

**Summer 2000**

**AXIS**

*News*

**Volume 6 Number 2**

## The New Klondike?

There appears to be a new gold rush: on the Internet. Companies large and small are rushing to get on the Net as fast as they can to get a piece of the action having heard that this is crucial not just to make more money, but for their very survival. Recent figures predict \$6.9 trillion for business on the Internet in 2004, with half being spent in the US. The promise of the Internet is one-to-one marketing described as "disintermediation". This means removing the middlemen who are involved with most of the financial transactions that we do today. And it will have a profound effect on the way we do business. Already Microsoft and Dell are retraining their sales staff to be consultants, because competition on the Net is taking away the mysterious black art pricing of software and technical support.

Insurance is perhaps a good example of a business that can be reduced and streamlined on the Internet. Will it become a commodity like airline tickets are today? How many insurance sales people are there?

If buying a house and you can do all your preliminary house searching online and take care of the financing there too, you may only need an estate agent to take you through your final selections. This could have serious impact on the population of estate agents.

This rush is however causing all kinds of problems. Companies are getting on the Internet with poorly thought out strategies and ugly, hard to navigate web sites. The simple act of purchasing a product, the very reason for the web site, can be often be very difficult. Frequently IT departments are told to create a web presence, and traditional IT people know very little about the unique nature of the web or the company's customers they are trying to attract and keep. There is also the other extreme of having a team of people in their twenties from a nine month old dot com who have no understanding of a

company's history or products, making the decisions of how the company will look and sell online. And all of this is happening at Internet speed. It has been suggested that, just like a dog's life, one year on the Internet is equivalent to seven years off line.

And as in the Klondike gold rush days there will be rogues looking to take advantage of the early prospectors.

Traditional (brick and mortar) business has spent decades identifying and removing vulnerabilities to theft. They have in-store cameras and security personnel and they know what kind of person to watch when they come in the store. In the eighties the systems used to mitigate risk were gates and guards, and in the US, often guns also. In the nineties it was risk avoidance, and for now and the next century it will be risk management. There is a whole new set of rules when a business goes online, and the old systems don't work at all because there is a new breed of criminal out there.

This is the virtual criminal, who could be living anywhere in the world. Today most of the crime on the Net can be classified three ways. The most common category is fraud and it is happening mostly

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### *Dates for the Diary 2000*

25 Aug Deadline for copy for AXiS News Vol 6 No 3  
20 Sep AXiS 25th Birthday Seminar, London Zoo  
25 Nov Deadline for copy for AXiS News Vol 6 No 4

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on the auction sites and retail sales. The next are investment schemes using securities, work at home "opportunities" and schemes, where the first investors get a high rate of return on their investment very quickly because they are paid with the money from investors who come in later. Everyone who comes in later loses. The next category is software piracy. The last category is extortion, eg., "Pay me money or I will take down your site!" Hackers can mess up a site and embarrass the company or agency. "Hackers" are people who just try to get into another computer for the challenge. A "cracker" does the same thing but for financial gain.

There are many challenges for law enforcement in the area of Internet crime. Firstly crimes can be

committed from any location in the world, which means nations must agree on venue, enforcement and extradition to a greater degree than ever before. Secondly problems here are highly technical and to even stay on the playing field, law agencies must become early adopters of technology. Prospectors must remain vigilant.

## Editorial

This first year of the 21st century is just at the half way point. Already we have leadership changes for AXiS. Welcome and best wishes to Andy Kirkham as he takes up the Chairman's reins and to Harold Clouff who will support him as Vice-Chairman. Somehow or other I picked up the Secretary's pen in addition to the Editorial pen. It would be good to have a few more members join the Executive Committee this year to help take AXiS forward in this new decade. The archive article in this issue reports on the AMSU and CUA reviews of 1990. I'm not sure that we would welcome too much self analysis again but Committee members would like to hear your ideas for the future of AXiS, suggestions for future activities or services. One idea is to conduct a short member survey but do please get in touch with any of the contacts shown on page 2.

The special one-day event to mark 25 years of VME and our User Group is now scheduled for 20th September 2000 at London Zoo. Details are being finalised as this issue goes to Press. There will be a celebration dinner to mark our anniversary to which we hope to invite a number of guests who have contributed to the success of VME and our group.

*Don Folland*



## From the Chairman

I am delighted to introduce myself as the newly elected Chairman of AXiS. I intend to continue with the traditional chairman's column in AXiS News. I think this was made a regular feature by our past chairman Dave Longson, who regrettably had to resign due to the pressures of work commitments. Many thanks to Dave for his tireless contribution to AXiS over the past few years.

I have taken the hot seat at both a critical and very exciting time for AXiS. Let me explain. I am very excited as this year AXiS celebrates its 25th year as a user group. However it is also a critical time because we must establish a strategy and action plan to take us through the next 25 years. I want you all to contribute your thoughts to this.

By coincidence VME has also been around for 25 years. This gives AXiS and ICL an opportunity to reflect the past, the present and of course the future. We intend to do this at a special 25th celebration event to be held at London Zoo on 20th September 2000. See our web site and AXiS News for more information as it develops. I do hope you will find the time to attend. The event will have many interesting speakers and I'm sure a good time will be had by all.

I would also like to take this opportunity to ensure all members know that Harold Clouff has recently been voted the new Vice-Chairman, taking over from Don Folland. Don is still with us, thank goodness! He has kindly agreed to take on the role of AXiS Secretary, along with all his other tasks, of course.

Can I also welcome Ian Myatt to the Executive Committee. We recruited Ian as a willing chair for a new Trimetra Focus Group. Ian has done us proud! The Focus Group is to hold its inaugural meeting on Wednesday 14th June at ICL West Gorton Manchester, and as I write this we have had over 40 requests for places at the event.

Back to the 25th Celebration event, please put the date in your diary now: 20th September 2000, attend armed with your views of how AXiS can continue to provide what you want for the next 25 years and please discuss them with a committee member. Remember your input is vital. I am always willing to discuss members requirements at any time, my contact details can be found on page 2 of AXiS News. I look forward to meeting you all at the various events AXiS will be holding throughout 2000.

*Andy Kirkham.*



## Obituaries

### Leslie Adams

Those of you who have been involved in User Group activities for many years, will be sad to learn of the passing of Leslie Adams. Leslie was Secretary to the ICL South West User Group for many many years, and was a tireless worker for the User Group fraternity as a whole. Before retiring, Leslie was Computer Manager for British Drug Houses (BDH) in Poole, and commanded enormous respect for his forward thinking and considerable breadth of experience.

Outside technology, Leslie was a tireless worker for

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various charities. He actually set up a scheme whereby disabled and disadvantaged individuals learnt to water ski. Leslie put his engineering skills as well as organisations skills to good effect, in designing special equipment, arranging training and sponsored events. He was also Chairman of the Friends of Wimborne Hospital from 1988 right up to the time of his passing, and was principally responsible for raising millions of pounds for the project. For this he received the Community Service Award, so amply merited.

As a further extension to his charitable activities, Leslie was a Freemason. He joined in 1972 and progressed to be Master of his Lodge. I personally saw Leslie a month or so ago. Though fully aware of his critical and timely situation, he was typically optimistic, busy and laying plans!

He will be very sadly missed, and the world the poorer for his loss, though the richer for his selfless dedication to mankind.

**Harry Barnes**



### **Bill Beard**

Our celebration of 25 years of user group activity will carry a tinge of sadness at the recent news of the sudden death of Bill Beard, a founder member of the original 2900 User Group. He will be remembered as an enthusiastic user group activist, sound technician, and a bon viveur; someone who worked hard and played hard; a manager with an excellent technical appreciation.

At the formation of the 2900 User Group Bill was a Principal (Grade 7 in current parlance) in the Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency (CCTA) where he had responsibility for the Central Computer Facility (CCF), a project giving Government through CCTA early 2900 and VME/B experience using a 2970 in the south-east corner of the hallowed hall at ICL° Lovelace Road. Prior to his CCTA days he had worked at the Royal Aircraft Establishment at

Farnborough where several days a week he shared an office with Ken Harrison, our recently retired Secretary, working on a payroll system. Bill served for a short term as acting Director of CCTA but eventually succumbed to the temptations of consultancy and joined Coopers Lybrand in the early 1990s.

I first met Bill in 1970 and had the pleasure of working for him in two separate spells, latterly with the CCF° project at Bracknell. Coincidentally we liaised with the same Ken Harrison who was then Operations Manager at Bureau West and together we made history by porting the CCTA bureau service to Devizes for a few weeks before eventually porting again to its ultimate operational base on a 2976 in Norwich. Bill was in overall charge of the whole exercise. It was Bill's suggestion subsequently that I volunteer to edit the 2900 User Group Newsletter in 1980 - and I dare not refuse! And I hope he can now see that I'm still doing it!

Wherever Bill went he made a significant contribution. Many colleagues will recall how he enjoyed his play time, either at squash, or golf, or at the bar! A favourite tippie which he alleged came from RAE Farnborough was the Irish Bosun, a splendid blend of angostura bitters, underneath a half pint of draft Guinness, topped off with a measure of rum. It certainly put hairs on this sailor's chest!

Thank you, Bill and God Bless

**Don Folland**



## **Focus Groups News**

### **Capacity Management**

The first meeting for this Group this year took place at ICL, West Gorton, with an excellent set of presentations to pick up the theme of End User Performance Measurement. As usual Dave Hewetson was in the chair to welcome a smaller group of members than we have been used to in past CMUG meetings but everyone participated in the proceedings to make it a productive day. The presentations are captured in full in Powerpoint format on the AXiS web site; go to <http://www.axis.org.uk/members>

The first session was presented by Ian Manton, Candle Corporation's European Business Development Manager for Electronic Business Assurance. With increasing use of Internet and web-based services customers' traditional expectations of service remain and indeed are often higher. Customers want good performance; good response times. Ian

reviewed appropriate metrics and then using Vodafone as a case study showed how the Candle product ETWatch was deployed to establish where performance gains could be made.

It was good to see Roger Picton, EDS Inland Revenue, at the OHP again. Roger explained how ARM was used for Inland Revenue services by EDS -

#### **Issue of the day:**

**Software agents  
or  
robots?**

the highs and lows of the implementation of the Industry Standard measurement agent. Whilst ARM can be used on both client and server systems EDS currently deploy it only for servers. End to End

response time monitoring does not provide statistics about queues for access to servers. Currently EDS are evaluating some products, all of which are based on windows event trapping.

Simon Stevens, Director, Amdahl Software Division, gave us our third presentation. It is thought that this was probably a first presentation by an Amdahl representative to an AXiS meeting. With the new relationship between Amdahl and Fujitsu perhaps there will be more to come?

Are software agents or robots the more effective for undertaking performance monitoring? This session took the view that robots do not carry the potential overheads one might expect from software agents. The use of robotic, continuous measurement, is proactive. Applied to end-user monitoring through the use of appropriate scripts robots offer end-user information which IT managers can share with users to provide a foundation for informed discussion between the IT team and end users. A case study - Bell Atlantic - was described to show the use of robotic measurement with EnView running as a dedicated slim-line NT workstation installed at user locations.

Performance managing 18500 Post Offices is a major project which will touch all of us who support their local post office. James Stinchcombe, ICL, provided some insight on the progress of the project which under the Pathway label did not get a very good press last year except in the Summer edition of AXiS News. The news from James was heartening and encouraged your reporter to visit his village Post Office to check that the local Postmaster was tooled up. Good news - he has been for several weeks now and is delighted with the service that he is getting. As at 12th May, the end of the week prior to this meeting, 6363 Post offices were up and running (this included 14,463 counters). The roll-out rate is 300 per week. The session outlined the approach taken to manage performance on a large scale network which is so large that it is impossible to do full-load tests. Metron's Athene is in use for automatic collection of performance data.

Lastly came a double-headed presentation by Peter Gill & Baz Pereira, Wick Hill Ltd, looked at VitalSuite in the context of supporting a large Financial Services Provider with mission critical information needs. The perception of the problem sounds familiar, desktops running slowly, poor response between locations, and a network problem. VitalSuite follows the idea of using software performance monitoring agents, which Peter and Baz argue, can hold their own in the agents versus robots debate. A description of VitalSuite was provided.

### ***Next meeting***

The next meeting is expected to be held late November/early December 2000. If any member is willing to host the meeting please contact Dave Hewetson (details on page 2). Provision of lunch is always very welcome but not a prerequisite.

## **Year 2000 Focus Group**

Chairman Edwin Woodcock welcome a select band of members to the final meeting of this Focus Group. Many of the Group's members had moved very quickly in the New Year to other duties and were unable to come to this meeting. Those present had agreed to meet in order to review the work of the Group and its achievements, and from experience consider whether there were any messages or recommendations to document.

The general view from the Group was of a job well done by all concerned. A few minor glitches had been reported, eg, the odd forgotten date, but no major problems either at the 1st January changeover or at the 29th February. Despite some comments in the Press that the IT industry had over-hyped the problem, the view from this Group is that Management considered that the investment in the Year 2000 project had been fully justified, and ensured a smooth transition.

A key component for success was good project management. Many of the lessons learned over the last four years would have benefit for future business-wide projects, eg adoption of the Euro. Business-wide co-ordination of Year 2000 activity appears to have been a first for many businesses, not least ICL. Compiling inventory; reviewing, collating and refining databases of customer and supplier contacts; and reviewing contingency and business continuity plans were typical activities. Spring cleaning of redundant code and packages may have been undertaken for the first time. How many discovered unused packages for which an annual licence fee was still being paid? Conversely how many packages for which there was no valid licence? How many suppliers were no longer trading or had passed on maintenance responsibility? How many redundant PCs were discovered awaiting this convenient opportunity for disposal?

Peter Iles reported some findings from internal ICL Year 2000 project review. This provided an excellent basis for discussion, identifying several issues which undoubtedly reflected the experience of other Focus Group members. It is encouraging to hear that ICL will be taking note of some facts discovered. As an example, one spin-off from ICL's activity should be the rationalisation of customer contact points.

### **Recommendations**

The following are some recommendations arising from Group experience:

- (i) maintain and regularly review your software inventory, checking for redundant code/packages, and currency of licences.
- (ii) maintain and regularly review your business continuity plan
- (iii) maintain your supplier database
- (iv) review tools and procedures used for the Year 2000 project with a view to retaining and maintaining

those which could have value for future business-wide projects, eg Euro conversion work.

(v) review and encourage regular checks of back-up arrangements for personal data.

### **The Last Word**

Edwin Woodcock formally brought the work of this Focus Group to a close, thanking all who had contributed to the activities during its lifetime. Particular thanks were recorded to Peter Iles who has led the ICL contribution to the Group since the inaugural meeting in July 1996. Thanks are also recorded to the following members who contributed to the Compliance Database:

Automobile Association  
Co-operative Retail Services  
Corporation of London  
Gateshead MBC  
Merant International (formerly MicroFocus)  
Oxford City Council  
Sema Group  
Start-rite Shoes

..... and with that the four members folded their tents and stole away to an adjacent hostelry to toast the success of the Year 2000 Focus Group and absent friends.

### **OPERA**

OPERA has not met so far this year but Jennie Crapper who is currently leading the Group is hoping that with the assistance of TeamWARE a Regional Meeting can be arranged this autumn. Watch either the AXiS web site diary (<http://www.axis.org.uk/diary.htm>) or the OPERA page on the TeamWARE site (<http://www.officepower.net/usergroup/index.htm>).

### **TRIMETRA**

As this issue goes to Press arrangements are being finalised for a Trimetra meeting at West Gorton on 14th June under the chairmanship of Ian Myatt and with enthusiastic support from ICL. The encouraging sign is that bookings quickly reached the capacity of the venue. Any further requests will encourage AXiS and ICL to think about a rerun of the event later in the year. Presentations are planned from the Patent Office, Information Builders, Sysop, Fox IT (formerly Ultracom). Boldon James, and a regular ICL speaker at AXiS' events, Tina Quenault. ICL have planned a lunch-time demonstration of OpenVME and OpenTP interworking with Microsoft SQL using Internet Explorer as the user interface.

## **Business At Risk Under New Data Law**

On 1st March 2000 a new Data Protection Act came into force followed rapidly by reports in the press that a significant number of businesses were completely unaware of the fact. Both civil and criminal liability can be incurred if the Act is breached, even inadvertently so anyone who handles data must be aware of the rules. The new Act covers data held in manual filing systems not just electronically, although the Act will not fully cover such data until October 24th 2001. Certain categories of manual data have a still longer exemption, to 2007.

Many businesses, particularly in the owner managed business sector, are seriously at risk of failing to comply with the new Data Protection Act. Furthermore, directors or managers who contravene the rules, or who by neglect or connivance allow the company to breach the rules, face personal liability including possible unlimited fines.

For the first time, individuals are being given a direct right to object to their personal data being used for

direct marketing purposes. However, many businesses who use marketing databases or send out mail shots have not got adequate procedures in place to record expressions of objection from their customers and so avoid breaching this provision.

Other areas for which businesses need to gear themselves are the increasingly strict rules on what may be done with personal data, how it may be collected, and how long it may be held. The Act creates a new category of 'sensitive personal data' dealing with such matters as health, race or sexuality, the processing of which requires compliance with even more stringent rules. Finally, individuals are given a much wider range of rights to seek access to what data is being held about them, to require changes to that data if it is inaccurate and to claim compensation for damage or distress that has been caused to them either by unauthorised disclosure of data or by the manner in which it has been used.

# ICL News

## **ICL Achieves Managed Service Accreditation**

The British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (BECTa) has awarded National Grid for Learning Managed Service Provider certification to ICL. The approved supplier status is exclusive to a small number of managed service providers who have been assessed by BECTa and have demonstrated financial and technical capabilities to provide required levels of IT services, support, training, and equipment. Accreditation helps schools, LEAs and other educational institutions to purchase managed services from tried and tested suppliers.

Amongst its many education projects, ICL has provided networked access to the Internet, e-mail, video conferencing facilities and technical support to over 49 primary and 8 secondary schools in Moray, Scotland. This was the UK's first National Grid for Learning Private Finance Initiative (PFI) to be signed.

Derek Hardman, Director of ICL's education business said: By building agreements with a small number of approved suppliers, BECTa is taking the pain out of identifying and benchmarking the large number of potential managed service suppliers for schools. We are delighted to be selected as an approved managed service provider.

## **Ireland's First Secure e-Procurement Service Launched**

Long term AXIS<sup>®</sup> member, Dublin Corporation, is to go live with a pilot of Esat's *marketplace.ie*. (<http://www.marketplace.ie>) The previous issue of AXIS<sup>®</sup> News reported on the development of a complete electronic business marketplace for Ireland, the country's first secure electronic trading business-to-business (B2B) marketplace, developed jointly by ICL and Esat Net, the corporate Internet service provider of Esat Telecom Group plc.

Dublin Corporation staff will be able to order and buy online from their desktop PCs everything from office stationery and consumables to furniture. Using a web browser and, with the appropriate authorisation level, staff will be able to order from a range of approved products and services, select the best offer available and place their order automatically with the supplier. Marketplace also incorporates management reports that will provide the Corporation with an overview of purchasing habits.

In 1999 Dublin Corporation's purchase of Maintenance, Repair and Operation goods (MRO)

exceeded £50 million. The Corporation is encouraging its suppliers to trade electronically and expects the majority of its trade and services to be delivered online over the next few years. This coincides with the eCommerce Act which is set to speed up progress towards all Irish Government services being delivered online.

Mr. John Fitzgerald, Dublin City Manager commented that the use of Marketplace should enable costs to be reduced and so deliver real savings in the administrative budget, in turn providing even faster and better services to local citizens.

## **Latest e-Business Wins for ICL**

### **Have WAP will travel...**

Thomas Cook travel agency has extended its e-Business services relationship with ICL to be the first high street travel agent to provide people with online access to travel services from WAP mobile phones and other mobile devices, such as Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs).

Customers can visit the existing Thomas Cook travel portal ([www.thomascook.com](http://www.thomascook.com)) through their mobile device and browse through information on special offers for holidays and flights, as well as look at city guides and world-wide weather reports. In the future, as mobile technology develops, holiday-seekers will be able to view photographs and video clips of their destination.

Thomas Cook with ICL help earlier this year launched their first online booking service. This allows people to book, confirm and pay for their holiday travel and accommodation online. It also provides visitors to their web site with an in-depth array of travel facts, weather and holiday information, primarily sourced from the famous Rough Guide series and Thomas Cook's own range of guidebooks.

### **... but there's always time to play...**

ICL has won a significant contract recently which includes providing SEGA Europe with a dedicated team of e-Business specialists who will develop the next wave of online services available to users of the Dreamcast games console.

ICL technical expertise will support Sega's development of a range of new online services including further development of the multi-player game environment, to allow people throughout Europe to play against each other in real time. There will be further development of SEGA's e-

shopping and online venue facilities, as well as the provision of new services for the Dreamarena community.

Some twenty ICL e-Business specialists will work full time for SEGA over the next 9 months to provide a design, build and operate service, which includes business and IT consultancy, application development, managed services and systems integration.

The two companies have been working together since May 1999, when ICL's technical expertise enabled SEGA to launch the first ever games console with Internet access and email services. The Dreamcast console, incorporating a modem and browser, was launched for £199. It meant that people no longer needed to buy a PC to access the Internet.

### ... and Sport

ICL in partnership with US-based eFANshop is

developing new online shopping sites for sports and entertainment merchandise. ICL is developing the web sites to enable eFANshop to manage all aspects of its sites including graphic design, merchandising, customer service, order processing and fulfilment. The sites will offer some 85,000 sports and entertainment products.

Founded as recently as December 1999, Dallas based eFANshop's go-to-market strategy is to provide a complete online shopping service to established news, sports and entertainment websites. The service means that existing websites can offer a shopping facility to their visitors without having to establish their own online shop. The first service will be launched in June on MSNBCsports.com —part of MSNBC.com which receives over 8.6 million user visits per month. ICL will continue to work with eFANshop to provide ongoing development and subsequent enhancements to the sites.



## From The Archives

### 20 Years Ago

2900 User Group Newsletter No 4, published in June 1980 under John Basher's editorship, reported on a wide range of User Group activity. In those early days the Group had a Technical Committee, liaising with ICL through a number of working parties to improve the serviceability and functionality of VME. A quick look at those Working Parties reveals some names still associated with AXiS today. There was a Communications WP under the chairmanship of a certain Harry Barnes from Dorset County Council, a Scheduling and Control WP, an Operability WP, a Filestore WP under the chairmanship of Don Folland from the CCTA Computer Centre, a Spooling WP with ICL support from Peter Iles. There were special interest groups, such as the VME/B SIG looking at Version 5X36, DME SIG and Systems and Serviceability SIG.

ICL was announcing a new range of highly competitive, multi-purpose systems to be known as the ME29 range, a powerful, easy to use, business system with unrivalled versatility. In the same issue was reported the first sale of a CAFS system to De Beers to work in conjunction with a 2960, and Securicor, long term members, had bought 23 ICL 7500 terminal processors with remote printers and VDUs to connect with a dual 2960 under VME/B and TP. The whole system to replace an ageing 1902T.

### 10 Years Ago

At this the beginning of the 90s both the ICL CUA and AMSU were undertaking a round of navel-gazing to consider their future role and appropriate structures. In those days the CUA was some 30 groups in strength. David Stewart, then Chairman, argued that with the rise of Open Systems it behoved user groups to integrate more effectively with one another to maximise their impact on ICL.

AMSU activities were still focused through its 5 main groups. The June edition of AMSU News reported on the Communications and Open Networking Group (CONUG) which this year was concentrating on OSI and hearing how ICL was converging on GOSIP standards to underpin Open Systems networking. The Capacity Management User Group (CMUG) coincidentally picked up on Filestore Management - an issue that was very much to the fore 10 years earlier. North West Water's Bill Horrocks reported how they had taken to controlling and allocating filestore. The interest sparked another Filestore Working Party. Meanwhile Data Management User Group (DMUG) had picked up on another Open System issue, Electronic Data Interchange (EDI). British Gas and Nat West Bank had been doing much work in this area. The message was that EDI was an irresistible force.

ICL was announcing that OfficePower would be made available on non-ICL equipment. John Bennett, ICL Marketing Director, commented that OfficePower is of great importance for the development of the UNIX marketplace. ICL won the Queens Award for Industry in 1990 for its General Merchandising System. A single GMS controller could handle in excess of 100 scanning EPoS terminals with a capacity for more than 200K price look-up items.