

STRATFORD

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Healthcare EDI and Practice Management Software

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stratford notes

We are here and our computers continue to work. The Y2K bug seems to have been a lot of “hype” as far as Stratford and its customers are concerned.

This year we are going to streamline our support methods and make them more accessible, possibly at a lower cost. We are testing a lot of new equipment and software that should help.

All of the new methods that we are testing will require you to have Internet access. This has the most promise for the future. Once you sign up for a connection the cost of transmitting and receiving messages and files is very close to zero.

The most promising at this time is the newest version of Microsoft NetMeeting. When you purchase a new computer, it may be pre-loaded. If not, you can download it from the Microsoft web site. We recommend downloading it anyway to be sure you have the latest version.

You can get a low-cost headset and make phone calls from your computer exactly like an ordinary telephone. You can get a low cost camera and transmit video as well as audio. There is a ‘whiteboard’. There is also text-chat. This newsletter has other related articles. On page three inside we will discuss these and how they may be used by you and Stratford to enhance the quality of the support you receive from us.

Some of you have probably had the ex-

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Stratford has more than **4,100** licensed users

perience of using a headset with your phone. It must be comfortable after several hours of use. You must be able to adjust the volume and the sound quality must be very good.

We believe that if all our customers will get this type of equipment it will make software updates and customer support much easier and better than it is today. It will probably be much less expensive. At this time software updates are very labor intensive for you and for Stratford. We believe that billing requirements will change much more often in the next five years as more payers require Internet transmission of claims. We will need to begin using the Internet in order to make the process of updating your software easier and lower cost for both of us. •

Pre-paid support customers may use email for fastest response:

support@stratfordsoftware.com

You can find Stratford's Internet server at this address:
<http://www.stratfordsoftware.com/>

Training Classes ***SHS Software Basic Training***

In the Stratford Classroom:

By Appointment only \$225

Call for class availability at least three days in advance. On-site training with a certified Stratford trainer may be available (*by appointment only*).

FROM THE EDI CORNER

Internet electronic claims...

Notice to MPMG providers: you must get your email working this month. MPMG needs you to send your files by email directly to them. Stratford support will help you get your email setup if necessary. Please call if you don't know how to begin. If you don't have an ISP we will recommend one in your area. The cost will be about \$19.95 - \$29.95 per month for premium services. You can also get free email as we have discussed in previous newsletters. We suggest you go with a commercial firm if your primary use will be to send claims. The free services have advertising commitments and many have limitations of email attachment file sizes that may prevent you from sending large files. We don't yet have any firm numbers regarding different services, but we welcome any of our customers to tell us about any negative experiences with sending claims by email or other Internet connection methods. •

EMAIL SUPPORT

We continue to get more of our customers using email for support. In fact, the response to our requests has been much bet-

ter than expected. If you have email capability and wish to try it for support, please do it now. Just send your email to support@stratfordsoftware.com.

If you just want to see how fast we respond, you are welcome to send an email asking for a test response. You may be surprised. •

NEIC CLAIMS

NEIC does not charge Stratford customers a setup fee or per-claim fee for most claims. Because of this, we continue to get more customers changing from their current clearinghouse to NEIC.

If you are transmitting to NEIC, you must keep track of the batches you send. You should put the date of your transmission and the job number from your "tot" file on a post-it and stick it on your display terminal. The 'tot' file is one of the Stratford audit files that you clear after transmitting your files. Look at the bottom of the file for a line like this:

```
IKJ56250I JOB $NEM837P(JOB34423)
SUBMITTED
READY
```

What you want from this is the number 34423. The next time you transmit you will receive a report back for this job. If you get a report back and everything is OK, just note this on your post-it and put it somewhere for a month or so and then toss it. If you don't get a report back, you should contact Stratford. We get error reports from NEIC with the job numbers and we can research it for you. •

EDI "per-claim" charges

Stratford does not have any "per-claim" or other charges related to transmitting claims to Medicare or any other carrier. We only charge (optional) for providing software support.

STRATFORD'S INTERNET RELATED SUPPORT PLANS

In the coming months we will report on brand names of hardware and software that we think are good and begin recommending specific brands.

INTERNET AUDIO WHAT IS IT?

Audio is the easiest to understand. It works just like the telephone that you use everyday. You only need a low-cost headset to plug into the back of your computer. These headsets are priced from \$15.00 to \$200.00. The difference is the quality of the sound and the features. You will be able to communicate with a Stratford support person through your computer.

There are services that even allow you to call from your computer to someone without a computer. Your computer sends and receives the voice over the Internet. The service you use has a telephone connection near the party you are calling and they ring the phone just like an ordinary phone call. The party you are calling answers the phone. The quality of the sound is not that good yet, but it is improving every month. The cost may be less than most other long-distance companies.

INTERNET VIDEO WHAT IS IT?

Video telephones have been around for a long time. They never really did catch on for some reason. It seems that most people don't want someone looking at them when communicating long distance. Internet

Stratford will run your Stratford software related classified ad in our monthly newsletter *free*, upon SHS approval! Fax your ad to us at (650) 692-1073.



video is the same thing, it just sends and receives through your computer instead of the telephone lines.

INTERNET WHITEBOARD WHAT IS IT?

A whiteboard is the same as the blackboard you used in school, except it is white and uses your computer screen. You can type on it or draw with your mouse. This technology will allow you to draw on your computer and have the image appear on the Stratford support person's computer simultaneously. If the Stratford support person marks on the whiteboard, you will see it on your computer.

INTERNET TEXT-CHAT WHAT IS IT?

This is a form of mail. Just like email except instant. It works only if there is a direct connection between you and Stratford. When you type, the Stratford support person will see it. This is good because you get instant results and you don't need a headset or any other equipment. •

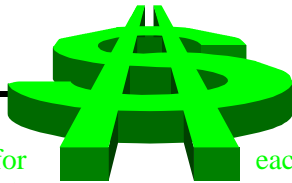
SOFTWARE SUPPORT NOTES

- 1 **Faxed requests for support get Priority Service.**
- 2 **If you send a fax with a description of the problem, your call is given priority over other faxes.**
- 3 **Do not call more than one time. The second call places your first call at the bottom of our callback list.**

We can receive many calls in the first few hours each day. It usually is not possible for us to have a technical support person waiting to take your call. If you just call and leave the message "please call", your call is placed at the bottom of the callback list. We must do everything we can to avoid "phone-tag". Hand-written faxes can be almost impossible to read, so please type them whenever possible. Include the best time to call you.

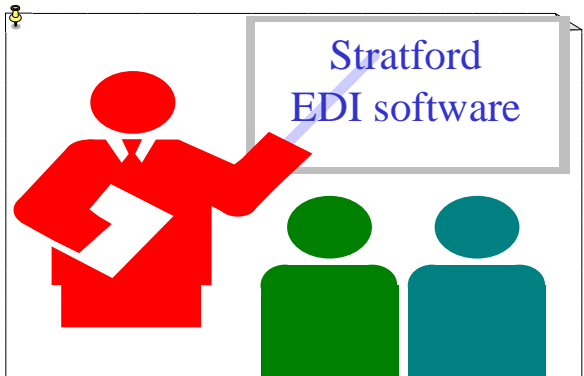
At this time we can deliver support by email. If you check your email each day, you may find this to be easier than faxing us. This is not very good support if you need a quick answer. We do not get very many support email messages so we only check the mail two or three times each day. As the volume increases, we will put more resources into email.

We are interested in hearing from people who would like to receive support by email. •



Stratford you \$100 for you refer who Stratford Software at full price (\$895). Simply fax or write to give us your referral. We must receive the referral notice in advance of the sale. We cannot pay for a referral if you notify us after the sale.

*Subject to restrictions



INTERNET RESOURCES

Here are some sources for free email taken from www.altavista.com by entering "free email". Be sure to read the contract to be sure it is really free and that it is what you want.

www.hotmail.com

www.microav.com (Internet access & email)

www.netaddress.com

www.apexmail.com

www.areacity.com

www.bigfoot.com

www.byke.com

home.crosswinds.net

www.ecosse.net

www.excite.com

Stratford Newsletter

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