



<http://www.loftusit.com.au/>

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Welcome to the **Loftus HMS** FAQ!

This FAQ is intended to answer common questions that **Loftus HMS** staff receive regarding our products and services. We hope the FAQ answers your question. If not, please contact us.

Q1: What OPERATING SYSTEMS does Loftus HMS software run on?

A1: All **Loftus HMS** software modules run on the following client operating systems:

- Microsoft Windows 95 & 95 OSR2
- Microsoft Windows 98 & 98 SE
- Microsoft Windows NT4 (SP5 or higher)
- Microsoft Windows 2000 Professional (SP1 or higher)
- Microsoft Windows XP Professional (SP1a or higher)
- Microsoft Vista Premium
- Microsoft Vista Ultimate

All software modules can be deployed via Microsoft Terminal Server or Citrix MetaFrame.

We recommend Windows 2000 or later for optimum performance.

In addition **Loftus HMS** modules tightly integrate with the Microsoft Office Suite and, in particular, Excel, Word and Outlook. The following versions of Office are supported:

- Microsoft Office 97 (SR1 or higher)
- Microsoft Office 2000
- Microsoft Office XP
- Microsoft Office 2003
- Microsoft Office 2007

CSS, **CMS** and **WMS** are capable of sending Work Requests and Work Orders via e-mail. The following e-mail systems are supported:

- Outlook based clients on Microsoft Post Office
- Outlook based clients on Microsoft Exchange Server 5.0
- Outlook based clients on Microsoft Exchange Server 5.5
- Outlook based clients on Microsoft Exchange Server 2000
- Any other CDO 1.2x compatible client
- Any other ActiveMessaging 1.1 compatible client

Q2: Do the security changes in Windows 2000 SP4, Windows XP SP2 or Windows Vista UAC affect Loftus HMS software?

A2: **Loftus HMS** has tested its software modules with Windows 2000 SP4, Windows XP SP2, Windows Vista and the post Service Pack security patches available at the time of writing. Presently, we are satisfied that there are no functionality issues or restrictions imposed by the Service Packs or security patches on **Loftus HMS** software.

Q3: What DATABASE PLATFORMS does Loftus HMS software run on?

A3: All new generation Loftus HMS modules were designed as full 32-bit systems for SQL Server 7 (and higher) including SQL 2005, SQL 2005 Express or MSDE (Microsoft Database Engine) database platforms.

MSDE is a version of SQL Server specifically tailored for organisations that do not already have SQL Server and expect low numbers of concurrent users – typically less than 10 or so. MSDE is included with all HMS product shipments and is generally adequate for customers who do not have SQL Server.

The SQL Server based **Loftus HMS** modules include: **CSS, CMS, WMS, PipePAK, PLANT, ParkPAK, RoadPAK** and **BuildingPAK**.

Loftus HMS SQL Server based modules allow your organisation to take full advantage of the scalability, reliability and performance that SQL Server and MSDE offer. Consider the following benefits:

- **Loftus HMS** modules are true client-server applications that offer rapid data access and reporting performance regardless of volume of data or concurrent users
- **Loftus HMS** modules can record an (effectively) unlimited number of assets without the headaches that come from low performance file-based systems developed using Access or Excel. You won't experience index corruption, deleted files or drive mapping restrictions with the new systems.

The following information about file-based (Microsoft Jet) databases comes from Microsoft

"Microsoft Jet is not intended to be used with high-stress, high-concurrency, 24x7 server applications, such as Web, commerce, transactional, and messaging servers. For these type of applications, the best solution is to switch to a true client/server-based database system such as Microsoft Data Engine (MSDE) or Microsoft SQL Server."

Reference: <http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=kb:en-us:300216>

- Users can be setup with their own user name, password and security applied to the individual menu item, allowing Administrators to easily customise and control access organisation wide
- Network traffic is heavily reduced and optimised allowing software deployment over low-speed connections such as dialup, WANs or the Internet
- All data is stored in a central location where it can be replicated to a standby server and be easily backed up to disk or tape by routine scheduled process
- Data is readily accessible to other applications through Open Database Connectivity (ODBC)
- **Loftus HMS** staff are experienced in SQL Server database design, deployment and administration and can offer your organisation specialist SQL advice.

The **BRAMS** module uses a FoxPro 2.6 (dBase) database which is Open Database Connectivity (ODBC) compliant. This application is currently being scheduled for replacement with a full SQL Server based version.

Q4: What are the minimum HARDWARE SPECIFICATIONS recommended for Loftus HMS software?

A4: Whilst hardware performance is improving constantly, **Loftus HMS** software is designed and tested with lower performance systems in mind. This means that you can be confident that the performance of *your* system will be perfectly acceptable if at the minimum specifications described below and even better on faster hardware.

Server / MSDE: Intel Pentium III-500 (equivalent or higher)
128 MB RAM (256 MB desirable)
1 GB free hard disk space (for anticipated database growth)
100 Mb network card
Access to a 4x (or faster) CD-ROM drive, Tape, CD or DVD based backup device

Client: Intel Celeron 333 (equivalent or higher)
64 MB RAM*
200 MB free hard disk space
10 Mb network card (100 Mb desirable)
800 x 600 or better graphics card showing 64 K or more colours
Access to a 4x (or faster) CD-ROM drive

* For machines running Windows NT, 2000 or XP a minimum of 128 MB RAM is desirable

All software modules can be deployed via Microsoft Terminal Server or Citrix MetaFrame.

Q5: Are DONGLES still used to control licencing?

A5: No. All SQL Server based modules do not use dongles!

A fully software based security system, developed by **HMS**, is employed to control concurrent user access. This system has the advantage of being completely transparent to the user and not reliant on 3rd party hardware or drivers. Furthermore, this system does not require any maintenance or elaborate configuration by IT staff.

Q6: Do Loftus HMS modules link to GIS?

A6: Absolutely! **HMS** modules interface with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in 2 different ways:

1. Via a free, embedded **GIS+Viewer** that is part of **CSS**, **CMS**, **WMS**, **PipePAK**, **PLANT**, **ParkPAK**, **RoadPAK** and **BuildingPAK**.

For **CSS**, **CMS** and **WMS** the **GIS+Viewer** provides visual confirmation of customer and service location details. For the other modules the **Viewer** confirms the location of an individual asset components. Additionally in **PipePAK**, **PLANT**, **ParkPAK**, **RoadPAK** and **BuildingPAK** the **GIS+Viewer** can be used to navigate to records and (in **PipePAK**) trace up and down the pipe network. The **GIS+Viewer** utilises ESRI Shape (SHP) files. Other GIS formats such as MapInfo can be readily converted to the SHP format for use in the **Viewer**.

2. Via a Dynamic Link to your GIS application using a **Loftus HMS** interface called **GIS+Link**.

GIS+Link is available for ESRI, MapInfo and GenaMap GIS applications and enables dynamic, real time sharing of data between your **Loftus HMS** Asset Management System and your GIS. **GIS+Link** enables data shown in one application to be created, viewed, updated and deleted in the other.

Q7: Do Loftus HMS modules export data to, and import data from, Excel or similar?

A7: All **Loftus HMS** Asset Management Systems allow a selected part of, or all, attribute data to be exported to a formatted Microsoft Excel spreadsheet for third party analysis, inclusion in specialist reports or for reference purposes.

Data can also be bulk loaded into **PipePAK**, **PLANT**, **ParkPAK**, **RoadPAK** and **BuildingPAK** using the in built Bulk Import/Update facility. Excel spreadsheets are also used to set up base system data in **CSS**, **CMS** and **WMS**.

Q8: What is Service Subscription?

A8: Service Subscription (or maintenance) provides **Loftus HMS** customers with verbal, written or electronic support via phone, fax or e-mail for their **Loftus HMS** products. Service Subscription also includes the provision of new builds for the current versions of the product that resulted from a program modification or updated documentation.

An additional benefit of maintaining an active Service Subscription contract is that our support staff will assist the customer in the resolution of issues or potential problems that may occur outside the control of Huefner, eg a staff member deleting an important file etc.

Q9: Can I save report outputs or settings for later use?

A9: All **Loftus HMS** software modules enable the user to save report outputs to a variety of formats including:

- PDF (Adobe Portable Document Format)
- RTF (Rich Text Format)
- XLS (Excel Spreadsheet Format)
- RDF (Report Document Format)

Raw bitmap (BMP) views of the embedded **GIS+Viewer** can also be saved. Report settings comprising report name, type and selection filter criteria can be saved for later use. This means a series of standard “Monday morning” reports can be constructed facilitating single click report generation. This is also useful for defining Valuation reports in the Asset Management Systems that can be run each year to keep the auditor happy!

Q10: Can Loftus HMS modules be customised to suit my organisations needs?

A10: **Loftus HMS** understands that all organisations needs are different so we have included a series of flexible tools to increase your productivity:

- DynaReports Builder – Design and build your own reports. Allows all fields to be selected, grouped, summarised and sorted. All reports created are made available on the Reports Menu and outputs can be saved to any of the formats mentioned in Q9 above.
- Customise Field Labels – Enables the user to change the label name of any field within the system. These changes flow throughout the program from input screens to reports. This tool also allows fields not required to be hidden, therefore removing any potential data entry errors.
- Customise Field Formulas – enables the user to specify a mathematical or textual based formula behind a field. All formulas are calculated dynamically on screen as data is changed.
- User Fields – Fully flexible that enable the label name and type to be customised.

Q11: What does Loftus HMS see in the future for Asset Management?

A11: We see our integrated software approach becoming more and more important to our customers. Asset Management is a component of a larger, organisation-wide process which also comprises Customer Service and Work Management. **Loftus HMS** develops and supports software that integrates these organisation roles using a modular approach, allowing additional modules to be added at a later date.

In the future, we see **Loftus HMS** developing specialist analysis modules that will enable Managers to obtain answers to questions they haven't even thought of! This first **Loftus HMS** product of this nature is **Clear view** - a GIS-based reporting tool that combines geographic, graphic and textual views of data in any **Loftus HMS** (or external) database or combination of databases.

With an in-house team of experienced local government Engineers and IT Professionals, **Loftus HMS** is also able to provide a new level of service to our customers in the following areas:

- **Training** : All **Loftus HMS** products are supplied with training, either on-site or in-house at Loftus IT offices.
- **Consultation** : Loftus IT offers analysis of data, preparation of reports, asset and maintenance management advice including creation of specific user functionalities.
- **Outsourcing** : **Loftus HMS** offers outsourcing services to our customers. Services include : Data pick up, Data translation, Policy development, Strategy determination, Valuations/AAS27 reports and Asset Management Plans.

Q12: Who can I contact if I require further information?

A12: Peter Wright or Chris Malone on +61 8 8304 8804 or via e-mail at hms@loftusit.com.au.

Your contact in :

Australia (Head Office)

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