



# THE 2019 EXECUTION MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS SURVEY

# Execution moves onwards and upwards

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The 2019 edition of The TRADE's Execution Management Systems survey finds the space in rude health as execution quality continues to increase.

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In the 2018 edition of The TRADE's Execution Management Systems (EMS) survey, compliance with the recent MiFID II rules was fast becoming a thing of the past, as providers and users

year found that the buy-side had spent around \$1.4 billion on the deployment of EMS and order management systems in 2018, with the most recognisable names in the space leading the way in terms

the compliance-focused days of two years ago when MiFID II came into play. However, there are signs that some providers may be resting on their laurels, falling behind the high standards their peers have set in this year's survey.

Figure 1 shows the scores recorded over the past three years across 13 functional EMS categories under review by buy-side respondents. Overall, scores continued to rise in this year's survey, with all categories under scrutiny scoring above 5.00 (representing a 'good', or 'default', score), while two categories exceeded the 6.00 mark. The overall survey average score also rose in this year's edition to 5.78, a 0.22 increase on last year, and the highest score for at least the past seven years.

Every area of service ranked

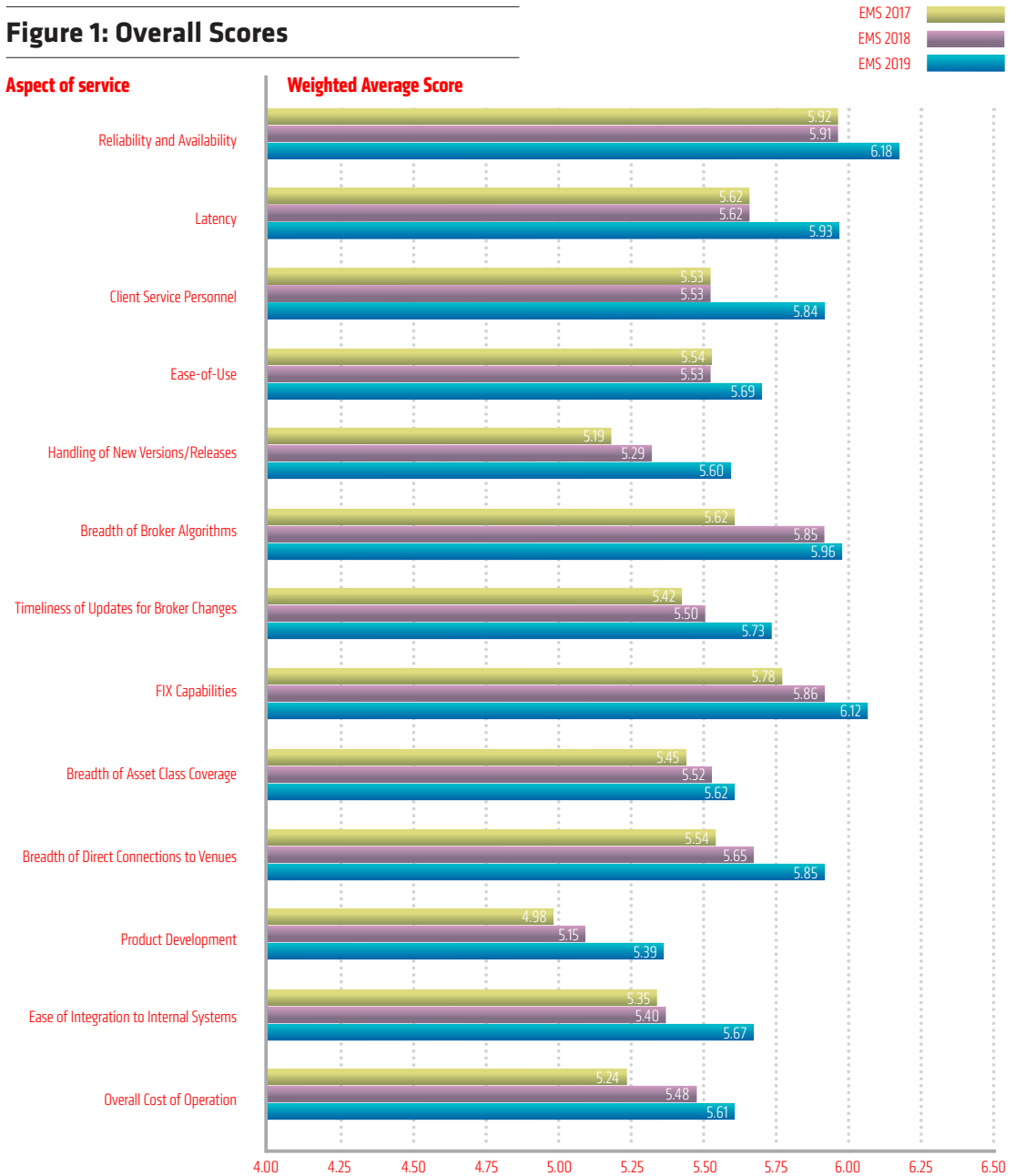
**"There are signs that some providers may be resting on their laurels, falling behind the high standards their peers have set in this year's survey."**

alike turned their attention back towards the real business at hand: improving the quality of execution.

Research conducted by the consultancy Greenwich Associates and published in March this

year found that the buy-side had spent around \$1.4 billion on the deployment of EMS and order management systems in 2018, with the most recognisable names in the space leading the way in terms of popularity. Given the amount the asset management community is now spending on these systems, the results of this year's survey will be pleasing to providers, as scores continue to rise as the industry moves further away from

**Figure 1: Overall Scores**



by respondents this year showed improvement on last year’s results, although a few of these were only marginal and can be considered

inconsequential — breadth of asset class coverage and ease of use scored just 0.1 and 0.13 higher than last year respectively — but

elsewhere there were signs of more tangible improvements.

Three categories recorded year-on-year score improvements

Figure 2: Asset Classes Traded 2019 (% of respondents)



of 0.31 – latency, client service personnel and handling of new versions/releases – while another six categories saw an increase of between 0.2 and 0.27 on last year’s results. While these scores may hardly seem ground-breaking in isolation, the wider trends show a far more encouraging perspective; compared to the 2015 iteration of the EMS survey, half a dozen categories have increased by as much as 0.55, indicating that this space may be one of slower, incremental advancement rather than experiencing a ‘big bang’.

The highest-scoring areas of performance in this year’s survey were the reliability and availability, and FIX capabilities categories, which scored 6.18 and 6.12 respectively, while four other categories were just underneath the 6.0 mark – latency (5.93), breadth of broker algorithms (5.96), client service personnel (5.84) and breadth of direct connections to venues (5.85).

One category that has always been a critical element for EMS users when reviewing the providers and systems is product devel-

**"This space may be one of slower, incremental advancement rather than experiencing a big bang."**

opment. This has been an area of underperformance for EMS providers over the past five years and although there have been signals of progress since 2017, it was again the lowest scoring category in this year’s results, with 5.39. While this still represents a ‘good’ score, it is far below the survey-wide average of 5.78 and has actually brought that figure down; without the product development category, this year’s survey average would stand at 5.82. Clearly then the buy-side expects more from their EMS providers and will be hoping for innovation in this space as the other areas of functionality continue to improve; those providers that cannot demonstrate this may find their clients looking elsewhere.

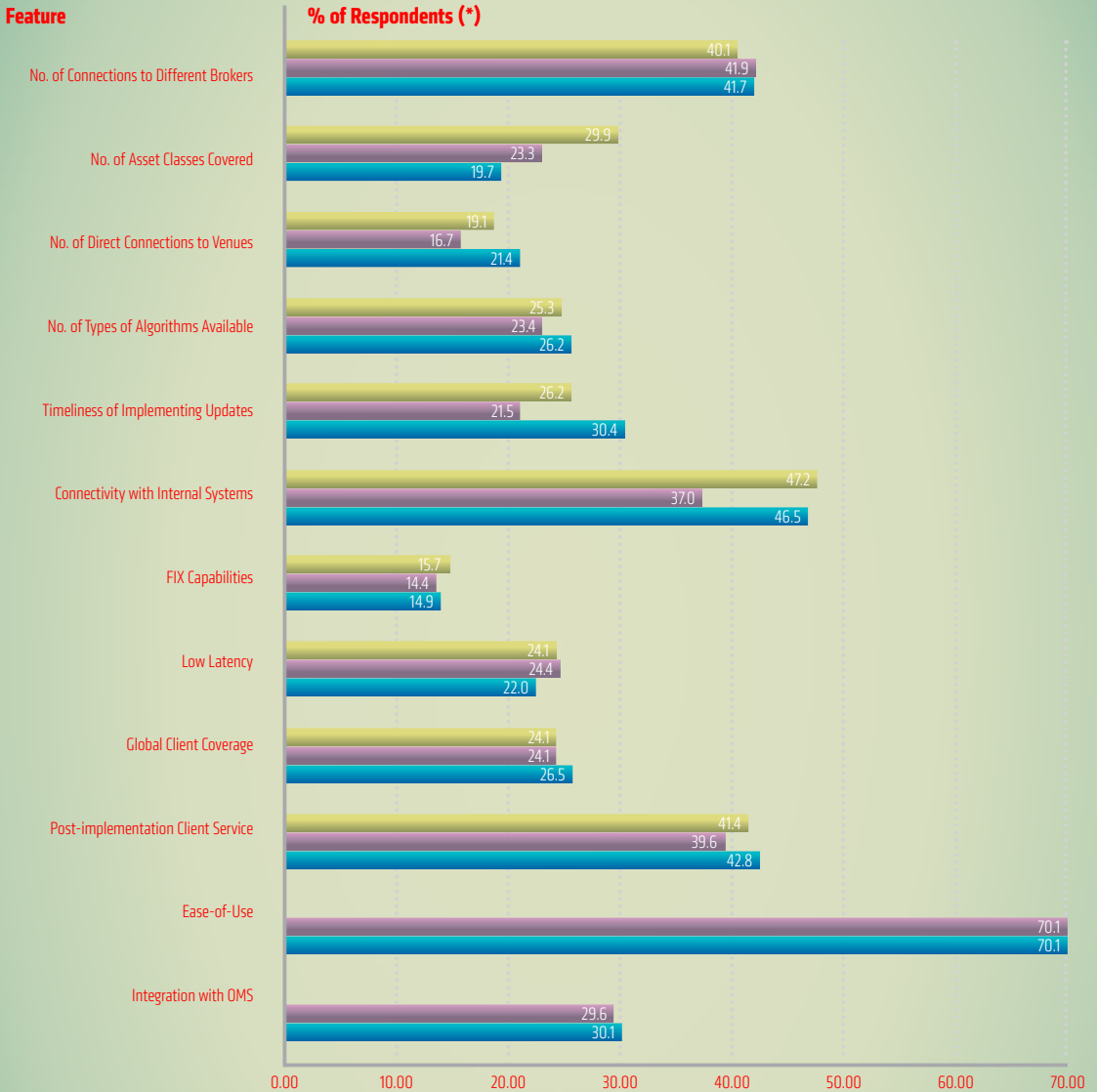
In terms of the asset classes traded through these systems,

equities still dominates the survey, with just over 95% of respondents trading this product, while there was a significant drop-off in the foreign exchange space, down to just 12.4% of respondents from 34.4% in last year’s survey.

When it comes to the most important facets of EMS’ for the buy-side, not much has changed over the past 12 months. Connectivity with internal systems and ease of use remain the most important features according to this year’s respondents (46.5% and 70.1%) respectively, as seen in Figure 3. Respondents to the survey were asked to select four important features of their chosen EMS’, and alongside the aforementioned facets, post-implementation of client service (42.8%) and the number of connections to different brokers

**Figure 3: Most Important Features**

*\*Each respondent named up to four important features*



(41.7%) were the four top picks.

Two areas that have seen an increase in importance among survey respondents compared to last year are the timeliness of imple-

menting updates and connectivity with internal systems categories, increasing 8.9% and 9.5% year-on-year. Although it scored exactly the same as it did in last year's

survey, ease of use continues to dominate the buy-side's opinion on the most important features of an EMS. Similar to the findings of The TRADE's annual Algorithm-

mic Trading survey this year, the buy-side is indicating that they are seeking technology that does not require a technologist mindset to operate and highly value systems that can be slotted into their processes as smoothly as possible.

The ongoing consolidation of EMS providers among the buy-side continues apace, as shown in Figure 4, as asset managers persist in slimming down the number of relationships they hold with these providers. Just under 63% of buy-side respondents said this year that they are using a single EMS provider, a far cry from the results of 2017, where just over one-third of respondents were using one provider. It would now be reasonable to assume the 2017 result was an anomaly, likely driven by the introduction of MiFID II, when asset managers were sampling their options in the space before making a definitive decision on which EMS provider they would use going forward.

There have been decreases in the level of firms using two or three providers to offset the increase in

**"While many areas of functionality covered by the survey have scored highly, it would be unreasonable to expect this trend to continue unbridled in future."**

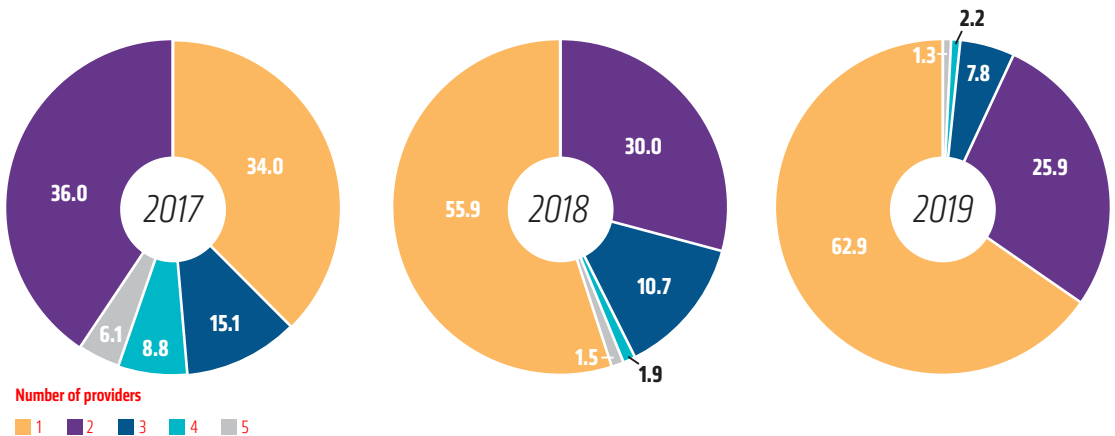
those with a single provider, and marginal increases for those using four or more EMS providers, but this larger end of the scale is the reserve of those on the buy-side with significant resources and complex trading strategies that necessitate a variety of systems or those designed to suit niche activities.

Leading on from this, Figure 5 shows little change from last year's results when examining the average number of providers when split by the AuM size of respondents, although there continues to be a reduction in the number of providers adopted by firms in the upper AuM brackets, down from 2.38 in 2017 to 1.81 this year. When asked if they had plans

to implement additional EMS providers to their existing set-up, over 70% of respondents answered that they had no plans to do so, while just five respondents were able to name which provider they planned to onboard in future. Similarly, 70% of respondents said that they had no plans to change which EMS provider they were currently using.

When it comes to evaluating EMS providers, eight firms garnered enough responses from buy-side users to warrant a profile, with some big industry hitters — such as REDI and SS&C — noticeably absent from the list due to insufficient levels of responses. Most interestingly in the profiled providers was the contrasting

**Figure 4: Number of Providers Used** (% of Respondents)



tales of performance for two EMS providers that were acquired by in big money deals, Charles River and ITG, now part of State Street and Virtu Financial respectively.

Charles River recorded the lowest score of all profiled providers (5.08) for the second year in a row, also recording the lowest scores in seven of the 13 areas of performance, while Virtu Triton, as the system is now called, received the second-highest, with 6.28. Virtu's acquisition of ITG was only closed in May this year and any changes made to the system will take more time to bed in, so this year's results should not be taken as an example of how Triton is being run under its new management, although its counterpart, Charles River has had over a year in the State Street stable and has only seen improvement in a few areas, continuing to languish behind many of its peers, according to this year's respondents.

The overall picture from this year's survey results show one of positive improvements as the industry looks to move further away from the compliance-led days of 2017 and towards greater execution quality. While many areas of functionality covered by the survey have scored highly, it would be unreasonable to expect this trend to continue unbridled

**Methodology**

Survey respondents were asked to provide a rating for each Execution Management System (EMS) provider on a numerical scale from 1.0 (Very Weak) to 7.0 (Excellent), covering 13 functional criteria.

In general, 5.0 represents the 'default' score of respondents. In total, around 230 individuals responded; more than 360 evaluations were submitted; and more than 20 providers were evaluated.

The evaluations were used to compile the eight Provider Profiles covering the major EMS providers based on responses received. Each evaluation was weighted according to three characteristics of the respondent; the value of assets under management, the scale of business being conducted electronically; and the number of different providers being used. In this way the evaluations of the largest and broadest EMS users were weighted at up to twice the weight of the smallest and least experienced respondent.

In arriving at any overall calculations, the scores received in respect of each of the 13 functional categories were further weighted according to the importance attached to them by survey respondents. The aim is to ensure that in assessing service provision the greatest impact results from the scores received from the most sophisticated users in the areas they regard as the most important.

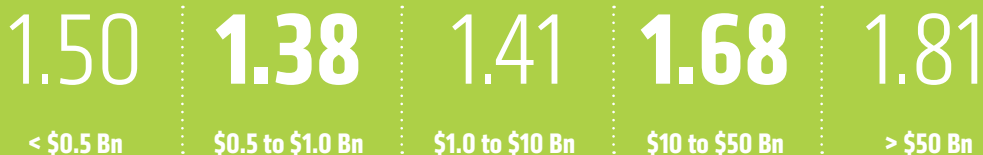
Finally, it should be noted that responses provided by affiliated entities have been discarded and that other responses, where respondents were unable to be properly verified, were also excluded.

in future; EMS providers are no doubt listening to what their clients are asking for in terms of functionality and performance, but a single unexpected event or a series of strong industry headwinds may change that tune in

future. But for now, it's a case of making hay while the sun shines for the EMS space, and moving onwards and upwards for execution quality.



**Figure 5: Average Number of Providers by Size 2019**



# Bloomberg

Having announced it is to exit its SSEOMS (sell-side execution and order management solutions) earlier this year, Bloomberg will have been looking for a strong showing in this year's survey from its buy-side users. Research carried out by Greenwich Associates this year found that the majority of buy-side traders used the Bloomberg EMSX platform as its EMS of choice; although the technology giant saw a 20% decrease in responses to this year's EMS survey, it retained its position as the largest provider based solely on the number of responses.

In terms of scoring, Bloomberg recorded relatively similar scores as in last year's survey, with some minor fluctuations across the functional categories under review, and an overall score of 5.29. While this represents an improvement on its overall performance last year, it is still well below the 2019 survey-wide average score of 5.78 and the second-lowest average score of the EMS providers profiled.

Similarly to last year, Bloomberg's highest score in this year's edition came in the reliability and availability category (6.03), while its most improved year-on-

year score was in the client service personnel category, which increased from 4.51 to 4.87. There were several other areas of improvement for Bloomberg according to survey respondents, with the latency (+0.29), handling of new versions/releases (+0.29), FIX capabilities (+0.27) and ease of integration to internal systems (+0.21) categories all displaying year-on-year score increases.

Meanwhile, Bloomberg received the lowest scores of profiled providers in five of the 13 functional categories under review – latency (5.61), ease of use (5.01), FIX capabilities (5.75), product development (4.49) and ease of integration to internal systems (5.07) – while there were four categories which saw decreased year-on-year scores. A particular cause of concern for Bloomberg will be its poor showing in the ease of use category, as 68% of the vendor's buy-side users indicated in the survey that this was their most important feature when using EMSX. Around 15% of buy-side respondents for Bloomberg also indicated that they were either considering or planning to replace Bloomberg as their EMS provider in the next 12 months.

## BLOOMBERG RATINGS FOR EMS PERFORMANCE

Reliability and Availability	Latency	Client Service Personnel	Ease-of-Use	Handling of New Versions/Releases	Breadth of Broker Algorithms	Timeliness of Updates for Broker Changes	FIX Capabilities
6.03	5.61	4.87	5.01	5.24	5.61	5.18	5.75

Breadth of Asset Class Coverage	Breadth of Direct Connections to Venues	Product Development	Ease of Integration to Internal Systems	Overall Cost of Operation	Average score
5.38	5.42	4.49	5.07	5.08	5.29

## KEY STATS

 **+0.36**

**Best year-on-year score**  
(client service personnel)

 **6.03**

**Highest score**  
(reliability and availability)

 **4.47**

**Lowest score**  
(product development)

 **68%**

**Most important EMS feature: Ease of use**



# Charles River

While the shockwaves of State Street paying out \$2.6 billion to acquire Charles River in July last year have long since disappeared, the initial reaction among the asset management community was one of positivity, if the discussions at last year's InvestOps conference in London could be used as a reliable yardstick. Since then, State Street has been hard at work integrating the vendor's various solutions into its front-to-back offering, and the buy-side will be keeping a keen eye on how this impacts on their front-office execution capabilities.

In this year's survey Charles River saw a 42% decrease in the number of responses from buy-side firms compared to the 2018 edition, and was the lowest ranked profiled provider based purely on response numbers. Last year Charles River recorded the lowest average score of profiled providers (4.83) and the vendor has the unwanted position at the bottom of the rankings again this year, with an average score of 5.08 (well below the survey average of 5.78), despite this representing a year-on-year increase of 0.25.

Charles River's highest score in this year's survey

was in the reliability and availability category (5.95), although this again was the lowest score amongst profiled providers, it also scored respectably in the latency (5.62) and FIX capabilities categories (5.80). The vendor also recorded year-on-year score increases in nine of the 13 functional categories under review, most notably for its latency capabilities (+1.17), while it also saw a good improvement within the reliability and availability (+0.81) and handling of new versions/releases (+0.67) categories.

However, Charles River also saw some decreased scores compared to last year, with year-on-year falls in the breadth of broker algorithms (-0.29), breadth of direct connections to venues (-0.24) and breadth of asset class coverage (-0.17) categories. These were also among the seven categories in which Charles River received the lowest score of this year's profiled providers – alongside client service personnel (4.59), handling of new versions/releases (4.80), timeliness of updates for broker changes (4.84), and overall cost of operations (4.48) – implying that buy-side respondents find the Charles River EMS far too narrow in market scope.

## CHARLES RIVER RATINGS FOR EMS PERFORMANCE

Reliability and Availability	Latency	Client Service Personnel	Ease-of-Use	Handling of New Versions/Releases	Breadth of Broker Algorithms	Timeliness of Updates for Broker Changes	FIX Capabilities
5.95	5.62	4.59	5.01	4.80	4.97	4.84	5.80

Breadth of Asset Class Coverage	Breadth of Direct Connections to Venues	Product Development	Ease of Integration to Internal Systems	Overall Cost of Operation	Average score
5.09	5.03	4.73	5.08	4.48	5.08

## KEY STATS

 **+1.17**

**Best year-on-year score**  
(latency)

 **5.95**

**Highest score**  
(reliability and availability)

 **4.48**

**Lowest score**  
(overall cost of operation)



**73%**

**Most important EMS feature: Ease of integration to internal systems**

# FlexTrade

FlexTrade was unable to garner enough responses to merit a profile provider in last year's EMS survey, but has returned to its usual position among profiled EMS providers in this year's edition, having received twice as many responses from asset managers in 2019's survey. The vendor has spent much of the previous 12 months making a series of upgrades to its FlexTRADER and FlexNOW EMS products, focusing on accessibility and interoperability through its work with OpenFin, moving FlexNOW onto the Amazon Web Services cloud platform to reduce latency and onboarding time, as well as expanding its workflow and automation capabilities.

However, it seems that these efforts have not impressed buy-side respondents to this year's EMS survey, or not yet at least, as FlexTrade recorded a disappointing showing compared to its results last year. The vendor recorded an average score of 5.50 from this year's respondents, which, while still respectable and well above the "default" score (5.00), it represents a decrease of 0.36 from its average score in 2018 and is one of the lowest average scores for profiled providers

this year.

Similarly, FlexTrade received a healthy set of scores across EMS functional performance categories from survey respondents this year, with scores exceeding 5.00 in all but one category – handling of new versions/releases (4.96), which perhaps does not bode well for the vendor's upgrade work this year. FlexTrade scored highly in the reliability and availability (5.76), client service personnel (5.74), breadth of broker algorithms (5.98), timeliness of updates for broker changes (5.84) and FIX capabilities (5.85) categories. However, it is the year-on-year score changes that provide a much starker view of how buy-side users rate FlexTrade's EMS offering, with nine of the 13 categories reviewed scoring below last year's total, most noticeable in for latency (-0.85), handling of new versions/releases (-0.91), breadth of direct connections to venues (-0.74) and, most significantly, in ease of use (0.92), an area that 64% of FlexTrade buy-side respondents said was the most important EMS feature for their operations.

## FLEXTRADE RATINGS FOR EMS PERFORMANCE

Reliability and Availability	Latency	Client Service Personnel	Ease-of-Use	Handling of New Versions/Releases	Breadth of Broker Algorithms	Timeliness of Updates for Broker Changes	FIX Capabilities
5.76	5.64	5.74	5.08	4.96	5.98	5.84	5.85

Breadth of Asset Class Coverage	Breadth of Direct Connections to Venues	Product Development	Ease of Integration to Internal Systems	Overall Cost of Operation	Average score
5.32	5.41	5.60	5.18	5.08	5.50

## KEY STATS

 **+0.07**

**Best year-on-year score**  
(FIX capabilities)



**5.98**

**Highest score**  
(Breadth of broker algorithms)



**4.96**

**Lowest score**  
(Handling of new versions/releases)



**64%**

**Most important EMS feature: Use of ease**

# Instinet

While its competitors and peers have embarked upon spending sprees, furthering the consolidation the front-office financial technology space, or undertook a series of public upgrades to their EMS offerings, Instinet has, on the other hand, been somewhat quiet in this particular arena over the past 12 months. Now in its 50th year, the agency broker seems content to, for the time being at least, focus on other areas of its business and let its EMS platform Newport stay the course. Last year we wrote that Instinet should be wary of complacency in a saturated EMS market, and that advice still appears to be relevant in 2019.

As one of the mainstays of the annual EMS survey, Instinet drew 15% more responses from buy-side users in this year's survey compared to last year. Having recorded the highest average score for profiled providers in the EMS survey for the past three years, Instinet was unable to hold on to its crown in 2019, receiving an average score of 6.15 from buy-side respondents, outperforming the survey average (5.78). While this represents a 0.09 improvement on its

score from the 2018 edition of the survey, the implication is that Instinet's competitors have leapfrogged the broker over the past 12 months.

However, Instinet should have every reason to be pleased with its overall showing in this year's EMS survey. The firm recorded a score of at least 6.0 in 11 of the 13 functional categories under review, posting the highest scores of all profiled providers in the handling new versions/releases (6.27) and overall cost of operations (6.35) categories, while also scoring highly in the reliability and availability (6.40), client service personnel (6.41) and FIX capabilities (6.32) categories. The only areas in which the broker failed to break the 6.0 score were for its breadth of asset class coverage (5.51) and product development (5.85), although, again, these still represent respectable scores. There was little in the way of major variation in Instinet's year-on-year scores, with the most noticeable differences coming in the overall cost of operations (+0.43) and handling of new versions/releases (+0.53) categories.

## INSTINET RATINGS FOR EMS PERFORMANCE

Reliability and Availability	Latency	Client Service Personnel	Ease-of-Use	Handling of New Versions/Releases	Breadth of Broker Algorithms	Timeliness of Updates for Broker Changes	FIX Capabilities
6.40	6.21	6.41	6.15	6.27	6.29	6.05	6.32

Breadth of Asset Class Coverage	Breadth of Direct Connections to Venues	Product Development	Ease of Integration to Internal Systems	Overall Cost of Operation	Average score
5.51	6.13	5.85	6.06	6.35	6.15

## KEY STATS

 **+0.53**

**Best year-on-year score**  
(Handling of new versions/releases)

 **6.41**

**Highest score**  
(Client service personnel)

 **5.51**

**Lowest score**  
(Breadth of asset class coverage)



**73%**

**Most important EMS feature: Ease of use**

# Portware

Having been acquired by FactSet four years ago, Portware has been another entrant that has dipped in and out of the EMS survey in recent years. FactSet has spent much of this time pioneering the idealistic synergy and integration between EMS and OMS, although the appetite for such a combined offering seems to fluctuate drastically among buy-side users depending on their trading strategies and operational resources. The vendor failed to attract enough responses in last year's EMS survey to warrant a profile but received an impressive 160% increase in response numbers for this year's edition.

Portware was the standout performer in this year's EMS survey, which will be hugely welcome news to FactSet, given its underwhelming showing in last year's edition. It received the highest average score of all profiled providers with 6.35, far above the survey average of 5.78, and a massive year-on-year increase of 1.13 compared to last year. With a score of 7.0 representing the highest possible achievable, to record an average of 6.35 is an outstanding testament to the work FactSet have done to improve the product.

The vendor received a score of over 6.0 in all but one of the functional performance areas under review – the one exception being the product development category, which scored 5.99 – and achieved the highest score of all profiled providers in six of the 13 categories reviewed by buy-side survey respondents. Portware also came close to achieving perfect scores in several areas, namely for its reliability and availability (6.88), client service personnel (6.61), FIX capabilities (6.74) and breadth of direct connections to venues (6.58).

The most noticeable year-on-year score increases were in the reliability and availability (+1.40), client service personnel (+1.82), ease of use (+1.60), handling of new versions/releases (+1.56) and product development (+1.78). The overall picture for the Portware EMS is one of vast improvement, particularly around product enhancements, consistency and service. The challenge for Factset now is to repeat this performance in next year's EMS survey, a feat much easier said than done considering the ongoing consolidation and shifting priorities of the asset management community.

## PORTWARE RATINGS FOR EMS PERFORMANCE

Reliability and Availability	Latency	Client Service Personnel	Ease-of-Use	Handling of New Versions/Releases	Breadth of Broker Algorithms	Timeliness of Updates for Broker Changes	FIX Capabilities
6.88	6.34	6.61	6.08	6.02	6.45	6.22	6.74

Breadth of Asset Class Coverage	Breadth of Direct Connections to Venues	Product Development	Ease of Integration to Internal Systems	Overall Cost of Operation	Average score
6.31	6.58	5.99	6.12	6.24	6.35

## KEY STATS

 **+1.82**

**Best year-on-year score**  
(Client service personnel)

 **6.88**

**Highest score**  
(Reliability and availability)

 **5.99**

**Lowest score**  
(Product development)



**69%**

**Most important EMS feature: Breadth of asset class coverage**

# TORA

Having spent the better part of the last few years making a series of enhancements to its integrated order and executions management system offering, mostly focused on new requirements concerning MiFID II reporting and bolstering its artificial intelligence capabilities, TORA seems to now be reaping the rewards of that work. The firm has continued to expand its primary client base in the Asia-Pacific, again receiving more responses from that region than any other provider in this year's survey. The vendor drew 36% more responses to this year's survey than it did in last year's edition, with around 75% of respondents coming from either Singapore, Japan or Hong Kong.

TORA produced a strong showing in last year's survey and buy-side users have bestowed a similar level of scores in this year's survey. The vendor recorded an average score of 6.12, well above the survey average of 5.78 and enough to place it fourth among profiled providers, as well as being a 0.1 increase on its performance last year. TORA scored above 6.0 in eight of the 13 functional categories under review; ease of use (5.98), handling of new versions/releases (5.95),

breadth of asset class coverage (5.94), product development (5.92) and overall cost of operations (5.69) being the exceptions, although most of these were only marginally lower than 6.0.

The vendor's highest rating was in the client service personnel category (6.46) and it also received strong showings in the FIX capabilities (6.39), reliability and availability (6.36), timeliness of updates for broker changes (6.24) and breadth of broker algorithms (6.21) categories. There were largely marginal year-on-year improvements in most areas according to buy-side respondents and three areas in which TORA recorded lower year-on-year scores - client service personnel (-0.04), product development (-0.03) and overall cost of operation (-0.33). While these fluctuations are relatively small and TORA was still scored highly in all three categories, the majority of buy-side respondents to the EMS survey in recent years have highlighted service levels and cost as some of their key metrics of judgement for providers, areas that the vendor would be wise to keep an eye on going forward.

## TORA RATINGS FOR EMS PERFORMANCE

Reliability and Availability	Latency	Client Service Personnel	Ease-of-Use	Handling of New Versions/Releases	Breadth of Broker Algorithms	Timeliness of Updates for Broker Changes	FIX Capabilities
6.36	6.22	6.46	5.98	5.95	6.21	6.24	6.39

Breadth of Asset Class Coverage	Breadth of Direct Connections to Venues	Product Development	Ease of Integration to Internal Systems	Overall Cost of Operation	Average score
5.94	6.13	5.92	6.10	5.69	6.12

## KEY STATS

 **+0.33**

**Best year-on-year score**  
(Timeliness of updates for broker changes)



**6.46**

**Highest score**  
(Client service personnel)



**5.69**

**Lowest score**  
(Overall cost of operation)



**47%**

**Most important EMS feature: Ease of use**

# TS (TradingScreen)

TS (TradingScreen) has been one of the main advocates of the integrated order and execution management system and has evolved its TradeSmart platform into this hybrid model, as well as building out its analytics capabilities through partnership with ITG (now part of Virtu) and improving standardisation and scalability through integration work with data specialist IHS Markit. However, the vendor saw the largest fall in buy-side responses in this year's EMS survey compared to the 2018 edition, drawing 44% fewer responses this time round.

The vendor's historic results in the EMS survey have shown respectable scores from buy-side respondents with year-on-year incremental improvements in most areas, and the story in this year's edition of the survey is no different. TS recorded an average score of 5.88, just above the survey average of 5.78, which represents a year-on-year increase of 0.19. The vendor received scores over 6.0 in four of the 13 functional categories under review: reliability and availability (6.25), client service personnel (6.10), FIX capabilities (6.05), and breadth of direct connections to venues (6.17).

Despite recording respectable scores across all 13 categories, TS was consistently placed on the mid-to-lower end of the provider profile scoring charts by this year's buy-side respondents. TS saw year-on-year increases in all but one of the 13 categories reviewed in this year's survey – the exception being a marginal 0.04 year-on-year decrease in the breadth of broker algorithms category – most notable in the breadth of direct connections to venues (+0.54), reliability and availability (+0.37), ease of use (+0.26) and product development (+0.25). Cost will always be a key consideration for trading technologies on the buy-side and while a score of 5.63 is by no means a bad result for TS it does show, at least in comparison to other provider's results, that some users think there may be more value elsewhere in the market.

While TS has again produced a solid showing in this year's EMS survey, the firm is in danger of falling further behind its competitors in this space, as other providers post significantly higher scores year on year and those with larger spending power seize their chance to acquire established EMS products and client bases.

## TS RATINGS FOR EMS PERFORMANCE

Reliability and Availability	Latency	Client Service Personnel	Ease-of-Use	Handling of New Versions/Releases	Breadth of Broker Algorithms	Timeliness of Updates for Broker Changes	FIX Capabilities
6.25	5.87	6.10	5.99	5.54	5.88	5.60	6.05

Breadth of Asset Class Coverage	Breadth of Direct Connections to Venues	Product Development	Ease of Integration to Internal Systems	Overall Cost of Operation	Average score
5.91	6.17	5.67	5.79	5.63	5.88

## KEY STATS

 **+0.54**

**Best year-on-year score**  
(Breadth of direct connections to venues)



**6.25**

**Highest score**  
(Reliability and availability)



**5.54**

**Lowest score**  
(Handling of new versions/releases)



**66%**

**Most important EMS feature: Ease of use**

# Virtu Financial (Formerly ITG)

Shortly before closing its \$1billion acquisition of ITG in March this year, Virtu made clear that it would not be completely absorbing the agency brokerage's client-facing businesses or brand name, a move designed to minimise disruption and ensure that the historic work done to build ITG's reputation would not be dismissed. ITG is another firm that has been a staple of the EMS survey over the years, thanks to its Triton platform, which now sits within the Virtu Financial portfolio. This year's survey will come too soon to judge how the Triton asset management user base will have reacted to the changes, but Virtu will have every reason to be pleased with its showing in this edition of the EMS survey.

Virtu was one of the top performers in this year's survey, although it might be more accurate to recognise that ITG would still have been the operator of Triton for most of the past 12 months. The firm recorded an average score of 6.28, far above the survey average of 5.78 and a year-on-year improvement of 0.29, enough to rank second among the profiled

providers in this year's survey. Virtu recorded the highest score of all profiled providers in five of the 13 functional categories reviewed: client service personnel (6.70), ease of use (6.36), breadth of broker algorithms (6.50), timeliness of updates for broker changes (6.27) and ease of integration to internal systems (6.22).

There were just two areas where buy-side respondents scored Virtu below 6.0 – handling of new versions/releases (5.95) and breadth of asset class coverage (5.86), while its score of 6.70 in the client services personnel category was very close to a 'perfect' score of 7.0. Virtu was also one of just two profiled providers that recorded increased year-on-year scores compared to last year's survey, recording steady increases of between 0.2-0.4 across all categories. Only time will tell how the Triton EMS will evolve under Virtu's stewardship but a prudent course of action, for a product that has been a mainstay of front-office trading for many years, will be to simply let it continue to do its job.

## VIRTU FINANCIAL RATINGS FOR EMS PERFORMANCE

Reliability and Availability	Latency	Client Service Personnel	Ease-of-Use	Handling of New Versions/Releases	Breadth of Broker Algorithms	Timeliness of Updates for Broker Changes	FIX Capabilities
6.52	6.25	6.70	6.36	5.95	6.50	6.27	6.51

Breadth of Asset Class Coverage	Breadth of Direct Connections to Venues	Product Development	Ease of Integration to Internal Systems	Overall Cost of Operation	Average score
5.86	6.27	5.92	6.22	6.29	6.28

## KEY STATS

 **+0.41**

**Best year-on-year score**  
(Breadth of asset class coverage)

 **6.70**

**Highest score**  
(Client service personnel)

 **5.86**

**Lowest score**  
(Breadth of asset class coverage)



**80%**

**Most important EMS feature: Ease of use**