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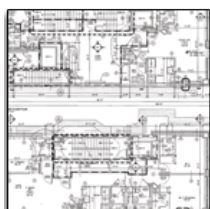
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Positioned to Takeoff

February 17, 2011

When it comes to cost-cutting methods in the construction process, more and more contractors find that the digital takeoff fits the bill. The technology has been gaining momentum in all segments of the market —residential, commercial, specialty, you name it. Now it's all a matter

of finding the right level of integration between these systems and your estimating systems to find the right fit.

Technology providers are beefing up their efforts around their digital takeoff and estimating offerings in order to provide contractors with the right solution. For some this means forming partnerships, for others it means enhancing current offerings. In either case, there is a solution for every segment of the market.

The conversation around digital takeoff starts with On Center Software, www.oncenter.com, The Woodlands, Texas, and its On-Screen Takeoff product. The company recently updated the product, adding in such enhancements as an overlay feature, which includes automatic resizing and aligning of overlay images, the ability to rotate overlay images independent of the base image, and a new overlay image de-skew function.

The product has been designed in such a way that any type of contractor can use it and apply it to any type of construction. Angelo Castelli, director, business development, On Center Software, says, "We view On-Screen Takeoff as our horizontal product that fits any discipline and we feel like we are the leader in the market based on our installed user base."

You could argue another reason On-Screen Takeoff has been so successful in the market has been the fact the product integrates so well with many third-party estimating systems in the market. On Center has developed a solid integration strategy around knowing that not all customers will use their estimating package, yet want to use the On-Screen Takeoff product, and therefore need a bullet-proof integration between the two products.



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Castelli says the integration strategy is driven by the users and that each

integration is designed with the intent of making On-Screen Takeoff more accessible to the industry, no matter what estimating solution they choose.

PlanSwift, www.planswift.com, Henderson, Nev., is another company making some noise in the area of digital takeoff. The company, which offers a single platform for both estimating and digital takeoff, recently released PlanSwift 9, which includes a range of new features, including comparative plan overlays, an option to include job-specific notes in one centralized location, and some enhanced toolbar options.



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One of the unique aspects the company is now including is a Plugin Store. Within

the product, customers can view custom plugins that have been developed by partners and other customers with the option to purchase and install them. These include different options,

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ranging from standard assemblies and parts database and advanced costing, to some unique offerings, like a "change takeoff" plugin, among many others.

Matthew Miller, director of marketing, PlanSwift, describes the experience to be almost Apple-like in the way it has set up its App Store. For each plugin you can see details and even user comments, much like you do with an app in the App Store.

Then there is the recent partnership between iSqft, www.isqft.com, Cincinnati, Ohio, and ProEst Software, www.proest.com, San Diego, Calif. Under the partnership, iSqft's digital takeoff tool, iSqft Takeoff, will be included in ProEst Estimating 2011 in effort to streamline the bidding process. Through a single click of a button users will be able to create an estimate using digital takeoffs from any drawing.

These are just a few examples of companies making some news around digital takeoff these days. Of course there are other providers of digital takeoff technology, developing solid products for different market segments in construction. It will be interesting to see how each player further positions itself to meet the needs of the industry as we push further into 2011.

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