



Taking Control

of Mass Maintenance Updates — Without Compromising Data Quality

Equip Your End Users with a Quick, Safe Solution from BackOffice Associates

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End users of large-scale enterprise systems, such as SAP solutions, are often tasked with mass maintenance updates of the data in those systems. For example, a business may want to reorganize how its customer hierarchy is rolled up or institute a massive number of changes in price or product descriptions. Each of these updates could involve as many as 15,000 to 20,000 records or more.

Traditional methods for handling these types of mass updates would involve manually changing the records one by one, approaching your IT department for a more programmatic solution, or turning to a consultant to perform the changes. However, these options can be extremely tedious and time consuming, not to mention expensive.

What if you could simply make your updates within spreadsheets, and then upload those changes into your back-

end SAP system? This option is now a reality: BackOffice Associates empowers end users to upload the changes themselves.

A Faster, Safer Answer to Mass Updates

BackOffice wanted to create a solution that would be safe for a broad range of end users and would include approval capabilities so that only authorized users could perform updates. We wanted a solution that was fast, would have minimal impact on system performance, and would not restrict the number of objects users can change at one time.

To provide users with additional options for managing their mass maintenance projects, BackOffice now offers two flexible solutions: ERP² and cMass.

Which Option Is Right for You?

Both ERP² and cMass have user-friendly, intuitive user interfaces. ERP² is a Windows desktop-based application that requires no server installation. As ERP² is mainly used at the department level, we recommend this option for a small base of users who want a quick, simple, and secure way of making mass changes in SAP systems.

cMass is a scalable corporate solution that you can customize extensively to have the look and feel of your company's website. cMass is a natural upgrade from ERP² for those users who are looking to ensure "Business-Ready Data" before even attempting to post the data into an SAP system.

Empowering Your End Users: A Closer Look at the Two Solutions

ERP² is an unobtrusive, simple tool that allows IT to facilitate mass end-user updates. It is a desktop application that can easily be installed onto a user's computer, and does not require any changes to be made to the network or to SAP servers. This option is a quick and easy fix that removes the burden of mass changes from IT and allows end users to effectively and efficiently make the changes on their own. Once a license is purchased and the application is installed on the users' desktops, those users can make any necessary changes themselves. As ERP² is very end-user focused, the application only provides Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Access as possible data sources.

cMass harnesses the power and flexibility of BackOffice's CranSoft development framework to provide a web-based application that allows for an approval process, as well as additional customization. This solution provides the same uploading capability that ERP² provides, but also includes the ability for users to:

- Add an approval process
- Add custom data-entry pages and validations to ensure the required data quality is maintained
- Use a database view as a source of the data

Because the cMass application runs in a web browser, it extends the reach of mass update capabilities to even those users without any knowledge of SAP systems. Users can enter data in a format they are familiar with, and the application converts that data to an SAP-compatible format. As a result of the custom data-entry pages and validations, additional

Feature	cMass	ERP ²
Required skill level	Low	Low
SAP validation	Yes	Yes
>500 items per change	Yes	Yes
Workflow	Yes	No
Additional validation	Yes	No
Microsoft Excel data entry	Yes	Yes
Database data import	Yes	No
Web-based	Yes	No

▲ A comparison of the available features of cMass and ERP²

validation is done even before the optional approval role — without the user needing to understand how that process is performed in the SAP system. This process can eliminate the need for one user to send spreadsheets to an SAP user who then keys in the data manually. The cMass solution allows you to eliminate this step and have the people responsible for the data enter it directly.

Although both products utilize all the validations configured in the target SAP system and offer a simple and intuitive way for users to design the upload templates, cMass has additional workflow and validation capabilities applied through the CranSoft framework. cMass can add additional rules to the data-entry processes that are specific to how your business runs. When a customer moves to CranSoft, they also gain multilingual, Unicode-enabled capabilities, so we see a lot of advantages when clients upgrade to cMass. ■



Tom Kennedy is founder and CTO of BackOffice Associates, LLC, a leading provider of data migration and data governance solutions for SAP customers worldwide. Concentrating on data quality for more than a decade, BackOffice Associates' solutions and services are a recognized best practice for companies implementing SAP software. BackOffice Associates is a global corporation that

provides data governance solutions to SAP customers that require "Business-Ready Data Every Day." Headquartered in Massachusetts, the company also has offices in the US, Europe, Australia, India, and Mexico. For more information, go to www.boaweb.com or contact us at Info@boaweb.com.