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Cost-Estimating Options

October 29, 2010

An accurate cost estimate can go a long way in securing a project these days. As margins get tighter and competition gets hotter, it often comes down to the estimator with the tools that allow for the most precision that win the job.

Of course BIM (building information modeling) has become a primary objective for many owners, contractors, and designers in the United States. These organizations are always looking for the most efficient construction software tools to complement their internal processes associated with BIM, cost estimating being one such tool.

Construction software companies are continually bringing new tools to market. And construction companies could soon have another option at their disposal as one provider that has made a name for itself in Europe is looking for a stronger presence in the U.S. market.



Construction Specific

CostOS from Nomitech, www.nomitech.eu, Athens, Greece, is a

cost estimating software system used by construction owners and contractors in Europe. According to company officials, the plan is to take the product, which is currently resold in the United States by Miami Micro Data, www.miamimicro.com, Miami, Fla., and enter the United States market more aggressively in the coming months. Here is a quick look at some of the high points to the product.

Through the use of open standards the product supports all the major design systems. It has a quantity takeoff feature that allows users to create a bill of quantities directly on the 3D model and view how the structure will be built as the estimate progresses. The product uses both your local/server cost database and the online databases, such as RSMeans, to find cost data that matches selected entities, directly assigning this data to the model.

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Nomitech is working with major software providers to ensure the product integrates

with key steps throughout the construction process. Some of these products include Oracle Primavera, from Oracle, www.oracle.com, Redwood Shores, Calif., for scheduling, and On-Screen Takeoff from On Center Software, www.oncenter.com, The Woodlands, Texas, for estimating. Of course the product is also compatible with Microsoft Excel to allow users to import and export data easily.

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According to Nomitech, while working with our estimate in it

program, users can connect to On Center's On-Screen Takeoff product to calculate quantities from PDF or DWG drawings. Through CostOS users can assign as many takeoff conditions needed to one bill of quantity item, apply factors on them, and select which unit of

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measurement to be taken into account.

Constructech readers consider technology associated with BIM to be among the top areas where they will allocate IT dollars in the year ahead. Could the market be right for some new choices? Only time will tell, but as the market develops it will be interesting to see which companies ultimately come out on top.

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