

## MEDITECH & Interfacing

### **1 If I already need to purchase an interface from my vendor, what is the value of an interface engine?**

Opening the interface from a specific vendor is always essential. The value an interface engine delivers can be summarized around four primary points.

First, with a robust, extensive interface from a vendor, getting the interface is only needed once and then it can be leveraged when additional data exchanges with other applications are required.

For example, if you need a patient demographic (ADT) interface between MEDITECH and your laboratory system, you should purchase a wide-ranging interface that includes not only all of the information you need today, but any information MEDITECH can include in that message for future purposes.

As a result, when you have another requirement for an ADT interface to your radiology system, you do not need to purchase another interface from MEDITECH or 3rd party vendor. The interface engine can use the existing interface, modify the format to meet your new partner's requirements, and send it to your radiology system from MEDITECH. An interface engine saves money as the numbers of interfaces grow.

Second, when a point-to-point interface is purchased and built between two specific applications, little to no monitoring of that interface takes place. If the interface is down, sometimes the only way you would know is when one of your physicians or providers calls to ask why no messages are being received.

With an interface engine, proactive monitoring and alerting of the interfaces are part of the package, along with message log management which makes it easier to re-send messages when needed. An interface engine facilitates providing better service to your users and ensuring timely data exchanges occur.

Third, as in most things in life, change happens. A new data element may be required in an interface. If a point-to-point interface is in place, a change in the interface means being placed in the 'custom'

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queue so someone can customize the interface and deliver a new one to you. This takes time and may add to the cost. With an interface engine, making a change to an interface is simple and usually only takes minutes to make the adjustment. An interface engine enables greater control over your interfaces and provides the capabilities to make changes quickly and easily.

A fourth key point is flexibility to work with other standards. Although HL7 is a standard central to healthcare, other standards are playing an increasingly important role. For example, X12 messages facilitate billing, insurance eligibility requests, and other efficiencies in various workflows.

The Continuity of Care Document, an XML-based data standard, is also gaining traction as it relates to exchanging patient summaries between various physicians and providers. An interface engine delivers the capabilities to work with different healthcare standards and adapt to the changing healthcare standards landscape productively and efficiently.

### **2** Isn't an interface engine just another point of failure in my healthcare IT environment?

It is true that your patient data will be flowing through a central point and then routed to another application as you have defined. Many hospitals – large and small – have this hub-and-spoke approach to exchanging data.

With an interface engine, robust monitoring and alerting is in place on all interfaces. If the data is not flowing as intended, then the right people will receive alerts right away. Service levels are maintained while potential problem areas are quickly addressed.

With point-to-point interfaces, however, monitoring rarely exists. Managing 5, 10, 15 or 20 interfaces individually is far more challenging and risky than managing them centrally.

Moreover, the right interface engine can deliver native high availability which provides additional protection and peace of mind with minimal extra costs or efforts. An interface engine delivers value by providing proactive monitoring and alerts, and provides the ultimate in data exchange protection with native high availability functionality.

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### **3** What is the development time for interfaces compared to point-to-point?

Deploying new interfaces to an interface engine environment typically takes hours, not days or months. For an interface, building the data mapping logic and testing takes most hospitals less than four hours.

With point-to-point interfaces, getting in the queue with the various vendors is the first step, and this step alone can take weeks or months to get an interface delivered.

An interface engine delivers more control at the hospital level and enables efficient leverage in deploying interfaces to the environment.

### **4** Do we have to be proficient in a programming language to have an interface engine?

The short answer is “no.” In most hospitals using our interface engine, an application or systems analyst is the skill level used in building, testing, and deploying interfaces. Building the interface is done in an environment that is menu-driven and easy-to-understand.

The approach is one of test-as-you-build so that you see the intended results immediately. Additionally, there is context-sensitive on-line help to assist with using the features of the interface engine.

### **5** Do we need an FTE dedicated solely to the interface engine in order to manage it?

There are a number of factors that come into play in determining the right staffing model for a hospital in supporting their interface environment. Some factors include:

- Size of the hospital
- Number of interfaces planned
- Number of interfaces in production
- Complexity of the workflows

All of the above contribute to determining the right staffing model.

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In general, building, testing, and deploying interfaces does not take a full-time employee. Ongoing management and maintenance is typically incorporated into the network or IT operations functions. For Corepoint Health customers, a mid-sized hospital may have a half FTE assigned to interface development.

### **6 Will we be completely on our own if we purchase an interface engine? What does support/maintenance entail?**

It is your choice. In Corepoint Health's case, our integration engine is designed to be used by analyst-level skills. It utilizes a menu-driven approach to build and test interfaces. Many of our customers are comfortable in developing their interfaces after attending our product training class.

On the other hand, we have customers who leverage our services team to build, test, deploy, and manage their interface environment. Corepoint Health acts as the full-service provider for the hospital in this scenario.

Whatever your choice, Corepoint Health is dedicated to delivering strong services to our customers. It can be in the typical product support role or in the full-service role.

### **7 Would an interface engine give me the capability to search for messages and resend? What about interface monitoring?**

Yes. Within our administration console, there is a robust log management solution in which it is easy to filter, search, and re-send messages with a few clicks. Finding and re-sending messages is done in less than a minute.

In addition to the log management features, complete interface monitoring is achieved through the web-based console. At a high level, you can organize your interfaces in a model that makes sense for your organization. Green, Yellow, and Red light-type visual monitoring can easily be seen. Within the console, if alerts are triggered or message volumes need to be checked, it is all within a click or two.

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To some degree, interface alerting is more important. Most hospital IT staff do not sit in front of a monitor every minute of the day. Having configurable interface alerts based on parameters defined by you is critical. Alerts can be emailed to the appropriate people when issues arise. If the alert is not addressed within the defined time period, it can be automatically escalated to the right individual or group of individuals.

Managing deployed interfaces needs to be done in a user-friendly, prompt manner. Corepoint Integration Engine delivers comprehensive, simple-to-use interface management tools.

### **8** What other protocols besides TCP/IP can an interface engine handle?

Within Corepoint Integration Engine, there are several communication vehicles available.

- TCP/IP
- File
- FTP
- HTTP Post
- Any ODBC compliant database

In all cases, Corepoint Integration Engine has intuitive wizards which walk the user through establishing the connections.

### **9** What other data formats or standards can an interface engine handle?

Corepoint Integration Engine works with the following data formats and standards:

- HL7 – all version 2 variations
- HL7 – version 3
- HL7 Clinical Document Architecture (CDA), including

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- Continuity of Care Document (CCD)
- ASTM Continuity of Care Record (CCR)
- X12
- XML
- CSV or any delimited file format

Additionally, we have customers who embed PDF documents, images, and WAV files within an HL7 message and send information in that manner. Within the interface engine, there is flexibility to address almost any data format or communication requirements.

### **10** Can we use your interface engine to connect to EMRs?

Yes. EMR connectivity is a growing area of demand as hospitals and clinics implement tightly connected communities of care. An interface engine plays a key role in the exchange of patient data between the different providers. Each EMR or hospital information system has a slightly different data format or communication requirement, and an interface engine delivers the flexibility to handle the exchanges efficiently and securely.

Corepoint Health has experience in working with various EMR interfaces. Although there are too many to mention, a few examples include eClinicalWorks, Greenway, Sage, eMDs, Allscripts, etc.

### **11** What is involved in the installation? How easy is the install? Is there product documentation?

Installing Corepoint Integration Engine is a straightforward process. Typical hardware and software requirements include the following:

- Microsoft Windows Server 2003 or 2008 with Service Pack 2
- Microsoft IE7

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- Adobe Flash Player 10
- Intel Xeon 2.8 GHz (2 or 4 CPU server)
- 4-8 GB memory
- 320 GB SCSI disk

The installation process takes about 30 minutes or less. There is complete product documentation available within Corepoint Integration Engine. It can be accessed by pressing F1 when you are in the product or by clicking on it in the product menu structure. The product documentation highlights why certain features would be used and provides examples as well.

### **12** Do you have 24x7 support available?

Corepoint Health delivers on our customer support promises. We have 24x7 support available, and our support receives the highest rating in KLAS®. Customers are central to everything that we do, and we work hard to demonstrate that every day in our interactions with our customers.