

## The Insuresoft User Group - A Unique Tradition

A boisterous group is gathered around heaping plates of ribs in Alabama, all talking about one thing: insurance software. It's Insuresoft's 2006 User Group, and insurance IT experts from all across the United States have come together to discuss the latest innovations from the Insuresoft team, provide feedback and recommendations, and have a good time while they are at it.

### History of the User Group

Insuresoft's User Group tradition began in 1997, initiated by a group of Diamond System users looking for an avenue to discuss their software needs and recommend areas for improvement and enhancement. Since then, the User Group has grown in size and the purpose has evolved. Today, the User Group is a full two and a half day event focused on future Insuresoft developments and sharing progressive ideas between industry professionals.

While the destination changes from year to year, Insuresoft always aims to provide a balance between presentation time and social events. For Insuresoft, one important tradition of the User Group has become taking customers out to taste local cuisine. At the 2006 User Group in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, that meant sharing ideas over hickory-pit ribs at a local favorite, Dreamland BBQ.

Insuresoft President and CEO, Tony Villa, stressed the importance of providing attendees with substantial business value, as well as the opportunity to interact with each other, "We have found that a more relaxed setting helps us develop a strong sense of community in which our customers are comfortable to network and suggest valuable innovations."

"As customers, we help determine the scope of future enhancements."

Jim Streicher,  
The Cincinnati Insurance Companies

### 2006 Attendees

The 2006 User Group included IT professionals representing nearly 20 different insurance carriers nationwide. In addition to the attendees, a number of users dialed in via video conferencing or watched Webcasts of the presentations. Among those attending was Michelle Lucas, IT Manager at Safeway Property Insurance Company, who has come to appreciate the level of support her company experiences with Insuresoft. "One of the reasons we would never consider going with anyone else is the responsiveness we get from Insuresoft," Lucas revealed. "This is especially important to us because we don't have a large IT staff, and rely on the kind of support Insuresoft provides. We also appreciate that we have a dedicated team at Insuresoft who knows our system well."

Another attendee, Jim Streicher, the Secretary for the Personal Lines Department at The Cincinnati Insurance Companies, indicated that the Diamond System has greatly improved their response time and customer service. "We went with Diamond because no other product met all the criteria we needed," Streicher stated. "Overall, it's a great product, and it's supported by great people. Whatever technical hurdles we face can be overcome because Insuresoft is willing to work with us to do whatever needs to be done."

### Stimulating Progressive Discussion

The User Group is an annual opportunity to stimulate discussion and encourage pro-active customer participation. Web services, third-party interfaces, credit scoring, and address and geo coding were among the topics discussed for 2006. "The focus group is about where are we going to take the product conceptually, as well as reaffirming our personal relationship with Insuresoft," Streicher said. "As customers, we help determine the scope of future enhancements."

### For information

on The Diamond System, visit [www.insuresoft.com](http://www.insuresoft.com),  
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Discussing future enhancements is a mutually beneficial process for Insuresoft and its customers. Not only are customers well informed on what to expect from the next product versions, but also, Insuresoft can prioritize the enhancement process. "Everyone has specific needs for the product," said Chris Blair, Vice President of Product Management at Insuresoft. "The focus group helps us determine how we can design solutions that benefit the majority of our customers."

## Informing Customers

Many carriers attend the User Group to preview the latest product innovations. "We are actually here to evaluate the 4x system," Lucas said. "There has been a tremendous amount of information presented, and we feel that we can make an informed decision at this point. We are definitely going to make the conversion, and I am very excited about it."

Todd Spencer, General Manager of Personal Lines at Federated Insurance indicated, "The User Group helps us plan from a technology perspective. Insuresoft's Gold-Level Certified Partner Status with Microsoft puts them on the cutting edge of developing technologies such as .Net and Web Services. The User Group helps us anticipate when and where we need to upgrade our technology to continue to accept new product enhancements."

## Developing a Network

Over the years the User Group has helped forge industry relationships, and networking is a welcome aspect of the annual meeting. Whether specifically Insuresoft related, or regarding another aspect of the insurance technology industry, all discussion is encouraged and can provide beneficial insights for the Insuresoft team and users alike. According to R. Christopher Haines, Assistant Vice President of Technical Operations at Buckeye Insurance Group, "The User Group is particularly valuable because it gives me the opportunity to build relationships with other Diamond customers. There have been several instances when I have contacted people who I've met at a User Group to find out how they handle particular issues."

Todd Spencer sums up the benefits of the User Group in a way all attendees would agree with: "It gives us the opportunity to interact with other Insuresoft customers and learn how they have dealt with or solved a problem. Plus the ribs are really good!"