White Paper: Union Built PC Grievance Manager

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Purpose

Grievance Manager applications are custom built for each customer's grievance process and data needs. Each application is a real-time tool to facilitate the representation process for grievances, as well as an archiving application for research.

Benefits for representing active grievances

- Open Issues screens can show all active grievances at a glance. They may be pre-filtered according to permissions of the logged-in user, are quickly searchable, and may be sorted by any column.

- Grievance and appeal input screens are built to match your current paper forms, but with many added benefits:

  - ✓ Input validation. Requiring certain fields, and checking any field for common mistakes or inappropriate entries. For example, is the cited article appropriate to the selected bargaining unit? Is the Step 3 appeal date within 15 days of the Step 2 answer? (These examples are arbitrary. Validations are always local or contract specific.)

  - ✓ Look-up features (such as Members) from another database. We look for ease of use and data integrity whereever possible. Most of our applications have an interface with another database to allow users to quickly and correctly select information. For example, all members may be in a convenient and searchable look-up pop-up feature on the grievance form. When a member is selected, his/her member ID, work location, address, phone and email can be auto-populated on the grievance form. Likewise for stewards, reps, work sites or supervisors.)

- Email notifications triggered by actions may be sent after scheduling, dispositions, or other events are saved by the application. These can go to parties specified in the particular grievance, or to others (by work location, for example) as set by an application administrator or imported through another database.

- Email notification of approaching deadlines are sent based on the number of calendar or business days elapsed since a saved date or event, or days ahead of a scheduled date. Like the notifications triggered by actions, these calendar-sensitive emails can go to parties specified in the particular grievance, or to others (by work location, for example) as set by an application administrator or imported through another database.

- Printable PDFs are often created to replicate required paper forms with data filled-in. While Grievance Managers can create a completely paperless process, they can also maintain and streamline existing paper-based requirements, giving you the best of both worlds by outputting your replicated forms, filled-out and ready to print.

- Documents can be uploaded and stored securely (any format, but PDF is recommended) can be conveniently and securely uploaded as attachments to any grievance. Documents are stored in the secure database and are streamed between the server and your browser in encrypted format.

- Information sharing and control.

    - ✓ Applications are Internet-based, and may be used from anywhere.

    - ✓ Access is controlled through user logins, and users with different roles may see different data and/or different forms and reports.

- Secure but flexible communication among staff.

    - ✓ Staff may securely "send" grievances to each other by email, using application features that send only a secure link which requires the recipient to securely login to see the grievance.

Benefits for long term archiving

- Electronic storage and backup.

    - ✓ Cost effective and portable

    - ✓ Hot swappable disk drives for backup and easy restore

- Accessible from the Internet

    - ✓ Possible to research issue histories from any location.

- Advanced search for settled and closed grievances.

    - ✓ Multiple criteria (usually 10-20 fields) advance search allows quick access to old grievances.

- Powerful aggregate (group by) reporting.

    - ✓ Reports showing grievance counts grouped by any relevant combination of criteria, within date ranges entered.

- Standard open source database (MySQL).

    - ✓ Grievance Manager uses the most portable database format in the world, now running on over 60% of all Internet servers.

Application Servers

The applications run on secure servers running the Linux operating system, the Apache web server with encryption for data security, the MySQL database server, and the PHP hypertext pre-processor for programming. All servers are backed-up nightly.

We sell and install onsite servers (http://unionbuiltpc.com/servers), and also offer remote hosting through Verio's Managed Hosting services.

Development Methodology and Process

We develop using the L.A.M.P. (Linux, Apache, MySQL, PHP) open-source development system. L.A.M.P. technology has become the most proven and popular method for building web-based applications, and is preferred for its power, flexibility and cost-effectiveness. It is functionally appropriate in all respects, comparable with more costly methods using Microsoft .NET and Java 2 Enterprise Edition technologies.

Applications are built to explicit specifications found in a Project Plan document, produced for each customer. That document will include cost guarantees and serve as a contract between Union Built PC and the customer.

Application Security

Each user has his/her own login account, with a username and password. It is strongly recommended that users do not share logins; doing so compromises security for this or any network application.

Users will have to login to see any part of the Application, including viewing links sent by email. All access occurs only through a web browser enabled with SSL (secure socket layer) security. The Application will only accept encrypted data, so any attempt to circumvent SSL (to send or receive non-encrypted data) will result in the user being immediately logged out and re-directed back to the secure login page.

Additionally, passwords use a one-way hash algorithm, so that only the person who creates (and remembers) the password will know it, regardless of database or server privileges. Administrators will be able to create or reset passwords, but not retrieve an existing one. After a login is created, the user may change his/her password at any time.

Copyright to Application, Source Code and Open Source License

Grievance Manager applications are developed for the customer and source code will be delivered on request. The Customer may modify source code, but may not gift or resell the application.

About Union Built PC

Union Built PC was incorporated in 2001 as a Maryland Corporation. The Company is committed to using entirely union labor, organized by CWA Local 1101 in New York, NY; UWUA 223 in Dearborn, MI; and IBEW 17 in Southfield, MI. The Company has staff in Maryland, New York, Southeast Michigan, Kansas City, and San Diego.

Union Built PC sells desktop and laptop computers, assembled with union labor in its Maryland facility. The Company also sells computer peripherals and projectors; the Net Integrator family of network servers; software and software training services; website development services; and custom software development services.

The Company's software development services are provided from offices in Kansas City and the Chicago area. All software code is written by Union Built PC employees, members of UWUA 223. Union Built PC development staff members average over ten years full time experience in software development of data-centric applications for Linux, Unix, and Windows server platforms.

Union Built PC has built its business providing low-overhead, cost-effective methods of delivering high-quality products and services to unions. Excellent cost-to-value ratio, as well as unique, stable products, programs, and methods, distinguishes the Company from competitors.