



# One Step Newsletter

SPRING/SUMMER  
2007

## One Step Systems

### Special points of interest:

- *Software Integration*
- *Lakeland FL & One Step*
- *Managing the Mobile Environment*
- *Ultra Mobile Computing—Origami*
- *Writing the Effective Funding Proposal*
- *Hardware Choices—What Works?*
- *Tech Tip*
- *Awards We are Proud Of*

## ONE STEP AND INTEGRATION

Many departments we work with initially thought that integrating One Step with their existing record management (RMS) system was the best choice. The decision to integrate is not an easy one to make for it requires a careful analysis of the current department business practices and rules.

- What information needs to reside in both One Step and the RMS. If the information is to reside in both databases what happens if there is an information conflict? An example: occupancy information is updated in the field; at the same time a department clerk updates the same info in the same record. Which data “wins” when the inspector synchs his device with the RMS? Sorting these business rules is the most difficult part of integration and once decisions are made

they are difficult to change.

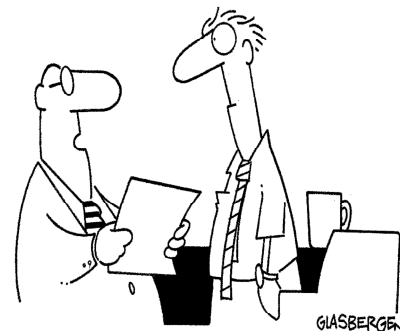
- Are you going to query the RMS or One Step for reporting or both databases?
- Once the data is imported into One Step, do you still need to have data going both ways if One Step is going to be your “Inspection Software”? We work with many departments who ask us to migrate their legacy data to One Step and then use One Step to manage the Inspection process.
- One Step can easily function as a “stand alone” solution to manage all occupancy information.

One Step data resides in a SQL data base allowing it to exchange data with other data bases. The real

issue is not the integration but the reasons for it and how much data needs to go between One Step and the RMS.

We are pleased to discuss this in more detail. Call us to find out more about integration.

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**“I want you to find a bold and innovative way to do everything exactly the same way it’s been done for 25 years.”**

## LAKELAND FL - ONE STEP IN ACTION

Larry Riles, Fire Marshal in Lakeland Florida is using One Step to streamline their plans review process. As new construction plans arrive, they are given a new address, time stamp, and then passed to the plans examiner. The examiner completes the review, creates the occupancy, adds comments and then makes the file available to all the inspectors in the field at the push of a button.

The same process is being used for permitting and other operations.

The field worker brings up the occupancy in One Step, reviews the comments and completes the inspection listing any deficiencies. The new One Step process has eliminated the communication break down between the plans review process and field inspections. The One Step system provides a better inspection history which can be viewed on site.

- *One Step is the innovative approach to doing inspections departments are looking for.*

Thank you Lakeland for leveraging the features of One Step. For more info call One Step

If you have helpful information about how you have deployed One Step within your department we will be pleased to include it in our newsletter. Thanks for your help.

## ONE STEP NEWSLETTER

### MANAGING THE MOBILE SOLUTION

More departments are making their occupancy inspections digital. The benefits include enhancing productivity and accuracy while reducing operational costs. Despite the benefits there are challenges that need to be managed. These include:

- keeping the mobile operating system in compliance—get the system patches and hot fixes as they are available. To have a mobile device fail

*In the race for quality, there is no finish line. We invite you to share your ideas with us to make One Step work better for your department.*

because Tech Services neglected to upgrade the system means down time that should be avoided. Annual maintenance provides the department with ongoing support and upgrades.

- Keep the mobile data secure—Equipping mobile devices with the latest physical securing tools and biometrics enhances security without impacting usability. The mobile device should only have that day's tasks and inspections – if the device is lost it is critical to minimize the risk of information leak.
- Know the hidden costs — you will need to replace broken or out of date devices. Do you really need a continuous wireless connect to the mobile user or would a WiFi connect work better? Do you need an extra device available to replace one gone for repairs?
- Is Tech Support versed in

mobile devices, applications, web access and internal LAN issues?

The keys to success include:

- Technologies have to be seamlessly deployed into the work environment to have user acceptance. Start with a test phase using “tech leaders” to understand the process. These individuals then become the trainers for the other mobile workers.
- Buy devices after you have tested them with the inspector. Many departments have discovered that PDA's are limited by the screen size, computing ability and are difficult to enter data into.
- Enforce established digital admin and user policies to manage costs and down time
- Ask other users to get their perspective
- Get IT services involved.

They can provide support and program management.

- Mobile data collection is an opportunity to do more inspections in the same time—no need to spend time being a clerk in the station. However this potential gain in productivity must be managed. Eliminating the paper chase and replacing it with longer coffee breaks is not enhancing production.

How we can help:

- Provide advice on hardware
- Provide references
- Provide software installation support
- Work with your tech team to insure the installation and deployment meets your expectations
- Provide software updates to help make the occupancy inspection task more accurate and efficient.



Windows  
Mobile®

#### ULTRA MOBILE COMPUTING

For data collection on the go the new generation of ultra mobile computers look interesting. They come with many of the standard features of convertible tablet computers but in a smaller package. With a fully functional operating system they provide users with more flexibility than the current generation of personal data acquisition (PDA) devices. There is

<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/products/winfamily/umpc/default.mspx>

lots of info on the web.

There are several manufacturers shipping these devices now. Price is dependent upon the bells and whistles you get with them. If you are considering UMCs as a hardware option we strongly recommend you test it with your end users before making the final decision.

We have successfully tested One Step on Vista and have emulated the screen size for Ultra Mobile Computers. We are ready when our clients are ready to migrate to this new platform

If you are having trouble coordinating a hardware test, call us and we may be able to help.

## SPRING/SUMMER

*“If you are going to play the game properly, you’d better know every rule”*

*Barbara Jordan*

## WRITING THE EFFECTIVE FUNDING PROPOSAL

You have made the decision to implement mobile data collection. Your decision was guided by understanding the benefits that will result but you need to convince others (your chief, the budget committee, your co-workers).

The elements you should include are:

### **The Executive Summary:**

Summarize the benefits that result from implementing a mobile data collection solution. Equally important is to identify the costs of not making the necessary changes

### **The Strategic Case:**

Summarize how you currently complete inspections. Explain how a digital solution would address the shortcomings of your current system

### **The Economic Case:**

This is where you identify the benefits resulting from the change in business practice. Concrete examples showing how these benefits will accrue will make your proposal powerful.

### **The Financial Case:**

Identify the hardware you plan to use and provide a buffer for replacement and repair. The life cycle of computers often is about three years and you need to include replacement and upgrade costs

The software also will include an annual maintenance cost. This must also be part of the proposal as it provides the technical support and upgrades to keep your system

operating at peak efficiency

If possible show the return on the investment in the technology. Estimate the time saved by digital data collection multiplied by salary costs and you will have an approximate return on investment.

### **Identify Challenges in Implementation:**

Recognize there will be “start up pain” with training the user and initial productivity hiccups.

### **How One Step can help:**

We have prepared a discussion paper that discusses these proposal elements. Call us for a copy and we will be pleased to help you write a successful proposal.

## HARDWARE CHOICES — WHAT DEPARTMENTS TELL US

Choosing the right hardware is almost as difficult as choosing the right software only there are more hardware choices.

1. Operating system: Most business applications use Microsoft systems—93%+. There is lots of support and programs available.
2. In addition to gathering inspection data, what else do you need your mobile pc to do? Do you need Bluetooth, Infrared, WiFi or an “Air” card, peripherals like CD burners, extra memory, Rugged or not? etc.
3. Which computer will best run the mobile application and can still work as a

desktop pc? Do I need a docking station or just a Bluetooth enabled keyboard and mouse?

4. Is warranty important and for how long?
5. Should we lease or purchase?

What has One Step learned from our customers:

1. Microsoft has been chosen exclusively by our users. One Step chose to write our software using Microsoft development tools as they provided the most flexibility and had the greatest audience of potential users.
2. Most of our users chose tablet computers with

keyboards (convertibles). Some chose small pda devices but they are now purchasing either ultra mobile computers or convertibles.

3. Most convertibles include WiFi connectivity, with options for Bluetooth and Infrared. For field printing Bluetooth is a better option than Infrared. Most departments do not purchase peripherals as it is just more stuff to break. Once logged on to the department LAN, users can easily update their pc.
4. Our customers are using rugged devices only in the rigs for company inspections—they weigh a lot and can be unwieldy in the field.

## TECH TIP

With One Step's new advanced search and saved filters, users can search on any field in the database and save the search query for later use as a custom query specific to them. These queries can then be accessed quickly in the future by selecting the filter from the "Saved Filters" list. An example is a query which shows all of the inspections assigned to a particular user that have not been completed. This filter could then be saved as "My Inspections". Call or email us for more details and other examples.



## ONE STEP SYSTEMS

US Address  
3888 Sound Way  
PO Box 9754  
Bellingham WA 98227-9754

Canadian Address  
#5—531 East Stanford Avenue  
PO Box 1124  
Parksville, BC V9P 1V6

**TOLL FREE : 1-800-469-1166**

*Mobile Fire Inspection Software*  
[www.onestepsystems.com](http://www.onestepsystems.com)

We look forward to your participation in this newsletter and welcome your contributions. We are keenly interested in understanding how your department satisfies information challenges.

If you have a good idea please send it along and we will try and accommodate the information regarding your innovations.

If you have a bad idea, tell someone else!

Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter; we look forward to hearing from you.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING GOOD RECORDS!

“A fire department that is extremely well trained, has the proper records will score worse with an ISO rating than a department that is not well trained, has some losses but keeps extremely good records” Firehouse Magazine, Jan 07

One Step provides excellent record keeping—Call us to find out more.

## ONE STEP WINS TWO AWARDS—WHY DOES IT MATTER?

In October 2006, One Step won a technical excellence award from a peer review organization - MISTIC. The award was given because of our commitment to delivering a technical solution that meets the needs of our clients in an innovative and technically sound way.

Our peers understood the effort required to develop a new way to help fire departments get more done with the same resources and at less cost.

Besides being recognized as a technical leader, One Step was nominated and won a kudo as the entrepreneur of the year. This award resulted from our effort in understanding our

clients business needs and then responding to them.

For those of our readers who have business' or have worked in business, you can appreciate the difficulties inherent in starting a business and then making it grow.

We are fortunate that One Step's corporate parent has been viable for nearly twenty years and over that time has grown and changed along with its customers.

Having been recognized by two awards within the same year is very special to the team at One Step. We know we must keep focused on strengthening our products and supporting our valued clients.

We are constantly working on improving One Step Fire Inspection by listening carefully to what departments tell us would make their job easier. We rely as much on your input as you do on ours and we see you as partners.

We thank you for your support and look forward to working with all of you to make One Step Fire Inspection even better.

*“To be truly number one you must constantly strive to surpass yourself, not the competition”*

*Pat Riley*