

The News Bulletin from Autoscribe Ltd

Genuine system configurability ensures a successful LIMS project ... and saves time and money

Comprehensive and genuine configurability, without resorting to writing custom code or using a programming script, is a rare commodity in the LIMS business but it is the key to a successful LIMS implementation.

Genuine configurability means that a LIMS can be designed quickly, without custom code, to represent user requirements in terms of workflows, screen designs, menu designs, terminology, report designs and much more. It avoids the need for users to change their normal working practices in order to meet the restrictions of the chosen LIMS.

Compromises caused by lack of system configurability are the most common reasons for failed LIMS projects and/or dissatisfaction with the system supplied.

Genuine configurability also ensures that the LIMS can keep pace with the changes needed as the customer business develops. This can involve the introduction of new products requiring additional or modified work flows or changes in the IT strategy within an organisation, for example. Whatever the reason, a huge amount of time and money can be saved if the chosen LIMS can be adapted to new requirements using the system configuration tools. The alternative would be to replace the LIMS or involve the vendor or a contractor in supplying custom code. These options involve spending a significant amount of valuable time and money.

Matrix LIMS is supplied with the most comprehensive set of tools that allow genuine system configuration without the need for custom coding. Nor do users need programming skills to master these tools - just a 3-day training course is recommended. The various workflows in your laboratory can

be configured into Matrix thus providing a user interface that existing users will find familiar.

An unlimited number of workflows can be configured in Matrix LIMS – it is rare for a laboratory to have just one workflow. This means that the screens, for example, can be designed for a specific workflow eliminating optional fields and greyed-out menu items. This results in a user-friendly system ensuring that users adopt the system quickly and that training costs can be kept to a minimum. The training course for the Matrix configuration tools is 3-days in length, other vendor companies quote 14-days training and others none at all because configuration work has to be done by the vendor or is simply not possible.

Configuration in Matrix LIMS also specifies how screens are linked together which creates a sequence of events directly related to the customer work pattern.

Terminology used in a system is often a key element in user-friendliness. The translation table in Matrix LIMS is amazingly simple using an A = B approach. A is the term the system uses, B is the term that you, the customer, wants to use. This can be English to English translation or English to another language translation. Result – a user friendly and relevant system.

System security is enhanced by the appropriate use of configuration in Matrix LIMS. Menus, designed for each user or groups of users, ensure that each screen in the system is absolutely relevant to the current user and to the authority they have on the system. A user does not know other screens on the system even exist. What

about users continually making changes to the system? Not a problem as access to the configuration tools can be precisely controlled and the system can be frozen when configuration is complete by de-activating the tools. They are only re-activated when changes are needed as new requirements surface. This provides the best of both worlds – a highly configurable system where configuration changes can be controlled and monitored.

When the system is “frozen” the complete definition of each screen can be printed as a record suitable for showing the quality personnel and auditors. Not only does this satisfy auditors but it will be uniquely impressive. Not something they have seen before! There is a further bonus for the auditors – each screen is version controlled and all changes are tracked with identity of user making the change, time and date as a minimum. A complete history of the system is maintained leading to confidence at audits, a priceless commodity.

A system configuration in Matrix LIMS is stored with the database and hence upgrades do not affect the system appearance and existing functionality. This is a real benefit compared to systems where custom code has been introduced. With Matrix LIMS the system can be upgraded to the latest version with the advantage of new functionality and technology without any concerns about the system configuration.

Earlier I mentioned training courses that would enable users to configure their own systems. These user developed configurations in Matrix LIMS are fully supported by Autoscribe. This is not offered by our competitors.

Should users require Autoscribe to modify an existing screen or create a new one, for example, the screen can be shipped as an attachment to an e-mail thus saving cost and time.

Neil Wheeler of Allied Technical Centre states that the configuration tools allowed

their own staff to develop a Matrix configuration for managing customer enquiries, an urgent requirement at the time. This saved the company money as it was an extension to the existing Matrix LIMS rather than needing to purchase another system.

Nick Martin of Arla Foods acknowledges that the configuration tools allowed the development of over 50 different sample registration screens required to meet the needs of various Arla sites dealing with a complex product mix.

Simon Raybould of William Ransom & Son states that thanks to Matrix they have improved their throughput and reduced the level of paperwork and lead times. “Matrix is used by the majority of staff, many of whom have gained access to such data for the first time.”

The Matrix configuration tools offer unique system flexibility to match existing needs and future needs as business demands change. This flexibility is not available to the same degree in other LIMS and hence replacement systems may be needed if business changes are significant at considerable cost to the customer.

Comprehensive and genuinely powerful configuration tools as supplied with Matrix LIMS provide the user with a system to match both current and future requirements.

Please call, fax or e-mail us to arrange a demonstration of these unique configuration tools. Or perhaps offer us a challenge to partially configure a system to meet a specific requirement ... and then compare the response of our competition. We would prefer the configuration work to be done in your presence to emphasise the genuine and comprehensive nature of our Matrix system configurability.

Do not miss out on this opportunity.

PS If you have tracking applications such as sample tracking, inventory tracking, complaint tracking, document tracking we can help using our unique configuration capabilities.

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