stratford notes

This newsletter and probably newsletters for several more months will concentrate on the new Stratford program which is in the final phases of beta testing.

Our most common support issues at this time with the current, dos-compiled program are people who are buying new computers with Windows ME and Windows 2000.

inside this issue . . . .

- Stratford Notes
- From the EDI corner
- Windows ME Fix
- Stratford's new program
- Software Support Notes
- Internet Resources

Stratford has nearly **4,400** licensed users

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

Most of the computers that have Windows ME pre-installed do not support more than 40 open files at one time for dos-compiled programs. We have a fix, but it requires you to edit a file in the \Windows path. There is an article on the next page to help you through it. We also have a more extensive article on our web site in the 'support' section. If you cannot understand the article or you want help, please contact the support group. We will be happy to help you.

The new 'Windows-only' program is becoming much more 'mature' and dependable now. We had some issues recently with the conversion of data from the old Stratford program when the old data was on a different workstation from the new program. The conversion program itself ran fine as it has for almost 18 months. The problem was in the data location pointers for some network configurations. You would think that all 'Windows' compatible networks would be the same, but we have found many different configurations. All these require special consideration to be sure all the data is converted into the correct files, in the correct format, in the correct final location.

If you are in the 'beta program' and you have any problems with the conversion of your old data, be sure to let us know as soon as possible. All the problems that have been reported were fixed in less than 2 weeks. It is very important to us that the conversion work correctly for all our customers. When we begin the conversion process in the coming years, we do not want to have any failures. It is as important to us as it is to you. We had one customer tell us he did not want to bother us with his conversion problem. We want to assure you that it is not a bother at all, but rather something that is very important to us. We appreciate the feedback. •

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

support@stratfordsoftware.com
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FROM THE EDI CORNER ......

We now have many customers transmitting to the new Medicare contractor for Southern California. We are not aware of any outstanding issues related to the changeover from Transamerica to NHIC.
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WINDOWS ME FIX

Yes, the Stratford program will run just fine on Windows ME, but you will need to make one small change. This involves editing a system file, so please be careful. It is a simple change so if you know how to use the Windows editor you should not have any problems. If you don't know how to use the editor, then you should stop reading this right now and get someone to help you. The Stratford support group will be happy to help you, but we can't edit a file on your computer. If you have email, we may be able to have you attach a copy of your system.ini file to an email, let us edit it and send it back. This means you must be able to attach files to emails and save files in the correct directory when you get it back from us. It is probably easier for you to edit the file. Anyway, here is the procedure:

From the task bar at the bottom of your screen, press START | RUN and type in Notepad.exe. When Notepad starts, pull down the File menu and then Open. Type in \WINDOWS\SYSTEM.INI

Now, using your arrow keys, move the cursor down through the file until you come to a section titled:
`[386Enh]`
Using the [Enter] key, put in a blank line under this section heading. On this blank line type:
`PerVMFiles=225`

Now pull down the Files menu and select Exit. When it asks you if you want to save your changes, answer Yes.

Now reset your computer and the Stratford program should work fine.

Note that this change is required even if your Windows ME computer is a workstation on a network and the programs are located on a different computer. In other words, the change is required on all Windows ME computers. We will attempt to have our program make the change automatically if possible in the future. For now, you must make the change.

Why did Microsoft elect to prevent the Windows ME version from reading the files: config and autoexec like every other operating system has done since the first version of dos in the early 1980's as well as all versions of Windows including the new Windows 2000? Don't ask us. We have no idea. •

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 NEW PROGRAM

Here are some questions and answers about the new program in 'beta' now.

Q: Do you have the tutorials working now so I can press F1 inside the program?
A: Yes
Q: Do you have a fix for Windows ME so I can use your program now?
A: Yes. See an article in this newsletter on this subject. Call support if you can't get it to work. We will be happy to help you.
Q: Do you have the conversion program working so I can convert data that is on a different workstation? If yes, can I convert even if I don't have the other workstation drive mapped to a drive letter? I mean can I convert from \\Workstation020\c-drive\130\205?
A: Yes and Yes and Yes.
Q: Do you have the printer thing worked out with Windows 2000?
Q: Yes and No. Some of the printers that are being delivered now have a printer driver that is not capable (as far as we know) of printing on a pre-printed form like the HCFA 1500. Actually, they will print but the print position cannot be controlled accurately. The fix, unfortunately, is on a per-printer basis. We are still working on this and hope to have an acceptable general solution.

You should know that when bubble jet printers first came out, we found that many were not capable of printing characters on a page wide enough to be acceptable for a HCFA 1500 form to be machine read. In those cases, there could be no solution short of having the federal government approve a new design for the insur-

ance form. No solution was ever found that was acceptable to Medicare and most other payers for these 'bubble jet' printers. Those printers could not be used.

Most laser printers are capable of printing a HCFA form so that it can be machine read correctly. Most laser printers require special control characters to make them compress print for reports. They also require special control characters to move the print image around on a preprinted form so that, for example, an 'X' will be in the proper box on a HCFA 1500 form.

Most laser printers were designed for printing letters and other documents on plain white paper. In documents like that, the placement of the image is not critical. If a letter is 1/8 inch higher or lower, it will not be noticed. If the image on a HCFA 1500 form is off that much, it can cause the form to be rejected and/or misread.

Some companies tried printing the form itself along with the words. Unfortunately, the form has to have red/pink ink in order to be machine read correctly. •
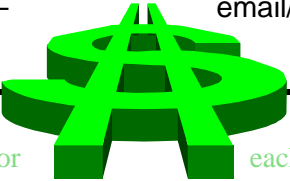
SOFTWARE SUPPORT NOTES

1   Email requests for support get <u>Priority</u> <u>Service</u>.

2   If you send an Email or fax with a description of the problem, your call is given priority over other Emails and 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 support requests 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 best by email. If you check your email each day, you may find this to be easier than faxing us. We check our email constantly — at least every 5 minutes. We are putting most of our resources into email and other methods that utilize the Internet. If you have an ICQ number, we can support it. Let us know.

We are interested in hearing from people who would like to receive support by Internet —   email/ICQ, etc.

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Stratford   will pay you $100 for   each person* you refer who   purchases 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

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EDI software
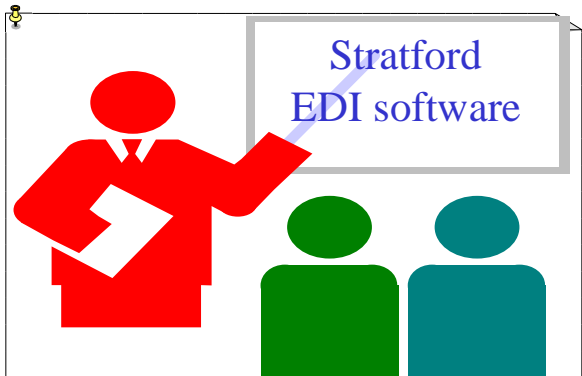
INTERNET RESOURCES

You can have your document or other written material spell checked at this site:

http://www.spellonline.com/

Just put your text into the Windows clipboard by using CTRL+C and then paste it into this web site using CTRL+V. If you have Office 2000 you don't need this, but it is neat to try it out.

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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.juno.com (Internet access & email)