

Data Innovations, Inc.

by Greg Vail and Dave Potter

Data Innovations, Inc. is a software company based in South Burlington, Vermont, specializing in medical instrument interfacing. The company has averaged over 100% growth for the last 3 years and has over 600 placements of Instrument Manager™ systems internationally.

The Instrument Manager product is a turnkey system specifically designed for medical instrument interfacing. Medical instruments range from large blood analyzers located in laboratories, to hand-held devices, such as glucose monitors. Prior to the emergence of interfacing, laboratory technicians had to program analyzers with patient demographics and appropriate test selections and hand enter results into information and billing systems. Recently, laboratories have become increasingly automated, requiring the Instrument Manager to control robotics moving patient samples to and from analyzers.

The Instrument Manager provides connectivity for up to 64 instruments simultaneously. TCP/IP, LAT, and RS232 connections are all supported at the same time. Each connection may have a different protocol and data format. Data received in any format, on any connection, may be translated to another format and routed to any other connection(s). The user may customize the system with no programming through easy-to-use menus and screens. Services include customization, installation, and 24-hour dial-in remote support.

Data Innovations, Inc. has been a Bronze Distinguished Member of MTA since 1992.

Data Innovations has been using M since 1989. Easy string manipulation, different types of I/O device control, and database management are all strong reasons why Data Innovations chose M as the platform for the Instrument Manager. These features, along with the ability of M to run multiple independent background

jobs, are what helps give Instrument Manager its competitive advantage. In addition, the ability to make dynamic code changes has made M a very efficient environment for programmers to develop and especially debug in.

Instrument Manager is a PC-based system implemented on a DOS platform. Customized versions of the Instrument Manager, marketed by various other companies under a variety of names, have been implemented in the Windows 3.x and Windows 95 environments. These Windows products use Visual Basic as a front-end tool.

The ability to use standard hardware and operating systems is also a very important asset of M. The ability to use standard network boards and especially multiseriport boards has given the Instrument Manager system a very cost-effective way to handle multiple medical instruments with only one PC. The use of standard operating systems has allowed Data Innovations to take advantage of off-the-shelf software such as remote control software. Remote control software allows Data Innovations to offer a high level of support world wide, all from one location.

Now under development is a port of the Instrument Manager system to Windows NT. Using the power of M to run on a variety of platforms with little code change will allow Data Innovations to keep the core of the system intact, while making changes to only the user presentation layers.

As long as M continues to grow while also maintaining integration with the rest of the software industry, it can continue to be a competitive advantage to anyone who uses it. **M**

Greg Vail and Dave Potter are co-founders of Data Innovations, Inc., a software company based in South Burlington, Vermont.
