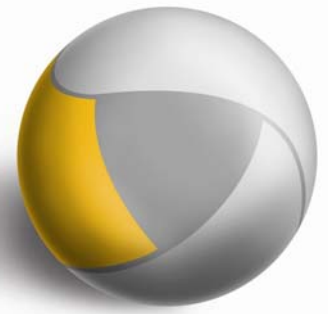


MI Management System Newsletter



July - August - September 2005

Quarterly Newsletter

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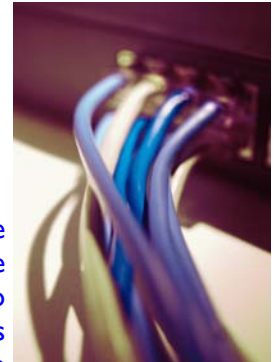
What Version?

The most current version of the MI Management System is 5.6.0.1. To find out which version of MI Management System you are running, click Help and then About.

New Downloads Available

- ⇒ AIG
- ⇒ Permanent General
- ⇒ Fidelity National
- ⇒ Indiana Farmers

Personal Auto policies can now be downloaded with these four carriers, personal home policies can also be downloaded with Indiana Farmers. Contact the carrier to get the downloads started, the first time the download is available you will be prompted to call MI-Assistant tech support. For a complete list of carriers available for download visit: <http://support.mi-assistant.com/public/synccompanies/>



NUDGMI News



The 2005 MI Users Conference will include meetings to complete the formation of NUDGMI (National Users Development Group for MI) and set the agenda for

the group. These meetings are a key step in getting the organization off on the right foot. The ultimate success of NUDGMI depends on involvement from its members. Now is the time to get involved, please contact John Wickhem at wickhemins1@charter.net or give him a call at 608.752.6030 for further information.

What's Next?

Version 6.0!

- ⇒ **Real Time Inquiry** – Real Time Inquiry is currently in Beta with several Carriers.
- ⇒ **Personal Umbrella Download** – Personal umbrella policies will now be available for download.
- ⇒ **Imaging area improvements** – Many improvements have been made to the Imaging area of the system.
- ⇒ **Improved integration to Comparative Rater** – Additional fields have been added to the integration from the Management System to the MI Comparative Rater on both the auto and home sides.
- ⇒ **Numerous other fixes** – Over 75 miscellaneous 'devstats' have also been completed. Most of these are requests from Resource Group meetings.

AN EXPEDITION WITH

MI-Assistant

A Division of Fiserv FSC, Inc.

For More information on the
MI Users Conference, please call
715.287.3225 ext. 167

Or Visit our Web Site at www.mi-assistant.com

2005 MI USERS CONFERENCE

July 20 - July 21, 2005

Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin



**Major New
Product
Unveiling**

**Variety
of
Education
Sessions**

**Hear from
Agency
“Power Users”
how to get the
most out of your
MI Products**

**Family
Friendly
Atmosphere
in Beautiful
Wisconsin
Dells**

Need Technical Support?
<http://support.mi-assistant.com/>

From The Customer Service Technical Support Archives

*By Jennifer Thompson, Customer Service
 MI-Assistant*

Do commissions download?

A few carriers offer some commission capability in download, but the MI Management System does not currently support this. When the user sees the wrong commission amount coming through on commission



reconciliation, it's coming from the System Defaults, Percentages tab or the Billing Setup. Whenever a new policy is started, it looks up the commission percentage from the System information. If the percentage pulls in incorrectly, it can be overridden in the Billing Setup screen. On the Percentages tab, the commission can be broken down for each carrier by line of business and by plan. It cannot be broken down by vehicle or premium volume.

During a download, how do I know whether I should Update, Replace, or Add the vehicle?

First, let's define what each option does:

- Update:** The vehicle at top (from the carrier) is obviously the same as one of the vehicles below, but the VIN doesn't match exactly.
- Replace:** The vehicle at the top (from the carrier) was purchased to replace one of the vehicles below.
- Add:** The vehicle at the top (from the carrier) is a completely new vehicle or the user processing the download isn't sure if they should update or replace.

Selecting update or replace should be done whenever possible because we will merge the existing vehicle information with the one being downloaded. The agency may have added information that the carrier does not download, so to retain the maximum amount of information updating or replacing is best.

However, this must be weighed against the benefits of processing the download quickly. The person processing the download may have no idea whether they should update, replace, or add. In a case like that, we recommend that the user always select add. It kind of defeats the whole purpose of downloading if the person has to get the file to figure out what to do.

Many users wonder if they will end up with duplicate vehicles

on the policy by always picking add. They will not. There is a mapping flag turned on that will cross check the download file against the policy and automatically remove any vehicles not in the download.

ASP users LOG OFF

ASP users are in a unique situation. They connect to their Management System on a remote server via the Internet. If a user experiences a lock up in the ASP management system, they should not do a Ctrl Alt Del and end task. Although this will separate the user from the server, it leaves the session that they were in open on the server. When they log back in, they will be at the exact same place. Instead, look by the clock on your own computer, double click on the ICA icon, then Log Off.

Why do I get a key violation on the Claim form?

Each ACORD loss form in the system has a Claims Payments tab. Here the agency can record the payments made to the insured. Make sure that if two claim payments were made on the same date when entering the payments, each has a unique check number on each payment. If the check number is left blank, it will assume the check number field is the same and result in a key violation.

If a user experiences a "key violation" error, the best thing to do is use the Undo Changes button at the top of the application or form. You will lose any changes made since you last saved. However, it's much better than doing a Ctrl+Alt+Del and ending task. Here you will also lose your changes, but also risk corrupting your database.

My Billing Setup Error Report is so long!

Then stop running it! This report was originally created to be analogous to the Information Errors from Apps report in the DOS version of the Management System for those of you who were with us back then.

This report points out information that may not be correct in the Billing Setup area, but most of these will be corrected the first time a person enters Billing Setup, or will make itself evident when someone trying to do the billing receives a message and can make the correction at that time. MI-Assistant will be reviewing with resource groups whether this report should be removed from the system.



Real Time Inquiry

By Mike Peterson, VP of Product Management
MI-Assistant

Unless you've been out of the country, you've, no doubt, heard the phrase "Real-Time" multiple times in the past year or so. It is truly the buzz word throughout the insurance industry. So what is Real-Time you ask? Well, it can mean different things to different people. Since MI is about to release "Real Time Inquiry" within the Management System, we wanted to explain exactly what "Real-Time" will mean to you and how it will benefit your agency.

MI's Real-Time component for service is referred to as ServiceLink. ServiceLink is free of charge to Management System users and will be shipped in the 6.0 release of the Management System. This module allows you to request "Real-Time" data from many of your carrier's websites without the hassle of logging in and typing in policy numbers as well as filling in other required fields. ServiceLink utilizes IVANS Transformation Station technology as well as proprietary web services provided by carriers to access information residing on your carriers servers and websites. This information includes: Billing, Claims, and Policy inquiry as well as login to the front page of the carrier's site.

No longer will you be required to minimize the Management System, log into the carrier site, and key

policy information. With ServiceLink, you simply highlight the policy on the client screen, click the ServiceLink button, select the inquiry type, and click process. The carriers themselves determine what happens at that point. Many times you will be logged right into the system just as if you went to the website. Other carriers may return a PDF with the information requested. The information available through ServiceLink differs for each carrier. If certain Real-Time functionality is not available from one of your carriers, you'll need to lobby your marketing rep for that functionality, or better yet, work with NUDGMI to lobby the carriers on behalf of all MI Management System users.

Once again, this functionality is provided to you and your agency at no extra cost and without a monthly charge. We hope that ServiceLink will help you provide fast and accurate service to all your policyholders. To learn more about ServiceLink, we encourage you to attend the 2005 MI Users Conference.



Putting a Face to a Name

Name: Jason Schultz

Age: 27

What do you do at MI? My main focus at MI is to test the Management System builds before they're released to the agents. I also did the majority of the 5.6.0.1 updates when MI moved the Management System from Interbase to Firebird. For my first 6 years at MI, I was in the Distribution department, sending out disk/CD

updates and also doing technical support for Customized Company Programs.

How long have you worked at MI? 7 years

Where do you live? Eleva (about 1 mile away from MI)

What do you like to do besides working at MI (that's a given)? Outside of work, I like to spend time with my family (especially my nieces & nephews). I also like to do basically anything outdoors including fishing, hunting & golfing.

What do you like about your job? MI is a great place to work & everyone is very friendly.

October Management System Training!

MI will be offering a Management System training October 11th, 12th, and 13th at the MI-Assistant office in Eleva, WI. This training is designed for any user new to the Management System or anyone who just wants a 'refresher' on the system. Further details are available at: <http://www.mi-assistant.com/miassistant/news/mi+management+system+training/default1.asp>.

Sign up soon as these sessions are very small with lots of hands-on materials and help from our training staff.

Resource Group Meetings



Have you considered joining an MI Resource Group lately? MI's regional resource group meetings continue to improve and grow. Meetings are now held at the regional locations twice per year. The meetings include updates on your MI products, user feedback on new features, review/training on the latest release, as well as a training session on a specific area of the system. With the thousands of hours CSR's, agents, and owners spend working in the system every year, any time-saving tips can have a great impact over the course of a year. If

you are interested in attending a regional meeting, call Bill Sterry at MI-Assistant for further information.

Surge Suppressors and UPSes



With the severe weather season upon us, there is always a concern that a lightning strike will occur nearby. Lightning strikes can cause damage to any electronics that are running on utility power unless properly protected.

Most people are familiar with the simple power strips that are strung underneath desks and around offices. Generally speaking, these power strips are a very poor choice for protecting the investment you have plugged in to them. The vast majority of standard, off-the-shelf surge suppressors use something called a Metal Oxide Varistor (MOV). Just about every surge protector uses MOVs as their surge suppression. MOVs work by diverting the surge away from the device being protected. As more surges are diverted, the life span of the MOV shortens and failure becomes imminent. The most commonly used MOVs last between 10 and 100 surges (depending on the size of the MOVs used). There are several problems with MOVs. First, depending on the surge suppressor you have, it may or may not automatically shut down after the MOV wears out. Second, it is possible that as the MOV wears out that it will catch fire.

All surge suppressors are engineered to work in two different ways. Without getting into the technical aspects of them, there is a "good" way to handle surges and a "not-so-good" way to handle surges. The "good" way (Mode 1, aka *Normal Mode*) is the safest way to divert surges (it diverts the excess voltage to the neutral leg of your electrical service). The "not-so-good" way (Mode 2, aka *Common Mode*) diverts the excess voltage to the ground leg of your electrical service. Diverting excess voltage to ground disrupts data and communications, introduces noise into audio and video signals and can degrade or damage data ports

(the same data ports and electronic devices you're lead to believe are protected!). Generally, it is possible to tell whether your surge suppressor is Mode 1 or Mode 2. The Mode 1 suppressors will generally say **(L-N)** or **(H-N)** on the back (indicating that it only diverts surges from hot to Neutral). Mode 2 suppressors will generally say **(L-N)**, **(L-G)**, **(N-G)** (indicating that surges get diverted to ground). Older surge suppressors may not say anything on the back, which means that it's probably old enough that it should be replaced.

Uninterruptible Power Supplies (or UPSes) are basically surge suppressors with a built-in battery pack. The general purpose for a UPS is to simply provide enough time to either 1) safely and properly shut down the devices attached to it or 2) provide backup power to the devices attached to it (via generator). When a power outage occurs, the UPS feeds the connected devices from the batteries until power is restored or the batteries are exhausted. Most UPSes have some sort of communication port on them (either serial, USB or network) that will notify the connected devices to initiate a shut down. To avoid data corruption it is very important to make sure that your UPS and computer are configured to talk to each other and your computer knows to shut down if the UPS loses power.

MI-Assistant strongly recommends that you have your file server(s) connected to a UPS to avoid data corruption if a power outage occurs. It is a wise idea to have all computers connected to a UPS to avoid data corruption, but it is most important for the file server(s). It is also important to purchase high-quality, Mode 1 surge suppressors and to replace them every few years.

