# iStart

## TECHNOLOGY IN BUSINESS

# BIG DATA
# BIG BROTHER

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**CASE STUDIES:** NOT-FOR-PROFIT, AGRICULTURE, MARINE, LOCAL GOVERNMENT, FOOD MANUFACTURING

# From the editor

We are living in interesting times – times that are redefining the world we live in. Today, there is little definition between public and private; companies, governments and criminals alike exploit all they know about us to further their various capitalist, protective and nefarious agendas. The intersection of big data, government and high-tech computing has privacy advocates up in arms. The technology should really come with a moral compass as lobbyist Paul Brislen points out on p34.

But while the general media is in a flap about conspiracy theories and protesters line the streets to dispute the powers of security agencies around the world, it is easy to forget that the big data story is more nuanced. We might feel heartily sick of the 'big data' buzzword in the business world, especially when people are just spouting marketing puffery, but scratch beneath the surface and the reality is more compelling, as our feature *'Is big data "bullshit"?'* sets out to demonstrate on p16. And, provocation aside, the results of information falling into the wrong hands can be significant (see Cybercrime – p30).

On a happier note, however, the case studies in this issue show how much good insights into your data can do for business. Take carbon fibre marine components manufacturer, C-Tech, for example. It had to re-engineer the focus of its business when the market for its battens used in the America's Cup shrank in line with changes to the rules governing the competition boats' configuration. Without a new ERP system, it would have been a struggle (p38). Or quality improvement organisation, AGPAL, that does accreditation for general medical practices. It needed to be able to focus on its clients' needs not administration and a new ERP's open data standards helped (p28).

For every concern you have in business there is a technology solution and you could go crazy buying them all. I think, though, the real trick is to know where you want your business to be in five years' time and map technology in to your plans. The ANZ and National banks merger in New Zealand is a prime example of good leadership delivering good results in this respect (p46).

With the mega trends of ubiquitous high speed broadband; cloud computing; big data and analytics; mobility; interface and collaboration technologies; and intelligent systems, sensors and robots all intertwining to re-shape our futures, the next era of business will challenge our ethical boundaries as much as present new digital business paradigms.

Enjoy the read,

**Clare Coulson**
Editor

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## BIG DATA ADVENTURES FAIL TO DELIVER

**THE BIG DATA SPARK** was ignited back in 2011 when the World Economic Forum declared data was the "new oil". Analyst McKinsey & Co then predicted that some businesses could expect margin boosts of up to 60 percent thanks to better big data exploitation.

The practice has yet to match the rhetoric for many organisations. A report from consultant Fifth Quadrant found that although Australian businesses were overwhelmingly supportive of leveraging big data, 53 percent reported their attempts to use it to improve the customer experience have failed. Only one in eight described their big data adventures as "extremely successful". It also found that, despite the apparent enthusiasm, only 31 percent of respondents were actually using big data and analytics to inform strategic decisions, fewer again consider big data a core business initiative.

Part of the issue may be the term itself. As data reserves continue to grow, just about every organisation may think it has 'big data'. But the term is better reserved for data of a wide variety collected at high velocity – from sensors, from social network feeds, from smartphones.

Technology analyst Ovum also released a report into big data adoption by telco companies. It found that entrenched corporate structures were inhibiting the roll out of effective big data initiatives, as was the paucity of skills in the field. Nevertheless it predicts that demand for big data analytics in all sectors will continue to grow and create a market worth US$7.7 billion by 2018.

## TECHNOLOGYONE OUSTS ORACLE AFTER WA GOVT PANEL CHANGES

**LISTED AUSTRALIAN SOFTWARE** company TechnologyOne is providing software to 21 Western Australia Government departments and agencies. They previously used an Oracle solution supplied by the now-decommissioned WA Shared Services Centre (SSC), which was scrapped when it was found that the project had incurred costs of $401 million but delivered minimal benefits in terms of savings, and had been dogged by problems with the Oracle systems installed over the life of the project.

TechnologyOne executive chairman Adrian di Marco said that this decommissioning and the freeing of agencies to select alternative services from a WA panel contract by the end of this year represented the "day of reckoning". He said this arose because organisations recognised that the model employed by many multinational software vendors to, "build it then throw it over the fence to IBM or Accenture" to deploy was fundamentally flawed.

He said that in contrast to that approach, "We do the whole thing and even run it. If it doesn't work then TechnologyOne is accountable."

While TechnologyOne has effectively ousted Oracle from the 21 WA organisations di Marco acknowledged that this was no overnight success and that there was a long road to travel in order to be named on a panel contract to supply major Government departments. While about 80 percent of the company's business (it has around 150 public sector clients) comes from public sector or quasi Government organisations di Marco said that it could take four to five years to successfully engage with Government and secure a spot on a panel contract, but that TechnologyOne had now attained sufficient scale to achieve that.



## SOFTWARE DELIVERS SOUND RESULTS FOR NOT-FOR-PROFITS

**NOT-FOR-PROFITS NEED** to ensure they operate on a sound business footing, so that they can focus their energies on their core mission and demonstrate to donors that their money is going to the cause for which it was intended.

The business of charitable giving in New Zealand is currently not transparent, however a good ERP system can deliver the accountability, efficiency and stability required.

"If they're drawing funding from government agencies, or getting tax breaks, transparent accountability is vital," says Peter Dickinson, CEO of business solutions provider Greentree.

The Oxfam Shop Australia, for instance, created a new supermarket channel for its Fair Trade products with the help of its business system's EDI and supply chain functionality opening the doors into Coles and Woolworths, successfully increasing awareness of its aims. Another example is WSX, which supports start-up businesses in southern England, and is a valuable resource to the local economy. Because it draws EU funding, it needed real-time data to ensure strict compliance. Finally, Queensland-based FSGA specialises in support services for the disabled and disadvantaged. Major changes to service funding drove it to seek a modern, flexible business system.

# HOSPITALS COULD SLASH WAITING TIMES USING ICT

**HEALTH SECTOR CIOS AND** administrators should implement new technology to streamline processes and underpin better models of care if they want to aspire to what is being delivered internationally.

Speaking to *iStart* ahead of the Health Informatics Conference in Adelaide, Andrew Howard, global e-health director for New Zealand-based software company, Orion Systems, acknowledged that policy impediments and "perverse" funding models for Australia's public hospitals, meant there were few incentives for investment in ICT to streamline health services. He also noted that investment in ICT could be politically harder to justify than investment in new beds, which had led to a "tremendous lack of spending on IT in hospitals".

However he said that hospitals and administrators should look at international progress in the field to see how costs could be saved and treatment improved by streamlining operations and judicious application of IT.

He acknowledged that few hospitals would be able to afford the A$100 million investment needed to replace legacy information systems, but argued that they could instead begin to install systems which

could provide clinical views of the 80-120 applications that were typically installed across Australian hospitals. These clinical views could then be used by healthcare professionals, in conjunction with electronic health records, to streamline and speed the delivery of healthcare services.

He pointed to Thailand's Bumrungrad Hospital as an example of a facility which had deployed technology to support clinical workflow and typically took an hour to examine, diagnose and begin treatment on a patient. "The median visit is 45 minutes," said Howard, adding that in Australian hospitals the same journey involving pathology tests, radiology, a visit to a specialist, diagnosis and treatment could take up to a month.

Howard said Bumrungrad had adopted a just-in-time approach to patient management and was attracting patients from all over the world as a result, being one of the pioneers of so-called "medical tourism".

# SIR RAY AVERY: BIG DATA MINING THE "GOLD" IN HEALTH TECHNOLOGY

**IN JUNE A PANEL** discussion hosted by IPENZ and the Medical Technology Association of New Zealand featuring Sir Ray Avery debated the role of IT in the healthcare sector. While the panelists admitted the healthcare sector is one of the slowest adopters of new technology it said things are changing.

The medical technology sector is nascent in Silicon Valley but investors are keen, the panel said. The focus of health technology these days seems to be on monitoring and providing continuous data on patients' conditions. Rather than replacing doctors, the clinicians' ability to treat patients is being augmented by technology.

Sir Ray explained that bio-devices allow us to continually monitor health, analyse the data and reveal underlying meaning. Rather than having to rely on one-off readings that only provide a snapshot in time, a continuous stream of data can offer far greater insight into conditions. "That's the real gold," he said. "All innovation starts with information and that's what we are doing mining big data. But it's not just about measuring, it's about what you do with that data."

At the moment, however, there is no infrastructure in place to examine the data properly and offer the insights that could be vital.

## MYOB ACQUIRES BANKLINK, GOES HEAD-TO-HEAD WITH XERO

**MYOB FINANCE NZ** has purchased award-winning BankLink for NZ$136 million. MYOB and BankLink are both recognised market leaders in the provision of business management solutions to SMEs and accountants. MYOB's SME solutions provide businesses with an accounting system, while BankLink integrates the business' accounts with its bank and its accountant.

MYOB said the two companies "offer highly complementary solutions", and said the acquisition is a key strategic move that will leverage the strengths of both organisations, and position the new entity to lead the next wave of industry growth – cloud accounting. The combination of MYOB's cloud computing offering and BankLink's existing relationships with more than 4500 accountancy practices will establish a platform upon which MYOB can compete with Xero.

According to MYOB the acquisition will create "the most comprehensive set of accounting solutions in the market today". MYOB chief executive officer, Tim Reed said, "Key to the success of MYOB's online strategy is its partnership with accountants in practice. The coming together of MYOB and BankLink allows accountants to recommend the most appropriate accounting solution for each and every unique client.

"Accounting is going through a period of rapid innovation. Cloud solutions are replacing desktop applications; bank feeds are a key component of a cloud solution, as they are used as source data for the accounts. BankLink has proprietary methods of supplying accurate, reliable and secure bank feeds that are more accurate and secure than others."

BankLink's European business does not form part of the acquisition.

## ENTERPRISE YET TO BE SOLD ON CLOUD BENEFITS

**TO LISTEN TO** computer vendors cloud computing is so well entrenched it's almost a last-year issue. Not so according to many Australian enterprises.

A survey of 87 enterprises conducted by IBM in March found that "among those enterprises already using cloud, many only employed it for testing and development, or to host email applications and data backups". Many companies also reported lingering concerns about data security and legislative compliance, with data sovereignty remaining the biggest challenge.

Ivan Greguric, enterprise architect for the Stockland property group, which participated in IBM's study, said that he believed cloud was still a case of more vendor push than user pull.

Part of the problem, he said, was to do with the lack of transparency about applications and data held in clouds. A number of software suppliers have approached Stockland detailing their cloud computing services, but when he requested information about the cloud's location, or its security controls, they refused to provide that level of detail and he walked away.

Devin Weerasooriya, solution architect for the Bendigo and Adelaide Bank, agreed about the lack of transparency associated with cloud computing, saying that there was often no "clear service delivery promise" from many cloud service vendors.

IBM said that its attitudinal survey was intended to separate "reality from rhetoric" about user attitudes to cloud computing.

## MANUFACTURERS FAIL TO REALISE IMPORTANCE OF ERP FOR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

**THE LATEST IDC** *Manufacturing Insights* report has uncovered how important a customer-oriented strategy is for successful manufacturers. The report also discovered just how crucial ERP solutions are in helping all manufacturers, including the industrial machinery and equipment, high-tech and metal fabrication sectors, to improve their customer experience.

"The research revealed that many manufacturers have an immature understanding of how a customer-oriented strategy can be implemented within an organisation," said Pierfrancesco Manenti, head of IDC manufacturing insights research practice, EMEA.

He said that manufacturers need to understand this better in order to continue to stay competitive, especially in more mature or developed markets where relationships and service levels have now become crucial differentiators.

One of the main issues is that many companies continue to describe good customer experience in terms of products or service features and functions rather than in terms of their service level across their customer touch points. Businesses would do better if they focused on their ability to deliver the perfect order – right quality, quantity, location, and due date – and the range of aftermarket services supporting the initial product, he explained.

The research highlighted how a modern, integrated ERP system will help manufacturers to improve their customers' experiences by streamlining operational processes and connecting the back and front offices by offering integrated CRM, warranty and aftermarket functionality.

"An enhanced customer experience paves the way for customer loyalty and longer lasting relationships between supplier and purchasers, a win-win situation for all parties," concluded Manenti.

You can read the full research whitepaper at: http://bit.ly/13lZWO7

# EXECUTIVES MUST INVEST IN IT OR BE LEFT BEHIND

**AN ECONOMIC FORECASTING MODEL** developed by Australia's National Institute of Economic and Industry Research at the behest of IBM, has been used to predict how organisations which embrace technology early will fare out to 2025, and the extent to which technology "followers" will lag. It provides CIOs with plenty of ammunition to argue for extra ICT funding.

The NIEIR argues that by 2015 most business sectors will have been substantially affected by global digitisation, and only the early movers could expect to benefit from the "compounding" effect of innovation which would prove impossible for laggards to match.

IBM managing director for A/NZ, Andrew Stevens, warned that business now face a "tipping point where the risk of inaction outweighs the risk of action," and that those organisations which waited might find it impossible to catch up in the future.

*Reinventing Australian enterprises for the digital economy* makes for sobering reading.

It applies the NIEIR model to hypothetical organisations in seven industry sectors, and then plots their fortunes for the next 12 years.

For example, a "leader" bank with $15 billion in revenues today, and a "follower" bank with $12 billion of current revenues should expect their revenues to diverge massively to $32 billion and $17 billion respectively. Over the same period the market capitalisation of the leader bank would rise to $69 billion, while the valuation of the follower would actually shrink to $22 billion by 2025. The report performs similar analysis for enterprises in retail, mining, telecommunications, public administration, healthcare and higher education.

Jenifer Westacott, chief executive of the Business Council of Australia, said that boards now needed to challenge their thinking and determine whether they had the technology skills and the imagination to ensure they were leaders rather than laggards.

# ERP VENDORS HUSTLE CLOUD TRANSITION TO NZ MARKET

**ERP VENDORS ARE** responding to New Zealand's growing appetite for cloud computing. Leanne Graham, GeoOp's CEO and the woman who spearheaded Xero's global growth strategy, recently warned ERP vendors that they would need to move to the cloud in some form or face extinction in the near future. Now, recent vendor activity suggests the warning has been heeded.

ERP cloud computing veteran, NetSuite, which offers a "pure cloud-play" solution, has announced that it has committed to growing its channel business in New Zealand, because "leading businesses in the region continue to embrace the cloud as a viable business model". The announcement came at a NetSuite cloud event and is in response to its need to keep up with growing demand for its cloud computing solutions from New Zealand businesses.

Speaking to *iStart* during the event, Net Suite's managing director for APAC, Mark Troselj, said that the general sentiment around cloud has definitely moved on. "For many people this is their first foray in to cloud computing in a complex business environment. It is about asking where it fits in their business, how it fits their requirements and how to de-risk it," he explained.

A couple of weeks prior to NetSuite's announcement, SAP made similar moves in the New Zealand market, officially launching its new cloud-based ERP.  It has been busy investing in its sales in New Zealand for the past few months and says it is "looking down the barrel of a very healthy pipeline".

When asked if the company's move to the cloud wouldn't cannibalise its lucrative implementation contracts, SAP's head of global sales for the customer and money suite, Joe Fuster replied, "The bottom line just shifts. The markets have shifted whether we want it or not."

## FINANCIAL SERVICES FIRMS SHOULD FOLLOW BANKS' TECH LEAD

**A SURVEY OF FINANCIAL SERVICES** firms released by the Financial Services Council revealed that while 80 percent of chief executives believe IT has a major role in innovation and delivering new financial products, only 62 percent plan to increase IT spending in the coming year – mostly to extract productivity gains (40 percent) and meet new regulatory demands (26 percent).

FSA CEO John Brogden acknowledged that the financial services sector had lagged the banking sector in terms of its investment in technology, but said that the advent of regulations such as FoFA (Future of Financial Advice), MySuper and SuperStream would force further investment in technology as organisations strive to achieve compliance.

Whether that leaves much over for technology-based innovation is moot. According to Rhys Octigan, regional head of business development for software and services vendor DST ANZ, which sponsored the survey, financial sector companies need to take a leaf from banks' book and develop more innovative client-facing technology, for example investing in mobile applications to foster closer links with clients, which he said would be particularly important for organisations seeking to expand into Asia.

## NEW TRANS-TASMAN CABLE COMES ONE STEP CLOSER

**TELSTRA, TELECOM AND VODAFONE**, the consortium of telecommunications companies that announced it intended to co-invest in a new submarine telecommunications access cable between Australia and New Zealand, have issued a tender for the cable's construction.

A press release revealed that several international submarine cable contractors have been invited to tender for the Tasman Global Access (TGA) Cable and all have indicated strong interest in responding.

The consortium anticipates the preferred option will be chosen over the next couple of months, with a contract expected to be in place by later this year and cable construction starting in 2014. The 2300km undersea cable system is expected to enter service early in 2015, deploying the latest 100 Gb/sec technology.

When Telecom, Vodafone and Telstra announced they had signed a non-binding memorandum of understanding (MoU) to co-invest in the TGA Cable back in February, telecommunications commentator and TUANZ CEO, Paul Brislen said, "it means very little at this point – it's only a memo of understanding and we've got a long way to go before any cable is actually laid".

Now the cable has come one step closer to being a reality, with landing options on both sides of the Tasman currently being evaluated.

The TGA Cable will significantly improve New Zealand's international telecommunications connectivity as well as strengthen links into fast-growing Asian markets. It reflects the growing importance of trans-Tasman internet traffic and demand from corporate customers for route diversity: around 40 percent of both Telecom and Vodafone's international internet traffic is now Australia to New Zealand, versus just 10 percent in 2000.

## SALESFORCE.COM BEATS SAP TO TOP CRM SPOT

**SaaS-BASED VENDOR** Salesforce.com has overtaken industry stalwart SAP in Gartner's worldwide CRM revenue rankings. Nearly 40 percent of the total CRM software market is now SaaS-based software, suggesting that legacy vendors will need to act quickly to survive the changes being wrought by the convergence and mutual reinforcement of social interaction, mobility, cloud, and information trends – a situation that Gartner discribes as the 'Nexus of Forces'.

Joanne Correia, vice president at Gartner said, "Competition among CRM software vendors really heated up in 2012, as major players continued to vie for broader market penetration internationally and more widespread adoption within midsize to large enterprises. Market growth in 2012 was three times the average for all enterprise software, highlighting how CRM is at the eye of the Nexus of Forces storm."

In 2012, vendors continued to expand their offerings with new features and functionality, often through acquisition. The wave of consolidation activity that began in 2009 continued throughout 2012, with more than 50 acquisitions, resulting in increased competition at the top end of the market.

Marketing automation has been the focus for investment in the past couple of years, growing at more than four times the software industry forecast norm in 2012. Marketing automation was also the target area for acquisitions by IBM, Microsoft, Oracle and others as analytics, lead quality and multichannel support for social and mobile technologies continue to lead the list of requirements by line-of-business buyers.

"With corporate cash at all-time highs, many vendors are willing to pay high premiums to acquire specific technologies and expertise in an increasingly dynamic and competitive CRM market environment," said Correia.

## YELP TESTS NEW ZEALAND APPETITE

**BEGUN IN SAN FRANCISCO** in 2004, Yelp has 36 million reviews across 20 countries, 100 million unique visitors per month and has now launched in Auckland.

"We have a pretty early success in Australia and Singapore and New Zealand seemed to be a very logical next step," said Miriam Warren, Yelp's VP of new markets. "It's also a place where a lot of fellow technology companies do a lot of testing, using New Zealanders as early adopters in a lot of the things they push out globally."

People use Yelp to search for everything from their city's tastiest burger to the most renowned cardiologist. It is not the first review site based on community to launch in New Zealand. Back in 2011, New Zealand Post's Localist launched amid great fanfare but with little ongoing success.

Although every city Yelp goes to already has local review sites, Warren believes Yelp sets itself apart by the sheer volume of its full text reviews across all categories that can be accessed from any device.

"One of the things about having such rich content is that we can mine it to find you almost everything you are looking for.

I think what Yelp does better than almost anyone else out there is we bring it all to you in one spot and it's very easy and extremely user friendly to access.

"For the site to be useful and powerful to the people who use it, it requires a lot of local action on the part of people here in Auckland," she added.

Unlike Localist's traditional advertising campaigns, Yelp relies on grass-roots marketing to get the community fired up with the help of a community manager. It monetises its sites through advertising, but there will be no adverts on the New Zealand site for the first one to three years.

## AUSTRALIA INCHES UP THE INNOVATION LADDER

**THE GLOBAL INNOVATION INDEX** for 2013, which ranks different nations' ability and success in innovation shows Australia has climbed four places in a year, to 23rd.

The brainchild of Johnson Cornell University, Insead and the World Intellectual Property Organisation, the Index is a composite measure of a nation's ability to innovate based on a broad matrix of political, economic, educational and scientific indicators which can be used by nations and industries to benchmark their innovation prowess. According to the report global innovation investment in 2013 is such that, "At no point in history has so much money been spent in R&D worldwide. Never before has innovation been so well distributed among countries."

While Australia has clambered through the rankings, there are areas where it deserves a "could do better" report card. For example the nation was only 30th in terms of its investment in software; 48th in high or medium tech output; 60th in high-tech exports; and a woeful 77th in communications, computer and information services exports.

Also when respondents to the survey were asked "to what extent is ICT creating new business models, services and products", or organisational models, Australia ranked just 27th even though we are 19th in terms of ICT access and use. So, while the Australian landscape might be conducive to innovation, it appears organisations are slower than some international peers in terms of fully exploiting technology to drive innovation.

## APPOINTMENTS

**Xero** has re-assigned **Duncan Ritchie**, currently general manager operations at Xero to the newly-created position of Chief Platform Officer (CPO), responsible for the design, development, operations and support of Xero's online accounting software, with teams around the globe. The CPO role is being created to manage the continued rapid growth of Xero. The functions were previously managed by the COO, who will continue to work with the CEO on mid-to-long term strategic initiatives.

Cloud-based customer service software provider **Zendesk** has appointed new directors to support its rapidly growing APAC team. Based in Australia, **Amy Foo** joins as the finance director Asia Pacific responsible for finance and HR, and **Daniel Scheltinga** joins as the new support and services director for Asia Pacific, responsible for continually growing support teams in Melbourne, Tokyo and Manila. **Michael Folmer Hansen**, vice president and managing director for Zendesk in Asia Pacific, said, "Amy and Daniel are amongst the best and brightest in their field and fantastic assets to our Asia Pacific team."

**Keir Garrett** has joined **SAP** as Head of SAP Cloud Solutions for New Zealand. This is a "strategic appointment aimed at supporting SAP's cloud strategy by strengthening its focus on cloud solutions in the country," according to the company. Garrett will be based in

Auckland and responsible for the go-to-market and sales delivery of the SAP Cloud solutions portfolio. She has more than 15 years' experience in executive sales, including Lawson Software and most recently as sales director at enterprise software solutions provider Infor.

A leading provider of media planning and audience profiling solutions, **Effective Measure**, has appointed **John Griffin** as its new global CTO. Griffin, who starts the new role in September, joins the Effective Measure management team armed with twenty years of technical experience and was most recently posted at Nielsen where he has served a long tenure across CTO and R&D positions. He will be responsible for spearheading the software engineering, data application and infrastructure technology teams, replacing former CTO Matt Youill and assuming the additional role of head of engineering.

**Braintree**, the global payment platform behind many next-generation online and mobile purchasing experiences, has announced "significant momentum in the Australian market", and has appointed **Tyson Hackwood** to head of market development for its newly-created Sydney office. Braintree also announced that several Australia-based companies now using Braintree including 99designs, Agworld, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, KidsDeals, Microlancer, Oomph and WORKetc. Hackwood most recently led the establishment of PayPal in Australia.

Business analytics vendor **SAS Australia and New Zealand** has announced the appointment of **Daniel Aunvig** as head of customer intelligence for Australia and New Zealand, joining from the company's Copenhagen office where he managed the business advisory team across the Nordic region. Aunvig will now develop and drive the go-to-market strategy and execution programmes in support of the company's continuing market growth. SAS has also appointed **Larry Roadcap**, a financial services industry executive, to lead the region's risk intelligence practice and drive the go-to-market strategy for SAS' risk intelligence solution portfolio across Australia and New Zealand.

## DEALS, SIGNINGS AND IMPLEMENTATIONS

**Abel ERP software** has been selected by Melbourne-based **Australian Wool Testing Authority (AWTA)**, the largest wool testing organisation in the world. Abel's ERP software will integrate with AWTA's custom wool testing software. Abel Distributor, **Abel Solutions** has also implemented Abel for **Innova Products**. Innova is a global company that designs and produces household brands such as Click Clack kitchenware, Dixbro, Talus and Brushworks brush-ware and Strahi beverage-ware products.

**Queensland's Varsity College**, has announced it will be equipping

its 3200 students with a range of **Windows 8 devices** for the current school year and beyond. The college aims to accelerate mobile learning and further its position as one of Australia's most progressive centres of learning by providing each student with a Windows 8 device to encourage students to tailor elements of the software to suit their needs. Jeff Davies, principal of the school said that Windows 8 also "offered a range of sophisticated learning apps, opening further educational and teaching opportunities to students and staff".

Technology start-up, **Timely**, has announced that investor and former Trade Me man **Rowan Simpson** has backed the cloud-based appointment system for clinics, salons, tradespeople and practices. Timely has previously won Startup Alley at Webstock and was recently a finalist at the NZ Hi-Tech Awards. The new venture was founded by Andrew Schofield and Ryan Baker, whose previous company, BookIt, was acquired by Trade Me in 2010.

The world's largest bulk commodity port, **Western Australia's Port Hedland Port Authority (PHPA)**, has used geographical information

system mapping technology to help build its future. The port has used **advanced GIS technology** to develop an intelligent multi-layered mapping platform that provides a clear view of existing and future infrastructure. The maps can be used to support the company's development, management and planning strategy over the next decade as it more than doubles its shipping weight by 2015 and beyond.

IT services provider **ASG Group** has signed a $14.8 million deal with the **Department of Education, Western Australia**, for licenses and support services that will modernise the department's existing investment in Oracle technology. The new five-year contract will provide the department with a strategic support and licensing modernisation solution, and marks the first time ASG has provided this type of solution as a restructuring of an existing customer's Oracle licences.



**2degrees** has secured a $165 million credit facility from the Bank of New Zealand and reached agreement with **Huawei** to deploy a 4G network in early 2014. The BNZ-arranged credit facility means 2degrees has a fully funded business plan, providing for continued national network expansion and revenue growth. 2degrees chairman and acting chief executive Stewart Sherriff says the transition from vendor finance to bank credit reflects the quality of the team at 2degrees, the financial strength of the business and its future plans.

Linux house **Red Hat** has said it is readying a public cloud version of its platform-as-a-service for Australasian organisations. Red

Hat has already sold its **PaaS solution** to organisations in Australia's finance, retail and IT sectors, albeit a version running on users' own infrastructure, and is now planning a public cloud version of the system, which is intended to allow organisations to rapidly self-service and provision tools for bespoke applications development, testing and deployment. However Red Hat has yet to provide any guidance as to when that public version of the service might be available here (it was launched in the northern hemisphere in June).

Sydney-based company **Presence of IT** has announced that it will be providing tools and services which will let enterprise-scale SAP users move their human capital management systems onto the **SuccessFactors cloud** and use SuccessFactors' Employee Central Payroll system. Smaller users with less than 500 employees which still want to move their SAP appli-

cations to the cloud could use the same process and have their systems hosted by Presence of IT.



**Northland Regional Council (NRC)** has selected **HP Converged Infrastructure** to improve employee productivity by increasing storage capacity and performance while simplifying data centre management. "Our existing IT infrastructure just couldn't support business-critical applications and kept us from efficiently delivering services to constituents," said Daniel Blake, senior systems engineer, Northland Regional Council. "Since upgrading to HP Converged Infrastructure, our virtual environment runs so much faster, we've

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been able to increase staff productivity by spending less time on data centre administration and more time enhancing public services."

Australian-listed IT Services company, **Empired** has partnered with IT consultancy, **Oakton**, to secure a multimillion dollar cloud contract with global mining giant, Barrick Gold Corporation, the world's largest gold mining company, headquartered in Perth. Under the multi-year, multi-million dollar contract, Oakton and Empired will provide a fully managed Oracle service, delivered over Empired's cloud solution (FlexScale) for Barrick's core financial accounting system in the Asia Pacific region. The terms of the contract provide for Oakton, as service integrator, to take ownership of the overall solution delivery and directly provide the application managed services relating to the Oracle e-business suite.

New Zealand health technology solutions provider **Orion Health** is introducing a converged cloud service to support its global managed health services in response to increasing requests from customers. **HP** has provided Orion Health with an IaaS solution called CloudSystem Matrix. Designed for private and hybrid cloud environments it will allow the company to build a catalogue of applications for deployment by creating templates of its solutions that can be deployed within the hour for customers .The system is in the stages of being deployed in New Zealand for district health boards that the company works with. It will also be rolled out to Australia later this year.

### MERGERS, ACQUISITIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

**SAP Australia and New Zealand** has announced it has entered into a distribution agreement with **Express Data** for SAP's database and technology, analytics and enterprise mobility solution offerings – including SAP's in-memory database platform, SAP HANA. As a strategic distribution partner, Express Data will provide end-to-end management and support for SAP resellers in Australia, from initial enquiry to the delivery of orders, streamlining buying and administration processes. Express Data will also handle all reseller contracts and certification requirements.



**SAP** has also signed a partnership with **Gen-i**, which will see them extend mobile-as-a-service, offering more than 300 SAP and SAP partner-built apps through a Gen-i hosted cloud. This is the first strategic mobile management partnership for SAP in the Asia Pacific Region. Available on a subscription basis and hosted in high resiliency, in-country data centres, the new MaaS service will provide Gen-i clients with ready access to about 300 mobile applications from shopping environments to SAP's HANA and Business One, across all major OS platforms. Gen-i partner **Infosys** will provide specialist

support for installation of SAP's managed mobile services into the Gen-i cloud, and systems integration where required.



**The Customer Experience Company (CEC)** has acquired **Davanti Consulting's** operations in Australia making it the largest specialist customer experience consultancy, according to its announcement. Davanti Consulting was a brand of Gen-i, Telecom New Zealand's ICT services division and is now privately owned following a recent management buy-out of Davanti's New Zealand operations and the Davanti brand. CEC and Davanti Consulting NZ have agreed a partnership to leverage Davanti's intellectual property, brand and resources bringing benefits to customers in both Australia and New Zealand and an unrivalled Trans-Tasman capability.

Hybrid IT service management solutions provider **FrontRange** has selected **Fusion5** as its master VAR for the Australia and New Zealand region. The agreement sees Fusion5 take responsibility and commitment for promoting, selling, and supporting HEAT Hybrid Service Management and HEAT Client Management solutions to customers throughout the region. The partnership with Fusion5 provides FrontRange customers in the region with localised ITSM expertise for support and services.

**Sage Business Solutions,** a leading global supplier of business man-

agement software, has announced the appointment of **Aquion** as a new Sage ERP X3 partner in Australia. Aquion, a leading IT solutions company that specialises in providing enterprise-grade software and supporting professional services, recently established its ERP Consulting Practice. The company reviewed several ERP vendors over a period of 12 months prior to selecting Sage ERP X3 as its core practice platform offering for Australian mid-market companies. Stephen Balicki, managing director, Aquion, said, "Sage will enable us to enhance our relationship with the Australian mid-market while working with a vendor which is committed to its partners' success."



**Maximizer Services,** a leading provider of CRM solutions, has announced a new partnership with the all-in-one marketing software company **HubSpot.** Maximizer has signed a referral partnership agreement with HubSpot and is also releasing a new integration tool to connect HubSpot's all-in-one inbound marketing software to Maximizer CRM. The integration offered in the Maximizer CRM: HubSpot Connector will bridge the gap between sales and marketing, offering new capabilities to boost sales productivity and marketing effectiveness. With the new integration Maximizer will also be able to offer HubSpot customers easy access to its CRM system, which will extend the value of HubSpot to a sales group and beyond.

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# Business intelligence: what are you really investing in?

*Gartner's* **Ian Bertram** *looks at the evidence on business intelligence and asks whether it's worth the investment...*

t's widely recognised by business leaders that a change needs to happen: we need to treat information as an asset. But not all organisations treat information the same way or in fact use it the same way. Investment in business intelligence (BI) in the last decade has been seen as the way to make better use of this supposed 'asset'.

Last year, Australian organisations spent more than A$436 million on BI software (including corporate performance management and analytics applications), an increase of 11.2% over 2011, and in New Zealand, spending grew 7.8% to NZ$68.7 million.

If you're investing in BI today, what are you actually investing in? Are you investing in technology, are you investing in analytics, are you investing in organisational change, are you investing to help make a better decision, or are you investing in managing data more effectively?

Essentially it's yes to all of these and more, but the extent of (and benefits from) your investment depends on the maturity of your organisation today and its willingness to bite the bullet on managing the information of tomorrow.

Organisations make hundreds if not thousands of decisions every day at different levels, with different degrees of impact, complexity, frequency and use. The only thing that's constant is change, and BI and analytics represent a way of adapting to change. Identifying patterns, anticipating outcomes and responding proactively will be the basis of competition in the future.

## Increasing analytics maturity

There are many styles of analytics needed for organisational decision making. It's the combination of these styles that will increase the maturity of business analytics capabilities within an organisation.

Figure 1, opposite, outlines what we at Gartner call the analytics continuum, which explains the analytic styles from descriptive through to prescriptive analytics. Descriptive analytics is all those hundreds, if not thousands, of reports that we all generate but then never do anything with. I say that flippantly, but in many cases there's a regulatory or compliance reason for having invested in the reports, so it's being done for all the right reasons. It's not money wasted, rather it's a great foundation to build upon.

So far, 80 percent of analytics investments have been to produce historical/descriptive reports from information often aggregated in data warehouses and data marts. This is what has commonly been known as BI and investment will continue in this area. However, to get more value out of the data we manage, we then need to invest in diagnostic analytics such as interactive visualisation. This makes the data more consumable and usable.

Finally there are the more advanced styles of analytics such as predictive and prescriptive analytics. Predictive analytics uses technologies such as modelling, machine learning statistics and content analytics, while prescriptive analytics uses technologies such as decision/mathematical modelling, simulation and optimisation. These new styles have been pursued in silos within organisations today. That's not necessarily a bad thing. The challenge is to harness the capabilities that are being developed and use those skills more broadly across the business.

There is a desire to shift capabilities towards the more advanced end of this analytic continuum, but skills will remain the biggest challenge for organisations. These additional capabilities often require new roles with additional quantitative, content and analytical skills, perhaps statistical analysts or data scientists.

## Global trends

The global BI software market is highly fragmented with more than 50 vendors identified by Gartner with more than US$10 million in BI-software-related revenue. Despite this, it is fair

to say that the market is dominated by five major players, led by SAP with 22.1% market share in 2012, followed by Oracle, IBM, SAS and Microsoft. Combined these market leaders dominate more than 70 percent of the BI software market globally.

There is a growing trend towards CIOs combining analytics with other technologies to create new capabilities, such as analytics plus supply chain for process management and improvement, analytics plus mobility for field sales and operations, and analytics plus social media for customer engagement and acquisition. New buying centres are also opening and expanding outside the IT department in line-of-business initiatives, and they are taking an increasingly large stake of the spending pie.

Two notable growth areas in the past 12-18 months are cloud-based buying and big data.

Cloud-based buying is showing substantial growth from a small base, especially for domain-specific analytic applications. Descriptive analytics has largely been completed for most big companies in traditional subject areas, such as finance and sales. As companies are now moving to more diagnostic use cases, growth opens up in numerous subject areas – such as HR, marketing, social and so on. New data sources, especially outside the firewall, have opened up for cloud-based vendors, which showed the most aggressive growth in 2012. However, cloud computing still accounts for a smaller portion of the BI market compared with other application markets.

Analytics plays squarely into the big data trend, where volume, velocity and variety aspects need to be taken into consideration. In that journey analytics pervade deeper in organisations, moving far outside the traditional 'bread and butter' BI domains and buying centres. But that also makes analytics bigger and more complex than we've been used to with traditional BI. Increased confusion around new hype terms and where the tangible benefits lie most likely contributed to



## Improving business performance

Figure 1  
Source: Gartner

a slowing of sales cycles in the BI market, while budget holders are trying to identify the tools and business value. In the medium term, we believe the much-hyped 'big data' will give way to what it has been all along – just 'data'.

There is no doubt that organisations will continue to spend and earmark money for BI, despite constrained budgetary environments. What is becoming increasingly clear is that BI projects remain relatively shielded from budget cuts, while a healthy portion of any discretionary money will be available for upcoming analytic initiatives.

In short, organisations that are effective in adopting analytical capabilities and the integration between analytical capabilities and business processes are seeing lower costs and greater business impact from their investments.

**ABOUT IAN BERTRAM//**

Based in Sydney, Ian Bertram is managing vice president of Gartner's worldwide analytics and business intelligence research team and head of research for Asia Pacific. Prior to joining Gartner in 1998, he was with IBM for 10 years.

# Is big data "bullshit"?

*Every few years a new buzz word makes it on to the scene and it can be difficult to separate the hype from the true need. Currently 'big data' holds the title of 'most over-used term' and business leaders that don't have a big data project on the go just aren't up to date with current IT trends. Or are they?* Anthony Doesburg *sifts through the big data brouhaha and considers the reality behind the buzz...*

Image credit: Charis Tsevis

For good or ill, big data is getting bigger. From President Obama's re-election campaign and US retailer Target's identification of pregnant shoppers to whistleblower Edward Snowden disclosing that the National Security Agency has been bugging our communications, examples of big data collection and analytics are everywhere.

IT vendors that until now hadn't been known as purveyors of big data products are joining the bandwagon. In June Hewlett-Packard announced a newly minted big data consulting practice and at Microsoft's July Worldwide Partner Conference in Houston boss Steve Ballmer said big data was one of four focuses of a reorganised company.

The drip-fed revelations by Snowden, an ex-NSA contractor, haven't made him popular with Obama and have angered US allies such as Germany whose citizens have been caught in the NSA net. As noted by a columnist in *The Guardian* newspaper, which was one of the first to report Snowden's disclosures, the leaks also highlight the role of algorithms — or analytical software — for finding gold among the dross.

To IT practitioners who've been bombarded by big data hype for years already, none of this will be news. If uncovering a terrorist plot is the nugget sought by the NSA, in the world of business intelligence the pay-off comes in the form of intersecting lines on a chart that might reveal a previously unsuspected customer appetite or the solution to a population or health problem.

The question, said Radio New Zealand broadcaster Kim Hill during a series on big data earlier this year, is whether the phenomenon represents manipulation or empowerment. Target, perhaps spooked by that line of enquiry – it was once confronted by a man whose school-aged daughter was being mailed baby-related bumf by the chain; he had no idea she was expecting – stopped co-operating with the *New York Times* reporter who broke the story about the company's use of data analysis to identify pregnant customers.

Hill pointed out that big data analytics has completely taken over: in 1986, only six percent of the sum total of world data was digital; today, nearly all the »

written word, music, images and data is in binary form.

She's in good company with that observation: according to Gartner principal research analyst Dan Sommer, it's fast becoming a world of "analytics everywhere". Speaking ahead of a Gartner business intelligence summit in Mumbai in June, Sommer said that by next year analytics will be in the hands of half of potential users, rising to three-quarters by 2020.

"Post 2020 we'll be heading toward 100 percent of potential users and into the realms of the internet of everything."

## Cutting through the hype

Yet there are other voices – and research – suggesting big data is just big noise. Although the Obama campaign's use of big data in getting him re-elected last year has been widely trumpeted – campaign workers were apparently able to identify all 69,456,897 Americans who voted for him in 2008 – campaign CTO Harper Reed told a CeBIT audience in Sydney in May that big data was "bullshit".

He wasn't totally dismissive, however. *ITWire* reported Reed qualified his remark by saying data itself is less important than what you do with it.

Analyst IDC and customer behaviour researcher Fifth Quadrant have also come out with findings that temper the big data story. An IDC survey this year of 300 Australian organisations found big data analytics is certainly "getting SMB's tongues wagging", (Vern Hue, senior market analyst for Australia and New

Zealand, commenting on the survey result).

But his colleague and head of big data research in the two countries, Shayum Rahim, says although Australian enterprises are well on their way in the "big data journey", they are still at a relatively early phase in resolving many of its issues.

In a smaller survey of 64 Australian organisations Fifth Quadrant found customers of less than half the sample were enjoying improved experiences as a result of big data analytics. The author of the Sydney researcher's *'Big Data or Big Hype'* report, Chris Kirby, says only an eighth of the sample rate their analytics activities as "extremely successful", yet three-quarters use big data analytics.

"The greatest success appears to come when organisations adopt an integrated customer analytics strategy that puts quality data in the hands of decision-makers and leadership from executive teams is critical," Kirby says.

IDC found more than 80 percent of organisations have either deployed or have plans to launch big data analytics in the next 12 months, which Rahim says illustrates that Australian organisations' efforts range in maturity from ad-hoc and experimental discovery to advanced analytical capability that drives decision-making.

"Technology vendors and service providers will really need to think about where in this maturity model they will engage customers. Do they go with the low-hanging fruit and target customers with

budgeted projects, or do they expand their pipeline and work with those customers who have just begun their business analytics journey?"

What's more, he says, organisations are being very strategic in the use of data analytics to deliver specific line-of-business outcomes. "We spoke to senior IT executives who acknowledged a shift in focus from IT priorities to LOB requirements when it came to big data initiatives."

He sees a warning there for CIOs: they will need to be more closely linked to lines of business and their specific goals to remain relevant "in rapidly changing organisational landscapes".

## Entering the mainstream

If there are obstacles to the adoption of business intelligence and analytics, ethical questions such as Hill hints at seemingly aren't one of them. Gartner's Sommer said ease of use, performance and relevance are the sticking points, but disruptive technologies such as Facebook and web browsers are helping overcome them.

And usability is being pushed to new levels by what Gartner calls interactive visualisation or data discovery, the tools which enable data mash-ups. This segment is growing three times faster than traditional business intelligence front-ends, with Gartner expecting the market to be worth US$1 billion by the end of next year, dominated by vendors such as QlikTech, Spotfire and Tableau.

"The are other voices - and research - suggesting big data is just big noise. Although the Obama campaign's use of big data in getting him re-elected last year has been widely trumpeted campaign CTO Harper Reed told a CeBIT audience in Sydney in May that big data was "bullshit".

"However, MicroStrategy, IBM, Microsoft and SAS have all launched rivalling products in the past year, propelling that entire segment into a newer, much more competitive phase," Sommer said. "What this means is that data discovery has arrived as a mainstream architecture."

Cynics might say the subject is being over-hyped but one thing is irrefutable: data is piling up at an enormous rate.

## Gems amongst the dross

Big data is classified as structured or unstructured, the former representing about 20 percent of the total. The unstructured 80 percent, which encompasses everything from machine and sensor data to contact centre logs, is growing three times faster than structured data. Lurking amongst the vast amounts of unstructured data is what is known as dark data – data organisations might not even know they have.

Every enterprise action from a tweet to a customer paying an invoice or making a purchase makes the pile bigger. Much of it goes unexamined, yet it can have real value. A customer transaction that might not immediately result in a purchase, for instance, could be an opportunity to create awareness of a product they might ultimately buy.

Or, as cosmetics company Elizabeth Arden

discovered, there could be significant savings hidden in the heap waiting to be revealed by big data analytics' all-seeing eye. Using QlikView data visualisation software, the New Zealand subsidiary of the US cosmetics maker found that a couple of its retailers were chewing through product testers at a much greater rate than others.

Visibility of business data went "from night to day" when Elizabeth Arden began using QlikView in place of manually entering figures from a green-screen ERP system into a spreadsheet, says finance chief Tony Goddard.

"It was hopeless," says Goddard of the company's pre-QlikView business intelligence efforts. "If we noticed a particular sales trend it was very slow trying to go back to the original data to try to interpret it."

QlikView, in contrast, makes it easy for users to analyse sales results for particular products and customers over any period.

"We can see how much we sold to the customer at what discount, the cost of goods and the gross margin. We can get into profitability by customer, by brand and by SKU."

Goddard says the marketing team love it because it gives them an answer when he presses them on where their budget goes.

"They're able to say, 'we got this result from that

spending'," he explains.

The sheer volume of data, however, is holding organisations back from making sense of it. By 2015, says HP, organisations with more than 1000 employees in industries such as banking, manufacturing and communications will have an average of 14.6 petabytes (million gigabytes) of data.

## Coping with your data

The pioneer users of business intelligence tools were financial services organisations and Fifth Quadrant' study suggests they are also the leaders in big data analytics – more than a quarter of respondents to its survey were banks, insurance companies or finance firms. But HP says interest in analytics is spiking among business-to-consumer and particularly telecommunications companies and airlines.

Aside from drowning in large volumes of data, other words starting with 'v' – velocity and variety – neatly sum up additional challenges faced by big data newbies. When it is considered that data comes from sources as diverse as the web, social media, partners, customers and the factory floor, arriving at a rate of a terabyte an hour from a single industrial machine, the potential difficulties can be glimpsed.

The first step in helping customers grapple with their mounting data stores is to understand what problem the customer is trying to solve or the objective he is trying to achieve.

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"A fundamental question for an organisation undertaking a big data or business intelligence project is 'what are its objectives?'. It can't expect a return on the investment, for instance, if it is not prepared to act based on what the analytics brings to light, if necessary changing the way it operates."

Glen Rabie, head of Yellowfin

Glen Rabie, head of Melbourne-based data visualisation tool company Yellowfin, says the ideal is that customers will have worked out how to store and manage their data before contemplating how to slice and dice it. But the reality is many come at the problem the other way around.

"Often people buy backwards. They'll look at what we do and say 'that's fantastic — I want those lovely shiny charts', but they don't really think about the structure their data is in. They're not necessarily ready yet to put a presentation layer in front of it."

Rabie says Yellowfin will offer advice about the plethora of possibilities, but the choices aren't simple, either for large or small to medium-sized operations.

"When thinking about SME solutions, the market is actually quite complex. There are a lot of different products and solutions so it can be difficult for people to work out what's appropriate in terms of infrastructure."

Standards in the big data world are ill-defined, in contrast to the traditional database market in which SQL and relational databases won the day, and it can be hard to validate the claims made for particular products, he says.

"Every product will tell you it does all things, as opposed to understanding what your needs are and easily being able to find the right match."

From a visualisation perspective, the key is that data access not be a bottleneck.

"If you have to wait 30 minutes for a query to run then no tool on the planet is going to be appropriate because you're going to get very frustrated every time you want to change a chart," Rabie says.

"So we help our customers to think about what is the most appropriate place to put their data, should it be SQL Server, or an analytical database like Vectorwise or Netezza, or should it be a Hadoop or MongoDB solution. If they've already solved those issues, that's fantastic."

## Studies in success

"An even more fundamental question for an organisation undertaking a big data or business intelligence project is 'what are its objectives?'. It can't expect a return on the investment, for instance, if it is not prepared to act based on what the analytics brings to light, if necessary changing the way it operates," says Rabie.

At Elizabeth Arden, that was easy. When it found some of its 130 retailers were using unjustifiably large quantities of testers, which represent a significant cost to the company, it asked the sales reps looking after those accounts to find out what was going on. "Once they knew we had this visibility, suddenly their demand on our testers went down and we're saving money," says Goddard.

At Yellowfin customer Macquarie University in Sydney, data visualisation led to big, and financially beneficial, changes to grant applications and its supply chain, Rabie says.

Savings aside, an intimate understanding of their data can be the only advantage available to organisations in highly competitive markets. If it helps them keep customers close, that's much

cheaper than acquiring new ones.

How else than by poring over sales data, for instance, might Australia's largest department store group Myer have found that customers at certain rural department stores who bought beds also bought chainsaws?

Mark Fazackerley, Australia and New Zealand head of MicroStrategy, says when the unlikely association between the two product lines was discovered, Myer rearranged its store layout accordingly. The theory was that holiday-home owners were trimming trees and replacing beds on the same cycle.

"When you consider the millions of point of sale transactions Myer handles, to sift through and find that correlation is quite an achievement," Fazackerley says.

Similarly, New Zealand electrical goods wholesaler JA Russell used MicroStrategy to uncover slow-moving stock in its warehouse. "It was able to adjust its forward ordering and pricing to try to alleviate that."

The trend among business intelligence users is towards "democratising" data collection and analysis, says Fazackerley, away from "guys in lab coats" who generated reports only they understood to giving staff the ability to find "information that matters in a time-frame that allows them to act on it and generate results".

The trouble is democracy, as Obama might say, can be messy: putting BI in the hands of the masses could be a potential IT management nightmare. However, that's not how it worked out at real estate agent Ray White.

Brisbane Tableau consultant and former Ray White analyst Nathan Krisanski says the firm opened up its data to 1000 franchise owners and 10,000 sales people without them even knowing what tool they were using.

"Tableau gave us the ability to push data to our people in a format that made sense to them and required little interaction to obtain basic information. But it also provided end users with transparency and deep-dive analysis if they wanted to understand more."

And it was done in a controlled environment, Krisanski says.

First things first, though, says Yellowfin's Rabie, who warns that big data advocates shouldn't go off half-cocked.

"They need to know why they're doing it and if they find out interesting things be in a position to do something about it.

"If they don't have their ducks in a row, they're just wasting money."

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| Y | Y | Y | Y |
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| Informix, Oracle, SQL Server | Oracle, MS SQL Server, IBM DB2, Sybase, Access | All | Oracle, MS SQL Server, IBM DB2, Sybase, MySQL and 25 others (any JDBC compliant database ) |
| Pronto Xi ERP | SAP Business Suite, SAP All-In-One, SAP Business One, Oracle, PeopleSoft, JD Edwards, Siebel, AS400 | Application independent. In addition, QlikView Connectors are available for Informatica, JD Edwards, Oracle, Salesforce, SAP and Teradata data sources. | Application Agnostic |
| Windows, Linux, AIX | AIX, Solaris, Windows, Linux, HP-UX | Windows , Windows server | Windows, Linux, Mac OS, AIX, Solaris, HP-UX |
| Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Y | Y | Y | N |
| N | BusinessObjects is the only BI tool to have received the MS Data Centre Certification of 99.9% reliability | N | N |
| | | | |
| Web-Services, REST, ASCII, ODBC, OLEDB, JDBC, XML, MDX, TXT, CSV, XLS | ASCII, ODBC, OLEDB, JDBC, XML, MDX, TXT, CSV, XLS | ASCII, ODBC, OLEDB, JDBC, XML, CSV, Web Services | ASCII, JDBC, MDX, CSV |
| Pronto Xi Roles and Security. Active Directory, NT Authentication. | NT Authentication, LDAP, Active Directory, Business Objects Enterprise Security | Multilevel role based internal security, Active directory, LDAP, NTLM | LDAP |
| Pronto Software has a network of offices and partners that provide sales, services and support locally to customers around the world. www.pronto.net | UXC Oxygen, uxcoxygen.com Nicole Seselj, Senior Business Development Manager NZ AU: 1800 002 354 NZ: 0800 008 606 info@uxcoxygen.com | Endeavour Solutions: www.endeavour.co.nz Sonia Elliot +64 9 308 0090 soniae@endeavour.co.nz | Yellowfin operates through a global partner and reseller network. www.yellowfinbi.com |
| Web: www.pronto.net Email: info@pronto.net +61 3 9887 7770 / 1300 PRONTO (1300 77 66 86) | BusinessObjects Sydney 1800 647 006 businessobjectsmarketinganz@sap.com www.sap.com/solutions/sapbusinessobjects | www.qlikview.com/au | Velocity Global www.velocityglobal.co.nz chris.morris@velocityglobal.co.nz Chris Morris +64 9 358 4445 |

# Mining today's gold

*__Owen McCall__ discusses the positive impact that big data can have – and how to go about finding it in your business...*

The IT industry has come a long way in 50 years or so. It's gone from just a few machines the size of houses doing very simple repetitive tasks to having digital sensors everywhere. This comes home to me when I have to drive to a meeting in a location that I have not visited before. I set up my smartphone to act as a GPS navigation system. I'm not 100 percent sure I know how it works but I assume it uses a combination of satellites, mobile phone tower triangulation and tracking known wi-fi connections to work out exactly where I am and provide real-time instructions. Next, I back out of my garage. As I do so the digital sensors on my car locate 'hard objects' behind me and beep when I get too close. That stage survived, I drive off, and the sensors in my car determine which engine in my hybrid to use (electric or petrol), and present me with real-time data on how much petrol I am using or whether my battery is recharging. The computing power and the data that is used for me to simply meet a friend and have a cup of coffee is phenomenal.

If you put this into a more serious context such as business and scale it up a few million times, today's trend of big data becomes very real. Industry commentators believe that big data offers new areas of competitive advantage to those who know how to mine it.

Mining the data is an appropriate term as you are doing the modern business equivalent to looking for the small flecks of precious metal amongst mountains of valueless 'data slag'.

So, you want to be a successful data miner but don't know where to start? Using the mining analogy try starting here:

*1. Make sure you know what precious metal you are looking for.* Gold is not the only valuable metal out there. In data mining this means you need to know what your business model is, who your customers are and the primary way that your business adds value for your customers (do you lead through product innovation or great customer service or the best price in the marketplace?).

*2. Travel to the goldfields (or tungsten mines) as that is where you are most likely to find the gold.* In data mining this means if you know that your business model is primarily about great customer service, for example, then make sure that most of the data you are collecting is based on understanding your customer and their experience as this is where the gold is likely to be for your business. Conversely, if your model is focused on efficiency of operations then ensure that most of the data you collect is put in this context. It will be likely that the data you are collecting is incomplete. When this happens set about defining what data you believe you need and begin to gather it.

*3. Stake your claim and begin work.* Both data mining and gold mining require hard work to be successful however you should also work smart by focusing on those areas that are likely to yield the best value. This means start by focusing on your largest or most profitable product line, your biggest or best customer group or your biggest cost items as these are much more likely to repay the investment than other areas.

*4. Finally, keep your eyes wide open!* While most miners who made money made it through hard work we all love the stories of the miner who found the huge gold nugget in the most unexpected place (they make great case studies too). It does and will happen in data mining but it is more likely to happen if you are open to the unexpected.

Throughout human history men and women have sought riches by mining for precious metals and stones. Our era may well be characterised by the beginning of a new form of mining; data mining, where we sift through the vast quantities of data which are being produced as we look for new insights to add the sort of value that may become the gold of our time.

So, increase your chances of success by knowing what you are looking for and where. Work both hard and smart, stay open-minded and be ready to seize unexpected opportunities.  ⚑

**ABOUT OWEN McCALL//**

Owen McCall is the founder of Viewfield Consulting a specialist IT strategy and leadership consulting firm. He was CIO of The Warehouse for seven and a half years. You can find Owen on the web at his blog site www.successfulcio.com

# Technology leadership key to economic transformation

**Paul Budde** *says the world in general, and its institutions and businesses in particular, are facing a significant number of challenges. Big data is key to successful transformation...*

There will soon be nine billion people; the environment has problems coping with us; whole business sectors are facing digital disruption; healthcare in western economies could consume 40 percent of national GDP by 2040; people are more empowered – they are moving away from traditional behaviour patterns; and new jobs are in the new economy, not the old one.

Governments and traditionally organised businesses and organisations have great problems with these developments. They are unprepared to embark on the essential economic and social transformations that are needed to face up to the challenges.

In essence, in order to transform they will need to operate far more horizontally and be far more truly customer/people focused. And in order to stay competitive with those organisations that have been successful in creating digital productivity they often need to look at ways to remove 50 percent, or even more, from their current business costs. It also necessitates cannibalisation of traditional services and revenues, without the certainty of new income from new services to compensate for this.

The recent announcement regarding the restructuring of Telstra's fixed line business and the transformation of this company towards the digital economy as well as the announcement of Ford to stop producing cars in Australia are all signs of these massive economic changes.

Still, many businesses are fighting rearguard battles rather than leading the charge, and whole sectors are resisting the transformation process (retail, healthcare, education, energy, government).

Over the last few decades citizens around the world have indicated that they are ready for change. We have seen this in relation to climate change and the use of new and modern means of communication. Political and social changes have also taken place, based on greater people empowerment, which has arisen, at least partly, from the availability and the adoption of new technologies.

I have argued that we can solve the challenges at hand, but we will have to do things differently. There is no linear way forward – lateral solutions are needed. Over the last 60 years we have created a world of specialists who operate within silos. These silos need to be demolished and new horizontal structures established in which all sectors and disciplines can work together.

Leadership from the top is needed if this is to be achieved. These changes will not be made by those protecting their silos and ivory towers. Open ICT infrastructure (broadband, smart grids, data centres, cloud computing, M2M) is the glue that is needed in the process of transformation that will lead to more horizontal collaborative structures within both individual organisations and broader economic and social structures.

Within these horizontal structures, and with the assistance of ICT, we can collect and analyse data in real time – collectively known as big data – that will allow us to transform existing organisations and structures into smart businesses, smart cities, smart transport, smart grids, smart buildings, e-health.

Big data allows people and/or machines to make instant and better decisions in relation to what are very complex and interconnected problems. Solutions that can be achieved in this way will greatly improve our understanding of consumer behaviour, business developments, energy efficiency, traffic situations, weather activities, personal health issues, as well as commercial decisions, to name just a few.

One of the key problems associated with these challenges is a lack of smart government policies that are based on integrated solutions crossing sector boundaries. Political leadership is needed to address these issues. ⨍⁊

### ABOUT PAUL BUDDE //

Paul Budde is the CEO of BuddeComm, an independent research and consultancy company, focusing on the telecommunications market. Its research encompasses 190 countries, 500 companies and 200 discrete technologies and applications. Paul is also the special advisor to the UN Broadband Commission for Digital Development.

# Health accreditor gives new SQL-based ERP a tick

As a quality improvement organisation, AGPAL has always looked for ways to improve its own internal processes, but not so long ago, its back-office systems were making that difficult…

**A**GPAL is a not-for-profit organisation that provides accreditation and quality improvement to general medical practices in Australia, including the Royal Flying Doctors and Aboriginal medical services. The accreditation is based on standards developed by the Royal Australian College of General Practioners and provides assurance for owners, managers, staff and funding bodies across the country.

### Duplication beyond belief

AGPAL had been using Account Right since the organisation started in 1997. As an accounting system it was perfectly capable, particularly for a small business, but integrating it with other systems was proving difficult.

Richard Dennis, CFO, explains, "As well as Account Right, we ran a CRM system. We needed to keep both up to date and that meant having to enter information like invoices and payment details into one system – and then repeat the process in the other.

"When I joined AGPAL, I saw duplication everywhere and thought, 'We're already using one SQL-based system [iExpress] for operations and CRM. If we bring in another for our accounts, we can integrate data from the two and cut out all this extra work.'"

So that's exactly what they did, turning to MYOB EXO for the solution.

### The importance of SQL

As an SQL-based system, MYOB EXO would be able to integrate seamlessly with iExpress and it would provide AGPAL with much-needed analysis and reporting.

"We really wanted to improve our client interaction and reduce the time clients were left hanging on the phone," says Dennis.

Previously, customers who wanted to review their account would have to wait to speak to someone in finance. With EXO, timely and accurate information could be fed automatically into the CRM system, allowing operational staff to answer queries easily themselves.

EXO's SQL back-end meant AGPAL would also be able to do a lot of its own report creating and customisation – which was another big plus for the system.

"With some ERP systems you have to find someone else to create reports, and that can get expensive. We knew we had the skills to do it in house," explains Dennis.

*"Knowing that we can use this system in Melbourne and Sydney and have staff in those locations supporting the business locally as well as nationally is a real bonus."*

**Richard Dennis,** CFO for AGPAL

### Working with Momentum

To help implement EXO, AGPAL turned to Maroochydore-based implementation partner Momentum. According to Dennis, the installation went "close to plan".

"When you change systems it's always challenging. You've got new processes to familiarise yourself with and new ways of doing things. The sign of success is being able to manage issues as they arise and move on," he explains.

According to the AGPAL boss, what Momentum's managing director Alistair Emery doesn't know about EXO you can fit on a postage stamp. But right across Momentum, there's a good mix of staff with capabilities and communication styles that make them adaptable to any organisation.

"With their help we managed to get things sorted quickly," says Dennis.

### EXO's ability to accommodate growth

Now that EXO's been installed a while, Dennis freely admits the system is doing exactly what he wanted it to – and has the potential to do a lot more.

"When we bought EXO, we knew we were looking at a possible merger. Well, that merger has just happened and we've doubled in size. We've doubled our people and we've doubled our turnover.

"Some systems would struggle with that, but EXO easily has the capacity.

"Admittedly our needs are relatively simple, but knowing that we can use this system in Melbourne and Sydney and have staff in those locations supporting the business locally as well as nationally is a real bonus."

### Seamless reporting

Using iExpress and EXO as one, AGPAL is now getting the seamless reporting Dennis was always looking for.

"At a basic level we are looking at very timely profit and loss accounts by state and by product. We can pass that information straight to the general managers of our various sites, which gives them much greater control of their budgets."

Asked whether he could put a dollar value on the improvements he's seen since implementing EXO, Dennis says there are some obvious wins.

"We aren't duplicating effort any more so that's an immediate saving right there. Raising invoices is now just a small part of one person's job too. Previously, it used to take a lot of time.

"Really though," remarks Dennis, "EXO's true selling point is its ability to enable you to get more out of the same resources. We're now much more focused on our clients, even though we're the same number of people."

### A bucket load of value

"The good thing with EXO is that I know it is only going to get better. The flexibility it gives us means we're now able to do things in-house quickly – like building the chart of accounts for two new companies (Quality Innovation Performance and Quality Innovation Performance Consulting Pty Ltd) and setting up the P&L using clarity reports. SQL reports will follow soon."

As a quality improvement company, AGPAL are focused on improving their own internal quality, as well their clients'.

"EXO's allowed us to do that," says Dennis, "and given us a bucket load of value in the process". 𝑓𝑖

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**CASE STUDY//**

AGPAL

**AT A GLANCE//**

**INDUSTRY**
- Not-for-profit, accreditation and quality assurance

**BUSINESS OBJECTIVE**
- Introduce an integrated platform.
- Reduce manual data entry.
- Be able to cope with a possible company merger.

**SOLUTION**
- SQL-based system MYOB EXO with professional services from Momentum.

**BUSINESS BENEFITS**
- Integrated platform reduces manual data entry and provides timely reporting seamlessly across the business.
- New system easily scaled up with a merger in which the business doubled in size.
- Company able to focus more on its clients' needs and do more with the same.
- Knowledgeable support from the Momentum team.

**FOR MORE INFO//**

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# CYBERCRIME SCENE

*Crime dramas bring whizz bang technology for tracking down the baddies into our TV rooms every night, but what happens when it's the criminals with the high-tech?* **STUART CORNER** *takes a look at how security intelligence software is helping those involved in corporate security and justice to narrow the field of suspects, and keep the cybercriminals at bay...*

**S**omewhere out in cyber space there's a group of criminals that has been busy hoovering up commercially and politically sensitive data from the IT systems of hundreds, maybe thousands, of organisations for over a decade. And it's showing no signs of stopping.

The group's activities and its technique, known as NetTraveler after the tool they use, have been spelt out in great detail by IT security technology company Kaspersky (http://bit.ly/10NUPVw ) "They have successfully compromised more than 350 high profile victims in 40 countries... [but] we estimate the total number of victims worldwide to be around 1000," the report says.

"The group has infected victims across multiple establishments in both the public and private sector including government institutions, embassies, the oil and gas industry, research centres, military contractors and activists."

Initial penetration of compromised systems was made via seemingly innocuous emails about the Dalai Lama's visit to Switzerland and a report on defence spending in Asia, amongst others.

# INVESTIGATION

## CRACKING THE SAFE

That's just one of hundreds of threats that IT security managers face every day. Take a look at the multitude of reports on cyber security issues produced regularly by security technology companies like Trend Micro, Symantec, Trustwave, etc. You'll wonder how any chief security office (or CSO) gets a decent night's steep. These reports are the stuff of nightmares: the range of threats is multiplying; the bad guys are getting smarter.

According to Craig Richardson, managing director of Wynyard Group, a specialist in intelligence-led software and solutions, every organisation has been compromised and most don't discover this for months. "There are two sorts of organisations: those that have been hacked, and those that have been hacked and

don't know it yet," he says.

"It is more likely now that intrusions will go undetected because criminals are very well resourced. It is now a question of how to have holistic and complete management of the risks, rather than a belief that you are secure because you have updated your anti-virus software."

Interestingly he points out that remote countries can be particularly vulnerable to cyber attacks. While their location insulates them from biological threats to a greater degree, Richardson says there is no such protection from cybercrime. "The attack can be someone in a garage in Russia, or in China, or any other country for that matter."

He says a new openness from normally secretive national cyber security bodies is evidence of the magnitude of the problem, and of how seriously governments are taking it.

"You're seeing the NSA in the US, the GCHQ in the UK and GCSB in New Zealand being very open about the fact that there are significant challenges and that engagement with the private sector is fundamental to meeting these challenges.

"That is a big shift. Those agencies have traditionally operated in isolation, but they are now saying 'this is a big challenge and without public sector collaboration, criminals will find the weakest point in the chain'."

The biggest worry of all is the Advanced Persistent Threat. This is where the bad guys target you because you have something very specific that they want – perhaps the intellectual property on which your entire business depends – and they will explore every avenue to get in to your systems and then spend as long as it takes to invade and manipulate them until they get what they want.

According to David Owen, director of strategy for security consultancy BAE Systems Detica, the time it takes the criminals to find what they are looking for after a successful infiltration provides the best opportunity to stop them.

"From initial infiltration to information leaving the organisation can take months because the bad guys have to do the reconnaissance, spread inside the environment and find the information they are looking for. It is a misconception that hacking activity happens really quickly. So there is »

a window there to take steps to prevent it."

It seems that many organisations are missing out on this window of opportunity. "We have found that on average when we get called in to an organisation they have been compromised for more than 300 days," Owen says.

One reason for this long delay he says is that, "Attackers are very focused on making sure their attacks are not detected. If they can elongate the window before the organisation realises they have been compromised it gives them more time to get the information out of the organisation."

of industries. Commenting on the findings, Scott Ainslie, security expert for IBM A/NZ, says, "Security people tend to be somewhat introspective and a little insular. So it is always a challenge to get them to speak about the problems they have within their company. It was quite interesting to discover that they don't share information. As a consequence they think that the problems they are encountering are unique to themselves."

Ainslie says that this insularity compromises security professionals' ability to protect their

of IT security vendor Websense, CSOs need to change the way they engage with the business and the board and the way they look at risk. "Today organisations have infrastructure and compliance-based security programmes, which means they just check the box and go and buy what their friends are buying, or what the vendors tell them to buy.

"Eighty percent of the spend on security goes on firewalls, IPS [intrusion protection systems] and endpoint security. And that is according to Gartner, Forrester, IDC and all the top resellers in the world," he says.

Much of this is money down the drain, according to Clark. "Those stop about 25 to 30 percent of the problem. That is insanity!"

Clark says that more of the security budget should be diverted to new methods of detection and prevention and the money spent on what he calls 'compliance' technology, like firewalls, be reduced by buying basic products.

Clark argues that being constantly on the lookout for abnormal activity and keeping a constant check on what data is leaving a company (and companies ought to know what should and should not be going out) presents a much better chance of preventing data loss and minimising damage.

> ## "THERE ARE TWO SORTS OF ORGANISATIONS: THOSE THAT HAVE BEEN HACKED, AND THOSE THAT HAVE BEEN HACKED AND DON'T KNOW IT YET."
> CRAIG RICHARDSON, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF WYNYARD GROUP

He says that security is about constant vigilance, an acknowledgement that compromise is inevitable and therefore a focus on protection of the 'crown jewels'.

"One of the key questions for a lot of clients is to identify, out of all the information they have, the key information that is really worth protecting and then trying to constrain the proliferation of that information to some extent."

### OPEN UP TO BE SECURE

Owen says technology alone cannot provide security. Constant vigilance and expertise to understand and interpret what the technology has to say are just as important. Here organisations face a choice between using internal expertise or outsourcing to a managed security service provider. Both options have their limitations: to be effective an external provider must have sufficient understanding of the client's business to be able to identify the most important information. At the same time, it's hard for an internal security professional, working in isolation to keep abreast of current threats and the weapons to fight them.

In this respect security professionals can be their own worst enemy. IBM has just released a white paper 'Truth behind the trends', a distillation of learnings gleaned from interviewing 87 IT leaders from companies across a range

companies. "It means they try and tackle their problems independent of external advice, and from our experience getting external advice or seeking collaboration from like-minded people is very helpful. More often than not the problems they are facing are not unique and if they work together collaboratively their chances of finding a solution are much greater."

The importance of information sharing to boost IT security has been recognised by Gartner. It has just published a research paper *'Information sharing as an industry imperative to improve security'* in which it "assesses the current state of data sharing and provides recommendations for enterprises and vendors".

According to author, Anton Chuvakin, "Security-data-sharing tools and practices are gaining mind share. Increasingly, enterprises are realising that they must break with insular 'every one for themselves' mind-sets and band together to confront escalating threats."

He says that every organisation should "establish a new functional group to undertake and co-ordinate sharing efforts and should expand sharing efforts and relationships to involve supply chain partner organisations, customers and end users."

It seems, however, that a fortress mentality still pervades much of the thinking in IT security. According to Jason Clark, chief security officer

### THE 'BIG DATA' MUSCLE

A relatively new approach to IT security is big data analytics. 'Big data' is all the large amounts of related but unstructured data that can be gathered and analysed in the hope of finding useful information. It is being widely applied to improve sales and marketing strategies and customer retention, but the technique can equally be used to track down malware or an intruder ferreting around inside a computer network.

According to IT security vendor, McAfee, the full potential of big data is not being exploited. It has just released a report *'Needle in a datastack'* that, it says, "reveals how organisations around the world are ... vulnerable to security breaches due to their inability to properly analyse or store big data".

According to McAfee, "The sheer volume of security-relevant data facing an organisation these days can make identifying a threat like looking for a needle in a haystack. Yet collecting

more data can also play a transformational role in information security and organisations must become smarter at harnessing the right information to protect themselves from the unrelenting threats they face every day."

There is some urgency to businesses realising the potential of big data, before the cybercriminals do. According to Kate McGavin, senior product marketing manager with EMC subsidiary RSA, cybercriminals are also using big data principles to improve their own efficiency. "Cybercriminals can now sort their collections of data more quickly to extract financial details and view performance metrics for current malware applications," she warns.

A major hurdle for business is finding people skilled in IT security and big data analytics, both fields that are growing rapidly and where skills are in short supply. According to Detica's David Owen, "There is a real question as to how we educate more people to have the sophisticated skills in the IT security space. If we don't do that there will be massive salary inflation."

And he says we cannot look to universities to fill the gap. "The teaching in some of the university courses in computer science is quite classical. It is very expensive for a university to evolve its syllabus every year."

In the meantime, more specialised institutions are filling the gap, however, according to Websense's Jason Clark, successful security professionals need more than technical skills: they need high-level interpersonal communications skills to get the security message to company boards. "The average tenure of a CSO in the US is 16 months," says Clark, and lack of communication skills is the number one reason for their precipitous departures.

"They might be very smart and very good at IT, and they might know how to stop the bad guys, but they don't know how to articulate that. They don't know how to talk to the board and sell the business on why they need to do certain things. They start locking things down and they don't last very long. Either they get frustrated because nothing changes or the company gets rid of them because they are causing problems."

"TECHNOLOGY ALONE CANNOT PROVIDE SECURITY. CONSTANT VIGILANCE AND EXPERTISE TO UNDERSTAND AND INTERPRET WHAT THE TECHNOLOGY HAS TO SAY ARE JUST AS IMPORTANT."
DAVID OWEN, DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY AND MAJOR CLIENT GROUP FOR BAE SYSTEMS DETICA

# Living in strange times

**Paul Brislen** *takes a look at the two pieces of legislation currently making their way with, what he believes, "undue haste" through New Zealand's parliament...*

There aretwo pieces of legislation that currently concern me. The first is the Government Communications and Security Bureau Bill, which is designed to tidy up some pesky confusion about just what the GCSB is allowed to do.

According to the government, the current Act is outdated and open to misinterpretation. Apparently, the New Zealand government has been allowing the NZ SIS and police to use the GCSB personnel and capability to fill in gaps in their own capabilities. That is, the SIS or police get a warrant to spy on a New Zealand citizen or resident and the GCSB does the leg work.

The only problem with this (well, not the only problem, but the one we'll focus on) is the current GCSB Act prohibits the GCSB from doing this. But the Government says it's not clear and the new legislation will tidy it up for all to see.

The current Act says:

Neither the Director, nor an employee of the Bureau, nor a person acting on behalf of the Bureau may authorise or take any action for the purpose of intercepting the communications of a person (not being a foreign organisation or a foreign person) who is a New Zealand citizen or a permanent resident.

Frankly, to my mind, this seems quite clear-cut and unambiguous. The GCSB cannot spy on New Zealand citizens or permanent residents at all. Ever. Under any circumstances.

The Prime Minister says the new GCSB Bill won't extend the powers of the GCSB but will allow the GCSB to spy on New Zealanders or permanent residents. Sounds like an extension to me.

On top of that, the government has introduced a new Telecommunications Interception (Capability and Security) Bill which will "tidy up" the existing Telecommunications Interception Act which is also, apparently, somewhat loosely worded.

The current Act requires telcos to work with agencies that have warrants and to ensure that communications are able to be intercepted.

The new TICS Bill goes beyond that. Not only will telcos be required to make sure their networks can be intercepted, but over-the-top providers (such as Google, Microsoft and Apple) may also be required to do likewise. In addition, if these providers come up with a product that can't be intercepted, the GCSB may require that product not be sold in New Zealand.

So, if Apple comes up with a messaging solution, let's call it iMessage because that's its name, which is encrypted and which allows secure communication that can't be intercepted, then either Apple has to hack its own systems on behalf of the New Zealand spy agency or not sell the product in New Zealand. Which is likely to happen do you think, given that the equivalent US law explicitly tells US telco service providers that they're not allowed to do this kind of thing for any other country? They can spy for America, but not for New Zealand.

And let's imagine that a New Zealand company comes up with a new cloud-based service that revolutionises business communications. Given the extreme nature of the New Zealand legislation, would any non-New Zealander ever trust that company's assurances regarding security and privacy? Probably not.

The TICS bill doesn't stop there. It goes one step further and introduces a whole new section which gives the GCSB the power to oversee certain elements of the telcos' networks. Companies like Chorus, Vodafone and Telecom won't be allowed to make changes to certain key elements without getting permission from the GCSB. Presumably that will include not only the hardware and software that will be deployed (or removed) but also which provider the telcos are allowed to use. Given that the Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) prepared by ministry officials includes lots of redacted paragraphs, it's a little hard to tell just what advice was given, but there are numerous references to Huawei and ZTE, two well-known Chinese equipment providers.

The upshot is that the government is increasing the GCSB's capability but outsourcing the cost of that increase to the telcos themselves. Huawei has made a name for itself by offering good quality equipment at a significant cost saving for the telcos – if they can't use Huawei in future because of some perceived security issue then the telcos costs will increase, even before we get into the realm of having to store (and make accessible) customer data.

This is the crux of the issue. We have a security apparatus that is built around an alliance with our traditional comrades in arms – the US, UK, Australia and Canada. But at the same time we have a trade model built around the new world order of South East Asia and China in particular. The two worlds don't exist well together and unfortunately we're eventually going to have to choose one over the other. In the meantime, New Zealanders will be spied on by an agency with a new remit that includes not only security issues but also economic factors, and we will end up paying more for the privilege.

These are indeed strange times we live in.

**ABOUT PAUL BRISLEN//**

Paul Brislen is the Telecommunication Users Association of New Zealand (TUANZ) chief executive.

# ERP is not an IT decision

*The technology to drive your business must be chosen by business heads, not techies says* **Philip Morgan**...

Your IT manager looks after your tired old business software, so you're giving them the job of selecting a replacement. Logical, right? Wrong!

Letting your IT manager alone decide the best ERP solution for your business could be one of the worst decisions you ever made. You could end up limiting your growth and losing the chance to boost performance levels. You could pay too much money for a complex, high-maintenance system that staff find difficult or frustrating to use, or which may not actually perform crucial tasks well at all.

Some IT managers, unchained from the support desk, may go hog wild looking for a state-of-the-art system with all the latest specifications – the Christmas present they always wanted. They may love it, but they're likely to be on their own.

On the other hand, your IT manager may understand your business and know your current system inside out. They may even have a reasonable idea of where the current system is letting you down or preventing you from achieving better performance. But they're still the wrong person for this job.

So, who is the best person? A senior *business* manager.

## Business vision the driver

Any process to change business software should be driven by senior leaders who have a firm idea of the business objectives driving the change. And yet it's surprising how often we're approached by an IT manager who's been tasked with evaluating ERP systems. Added to which the brief from management is usually pretty vague and is frequently driven by sheer obsolescence – either of the existing software or the hardware it's running on.

You need a strong vision of where the company is going before you can decide what software is going to get you there.

Start by separating out the 'how we do it' (the current processes) from the 'what we want to achieve' (the outcomes), and make sure your evaluation is done in terms of the latter. Just because the business does things one way now, it shouldn't necessarily work the same way with a new system. And if a significant change in the business is required, do you really want your IT manager guiding it through?

If any of your requirements at this stage are technical, you're missing the point. Technology is rarely an end in itself and almost always a means.

## The hygiene factor

Technology should be a 'hygiene factor' in evaluating a software solution's ability to meet your business requirements. The term 'hygiene factor' was coined to describe criteria that don't contribute to an improvement in a given situation but prevent deterioration – like hygiene in a hospital. After an operation good hygiene doesn't improve recovery, but poor hygiene can kill the patient. Similarly, don't expect the technology supporting your business systems to deliver the improvements, but ensure it is robust and appropriate to the task.

Of course, your IT manager still has a role to play, but they should focus on their core skills. They should specify the technological requirements that need to be considered – these are separate from the business requirements. It's worth sense-testing these requirements to ensure you're not limiting your choice of solution because of the IT manager's preference for one technology or one supplier over another.

*Valid examples include:*
- Technical support is available at specified hours
- The database technology underpinning the software is well supported
- The software has a large and active user community
- A roadmap of future enhancements demonstrates the longevity of the software
- It fits with the company's backup and disaster recovery policy.

*Questionable examples include:*
- It must be supplied by Microsoft
- It must *not* be supplied by Microsoft
- It must be delivered via 'the cloud'
- It must be browser-based.

Before you let any software vendor through your door, you should be able to supply them with a document that precisely outlines what you want an ERP system to do for you. The vendor who gets your business will address what you want, and have a proven track record of delivering those requirements.

But first things first: senior management must map out what the business is doing now and (more importantly) where it is going. The IT manager can then focus on their proper role: building a system that addresses both the present and the future.

# Re-engineering costing makes boat go faster

C-Tech, a key supplier of carbon fibre products for America's Cup yachts, has navigated into new waters thanks to ERP system SyteLine and deployment expert EMDA…

When the 34th America's Cup is sailed in San Francisco in September, Auckland company C-Tech will be as close to the action as it's possible to be without actually being aboard either of the competing yachts.

As it has been for more than a decade, the 16-year-old company is a supplier of carbon fibre components to the America's Cup teams. And C-Tech chief executive Alex Vallings, a sailor, will be competing in San Francisco Bay at the same time as the America's Cup is being contested.

However, Vallings will be racing an 18-foot skiff with cloth sails while the America's Cup is fought over by 72-foot catamarans with fixed-wings larger than the wing of a Boeing 747.

Vallings might well have mixed feelings as his boat skips across the waves, knowing that the big cats' wings have diminished C-Tech's role in the world's richest regatta. A key component of a cloth sail, the batten, is absent from the rigid wings.

For most of a decade from 2001, more than three-quarters of C-Tech's business came from supplying a unique, hollow, tapered rectangular sail batten. When the 31st America's Cup was sailed in Auckland in 2003, the battens were used by Team New Zealand, Alinghi and Victory Challenge.

At the 2007 Cup in Valencia, says Lyn Holland, C-Tech's administration manager and Vallings' partner and fellow sailor, not one of the dozen participating teams was without the battens.

"We supplied battens for every syndicate, so we were at our export peak with sail battens making up 80 percent of what we sold."

The battens' popularity was down to their strength, lightness and durability – the product of design and manufacturing nous that resided in Vallings' head.

"Then someone decided to put solid wings on America's Cup boats and completely ruined our market," Holland says. "So things changed – and we changed our product mix at the same time."

At about that time and with that kind of contingency in mind, C-Tech decided to upgrade its cashbook accounting system. The company was prospering – since Vallings started the business in 1997, revenue was approaching NZ$5 million, it had 17 staff and occupied an 1800sq m manufacturing facility in west Auckland.

Much of its success rested on Vallings' engineering expertise and his ability to accurately cost the made-to-order jobs that came in via the company's website.

"He built up all the manufacturing processes so could look at a job and know pretty well how long it should take and how much it would weigh so he could multiply that by the cost of carbon to get the material cost. He could pretty much do the labour and material costs in his head, or if it was particularly complex, on a piece of paper," says Holland.

"Nobody else in the company had that capability or that information."

However, if the company was ever to be sold, that institutional knowledge needed to be incorporated in its business systems. And there was another long-standing issue: with 80 percent of sales going overseas, currency conversions were time-consuming.

"We wanted to make our exporting process simpler. And we wanted to have a feel for actual costs – take them out of Alex's head and put them into a bill of materials system. Our eventual objective is that someone will be able to come along and buy the company and its assets and one of them would not be Alex."

Holland, who ran her own software development

> **"We were able to change our product mix away from sail battens because we had the visibility of costs through SyteLine."**
>
> **Lyn Holland,** C-Tech administration manager

business before merging it with C-Tech in 2001, homed in on enterprise resource management (ERP) system Infor SyteLine, supplied by Christchurch-based EMDA. With its strengths in managing complex manufacturing processes and export businesses, it wasn't long before SyteLine rewarded Holland's judgment.

When America's Cup defender Oracle Team USA set the design rules for the regatta being contested in

September, far from having the wind taken out of its sails, C-Tech was able to rely on SyteLine to help it develop other product lines.

Battens have gone from being 80 percent of sales to 45 percent and the company has become a supplier of tubular composites for applications as diverse as telescopes, guitar necks and gun silencers. And it is keeping its America's Cup hand in, making control components for the wings of the 2013 regatta's yachts.

"Without the costing information we gained from having an ERP system we could have gone down some wrong tracks very easily," says Holland.

"We also have a much clearer picture of product cost versus sell price at a time when people are taking a lot more care over what they buy. They're not so willing to pay top dollar and we've had to be careful about our margins. SyteLine enabled us to change our product mix because we had visibility of costs."

The ERP system has also eased the exporter's exchange rate burden. C-Tech doesn't engage in currency hedging, but with more than 350 suppliers and 1600 customers, most of them overseas, Holland appreciates SyteLine's currency conversion functionality.

There was another objective, too, in choosing Infor's ERP SyteLine, developed using the .Net toolset: C-Tech wanted a system that would interface with in-house software.

"We have a lot of spreadsheets and databases that record laminate information and product technical specifications and we looked for an ERP system that was going to be relatively easy to get things to talk to each other. The integration with Excel was one of the key reasons for choosing Syteline." Integration remains a work in progress, Holland says.

In the meantime, despite "a much reduced role" in the 34th America's Cup, Vallings and Holland are eagerly anticipating the event.

"We will be there and I'm looking forward to it," Holland says.

---

**CASE STUDY//**

C-Tech

**AT A GLANCE//**

**INDUSTRY**
- Carbon fibre marine components

**BUSINESS OBJECTIVE**
- Replace accounting software and paper-based manufacturing processes with a full ERP system.
- Embed job costing information in an electronic system.
- Simplify exchange rate calculations.

**SOLUTION**
- Infor ERP SyteLine deployed by business solutions provider EMDA.

**BUSINESS BENEFITS**
- Accurate costing of new products.
- Easy currency calculations on export sales.
- Embeds institutional pricing and product knowledge in business systems.
- Supports product and market diversification.

**FOR MORE INFO//**

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# Fugro-TSM forecasts better job profits

As subsea energy and marine specialist Fugro-TSM grew it realised it needed a truly international ERP solution to support its global expansion so it took the plunge with Microsoft Dynamics NAV…

Fugro-TSM is a subsea contractor offering a range of services to the oil and gas and marine industries. Operating globally, it provides an integrated service to customers, combining dynamically positioned vessels, subsea equipment, personnel, engineering, innovation and know-how to deliver unique services in subsea intervention, subsea construction and decommissioning and abandonment. Originally formed in Perth as TSmarine, it was acquired by Dutch company Fugro in March 2011 and has since experienced growth and expansion into a number of foreign countries.

### Growing pains

Fugro-TSM had been using MYOB as an off-the-shelf solution but needed a solution that was flexible across multiple locations, currencies and offered deeper reporting analysis and transparency.

"As well as looking for an integrated solution that included procurement, cost control and advanced reporting, the business was growing. We had entities in foreign countries that needed a consolidation module to sit over the top of the solution and we were looking for the ability to run multi-currencies, but report back into a functional currency, that was easily streamlined," says Jeremy Grant, project services manager for Fugro-TSM.

"We wanted a solution that was easy to modify, didn't interrupt the business processes too much and that had been accepted and tried."

### A perfect fit

Fugro-TSM liked the flexibility of Microsoft Dynamic NAV's off-the-shelf functionality and has found it is able to cope with the company's expansion, growth and multi-country presence.

"Microsoft Dynamics NAV had the functionality that we needed – procurement, cost control, accounting, CRM, off-the-shelf ease-of-use, and the benefits of a Microsoft look and feel. We did our homework. Some of our competitors had implemented Microsoft Dynamics NAV from MYOB, so before we decided on a solution, we called them. When they reported Microsoft Dynamics NAV was not only tried and tested, but gave us a glowing report on the implementation, it helped us make the decision," explains Grant, adding that they chose to implement Microsoft Dynamics NAV through UXC Eclipse.

Used as a platform to link the company's various geographical areas, Microsoft Dynamics NAV's integration and flexibility has been crucial in Fugro-TSM's ability to forecast better. It has also increased accuracy across operations and accounting.

"Usually with the accounting process, you only learn about things as you post them. Through Microsoft Dynamics NAV, in job costing and procurement you can commit a cost before you commit a vendor. This means that the funds haven't gone out the door and you can forecast more accurately through the job module. Using the purchase order function you can see the commitments against your budgets. This then ties in as the actuals come through the accounts.

"Having job costing, and the ability to use a work breakdown structure for our engineering profit and loss gave profitability, accountability and functionality to two separate parts of the business," says Grant.

Fugro-TSM uses the system to analysis Microsoft Dynamics NAV to analyse its operations and accounting profit and loss. By being able to identify over-runs and adjust accordingly, they can forecast where change is needed to keep projects on time and on budget.

"Our project managers can avoid over-runs by knowing what the PO commitment is, how it works against their P&L, and how it will affect the project. Microsoft Dynamics NAV allows us both control and visibility," says Grant.

The company is also enjoying the results of the "lessons learned" system. At the end of each project, a costing database is created by analysing reports in Microsoft Dynamics NAV. This database can then be used as a tool for costing future projects of a similar nature so that the team can see where to improve and move forward. It is powered by Microsoft Dynamics NAV and business intelligence solution Jet Reports, which allows in-depth reporting and saves a considerable amount of time in the monthly reporting process as well as being able to write ad-hoc reports.

### Easy and effective

Another major benefit of Microsoft Dynamics NAV for Fugro-TSM was the price point and

*"You hear of other systems that cost millions of dollars, but with Microsoft Dynamics NAV being off-the-shelf and requiring a few modifications, it meant we achieved everything we wanted with minimal impact on the business, and a budget that was achievable."*

**Jeremy Grant,** project services manager for Fugro-TSM

the ease of implementation, says Grant. The implementation process was planned and run very well from the outset and UXC Eclipse consultants spent time with the company on-site to understand the business and its requirements.

"You hear of other systems that cost millions of dollars, but with Microsoft Dynamics NAV being off-the-shelf and requiring a few modifications, it meant we achieved everything we wanted with minimal impact on the business, and a budget that was achievable. And with UXC Eclipse to manage the implementation, we were able to get on with our day-to-day tasks."

What usually happens in these types of projects is that focus gets taken from the clients, Grant explains. "The ball is dropped and revenue opportunities missed," he says, "but when you have a system that is easy, and only takes a short amount of time to get right, it doesn't affect your business. It's hard to put a value on that."

Added to that, Microsoft Dynamics NAV gave the company accountability for its budget and an excellent reporting function that allowed it to measure and maintain profitability right from the start.

**A new benchmark**

"We got what we wanted and there wasn't an expectation gap. From the outset it was managed very well. We constantly got feedback on where we were running for cost versus budget, which was much appreciated," says Gered Hetherington, financial controller for Fugro-TSM.

"We've had other projects and other systems that we've tried to roll-out and we pretty much use UXC Eclipse as a benchmark. Overall we are very pleased with how the system was rolled out. And the support has always been first class."

"UXC Eclipse exceeded our expectations. When you meet your budget and meet your schedule, and haven't taken your focus off your day-to-day activities – I don't think there is anything more that you can ask for," says Grant.

**CASE STUDY//**

Fugro-TSM

**AT A GLANCE//**

**INDUSTRY**
- Subsea energy & marine industries

**BUSINESS OBJECTIVE**
- To improve business forecasting for projects.
- Be able to handle multiple currencies / locations.
- Have a scalable and flexible ERP system that could deal with the company's growth.

**SOLUTION**
- Microsoft Dynamics NAV with implementation services by UXC Eclipse.

**BUSINESS BENEFITS**
- More accurate forecasting and greater visibility into the true costs of each project.
- More control over the business with the ability to identify and mitigate potential budget over-runs.
- Cost effective out-of-the-box solution with a smooth implementation that did not distract from business-as-usual.

**FOR MORE INFO//**

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# What is platform-as-a-service?

*There are three key service models within cloud computing, but platform-as-a-service is probably the least discussed. PaaS expert* **Kanchana Wickremasinghe** *explains what is what and why we should care...*

The three pillars that make up cloud computing are commonly called software-as-a-service (SaaS), platform-as-a-service (PaaS) and infrastructure-as-a-service (IaaS). While everyone has heard of software-as-a-service, it is now becoming apparent however that the little talked-about or publicised PaaS is playing an ever-increasing role in provisioning comprehensive cloud services appropriate to enterprise application. NIST defines PaaS as:

• The capability to deploy onto the cloud infrastructure [orchestration] consumer-created or acquired applications created using programming languages and tools supported by the provider [platform components].

• The consumer does not manage or control the underlying cloud infrastructure including network, servers, operating systems, or storage [platform components], but has control [access and control] over the deployed applications and possibly application hosting environment configurations.

In simple terms PaaS consists of three core layers, known as orchestration, platform components, and access and control that enable you to develop, deploy and manage your application without having to worry about underlying components.

### Orchestration

The orchestration layer facilitates application deployment and management activities such as scaling, security, high availability etc, in a selected cloud environment that is suitable for the application. This environment can be public, private or even a hybrid.

### Platform components

Platform components includes, but is not limited to, the operating system, application run-time engines (i.e: PHP, Ruby, .Net etc), web servers, services such as databases, caching and DNS. Depending on specific application requirements you can select an environment that consists of one or more of these platform components to execute your application.

### Access and control

The access and control layer allows you to easily configure, manage, monitor and control your deployed application without having to manage the underlying cloud infrastructure and platform components.

### Who uses PaaS?

PaaS is designed for three different customer segments, namely developers, IT managers/DevOps and DIY consumers.

Whether they are a freelance developer or in large enterprise development teams, developers love to code and want to spend most of their time creating great products for existing and/or potential customers, not managing the environment they want to code in.

It's a similar story for IT managers and in SME to large scale environments. These guys are under more pressure than ever to support customer demands (both internal and external), therefore they need to free up more time to manage these not their operating environment.

Finally there is always a subset of business owners or individuals, known as DIY consumers, that likes to trial everything themselves.

### A simpler life

Platform-as-a-service can make life simpler for its three user-groups in a number of ways. By using PaaS, developers will be able to eliminate the time and effort required in setting-up environments they need to develop, test and deploy their applications in the cloud, thereby freeing-up more time to focus on their core application development activities.

IT Managers and DevOps can use PaaS to eliminate time and effort required in managing their customer and internal staff environments, giving them more time to work on other business demands and help their customers better.

DIY consumers can trial applications and services using a platform-as-a-service offering without having to do all the groundwork themselves and freeing up their time to look after their customers or maybe just play more golf.

In short, PaaS is an innovation enabler that helps deliver business solutions more rapidly, with more flexibility, less risk and lower cost. ⚑

### ABOUT KANCHANA WICKREMASINGHE//

Kanchana is the founder and director of Senath. His expertise spans over 18 years in the IT industry, most recently in cloud computing technology-based companies. He has worked with large multinationals such as EDS, Cap-Gemini and Aclatel-Lucent as well as a number of start-ups. He has also helped start-ups to raise angel and seed funding.

# Service is the future

*As we move from the industrial age to the service age we have to change our sales approach.* **Gerry McGovern** *looks at how to go from selling products to selling services...*

One of the key changes being driven by the web is the movement away from products and towards services. Today, the product is in the cloud or wherever. We don't care. We want the song, not the CD. We want a place to store and easily access sales leads, not the Customer Relationship Management software. We care much less about the product and much more about the service the product delivers.

A service culture is different from a product culture. When customers buy products they are open to the complexity sell because people are very bad at predicting their future needs. They don't need feature X and Y and Z right now but they might need them later. So they buy them, just in case.

When customers buy services, on the other hand, they are driven far more by immediate need. "This is what I want to do now. Can you help me?" they ask. When customers are influenced by immediate need they tend to care more about speed, convenience and simplicity. We thus move from the complexity sell to the simplicity sell.

But most organisations think in products – things they produce – and I mean this in the broadest sense. Developers and programmers think in tools and applications. Customers think in booking flights and checking the weather. Content professionals think in documents, pages and words, but customers want to know what this rash on their child's arm could mean, or which of these car models has the best fuel consumption. Nobody is looking for the installation manual because they like to read or want to 'engage' with your content. They want to install the product.

As members of organisations we inherently see ourselves as creators of things (products), doers and producers of things. It's all so Industrial Age, but it's a very deeply engrained mindset. Rarely will you hear a programmer or writer say, "I serve customers". We don't like to serve, do we? "Oh, service, that's that low-level activity we have to provide to people who have bought our stuff, isn't it? Any chance we can outsource it?"

Service and support is the new sales and marketing. It is the new branding. Service is the future.

Online represents a particular type of service – self-service. If you think face-to-face service management is hard, self-service is ten times harder. Online changes how we can deal with customers by letting customers deal with themselves. The empowered customer wants to do things for themselves quickly and easily. Self-service design is absolutely obsessed with speed, convenience and simplicity. Online, speed doesn't kill. Complexity kills.

Traditional organisations were often made up of intermediaries who channelled customer requests. Sales people talked to customers to understand them better. Administrators added customer details to internal systems. Rarely did the customer have to deal with the 'backend' systems. These complicated backend systems and their related 'backend' content have now become frontend.

Self-service design requires very particular skills. These begin with empathy. You need professionals who like to serve, who enjoy observing customer behaviour, who don't make the fatal mistake of saying, "Well, I love using advanced search...". Remember – you are *not* your customer. **!**

**ABOUT GERRY MCGOVERN//**

Gerry McGovern is an expert in customer-centric technology, CEO of Customer Carewords and a five-time published author. He helps large organisations become more customer centric on the web. His clients include Microsoft, Cisco, VMware, IBM, Atlas Copco and Tetra Pak.

# Are you breaking

*Bank fees are part of life, but when it comes to international transaction payments we could be paying over the odds.* **Beverley Head** *reports...*

Rising volumes of international trade supported by the internet have driven a surge in the international payments business. Such is the demand for the transfer of international financial information that in April this year Swift, which provides the global communications for inter-bank messages, experienced its first 22 million message day – almost half of which referred to payments, which are growing in volume at 6.5% a year.

For businesses that want to effect international payments there are a range of options. The traditional approach has been to execute international funds transfer via a bank which will charge a fee for each transaction, and tightly control the currency exchange rate. But competing alternatives are emerging, including online foreign exchange services, closed loop international payment systems such as PayPal, remittance businesses, and even global virtual currencies such as Bitcoin.

For most businesses, their bank provides a first taste of international funds transfer. Major banks allow customers to send funds in 20-plus currencies directly to trading partners' bank accounts, which, depending on currency cut-off times, will be available to recipients either on the same or next day. The world's major banks and securities houses own the Swift network which funnels the international payment messages created by banks to other banks based in more than 220 countries around the world.

Australian and New Zealand banks can accept international funds on behalf of their customers either into a normal bank account or a foreign currency account which allows the customer to decide when or if to convert those funds into domestic currency.

If the funds transfer is originated in a bank branch it typically costs A$30-32; if originated online it costs about ten dollars less.

In June the Australian Bankers' Association trumpeted the fact that households are paying less in bank fees for the third year in a row. Australian businesses however paid $7.3 billion in fees in the year to the end of June 2012 – 6.9% more than the previous year – which the ABA put down to an increase in business lending and associated fees. Nor does it disclose the margin taken on wholesale exchange rates versus that charged to customers.

In its report into bank fees, which draws on information supplied by the banks to the Reserve Bank, the ABA does not break out fees associated with international transfers as a separate item, lumping them into 'other' fees category, which still amounts to 16 percent of the total fees business faces.

What it does note however is a somewhat surprising continued investment made by the major banks in their bricks-and-mortar branch network. In the year to the end of June 2012 994 new branches were opened – a 21 percent growth in the bricks-and-mortar network and a costly investment for the banks. At the same time banks have to contribute to the operation and upkeep of the Swift network. Bank fees reflect these investments.

While technology has delivered a simpler way of transacting for banks, it has simultaneously injected new competition, with the arrival of services which don't have costly bricks-and-mortar networks or legacy infrastructure to support. Many of the newcomers don't have to comply with capital requirements needed to be accepted as a deposit-taking institution, which can again shave costs, although they are obliged to adhere to country and anti-money laundering regulation.

Jim Vrondas is the chief currency and payments strategist for APAC for NZForex (an OzForex subsidiary) which specialises in international money transfers for individuals and businesses.

NZForex charges NZ$12 to effect a transaction worth $2000 to $10,000 and waives the fee entirely for any transfer above $10,000. Vrondas says

that while its fees are lower than the banks', the real savings come in the rates which are typically available. "There is a mark up (by the banks) on the rate, which is where the big savings can be," he says. NZForex's margins vary depending on the size of the transfers and it says it can save individuals an average of more than one percent on a transaction.

It's worth noting that the service is however directly targeted at larger transfers and isn't available for transactions worth less than $2000.

Vrondas says it has now built up a clientele of 180,000 worldwide, and also offers a white-

# the bank?

label service based on its international payments platform which is used by a range of organisations including Macquarie Bank, ING Direct, Travelex and Moneygram. He claims demand is rising fast, with the organisation accepting 10,000 new registrations each month after identity requirements are satisfied. It turned over nine billion dollars last year.

Once an account is established a user can get a live quote on an exchange rate, and if satisfied accept the quote and provide the account details of the recipient, their BSB or International Bank Code.

NZForex relies on the banks to complete the loop. As Vrondas says, "Generally we are a good customer of the banks."

Banks approached by *iStart* to explain the fees and rates that they offered compared to those on offer online declined to participate. As one manager noted; "It doesn't put us in a good light." According to Jonathon Mott, a banking analyst for UBS, international transfers remain a very small part of banks' overall business, which suggests that the arrival of alternative platforms for international money transfers isn't worrying them – yet.

The banks had a similar attitude to PayPal when it first arrived on the scene, only to see the closed loop system eventually eat more of their payments lunch. Other similar payment services able to effect international transfers have also arrived in Australia such as Braintree which charges 30 cents per transaction plus 2.4% of the value to effect a credit card payment. Targeted at start-up companies Braintree claims about a quarter of all payments by volume are international.

Besides these organisations there are still further alternatives such as remittance service providers including Western Union, which also handle international transfers, and have flat fees starting at $5. According to money laundering monitor Austrac, international funds transfers handled by such organisations run to well over $10 billion a year.

Finally businesses are being wooed by emerging global currencies such as Bitcoin, which promise even less friction and fees for international transfers although these virtual currencies are at the edge of the financial frontier and probably not for the faint-hearted.

With international funds transfer it appears that more than ever, alternatives are worth the price of investigation. **f7**

In mid 2011 Joanne Hand the managing director of Realtech, an SAP consulting house based in Auckland, needed to make a seven figure payment to the firm's German parents, converting New Zealand dollars to Euros in the process.

Previously Hand had relied on Realtech's bank to handle foreign transfers. This time after hearing from peers about NZForex she decided to explore the alternative, was suitably impressed and saved thousands of dollars on a single transaction. Since then she has used the service for her personal needs, and also recommended it to UK-based clients who need to transfer funds internationally.

While Hand said that using NZForex was relatively simple, she first initiated a face-to-face meeting to gauge whether the company was the sort she wanted to do business with, and says she values the personal relationship that has been built out of that initial contact. Regular email alerts regarding exchange rate movements also allow Hand to identify the most cost effective times for her to transfer money internationally.

Each time she has to make an international payment she still checks what the bank can offer. But to date she says NZForex "has always been sharper."

# Merging is no horseplay

*Two million customers, 8500 employees, over 400 IT systems, two very different brands and a thousand ways that it could have gone very wrong. But, despite inevitable niggles, by any measure it was a smooth transition – the result of strong leadership.* **Amanda Schaake** *speaks with ANZ New Zealand CEO David Hisco on integrating the ANZ and National banks...*

The most important phone call of David Hisco's career came just after lunchtime on October 27 last year. At the other end of the line was ANZ's chief operating officer Craig Sims. After two years of planning and build work by a team of hundreds of specialists across three countries, New Zealand's biggest Information Technology integration was as ready as it would ever be.

"Permission to go, Mr Hisco?" Sims asked the ANZ CEO.

The stakes were high. ANZ, New Zealand's largest bank, was moving more than 2.6 million customer records, 80 million transactions and $46 billion in funds onto a new IT system. With about half of all Kiwis having a financial relationship with one of ANZ's brands, the effect of getting it wrong would be felt across the economy.

But as he gave the green light for the conversion to proceed, Hisco was confident. "In the lead up to the change we kept going back to the six Ps," he says. "Proper prior planning prevents poor performance."

The IT integration was the successful conclusion to one of the biggest changes in the New Zealand financial sector in at least a decade.

A month earlier Hisco had announced that ANZ would be bringing the ANZ and National Banks together – in brand and in infrastructure.

Banks are, by nature, big and conservative organisations. They don't make change for the sake of it and don't usually have a reputation for innovative leadership.

But Hisco, 49, had arrived in New Zealand as ANZ's new CEO in 2010 with a reputation for making the hard calls. On a previous stint in New Zealand in the 1990s he sorted out UDC Finance and in Australia, he turned asset finance arm Esanda into a sustainably profitable unit. Strong strategy, backed up by clarity of message and ruthless execution.

## 66 Proper prior planning prevents poor performance. 99

**David Hisco, CEO, ANZ New Zealand, on the six Ps**

Merging ANZ and National Bank had been on the cards since ANZ bought the brand from Lloyds TSB in 2003. National Bank was a much-loved brand, well regarded for its strengths in customer service and internet banking.

At the time it was thought that operating the two brands would enable better market segmentation, capturing a greater share of the market. But over time the combined market share dropped from about 40 percent to about 30 percent.

"We had the ridiculous situation where we had branches across the road from each other with the brands competing against each other for customers and forgetting we had the same shareholder," says Hisco.

"The onset of the global financial crisis in 2008 showed that this strategy left us exposed. At a time when banks in Europe and the US were falling over, we realised that it was vital for us to be as strong as we could be – and we couldn't do that with two brands and all the duplication and cost that brought with it."

"The natural advantage we had of size and scale wasn't being used."

### The road to simplification

The strategy was to be New Zealand's best bank by radically simplifying the business, stripping out duplication and focusing resources where they could be most effective in delivering better products and services for customers, achieving efficiencies, improving technologies, and making

the bank lighter on its feet to respond to a rapidly changing banking environment.

Such fundamental change required the buy-in of about 1.7 million customers, more than 8000 staff, government and regulatory officials, media, unions and influencers. It also needed a leadership style that included a clear vision, an ability to engage across a wide range of groups and an understanding of the deep links people had with the brands.

Moving such a large group through a change curve couldn't be done single-handedly so a decision was taken early to have a de-centralised approach of engaging local leaders and managers. They – and not head office – were going to be the agents, the ambassadors, of change.

"If you want to deliver something big you have to trust your leaders," Hisco says.

"Having spent much of my career outside of head office, I'm well aware of what can happen when head office rolls out initiatives without proper engagement with the front line. You might get a result but you'll never really ignite a workforce from behind your desk.

"In all honesty, some days I did feel a bit out of control, but the sheer scale of the change meant we needed to de-centralise our engagement approach."

Hisco understood that the strong relationships the brands had with their customers were forged and maintained in the branches.

"The relationships customers had with the people behind the counter, the people they saw every week at kids' sports, and who they turned to for advice, was stronger than the colour blue or green. These relationships transcended brands because they were personal, and they are at the heart of an organisation such as ours.

"Having customer-facing staff engaged and believing in the change was vital. They – and not head office – had to be the heroes of our change." »

## Sharing the vision

The de-centralised engagement approach is one that builds on research by Towers Watson (Towers Watson and Tom Lee, Arceil Leadership Communications). According to the management consulting firm, employees receive 61 percent of their information from leadership, 32 percent from systems and processes and only seven percent from formal corporate media.

The role Hisco and his executive team took was laying the groundwork. They covered the length of the country stopping at branches to meet the teams. They hosted road shows across the country's main centres (open to all staff, not just management) to share their vision for the change and to take time to listen to front-line staff's concerns and questions.

These sessions provided the first opportunity for many ANZ and National Bank employees, who had previously been deliberately kept apart, to meet.

"Some of our people had been living two doors down from each other for years and working across the road with a different coloured sign above the door, and they didn't know each other," Hisco says. "Once they started talking to each other they could see the benefit of working together. Sure, some people were really loyal to their own brand but when the majority are in favour of getting on with the change they help the others to get on board with it."

With the National Bank brand on license from Lloyds, and that license about to expire,

> **❝ If you want to deliver something big you have to trust your leaders. ❞**
>
> **David Hisco**, *CEO, ANZ New Zealand*

employees had lived with the prospect of a brand change for some time. For many, the realisation that change was coming was a relief.

"I was pleasantly surprised. A lot of our teams just wanted us to make things happen. When we met the staff the overriding message they gave us was they were up for the change and just wanted us to get on with it.

"People smell indecision in leaders – it undermines you and the organisation."

## Talking change, believing in success

That early engagement led to a catch 22 of sorts. While the brand change had been rumoured for some time, preparation work for the ANZ board's decision had to be kept within a tight circle to prevent competitors taking advantage.

Early engagement with leaders across the organisation meant non-disclosure agreements for 100 staff, but in the final week before the change that grew to a few thousand staff as branch managers were briefed. Hisco believes the fact so many people kept schtum so long was a testament to the fact they had bought into the vision and wanted the brand change to be a success.

What happened next was an accomplishment in logistics. Briefing packs were provided to all key leaders and relationship managers to guide them through potentially difficult customer conversations. The leadership team conducted phone conferences and online chat sessions with all staff.

In the 24 hours after the brand announcement, relationship managers made more than 100,000 phone calls to their key customers to talk through the change. Over 8000 hours were spent holding direct conversations with customers.

Hisco credits his optimistic leadership team with turning those potentially difficult telephone conversations into relationship-building opportunities. In addition, the outcome of the calls was not just customer awareness of the brand change, but an increase in product sales.

The brand announcement was swiftly followed by ad campaigns and relentless internal communications sharing the success stories.

"We developed the plan and made our decisions based on 30 years of banking intuition," Hisco says. "I changed the leadership team early on so we have the right team in place and then we put in the ground work to get closer to the front-line to understand what the change meant for them. Staff can see straight through the crap. They just wanted us to make decisions, be as open as we could be with them and get on with it."

## Teething problems

A month later, the ANZ and National Bank IT systems were merged. Such an epic change

didn't occur without a few issues. Most core system changes take around two years, but the original plan was to merge the systems in late 2011 meaning the project would complete in under a year. The tight deadline galvanised many in the organisation into action, but it became clear as the deadline approached that much more testing needed to be done.

The drive to act as quickly as possible meant conflicts in priorities between New Zealand and Australian IT teams were overlooked, corners were being cut, planning wasn't as thorough as it should be and there was a lack of leadership in key parts of the programme.

Hisco and the team made the tough call to halt the merger.

The business regrouped and entered a stage of re-planning - strengthening resources in key areas, enhancing risk management and making changes to the project team. The changes, although adding intense pressure, paid off when the migration took place with almost no loss in system availability.

### Combining the best of both banks

As expected, competitors tried to take advantage of the brand change to poach National Bank customers. ANZ was ready for this, to the point where its marketing team had prepared a series of fake competitor ads to show teams what they might be up against. And counter-attack plans were developed by the bank.

Despite fierce targeting by competitors, ANZ has minimised customer losses and avoided a dive in staff morale seen in many corporate mergers. In fact deposits and lending market share increased in the first quarter of this year, there has been no significant increase in staff turnover and staff engagement remains at all-time highs.

"We run a group engagement survey annually and measured employee sentiment regularly before, during and after the migration. It was by far the largest period of uncertainty and change and yet our people were supportive of the change. They told us that it felt like things were on the move and the bank was making progress. And we could see this in their behaviour.

"Communication and feedback from the front line was more open and frequent and new product sales were up."

So if getting leadership out from behind their desks was a key success factor for ANZ, how does Hisco feel it went?

"It was brilliant," he says. "I'm actually really proud of my executive team who took real accountability for their individual work streams; they got out there and got the job done without fuss. And I'm even more proud of our front-line people. They stood up to the fight, stood up to all the negative media and they held onto our customer base. They didn't do it because of the sign above the door but because they wanted to defend their turf and they're loyal to the customer.

"You can't ask for better than that really." 🄵

*This article originally appeared in New Zealand Management magazine's July 2013 issue.*

## Integration by numbers

### One management structure

- 8500 employees and 17,000 shareholders in New Zealand.
- More than 130,000 training hours for staff members.
- No dip in employee engagement levels.

### One customer approval process

- 2.4 million customer letters to advise of change.

### One product set

- Over 320 products simplified to under 100 core items.

### One brand

- 2.6 million customer records.
- 500,000 security records.
- 80 million transactions.
- $46bn funds under management.
- No loss in market share and customer numbers.

### One technology system

- 290 pre-integration system updates released.
- 37,000 test scripts.
- Four dress rehearsals and one back-out rehearsal to get migration right.
- Over 400 core systems simplified down to 270.
- The bank was balanced to the cent.

# 10 ways to boost revenue with your CRM

*Existing customers are your most valuable asset, so the experts at Maximizer say you should leverage them first...*

The cost and efforts associated with customer retention, loyalty and revenue growth are far less than the cost of customer acquisition. In fact, engaging a new customer can cost between six and eight times more than reaching an existing customer. Your CRM can be your best friend when it comes to getting the best out of your existing customers. Here is how:

**1 Know your customer**

Customers today – especially those you have had a long relationship with – expect that your company knows who they are, what they have purchased and what kind of service requests they have made in the past. Collect as much information on your customers in their CRM profiles as possible, including from your accounting and shipping systems. Plug your sales team into LinkedIn to gather information and identify additional contacts to engage with, and update any demographic data that will make customer segmentation and profiling easier. Personalised communications and offers are far more likely to succeed.

**2 Remember not all customers are created equal**

Use CRM software to identify and target loyal and profitable customers. This approach will allow you to increase revenues through existing customers. Identify customer segments that will spend more: those that are less price sensitive, have a strong vision of your product that they can communicate within their networks, and consume fewer resources with your company. This may not be an obvious group, such as industry or customer size. There may be behavioural factors to analyse too, such as brand loyalty, buying patterns, close relationships with your staff, and passion for your product. Once you identify these segments, target them with unique, personal offerings and cross-sell additional products or services.

### 3 Refocus sales and service teams

To get your sales and service staff focusing on their customers, consider implementing a different structure of responsibilities and incentives that are aligned with customers. For example, instead of ending service calls with simply ensuring satisfaction, train your staff to identify opportunities to suggest other products that specifically match their customers' needs. Have sales staff with the strongest account management skills to focus exclusively on existing customers and reward customer retention. Equally, design customer loyalty programmes to provide discounts or advantages to customers that spend more with you.

### 4 Leverage happy customers

CRM systems can also help sales people and customer service reps keep track of who knows who. No matter what the purchase size, most people listen to their colleagues and friends when making a buying decision – especially in cautionary times. So if you know that one of your current customers is a colleague of a new prospect, or if you have satisfied customers in the same role in the same region as the new prospect, ask for their help in a new sale by acting as a reference. For lower end, high-volume products, you can develop incentive programmes for your customers to become your sales force for you.

### 5 Spend less time reporting

Eliminate time-wasting cut and paste report preparation by automating the reports you need to drive business forward. Capture the information in your CRM system, and have reports automatically emailed to you on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. Better yet, create a dashboard view of key performance metrics that are updated in real-time, so you don't have to wait for the end of the week to see your sales pipeline status or customer service case resolution status.

### 6 Monitor performance – get alerts!

Get the confidence and insight you need to drive success by automating the monitoring of critical processes and being alerted to activities that need immediate attention. You can set up your CRM system to track customer interactions and monitor the flow of work and business activities at any stage in the lead, sales, or service cycle. The same monitoring can be applied to customer service cases. Business activity monitoring or workflow automation technologies used in conjunction with CRM software ensure people follow the step-by-step approach to sales and service success.

### 7 Sales process + CRM

Successful companies use structured sales methodologies and CRM to model a systematic, winning sales process that will generate more revenue per person than companies without an automated selling methodology. Taking this approach allows you to win more deals by focusing on best practices. Start by keeping it simple. Incorporate the winning steps and strategies into your CRM system to ensure every step and activity throughout the sales cycle is being followed by every sales person. You can even use CRM to monitor sales performance against compliance to measure individual adherence against success rates and get people back on track when their results are lacklustre.

### 8 Take your CRM mobile

CRM mobility will help facilitate an immediate response to customers when you are on the road. When field sales reps have the means to look up customer account history, documents, contracts, or inventory information using a handheld device while on site with the customer, they'll be able to get an immediate answer, get a contract into their hands, or tell the customer whether or not their order will go through immediately. Providing reps with better

access to information in the field will reduce the sales cycle and give customers a great impression of your company.

### 9 Take customer service online

Initiatives such as customer self-service can reduce costs and grow business without growing staff. Prospects don't always want to rely on a salesperson as the initial source of information. Providing online resources can help educate prospects on your products and services and alleviates some of that burden from your sales team. Adding lead capture forms to high-value content, such as free trials or product videos, is an effective way to gather leads and determine the prospect's level of interest.

Information gathered from forms can be automatically entered into your CRM and the appropriate staff notified for immediate follow-up. For online purchases, a web portal integrated with your CRM system can allow customers quick access to their order status and service ticket information.

### 10 Identify marketing ROI

By using CRM software that includes workflow automation and an email campaign engine, your company can harness the power of one-to-one, personalised communications. You can automate when you send emails, then track and analyse the success of your campaigns through metrics. Campaign management and marketing analytics, while always important, become even more so when competing for scarce marketing resources. Use CRM systems to close the loop from lead to customer.

# Farmlands harvests improved efficiency with Ricoh Consulting

Agricultural supply leader reduces invoice backlog and improves its business processes thanks to automated accounts payable procedures…



Farmlands is one of New Zealand's foremost agricultural supply companies. With 45 stores in the North Island and an annual turnover in excess of $770 million, the system Farmlands employs to manage invoices is critical to its overall performance. On average, Farmlands processes some 20,000 invoices per month.

In an effort to improve efficiency and streamline its business processes, two years ago Farmlands centralised its invoicing procedures so that invoices are now submitted from each branch to the central office for payment.

After a successful switch to centralised payments, the team at Farmlands sought to further enhance efficiency by reducing the number of 'exception' invoices, those invoices that needed additional information before they could be paid. And to do that, Farmlands has deployed an automated document management solution provided by Ricoh Consulting based on Laserfiche Enterprise Content Management.

### Exceptions to the rule

"When we centralised the invoicing procedures we had a much better overview of the invoice flows from the branches to head office. But as we started to track the actual numbers, we quickly realised that 'exception' invoices were taking too long to process and were interrupting the workflow," explains Farmlands business analyst Grant Smith.

"On top of that, we didn't yet have a process in place to track the number of exceptions, identify the exact reasons the invoices were exceptions and how long it was taking to correct the invoices so we could approve them for payment," he says.

At first the teams would make a copy of the invoice, attach an 'exception' note and post it back to the branch, but this was much too slow. Next they tried scanning the invoice and emailing it to the branch along with the exception notice, but there was no way to track the process.

"We mentioned our situation to our ICT partner, Duncan Wallace of Hawkes Bay Document Technologies, and he recommended that we talk to the people at Ricoh Consulting as they had been doing some excellent work with Laserfiche, an Enterprise Content Management and automated workflow solution," explains Smith.

### Well-defined business processes

Farmlands, it turned out, was the ideal organisation for Laserfiche according to David Dewse, a software solution specialist at Ricoh Consulting. They had a massive document workflow, they needed to implement more stringent controls over the exception invoice process and, ultimately, they wanted to reduce the number of exception invoices.

"We sat down with the Farmlands team, and drew up a solution that incorporated existing hardware with direct integration into Laserfiche. Because Farmlands had spent so much time specifying the workflow and the business processes [when it centralised the invoicing procedures], it was a fairly straightforward exercise to map the current procedures to an automated process."

"We started with a smaller proof-of-concept exercise, so that we could adjust the process if required," says Smith. This entailed installing and configuring the server-based software at head office and loading the client software at selected stores.

"David and the Ricoh Consulting team showed us how to set it all up…via drop-down menus, prompts, alerts and report generation…and we set the wheels in motion. It took a couple of weeks to initially establish the business rules, but once we had it to our liking the exercise progressed as smoothly as can be expected."

### Solid improvements

Once the concept was proved, Farmlands rolled the system out to all branches. That was two years ago.

Smith says, "Since we have been using the Laserfiche solution we have been able to reduce the number of exception invoices by almost five percent. In addition, we have an exact count of the number of exception invoices and the total amount of accounts payable involved. And we have speeded up the entire process of rectifying the exception invoices. Another benefit is that we

*"The real value of the system is that we now have much more control over the process. The Laserfiche solution has given us better insight into our overall performance and has provided a mechanism for tighter management for accounts payable."*

**Grant Smith,** business analyst, Farmlands

have been able to identify areas where we could improve invoice preparation procedures at certain branches which has further reduced our exception invoice backlog."

The cost savings have been impressive. Not only has Farmlands reduced the number of exception invoices it has to process, but it has also automated the workflow to reduce the time required to correct and resubmit the invoices.

"While the cost/benefit ratio has been impressive, the real value of the system is that we now have much more control over the process," notes Smith. "We are constantly looking to improve efficiency and streamline procedures. The Laserfiche solution has given us better insight into our overall performance and has provided a mechanism for tighter management for accounts payable."

### Satisfied customer

Farmlands is also very pleased with the service it has received from both Ricoh Consulting and Hawkes Bay Document Technologies. "What could have been a long, drawn-out process went very smoothly," concludes Smith. "Duncan knew our organisation and was able to help us translate our requirements into a strategic implementation plan. And David and the Ricoh Consulting team were able to map our processes into a specification. As a result, two years on we are more than happy with the results. Given the scope of the project and the improvements we have seen, we would have no hesitation what-so-ever recommending Ricoh Consulting and Laserfiche to other organisations that want to improve their document workflow."

**CASE STUDY//**

Farmlands

**AT A GLANCE//**

INDUSTRY
- Agricultural supply

BUSINESS OBJECTIVE
- Reduce the number of 'exception' invoices.
- Improve visibility into invoice workflows.
- Streamline processing of 'exception' invoices.

SOLUTION
- Laserfiche enterprise content management implemented by Ricoh Consulting.

BUSINESS BENEFITS
- Reduced the number of invoice exceptions by five percent.
- Advanced reporting capabilities now provide real-time insights into accounts payable.
- Improved oversight has led to better invoice generation procedures and even fewer 'exception' invoices.

**FOR MORE INFO//**

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# Accounting
# for lost time

*In a service-based economy where time really is money many businesses are literally leaking dollars and cents like a sieve. Without a meaningful task assignment, time-tracking and billing system, how will you know that you are potentially pouring money down the drain? **David McNickel** investigates the new wave of service automation systems that can help to stem the tide and manage service workers more profitably...*

All businesses operating in today's service-based economy share a common interest in evaluating the effort, cost and bill-ability of human resources. Until recently, however, extending the operational efficiency of an organisation beyond its gates has been a challenge. People don't necessarily work the way timesheets and Gaant charts do. Pen and paper-based systems often dominated in smaller enterprises, and untraceable profit leakage has just been the cost of doing business. Today, though, innovative new solutions to these age-old problems have arrived, they work, and they're available at a fraction of the cost of yesterday's enterprise management systems. "We have never seen a revolution in technology like we're seeing today," says GeoOP CEO Leanne Graham. "Business processes are moving into the cloud and onto mobile and that transition is delivering sophisticated business technology right down to micro-business at a commodity price." Want your mobile staff to be able to quote, do the job, create an invoice and be paid – all during a single client visit? Do-able. Want to know the inventory levels in all your technician's vans real-time (and where they are)? Just log in and check. Want alerts for critical business processes sent to relevant team members automatically? Create the job and it will happen... but first you'll have to pick your system.

So what types of solutions are out there? Of course the fully integrated in-house ERP system always remains a strong contender for a medium-sized business wanting to move on from Excel spreadsheets and Access databases. And most ERPs today have expanded their touch-points to mobile teams and clients via portable devices and self-service internet portals. Full ERP functionality has now also been extended to the cloud, delivering the backend and business process benefits of an in-house system over the internet, without the on-site maintenance overhead. Best-of-breed solutions are still commonplace for industries with unique market-niche requirements, and more recently a number of cloud/on-site hybrid solutions have emerged that deliver sophisticated cloud-based process management and business transparency tools, while simultaneously integrating with an organisation's existing in-house financial management solution.

**Timely comparisons**

While critics of best-of-breed solutions still point to the potential expense and performance challenges of connecting disparate systems, in some cases the specific requirements of an industry make best of breed a logical choice. Zavanti, for example, was founded to address the needs of businesses operating in the construction, real estate and professional services sectors. "We built a system to fit in with the specific processes they're dealing with," says founder Ian Plater. "How they do their billing, how they manage multiple projects in different combinations, how they manage their sub-contractors. It hasn't been a case of us saying 'we should do this or that', it's been developed in response to what the industry actually requires." So if your business is unique, then best of breed could be your answer.

And then there are cloud solutions – what about them? A fully fledged cloud solution means you essentially rent your ERP – which is housed in a box somewhere off-site – alongside many other company's solutions all in the same box (a scenario described as multi-tenanting). Your system is configurable to your business within the parameters of the

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master solution and backups, maintenance, data storage, security and upgrades are all the responsibility of the cloud provider, which significantly decreases your spend on IT staff. In the past critics of cloud solutions have pointed to risks relating to downtime and data security, but today, given you're operating in a region with a generally stable internet service, there's actually likely to be less downtime in the cloud than you could expect running your own server stacks in-house.

The question of uptime is always two pronged anyway says cloud ERP provider NetSuite's Dean Stockwell. Firstly you have to ask if your provider is 'up' and secondly if you are 'up'. It takes two to tango and both sides need to be sure they have applied the appropriate resource to their connection. "Our uptime guarantee is 99.5%," he says, "and our current standing is 99.85%." For a client operating in Outer Mongolia (yes, there are businesses there) Stockwell says for service redundancy he recently recommended that they maintain an internet pipe with two different providers. Although this might seem unnecessary in Australasia, it's not unheard of, as Navman recently had to deploy two pipes (via WorldxChange) to their Auckland head office, given the repeated failure of another provider's solo connection (due to ongoing roadworks).

Not surprisingly, Greentree CEO Peter Dickinson recommends a fully integrated in-house ERP solution, and says organisations need to be aware of the risks of moving all their data to the cloud (you might not be able to get it all back, he says, should you wish to change providers). Dickinson notes Greentree will soon be releasing a report designed to help businesses comparing cloud and in-house solutions to evaluate the efficiency of providers in the field. Interestingly, a recent

survey in the US found that some A-list cloud providers like Dell vCloud and Microsoft Azure, for example, were delivering overall performance slower than that provided by dedicated in-house server racks.

"Businesses need to understand there may be performance issues," Dickinson says. "If you're moving your core business software online, you need to know how to measure whether you're getting what you signed up for."

Alternatively, if you want to maintain your existing financial system or supplier, but want enhanced operational functions, hybrid solutions like GeoOP and SimPro can deliver the professional services automation tools your company desires (scheduling, service management, sales management, invoicing etc), without requiring a complete swap out of unrelated business systems. "If you're already entrenched with MYOB or QuickBooks," says SimPro CEO Brad Couper, "to switch a financial package and implement a new operational software solution at the same time would be a tall order. So we just allow the operations guys to configure our system how they want it while the finance people still have their familiar solution and absolute control over their domain."

## Why automate

Once organisations expand beyond a couple of staff and particularly when a workforce is mobile, many companies begin to leak profits like a sieve. The reasons might be geographic, relating to poor route management through traffic congestion, for example. With GPS integration, a solution like GeoOP easily removes the hassle of poring over a street map for directions to the next job says Graham. "In big cities if you don't optimise getting your people from job to job they can waste half a day just sitting in traffic. And it improves customer service. People are busy and they want to know when you're arriving – they don't want to be sitting around all day waiting."

Alternatively, profits could be leaking due to task-avoidance. Perhaps it's a job variation on-site not being billed because a technician can't be bothered with the paperwork. "With a mobility app you can easily create a variation on the job," says Couper. "We have around 40,000 field engineers on the road using SimPro and typically they'll be asked to do two or three variations a day. So if they can easily create a variation on their device and get the customer to sign on glass, it's an extra $50 or $100 a day per technician and it makes a massive difference to your business."

Occasionally, though, the reasons behind the profit leakage might be more malevolent – staff doing cash jobs on the side using company vehicles and inventory for example. Integrated fleet tracking means you know where your vehicles are at all times, and if on-board inventory is being billed to jobs, integrated stock management software will quickly identify

variations and any staff members who are running their own business on the side at your expense.

Devices with built in cameras are also great when you need to prove you've actually done the work, says Greentree's Dickinson. "We had a client doing landscaping for councils. They put in shrubs in the afternoon and they'd turn up the next day and the locals had stolen them. It sounds ridiculous but now they can take a photo and attach it to the job so the council can see they actually did the planting."

## Getting your money's worth

Some aspects of return on investment are easy to calculate. For example, if you have a team of 30 mobile plumbers that you're billing out at $50 an hour, and your route planning solution or automated job allocation tool gives them as little as an additional 30 productive minutes a day – that's a potential $3750 a week added to the bottom line. If a company like this had deployed GeoOP, says Graham, the system would have paid for itself on day one. "Our pricing is free for administrators and $20 a month for mobile workers," she says, "so you're literally talking about a ROI in less than half an hour of an individual's time a month."

While this type of 'dollars divided by time' ROI equation is simple enough to calculate, many other payoffs aren't as easy to quantify, but deliver substantial intangible benefits nonetheless. Dickinson points to one managing director who credits his new Greentree ERP with winning his company a multi-million dollar contract. "They went in for a presentation," he says, "and showed the client their new system and how the client was going to be able to self-service and connect with them online and the client was so impressed with how seamless it was going to be that it basically sealed the deal there and then."

Other benefits not recognised in a typical ROI calculation include the ability to retain and attract talented staff (service staff actually do want to give good service and become discouraged when system shortfalls let them down), and of course the all-important cash flow. With invoices being processed on-site (and sometimes paid there too) job books aren't being lost in tool boxes and work is being accurately tracked and billed (and if it's not, the boss will get an automated alert).

Asked to summarise the benefits of his product, Zavanti's Plater seems to speak for all the vendors in the services automation sector. "What we're delivering is a consolidated, single view of the truth, able to be accessed from a wide variety of touch-points, devices and locations. That gives managers enhanced real-time knowledge of what's going on in their business, and that in itself becomes an integral part of their business process." ⚏



# Tougher than the rest

While there are those who will say extending your business systems to your mobile workforce is as simple as downloading an app to their iPad or iPhone, Mobico's Aldas Palubinskas says many early adopters of that approach are already retiring their multi-functional consumer-centric smartphones and tablets in favour of 'dumber', but more dedicated, task-specific mobile devices. There's a long list of reasons, he says, but probably the overriding theme is that consumer tech just isn't built to take the sort of punishment that work situations inflict.

"Our enterprise-level devices are engineered completely differently," he says. "They're drop-proof and they're designed to be used 24/7, seven-days a week for five years in a row." Contrast that, he observes, with smartphones that can't get wet, won't survive a drop from great height, and aren't easy to see in bright sunlight. They also need more frequent charging, their OS upgrades aren't guaranteed to be compatible with your business apps and if they're lost or damaged they're not easily swapped out, meaning workers are unproductive until their device is repaired or replaced.

"I'm not saying nothing can go wrong with an enterprise mobile device," he says, "but if one is damaged, you just plug another one in and the data comes back down and you're off again."

While a bespoke enterprise mobile device can be up to three times the price of a consumer one, Palubinskas says ultimately the numbers on consumer-tech don't add up. "People are abandoning the smartphone approach and moving back to work-specific devices," he says, "because it's just cost them so much money."

# Handhelds take legwork out of park maintenance

City Parks Services, which keeps Auckland looking good, has made the task much easier by equipping work crews with a mobile job management system…

**M**aking Auckland a dynamic city has become a catch-cry of its civic leaders. And Aucklanders show their approval by attending annual events such as Christmas in the Park and Pasifika Festival in their hundreds of thousands.

But who cleans up when the party's over?

That job, along with countless others, falls to City Parks Services.

All told, the 250 City Parks Services staff, who do everything from cutting grass and cleaning footpaths to tidying up after concerts by megastars such as U2, carry out more than 30,000 jobs a month. And they are having to do so at a time when the Council and other customers expect more for less.

"We still have to provide ratepayers with value for money," says City Parks Services systems manager Louis Chetty. "The council puts out tenders and we have to compete on the open market for that work."

That drove Chetty to look for a mobile job management system to increase productivity, among other things. He could have opted for app-equipped smartphones, but figured their flimsy construction and frequent operating system upgrades would be a support nightmare.

Multiplied 140 times for the number of City Parks Services crews on the job each day and Chetty decided to look elsewhere.

"Consumer devices would have been cheaper to buy but not as cost-effective in the long run," he says. Instead, wanting a stable platform that would last at least three years, he opted for ruggedised Motorola ES400s supplied by Auckland company Mobico.

There was another consideration as well. The council, the biggest of a number of City Parks Services' customers, was anxious that public data could be erased from any device that was lost, a remote management feature that Mobico provides.

However, Chetty's choice of system and supplier was more subtle than ticking the boxes on a wish list of product features.

"We had a range of features and benefits in

## "Consumer devices would have been cheaper to buy but not as cost-effective in the long run."

**Louis Chetty,**
systems manager, City Parks Services

mind, but we also wanted a business partner that gave us the confidence that it would deliver what it promised."

"Partner" was the operative word. Chetty says a past experience of having technology in place that didn't quite meet requirements, then running up against a lack of vendor responsiveness and flexibility, had made him cautious about who he does business with.

"That led us to look for a partner – rather than a supplier – that took the time to understand our business," he says. City Parks Services ended up working with Mobico on the hardware front and another Auckland company, e-merge, as supplier of the job management software.

That was two years ago. Chetty says implementing the job management system had two drivers.

"We wanted to be able to position ourselves strategically in the market with the intention of winning new business; and we had customers wanting access to our job reporting data as part of their operational requirements."

With 30,000 jobs to do each month, there was plenty of scope for gains from streamlining scheduling and from paperless recording and reporting of details from the field.

As well as Auckland Council, City Parks Services' customers include Auckland Airport, schools and landscaping clients. Customers, and the Council in particular, were clamouring for links between their contract management and City Parks Services' job management systems so they could get near real-time notification of a job's completion.

This wasn't a case of micromanagement, Chetty says, but was to allow external auditors to visit work sites in a timely fashion to check contractual terms were being met – in other words, before the grass

had regrown, the toilets had become dirty again or litter had piled up.

"Without the system, we weren't able to inform the auditors in reasonable time when jobs were done, so it was hard for them to tell the quality of the work."

The job management system's implementation has been an unmitigated success. With Mobico supplying and supporting the hardware and remote management software, and e-merge taking care of job management software Con-X, the system is doing all that is asked of it.

Instead of being handed a printed job schedule by a supervisor at the start of the day, field staff, who typically work in pairs, log in to their assigned Motorola ES400. That tells them where they're working and what the task is, and once on-site runs them through a health and safety checklist.

If they discover an unrecorded hazard, they can upload the details, including geospatial information and a photograph, so the next crew on the site will be warned in advance. Once the job is complete, they sign it off on the handheld and Con-X makes the information available to the customer's contract management system.

"Field staff would probably argue that life was easier before the system was introduced," Chetty says. "Their routine was pretty straightforward: they would go to the office for a spreadsheet printout of their day's work and be told by their supervisor where to go and what to do.

"Now they get their jobs on an electronic device, which has required them to acquire new skills and be diligent about doing pre-start safety checks. And when they're done they have to remember to sign-off their jobs so they come up on the system."

If bad weather throws the schedule out, the system you can keep track of jobs that haven't been done and reschedule them.

"From the organisation's perspective there's a tremendous advantage in terms of ensuring jobs are done on time with managers having the ability to glance at the system dashboard to check progress. The company benefits from having people on the job for more of their time."

From Aucklanders' point of view, they get the benefit of a lively city that looks good too. ∩

**CASE STUDY//**

**City Parks Services**

**AT A GLANCE//**

**INDUSTRY**
- Public works, utilities & local government

**BUSINESS OBJECTIVE**
- Lift organisational efficiency.
- Provide customers with B2B links into City Parks Services' job management system.

**SOLUTION**
- Equipping 250-strong field force with Mobico-supplied handheld devices.

**BUSINESS BENEFITS**
- More jobs completed in the same time.
- Streamlined job scheduling.
- Automated timely reporting to customers of job completion.
- Improved recording and notification of on-site hazards.
- Step up in overall competitiveness.

**FOR MORE INFO//**

**MOBICO**
www.mobico.biz

*Visit iStart online for more Mobico case studies.*

# Tasti's recipe for product development success

When the food manufacturer needed to take the manual labour out of its product development it chose a Microsoft-flavoured solution, and its teams love the results…

Formed in 1932, Tasti remains a proudly 100 percent Kiwi-owned and run company. True to its heritage of excellence, it maintains a focus on quality ingredients, innovative product development and investment in plant, people and facilities.

### Deploying a solution

Tasti worked with its long-time business solutions partner, Koorb Consulting, to deploy Microsoft SharePoint to help manage project management and process improvement.

The implementation of SharePoint replaces a system which saw Tasti's documentation stored on its local Windows-based filing system or in hard copy. For David Bryant, Tasti's information systems manager, the lack of visibility and the frustration around finding information and tracking projects were key drivers for the change.

### A challenging project

Project management was the priority for Bryant. "We have five NPD (new product development) staff, each managing a range of projects. Previously they used Microsoft Project to maintain a time line based on the delivery deadline, and would meet weekly to review them. Unfortunately there were no metrics around the projected deadlines against actual completion."

This meant that unless you attended the meeting it wasn't possible to see if the actions for the projects were done on time, or if the project had actually slipped backwards. Viewing rights of the project plans were also restricted to the NPD and marketing team.

Project documentation was another problem addressed by SharePoint. With each project manager managing their own documents through their own filing system and protocols there were genuine challenges if someone left part way through a project.

### Shared clarity

"With the introduction of SharePoint, there's been an immediate improvement in the visibility of projects and documentation," says Bryant. "We now see instantly how projects are tracking. Delivery dates are locked in place, so if a change is made to the project plan, SharePoint compares it to the time line and uses a traffic light device that shows if you're outside spec, close to spec, or on schedule."

The project list can now be viewed on one page in SharePoint and a further drill-down option shows the same degree of analysis for each stage of a project. And to everyone's relief, project documents can now be searched for and easily found in SharePoint using its metadata functionality.

### Process improvement

According to Bryant, one of the major benefits of SharePoint is the huge improvement to Tasti's workflow when it comes to the creation of new product items in the system.

"Our requirements translated into the most complicated workflow that Koorb's SharePoint consultant had ever done. We'd been struggling using an interface to create new items in our Microsoft Dynamics AX ERP. It was a time consuming job. Another issue was caused by alert generation. Before the new item could be created, alerts were sent simultaneously to multiple departments, to let them know they had critical tasks to perform. This was regardless of whether they could take action right away, or were dependent on information from another department, which may not be available for months. This meant some departments had to repeatedly check in to see when they could do their bit.

"Additionally, we had a single person spending a significant amount of time every week manually chasing up hundreds of actions, any of which could have an impact on the project's launch date."

### Workflow efficiency

The decision to move this process to SharePoint meant Tasti could implement an efficient workflow. To facilitate this Koorb used Microsoft InfoPath, a software application for designing, distributing, filling and submitting electronic forms.

"Now, when a new item gets raised, each department is automatically notified, but only once it's their turn to complete their tasks. When they submit their form into the workflow an item is created in Dynamics AX for them, so that's another action we no longer need to do manually," explains Bryant.

"We can now see what stage each and every project is at, and what actions are outstanding. The system sends out reminders for these, followed up by an email every two days, until they're done. With SharePoint managing the whole process it's a massive improvement."

Another smart idea which helps Tasti's project managers to generate significant time savings is the use of IntelliGantt. The plug-in, implemented by Koorb, enables Microsoft Project tasks to be synchronised with task lists in SharePoint, and vice versa.

### Non-conformance reports

Microsoft InfoPath has also been a winning solution for handling NCRs (non-conformance reports). Tasti has a stringent quality control process and a number of NCRs covering everything from incorrectly completed paperwork to manufacturing and packaging issues.

The quality team can pick the appropriate electronic form, add further detail and even photographs from a tablet, and allocate it against a particular item in AX. This means that the entire history of a product run can be documented, and any problems can be segmented by production line or department to be addressed by the managers of those sections.

This new process replaced a manual system of Word documents, emails and spreadsheets. "Now, the manager of each department or process can see open and closed NCRs and the detail behind them, and can focus on improving performance," says Bryant.

### A job well done

For Bryant the partnership with Koorb on this project has been a valued one. "Given our strong relationship, Koorb was a natural choice, and the team has certainly delivered a great result. Our SharePoint project has run to schedule and budget and provided some excellent outcomes."

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**CASE STUDY//**

Tasti

**AT A GLANCE//**

INDUSTRY
- Food manufacturing

BUSINESS OBJECTIVE
- To support new product development.
- To provide a collaborative project management system that replaced the manual process based on Word and Excel.

SOLUTION
- Microsoft SharePoint with professional services provided by Koorb Consulting.

BUSINESS BENEFITS
- A centralised and collaborative project management system that gives everyone a view of project progress.
- Far improved visibility of a product's entire development history.
- Greater workflow efficiency thanks to the newly automated process.

**FOR MORE INFO//**

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*Visit iStart online for more Koorb case studies.*

# Payroll's timely solution

*If you believe a time and attendance software solution will instantly solve all of your employee time management issues, or that there is no way one product could meet all of the unique complexities within your organisation, subject matter expert **Jo Smith** invites you to think again...*

There are a lot of myths out there about the strengths and weaknesses of time and attendance software, but before you make up your mind on whether it might be a solution that could help your business, make sure you know your fact from your fiction.

One of the most common misconceptions is that time and attendance software is only good for waged employees, and to a large degree, it is. Time and attendance products are great for waged or casual employees to enter their timesheets. You'll know when they arrive, when they work late, and when they earn overtime. The system will work out their ordinary and overtime payments, as well as other allowance payments such as meals, weekend penalties and on-call pay. But these products are also beneficial for salaried employees, and can be used to allow them to apply for leave online and to generate payments for import into payroll. Time and attendance systems can also be useful for salaried employees who need to enter job costing data, breaking down their day into client-chargeable hours which can then be integrated with accounting / billing software products.

If you are worried that a time and attendance product is too expensive and hard to deploy, you might want to look at the full picture before dismissing it. Although there will be licence fees and a cost to get the system up and running, for a quality time and attendance product, this will quickly be offset by the many benefits, for example:

- Minimised overtime payments thanks to advance-costing the roster
- No data entry costs means payroll staff can focus on more value-added tasks
- Accurate processing and reporting means no more subjectivity errors (especially at complex times of the year such as public holidays).

Many modern time and attendance software products are online SaaS/cloud solutions so all you need is a web browser and an internet connection to use them. Employees and managers will be able to access the system from anywhere, and your IT department won't have to worry about a thing.

For many people, the belief that their business is unique and time and attendance software will be too inflexible is what puts them off. While some products on the market are 'out of the box' and cannot be customised (and there is a market for this type of product) larger or more complex organisations can choose a product where the system can be configured to meet their every need.

If you chose this approach you will need to be careful that any customisation is within a standard product release, and that your system is fully supported by the vendor. Customisations can be very expensive, so choose a supplier that doesn't charge exorbitant fees and a product that has been designed to be configured simply and cost effectively to meet individual organisational requirements.

Lastly, potential users are scared by the thought of having yet another product where they will have to maintain the data, but this is not the case. You should always avoid taking on a system where you have to maintain data manually in two separate systems, as it will come unstuck very quickly. The best time and attendance systems will integrate with your existing payroll and / or accounting systems. As you will want to continue maintaining data in the systems of record, key data such as employees, payment codes, etc. should be automatically transferred to the time and attendance programme.

There are many more myths and they often stem from the way such systems existed ten or more years ago. Bring your organisation into the 21st century and let go of the misconceptions. If you embrace the latest technology you'll not only save on the wage bill, you'll also reduce your data entry errors, and ensure your employees are paid correctly every time.

# Inspiring innovation

*With New Zealand leading Australia on the Global Innovation Index 2013 and only beaten by Hong Kong and Singapore in the Southeast Asia and Oceania region, we take a look at the winners of the New Zealand high-tech industry's most prestigious awards night....*

**S**even hundred people dressed to impress, cloud was king, quality high and international judge and co-founder of Apple, Steve Wozniak was virtually there. Welcome to the 2013 NZ Hi-Tech Awards night. It's an event that the honourable Steven Joyce "minister-of-almost-everything-including-Novopay" says he never misses because he likes to come and be inspired.

This year cloud-based Kiwi companies Vend and Xero were the darlings of the night.

Xero took out top honours, winning the PwC Company of the Year category as well as the HSBC and NZMEA over $5 million export category. The peer-review judges in the Company of the Year category lauded Xero's all-round prowess:

"The hallmarks of a great company are focused leadership, rational planning, and superb results in the market, Xero exhibits all of these," stated one judge. "Xero is executing the web 2.0 playbook perfectly, blending brand building, product development, capital raising, value creation, and global expansion. Xero is the new benchmark for product-based tech companies in NZ."

Vend also impressed, taking out the trophies for both the HSBC and NZMEA under $5 million export category and the State Government of Victoria services category.

"Vend's objective of 'moving every bricks and mortar retailer onto the cloud' and its execution of a strategy to achieve this goal impressed us. With thousands of retailer customers in more than 100 countries, Vend is well on the way to being a real NZ IT success story and has plenty of growth left in it yet,"


*Team Vend*

said the judges.

With redefined categories and more awards than ever this year, there was a lot of top New Zealand talent in the room on awards night. Mobile apps company Carnival Labs made it to the finalist list in no less than four categories, taking out the top prize for the Most Innovative Mobile Technology category. The most hotly contested category was the Hi-Tech pre-commercialisation company of the year where the judges took six companies to the finals, showing that there is incredible talent and some amazing businesses coming up the ranks. Trigger happy won the category for its Toon Hero iPad App, while Perfomance Lab Technologies was the only 'highly commended' company of the night.

NZ Hi-Tech Trust chairman and revered ICT luminary, Wayne Norrie, echoed these sentiments saying that "high-tech is New Zealand's future" and the number and quality of the entries received this year, and the ability of the awards to attract such high-profile judges are "a reflection of the breadth and depth of high-tech in this country". 🏁

## Quotes of the night:

*Xero's Rod Drury on winning the PWC Company of the Year Award:* **"Man up and list [on the stock exchange]"**

*An unnamed NZ Hi-Tech international judge:* **"Xero is the new benchmark for product-based tech companies in NZ."**

*'Smart model' company BIMStop when accepting their award for Best Start Up of 2013:* **"It's more fun being a pirate than in the navy."**

*Vend CEO Vaughn Rowsell upon receiving the company's second award of the night (after having had time to think about what he should have said on winning the under $5 million export category):* **"We are not just exporting bits, but Kiwi attitude."**

*Carnival Labs, first-time entrants, finalists in four categories and winners of the Most Innovative Mobile Technology Award being described as* **"Flight of the Concords of the high-tech industry."**

## Award-winner list in full:

**FRONDE HI-TECH YOUNG ACHIEVER**
*Robert Bell, UBNZ World Markets/KlickEx Corporation*

**NEW ZEALAND TRADE AND ENTERPRISE BEST CONTRIBUTION TO THE NEW ZEALAND HI-TECH SECTOR BY A MULTINATIONAL COMPANY**
*Navico*

**HSBC AND NZMEA HI-TECH EXPORTER OF THE YEAR AWARD – UNDER $5 MILLION**
*Vend*

**HSBC AND NZMEA HI-TECH EXPORTER OF THE YEAR AWARD – OVER $5 MILLION**
*Xero*

**DUNCAN COTTERILL INNOVATIVE SOFTWARE PRODUCT AWARD**
*Wynyard Group*

**ENDACE INNOVATIVE HARDWARE PRODUCT AWARD**
*ikeGPS*

**STATE GOVERNMENT OF VICTORIA INNOVATIVE SERVICE PRODUCT AWARD**
*Vend*

**TELECOM BUSINESS – MOST INNOVATIVE MOBILE TECHNOLOGY AWARD**
*Carnival Labs*

**NZVIF PRE-COMMERCIALISATION COMPANY OF THE YEAR**
*Winner:* Trigger Happy
*Special commendation:* Performance Lab Technologies

**MINISTRY OF BUSINESS INNOVATION AND EMPLOYMENT BEST HI-TECH START-UP**
*BIMstop*

**CISCO HI-TECH EMERGING COMPANY AWARD**
*GreenButton*

**PWC NZ HI-TECH COMPANY OF THE YEAR AWARD**
*Xero*

# MOBILE BUSINESS

## APP ECONOMY TO MORE THAN DOUBLE BY 2017

**THE APPNATION THOUGHT LEADERSHIP** conference and expo that focuses on the global app economy has announced the launch of a new research arm, Appnation Research. Its first report predicts the app economy will double from US$72 billion to US$151 billion between 2013 and 2017.

"Despite the massive popularity of apps and a saturated marketplace in the US, the overall growth rate in the app economy is still accelerating and will be until at least 2015," said Appnation's founder and CEO, Drew Ianni.

"With the number of apps used per day by US consumers still expanding, and as time spent on mobile devices shifts more to using apps versus other media, it is clear that there is still a lot of runway ahead across all key sectors of the app economy. This is an incredibly exciting time as the US app economy experiences its first major growth explosion, but next year will be the time we expect to see the global app market take off."

By far the largest contributor to the economy is app-enabled commerce, supplemented by forecasted revenue from downloads, in-app advertising and virtual goods. The feature consumers most expect to use in smart TVs is being able to watch from their mobile devices.

Ross Rubin, principal analyst at Reticle Research and co-author of the report, added, "smartphones and tablets are driving the app economy today, but emerging platforms such as connected cars and smart TVs are providing new opportunities as well as raising thorny questions regarding how they will interface with apps consumers already have."

## ARE YOU RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR DATA?

**A SURVEY FROM UNISYS** has found that New Zealanders hold a range of organisations responsible for the security of data gathered by mobile apps. However, only 53 percent said that the data's security is the individual's personal responsibility – worrying in an age of BYOD, social media and data leaks.

The national study, part of the broader Unisys Security Index global research programme, surveyed 505 adults aged 18-plus, asking who should be responsible for protecting personal or financial data collected and stored in mobile apps. The findings show that Kiwis put the weight of responsibility on the organisation offering the app to their customers or community, as well as the government.

| WHO SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR SECURITY OF DATA COLLECTED BY MOBILE APPS? | |
| --- | --- |
| Provider of the service that the app links to such as the bank or airline | 72% |
| Government | 60% |
| Internet and telecommunications providers | 53% |
| Individuals | 53% |
| Mobile app market place such as Apple App Store or Google Play | 46% |
| Developer of the app | 43% |
| Social media companies | 42% |

Steve Griffin, country manager, Unisys New Zealand, said, "More and more organisations, such as banks, government departments, insurance companies, and airlines, are offering mobile apps as a way for people to interact with them. Some of these apps are clearly designed to gather information about the people who download them. The Unisys Security Index findings send a clear signal to organisations that the public expects them to protect any personal data they collect via mobile apps."

But Griffin also warned that individuals must take personal responsibility for protecting their own personal information, particularly given that mobile apps may contain hidden malicious code designed to secretly gather and transmit data.

# MITRE 10 BUILDS OUT DIGITAL RETAIL STRATEGY

**HOME IMPROVEMENT RETAILERS** and builders' merchant Mitre 10 has extended its digital platform across multiple channels and platforms to match the way its customers access their information about DIY products and services. It has just launched its new 'responsive design' website that automatically adjusts itself to fit the screen and device used to access the site and has also introduced wi-fi connected kiosks and digital signage in its stores.

Dave Elliott, general manager marketing, said smartphone access to the Mitre 10 website has doubled in the past year and now represents almost one third of all traffic on the site and tablets are rapidly catching up to laptop computers as the in-home online shopping device of choice.

"As a retailer responding to customer choice in accessing our brand, it's important to us that our customers get full access and readability on our site regardless of the device they use."

He also said that the in-store digital channel is becoming essential, as digital media access usurps the traditional media channels such as daily press and weekly magazines.



"A comprehensive digital strategy is essential alongside those traditional channels as Mitre 10, for example, has seen more than 40,000 new followers attracted to its Facebook site in the past year alone," said Elliott. "Engaging with customers through digital channels is a key factor in our success."

# SAMSUNG SURPRISES WITH FIRST 5G

**SAMSUNG SAYS IT** has developed a new 5G wireless technology several hundred times faster than the current 4G networks. It claims to have built the world's first adaptive array transceiver technology operating in the millimetre-wave Ka bands for cellular communications and says the new technology sits at the core of the 5G mobile communications system.

"The millimetre-wave band is the most effective solution to recent surges in wireless internet usage," said Chang Yeong Kim, executive vice president of Samsung Electronics and head of the digital media & communication R&D Centre. "Samsung's recent success in developing the adaptive array transceiver technology has brought us one step closer to the commercialisation of 5G mobile communications in the millimetre-wave bands."

While the millimetre-wave bands have been a recognised option, it has been long believed

that they had limitations in transmitting data over long distances due to unfavourable propagation characteristics and critics are playing down Samusung's announcement.

Shahram Niri, deputy director of the 5G Innovation Centre at Centre for Communications Systems Research (CCSR) at the University of Surrey, told *The Guardian* newspaper that the key issue is there is no agreed-upon standard for 5G yet and Samsung has only touched on one of the areas relating to improved data rates. Other elements required to build the standard include the method of encoding data in the radio carrier wave and the frequencies to be used.

Despite this lukewarm reception, Samsung said it believes its announcement will trigger the creation of international alliances and the timely commercialisation of related mobile broadband services.

# VOUCHR TACKLES MOVING TARGETS



**MORE THAN 100,000 PEOPLE** have so far downloaded the Australia-developed Vouchr iPhone app which allows them to collect and then redeem discount coupons.

According to Vouchr CEO Chris Newell, US surveys have found that while only one percent of paper discount vouchers are ever redeemed, 10 percent of coupons stored on mobiles are used.

One of Vouchr's early adopters, drink retailer Chatime, saw its online coupon campaign go viral among Sydney's Chinese community, leading to eight percent of the company's daily gross revenues being driven by Vouchr redemptions.

To use the service consumers download the free iPhone app and then scan the offers that are available, and save any that they are interested in to the PassBook on their iPhone. "Passbook then allows for a location-based reminder, or a reminder about the number of days to expiration (of the offer)," said Newell.

Most early adopters of the service have consumers redeem the offer by simply showing their stored discount voucher to the sales assistant. Vouchr is, however, trialling a system with ice cream vendor Moochi that will close the loop on the voucher by having the cashier scan the QR code on the discount coupon on the smartphone which will register it for the retailer and cancel that coupon.

Newell said that early adopters of the service – 25 in all, including Baskin Robbins, Domino Pizza and Taronga Zoo – have either had free trials of the service to validate its capability, or paid Vouchr on a cost-per-save of discount coupons. Ultimately however Newell's business model is that merchants using the system will pay for it through a clip on the ticket every time a coupon is redeemed.

**MOBILE BUSINESS**

## MOBILE CURSE AND CURE FOR RETAILERS

**LATEST RESEARCH FINDINGS** released by TNS reveal that mobile can play a valuable role in reducing the risk that 'showrooming' (where people visit stores only to test products but buy them later elsewhere) poses to retailers.

TNS's annual *Mobile Life* study, based on responses from 38,000 people in 43 countries, shows that whilst showrooming is a very real threat (one third of mobile users globally admits to it) mobile can offer a solution to brands in minimising this risk. Among those who showroom, two thirds use their phone whilst doing so, providing a major opportunity for brands to interact with consumers via mobile and turn browsers into buyers.

David Thomas, Director of TNS New Zealand, said, "There is both risk and reward for brands: mobile internet and online shopping are coming together in a way that is posing a very real threat to traditional bricks and mortar retailers. However, there is also opportunity to mitigate that risk for brands that get their customer engagement right."

The biggest drivers for showrooming consumers are twofold: reassurance on price and reassurance on suitability. The study shows that people are open to engaging with brands whilst in-store, however, with more than a third of smartphone owners in New Zealand keen to receive mobile coupons whilst shopping and two-fifths interested in apps that help

them navigate the store they are in. One in ten consumers in New Zealand are interested in a 'virtual sales assistant', who will help answer their questions in-store about a particular product.

Thomas said, "Mobile might seem like the enemy, however, anything that saves the consumer time, money or angst will help reduce the flow of people out of the shop to purchase elsewhere. In understanding exactly how consumers are using their mobile in-store, brands and retailers can improve their own offering and begin to nudge shoppers back towards the tills."

### FIVE TIPS TO KEEP YOUR DATA SAFE

**UNISYS OFFERS FIVE TIPS** to help minimise the risk of a mobile app stealing your personal data:

• Before downloading a mobile app, review the app permissions to make sure that your personal information is not being shared with other third parties. Read the licensing agreement and privacy policy!

• Avoid downloading or accepting invitations to join games that require you to enter your birth date, place of birth, etc., as this information is also often used in sign-on credentials.

• Conduct an internet search on the app to see if there are any reports of it containing malicious code. Look at user reviews to see if there are any known issues with the app.

• If that free app looks too good to be true, then it probably is – treat it with caution.

• If it's an app you want to use for work, check if your employer has a corporate app store that contains apps they have already reviewed and vetted as safe to use.

## WESTPAC CROWDSOURCES MOBILE APPS

**WESTPAC IS PLANNING** to crowdsource ideas for mobile banking apps from New Zealand developers and designers. The Westpac App Challenge invites developers and designers to use their experience as a bank customer and their expertise in development to make a process or service faster and easier via a mobile app.

Simon Pomeroy, Westpac's head of digital, explained that app developers and designers are in a unique position and collaborating with them is an obvious thing to do.

"Like most New Zealanders they are the customer of a bank and like many Kiwis there will be some interaction with that bank, whether a process or a service for consumers or a business, that they know an app could improve.

We have deliberately been wide in the brief to encourage innovative and creative thinking. We don't want to prescribe a narrow field of focus because we want to encourage their unique

perspective and skills."

The Westpac App Challenge is open to individuals, teams and organisations. Entrants need to be clear on the purpose of their app, how it benefits users and how it makes a banking process or service faster and easier. A fully operating app is not essential, although the more developed the concept the better. Entries close on 13 September 2013.

The developers or designers of the selected apps will each receive $10,000 and will have the opportunity to work with Westpac while their solutions are implemented. They will retain ownership of the intellectual property rights in the app, which they can then use outside New Zealand and Australia.

# VISA SELECTS AUSTRALIA FOR DIGITAL WALLET ROLLOUT

A DIGITAL WALLET SERVICE, which will allow users to store their card details online and access them from a desktop, tablet or smartphone to make online payments for goods and services will be launched in Australia before Christmas by Visa. The company's V.me digital wallet was launched in the US in late 2012, and Australia will be only the second market in the world to experience the service according to Visa country manager Vipin Kalra.

In order to make the service simple for consumers Visa is relying on banks doing the heavy lifting and encouraging their customers to sign up for it. Visa said it learned from its experience in the US that for the wallet to be a success "it has got to be simple for the consumer" and those banks which made the process easiest would do best. Three of Australia's four big banks have committed to

offering V.me, although the Commonwealth Bank, which has long fancied itself as a payments innovator, has yet to commit.

Users of the V.me wallet won't have to have a Visa card and Kalra acknowledged that to make the wallet successful, "it is critical we don't make this a Visa-centric app".

In fact it's not an app at all – but an online service accessed via a browser and password-secured login. Local merchants already signalling their intent to accept V.me payments include JB HiFi, City Beach and Lorna Jane, although Visa's intent is to make V.me a global service.

In the future Visa plans to extend the capability of the V.me wallet, for example to be used to store and redeem loyalty points, or be used on an NFC-enabled smartphone to make payments.

## QUEENSLAND START-UP SEDUCES MICROSOFT AND NOKIA

WHEN INDIGO TELECOM'S AUSTRALIAN adventure collapsed late last year, it delivered a phoenix moment for seven of the technology professionals who had worked there. Out of the ashes of Indigo the head of research and development, its CIO and CTO along with four other employees formed a Brisbane-based start-up company called Nubis.

Indigo Telecom had been focused on the deployment of satellite technologies to connect remote and rural Australians with the rest of the world. Communications remains a focus for Nubis, which has led it to develop the Alphega mobile cloud service, scheduled to be launched in August.

It is this app which secured the interest and EUR 50,000 grant from Microsoft and Nokia, through the BizSpark initiative. While the companies don't get a stake in Nubis for their investment, they do get a 90-day exclusivity agreement meaning Alphega will only be available for Windows 8 phones for the first three months after launch. Alphega is an augmented reality cloud service which

projects onto a smartphone the social network connections of who or what is being viewed on the phone.

The company describes it as a "socioscope," which allows users to determine how much of their social networking content they make available to other Alphega users.

According to Uzi Bar-on, a co-founder and director of Nubis, the company is currently being financed by three of the seven employees taking on consulting roles to fund the start-up and pay salaries. A three-time start-up founder, Bar-on said that while the company was interested in investment opportunities, it was "not looking just for money, we'd want quality investment".

Besides Alphega the company is working on an e-commerce platform which has been developed to link directly to the Sage financial application, meaning that information such as stock levels could be instantly available. Developed for toy distributor Bright Spark Enterprises, Nubis expects to launch the solution as a product within weeks.

# APPEALING APPS

# 10 of the best for business

With more than 1000 apps being submitted to the Apple App Store each day, not to mention those created for Android, the apposphere is a fast-changing environment so **Clare Coulson** puts a few of the best apps in the spotlight...

**B**ack in 2008 when Apple debuted its App Store, the term 'app' was almost unheard of. Now it has penetrated deep into our vernacular and features as the butt of many a joke in the vein of 'there's an app for that...'. It was even celebrated as the 2010 'word of the year' by the learned American Dialect Society.

Today apps are a central pillar of modern life. Smartphone penetration has now reached 52 percent in Australia and 44 percent in New Zealand. According to Our Mobile Planet, the average smartphone in ANZ has between 26-28 apps on it, of which 10 were used in the last month. As BYOD policies proliferate, apps that let you stay informed, improve your workflow and productivity, and allow you to do so from wherever you happen to be without a

kerfuffle are increasingly important.

Here at *iStart* we are regular users of a number of business-related apps, so we reached out to our readers through our mobile social networking to find out what you use for business beyond Dropbox, LinkedIn, HootSuite and Twitter. Here is the result. (And thank you to everyone who participated.)

## 1

## Evernote/ Evernote for Business

Evernote was by far the most popular app suggestion by readers. It allows you to collect all your ideas in one place and access them from any computer or mobile device. Snap a photo, record audio, clip entire webpages, scan handwritten notes and save documents and images. (For 'clipping' web pages on the iPad and iPhone we suggest EverClip, winner of the Evernote DevCup 2012.) You can keep them in your digital filing cabinets by project name or theme and search by keyword, tag or even printed and handwritten text inside images. Use the free account or pay for the Premium one. Alternatively Evernote Business makes knowledge sharing and discovery amongst teams easier. Useful for project co-ordination, as a resources library or a planning/brainstorming tool.

*To watch a brief overview, scan the QR code (we use the Red Laser app to scan QR codes).*

**CATEGORY:**

Productivity

**AVAILABLE FROM:**

Apple

Google

**PRICE:**

FREE
*or choose the paid-for Premium or Business options*

## 2

## Workshare

We all strive for work flexibility but access to the right files has not always been easy or secure. Workshare makes it simple for teams to work together, compare documents and collaborate securely using secure, controlled access to files with encrypted authentication – perfect in an age of BYOD. Your Workshare files and folders are always available on your iPhone or iPad, and always up to date with the latest comments and changes made by fellow collaborators. You can participate in existing collaborations as well as initiate new collaborations from Workshare by creating folders, adding files and sharing them. Workshare matches the way collaborators work, making it easy to move seamlessly between PC, Mac, tablet and mobile devices.

**CATEGORY:**

Business

**AVAILABLE FROM:**

Apple

**PRICE:**

FREE

## UX Write

**3**

The most expensive app on this list but potentially worth the price as its developers maintain this is the first full-feature word processor designed from the ground-up for iPad. It has everything you would expect of a word processor and is ideal for creating and editing large, complex documents. It has top-class support for Microsoft Word .docx, HTML5, Dropbox, and PDF export - plus full functionality when working offline.

If you just want a basic word processor, then the more economical Pages, is also a good option at NZ$13.99. Numbers and Keynote – the basic equivalents of Excel and PowerPoint – are also available for the same price as Pages.

*To watch a brief overview, scan the QR code (we use the Red Laser app to scan QR codes).*

**CATEGORY:**
Productivity

**AVAILABLE FROM:**
Apple

**PRICE:**
A$25.99
NZ$30.99

## 1Password/ 1Password Reader

**4**

Never forget a password again. 1Password stores all your website logins in one place, so you simply enter your Master Password to unlock 1Password and log into websites with a single tap. And it stores more than just logins: you can add credit cards to easily shop online; save identities to automatically enter name and address details while creating new online accounts; store bank accounts, passports, drivers' licenses and more to ensure you never leave home without your important data. You can also surf the web, log in to websites and shop online with full access to your vault data, all without leaving 1Password.

1Password synchronises your data across all your devices automatically through iCloud and Dropbox. Use Dropbox to sync with 1Password for Mac, Windows or Android (sold separately). You can use the Strong Password Generator to create strong, unique passwords for all of your websites, which it remembers and fills in automatically.

**CATEGORY:**
Productivity

**AVAILABLE FROM:**
Apple

Google

Windows

**PRICE:**
Apple
*A$18.99
NZ$12.99*
Android
*FREE*

## Flipboard

**5**

A seamless way to consume the information that matters to you. Flipboard funnels all of your news and social media feeds into your own personal flip board-style magazine. Add your favourite web destinations, browse the sections, explore the staff picks including hundreds of magazines, thought-provoking blogs, gorgeous photography and well-curated sections including news of the day and other topics. And just tap the [+] symbol to save anything from the web – stories, photos, audio and more – into your own beautiful magazines to flip through later or share with friends. Explore other people's magazines on all manner of topics and search for anything – people, topics, hashtags, your favorite sites – and then flip through articles, updates, photos and videos all in Flipboard's magazine-style format.

*It's hard to describe how sexy this app is, so go take a look at the demo here.*

**CATEGORY:**
News

**AVAILABLE FROM:**
Apple

Google

**PRICE:**
FREE

# 6
## Clarity

The Clarity app is a great way for young entrepreneurs to tap into experienced mentors. Clarity helps you easily connect with the best experts from around the world in a one-on-one phone call. It has a network of 10,000-plus experts waiting to help. Membership is free and advice is paid for by the minute at the rate set by the expert. A typical half hour call comes to approximately US$50. It's especially useful to get an answer on a specific question from an industry expert. Its creators believe that, collectively, the Clarity community can have a huge impact all over the world and say "Our mission is to positively impact one billion people, worldwide, by 2022".

**CATEGORY:**
Business

**AVAILABLE FROM:**
Apple

**PRICE:**
FREE
*to download, pay per minute for calls to experts*

# 7
## Fancy Hands

The Fancy Hands app gives you access to thousands of US-based virtual assistants, ready to help you wherever you are in the world. As a member of the service, you can tell the Fancy Hands team what you need using the free app and an assistant will start working for you right away. You can dictate or type the task into the app, add attachments and give Fancy Hands access to your Google calendar to set up appointments for you. You can also lodge requests through the website, by email or phone. Popular requests include finding a good restaurant and making a reservation, scheduling an appointment and adding it to your calendar, finding the answer to a question etc.

**CATEGORY:**
Productivity

**AVAILABLE FROM:**
Apple

Google
*(beta – sign up only)*

**PRICE:**
Starts at US$25/ month for 5 requests

# 8
## Kanban for 1

Kanban is a lean scheduling system developed by Toyota in Japan, which uses visual cues to tell them what to produce, how much to produce and when to produce it. The Kanbanfor1 app uses the principles to help you track the progress of your to-do list. Using digital sticky notes the Kanban board offers an elegantly simple way to interact with your task list. In one quick glance you can see what you have to do today, what you should work on next, what you are working on right now and what you have achieved. The physical act of moving sticky notes from one column to the next throughout your day will put you in touch with your progress and make managing your daily workflow a tactile pleasure.

**CATEGORY:**
Productivity

**AVAILABLE FROM:**
Apple

Google

**PRICE:**
Apple
*A$5.49
NZ$6.49*
Android
*A$1.49
NZ$2.74*

# 9
## CloudMagic

# 10
## InkFlow/InkFlow Plus

## *iStart* business app hall of fame

A round-up of apps that we have featured in the past.

**Wi-Fi Finder** - Instantly find free wi-fi internet hotspots anywhere in the world

**Analytics App** – Provides Google Analytics reports direct to your phone

**Quickoffice Mobile Office Suite** – View, edit and exchange Word and Excel documents via your phone

**ClockIn** – track time spent on projects

**Dropbox** – Store all your documents and sync them across all of your devices for free

**Skype**- Make video calls from your desk or mobile device for free

**reQuall** – Capture tasks and ideas using voice to text and integrate it with your calendar

**iFax** – Turn your phone in to a fax machine using your camera

**HootSuite** – Post to all your social networks, manage social media campaigns and monitor feeds

**LinkedIn** – Access your business social network from your phone or tablet

**GDocs for Android** – View and edit your Google documents on the go

**Bump** – Swap contact information between phones by literally bumping them against each other

**SingEasy** – Sign any document or contract digitally

**Google Voice** – Get a single Google phone number which will call all of your phones and text all your devices

**AK Notepad** – Jot down your ideas, organise your thoughts and get reminders

**PocketCloud** – Run desktop applications and access any files on your desktop from anywhere in the world

**Jorte** – Manage your daily schedule in an app that resembles a paper organiser

**Expense Manager** – Track and manage your expenses on the go

**SlideSpeech** – Write a presentation on your PC then play it on your mobile minutes later

**Flo2Cash Payment Terminal** – Receive credit card payments through your smartphone

CloudMagic offers you one view of all your data and one search box for everything. It provides lightning-fast, blink-and-you'll-miss-it search across all your data including Gmail, Yahoo, Hotmail, Exchange, Dropbox, Evernote and much more. In fact the search is so fast it almost seems like it's done before you have finished typing. You can use it on your favourite browser, smartphone and tablet and its home screen offers a quick snapshot of all recent updates across all your cloud data.

**CATEGORY:**

Productivity

**AVAILABLE FROM:**

Apple

Google

Windows

**PRICE:**

FREE

This app is perfect for picture thinkers, working like a word-processor for visual thinking. Capture your ideas as easily as with pen and paper, then arrange and reorganise them with your fingers. Communicate your ideas with handwritten notes, diagrams and illustrations or insert type and images then scale and move to suit. For example, jot down a list of concepts then rearrange them to fit into the bigger picture. This works really well for brainstorming and planning, prototyping layouts, sketching, and drawing. Share your results by email, with other apps or on your social networks.

**CATEGORY:**

Productivity

**AVAILABLE FROM:**

Apple

**PRICE:**

FREE
*or A$8.49 NZ$10.99 for premium version*

# Come on Apple – NFC is good for business

*Near Field Communications, or NFC, has been pushed by Google and others as the next big thing for smartphones, but what about its applications in business?* **Dan Matthews** *looks at the role it could play there....*

NFC lets your phone talk to other NFC-enabled phones and equipment, including tags that don't have a power supply. Right from the beginning two killer applications for NFC-enabled devices have been touted; firstly as a replacement for bluetooth because it doesn't need any pairing or other complicated steps, and secondly as a digital wallet on your phone to pay for smaller purchases or to confirm credit card transactions. Other ideas include using NFC as a key for your car or house or as a replacement for QR codes.

But those are really all consumer applications. My view is that NFC has a lot of useful applications in business so we've been looking into the possibilities and have built solutions or prototypes for quite a few scenarios.

Firstly it could be a replacement for warehouse barcodes. Reading an NFC tag is faster, more accurate, and less lighting-dependent than scanning a barcode. Plus it gives businesses a choice to use inexpensive consumer devices over costly scanners. Sure, NFC tags are a little more expensive so you probably won't put them on boxes of inexpensive products, but sticking them on warehouse bins for location scanning is a no-brainer.

We can also see it working in retail self-pick scenarios. Imagine you find that couch you want for the living room at somewhere like IKEA where you self-pick the goods. Instead of having to memorise where you can pick it up later, you just pull out your phone and scan the NFC tag. This automatically downloads the shopping app and adds the item to your pick-list. Once you get to the warehouse the app shows the optimal pick-route. At the checkout you simply tap your phone on the till to transfer your list – no running around like crazy looking for bar codes – and pay. It's a much better experience for the shopper, and offers higher throughput for the store. We've prototyped this scenario and it works great.

It also works in service management where a technician can tap their phone at a location or on an asset to prove when he arrived and avoid any doubts about whether a service level agreement (SLA) was met. For a consumer service, the customer can tap phones with the technician to sign off on the job and pop open the satisfaction survey.

And it can work for time and attendance solutions too. Instead of the good old punch clock, or modern digital equivalents, workers could simply tap their phone against NFC tags for different actions such as 'clock out for lunch', 'clock in' or 'clock out sick'.

The list could be made much longer. People may argue that some of these scenarios could be done just as well with RFID, but the big difference is that RFID scanners will remain in the land of expensive stuff bought by companies. It will never make it into the hands of billions of people for scenarios like the IKEA and service management examples.

NFC has a good chance of doing just that – ending up in everyone's hand. There are already plenty of NFC-capable Android and Windows phones, although we still haven't seen the breakthrough. I believe that the deciding factor for NFC's success is whether Apple puts it in the iPhone. There have been plenty of rumours about NFC capability being put in an upcoming iPhone 5S. I don't know if they are true, but at least Apple continues to file patent applications related to NFC – that might just be a clue.

So I say, "Come on Apple – NFC is good for business!"

### ABOUT DAN MATTHEWS//

Dan Matthews is the Chief Technology Officer at IFS where he researches, formulates and communicates the strategic direction of the IFS Applications component-based extended ERP suite. Dan leads the Research & Strategy unit at IFS's head office in Sweden and speaks regularly with Australian & New Zealand customers.

# From the coalface

*iStart asked readers to tell us about their experiences, challenges and successes with technology in business...*

## Daniel Larke
*Project manager, The Bendigo Truss Plant*

### Who are you?

I am Daniel Larke, 28 years of age, born and raised in the humble town of Bendigo, Victoria. I Graduated from Latrobe University Bendigo with a Bachelor of Business majoring in HRM. Then I went back to uni at Latrobe again because I had a thirst for more knowledge and graduated with an MBA some two years ago. I live with my partner of seven years and have just recently made the final payment on a block of land that we purchased three years ago. The next stage in life is going to be about building our house on this patch of dirt. I love my cricket, and have just recently been made captain of our 1st division team, so I'm looking forward to the challenge of leading a group of ultra-competitive people.

### Describe your current role

I have quite a diverse role as project manager at The Bendigo Truss Plant, but put simply my main responsibility is to save the organisation money by improving organisational systems and processes. The biggest component of my role often comes down to supporting the systems and processes that I have implemented, but as these become more engrained into the company my time gets freed up to work on the next implementation project. Often I have to spend money to save money, but my boss knows that I have the organisation's best interests at heart and trusts me on a lot of judgment calls that can sometimes not be fully quantified until you actually see it in action as opposed to on paper. I have also recently become involved in the sales analysis process, which has added another dimension to my work that I am finding quite interesting.

### What are your chief frustrations?

I have a few but to be totally honest the type of frustrations I suffer from are really just first world problems! Things like not having mobile reception or the internet going too slow are probably my biggest frustrations. I'm not the best when it comes to waiting for things either; I get a little bit agitated when I have to wait for things to get done if I'm not capable of doing them myself. I also get a little frustrated when I hear people tell me that they are too busy to participate in discussion groups or forums, only to later complain about the outcome when they were openly invited to attend and contribute.

### What is your favourite working tool?

My feet would be my best working tool. They get me out and about to people's desks and offices. Going and physically talking to someone to communicate and demonstrate systems or organisational changes, bounce ideas around, resolve issues, (or anything for that matter) just makes things easier. It not only allows me to relate to and connect with the people I'm communicating with, but actually speeds up the entire process that might have otherwise taken a matter of hours via email. Visiting someone also gives it that more personal touch and makes the person you are talking with feel as though someone actually cares about the situation and is genuinely accountable. I have found that over time people get to know you a lot better and can speak more freely to you about the issues that are hindering their performance.

### What was the last piece of tech that you purchased?

Outside of work I'm really not a big technology user and don't actually own many gadgets! However I recently purchased a laptop; this choice was simply about convenience. The laptop does everything that a smartphone, iPad/tablet, netbook and desktop PC can, but negates the requirement to purchase a multitude of these devices. I still like to burn my songs that I purchase off the net onto a CD to listen to in the car rather than fiddle around with leads for iPods and tablets!

### What is your social media personality type?

Lurker. I'm not big on the whole social media thing – some might feel that this is a little strange for a Gen Y person, but I really don't feel the need or desire to tell the world what I cooked for dinner, where I'm travelling next or what I'm doing at the weekend. I use social media more for keeping up to speed with everyday news and sports.

### How did you end up doing what you are doing now?

I got lucky really. I was working in HR at a government organisation but the 2008 elections meant that the amount of funding they would receive changed quite dramatically. I was made redundant, along with quite a few other people. The following Monday my old boss from The Bendigo Truss Plant rang me and told me to come in and have a chat. He wanted to make some significant organisational improvements and wanted me to lead the projects; I jumped at the opportunity. Whilst this role had

nothing to do with HR I didn't care. I was happy to take on a completely different challenge and, looking back, I'm really glad that I did. HR just seems so boring compared to what I'm doing now.

**⨍⌿ What is the best piece of advice you have ever received?**

Keep It Simple Stupid (KISS). My dad gave me this advice when I was about 18. I can't remember exactly why or what I was doing, but it has stuck with me ever since. The beauty of KISS is that it applies to everything in life really. In my work I find that it has been ever so important. How can you expect people to adopt new systems or processes if they are not simple to operate or follow? They won't; which of course leads to a whole range of user uptake issues and a lot of unnecessarily wasted time that could have been avoided a long way back.

**⨍⌿ What is your ultimate big boy's toy?**

A formula 1 car. The speed, power, sound and manoeuvrability of such a machine is just incredible. To have the possibility to drive and experience the feeling of an F1 car would be a lifelong dream. The drivers that get to drive those cars for a living certainly have the best job in the world!

**⨍⌿ When you are not working what do you prefer to do?**

I love to exercise, be it via going to the gym for a workout, a long run or ride or playing cricket. Exercise and sport has just become a lifestyle choice and feels second nature. Not only is it great as a natural stress reliever but the feeling it gives after sweating it out is just so satisfying. I also love playing cricket because every weekend I get to sit around for seven hours with my mates and talk garbage.

# Ben Dallenger
*Director, BHD Business Services*

**⨍⌿ Who are you?**

I am Ben Dallenger and I live in Melbourne with my wife, Helen, our Rhodesian Ridgeback (Chloe) and two Burmese cats (Moet and Chandon).

**⨍⌿ Describe your current role**

Director of BHD Business Services. In collaboration with Think Solutions we provide cloud-based WMS (warehouse management system) solutions, based on Puma Australia and NZ's ERP, using IBM iSeries on a pay-per-pick basis. This is ideally suited for 3PL operations because interfaces can be built to any ERP. BHD Business Services also provides consulting services for supply chain logistics, warehouse management and design, EDI and inventory control.

**⨍⌿ What are your chief frustrations?**

People who fix the blame rather than fixing the problem (e.g. politicians!)

**⨍⌿ What is your favourite working tool?**

Anything electrical.

**⨍⌿ What was the last piece of tech that you purchased?**

Apple iMac because of its design, features and functionality. The all-in-one design and small footprint is good when desktop real estate is limited.

**⨍⌿ What is your social media personality type?**

Lurker.

**⨍⌿ How did you end up doing what you are doing now?**

I started out in accountancy. When the company installed an IBM 360 and a lot of the tedious manual end of month journal transactions were done by the computer I thought, "gee these machines have a future!" so I sat an aptitude test at IBM and started out as a programmer.

**⨍⌿ What is the best piece of advice you have ever received?**

My first IT manager said "when you've got a problem the worst thing you can do is nothing". This was in relation to finding program bugs. You should always try changing something even though you know it will not fix the problem, because further discovery often leads to a solution. True for life in general as well.

**⨍⌿ What is your ultimate big boy's toy?**

Cessna Citation executive jet.

**⨍⌿ When you are not working what do you prefer to do?**

Riding my Triumph Bonneville motorcycle.

»

# Dhaya Sivakumar
*Chief information officer, Paymark*

## Social media personality types

**Ultra** – checks feeds dozens of times a day and is happy to admit to obsession

**Dipper** – can go days or weeks without checking profiles

**Denier** – maintains social media does not rule their life but is anxious when cut off

**Lurker** – observes but rarely participates

**Newbie** – taking the first tentative steps

**Peacock** – sees social media as a popularity contest

**Ranter** – is mild in person, opinionated online

**Changeling** – completely changes persona online to avoid identification

**Quizzer** – asks questions to start conversations

**Ghost** – creates anonymous profiles through security fears

**Informer** – the first to share interesting information (for kudos)

**Approval-seeker** – frets until people respond to posts

### Who are you?
Dhaya Sivakumar, chief information officer at Paymark, father and family man plus die-hard rugby league fan.

### Describe your current role
As CIO of Paymark, and part of the executive team, I am accountable for driving the performance of the organisation in achieving its objectives. I lead the technology team to create and deliver the appropriate vision and goals aligned to these business objectives while creating a fun and inspiring workplace for them to be part of. There is always the important element of 'keeping the lights on' but this is balanced by a need to innovate and create capability to support the products and services that Paymark offers.

### What are your chief frustrations?
• Getting people to be confident in their abilities and back themselves in making decisions.
• The inability to do things more quickly. Often I would like to implement change with immediate effect but this is not the way the world or people work!

### What is your favourite working tool?
I am tempted to say my iPad because it enables me to do so much on a compact device, but instead will say my phone. It's a fundamental tool that connects people and without it I would be lost. Since the days of Blackberry the ability to work from anywhere has certainly ramped up and the smartphone is the tool that enables this.

### What was the last piece of tech that you purchased?
It was an amp and surround sound system which works beautifully with the Xbox and a short-throw projector. Playing Forza or Halo on a big screen with a sub and surround sound is magic.

### What is your social media personality type?
I'm a 'Dipper'. I'm probably too introverted to continually update the world on what I'm doing, but it's always interesting to see what friends or colleagues are up to.

### How did you end up doing what you are doing now?
I've always been into technology and especially computers. Since the early '80s I've been dabbling with ZX81s, Spectrums, Commodore 64s and Apple IIs so I have just naturally loved it. As technology has evolved I've always moved with it – not as a job but because I enjoy it. I have also always had a business/accounting mind so that helps join the dots between the tech and its application. In my early career I began creating opportunities within my workplace so I could do the things I love and it's grown from there. I've also been fortunate to work with some terrific and inspiring CEOs who have been great mentors.

### What is the best piece of advice you have ever received?
I would have to mix two things here. One was something that my wife heard from a parent of a kindergarten kid (my wife is an early childhood educator). The question was what is your goal in life? The answer is 'to be happy'. I think being happy is a great goal if you think about what that really means.
The second bit of advice was through one of my previous insightful CEOs. They said worry less about what others think or want to hear and always stay focused on what you want to achieve.

### What is your ultimate big boy's toy?
New Gen F HSV GTS Supercharged Commodore; 430kw and its still a Holden!

### When you are not working what do you prefer to do?
I love my league, muscle cars and gaming and making sure I squeeze enough time in for the family in between makes things perfect.

*If you would like to feature in the next issue email editor@istart.com.au*

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