What's New in Acowin 4.3?

Introducing AcoTruck: Acowin version 4.3 is being released in conjunction with the debut of AcoTruck, a new system that allows technicians to use portable tablet computers to complete their work orders in the field. These "tablet" computers are laptop PCs with touch-sensitive screens, which can be manipulated with electronic pens. If you purchase AcoTruck for your system, your Acowin dispatchers will be able to send Call Slips out to the technicians via the Internet. These Call Slips appear on the technicians' AcoTruck schedule display. The technician can fill in labor, materials, resolutions, and equipment specifications, using a screen that looks exactly like the pre-printed work order forms traditionally carried by field techs. The technician can prepare the final invoice using Time & Material, As Agreed, or Flat Rate billing methods, show the customer an on-screen invoice preview, obtain the customer's signature electronically, and print the invoice with a portable printer. The Acowin Dispatch Board is updated as the technician enters his work times, and completed Call Slips are returned from the AcoTruck tablet to the Acowin system over the Internet, closing out the Call Slips and storing the customer's signature as an Attachment file for easy review in the future. Several Acowin screens have been modified to work with AcoTruck, as described below. If you're interested in adding AcoTruck to your system, please contact your Team Management Systems sales representative.

Attachment Setup Change: To allow Attachments to work with AcoTruck, the Setup / Settings / Miscellaneous screen has been modified to include an "Attachment UNC" field. This field should contain the computer and share name of the Attachments folder, in the standard Windows directory format, like this: \\server\attachments, if the Attachments folder is located on a computer named "server" and shared as "attachments". This is the same path you would type when creating a mapped network drive to point at the Attachments folder. The Acowin server computer no longer needs a mapped drive to point at the Attachments folder, as it can use the UNC entry instead. Acowin workstations should still be given mapped network drives pointing to the Attachments folder, using the drive letter specified in the "Attachment Drive" field of Setup / Settings / Miscellaneous.

Tablet Icon and Check Box on Dispatch Detail Screen: The Dispatch Detail screen is opened by right-clicking a Call Slip on the Dispatch Board. This screen has been modified to include a check box called "Tablet", in the upper-right corner. Also, an icon for the AcoTruck tablet has been added in the middle of the Dispatch Detail screen. The icon resembles a PDA or Palm Pilot. To send a Call Slip to the AcoTruck technician, the dispatcher clicks on the AcoTruck icon. This marks the Call Slip for transfer to AcoTruck. It will be picked up the next time the AcoTruck technician clicks the Sync button on his schedule display, launching a short "send and receive" connection to the Acowin system over the Internet. If the Acowin dispatcher changes his mind about sending a Call Slip to AcoTruck, he can remove the Tablet check mark, but this must be done BEFORE the technician synchronizes and takes the Call Slip. Once a Call Slip has been pulled by the AcoTruck field tech, it becomes locked and can no longer be changed, until the tech returns it.

Dispatch Board AcoTruck Indicators: The first indicator box beneath each Call Slip on the Dispatch Board will now change color, based on the AcoTruck status of the Call Slip. (Up until now, this indicator has only been used to indicate the presence of a service contract, which causes it to display a star. It still displays a star if the customer has a service contract.) The AcoTruck color codes are:

> Dark Blue = marked for transfer to AcoTruck, but not picked up by technician yet
> Green = picked up by AcoTruck, the technician has the call on his tablet
> Yellow = returned by the AcoTruck technician as a completed call
> Red = returned by the AcoTruck technician with "Needs Attention" flag set

The Dispatch Diary: A new Diary has been added to the system, called the Dispatch Diary. It can be accessed by right-clicking a Call Slip on the Dispatch Board, to open the Dispatch Detail window, then clicking the Diary button. This Diary is intended to contain reminders and special alerts pertaining to the Call Slips. The AcoTruck system uses it when technicians return a Call Slip with the "Needs Attention" flag set. Special notes from the AcoTruck technician become Dispatch Diary entries. You can use the Dispatch Diary to create manual reminders tied to Call Slips, even if you don't have AcoTruck on your system.

Vendor Bill Wizard: When you create a new Vendor Bill, the system automatically launches a short wizard to help you prepare the invoice. This should make the procedure easier to follow and more convenient, especially for those users who have a large number of Purchase Orders in their system, since the old method involved using pull-down menus and became somewhat cumbersome when hundreds or thousands of Purchase Orders needed to be scrolled through.

Mass Change of Assigned Technicians: The Company Utilities menu now includes an option to change all of the Sites assigned to a particular technician, replacing him with a different default technician. This utility will prove helpful if a technician leaves your company or is assigned to different duties, making it necessary to transfer all of his assigned Sites to a different tech. The assignment of a default technician to each Site is made on the Billing screen of the Customer/Site File.

Acowin License Manager: The Acowin Server program has been renamed to "Acowin License Manager." The appearance of the program has been slightly adjusted, but it still has the same buttons, and serves the same purpose. You may notice the Acowin License Manager closes considerably faster than the Acowin Server did. It is no longer necessary to close the Acowin License Manager overnight, if you leave your server computer running all night - you should let the Acowin License Manager run constantly.

Improved QB Performance: This version of Acowin brings a substantial increase in speed when synchronizing invoices with QuickBooks, or requesting customer aging information and invoice balances from QuickBooks. Your QB Sync runs should be much quicker.

Improved Email Performance: Email message sent from Acowin, including emailed

invoices, Purchase Orders, and Call Slips, should go out much faster than ever. If you occasionally experienced time-out issues when sending emails in the past, you should no longer have such problems.

Windows Vista Compatibility: Acowin version 4.2 is fully compatible with Windows Vista. Both Acowin servers and workstations can now be installed under Vista.

Auto-Updater Now Runs as a Service: The Acowin Auto Updater, which formerly ran as a minimized icon in your server's system tray, now runs as a Windows service on the Acowin server computer. This will reduce icon clutter in your system tray, and comply with the requirements of Windows Vista. The Auto Updater service should normally be left running at all times.