Written by Terrence O'Hanlon, ReliabilityWeb.com
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In the past few months, this column has covered computerized maintenance management systems (CMMS) and enterprise asset management (EAM) resources available on the web. We also have covered an open source code CMMS and freeware CMMS. At last count, there were more than 400 CMMS products available. You will need a great deal of time to investigate even a small percentage of them.

One solution is to run with the crowd and select SAP-Plant Maintenance (if your company runs SAP, this decision may be in your future), MRO Software or Datastream. Our research shows that these three vendors cover just over 50 percent of the CMMS/EAM market.

That leaves at least 397 maintenance software packages uncovered. If you are like many companies, you may decide to bring in an expert to assist in your CMMS selection process.

Consultants can be an excellent resource for ensuring a good software selection process. You must seek one willing to fully understand your requirements and partner with you for the long-term success of your CMMS project. These types of CMMS consultants are available if you look hard enough. You should also make sure that the consultant is not affiliated with any specific software vendor, lest the results be skewed in its favor.

Online knowledge base

An alternative for CMMS selection is available for those who want to do it themselves. Cmmscity.com, which is affiliated with the writer's Reliabilityweb.com, has just completed a project with Technology Evaluation Centers Inc. to launch an online knowledge base of CMMS and EAM software. This system allows a CMMS shopper to be armed with powerful information that should make the initial vendor selection process more productive.

The CMMS knowledge base contains more than 2700 criteria for CMMS vendor evaluation and selection. The data supplied by each CMMS vendor has been vetted by leading CMMS subject matter experts to create an impressive man/machine information system.

The Cmmscity.com knowledge base, allows users to describe the type of work environment, specific work requirements, number of users, the type of computer operating system, budget

ranges, and hundreds of other optional information elements. The knowledge base displays all the possible CMMS choices with summarized information and allows the user to select up to five vendors for a detailed side-by-side comparison. Original criteria may be adjusted on a what-if basis to see how different factors affect different vendors. Once the reports display the information as the user wants, cost justifications and business case reports may be prepared to begin the real world evaluation process.

The Cmmscity.com knowledge base is available at no cost for up to 7 days. If someone wants to take more time to evaluate CMMS options, a small service fee applies. Even with the fee, it is a fraction of the cost of hiring a CMMS consultant.

This is another example of the Internet changing the way things are done and we are always in favor when the power of information shifts into the hands of the buyer. In the past, CMMS buyers sometimes did not know what they did not know until the final software decision was made.

Cmmcity.com also offers an alternative manual CMMS shopping system that allows users to supply basic system requirements. These requirements are sent to various CMMS vendors who each reply to the shopper with their best offers including software, implementation services, support, and training.

With almost 60 percent of CMMS implementations failing to generate the expected return on investment, it is important to have every advantage available to make sure you end up with the right software for your maintenance operation. Try the Cmmscity.com knowledge base and see how your decision-making process can be markedly improved with the power of detailed information and side-by-side CMMS comparisons. **MT**

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