

Streamlining Environmental Compliance

The latest ASP technology is a fast-growing trend for companies with environmental management systems—and the payoff could be substantial in terms of time and money.

By Julia Wagner

In an industry with increasing environmental regulations and standards, the implementation of an EMS (environmental management system) has become paramount to ensuring compliance in an efficient and organized manner. However, the initial capital expenditures and the time consumed in developing and implementing a traditional EMS can be an overwhelming undertaking for both large and small companies.

As a solution, the ASP (application service provider) industry has emerged as an outside provider of maintaining compliance data with a Web-based service. According to *Investor's Business Daily*, the ASP industry will grow from \$1.3 billion to \$23.8 billion by 2005 due to the demand for quality data systems. This growth may affect the way industries concerned with maintaining air, water and waste compliance keep track of data. Efficiency is the goal of any new system; however, the ASP option is unique in that implementation can ultimately help a company's bottom line in terms of time and money output as well.

Natchiq turns to ASP technology

Two companies adopting the latest technology are Natchiq, of Anchorage, Alaska, and DuPont, of Wilmington, Del. Both are in the process of implementing an Internet-based ASP from Enviance, an online provider located in Carlsbad, Calif.

Natchiq, a service provider to the oil and gas industry, hopes to streamline environmental information into one database across the board.

"In the past, each subsidiary managed it [environmental compliance] independently using PC-based spreadsheet programs to collect, compile and track information," explains Keith Heffner, Natchiq's health, safety and environment director. "We want to eliminate redundant systems ... and have a standardized system that will track activities, products, services, training and operational controls in a comprehensive and systematic way."

"Industry surveys have come out saying time is being wasted manipulating data on spreadsheets."

- Greg Gasperecz

And the ASP component eliminates redundancy and inconsistency by using internal and external information sharing, and task management for all facility locations instead of different systems for each location. Multiple users from various operating units can access the same information with uniform calculations and real-time

assembly of compliance data in a common format.

Natchiq had high expectations to be met before choosing a new system. The company found the ASP element to the Enviance system especially appealing. Since it is Web-based, upgrades and modifications become relatively simple and automatic.

"Having been involved in the purchase and use of multiple computer-based management systems in the past, we [Natchiq] would have to buy upgrades for modifications," says Heffner.

Although the Enviance system continues to develop with changing technology, new facets do not require changes in the entire system. Since the ASP is Internet based, upgrades or advancements do not require extraneous time or money from users.

In addition to the flexibility of a system that evolves with technological advances, data security was of the utmost importance to Natchiq.

"If there is a crisis at a location, it is backed up at Enviance; we feel that the data is a lot more secure," Heffner explains.

The system maintains security by relying on servers located on both the East coast and West coast at sites that handle encrypted information. Other protections include temperature control, restricted access, level-three encryption and firewall protection to meet high levels of security.

DuPont simplifies operations

For DuPont, a company specializing in science-based solutions in markets such as food and nutrition, health care, apparel, home and construction, electronics and transportation, one of the main attractions about Enviance was its simplicity.

"As with any multi-billion dollar corporation, DuPont has a considerable amount of data to manage," explains Christopher J. Hartley, environmental health and safety data systems manager at DuPont. "Ease of use is a major benefit of Enviance products. Since Enviance's application works in conjunction with DuPont's corporate environmental reporting plan, data collection and analysis has been simplified."

For DuPont, the common platform for data input and collection

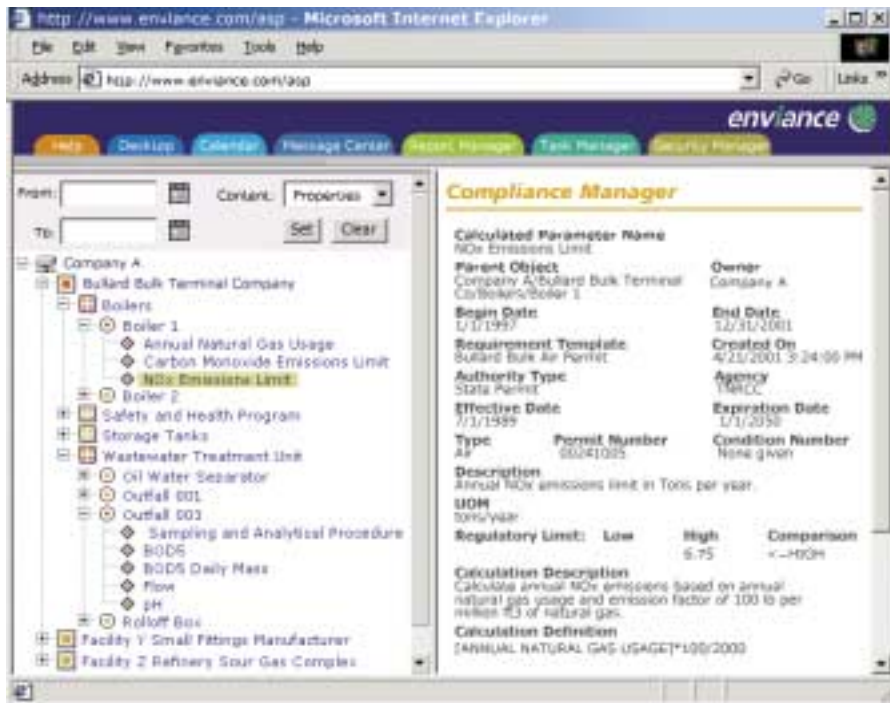
Since the ASP is Internet based, upgrades or advancements do not require extraneous time or money from users.

provided by Enviance assists with the preparation of company-wide reports and expedites the filing process. In the past, DuPont used an electronic system that was created and supported in-house, with over 100 employees spending time recording compliance data.

Greg Gasperecz, vice president of environmental, health, and safety at Enviance and a former EPA regulator, sensed the need for a program that streamlined this process seven or eight years ago as regulations under the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 grew complex.

"Industry surveys have come out saying time is being wasted manipulating data on spreadsheets," he explains.

Indeed, The BTI Consulting Group (Boston) surveyed more than



The Enviance system tree is set up much like Windows folders.

300 environmental managers and found that 66 percent of environmental managers' time is spent originating, gathering, analyzing, storing and sharing information.

"With the Enviance system, we anticipate being able to decrease the amount of time Industry spends managing data by nearly half," explains Lawrence Goldenhersh, president and CEO of Enviance.

Simplification is key to any ASP's success. The system tree is set up much like Windows folders and users can point and click to view or modify data. Numeric and non-numeric data can be entered to track information ranging from external and internal requirements to company branch information. The data can be viewed as summary statistics, eliminating superfluous or repetitive information.

Moving beyond the basic EMS, Enviance combines permitting, manufacturing and operations data to achieve three goals:

- Organize data—to create a framework specific to an individual facility and simplify report generation.
- Integrate equipment with software—to provide automated recording of measurement data in real-time.
- Robust calculation engine—to trigger alarms before established limits are exceeded.

With these goals now in reach for the companies implementing new systems, such ASP's are clearly an asset—and many more companies are sure to follow suit as this industry trend grows. **PE**

Reader Interest Review

Please fill in the appropriate number on the Reader Service Card to indicate the level of interest in the article.

High 53 Medium 54 Low 55