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For MRO software, airlines have pure-play solutions, specialist point solutions and ERP solutions to choose from. There are also EFBs & ETLs to consider. The products of 50 industry suppliers are reviewed & profiled.

MRO IT market suppliers survey

As we reported a year ago (*see MRO IT market suppliers survey, Aircraft Commerce, February/March 2008, page 63*), there are a large number of software systems aimed at improving commercial aviation maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) efficiency. The market entry barriers remain low and this year, in spite of the economic climate, there are a number of relatively new entrants.

Again this year, *Aircraft Commerce* categorises vendors and tries to explain the range and depth of functionality on offer. The survey also looks at company credentials of longevity and customer base. Not every single vendor is covered; those who did not provide responses to our questionnaire are marked 'no data'.

There are five categories of solution: 'pure-play MRO solutions', which are the main vendors in the market; 'specialist point solutions', which usually augment pure-play solutions; 'enterprise resource planning' (ERP) solutions, which provide extended capability in finance and human resources; 'tier-two MRO solutions', which target smaller organisations; and 'electronic flight bag (EFB) and electronic technical log (ETL) software solutions', which deploy software into the aircraft and MRO shop environment to support real-time data exchange between users and the main MRO software. Vendors are surveyed in alphabetical order.

Pure-play MRO solutions

Most of the pure-play MRO software companies have the capability to respond to small and large airlines and MRO facilities seeking a new software solution. These are tier-one specialists that provide fully integrated maintenance and supply systems for commercial aviation. Some of the companies listed have more limited capability than others.

AD Software

This French-based company has been in business for just over a decade and has offices in Thailand and Africa. It has 7 customers for its AIR suite of products, four of which were added in the past year. The company's IT staff produce a range of discrete solutions called AIR: LIMS, AIRSTOCK, AIRBUSER, AIRDOC and AIRSTAT. These offer an integrated maintenance management, inventory control management, software management, electronic documentation management and fleet and equipment reliability management capability. The market for this product appears to be small operators, with the largest customer being the French Ministry of the Interior with 14 aircraft. This puts it at the edge of the tier-one pure-play MRO company.

Applied Database Technologies

This is a 22-man, 26-company, now with a sales base in Turkey. Responding for the first time to the survey, ADT has 14 direct customers, including four new ones in 2008, although it still has a little way to go to prove it has the longevity to stay in the top layer. The company has Oracle as an implementation partner.

The product, called Wings, has the following modules: fleet management (planning), maintenance engineering, production control, flight planning, inventory control, labour collection, employee attendance, employee training & finance tracking, billings, roles and inspection. Recent customers include Kozair Airlines where the system is now live.

Aerospil Systems Inc

Aerospil was a former maintenance and IT services provider. They started in aviation maintenance software in the mid-1990s.

It is based in Canada, the US and Austria. Aerospil acquired the success maintenance product PAM in early 2004 from STCA, with which it still has a partnering relationship.

The WinPMI product is now marketed with WebPMI as a browser application over a corporate intranet, and the other Aerospil products, EngMAINT, is now web-enabled. These products have been enhanced with a new series of AeroBLL and AeroBLL AeroKIT PAK. These electronically manage requests for quotations, purchase part orders and invoices for vendors that participate in a business logistics. It is designed around the requirements of the ATA standard Spec 3000. This integration capability, making Aeroexchange, has been acquired by Aerobase Airlines and LIFT recently.

With 32 customers, including three new ones in 2008, Aerospil end qualifies as a tier-one supplier. Although the main technology society to move away from client-server architecture is unclear as yet. The company has a marketing relationship with Cognate, its below in point solutions for technical document management in the Digital DOC, and with Casebank Technologies Inc for integration of its Spotlight reliability analysis technology. Aerospil also teams with Flight Technologies Inc below in point solutions to integrate and co-market its on-350 solutions as Digital AIR. Its logistics and maintenance planning.

Kimber Air Data

Kimber Air Data is part of the Kimber group, based in Denmark but with offices in Malaysia. Its AIRCO2 product was first implemented in Kimber Air as a main computer system. Now a client-server system, it raised their net sales in 2008.



MINT Media is a specialist point solution offering scheduling and manpower management capabilities. These usually bolt-on to other pure-play MRO software or ERP systems.

The AMASIS II product has a range of modules spanning the full scope of normal airline and MRO requirements, including engineering, planning, reliability and quality control, technical records, material planning, cost control, purchasing, third party work, inventory, sales, supplier management, and MRO, which includes cost control and invoicing.

The company has 12 staff, and the AMASIS customer count has remained flat in 2008, possibly because the airline downturn has led to airline bankruptcies. Like its parent, the rest will see whether Comsol Air Data can take the technology forward from IGT client server infrastructure.

Commssoft

Commssoft started in business over 20 years ago. Based in the UK, the company caters to markets the COMSIS client server product around the world. The company

provides a range of solutions for airlines, including Airline systems like AirFM, Commssoft aims to keep carrying out its niche supporting smaller airlines and third party maintenance operators. It offers COMSIS as a hosted ASP solution.

IBS (formerly VISAer)

One of the changes from early 2008 is VISAer having reported last year that it has had a low problem recent years, the company was sold to IBS Technics, a publicly reported \$80 million, including all operating assets. The IBS used this investment to buy a fully owned subsidiary of IBS software, with offices around the world, including in the USA, UK and India. This division inherited 42 existing customers and 600 staff, including 63 developers up from 30 staff that came from VISAer. The company offers the IBS Maintenance Software (formerly MUser) as a replication service provider (ASP) to the market, alongside the traditional

IFR

IFR is an EADS company, based in Toulouse, France. It provides maintenance software alongside catering and flight operations systems. One of the longest-serving MRO software vendors after Commssoft, the company started in 1987. It has 74 airline customers, many from former French colonies. In 2008 it added nine new customers. The maintenance product is AMASIS. The sales and company size are somewhat distorted by the fact that the company also sells a range of airline solutions. These include CANOPES for catering, KEOPS for operations management, and RAMSES for revenue accounting. It is not clear if the AMASIS system has moved from its COBOL origins, but it is in the process of moving to .NET. The solution is offered as a hosted ASP system, and has 18 airlines using it in this mode.

AMASIS is used mainly by airlines, some third-party maintenance providers, and the French navy. Modules include: routine maintenance; scheduled maintenance; airworthiness directive (AD) and service bulletin (SB) management; logistics; finance; e-documentation; assemblies & sub-assemblies; automatic provisioning; labour man-hours (MH); technical library; and barcode and data import-export. The system links to the Airbus suite of products, and also has a native link to a project planning tool. A link to Boeing's AHM product is planned in the near future.

Infospectrum

Infospectrum bought the Avaxis company in December 2006. Headquartered in California, USA, Infospectrum has strong roots in India, where much of the development and business process outsourcing is done. A deal in mid-2008 with an unnamed provider a partnership for implementation services and software as a service (SaaS).

The company also has a SAP presence. Little is known about the customer base for the re-branded into IFRAM product suite, since regulations were enforced from the company.

Traditionally, Avaxis sold to the MRO facilities and shop environments, with some defence contractor business. Also market area parallel. Their website suggests that this is Infospectrum's market focus.

Precisions since publication of this article:

From now on **IFR France** counts more than 100 worldwide licences.

IFR France solutions are adapted for both civil and military operators, whatever the type of aircraft considered.

Technologically speaking, **IFR France** has finalized the migration from COBOL towards JAVA started in 2006.

IFR France solutions are offered both in a local and hosted mode in order to allow each operator to use an information system whatever its specificities.

maintaining level and increasing COBOL has been integration with Boeing's AHM and Airbus' Argus product.