



Choosing a Software Package that's Right for You

Matthew R. Walsh

You don't have to buy the most expensive software package to get what you need, TAKE YOUR TIME WITH MAKING THE RIGHT DECISION.

CONFUSING, AS IT MAY BE TO SOME, CHOOSING AND implementing recycling management software is becoming more of a requirement than an option due to changing laws regarding scrap businesses. Laws vary from State to State, but every State's legislation follows the same premise: adhere to specific payment restrictions, record detailed information about the customer and their transactions, track sales and purchases, and retain records for a certain number of years.

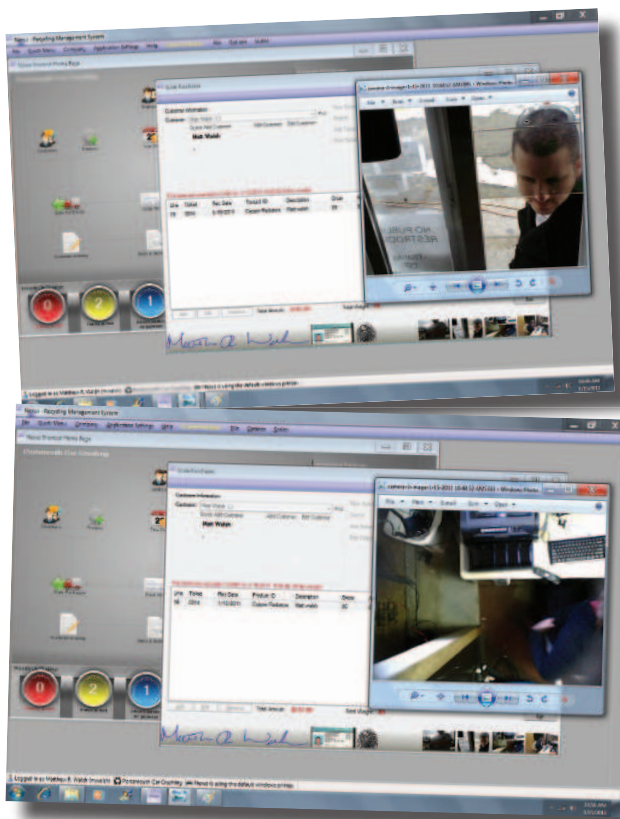
transactions and customers, the paperwork begins to pile up and records often get lost.

Recycling software eliminates or reduces the need for paperwork, encapsulating all related information inside of a database. The software acts as a gateway, instantly providing information at the click of a button. However, not all software is created equal. Business owners often become dismayed and discouraged while searching for a software package that fits the needs of their business and risk compliance issues as well as other problems such as scrap theft, and employee theft.

All in all, the laws are not complicated to follow, but many scrap businesses fail to do so properly and some even find themselves in trouble with lawmakers because without software to manage

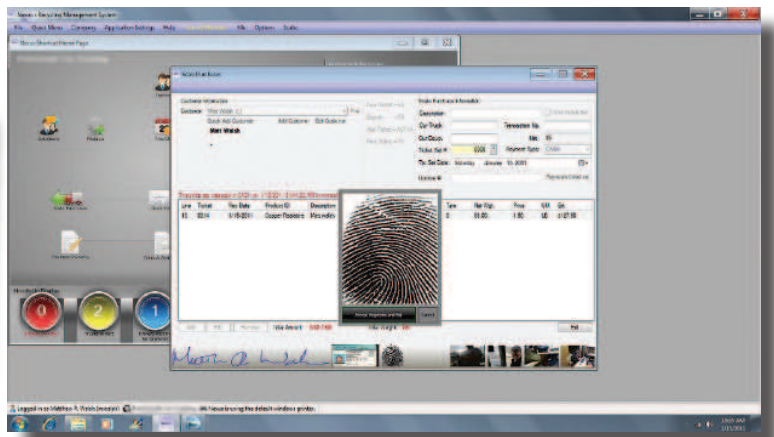
Consider the Future

Recyclers should not only consider the present, but also the future of their business. Are there technical limitations that stand in the way of business



Nexus recalling a video recorded from a hidden ceiling camera during a cash payment.

Nexus recalling an image of the customer taken at the scale window during a payment transaction. Photos courtesy of AEON Blue Software & Development.



Nexus scanning a customer's fingerprint during a transaction.



A Car Crushing Company Implements a Software Package that Saves Them Time and Money

Portsmouth, OH is a small town with a population of 21,000 people. A local car crushing company, that draws a respectable volume of people both from neighboring towns as well as residents from Kentucky, was faced with the challenge of customers who would try stealing from them by loading bricks into the back of vehicles, filling buckets with water, etc. The company also had issues with employees stealing cash when scale tickets were paid. They needed a software package implemented that would manage their transactions and cut down on the theft issues.

After researching a number of packages online, the company found the Nexus Recycling Management System (www.nexusrecycle.com) developed by Aeon Blue Software (Tampa, FL), a company specializing in creating software for any business which has a need for custom tailored solutions. Aeon Blue also develops software and manages network and server infrastructures for multiple industries, but caters to small businesses and even residential computer users. Their primary focus now is software for the recycling industry. The car crushing company called Aeon Blue's references, read the magazine articles in which Aeon Blue was featured and called for a demonstration of the software. As a result, they immediately made a decision to go with Aeon Blue's software package, Nexus.

The implementation took six days. Aeon Blue staff flew to the customer's location, purchased computers, cameras, networking equipment and all the required materials for the customer. During the six-day implementation, everything was configured and set up for the customer; Aeon imported their products, pricing, customers and made modifications to the application to suit their business needs. The last three days of the implementation process were spent training the employees first hand. By the sixth day, the car crushing company was fully running on Nexus without further need from Aeon Blue.

The software has now been in place for about two months and operations are extremely successful. Nexus allows them to track all their transactions; it integrates with a computer-controlled locking cash drawer, which records video from multiple angles any time the cash drawer is opened. Cameras watch the scale and the scale-house window recording video and images of the customer and the scale. Their customers are now required to submit a fingerprint, driver's license and electronic signature to ensure scrap theft purchasing is kept to a minimum. Scale tickets are generated instantly and stored in the computer, eliminating the need for boxes of handwritten paperwork. Vehicles upload to the NMVTIS system and their State's agency with the click of a button, eliminating hours of manual entry. Employee cash theft is now down 100 percent, and theft by the customers due to the security features of the program is expected to be down as much as 80 percent as well. The customer is even more satisfied that there are no maintenance fees or support costs, which save them on average \$12,000 per year.

The car crushing company now has the most up-to-date product on the market that cost them a quarter of some of the other quotes they received. They save annually about \$12,000 in maintenance fees since Aeon Blue does not charge them, and they receive 24-hour support whenever they need it, even for non-Nexus issues. They save on average three to four hours a day by the system handling NMVTIS reporting, and they're making and keeping more of their money. With a computer system in place managing their day-to-day routines, the fear and uncertainty of employee and customer theft has been eliminated almost completely. Within the next two months, the customer will be opening two additional locations and will be implementing Nexus in those as well.

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expansion? Is the software up-to-date? What type of features should be available at the time of purchase? Is the software going to be reliable? These are all valid questions that no one should ignore.

There are many software packages on the market. A simple Google search will yield the most popular or relative products. There are many points to consider, but recyclers should know the laws in their area before even entertaining the idea of purchasing a software system. When contacting a software vendor, ask them about the laws in your area, cross-reference the laws with the vendors' software to see if it is a fit. ScrapLaws.com has a software compliance check system that recyclers can use to make sure their current or prospective software features match the requirements of their State.

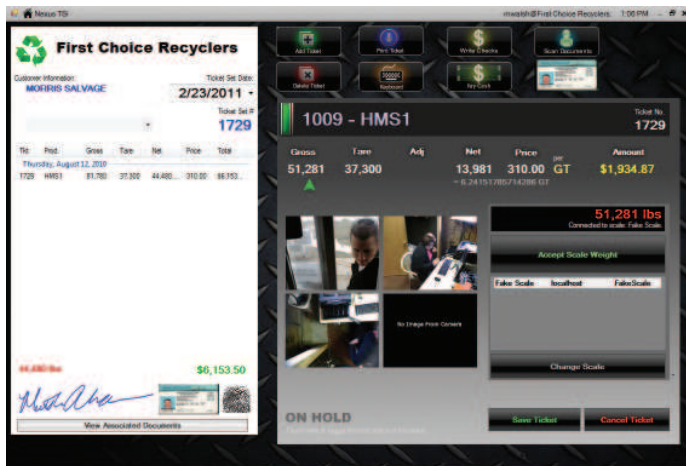
Almost every state requires recyclers to scan driver's licenses and fingerprints, however, some States require digital signatures to be captured as well as pictures to be taken of the customer and the vehicle. When choosing a software program, look towards the future. Just because your State doesn't have strict requirements now, doesn't mean they won't soon. The federal government requires salvaged vehicles to be reported to NMVTIS, some States have their own reporting systems as well. Some States even require that payment cannot be made by cash. Take all of these requirements into consideration when choosing an application. Solid, consistent resources about States and their laws are tedious and hard to find; however, www.scraplaws.com is a good site to find information regarding the laws surrounding recyclers' States as well as resources and reporting guidelines.

Features

The more features a software package has, does not necessarily mean it will be more expensive, or that it should be. Unfortunately, some software developers charge in upwards of \$50,000 for software alone, and many charge maintenance fees, which can be in upwards of \$1,300 per month. There are reliable, up-to-date and fully compliant packages on the market which cost as little as \$10,000 and even some which do not charge maintenance fees. It is important to shop around and take your time when choosing software as it will be a major part of your business. With any business software: reliability is key.

In addition to cost, other features that should be considered when selecting this type of software include:

- It should be able to support fingerprint scanners, driver's license scanners, signature capture devices and IP cameras.
- Ask the developer what programming language their software was written in. If the software has been written in Visual Basic 6 (VB6), keep looking elsewhere. This programming language was discontinued over 10 years ago because of performance and reliability issues and may not be supported on newer computers.



The Nexus touch screen interface.

- The .NET platform is the most up-to-date programming platform from Microsoft. Software written in .NET will be the most efficient and reliable.
- The software package should have a reliable database system such as MySQL, Microsoft SQL, or Oracle; if it doesn't it is likely the software has database limitations, which will cause problems in the future.
- Software should never have limitations with devices or computers. If a

package is not supported on your version of Windows, or will only support specific printers or devices, keep looking; once those devices are discontinued, you may find yourself purchasing another software package.

- All software packages should report to NMVTIS as well as complying with your State's reporting guidelines.
- Ensure the company you choose to go with has the ability to provide you with support when needed.

Take Your Time

You don't have to buy the most expensive software package to get what you need, take your time with making the right decision. At the end of the day, recyclers should ensure they have the most up-to-date software, with the most features possible. Choosing software that is compliant with States that have stricter requirements, such as California, Arizona or Texas, will likely ensure compliance in any State and prepare recyclers for the future and prevent issues with compliance and help protect against scrap theft. | **WA**

Matthew R. Walsb is President and Lead Software Developer for AEON Blue Software & Development (Tampa, FL). He is an expert computer specialist and programmer who has developed enterprise software for GM, Ford, Chrysler, BMW, Lamborghini/Audi and Mercedes-Benz. His company has produced marketing software for social networking conglomerates and has also managed heavy traffic networks and infrastructures for international corporations and a major internet provider simultaneously. Aeon Blue Software is the developer of the Nexus software package for recyclers. Matthew can be reached at (813) 333-1112 or visit www.NexusRecycle.com.

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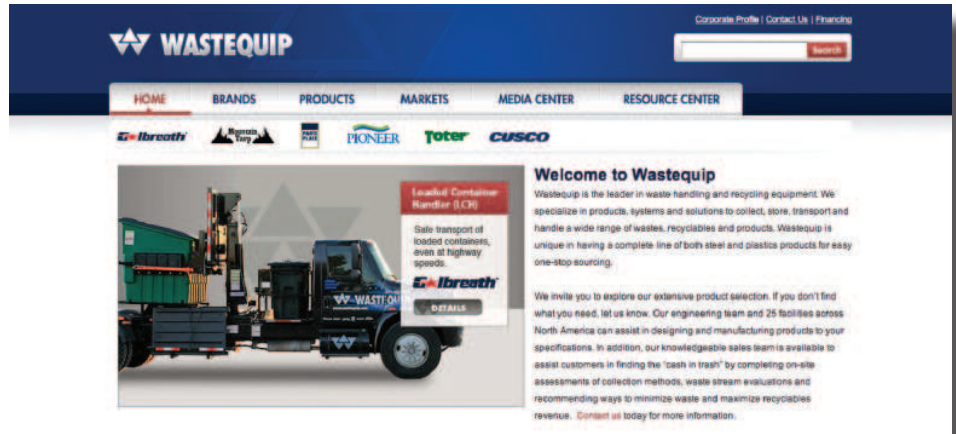
Breakthroughs and Innovations



WASTEQUIP (Charlotte, NC) has launched a new Web site featuring a cleaner design, bolder graphics and an easy-to-navigate interface. The goal for the new Wastequip Web site is to make it simple for users to find the latest, most in-depth product information across all Wastequip brands. The Web site features a video center that contains product videos about the features, benefits and operation of Wastequip's most popular products including compactors, balers, the new Loaded Container Handler (LCH) and more. Site visitors will be able to easily contact Wastequip to receive product quotes via bold graphics and buttons located throughout the site. If visitors wish to speak directly with the territory sales manager for their region, they can easily locate the sales representative's name and contact information by simply entering a zip code or city and state.

Another exciting feature of the Web site is the market segments section. Here, visitors will find product information across the Wastequip family of brands applicable to specific types of businesses including convenience stores, shopping centers, restaurants, waste haulers and more. Other notable features of the new Wastequip Web site include a resource center with downloadable literature, robust site search functionality, training information, trade shows and events, company and product news, careers and more.

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AEON BLUE SOFTWARE & DEVELOPMENT (Tampa, FL) has released the second version of their popular recycling management software, Nexus. The application allows the capture and recording of fingerprints, driver's licenses, digital signatures, pictures and video to be recorded when certain events occur during the scale ticket process. The software also integrates with computer-controlled locking cash drawers and counts down the drawer within the application to ensure employee theft in cash environments is kept to a minimum. The software is compatible with any printer, any scanner, any fingerprint reader, any camera, any scale and even works with Windows 7. The developers have released the Enterprise Management Console, which allows reports, transactions and pricing to be controlled from one interface and interacts with multiple separate scrap yard branch locations at once. Nexus is fully compliant in every state, can be implemented for under \$10,000 and there are no maintenance fees or support costs after the initial purchase.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL (813) 333-1112, E-MAIL NEXUS@AEONBLUE.COM OR VISIT WWW.NEXUSRECYCLE.COM.

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