance of data integrity from the inaccessibility of the remotely hosted database. When data is saved on our servers and *locked*, all parties can safely assume users of the system cannot make any changes. The final benefit is the use of the familiar web browser interface, which reduces the burdens of staff training.

Vendor Benefits

There are several benefits for the ASP vendor (Cargotrader, Inc.) to maintaining a shared application, and these benefits ultimately accrue to clients as well. Firstly, the administrative burden of maintaining the software is reduced whenever the software is updated; and this allows the software to be fixed or updated readily, rather than just periodically. Secondly, the software remains proprietary, reducing the risks from software piracy and hackers. The billing process is greatly simplified when based only on monthly user account fees and customization work, and the costs of hosting the application are spread out among several clients. Finally, the software remains on a stable and predictable platform.

Demo and Real Versions

The shared application comes in both a *demo* and a *real* version, which are identical in form and function, but which have separate databases and executable source code installations. Potential and current clients can access the demo version to test and train with, leaving the real version free of bad or incorrectly entered data. The two instances of the software do not share data but it can be copied from demo to real.

Large Client Custom Hosting

Particularly large clients may wish to utilize a custom hosting package where Cargotrader, Inc. provides hosting for an independent installation of the application.