

Thomson Pharma: a modular approach

interview with Jon Brett Harris, executive vice president

of Pharmaceutical and Chemical Markets at Thomson Scientific

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Thomson PharmaSM aims to fulfill the drug discovery and development information needs of professionals working at all stages of the drug pipeline. Its launch in December 2004 gave Thomson Scientific customers easy access to the best pharmaceutical industry content owned by Thomson. Eighteen months on, I talked to Jon Brett Harris about the continuing challenge of delivering knowledge and expertise to such a broad target audience.

Q. *You joined Thomson Scientific four months ago. What was the attraction?*

A. My background in the pharmaceutical industry gives me a good understanding of information needs from the customer's point of view. I was pleased to come on board at such an exciting time for the SBU and for Thomson Pharma in particular.

Q. *Tell me about your team?*

A. The global Pharmaceutical and Chemical Markets team brings together professionals in research and development, sales, support, communications and an excellent editorial group. They have shown fantastic flexibility, dedication and teamwork while we have brought *Thomson Pharma* to market. We are fortunate to have such a deep pool of expertise, and it's been great to witness the enthusiasm from all departments as Thomson Pharma grows and we start to reach a wider audience.

Q. *What have been your main challenges since you joined?*

A. Our vision continues to be to provide the first workflow solution to cover specific stages of the drug development process. We want to help our customers innovate, work faster and smarter, and attain outstanding research and business results. 40 Thomson data sources now populate *Thomson Pharma*, among them *IDdb*, *DOLPHIN*, *Derwent World Patents Index[®]* and *Web of Science[®]*. The focus this year has been to ensure these data sources are fully integrated to support and enhance the other content, and to develop or acquire the additional information sources customers have told us they need. The challenge is always to meet and exceed our customers' expectations. As you know technology moves fast, and Andrew Brown (vice president of Research and Development) is driving our

product and software development initiatives through a series of dedicated project teams — focusing on combining our great content with the latest portal and internet technologies.

Q. *How deeply are customers still involved with this development work?*

A. Customer-driven innovation is a key focus for the Thomson Corporation, and *Thomson Pharma* is a prime example of this. From the very beginning we have worked to gain a deep understanding of the information and functionality needs of both current and potential customers. Throughout the development and launch we have continued to seek and act on customer feedback, including the appointment of a dedicated Customer Values Manager — Rachel Irvine — who is our in-house advocate for the customer. We upgrade *Thomson Pharma* regularly based on the feedback we receive. One recent example of this is the introduction of Supplementary Protection Certificate expiration dates on *Thomson Pharma* patent summaries — crucial data to help generic drug companies ensure they are not infringing the intellectual property of drug originators.

Q. *Tell me more about the new modules introduced this year*

A. Thomson has made several strategic acquisitions to bring in new information sources and help complete our coverage of the drug pipeline. In addition to maintaining the acquired resources as stand-alone products, we have also integrated them into *Thomson Pharma* this year through new optional modules:

The Brand Management Module, launched in March, integrates market intelligence content from the *Thomson Message Mapping System*SM (formerly Astrolabe). Market research told us that information on marketed drugs was of key importance to our customers, and this addition helps us give pharmaceutical companies a better understanding of how the market perceives their products. This is a key strategic tool for developing effective product messaging and positioning.

Last month we launched the Generic Competition Module to help innovator pharmaceutical companies identify and assess generic competition for their brand products. The powerful competitive intelligence and analysis in this module is derived from the *Vision CI*TM system, originally developed by Newport Strategies.

The Regulatory Affairs Module is our other most recent addition, and is derived from the *IDRAC*[®] global regulatory intelligence database. It brings together information on regulatory requirements from 140 different sources worldwide — knowledge which is

crucial for companies building strategies to accelerate their product launch plans in the global market.

Q. *Are you planning to migrate original customers of these databases to Thomson Pharma?*

A. There will be no immediate change in access for these customers. But the integration does give us the opportunity to offer the same content to *Thomson Pharma* users, combined with our customization and collaboration tools, and seamless links to our other data sources. The addition of the modules is a key milestone in giving our customers faster access to all the information they need to make their business decisions.

Q. *How can Thomson Pharma work alongside existing in-house solutions and systems?*

A. We can fully customize *Thomson Pharma* to integrate it with an organization's existing solutions and systems. This can include aligning it with in-house and third party data, and with existing or planned intranet or portal-based information systems. We can also set up dedicated home pages for specialty research areas of that organization, complete with customized searches and alerts. We have a flexible pricing system based on individual requirements, and aim to help customers cut costs and improve efficiency by consolidating their information sources.

Q. *Are large pharmaceutical companies your only focus?*

A. Not at all. *Thomson Pharma* pricing is based on the size of the company, and our representatives will work with SMEs to find an option that is suitable to them. We already have many smaller companies that have access to *Thomson Pharma* – meaning they can benefit from the depth of information, functionality and analysis tools the big players use.

Q. *How will the acquisition of CMR impact Thomson Pharma?*

A. The acquisition of CMR (Centre for Medicines Research International) earlier this year has brought an exciting opportunity for us to work with customers to help them plan their R&D more effectively. CMR is the foremost provider of R&D performance metrics and we are currently evaluating ways in which this information can be brought to a wider Thomson audience.

Q. *So where next for Thomson Pharma?*

A. As I mentioned, we want Thomson Pharma to evolve to be a true workflow solution that can help our customers make critical decisions in the drug development process. Thanks to an extraordinary effort across the team, we have made a tremendous start, but we are not there yet. We will continue to work with our customers to add content and technology to achieve our vision and given our success so far we have every reason to be excited and opportunistic for the future.

Find out more about *Thomson Pharma* at www.thomsonpharma.com