



TECHNOLOGY FOCUS

Messaging going mobile

The right app will transform the iPad from being merely an electronic document carrier to a real-time message-management tool that can provide real benefits



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The iPad can revolutionise the way in which the London market does business – but only if it has the right apps

UIB, Miller and Price Forbes are piloting an iPad app that supports situations where face-to-face negotiation is required.

Heralded as the latest weapon in the war against the London market Luddites, much has been written lately about the use of the iPad in the underwriting room at Lloyd's.

With its sleek, stylish good looks, there are high hopes this fashionable gadget will win over the hearts and minds of industry practitioners and pave the way for new technologies in the London market.

While the iPad will undoubtedly help charm some die-hard traditionalists, can we really pin our hopes on this smart new toy improving efficiencies in the way we trade in London?

E-endorsement trial

The iPad is being trialled by a number of leading brokers to support the electronic agreement of endorsements at present. However, the iPad on its own has limited effectiveness. Used merely as a portable electronic slipcase to replace the bundles of files carted up and down Lime Street, it does little to improve an inherently inefficient process and offers no benefit to the way in which brokers manage their workload.

Used in this manner, where documents need to be manually transferred to and from the iPad as the broker leaves and returns to his office, it simply adds yet another layer of process, as well as additional complexities in terms of document versioning.

It may be a small step towards chipping away at working practices steeped in 300 years of tradition, but in today's competitive global marketplace, can we afford to be edging forward so slowly?

Does this mean the iPad is not the right tool for the job? Not at all. The iPad has the potential to be very powerful, but only if it is loaded with the correct ammunition.



The iPad is a blank slate, built with applications in mind and therefore to harness its power, business apps are needed. These

apps are able to exploit this new mobile technology fully by providing instant access to data held on the broker's own network, as well as real-time messaging wherever the broker may be.

Business apps, such as the one created by Trace Isys and presently being piloted by Price Forbes, Miller Insurance Services and UIB, allow the broker to connect directly from their iPad to their messaging platform, providing instant access to risk information and placement history.

Return visits to the box are dramatically reduced by providing remote access to documents on the broker's network.

Changes can be made on the fly, queries addressed, supporting information provided and messages sent and received while standing at the box.

On top of all this, the broker now has a mechanism for effectively managing their endorsement workload remotely with a real-time view of all endorsement activity. All this will lead to the faster closing of transactions, significantly speeding up the agreement process.

If companies are willing to invest in the equipment, surely it makes sense to invest in the right software, too.

Transforming the iPad

The right app will transform the iPad from being merely an electronic document carrier into a real-time message-management tool that can provide real benefits in terms of immediacy, access to information and workload management.

With this much potential, the iPad could truly become the tool that transforms the way we do business in the London market. ■