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Software Helps Master EPA Regs

Technology: Enviance's Program Sorts Through Maze of Paperwork

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CARLSBAD — If a business puts out waste through a smokestack or an outfall, chances are it's also generating paperwork for the government. It's producing tongue twisters like water quality discharge monitoring reports and air quality permit compliance certification reports (with monitoring deviations reports). And so on.

They are a reflection of the emissions mandates governments place on industry. It's terrain that Carlsbad-based Enviance calls home.

Enviance makes software. Company executives say their product eases the process of going along with government environmental regulations. What's more, it simplifies the process of distilling information and then generating those government-mandated reports.

Enviance does this as an application service provider, letting clients log onto its Web site, then go to a secure corner and process their data. Wilmington, Del.-based DuPont is a customer. So is Natchiq, an oil field support company based in Alaska. Since the program is Internet-based, clients like the latter (who work in out-of-the-way places) can get it wherever they get Internet access, said an Enviance spokeswoman.

For companies, the real burden of environmental work is in the record keeping, said Greg Gasperez, a former regulator who now works as Enviance's vice president of environmental health and safety. Some information needs to go to the government. More information must be kept available if the regulators want to see it. Imagine, said Gasperez, a company with 50 smokestacks or discharge points, having to collect hourly data on five parameters, then having to compile a twice-yearly list on data that doesn't comply.

It's a big job.

Enviance's software can greatly streamline the process of preparing the report, he said. The system deals with numerical information like pollution measurements, and performs calculations like an electronic spreadsheet program. With the built-in calculator, the software can quickly tell its user whether a certain parameter — like the benzene limit in a certain discharge — is being exceeded.

The program also deals with the "non-numerical" parts of government compliance. Calendar and e-mail functions in the software can remind people to make a monthly equipment inspection or ask them to certify they are operating in a certain manner. A person might compare it to a very specialized version of Microsoft Outlook —with its mix of e-mail and day-planner functions — tailored for environmental compliance. Clients customize the software to fit the mandates the government places on their particular equipment and location.

Enviance sells its software by monthly subscription.

The company does not make its prices public. Since the product is tailored to specific sites and industries, a company spokeswoman said an example would be meaningless for comparison.

Enviance's ASP product has been on the market five months. The privately held company was founded in 1999.