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Technology

Grants Management Software Moves to the Web

by *Martin B. Schneiderman*



In the May/June 1999 issue of *Foundation News & Commentary* I wrote "[What Choice Do You Really Have?](#)" It described the state of the grants management software industry and key market trends. I predicted that the next wave of products and services would be Internet-enabled and that new players would emerge, and that's just what's happened in the past year. Now it's time for an updated look at the industry.

Expanding market share. More grantmakers are now using commercial grantmaking software than ever before. Vendors report the following increases in the number of their clients: MicroEdge's list is up by 300; NPO Solutions, by 62; Bromelkamp Company, by 10.

Notable trend. In the past year many of the commercial vendors have focused on developing new and expanded Internet-based systems that permit Web-based grant applications and secure browser access to grant information from anywhere at anytime.

New products and services. The Arlington Group, a custom developer and application service provider (ASP), plans to introduce Easygrants.com. This new Web-based service will invite grantseekers to submit applications to multiple grantmakers at the same time. Grantmakers will then receive a data file containing qualified applications for import into their existing grants management system.

Bromelkamp has developed Community Pearl, an integrated grantmaking, fundraising and fund-accounting system for community foundations.

The nonprofit Center for Arts Management and Technology (CAMT) has introduced eGRANT, a Web-based grant application form that works with its custom Automated Grants Management System. CyberGrants is the first ASP to offer a fully customized Web-based grant application form and grants management service. Its service includes all of the necessary hardware and software for grantmakers to access their own data via a Web browser. The software can also be licensed to run on in-house systems. New employee-giving services have been announced for later this year.

MicroEdge has a new Internet Grant Application Module and service that works with its existing GIFTS for Windows product line. It includes a design tool that enables the grantmaker to design and post a custom grant

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application form on the Web. Only a single PC with Internet access is required. GIFTS for Windows has been certified for use with Citrix's new Nfuse "thin-client" technology, which now enables full access to all current GIFTS programs via a Web browser. A new product, GIFTS for the Web, is planned for release later this year.

NPO Solutions has released FIMS Lite, which is scaled to meet the needs of smaller community foundations. NPO's eAdvisorNet Express, a Web-based suite of services for community foundations, gives a fund advisor remote capability to manage grants and investments. NPO plans to offer an Internet grant application and a Web-based interface to its FIMS and FoundationPower products.

Orcatec specializes in the development of custom Windows systems. The company is now introducing Grant Tracking and Management System—currently used to administer large Canadian governmental grant programs—to the U.S. market.

Options for Macintosh users. Philanthropic Systems and PowerNet both continue to offer systems that run on Macs. This is in addition to all Web-based and thin-client systems that are also available to Macintosh users.

Another choice. The Foundation Collaboration jointly developed Portal in 1994. It's a custom application that is available free to grantmaking organizations. However, distribution has been limited because of the lack of ongoing joint development and support.

Caveat emptor. Be careful when you choose technology partners and new systems in today's quickly evolving market. Seek providers with the requisite expertise, a long-term commitment to grantmaking and the financial strength to succeed. And be sure Web-based systems are secure and multivendor solutions are fully compatible.

Click here to view a chart of commercial grants management software and services providers in 2000.

Martin B. Schneiderman is president of Information Age Associates, Inc., (www.iaa.com), a firm specializing in the design, management, and support of information systems for grantmakers and nonprofits. He can be reached at mbs@iaa.com.

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