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## **New COMNET portal offers relief on LEED online documentaion**

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It has been a busy year for the LEED Rating System and the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). In July, we announced that the total footprint of commercial projects certified under the LEED green building program surpassed 2 billion s/f. LEED is currently certifying two million square feet of commercial building space each day worldwide, with an additional 7 billion s/f currently in the pipeline across the globe as registered projects (USGBC, July 26, 2012). That requires a lot of LEED documentation. With all of this progress and its documentation, it is a relief to see that COMNET has found a way to automate the LEED online submission process. In August, the COMNET team, of New Buildings Institute (NBI), Architectural Energy Corporation, Institute for Market Transformation and RESNET, unveiled one of the first LEED Automation tools for LEED project teams. The COMNET Energy Modeling Portal is an online platform used to collect energy modeling simulation results, perform basic quality assurance checks, and submit the results to LEED Online, eliminating time consuming manual transmission. LEED Online users can now upload modeling results directly from their simulation software to the COMNET Energy Modeling Portal. The Portal can be used for New Construction, Core & Shell, and Schools projects. It was designed specifically for the submission of Energy & Atmosphere Prerequisite 2 and Energy & Atmosphere Credit 1 results. Before COMNET, energy modelers had to analyze pages of output reports, locate the required data, convert units, and then manually type this information into the LEED Online Templates. COMNET will streamline the modeling process and accelerate the completion of documentation in LEED Projects. This new automation tool is valuable not only because of the time-saving aspect, but also as a quality assurance for LEED project teams. It offers design teams a way to reduce errors and improve accuracy in the submission process. This portal is currently available at [www.comnet.org/portal](http://www.comnet.org/portal). Although the new COMNET portal is currently free to use, payment for the service will be required in October. The portal supports two file types—legacy outputs from eQUEST (.sim files) and COMNET XML standard output files. Currently, Trane TRACE 700 and EnergySoft's EnergyPro v5.1 have enabled COMNET XML outputs, and several other software vendors are developing this capacity. Industry experts speculate that design teams will start using this portal as a standard practice in project submission after experiencing the cost and time savings provided by automation. I applaud the COMNET team and the USGBC on a synergistic relationship that will accelerate the marketplace for LEED buildings. Suzanne Abbott, LEED AP BD+C, is the chapter operations manager for the U.S. Green Building Council-Mass. chapter, Boston and is a monthly contributing USGBC-Mass. chapter author for the New England Real Estate Journal's Green Building section.