Sarbanes-Oxley Compliance with ERP Software

By: Visibility Corporation

ERP Software, for many companies, is the single most important infrastructure element. Its power to deliver end-to-end integration, across the entire organization, is what makes businesses run effectively in today's marketplace. Business function and use of new technology in ERP Software has grown in sophistication over the years, enabling further automation of additional business requirements.

This further automation has enabled some ERP solutions to address many requirements for Sarbanes Oxley compliance. One such solution is VISIBILITY.net ERP, which provides many controls used to comply with Sarbanes-Oxley. These built-in capabilities provide specific automation that when applied with procedural controls greatly assist in achieving optimal results towards compliance. Individual business processes including management controls are subject to Sarbanes-Oxley compliance audit. When it comes to Sarbanes-Oxley compliance, ERP software can be a key component and when effectively combined with the appropriate procedures specific to an organization can deliver the necessary controls.

The topics listed below provide a further review of the VISIBILITY.net ERP pertinent capabilities as they each may be applied to Sarbanes-Oxley:

Controlled System Access
Access to VISIBILITY.net ERP requires a distinct username and password. Additional controls allow the user's organization to manage maximum password lifetimes and minimum password length.

Data access user segregation
Data accessibility is controlled at the user level; all data access is segregated to enable unique access permissions for each user. This controls access to data, forms/screens, transactions, reports and inquiries and offers the ability to prohibit the viewing of selected data based on a user's level of authorization.

Assigned security roles
User access is constrained to the set of actions defined within the one or more application security roles to which the User has been assigned.

Controlled administration and security
Only an authorized application Administrator can create a User or define or modify a role.
- **Administrative responsibility** - Can be set up to split one Administrative user to define Users while a second Administrative User is responsible for role definition and user assignment to role(s).
- **Workflow notification** - It is possible to define an automatic workflow notification and/or approval workflow which would be triggered on either or both the creation of a new user, the modification of an existing user, or the assignment of a user to a role.

Traceability

All records within the VISIBILITY.net application database always include four identifying columns for traceability. These columns include:

- The user ID of the authorized user who inserted (created) the original record
- The Date and Time (to the nearest millisecond) that they created the record
- The user ID of the authorized user who last modified the record
- The Date and Time (also to the nearest millisecond) that they modified the record

Notifications

VISIBILITY.net integrated workflow makes it possible to define business process rules for enforcement and auto generation of notifications, restriction of transaction performance based on defined approval(s) before execution of the transaction.

Audit Trail

For select transactions, VISIBILITY.net incorporates an audit trail whereby every change made to a transaction record is recorded on each insert/change event.

These transactions include:

- Sales Order Line history
- Purchase Order Line history
- Part movement (including receipt, inspection, transfer, issue, consumption and disposition), extending to distinct lot or serial number identification where defined.

Additional Auditability

All other data tables can also be set for auditability. The database can be set to capture events identifying user and data and time for each accessed or changed. It is up to the user organization how rigorous they may choose to deploy this option.

Software Change Management and Control

All application enhancements or changes use a managed process which monitors each application enhancement or change to multi-levels of sign-off and validation prior to release for use by application licensees.

Sarbanes-Oxley compliance is a business responsibility. This responsibility is audited for conformance to the business processes defined by the business to ensure that there are no overlapping responsibilities.

Most of these requirements are met solely by the business definition and enforcement of its own standard operating procedures and the managed control of responsibility. In some cases, as stated above, the business application software (VISIBILITY.net) can play a major role in facilitating the execution of this compliance requirement. In combination with the facilities in the database (in both ORACLE and SQL Server) software and business procedures that an organization chooses to deploy make for a powerful solution for Sarbanes-Oxley compliance.

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