



Arlenda is a spin-off from the University of Liège, which develops software for the validation of analytical methods. Its customers come from the pharmaceuticals, chemicals as well as agri-food sectors.

The company was founded in 2003, combining multiple skills – expertise in laboratory analysis, pharmacy and statistics. The development of the software itself was launched three years before the founding of the company. Its main export markets at present are France, Switzerland and Morocco. The Liège-based company currently employs seven people, and had a turnover of 313,000 € in 2006.

Levelling the playing field for SMEs

The flagship product of the Arlenda range is the e.noval software. It had been noticed that small and medium-sized firms did not have easy access to advice from statistical experts or staff capable of programming the statistical tools available on the market. This observation led to the idea that it would be useful to develop software tailored to an audience of non-experts in this work, for example laboratory technicians, who do not need to have an in-depth knowledge of statistics. Schematically, the user enters the data measured into the system, together with the analytical method of which it is intended to perform the validation. The program then produces a commentary indicating clearly whether the analytical method could produce accurate results routinely or not. Large firms usually already have a specifically developed and validated solution available, but small and medium-sized companies occasionally need the services of statistical experts.

The e.noval software is intended for all analytical laboratories, regardless of the sector (pharmaceuticals, food industry, etc.). The company's clients include, for example, a manufacturer of wooden toys who has to perform many quality controls on the coatings used.

At a glance

The software engine used for the performance of the statistical calculations is SAS. Arlenda's software functions as a web interface between the basic software and the user. An immediate advantage is that instead of receiving voluminous pages of statistics which are difficult to interpret, the user receives the results in graphic form – the "accuracy profile" from which it can immediately deduce whether the analytical method in question is acceptable or not.

New philosophy

Normative testing intended to validate analytical methods has been around for the last fifteen years. The statistical examination is divided into two parameters: statistical errors and random errors. The procedure is unimpeachable from the theoretical viewpoint, but in practice may lead to erroneous results. It can happen that an analytical method produces acceptable results for both parameters, yet the resulting value (systematic error + random error) is still unacceptable.

According to Arlenda and other companies, this is unacceptable. According to the "new" idea, what counts is the end result. This is exactly what the e.noval software does: graphic evidence of whether the final result is acceptable or not.

Clear answers

The implementation is extraordinarily complex. On average, pharmaceutical companies take a week to carry out the statistical calculations for the validation of an analytical method and to generate the corresponding report. The e.noval software can do this job in 10 minutes. To achieve this result, five years of research were required: five years to mature the thinking process about a new way of processing the results numerically.

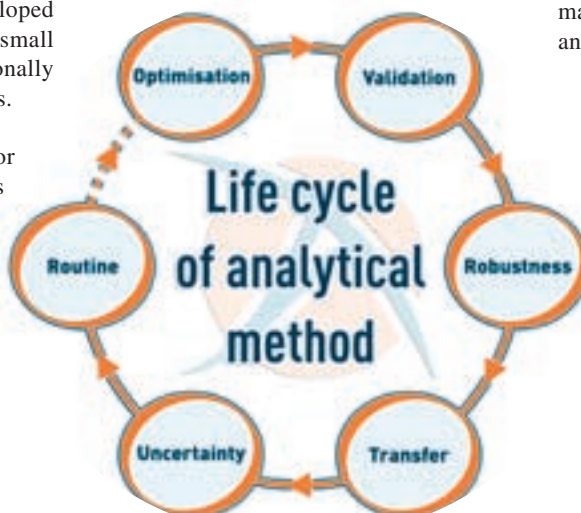
In practice

The user sends the data to a secure server. The software analyses it and converts it almost immediately into a report. At the time when the user receives it, all the data is automatically deleted from the server. It is a very flexible and manageable solution.

Arlenda constantly endeavours to raise awareness among potential users about the clear advantages offered by its solution.

Plans for the UK

Arlenda is aiming to reinforce its sales efforts in areas where there are clusters of pharmaceutical firms. It is seeking a new commercial partner to represent it, preferably in the Quality field working with pharmaceutical companies or test laboratories and in the analytical field.



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