

HandyWork Newsletter

Winter 2007

Prepare to Change

In the works...

As usual, we at HandyWorks never sit still for very long. And while you may not see much visible action in the HandyWorks product, there is ALWAYS work being done beneath the surface. Besides the usual form and report enhancements, this work falls into several main categories.

Bug removal: When it comes to finding bugs, it doesn't seem to matter how many years we have been developing HandyWorks! Fortunately, the ones we find today are almost always minor and relatively inconsequential. Mostly, they are found by new and inexperienced users, who continue to provide us with "bug fix opportunities." Sometimes we sit back and scratch our collective heads and ask: "Why would the user ever consider doing that?", (with "that" being a certain data entry or specific mouse or keystroke sequence). Sometimes, it's a new user simply exploring a little used section of the program that regular users know how to handle with no problems. Regardless of the cause, we find the bug and fix it, often without any other users even knowing that it has been fixed.

Form printing: We've grown to love our Medicare, Medicaid, and BCBS carriers for routinely altering the way information needs to be presented on the HCFA-1500. And to make things more fun for us, each state does things differently.

Interestingly for us (and you too), the first realization that something is wrong on a form comes when a claim is denied. When we get notice of a form change, we usually ask for verification. This is because we have made form changes in the distant past that were not based on reality, but on what a user picked up at some "seminar." So, don't be offended if we ask for proof.

Ebill Creation: When Congress passed HIPAA years ago, they also mandated a new electronics claim filing standard. This complex standard is called ANSI 4010, and the portion we use is the 837 Professional claims component.

Were life truly this simple and the phrase "We're from the government and we are here to help you" really true, then things might be different. But alas poor Yorick, it is not so. So the ANSI non-standard has been supplemented by every state and every carrier with multi-page addendums detailing how they want data entered differently from the standard. What a mess!

But we at HandyWorks are up to the task, having worked with carriers from many states, ironing out their needs with a barrage of updates, patches, fixes and corrections. Unfortunately, we can never get ahead of the curve because the carriers like to change things on their own, letting the poor Doctor find out through the lovely process of claims rejection.

Now should this happen to you, and you find that claims that were previously fine with a carrier are

now being rejected, call them first! And what we need to know are four items: What are they getting? Where are they getting it? What do they want? Where do they want it? Tell us this and we'll have the problem fixed in no time at all.

X-Charge it!

In this day and age, if you don't accept credit or debit cards, you are losing business!..

Of course there's a cost to accepting credit cards - the nominal 1/5% charged to you by the credit card companies. But if experience is any guide, you'll end up making more at the end of the day if you accept them. And HandyWorks makes it EASY to collect funds from a credit card.

We do it with X-Charge, a credit card charging system that integrates into HandyWorks. Users who have switched their credit card processing over to X-charge are not only saving money with reduced fees, they are saving time because X-Charge fully integrates into the HandyWorks Transaction screen.

It is convenient, fast and reliable. If you are tired of paying high rates for credit card services, why don't you call Barbara Rivards at 800-217-3927 or email her at Barbara.Rivard@xcharge.biz She'll ask you to fax her your current credit card services bill and show you how you can start saving money right away.

Meet the New HCFA, just like the Old HCFA

File this in the "Why am we not surprised" category of problems. We've been testing the new HCFA forms in our office. And what better test recipient than our very own state Medicare carrier? Guess again! All our recent claims came back with a note telling us they aren't accepting the new forms until January 1. Maybe they didn't read the national CMS timeline mandating insurance companies to start accepting claims in October. Makes us wonder what they have in store for us next. We can hardly wait.

In the meantime, we continue to give out claims to our patients, and have not had any other problems so far. For those that are eager to switch over, the new form will be fully implemented in the January upgrade.

KISS Please

A new techie was working on a large HandyWorks installation a few weeks ago. The installation included 8 new computers and setup for 3 different HandyWorks clinics. Also involved was conversion of one clinic that was still running DOS.

For the most part, a lot of techies have corporate experience with large enterprise systems, and as such, they often work in a style I call complex and sophisticated. However, we come from the KISS (keep it simple stupid) school of design. So, while this techie want each clinic in its own directory on the server, we wanted all clinics in one folder, but with slightly different dataset names. Here's the reason why.

Techies come and go, but we are here to stay. And while the current techie may know exactly where the files are located, when an end user calls up our tech-support

hotline with a problem, it is very easy to solve their problem if files are located in a place we expect them to be. (This also makes upgrading easier.) If the data files are strewn across a hard drive, we may not know where to look for them, complicating our support efforts.

Our KISS rule is as follows. On a single machine, all files related to HandyWorks are kept in the C:\hww folder. In a network, all data files (hwdata.mdb) are stored in the C:\hww folder on the "server." Each user has their own copy of the HandyWorks program, stored on their machine in its \hww folder. KISS? You bet. Let's keep it that way!

DOS RIP

Seven more conversions to go! Then its done, over, kaput, finito, ended, finalized, dead. Will we miss the simplicity of the DOS interface? Sure. Will we miss the complex, labyrinth-like coding behind the screen. No way. Adios DOS!

Not Updating?

We try to track all of our tech support calls. We do this primarily so we can better handle recurrent problems. Another item we track is when we give out the password for the website updates.

At the end of every year, we review each account on our system. Interestingly, we find that there are a number of doctors who have not requested a password. This is surprising to us because it is one of the features that is paid for with the yearly maintenance fee.

When a user calls us for tech support, one of the first questions we ask is what is the version date. We ask this because oftentimes, problems they may be experiencing have already been solved and posted as an update. So, do yourself a favor, and stay current. That way you will always have our best efforts on your machine.

Backup Horror

As we were doing this newsletter, Dr. M.D of NJ called with a small backup problem. Seems his C.A. had reverse copied from his flash drive to his hard drive, overwriting his existing data. Since he didn't have multiple copies of his data, he was out of luck.

Remember, there are two types of computer users out there. Those that have lost data and those that will. Backing up is your ONLY insurance against a computer failure. If you don't have a backup and you lose your data, it will be no one's fault but your own.

BACKUP THIS WAY:

How to Backup

Please have multiple backups of your data. Make 5 empty folders on your flash drive. Call them M, Tu, W, Th, F. (Or the full names of the days of the week if you want.) On Monday, backup to the M folder. Got it?

To make things easy, we use a batch file to make each backup. This is a small text file made with notepad. We'll detail one file and its contents. You can do the rest.

Make a file and call it BUM.BAT (This stands for backup monday) It has the one line of text. *copy c:\hww\hwdata.mdb I:\m* This one line of text is run when we double click on BUM.BAT file located on our desktop, and it copies the hwdata.mdb file from the hww folder to the M folder on the flash drive (letter I: for me in this case). If you need help in doing this correctly, call or email us. OK?

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