

Funny, I don't feel exposed?

There's no question about it, we live in a litigious world. Get into an accident, get caught with a hanging "chad", or lose an image and *boom* you're exposed to a lawsuit.

Losing the image of a deed or inaccurately recording a mortgage may not go down in history like the election chads of 2000, but they both can certainly lead to a lawsuit. How effectively does your software protect you? Are you exposed?

Many software related lawsuits are a result of data entry errors. This is the root of most problems. Does your software help prevent bad data from entering your system? Here's how to find out.

The key to clean data begins with "Edits". (Edits are a series of tests that the system automatically performs on the data you have entered.) There are many type of edits. The most common edits are data type, date, time, sequence and page count.

- Data type – text fields should allow the input of numeric values but numeric fields should not allow text values.
- Date – only valid dates should be allowed in date fields (Would your

system allow a recording date of February 29, 1999?).

- Time – only valid times should be allowed in time fields (Can you control what your system considers to be a valid recording time?).
- Sequence – the current recording should have a B/P, date & time that is later than the preceding document (Will your system tell you that the recording time you keyed on a document is earlier than the time you keyed on the previous document?).
- Page count – verifies that the total number of pages recorded equals the total number of pages scanned.

In the BROWNtech system, many edits occur in the background and you may never see them unless the edit detects an actual error. Based on the type of error detected the edit will either allow the error message to be bypassed or it will actually prevent the user from continuing until the error is corrected.

If you're not sure whether your software is using any of the edits listed then simply test them by trying to enter bad data. If your software fails to detect the bad data then it's likely that

your data is already corrupt. *Boom*, you're exposed!

Even with the strictest of edits, bad data can still get into the system in the form of manual overrides, unauthorized changes and genuine mistakes (yes, we all make them). So how can you minimize this type of bad data?

A common solution is to restrict who can make corrections, but this can lower productivity because it tends to make it more difficult for staff to make necessary changes and corrections. We have found that people learn more when they are allowed to make their own corrections and stop making them in the future.

An audit trail is usually a better solution because it empowers your staff to do their job but holds them accountable. A good audit trail will allow the staff to make the necessary changes to a document while keeping a history of those changes. This history of changes should be available to title examiners through public inquiry workstations.

Without a detailed document history you have no way to review the changes that were made to a document. *Boom*, you're exposed! ☺

BACK TO THE FUTURE

The year 2000 was another exciting year for BROWNtech as we rang in the new millennium and added customers in two new states, Rhode Island and New Jersey.

We started out the year wrapping up our first Rhode Island installation for Janice Laporte, Pawtucket City Clerk. Although imaging was a new technology for her office, they have learned quickly and have already loaded 5 years of images, converted from microfilm, into the system. They

are currently enrolling users for remote access to their system.

Our first installation in New Jersey was for Angela Pulvino, Cape May County Clerk. Thanks to her vision and excellent staff, Cape May proved to be one of the smoothest implementations ever in the state. The imaging system was even pre-certified by the State. In addition to cash, indexing and imaging, the system features state-of-the-art Map/Plan scanning and a Kodak Archive Writer for automatic microfilm

creation. All of their previous index data was converted including the "Russell Index", which is expected to be available within a few weeks.

In 2001, our research & development staff will begin focusing more of their efforts on Java and the Internet. The Internet is quickly becoming the medium of choice for accessing and viewing public records. With an increasing demand for our products and an improved Internet module, 2001 should be an exciting ride. ☺

Did you know? “PRINTING”

In this issue of “Did you know?” we cover some of the features and capabilities of PRINTING using the BROWN^{tech} system.

1. *You can* specify a different default printer for each of the 25+ reports in the system. Invoices and Accounting reports could be sent to the printer in the bookkeeping room while index and proof lists could be sent to another printer in the indexing area.
2. *You can* specify which reports are automatically printed and which reports should be held in your print list. This can be very useful when generating large reports like multi-year indexes because it allows you to decide when and how much of a report should be printed based on when the printer is available. Holding a report is also helpful if you like to review the report on the screen, or before printing it.
3. *You can* create and save multiple alphabetical name groups for your grantor/grantee listing (corresponding to your binder tabs) and then choose the appropriate group when printing a name index. A daily index may only need a single tab A – Z, a monthly index may need tabs A – M and N – Z, and a yearly index may need a tab for each letter i.e. A-A, B-B, C-C, etc.
4. *You can* stop, start and re-direct reports while they’re printing. Imagine being several hours into printing a multi-year alphabetic index and you run out of toner or someone has an urgent report that must be printed. Instead of starting over you

Strong customer relationships and superior products are the cornerstone of our business. We continuously strive to improve these relationships and to make our software better, and easier to use. We treat our customers as we would expect to be treated, and it works!

Clifton H. Brown
President

FOOD is GOOD

Let us know about any ideas that you may have for a new feature or enhancement and you could win a free lunch. Come up with an idea that we implement and you could win up to 5 lunches for your staff.

Fax: (508) 543-9396 or

E-mail: ideas@browntech.com

Who says there’s no **FREE LUNCH?**

can simply stop and then re-direct the rest of the index to another printer or wait until the printer is no longer needed and then re-start the index where you left off.

5. *You can* break up large reports and print some today and some tomorrow.
6. *You can* specify the size of images and the alternating margins when printing book images and indexes. This gives you greater control over printing and allows you to choose whichever binders best fit your needs.
7. *You can* write some index reports to diskette or CD for distribution to newspapers and abstractors. Images as well as index data can also be written to CD.
8. *You can* automatically direct public inquiry print requests to different printers based on whether or not the user has a charge account. Users with an account can charge the cost of their reports and have them sent to a printer accessible to the public. Users without an account must pickup and pay for their reports from a printer maintained by the staff.
9. *You can* print public inquiry requests one at a time while you search or you can accumulate them in a list and then print them all at once after you’re done searching.

NOTE: Not all options and features are available in all products. ☺



What's new is old?

What could be better than getting the latest software upgrade or enhancement? How about finding out that you already have them?

The following tables list the enhancements that were recently announced by two of our competitors. The **BROWNtech** column shows how long our software has already had the same feature.

They say that imitation is the highest form of flattery and to that we say "thank you". If you're not already using our software and would like to know more, why not schedule a demo, you may just see something that ends up in one of your vendors future upgrades.

Catch up with the leader, **BROWNtech** . . . *One step ahead!* ☺

| Vendor 1 | |
|--|--------------------|
| <u>Upgrade / Enhancement</u> | <u>BROWNtech</u> |
| Court and judgement scanning modules | Yes – 1 year ago |
| Image-to-Film module | Yes – 6 months ago |
| Film-to-Image module | Yes – 3 years ago |
| Compact book printing interface | Yes – 6 years ago |
| Auto Book/Page to the Fee Module | Yes – 8 years ago |
| NJ State Certification of imaging system | Yes – 6 months ago |

| Vendor 2 | |
|--|--------------------|
| <u>Upgrade / Enhancement</u> | <u>BROWNtech</u> |
| Draw down accounts | Yes – 1 year ago |
| Unlimited fees | Yes – 1 year ago |
| Unlimited "refers to" (marginal notes) | Yes – 10 years ago |
| Add / Delete menu options (queries) | Yes – 10 years ago |

"Affordable Imaging" is not an Oxymoron

I can't afford an imaging system. Imaging isn't in my budget. Sound familiar? Not all imaging systems require taking out a second mortgage (although your office may have plenty). Even if you already have an imaging system you may be able to upgrade to a more efficient system and still save money.

In many cases, an imaging system can help pay for itself. One of the largest cost savings is usually realized in printing supplies. Many states no longer require the printing of books once a certified imaging system is installed.

But what if I am still required to print books? Even if you are required to print books, the **BROWNtech** imaging system

makes the book printing process easy and efficient; turnaround is immediate, with books on the shelf the same day the document is recorded. You can even automate the time consuming microfilm process.

What else can an imaging system do? An imaging system can reduce the amount of time the staff spends on making copies and assisting the general public. It can also streamline the distribution of copies to other departments, municipalities and title examiners. Document images can be automatically printed or written directly to CD.

Adding electronic images to your database can also provide an additional source of revenues through remote access fees. The

Internet provides an excellent medium for the search and retrieval of records and document images.

Whether or not you continue to print books, a fully integrated imaging system can save money, improve customer service and increase the overall efficiency of your office.

For more details or questions about **BROWNtech's** complete line of imaging products call (888) 543-2074 or email us at imaging@browntech.com. ☺



The Obsolescence Factor

Choosing a new computer system can easily turn into a full time job. The computer industry continues to churn out new hardware and software every day making the selection decision even more difficult. PC's now even come in different colors to suit your mood or office decor. And do I really need a "mega" of this or a "giga" of that? (sounds like the super-size drinks or popcorn that you get at the movies).

Even after you sift through all the acronyms and have decided what you want, you still need to decide how to pay for it. The two primary payment methods are: 1) cash/financing, and 2) lease/rental. In the computer industry, this decision can not be made without first asking yourself the following question: "When will my new computer system become obsolete?"

I know what you're thinking. You finally choose a color for your new PC's and now you need to figure out when to replace them. Obsolescence can be a complicated topic when we consider all the possible tax consequences, but let's leave that one to the accountants and talk about how this may actually impact the future day-to-day operations of your office.

Obsolescence in your office means that the equipment is no longer useful. The *average* useful life of most computers is about 3 years. Don't panic, that's the average. A Clerk's office or Registry tends to get far more life out of computer equipment. In fact, we have customers that are still making very good use out of PC's that were purchased nearly 10

years ago.

Most PC's in a recording office don't need the extreme processing power available with the latest (and most expensive) machines on the market today. Your kids, believe it or not, are one of the primary driving forces in PC development. With full motion

videos, streaming audio, surround sound speakers, and 3D worlds to explore, today's games require the latest and greatest PC's (Embarrassing as it may seem, I just upgraded my PC, not because

I needed to for work but because I couldn't load a new Disney game for my 18 month old son).

Some people fear that their recording & indexing PC's will become obsolete so quickly that they lease or rent all of their equipment. In most cases this just isn't true. Consider a 21" monitor or a 21 ppm laser printer. Will these be any less useful to your office in 3 to 5 years or even 10 years (can you even fit a monitor larger than 21" on your desk?). With the proper maintenance plan, this type of equipment will keep going, and going, and going.

Don't get me wrong, there may be tax or financial reasons to lease or rent. But in terms of obsolescence, your office may not benefit from a lease. Rented equipment that has a useful life of 3 or more years will probably end up costing much more than it's original purchase price. The bottom line is don't assume that all computer equipment should be leased or rented, it depends more on how you will use the equipment than on the actual equipment itself. ☺

o b ' · s o · l e t e
1. of a discarded or outmoded type.
2. no longer in fashion; out of date; passe'.

Love it? ☺ Hate it? ☹ Let us know.

Your comments or questions help us improve our products and services. Please direct your correspondence using any of the following contact information:

BROWNtech, technology solutions for state and local government

19 Twilight Drive, Foxborough MA 02035-1521

web: www.browntech.com e-mail: ideas@browntech.com phone: 508-543-0211 fax: 508-543-9396