



# Unlocking the benefits of ECF

*Lockton have been heavily involved in the ECF initiative since its beginning, and upgraded to become DRI users from December last year. The result is a significant change in the way they process claims that is beginning to show benefit in terms of client service but also in the wider opportunities it provides for staff. In this article **Chris Reay, Lockton ECF Project Manager; Ian Thomas, Executive Director in the Claims Broking Unit; Nicola Knight, Claims Broker/Technician and Katharine Meader, Reinsurance Claims Associate Director**, discuss the way working life is starting to change and the advantages this brings.*

Ian starts by clarifying the business model Lockton are implementing and how this has had an effect on their ECF experience: “All our staff are on site here in London and that is not something we are seeking to change. So ECF for us is not about facilitating the creation of remote teams dotted around the country or the globe; and our thinking is not as dominated as that of some other brokers simply on driving down unit cost. It is about using the technology to deliver a more efficient, effective service for our clients and that is something we always try to have at the forefront of our minds”.

In some ways the easiest wins for Lockton have come from the ability that ECF gives them to process simple business more efficiently. Nicola picks up this story: “Previously batches of small claims, where the amount involved in each case might not be more than €100-€200 have been time consuming. These tend to be risks where there is only one underwriter. Now they are straight forward. The slip will already be on the repository, we just need to add the claims documentation which is not usually lengthy and send it off. You can put together a package of, say, six claims, totalling no more than €1000 in a matter of minutes. Previously these would have taken hours to walk round the market.”

“Our experience will back up the work XCS are doing piloting approaches to segmentation” adds

Ian. “This is looking at triage for claims – the opportunity to use the nature and value of the claim as the basis for allocating work amongst Xchanging’s handlers – with the most complex issues going to the most experienced staff. For routine claims, ECF provides the basis for the ideal process – limited time spent adminis-

“You can put together a package of claims in a matter of minutes. Previously these would have taken hours to walk round the market.”

tering, with the client getting their money quicker as a result”

But it is not just in time saved processing straight forward business that Lockton is seeing an advantage. The roles within teams are changing and this is benefiting all involved, as Ian explains: “We have always had technicians and brokers sitting together in a single team. Previously the roles have been quite distinct, but with ECF both positions are becoming more involved in the overall process. The reduction in the administrative overhead that ECF delivers is beginning to allow techni-

cians to become more involved in broking claims; and this is allowing the brokers to spend more time concentrating on claims advocacy and on the larger and more complicated cases. This process is making both job roles more interesting and rewarding and is providing more opportunities for career development. It is also delivering better service for our clients as our added value as an organisation is brought to bear on the claims where it really makes a difference.”

Electronic processing is also changing the way that claims are managed. The MI reports that the in house workflow system is now capable of producing allow for a much more proactive approach to the working day. Chris outlines the new capability: “We have developed a range of workflow management reports in our enterprise system with our internal ECF working party. The advantage of the system is that it allows us to start to measure each stage of the process. This in turn means we can start to set target turnaround times for each stage and flag up where these aren’t met. This means that we can manage by exception and not just progress work in strict order. We have an internal MI dashboard which everybody can access and which includes a report of cases that have missed or are near their deadline – each claims team member can use this as the basis of their work plan for the day. It means that we can immediately identify the priority files to deal with

rather than have to sift through a pile of maybe a hundred to pick out the two that require action.”

Understandably all these changes are having an impact on working life – whereas previously claims staff were constrained by the hours that underwriters were open to accept files, now their days are much more flexible. “People can get in before 9am and start to distribute files around the market in a way that just wasn’t possible before” says Chris. This flexibility extends to more than just time. Lockton staff now have the capability to access their systems remotely which leads to the possibility of claims processing from home (“although not on days off!” is a swift, but naturally unattributable, quip from around the table).

Ian also has seen a new pattern to his day: “Before I would be straight out in to the market; now I tend to spend the morning working on my ECF files and the afternoons progressing those cases that still need a face to face meeting”.

There remain challenges ahead. “ECF is a big cultural change – for us and the whole market” says Katharine “we need to continue to work to make

the process better not just for us but for the underwriters as well. How do we point an underwriter towards the key information in a claims file when

**“We can immediately identify the priority files to deal with”**



we are not sitting next to him? Well, we’re working closely with the Adjustors to find business solutions that will assist them in adjusting the claim quickly by drawing their attention to significant areas of the electronic file, thereby bringing about an improved service for our clients.”

Chris picks up on this: “we have also begun exploring more advanced software solutions to this problem –

tools that will make it easier for the claims underwriters and XCS to review the electronic file quickly and efficiently.”

What all are agreed upon is that ECF, for all the advantages it brings, will not bring an end to the need for personal contact. Katharine builds on this: “contentious and large claims will always require face to face negotiation. But beyond this claims teams on both the broker and underwriter side will need to stay in contact. You need to know who is still there, who you can speak to when you need to discuss a particular issue. What ECF brings is a need to change your communications approach because you are not seeing these people at the box or in the queue. It changes the mechanics and means you have to concentrate more proactively on networking with your peers. That is a change to what we are used to, but overall I think it allows for a more efficient approach to allocating your time; and, if nothing else, whenever we need to do any work on a claim, we can have the file in front of us on the screen in seconds and we know the precise status – that is a huge benefit”



# Events...

## Dates for your diary

The Market Reform Forum sessions are designed to provide an update on the progress of the reform programme and give more detailed information on particular projects or aspects of the process.

Forthcoming dates are provided below.

**Thursday 24th April - 9.15am**  
**Balls Brothers, Minster Court**

**Thursday 29th May**  
**Thursday 26th June**  
**Thursday 31st July**

Places can be booked by emailing:

**mro@marketreform.co.uk.**

Places are reserved on a first come first served basis.

### Beginners Sessions:

we have places available on our half day sessions on 21st May and 18th June.

Email **mro@marketreform.co.uk** to register.

### IT Club dates:

The Market Reform Forum now shares dates and venue with IT Club - with this session kicking off at 11.00am on each date.