

Earlier sections of this publication, notably Chapter 4.2 sections IV and V, explain why these questions are important. The survey showed a significant difference in the VANs' domestic, U.S. and overseas capabilities in each of the above four areas. Therefore, the domestic, U.S., and international capabilities are reviewed separately below.

Domestic

i) Area of Operation

Most of the VANs operate in Canada, although some are more focused and thus are less widely visible. All but two of the VANs maintain EDI sales and support offices in Canada. **Kleinschmidt** services Canada entirely from the U.S. and **SITA** plans to develop domestic EDI capability.

In general, access to local sales representation and support is important to companies new to EDI; it becomes a major factor in determining how many local trading partners the VAN has. But it can be less important to experienced users with specific needs.

ii) Trading Partners (Customer Base)

The size and make-up of the VANs' customer base varies greatly. Of course, this will influence a company's choice of which VAN to use; one that is already subscribed to, or likely will be subscribed to, by many of that company's trading partners is probably the best choice.

In the survey, the majority of VANs either declined to answer questions on the size of their customer base, or chose to answer those questions in a fashion that made industry-wide comparisons difficult. Nevertheless, the important thing to remember is the number of customers using the VAN for public EDI (X12, EDIFACT, etc.) The number of customers using E-mail or other proprietary services is irrelevant to the successful implementation of EDI. We believe we have overcome the problem of insufficient data by using the survey results to estimate the size of some of the VANs' customer bases.

GEIS has the largest number of EDI customers in Canada, followed by **Sterling Ordernet**. We estimate that **A.T.&T.**, **Immedia**, **Kleinschmidt**, and **TDNI** all have relatively fewer.