



# mSupply

simply powerful pharmaceutical supply chain management

## mSupply and Web services

### What are web services?

Firstly, let's clear up the term- web services aren't really services, and they have little to do with the world wide web! Rather they are a way (a set of rules) that allows software applications to exchange information.

### Why should you care?

Think of web services as a tool to allow access to your information from a variety of sources, and also to access information that others provide. This is an advantage for mSupply users as:

- Your data can be made available to software written by different organisations on a wide variety of computer platforms
- Due to use of open standards and the low bandwidth requirements of most web services, they can be put to work in remote situations where normal client-server network connections are not feasible.
- Web services tend to be simple to implement. This saves you time and money. In many cases a new web service can be added to an application in a matter of hours.
- Data can easily be delivered to software such as Microsoft Excel.
- You can access reliable information published by others (such as currency rates) quickly.
- You can eliminate much double-entry of data, improving accuracy and efficiency.

### Examples of uses of web services

“Web services will become the dominant distributed computing architecture in the next 10 years and will eventually define the fabric of computing....

— IDC, February 2003

#### Getting data from another web service

- You could have automatic updates of the currency rates stored in mSupply.
- You could subscribe to the RPC server that is under development at [www.drugref.org](http://www.drugref.org) to update mSupply's drug interaction database.

#### Getting information from a remote copy of mSupply

If you use mSupply in multiple locations, it is very quick to set up web services that facilitate all sorts of operations:

- Providing information on stock holdings in remote locations.
- Reporting.
- Facilitating stock transfers between locations

#### Allowing customer systems access to their data in mSupply

Certain information that you store may be highly useful for your clients. With web services you can:

- Allow customers to automatically see their outstanding balances.
- Receive up to date information on order status.
- Allow customers
- Full automate the transfer of invoices to customer systems, even if they don't use mSupply

#### Allow suppliers access to mSupply information

Suppliers can be allowed access to your data to

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- See the status of payments due to them.
  - Allow automatic re-ordering of stock items when the stock level falls below an agreed threshold.

#### **Remote managers**

Managers in physically remote locations can have real-time information on the state of an organisation running mSupply without having to lift a finger.

#### **Other interested publics**

In a hospital situation you may wish to expose your data on drug interactions that is stored in mSupply to software running in consulting rooms and in wards

### **What about security?**

mSupply web services include authentication mechanisms that mean you only give access to your data to the right people. Further, each web service only supplies information about a particular aspect of mSupply. A customer can only receive information about their transactions, not about the transactions of other customers, nor about the your internal information such as the margin applied to their invoice!

mSupply is able to use SSL connections, allowing full secure transmission of data on public networks.

### **What other software supports web services?**

Software written in a wider variety of languages can have web services support built in. Languages with support for web services include:

- SAP
- Oracle
- Java
- Excel
- .Net
- Perl
- WebObjects

### **So, where are these web services?**

The mSupply version you can currently download from our web site does not support web services. Currently we only supply web services for client-server versions and for customized single-user versions.

Contact us as <[info@msupply.org.nz](mailto:info@msupply.org.nz)> for more information.

Craig Drown

Sustainable Solutions

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