

Computer based training

ToolKit CS™
Ai Solutions Ltd

Content ★★★★★ Usability ★★★☆☆ Presentation ★★★★★

A PREVIOUS REVIEW in this section (HSW May 2004, page 48) looked at the availability of information on the web to help organisations manage their responsibilities under the Control Of Asbestos At Work Regulations (CAW Regulations). For example, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) website outlines the responsibility to assess and document the state of asbestos in non-domestic premises. ToolKit CS™ has been produced by Ai Solutions to help you carry out this task. The “CS” stands for “compliance system” as the aim is to help you comply with CAW Regulations.

In outline, ToolKit CS™ allows a facilities or building manager to set up and manage details of asbestos surveys. A surveyor can enter survey details onto ToolKit CS™ to communicate that information back to the building manager. Reports can be produced detailing what items of asbestos are present in which buildings with outstanding maintenance tasks.

Content

ToolKit CS™ has facilities for demonstrating compliance with Construction Design And Management (CDM) Regulations as well as compliance with CAW Regulations. This review concentrates on the CAW part of the system. For each building under your responsibility, you will need to create a property. Information on the property will refer to a database of organisations into which you need to add names and contact details of companies or individuals that may be referred to within asbestos surveys.

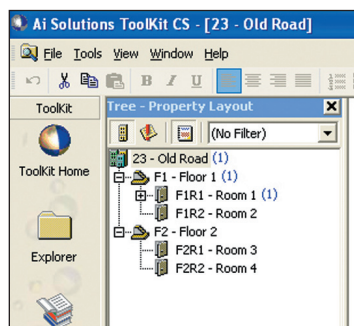
A “knowledge centre” is also included to provide background information on asbestos and managing asbestos risk in premises. The product guide for ToolKit CS™ is held in the knowledge centre and you can add extra databases from information held by your organisation, enabling it to be viewed through the toolkit. Templates within ToolKit CS™ aid the production of reports and letters, drawing results from the asbestos surveys into pro-forma documents using standard text.

In the Explorer view, ToolKit CS™ shows you all your existing properties, from which you can edit an exist-

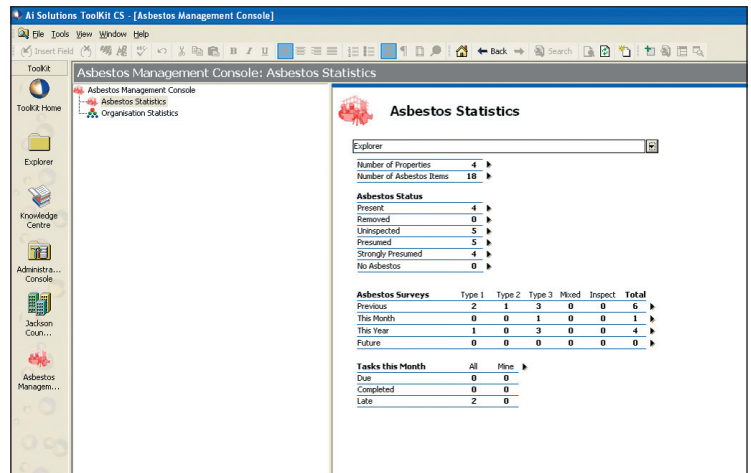
ing property or create a new one. A software “wizard” takes you through the process of defining houses or flats, floors, rooms, corridors and walls. These are arranged in a hierarchy — so for example, floor 1 may have rooms 1, 2 and 3, with floor 2 having rooms 4 and 5 plus a corridor. If the locations aren’t organised correctly after you have created them, there is a tree diagram that lets you “drag” a room or wall onto the correct floor.

Floor plans and other attachments (including photographs) can be associated with each property. Once created, another wizard takes you through the process of choosing the right type of survey (eg presumptive, pre-demolition) and identifying individuals involved for each location. I appreciated being able to check the “knowledge centre” for the meaning of different survey types without losing my place in the survey wizard. Details of what needs to be inspected and what is already known about a location can be entered. Items such as ceiling tiles, boilers or pipework can be shown in the tree diagram in the relevant location.

From this information a risk assessment questionnaire is created. At the end of the risk assessment, an automatic recommendation can be generated based on the information. I was surprised however that the tree diagram did not update the status of the item assessed according to the details entered in the risk assessment. For this to happen I had to manually duplicate some of the answers within the “item details” area. Once this has been done the tree will quickly show the status of each item: for example, a single blue question



The tree diagram lets you “drag” a room onto the correct floor



The summary of statistics includes the number of properties and items under study

mark for asbestos presumed, 2 red question marks for asbestos strongly presumed, and a green “R” where asbestos has been removed.

ToolKit CS™ provides templates to help you produce the documents needed to show compliance with CAW Regulations — such as risk assessments, permits-to-work and survey reports. The templates have editable areas where you can modify or add text, plus fields that automatically include some of the information collected in your survey.

Usability

There is a very helpful if somewhat lengthy and non-interactive web-based tutorial to support ToolKit. Wizards are very effective at taking you through the basic processes of data entry. Having had my hand held so effectively, I was all the more surprised that on other occasions the user is left without obvious choices, as many functions are available only on the click of the right mouse button. Use of the right mouse button — giving a list of options that you could select from the pull-down menus — will be more familiar to some users than others. However, I feel that any functions available on the right mouse button should also be available in a pull-down menu. This gives users the choice to use a computer in a way they find familiar. In the case of ToolKit CS™, it seemed that some functions were only provided on a right mouse click.

Administration

ToolKit CS™ includes an audit trail providing you with a list of changes, additions or deletions made in a given period of time. This can be limited by type of change (eg just show items added to the database) and grouped by type of item. The administrator can

see who has logged onto the system, for how long and from which computer over a specified period. The admin function also allows the administrator to edit the drop down lists used for asbestos site status, asbestos item condition and site status.

From the asbestos management console, you can see a summary of statistics, including the number of properties and items under study, plus tasks and surveys carried out and due. From the statistics, you can click directly to the item of interest — for example, from the information that 2 tasks are overdue you can drill down to a list of those tasks and from there choose a task to act on. Reports can be generated where paper records are needed.

Comment

What distinguishes ToolKit CS™ from many other database packages reviewed is that it has overcome the normal trade off between the complexity of the user interface and the usefulness and meaningfulness of the database structure by the use of wizards to help users through the more complex parts of the system.

The wizards spoon-feed new users, whilst experienced users have the flexibility to go straight to any part of the database to add or amend information. I would like to see options currently only available on the right mouse button menu available more visibly (something Ai Solutions will address in future versions), but otherwise I found ToolKit CS™ a thoroughly useful product for managing CAW Regulations.

Bridget Leathley

Prices start from £995 for a standalone package. For further information, tel 01525 850 080 or visit www.aisolutions.co.uk