Creaven trial is ready to roll

Sara Yirrell

THE COURT CASE FOR COMPANY director Dylan Creaven, who has been charged with alleged VAT fraud, is due to start tomorrow.

The former director of components distributor Silicon Technologies Europe was arrested for an alleged 'missing trader' VAT fraud, initially estimated at £162m but now believed to be in the region of £313m.

His trial, at Blackfriar's Crown Court in London, is expected to last until the end of July.

Creaven was arrested in 2002 after an operation codenamed Chipstick, run by Customs and Excise, the Criminal Assets Bureau, Irish Police and Irish Revenue Officers of Customs Enforcement. He was remanded in custody at HMP Wandsworth, but released on bail on the condition that he reported daily to Belgravia Police Station until the trial begins (CRN, 12 January 2004).

He stands charged with conspiracy to cheat the Revenue under Section 1 (1) of the Criminal Law Act 1977, and money laundering offences under Section 93 C (1) (B) of the Criminal Justice Act 1988.

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CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1157331

Government bows to lobby over contracts

Door is opened for negotiation of liability in public-sector projects

Mark Ballard

PUBLIC-SECTOR CHANNEL PLAYERS received a morale boost last week as the government softened up over contracts that suppliers believe could force them to carry a disproportionate share of responsibility for IT failures.

Suppliers have been campaigning against a greater burden of risk placed upon them by new contracts for government IT projects. They have warned that the new terms, introduced by the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) last November, will force up the cost of government IT (*CRN*, October 2004).

Trade association Intellect raised nine points of concern in a letter to the OGC in September. But in November, the contracts were introduced despite opposition to all but minor complaints.

However, last week Intellect chairman Jonathan Higgins told *CRN*: "The OGC has now said, 'Pick out three major areas of the nine points you made in your letter and we'll discuss them.' So the

door is open. I think that's reasonably promising news."

Roger Bickerstaff, an IT contracts lawyer at Bird & Bird, welcomed the change of heart. "It indicates there's scope for dialogue between the OGC and the IT industry, otherwise there could be a stand-off," he said.

John Sheppard, LogicaCMG director of public-sector business, said the increased risk that would be taken on by suppliers could increase their costs by between five and 15 per cent, depending on the project.

"Those costs will inevitably be passed on to the public sector," he said. But he conceded that

competition could force suppliers and channel players to absorb the costs themselves.

Steve Derbyshire, managing director of VAR Telamon, said the government still needs to open up the contracts to a wider range of VARs.

"The only way to get involved is to partner with larger firms and often that doesn't work out to the smaller firm's advantage," he said.

"I would like to see the government open up the list a little more, but there is the problem of regulating additional suppliers."

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▶ *See Analysis, page 18*

CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1160689

Unified Networks regroups in wake of administration

Sara Yirrell

A PHOENIX HAS RISEN FROM THE ashes of networking VAR Unified Networks days after it entered administration.

Just before Easter the Berkshire-based firm, which dealt mainly with Nortel, went into administration, appointing BDO Stoy Hayward as administrator.

Andrew Beckingham, business restructuring partner at BDO, told *CRN*: "The firm had two sides to its business: equipment installation and maintenance. Its

primary assets were debts owed to it. To protect these debts and the workforce, we decided to sell shares in a subsidiary company known as Unified Networks Services Limited (UNSL) to the existing management, which means it has the right to trade under the name."

All staff have been transferred to the new firm under Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment (TuPE) rules.

Beckingham said he will be looking to realise assets, including stocks, "for the best possible

price", to try to gain some dividend for creditors.

Distribution is understood to have taken a hit from the administration. Clarity, Northamber and Azlan told *CRN* they were unaffected.

Simon Hill, UK managing director at Azlan, said: "This sort of thing always happens when coming out of a recessionary period, when companies over-trade on the back of increasing market demand."

Simon Welch, marketing director at distributor Clarity, added:

"I'm sure there are some pretty miffed companies out there."

Tony Bailey, UK and Ireland channel manager at Nortel, said the vendor was working hard to ensure a smooth transition. "We are working with Unified to ensure customers still receive the service they expect from Nortel."

No one at UNSL or distributor Westcon, which is believed to be a supplier, was available for comment at the time of going to press.

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CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1156031

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IT programme looks good for reseller health

James Sherwood

THE GOVERNMENT HAS RENAMED THE £6.2bn National Programme for IT (NPfIT) following its restructure to give GPs access to a wider variety of computer systems. This is a move that could see channel players win more contracts.

The programme will now be known as Connecting for Health, despite the fact that a US health IT research foundation already has the same name.

An NPfIT representative said: "The Department of Health and NPfIT lawyers have looked into this issue and advised that there are no trademark or copyright issues concerned with using the same name in the UK."

Under the reorganisation, a supplier's products will be offered to practices nationwide, provided it has signed a distribution deal with one of four regional local service providers (LSPs), such as Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC) in the North West and West Midlands.

John Hutton, minister for the Department of Health, said: "The National Programme for IT has achieved an enormous amount in the two years it has been running – procuring and developing advanced information systems."

Although detailed agreements with LSPs have yet to be reached, practices are expected to be able to choose from a variety of system suppliers, including EMIS and iSOFT.

The IT system must also be able to integrate with the NPfIT's data centre to assist with nationwide medical services, such as GP-to-GP data transfer.

Andrew Spence, applications director at CSC, said the NPfIT's new design could have indirect benefits for the channel.

"Many GPs are responsible for their own server maintenance and we want to ask vendors how best to move that role over to a managed service, so there will be channel opportunities," Spence said.

"Previously the NPfIT was a free-for-all, with any provider able to sell any part of a system to any part of the NHS. Now GPs will be much better connected."

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CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1162121
www.crn.vnunet.com/comment/1161299

Syscap exploits HCI potential of SMEs

Firm offers VARs web tools to capitalise on Home Computing Initiative

Sara Yirrell

VARs ARE MISSING OUT ON A crucial part of the market by not targeting SMEs with the government's lucrative Home Computing Initiative (HCI).

The HCI, under which companies can offer employees a tax-free loan for a PC, has so far been aimed mainly at enterprises, said Adrian Standing, recently appointed business development director at leasing firm Syscap.

To this end, Syscap has launched its HCI-In-A-Box scheme which offers resellers an online sales tool to push the initiative to the largely untapped SME market.

"There is a marketing opportunity for resellers and distributors to offer HCI to smaller firms," said Standing. "VARs can provide the installation, distributors can supply the hardware and we supply the financing."

To register for the scheme, VARs must complete a single day's accreditation course, after which they will be given the online tools to offer their own HCI scheme.

Syscap is not the first company to highlight the importance of SMEs. Last year, Microsoft and Evesham formed an alliance with the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) to encourage HCI take-up among BCC members (*CRN*, 26 September).

Syscap and Sage

Syscap has been awarded a renewed three-year contract to manage SageFinance, the scheme which allows firms to finance their accounting software purchases.

Under the terms of the deal, Syscap will provide a complete finance service to Sage customers.

Syscap sales director Philip White said: "In the next three years we will build on our success of delivering a viable software acquisition model for Sage customers."

John Laity, director of marketing at HCI-approved provider OneCall Technologies, agreed there was a good opportunity in the market.

"The SME market is the UK's biggest business base. I am in favour of as many providers as possible making HCI available through the web," he said. "It is critical that there is choice in the market, and I think the smaller firms will become the bread and butter of the IT industry."

Pete Mistry, technical sales consultant at VAR Eclipse Group Solutions, also welcomed the Syscap initiative. "We have always put a lot of effort into large enterprise customers, but I don't think the industry concentrates enough on SMEs," he said.

"Obviously there is not as much big revenue with SMEs, but you often become a trusted advisor, which can create other opportunities."

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CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1158347

FSC rethinks VAR accreditation

Sara Driscoll

UNDER A REVAMPED CHANNEL programme launched today, Fujitsu Siemens Computers (FSC) VARs will have to be reaccredited, but could secure additional funding through a new rebate scheme.

The vendor has been running its two-tiered Elite programme for four years, according to Ian Snadden, director of channel sales at FSC. He said all VARs will have to get reaccredited to fit into one of three new levels: Approved, Authorised or Premier.

"This is not about purging our channel, it is reassessing VARs – we haven't reaccredited anyone since the programme began," said Snadden. The vendor is looking to recruit about 130 additional VARs to bring its total to 600.

Snadden said the vendor has also introduced Quarterly Focus Funds (QFF), its first real rebate scheme. "A feature of the margin model is rebates, and we have never really had these," he said.

Ian Snadden, FSC

"With QFF, we will agree targets with the VAR and give rebates whenever they accomplish them."

However, the Elite programme will also see MDF funds being cut, Snadden admitted. "A lot of VARs have told us that MDF funds are distributed in the wrong way. So we have launched a more targeted and specific funding programme called Tactical Growth Funds (TGF) where we will invest on merit. We are not cutting funding. In fact, we are putting more money into the channel and just changing the mechanism."

Tony Davis, managing director at Elcom IT, said he agreed with the move. "Resellers will find that the funds will come back to those who deserve it," he said.

"In a way, this is similar to what a lot of other vendors are doing – cutting back MDF to focus on specific activities with specific VARs."

Dan May, operations director at VAR Ramsac, said: "It's been a while since we have seen any MDF because times have been tough in the industry, so this could be a sign of greater buoyancy. If it is controlled in this way, it will be used more legitimately and be beneficial to both vendor and reseller."

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Phishers are moving away from big banking institutions and aiming at smaller targets, according to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (APWG). Read about the APWG's latest phishing survey by going to: *www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1162221*

Fingerprint alliance to nail virus attacks

Group develops information-sharing scheme to wipe out online threat

James Sherwood

THE FIGHT AGAINST CYBER-CRIME received a boost last week, with 80 firms banding together to create the Fingerprint Sharing Alliance (FSA) as part of a campaign to clean up the internet.

The FSA will attempt to mitigate internet attacks, such as denial of service and worm outbreaks, by plotting its digital fingerprints and sharing the information in real-time.

Arbor Networks will spearhead the group, which includes Cisco, BT and MCI, by providing members with an enhanced version of its Peakflow SP technology, allowing them to instantly share attack information across different network boundaries.

Rob Pollard, Arbor vice-president EMEA and APAC, said: "The FSA is looking to clean up the internet because attacks of 15GB traversing networks, for example, can cause serious collateral damage.

"We will focus on discovering the source of malicious attacks on

FSA members include:

Asia Netcom
BT
Broadwing
Cisco Systems
Earthlink
Energis
Internet2
ITC^DeltaCom
MCI
Merit Network
NTT Communications
University of Pennsylvania
The Planet
Rackspace
Utah Educational Networks
Verizon Dominicana
WilTel Communications
XO Communications

network providers. Resellers and system integrators can offer a raft of solutions to fit alongside and help the end-user to understand attacks more fully."

It is also hoped the FSA will help network operators provide end-users with faster and more effective responses to attacks.

A recent report from Symantec revealed that 54 per cent of malicious code samples such as spyware, discovered in the past six months, were written by criminals to extort money and steal identities.

However, Rachel Power, an analyst at Canalys, said network attacks might not be the only problem for the FSA.

"Getting 80 vendors to agree on information sharing is a challenge in any partnership. Rules of engagement must first be created, but developing a threat fingerprint is in users' interests as security threats are always evolving," she said.

"Most channel partners will need to add value around services because security updates are quickly becoming live downloads. But they can still add value and earn margin from security in other ways."

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CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1162139
www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1161371

Kagoor leads Juniper into VoIP

James Sherwood

THE RIVALRY BETWEEN JUNIPER Networks and Cisco could subside, following Juniper's $67.5m acquisition of Kagoor Networks last week and its expansion into the Voice over IP (VoIP) carrier space, according to the vendor.

Kagoor manufactures session border control technology that monitors and ensures the quality and security of VoIP calls between different carriers and networks. It is expected to become essential kit as increasing numbers of telecoms companies route voice calls over IP-based networks.

Richard Brandon, vice-president of marketing at Juniper EMEA, told *CRN* its latest acquisition will help it develop a new market focus and reduce the product overlap with Cisco.

"This acquisition takes us into the telecommunications voice networks space, which is one

Richard Brandon, Juniper

where Cisco is not heavily focused. This will now be our sweet spot," he said.

Juniper announced plans in December to use the channel as its primary assault weapon against Cisco's dominance of the enterprise space (*CRN*, 6 December 2004). Brandon said the move could create opportunities for its channel partners.

"The impact on the channel will be minimal but positive," he said. "Kagoor's product is not suitable for sale by lots of VARs, but there is the potential to extend out to more UK channel partners."

Kurt Lyall, an analyst at First Partner, said many carriers are now adopting VoIP.

"Most of the carriers are upgrading to IP-based networks and going though a natural refresh of their infrastructures to take advantage of the lower costs associated with VoIP," he said.

However, Lyall said Juniper's acquisition is unlikely to set the carrier space on fire. "An acquisition such as this is likely to sway only a limited number of carriers because they have their preferred partners and don't like to take risks in switching," he said.

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CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1159886
www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1156709

BMC pockets OpenNetwork

James Sherwood

BMC SOFTWARE HAS CONTINUED its acquisition spree with an $18m take-over of web access management firm OpenNetwork.

In the past three years, the vendor has bought Marimba, Magic and, most recently, identity management start-up Calendra for $33m. It has said its latest acquisition will help strengthen its foothold in the identity management space.

Gary Leibowitz, BMC vice-president of EMEA channel alliances, claimed that about 65 per cent of BMC's identity management product sales are routed through the channel.

"This acquisition is timely and will enable us to play more heavily in the identity management space. This is a red-hot and growing sector," he said.

BMC announced recently that it was amalgamating its channel programmes into one, to be called the BMC Partner Network.

"The OpenNetwork channel wasn't very strong before but the BMC one is, so it can grow and reach more markets," Leibowitz said.

He added that OpenNetwork developers, salespeople and consultants will be kept on board, but said isolated redundancies were not out of the question.

As a direct result of the OpenNetwork acquisition, BMC said its identity management suite now has additional functionality to include access management, web single sign-on and identity federation services.

Bob Worner, chief executive of OpenNetwork, said: "Our customers will benefit from this move, as we combine the strengths of our product offerings with BMC's identity management suite, and grow together."

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CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1160841
www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1160499

BMC's acquisitions

- OpenNetwork in March 2005 for $18m
- Calendra in January 2005 for $33m
- Marimba in July 2004 for $240m
- Magic Solutions in February 2004 for $47m
- IT Masters in March 2003 for $42m

news

Hurd keeps spin-offs in mind

New HP chief executive says he will take time before considering strategic changes

Tom Sanders *and* **Sara Driscoll**

Hewlett-Packard's (HP) new chief executive Mark Hurd has asked for time to learn about the company, but has not ruled out spinning off any divisions.

Hurd, who was appointed last week, is formerly the chief executive of NCR. In his first analyst meeting, Hurd claimed that HP is fortunate to be suffering mostly from internal problems.

"The great thing about internal problems is that they are very easy to deal with, provided the leadership does its job," he said.

Hurd maintained that it is too early to talk about any changes in strategy, such as spinning off the printing or computer divisions,

and that HP needs to focus on operations and cost cutting.

Sam Bhavnani, senior analyst with Current Analysis, said that by putting the option of spinning off parts of the company on the table, Hurd has broken with past statements by HP's board.

"When Fiorina was ousted by the board, they said that whoever they brought in was going to execute on her vision. There is not as much confidence that the strategy they have in place today is the right strategy," he said.

Spin-offs have been suggested by analysts who think some units would perform better outside HP.

Gartner said it expects HP to form four or five business units for PCs, printers, enterprise hardware, services and possibly consumer electronics.

Hurd said that the question of spinning off parts of the business

revolves around improving the profitability of the company, at which point cutting off pieces of HP may not necessarily be the best solution.

Channel partners received the news with caution. "He will want to make his mark, but lets just hope he listens to partners before he changes anything in Europe," said Sue Richards, managing director of HP VAR EBM.

"HP has made real efforts to to sort their channel out, we're getting regular visits now and it really wouldn't help if they suddenly started changing things all over again."

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▶ *See Editorial, page 23.*

CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1162206

Mark Hurd, Hewlett-Packard

Get your monitor running: Trident Microsystems has won a lucrative contract to supply entertainment systems for in-taxi entertainment firm Cabvision *see page 15*

Oracle overpowers Oblix

Laura Hailstone

Oracle has opened its wallet again and acquired identity-based security vendor Oblix. The terms of the deal were undisclosed.

Oblix makes identity software that allows web access control, including Single Sign On and user provisioning.

"Oracle has had identity management primarily focused on Oracle products," said Thomas Kurian, Oracle's senior vice president of server technologies.

"We now move beyond Oracle environments [with a solution] for heterogeneous, enterprise-wide deployments for packaged applications from Oracle and outside Oracle-databases, application servers and other systems that

may be from Oracle or from other companies."

Bill Wohl, vice president of product solutions public relations at Oracle rival SAP, said: "Oracle is putting in a lot of effort and expense to catch up with SAP. But will it ultimately be successful? This is something we'll have to consider in three to four years.

"Oracle is now in the process of integrating four different companies. Supporting the customers of all these different firms will be a big challenge," he said.

The deal comes after Oracle's $670m acquisition of retail specialist Retek, which it beat SAP to, and its £10.3bn buy-out of rival PeopleSoft late last year.

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CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1162094

IBM's own software to target spammers

Sara Yirrell

IBM has taken its first steps into the anti-spam market by developing standalone software.

The product, dubbed Fair-UCE (Fair use of Unsolicited Commercial Email), uses built-in identity management capabilities at the network level. According to IBM the software is able to establish the legitimacy of an email message by linking it back to its origin. FairUCE also blocks and eliminates spam from spammers that assume false identities.

Nick Coleman, head of security services at IBM, said the software adds another layer to Big Blue's security strategy.

"We've been developing security solutions for years, in terms of hardware, software and services, and this is another product we have brought to the market.

"Spam accounts for 70–90 per cent of all email on the network and we recognise that this is a significant cost to business," he said.

Coleman said IBM has adopted a 'multi-layered approach' to security and intends to continue with security as a focus in the future.

"We are working closely with a number of partners and have opened it up to the developer community," he said.

But Shaune Parsons, managing director of VAR Computer World Wales, said IBM should focus on its core products rather than develop standalone products.

"IBM has some superb security technology related to specific hardware and products, particularly its ThinkVantage Technology, which includes its Embedded Security Subsystem technology that is used by the CIA.

"But when it comes to mainstream security products such as anti-spam, there are plenty of players out there already," he said.

Clive Longbottom, service director at Quocirca, welcomed the product. "Lotus is a platform that has been neglected by IBM in terms of anti-spam – it was a costly exercise and involved getting mail redirected from another environment. However, if you wanted anti-spam services in a Microsoft environment it was free of charge," he said.

Andrew Clarke, vice-president EMEA of rival security vendor CyberGuard, also welcomed IBM's technology. "It is excellent news that IBM is raising the profile of security issues in the wider commercial market. Its approach of defence-in-depth is the right approach," he said.

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CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1162018

condensed

Telindus looks to Laurel

Pan-European integrator Telindus and networking vendor Laurel Networks have partnered to develop a solution for ntl, which will enable the communications group to provide an Ethernet and IP VPN service to its UK business customers. The partners have claimed the network will allow ntl to link disparate office locations of all sizes over a single advanced broadband network.
CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1133746

Averatec debuts 3300 range

Laptop manufacturer Averatec has launched its 3300 notebook series in the UK. The Thin&Light 3300 series is equipped with an Intel Pentium M715 processor running at 1.6GHz, a 60GB hard disk and 512MB working memory. It also includes integrated 54Mbit wireless LAN and three USB 2.0 ports The vendor recently signed a distribution deal with Ingram Micro (*CRN*, 28 February).
CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1161560

Sony pins down RSA licences

RSA Security has announced that it has licensed its BSAFE Secure Sockets Layer and public key infrastructure (PKI) products to Sony Computer Entertainment. Under the terms of the deal, RSA will provide a secure interactive environment for software title developers, and for publishers creating games for its new PlayStation Portable (PSP) hand-held console.
CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1161409

Devoteam joins BPM fold

Business Process Management (BPM) software vendor CommerceQuest has added IT consultancy group Devoteam UK to its CommerceQuest partner programme. As part of the agreement, Devoteam will add the CommerceQuest BPM suite to its solutions portfolio.
CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/news/601214

Microsoft partners CapGemini

Microsoft has announced an alliance with CapGemini to drive the adoption of Microsoft business applications by UK customers. The partnership will focus on Microsoft's Business Solutions CRM and Business Solutions Axapta products. The firms have claimed the alliance will allow quicker and more cost-effective deployment of applications, allowing more customers to benefit.
CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1155191

EquIP lands nCircle contract

Vendor selects single UK distributor to increase its presence in enterprise security market

Sara Yirrell

VULNERABILITY MANAGEMENT vendor nCircle has appointed equIP as its sole UK distributor to boost its enterprise market share.

The agreement will see equIP distribute nCircle's IP360 Vulnerability Management System through its network of resellers. IP360 allows large enterprises to measure, manage and reduce network security risk.

Reiner Pinot-Noack, vice-president EMEA of nCircle, said the partnership with equIP will help it increase its business, not only in enterprise accounts, but also in local branches of multinational organisations and the upper tier of the mid-market.

"The UK has a strong specialisation in security; there are not

Security facts

● In 2003, digital attacks caused more than $42bn in damages worldwide, according to IDC.
● More than 150,000 network security incidents occurred in 2003 alone. And according to CERT (the Coordination Centre at Carnegie Mellon University), that number has doubled every year since 2000.
● Of senior technology executives polled in a recent Price Waterhouse study, more than 67 per cent admit their organisations have experienced a security breach in the past 12 months.

so many vanilla distributors as there are in other countries. This is beneficial to companies such as nCircle because we will form a significant part of equIP's

revenue, compared with some vanilla distributors where our product is just one out of hundreds."

Pinot-Noack said nCircle had screened "a large number" of UK distributors, but equIP had come "top of the list" because of its competence in handling enterprise customers and its broad reseller network.

Mark Fullbrook, product sales manager at equIP, said the distributor is keen to recruit more nCircle partners.

"We already have two or three partners, and are looking to add a couple more. We are looking for a focused group of resellers,

Mark Fullbrook, equIP

which we will expand as and when the market dictates," he said.

Fullbrook added that the potential marketplace for nCircle's products is "huge".

He said: "Most enterprises go out and get their networks scanned every now and again. But this is not providing them with any idea of what's happening to their network on a regular basis. Many are looking for a product such as nCircle's that allows them to do this. At the same time, a lot of resellers have a hole in their portfolio for this type of product."
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CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1161896

Northamber broadens scope of Madge deal

James Sherwood

MADGE IS HOPING TO ATTACK THE wireless market by extending its distribution agreement with Northamber to include its wireless security and management products.

Previously Northamber had a deal to carry Madge's token ring products, but the latest agreement will give the distributor access to its entire product range.

Julian Pickens, product marketing manager at Madge, said the new terms will help the vendor increase its market share and capitalise on the growing wireless LAN (WLAN) market.

"Northamber will be extending its relationship with us into the security and management wireless networking space. The channel needs educating about the topic, and Northamber will play a big role in this," he said.

Northamber will remain Madge's sole UK broadline distributor. Pickens added that the deal is also an attempt to grow Madge's reseller base.

"We want Northamber to convert some of its resellers over to wireless networks, as well as bring new channel partners on board," he said.

David Hennell, commercial

Number of wireless hotspot locations by country

Source: iWire / Computer ResellerNews

manager at Northamber, said the market is only just beginning to wake up to wireless networking.

"End-users are starting to realise the implications of WLANs as they grow and become more popular," he said.

"As the market grows and educates itself about wireless networking, it will give channel partners the ability to deliver more of these solutions."
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CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1160156
www.crn.vnunet.com/news/89254

Asus web site puts reseller tools online

James Sherwood

COMPUTER COMPONENTS GIANT Asus is attempting to improve communication with its resellers by launching a web site to accompany its channel programme.

The site, built into the vendor's Advantage reseller programme, provides up-to-date information, downloadable marketing materials, and a FAQ section to help resellers answer end-user queries.

"We realise the importance of direct communication with our channel partners," said Allen Yen, UK managing director of Asus. "We designed our programme to help strengthen the professionalism of the successful resellers that share our ambition for growth."

A selected number of resellers will also be listed as recommended partners. They could then be chosen to join its more elite Advanced partner programme, giving them Asus Centre status.

"The Asus partner programme commits investment, facilities and time to our partners," Yen claimed.

Asus created a number of channel agreements last year with UK broadline distributors, including the UK arm of Tech Data, Computer 2000 (*CRN*, 20 December). The deal saw C2000

What the site offers

● Access to up-to-date company information, such as developments, product information and promotional campaigns.
● Access to downloadable Asus marketing materials, such as advertisements and catalogues.
● FAQs to help resellers answer end-user queries.
● The opportunity to participate in local promotional events.
● Selected resellers will be listed in the 'where to buy' section.
● The opportunity to be selected for the Asus Centre Advanced reseller programme.

distribute most of the vendor's products, including motherboards and graphics cards.

The web site will help Asus grow its market through the channel, according to John Osborne, general manager of the components division at C2000.

"These are the right tools for Asus and the site will help it develop its business. Resellers will find these tools beneficial, and it will help to develop the market," he said.
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CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1161099
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news

shortcuts

CMS to distribute ECS

Motherboard manufacturer ECS has appointed CMS to distribute its full line of products. CMS said it partnered with ECS because its strong marketing campaign has helped create end-user demand for its motherboards.

CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1158378

Semiconductors going at last

The $1.6bn glut of semiconductors plaguing suppliers' inventories is finally clearing up, according to iSuppli. The analyst firm claimed the excess could fall to $780m by the end of the first quarter of 2005.

CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1162108

VoIP to get new standards

The Voice over IP (VoIP) Security Alliance has formed a working group to set security standards for new VoIP products. The Security Requirements Committee is one of five groups to set new standards. The others will cover research, testing, best practice and education.

CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1162189

Still ATI after all these years

Graphics manufacturer always looking for new partners to help maintain market position

Sara Yirrell

GRAPHICS CHIP MANUFACTURER ATI is celebrating its 20th anniversary by pledging to work more closely with partners to boost awareness of its brand.

The firm, which released its second-quarter 2005 results over Easter, views nVidia as its biggest threat. ATI's turnover for Q2 increased by 31 per cent to $608m and profit rose by 20 per cent to $57m.

Speaking to *CRN*, Peter Edinger, vice-president of EMEA at ATI, said the firm is confident for the future.

"We have 70 per cent market share of all discrete notebooks and 90 per cent of the PCI Express market. The fact that we work on a local level in each country helps our business. While our competition is running its business from a central European HQ, we run ours

Peter Edinger, ATI

country by country and have local knowledge," he said.

Edinger said ATI had learned lessons from the past after it lost its number-one market position.

"As a result we changed our model to work more closely with partners, both on a technology level and through the channel, and it worked. We are back at the top," he claimed. Edinger added that the channel plays an important role in ATI's strategy because it "creates demand".

He said ATI is working on seven different roadmaps including notebooks, workstations, consumer products (such as HDTV and set top boxes), handheld computing (Smart phones and PDAs) and game consoles, having secured a graphics deal for Microsoft's XBox 2.

Edinger also refused to rule out acquisitions for 2005. "We are looking for good strategic partners all the time. It's about finding the right fit," he said.

Matthew Wilkins, senior analyst at iSuppli said ATI, along with nVidia, was leagues ahead of the competition.

"ATI made a sensible move when it opened its graphics chips to original design manufacturers.

That helped it gain lots of market share over nVidia. ATI is also making moves in the mobile device and digital TV markets, both of which really need to grow," he said.

Wilkins added that the firm is fighting to increase its brand awareness. "The strategy change had a real effect, but won't happen overnight. The graphics market moves roughly every six months, and it is easy to claw back any performance deficit over the competition," he said.

"ATI is getting good press and the real question should be. Can anybody else come into the market? Theoretically it is possible, but in reality I would be surprised: it's very expensive to develop a new graphics core. I think we will continue to see ATI and nVidia at the top for a long time to come."

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CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1161922

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security

Blue Coat bundle Ironed out

Vendors partner to roll out joint hardware package that promises to boost reseller margin

Sara Yirrell

Matt Peachey, IronPort

SECURITY APPLIANCE VENDORS Iron-Port and Blue Coat have teamed up to offer resellers a hardware bundle that promises up to 10 per cent extra margin.

The two firms will be working with distributor InTechnology to push the bundle into the market. It will consist of IronPort's C-series range of email appliances: the C60, C30 and C10, and Blue Coat's Proxy range of appliances: the 400-series, 800-series and 8000-series.

Matt Peachey, regional director northern Europe at IronPort, said: "One of the things we identified early on was the commonalities between IronPort and Blue Coat. Both of us had appliance-based technology, but IronPort handles the email and SMTP side

of security and Blue Coat focuses on internet applications. There is hardly any technology overlap, but a lot of synergy between our products."

Peachey added that the firms share a lot of customers and resellers, and the bundle promotion, scheduled to last until at least July, makes perfect sense. To qualify for the extra margin, VARs must prove they have sold the two firms' products to the same customer at the same time.

"We are aiming in particular for the mid-market; that is our sweet spot with this bundle. Those firms are serious about protecting employees from threats and making sure information doesn't float out of their networks," Peachey said.

Tim Ager, vendor sales director at InTechnology, said: "We are

very excited about this offer. It is a good opportunity for us."

"We are the largest Blue Coat distributor in the UK, and it's good to go back to their resellers with something new. At the same time it allows us to expand our IronPort partner base."

He added: "If you look at growth areas for us, web and email security are very strong."

Nigel Hawthorn, marketing director Europe at Blue Coat, said: "We have seen a lot of VARs selling both devices. We wanted to make it easier for partners to recognise that IronPort and Blue Coat are working together.

"We found the products to be a fortuitous fit and it is already providing a good choice of partnership."

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CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1160873

Sphinx set to distribute Sidewinder range

Sara Yirrell

SECURITY APPLIANCE VENDOR Secure Computing has made its first distribution move by signing an agreement with Sphinx.

The deal will see Sphinx recruit resellers across the UK and Europe to sell Secure's Sidewinder G2 Unified Threat Management (UTM) appliance. It features hardware, software and networking technologies that perform multiple security functions including a firewall, intrusion prevention and anti-virus.

Jamie Pearce, UK channel manager at Secure Computing,

told *CRN* that an expanded range demands a distributor.

"Our Sidewinder G2 security appliance has been around for many years, but it has mainly been aimed at the enterprise marketplace," he said. "However, this year we have extended the range and launched new models that allow us to address the mid-market and SME sectors. That is what fuelled the need to get the right distributor in place. Sphinx has the right depth and breadth for taking the product to market, and it is an ideal partner for us," he said.

Pearce added that the appoint-

ment of Sphinx will help Secure Computing drive new applications through the channel, particularly around UTM.

Mark Hatton, managing director of Sphinx, said the product makes both technological and commercial sense. "We didn't have an appliance level firewall in our portfolio or anything in the UTM space, so it made sense from the technology aspect and in terms of commercial gain," he explained.

Hatton added that the Sidewinder appliance offers resellers a "significant" services opportunity, both pre- and post- sale. The

distributor is working closely with Secure Computing to set out the accreditation programme and ensure that resellers are trained to the appropriate level, Hatton said.

He added that the distributor will be looking for an additional 10 to 15 resellers to join Secure Computing's existing partners.

"Secure Computing already has seven partners in the UK, but is looking for more to focus on different sectors, including mid-market, enterprise and some verticals," he said.

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storage

HP Works for VARs

Vendor claims resellers will benefit as it updates storage offering

James Sherwood

HEWLETT-PACKARD (HP) HAS promised its channel partners continued services revenue through the expansion of its Storage Works products division.

HP has updated its Reference Information Manager (RIM) and Reference Information Storage System (RISS) products, which are designed to run together.

Front-end application RIM is designed for email archive and now includes support for Lotus Notes and Domino, while the storage capacity of RISS has been doubled from 400Gb to 850Gb, with its base price also cut by about 50 per cent.

"These products have a lot of services based around them. The end-user cannot deploy them until data policies and practices have

David Smith, HP

been put in place, and that presents a good opportunity for the reseller," said David Smith, HP's enterprise storage manager.

HP has also signed eight new ISVs to its RISS partner programme and rolled out a software

development kit to make it easier for ISVs to integrate and store application data on the appliance. All updates are based around HP's Information Lifecycle Management (ILM) strategy. Smith added that the set will appeal to users across the board.

"RIM and RISS are designed around ILM. There are lots of services involved and resellers can use them to develop a complete solution," he said.

Abdul Terry, head of marketing at VAR Equanet, said: "This gives resellers the chance to engage with the customer more, and opportunities will come from that.

"The expansion of RISS's storage capacity will be a good door opener, although their user numbers are decreasing."

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CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1161713

shortcuts

Room for storage members
The Storage Networking Industry Association (SNIA) Europe now has over 100 organisations, consultants and end-user members, it has claimed. SNIA recently added six new members, including Overland Storage, and said its European success underlines the crucial role the storage industry plays in today's business environment.
CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1160868

Gateways to cost cutting
ONStor has published a white paper called 'Ten Ways to Cut Storage Costs with NAS Gateways.' In the report, the vendor's vice-president of marketing, Jon Toor, describes how NAS Gateways are becoming an ideal consolidation solution, thanks in part to rising server maintenance costs.
CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1161973

CommVault conquers Galaxy
Unified data management vendor CommVault has revealed that its Galaxy Backup and Recovery software is qualified with the Cisco Network-Accelerated Serverless Backup, SCSI-2 Extended Copy feature. This qualification validates that CommVault software meets the test criteria for interoperability with the Cisco standards-based Extended Copy technique.
CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1159410

Insight gets in right Mindjet

James Sherwood

INFORMATION VIRTUALISATION vendor Mindjet, has expanded its UK channel with the addition of reseller Insight.

Mindjet's flagship software product, MindManager, enables end-users to capture, organise and share unstructured information, such as brainstorming ideas.

Dustin Newport, managing director of Mindjet UK, said the addition of Insight will help it to reach new markets.

"This helps to service our need to give customers more avenues of fulfilment, thanks to an expanding product base," he said.

Newport added that Mindjet plans to unveil changes to its UK partner programme in the coming weeks. Mindjet currently has about 20 resellers and works with distributors ISPD and Sigma.

The vendor also has a direct access model whereby orders of less than 10 units can be bought directly on its web site.

Simon Rutt, marketing director at Insight, said: "Our alliance with Mindjet will deliver specific visualisation tools that enable our customers to see and manage complex information and ideas."

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CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/products/software /1153821

TotalStorage for HyperIP

James Sherwood

DATA TRANSPORT VENDOR NETEX has bolstered its HyperIP appliance by achieving TotalStorage Proven status with IBM's storage products.

The appliance provides application acceleration for storage networking applications using TCP transport services. Big Blue confirmed compatibility with its products after tests under its TotalStorage Proven programme.

"We passed testing by validating iSCSI and NAS connectivity and functionality with HyperIP.

This demonstrates to customers that our solutions work with IBM," said Robert MacIntyre, vice-president of business development at NetEx.

IBM said it introduced the TotalStorage Proven programme to help end-users identify which storage solutions are proven to work well together.

Kevin Drew, managing director of VAR Triangle, said: "This will make a proposition appealing, but being cheaper would be better than TotalStorage proven status."

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Midwich adds more definition

Spotting potential demand for HDTV, distributor strikes deals with Pioneer and Samsung

Laura Hailstone

AUDIOVISUAL (AV) DISTRIBUTOR Midwich is keen to exploit the high-definition television (HDTV) market and has set the ball rolling with two new distribution deals with Pioneer and Samsung.

"Pioneer's range of home-entertainment products are HD-ready as standard. It will give resellers an opportunity to capitalise on the anticipated demand for HDTV," said Darren Lewitt, Midwich's divisional director.

"Midwich will also become the primary distributor of Samsung's home-entertainment products, which include plasma, LCD, rear-pro and conventional CRT TVs, home-cinema and audio offerings."

HDTV has already taken off in Japan and the US. UK TV pictures are made up of 625 lines and about 700 pixels. By contrast, HDTV offers up to 1,080 active lines, with each line made up of 1,920 pixels. The result is a picture that can be up to six times as sharp as standard TV, according to manufacturers.

Ian Baugh, product manager of Midwich's home entertainment division, said: "The average member of the public won't yet be aware of what HDTV is, but those into their home-entertainment systems will be clued up.

"When Sky brings its box out it will bring HD to the masses. It wants to get set-top HD boxes in place for the 2006 World Cup. The biggest problem is there have been several different definitions

Ian Baugh, Midwich

of HD. Many flat-panels have already been sold as HD but are not actually able to display HD."

The European IT and consumer electronics trade association (EICTA) has now introduced an HD-ready label that manufacturers can put on their equipment.

Baugh's advice to resellers is to "get a heads up and start learning about the technology now".

David Mercer, principal analyst at Strategy Analytics, said: "HDTV doesn't mean much to consumers yet. Sky is promising HDTV broadcasts from next year which will help push it. By the end of the year we should see most HD products sporting the ECITA label."

He added: "VARs need to train their staff to understand HDTV technology. They should also persuade suppliers to adopt the ECITA label on their products."

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CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1161900

Trident shows vision with passenger entertainment

Laura Hailstone

DISTRIBUTOR AND MANUFACTURER Trident Microsystems has won a £2m contract to supply 1,000 entertainment systems for in-taxi entertainment firm Cabvision.

The in-cab TV system involves a digitally driven 12.1in LCD screen situated between two fold-down seats in the rear of the taxi. It is powered by a custom Low Voltage Differential Signalling interface board and inverter produced by Trident. The system, which is linked into the fare meter system, starts up automatically when the passenger enters

Trident's in-taxi entertainment system

the cab and runs for the duration of the journey.

Warren Kressinger-Dunn, director of design at Trident, said: "We are the largest distributor and manufacturer of this type of

equipment in the UK. Cabvision approached us and asked us to design a complete system for them. Cabvision had trialled another system, but it didn't meet the firm's needs. Initially it asked us to produce 100 units, but this has been increased to 1,000."

Nigel West, Cabvision director, said: "Trident was chosen for its ability to provide the best possible solution for customers' needs. Its extensive expertise across a range of products, its commitment to service and dedicated project management made it the ideal partner for this project."

The in-cab screens will go live this month. MEI Digital is responsible for the production and management of the content shown on the Cabvision network.

MEI has also provided the specialist suite of software needed to drive the system and manage content distribution.

"There are 21,000 black cabs in London. Cabvision has said it aims to get the system installed in 6,000 of them. Eventually it plans to target black cabs in other UK cities," Kressinger-Dunn said.

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DIGITAL CAMERAS: Canon Digital Ixus i5

Small and stylish with a range of settings

Like all the cameras in Canon's Digital Ixus range, the i5 is extremely stylish.

Easy-to-use menus let you choose between five automated shooting modes, while the macro setting offers close-ups at a minimum distance of 3cm from your subject. A manual mode provides access to white balance, exposure and ISO speed settings.

Unfortunately, there's no optical zoom on the i5, which will disappoint if you're looking to move beyond basic pointing and shooting.

Image quality was good but many of the test shots suffered from red-eye – use the reduction option when shooting indoors.

A USB cable connects the camera to a PC, but it's Pictbridge compliant too, so it can connect straight to a printer, bypassing a PC altogether.

This camera is a neat machine with good battery life, but the lack of optical zoom could disappoint the more serious photographer.

Emilie Martin

Details
Specifications: 5megapixels • 6.5x digital zoom • 39mm focal length (35mm film equivalent) • auto, on, off, slow-sync, red-eye reduction flash modes • 1.5in LCD • 32MB SD card • 100g • 90.3 x 18.5 x 47mm (w x d x h) • USB • Pictbridge compliant.
Pros: Compact; range of photo settings.
Cons: No optical zoom.
Verdict: If the i5 featured an optical zoom, it would be a seriously desirable camera.

Originally published in *Personal Computer World*

Performance	★	★	★	★	☆
Features	★	★	★	☆	☆
Value for money	★	★	★	★	☆
Overall	★	★	★	★	☆

PERIPHERALS: Sitecom Copy Box

Allows USB devices to swap files directly

Copy Box addresses a major drawback of USB ports: the fact that, unlike rival Firewire, they don't support peer-to-peer links. The problem should disappear as new products adopt an extension to the USB2 specification called USB on-the-go (OTG). This allows one of two linked devices to mimic a host PC; the other one does not need to support the technology. Copy Box goes one further by allowing users to copy files between USB devices when neither supports OTG. Both have to be addressable as USB drives, however.

The transfer rate between USB2 devices was just under 6Mbps in tests. But there is no listing screen, so users have to trust the status lights. Nor is there a Move option, which cuts the risk of losing files, but this also means users have to delete manually to clear a source device. Customers can only copy a subset of files if their source device lets them create a directory.

Clive Akass

Details
Specifications: Three AAA batteries • USB1.1 & 2 • Cameras and USB drives need their own power source • Fat16, Fat12 and Fat32 drive formats supported.
Pros: Does the job, once you figure out how to use it.
Cons: Misleading, barely readable instructions.
Verdict: Basic but useful. Practice a few times before doing it for real.

Originally published in *Personal Computer World*

Performance	★	★	★	☆	☆
Features	★	★	★	☆	☆
Value for money	★	★	★	☆	☆
Overall	★	★	★	☆	

SOFTWARE: Paragon Partition Manager 6

A useful tool that is incredibly easy to use

Now that hard disks are available in such large capacities, splitting them up into smaller, more manageable partitions makes sense. Paragon Partition Manager 6 Personal has all you need to split up your disks.

The package starts with the main screen showing your drive setup, and the dialogue windows are clear with sensible defaults.

The CD itself is bootable and, should your Master Boot Record accidentally become corrupted, there's a file manager that can be used to copy information off an otherwise inaccessible partition.

A Professional version of Partition Manager is available, offering the bonus of working with dynamic disks in Windows 2000 and later, and the option to schedule tasks such as defragmentation. Both versions also include an ISO writer for creating CDs from disc images.

Tim Smith

Details
Specifications: Windows 95, 98, ME, NT, 2000, XP • Linux partitions can be edited using the bootable CD • 486 processor or higher • 16MB Ram • 12MB hard disk space.
Pros: Bootable CD with file manager; easy to use.
Cons: Limited wizards.
Verdict: This is a useful tool for managing and maintaining hard disk partitions.

Originally published in *Personal Computer World*

Performance	★	★	★	☆	☆
Features	★	★	★	★	☆
Value for money	★	★	☆	☆	☆
Overall	★	★	★	☆	☆

SOFTWARE: Zonealarm Security Suite 5.5

Key updates and spam filtering make this a serious contender

At its heart is the latest edition of the Zonealarm Pro firewall, updated with new network detection and program access control routines, as well as improved support for the Windows XP Service Pack 2 Security Centre.

Computer Associates' Etrust virus scanning engine provides frequent updates to ensure users should never fall prey to a virus or worm.

The inbuilt category-based web content filtering hasn't changed much since the previous release and all users of the computer are subject to the same content restrictions.

Important information such as passwords and PIN numbers can be prevented from leaving your computer without your express permission.

The biggest drawback of version 5 was the lack of spam blocking technology. This glaring omission has been rectified with the integration of Mailfrontier's Desktop mail filtering product.

Andy Gibbons

Details
Specifications: Windows 98SE or greater • Pentium II processor or greater • 128MB of Ram • 50MB of hard disk space.
Pros: Spam filtering; excellent all-round internet security.
Cons: Settings not linked to user accounts; price increase .
Verdict: The addition of spam filtering makes for a more rounded product but there are still improvements that we'd like to see.

Originally published in *Personal Computer World*

Performance	★	★	★	☆	☆
Features	★	★	★	★	★
Value for money	★	★	★	★	☆
Overall	★	★	★	★	☆

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TEAM LinG - Live, Informative, Non-cost and Genuine!

analysis

New model confrontations

As the government's newly designed IT contractual terms and conditions shift risk to the suppliers, the industry wages a quiet campaign to establish fairer standards of best practice, writes **Mark Ballard**

Expected business benefits of using external IT providers (%)

Source: Benchmark research

Illustrator: Simon Procter

IT SUPPLIERS HAVE BEEN MUSTERING THEIR forces for a confrontation with the government that could see them lock horns every time they negotiate a contract. Ironically, the spat has come about after the Office of Government Commerce (OGC), which controls public

CRN condensed

▸ The OGC and suppliers are very nervous about the new contracts the OGC has designed.

▸ Suppliers believe that greater risk is put onto them, and so trade body Intellect has tried to step in.

▸ However, Intellect has been seen to compromise on many issues, and suppliers have questioned Intellect's Best Practice guide.

▸ More and more support however has been generated towards Intellect as insurers, academics and consultants support the organisation.

▸ The OGC has tried to build bridges by promising to open up for small public sector contracts for SME, VARs and suppliers through a web portal.

▸ Of late the OGC has made some point to change the contract terms, and this may bring more suppliers to sign up to it.

sector procurement, introduced model terms and conditions designed to make it easier to draw up contracts with suppliers (*CRN* 25 October 2004).

The falling-out has been primarily over the allocation of risk in IT projects, much more of which could be heaped on suppliers than they think is reasonable.

Intellect, the IT trade association, reacted by laying plans for its own model Ts&Cs, a best practice guide to contracting. Suppliers would be able to use the guide to square up to any public sector paymaster who comes to the negotiating table clutching the OGC's dreaded model terms.

Suppliers on a tightrope

The idea behind the best practice is a safety factor for suppliers, resellers and integrators. If a public sector manager should approach a supplier and say: "this thumb screw clause is the starting point of any contract negotiation with the government", an anxious supplier can demonstrate that best practice says otherwise.

However, industry's reaction to the contracts has appeared weak. Suppliers have been tight-lipped about their con-

cerns, while fretting behind closed doors about how they could shoulder the additional costs associated with carrying more risk in government IT projects.

Nick Kalisperas, the public sector representative at Intellect, insisted he wanted to avoid a confrontation with government, while sketching out a strategy for his members to do just that.

Yet Kalisperas and the suppliers he represents are walking a tightrope. On the one hand they have to keep the government happy because it is a buyer's market and the public sector has the fattest wallet. On the other, industry feels the government has not reciprocated its efforts to form a more harmonious partnership.

Suppliers' frustration at the one-sided nature of their relationship with the public sector was first provoked by what they considered to be lacklustre government support for the Code of Best Practice,

which Intellect introduced at the end of 2003. The Code is a different document to the proposed best practice guide to contracts. The Code is a non-contractual commitment by industry to ingratiate itself with government and prove it's doing its bit to avoid further IT disasters.

No accord on Code

It is no surprise that few suppliers bothered to sign up to the Code because, in hindsight, it looked embarrassingly tractable. The first commitment of the Code dreamed of a relationship "founded on mutual trust and openness".

This ideal was sullied last autumn when the OGC ignored Intellect's main concerns about the new model contract terms. After they were introduced in November, John Kenyon, deputy director of contract innovation at the OGC, and the man who put the contracts together, insist-

> The first commitment of the Code dreamed of a relationship "founded on mutual trust and openness".

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analysis

IT spend by sector (£)

	Health	Education	Cultural	District councils	County borough councils	Fire and emergency	Average (%)
0-49k							
	9.6%	15.4%	25.5	4.8%	3.0%	0.0%	9.7%
50-99k							
	5.8%	11.8%	7.3%	3.5%	1.3%	0.0%	5.0%
100-249k							
	7.0%	10.6%	10.9%	4.8%	6.5%	9.7%	8.2%
250-999k							
	17.7%	13.6%	14.5%	15.8%	19.6%	21.5%	17.1%
1m-4.99m							
	11.0%	7.3%	5.5%	21.1%	19.1%	14.0%	13.0%
5-49.9m							
	2.6%	4.2%	3.6%	5.3%	7.4%	4.3%	4.6%
50m+							
	4.4%	1.1%	0.0%	2.2%	4.3%	0.0%	2.0%
Not specified							
	42.0%	35.9%	32.7%	41.2%	38.3%	50.5%	40.1%

Source: Computing

Firms with procedures to track benefits
of using external IT service providers

Public sector
47%
53%

Private sector
68%
32%

Yes
No

Source: Benchmark research

Nick Kalisperas, Intellect

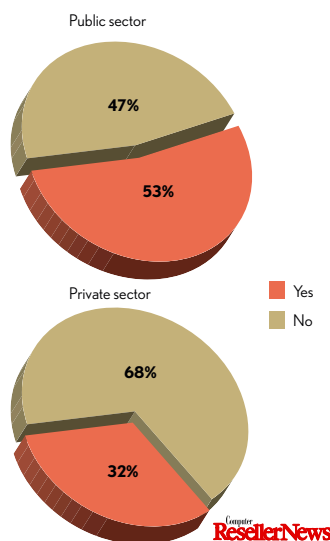## Public sector IT market predictions

- The UK public sector software services market grew 12.1 per cent in 2004
- IT will grow an average of 9.5 per cent per year between 2004 and 2008, expanding from £6.7bn to £9.6bn
- The private sector software and services market will grow an average of 3.9 per cent over the same period
- Health and criminal justice will be the fastest-growing sectors, with annual growth of 15 per cent and 13 per cent respectively
- The UK public sector still spends more on bespoke development than the private sector. In 2004, 17 per cent of government IT spend was on commercial off-the-shelf packages, compared with 23 per cent in the private sector
- In 2004, the central government sector grew 12.7 per cent, the local government sector grew nine per cent and the health sector grew 28 per cent.
- The Joined Up Justice programme in the criminal justice system has progressed slower than expected, but will see double-digit growth in 2005 and 2006

At the same time that Intellect was trying to formulate a response to OGC's new model terms and their transfer of risk onto suppliers, it was reasserting its adherence to commitment seven of its Code of Best Practice: "We will consult with the Customer to identify risk areas... and will be prepared to challenge the Customer's assessment of these issues if necessary (for example if we are being invited to accept responsibility for a risk that we believe would be better owned by the Customer)."

The OGC model contracts left no room for such a challenge. And it looked like there was not a lot suppliers could do about it, apart from bring their own model terms into contract negotiations. As the OGC's terms were intended as a starting point for negotiations, industry hoped it could argue the case of best practice to get offending terms watered down.

Excess risk

The trouble with a best practice guide, to contracting, however, is that there is also a trend for private sector contracts to be more onerous on suppliers. If Intellect's best practice contract terms were as successful as its Code of Best Practice, it could soon become established best practice for customers to pass the buck to suppliers.

But, in Intellect's defence, a groundswell of support has built behind its campaign. Lawyers, insurers and consultants have expressed concern over the amount of risk the model contracts could lump on suppliers.

Hiscox, Britain's largest IT insurer, has started its own quiet campaign, warning suppliers that it may not be able to provide insurance under the new terms. That could be a crack in the dam, as the new contracts stipulate that suppliers must arrange insurance cover for their government work.

Intellect Code of Best Practice

The 10 commitments (edited)
1 Maintain trustful relationships with customers
2 Try to understand project requirements
3 Challenge customers over unfeasible requirements
4 Only bid what we know we can deliver
5 Clarify assumptions made about customer's contributions
6 Ensure projects are managed professionally
7 Agree the allocation of risk with the customer
8 Be transparent about dealings with subcontractors
9 Only employ people fit to do the job
10 Encourage staff to do professional training

Intellect's diplomatic reaction has bellied industry feelings about the OGC terms. But looking unconvincing, as Intellect did in the face of OGC snubs last year, is not relevant to the organisation's game plan.

Intellect and the OGC have what Kalisperas calls a mature relationship: "We can't agree on everything. We have to identify areas of disagreement and act on them accordingly," he said.

This sounds like far too reasonable a view for a trade association to be expressing in regard to one of the most crucial disagreements it has ever had to deal with. Yet the OGC has given ground by offering to reconsider Intellect's complaints about the model contracts, albeit three months after their objections were disregarded.

The OGC has not given a reason for its sudden willingness to compromise its model contract terms, being unavailable to comment. Presentations had been made to the OGC, before it introduced the terms, that argued they should be watered down. They were not, but Intellect continued its campaign and may have scored a victory.

If the OGC does back down, Intellect may vindicate its kid-glove approach to government relations. The Code of Best Practice, instead of looking like a heavy compromise, will become a dignified manifesto for government IT. Perhaps then more suppliers will see the Code that way and sign up to it.

CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1160689
www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1160531

Contacts

OGC (0845) 000 4999
http://www.OGC.gov.uk/
INTELLECT (020) 7331 2000
http://www.intellectuk.org/
SBS (020) 7215 5000
http://www.sbs.gov.uk/

ed they allocated risk equally between contracting parties (*CRN* 13 December 2004). At the time Kenyon said: "Intellect had some late concerns and we took on board some of its views."

He said the OGC agreed with Intellect on broad principles, but had not reached accord on every detail. "There are one or two minor points where we had a slight difference of view," he said.

Penalty clauses

Nevertheless, debate is raging over the efficacy of the government's scheme. Everyone wants to avoid further repetition of the high-profile disasters that have embarrassed government and industry alike. Yet it is hard to find independent observers to back Kenyon's claims.

Dr Chris Sauer, a fellow of Templeton College, Oxford, said the OGC's onerous terms could create an "adversarial" relationship with "nit-picking" over terms and suppliers having to "play the variations of the contract game" to recover the costs they accrue from the added risk.

His views are echoed repeatedly, which makes a mockery of Intellect's Code of Best Practice compromise and raises questions about its softly-softly approach to government liaison.

In January Intellect announced that its Best Practice Code had "gained teeth" through a broadening of the voluntary commitments of signatories to do their best not to mess up their public sector IT implementations.

Meanwhile, the OGC had grown real teeth – contractual clauses – that would achieve the same ends with the threat of heavy penalties, such as those just imposed on BT for missing implementation deadlines in its work on the National Programme for IT (NPfIT).

> "There are 9.6 million contracts available each year. Smaller firms are quite capable of fulfilling them."

A little family of intrusions that spell do

THE FAMILY

Mr Congestion
the father-in-law

Your very own bandwidth bandit

Okay, he looks like your fun-loving rich uncle from Aussie. Yea, and his string of bits on the side – his dolly-birds - make good eye-candy. But this unlovable rogue packs a real punch around the office network. In fact there's nothing he likes more than jamming the lines. Everywhere you look his larger than life persona is stopping you get on with things. If he was a blocked drain, you'd call Dynorod to get rid of the blockage. But who do you call to get rid of this bandwidth bandit? Somebody's got to tell Mr Congestion he just isn't funny.

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THE FAMILY

Miss E-mail Moore
the sister-in-law

A vamp, a tramp, a user and abuser

The email's down again - any surprise? Meet your sister-in-law from hell. This un-sweet honey has got some nerve. Like sitting there, filing her talons, nattering on the phone and sending emails all at once. Oh sure, she can spell cat but it's cat for catastrophe. Get a job in a circus girl! You know, what she doesn't understand is that email is a work thing and boy-friends are a sort of out of work thing. If only she'd got that energy for your business you'd be playing golf in Marbella forever. But you're not. You're stuck wondering why nothing gets done instead.

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THE FAMILY

Mr Hacker
the brother-in-law

The over-friendly, in-your-office guy

He's jolly, he's round, he tells bad jokes. Mr Hacker thinks he's the fun guy from afar. You know, that geek you met on holiday and you sort of, kind of, let him know where your computer was. And now you're back in the office he's still intruding. Yea, and that other thing - how come he knows more about you than you ever told him? Because beneath that ruddy grin of his that haunts your holiday memories is security alert red to anything you treat private or personal. Thing is, you just don't want him around but he just won't go away.

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Meet the Family

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THE FAMILY

The Mother-in-law

The original "just discovered the internet" predator

"Hi diddly-dee, it's a surfing life for me". Oh, you can hear her coming - the mother of all Internet users! And the wife of Mr Congestion. The fact that she's only just found out about the internet – and the fact that you probably showed her the ropes - makes for unwanted cardio-vascular activity. She brings a new meaning to "always on" internet. Ask yourself "how does Mr Congestion get away with his bits-on the side?" Now ask yourself "how many bytes on the side has she had?". But you're not a marriage counsellor, you're an office manager. You don't want to get them together – you want to get them out!

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A SERIES OF 5 N0 5

THE FAMILY

Mr Virus
Uncle Fester

Nudge-nudge, wink-wink, say no more…

Dapper? No. Slimy? Yes. Mr Virus is the most unwanted little character this side of your keyboard insert button. If you don't watch it, he'll worm his way into anywhere. Remember you got that email about his girlfriend, Melissa? That's the work of Mr Virus. This irritating sleaze bag likes borrowing your files and folders too. Only, unlike Miss Good-body, your ever efficient secretary who returns everything to its right place, he removes everything permanently. He's the ultimate pain in the proverbial – know what I mean?!

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Five Problems
- *One Solution*

Hackers, congestion, viruses, internet and e-mail abuse. With all of the problems that you and your business network face today, you've probably purchased a number of different software packages and appliances to protect your data. Prodigy is the first Internet Security Management device to combine the fundamental elements of your security policy into a single device, offering your network a high level of security and guarantees you peace of mind.

research and analysis

Rules and regulations

It's time for resellers to look at how they can help businesses comply with corporate governance requirements, says **Bob Tarzey**

YOU'RE LIKELY TO HAVE noticed two things becoming more prevalent in recent years. First, the number of regulations being bandied about by governments and industry bodies, and second, the number of IT vendors which claim that without their product, your customers will fall foul of these regulations.

As a reseller, you do not want to ignore all this; there may well be a genuine opportunity to help your customers protect themselves and make an honest euro or two at the same time. But you don't want your customers to accuse you of scaremongering.

A good starting point is to have an idea of what it is that concerns the businesses you are selling to. Many of the suppliers you deal with will be based in the US, and their messaging will have been developed over there, where things are rather different.

There is a genuine worry in the US about government regulations, such as those imposed by the Sarbanes-Oxley Act. These regulations are not irrelevant in Europe, but for many businesses they are not the highest priority.

In fact, regulatory compliance is low down on the list for European organisations when it comes to good corporate governance.

On this side of the Atlantic, managers are worried about protecting their brand name, maintaining customer confidence, increasing employee productivity and avoiding bad publicity – all of which are equally affected by poor corporate governance.

From an IT perspective, good corporate governance really comes down to two things: keeping documents and records of communications that need to be kept, and being able to retrieve required information when it comes to the crunch. The retrieval of data might be required to prove compliance

Solve the email problem and you start to solve the storage problem, and better enable good corporate governance.

with some regulation, but equally it may be needed to solve a contractual dispute with a supplier, prove a disciplinary case against an employee, or protect against libel in the media, all of which can be detrimental to a company's brand name, customer confidence, employee productivity and other measures.

This is all well and good, but to achieve good corporate governance it is necessary to store ever-increasing amounts of data. While the density of storage media is increasing, the capacity is being outstripped by demand.

One type of data is growing more than anything else: email. This now accounts for more than half of internal and external communications, and some organisations say it represents most of the data they store.

Solve the email problem and you start to help solve the storage problem, and better enable good corporate governance.

The first step is to decrease the amount of email that is being stored. Good email filtering soft-

ware has been available for many years and can be used to control what is generated by employees, ensuring they stay focused on business-oriented communications. Many organisations are already doing this, although effectiveness can always be improved.

However, filtering software is not designed to make the subtle decisions about which emails should be kept to protect the business against future threats, and human intervention is impractical because of the high volumes. The only way to be sure is to store all email that does not get stopped by filters. However, you do not need to keep it forever.

Good email archiving enables rules to be put in place that reflect the requirements of the regulators, the wishes of the business and plain common sense. For example, by default, all email should be kept for three years, unless it is sent by an employee of the legal department when it should be kept for seven years. All emails containing large attachments ending in .pdf or .ppt could be deleted after three months.

Good archiving means rules can be put in place and adjusted through time to reflect the requirements of new regulations and changing business practices.
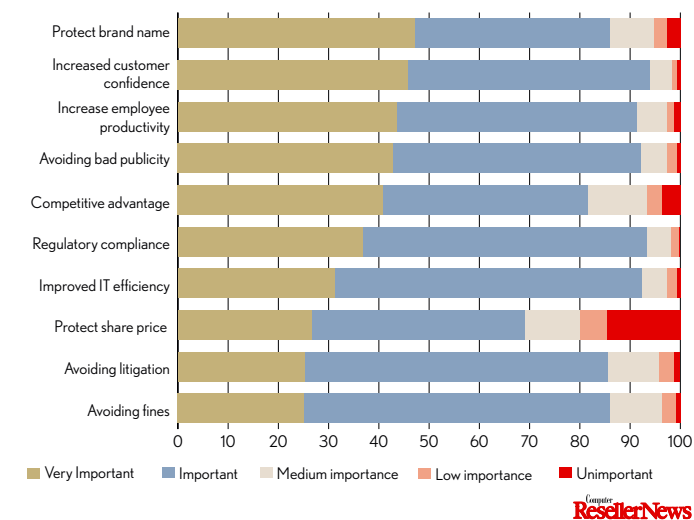
The danger posed by email to businesses should not be underestimated. While a weighty report is likely to have undergone intensive internal review, it's lucky if an email gets the once-over from a spell checker.

There are real issue for resellers to address for their customers and pragmatic solutions to be found. Quocirca's *Email and Corporate Governance* report is available free to *CRN* readers at *www.quocirca.com/report _email_corpgov.htm*.

Bob Tarzey *is service director at Quocirca.*
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How important are the following drivers for ensuring good governance in your organisation (%)?

Categories (top to bottom): Protect brand name, Increased customer confidence, Increase employee productivity, Avoiding bad publicity, Competitive advantage, Regulatory compliance, Improved IT efficiency, Protect share price, Avoiding litigation, Avoiding fines

Legend: Very Important, Important, Medium importance, Low importance, Unimportant

Source: Quocirca

What percentage of person-to-person communications do you estimate to be done via email (%)?

Categories: Internal, External

Legend: 90% or more, 70 to 89%, 50 to 69%, 30 to 49%, 10 to 29%, Less than 10%, Don't know

Source: Quocirca

Have email communications ever been important in any of the following situations (%)?

Categories (top to bottom): Cause of contractual dispute, Disciplinary action against an employee, HR complaint by employee, To defend business in a dispute, Cause of litigation against your business, Cause of litigation by your business

Legend: Very important, Important, Medium importance, Low importance, Unimportant

Source: Quocirca

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editorial

Hurd joins HP pack

The longevity of his career at NCR will undoubtedly reassure partners. But will Hurd show such commitment to the channel?

THE WAIT IS OVER; the anticipation turned more into an anti-climax, and now it's time for the speculation to begin. Last week, Hewlett-Packard (HP) appointed a new chief executive, replacing Carly Fiorina who was ousted almost two months ago. Mark Hurd, who was chief executive of NCR, will take the helm at HP on 1 April.

Hurd, a 25-year veteran of NCR, has an impressive CV. He was in the chief executive post for two years. And previously he was chief operating officer at the firm. Hurd joined NCR in 1980 and was chosen to run the Teradata division in 1999. He was then promoted to chief operating officer of the division within a year. Under Hurd's leadership, Teradata increased revenue by about 36 per cent and improved operating performance by more than $250m. With this improved performance, higher revenues and increased market share, it is no wonder that HP's share price rose when the announcement of his appointment was made.

The longevity of his career at NCR will undoubtedly reassure channel partners, who know that HP is under pressure to provide a chief executive with some serious commitment to the role. But the question remains: will Hurd show such commitment to the channel?

Worryingly, NCR is not renowned for its channel presence, especially in the UK. The vendor generated 90 per cent of its $627m retail point-of-sale product revenue in 2004 through its direct salesforce. The company also derived 75 per cent of its $1.1bn in sales from financial self-service or ATM products also sold direct.

However, on a brighter note, the news from the HP reseller camp is that the vendor is officially supporting its partners again. And despite the fact that most VARs know that changes are an inevitable part of gaining a new executive, most in the UK realise it will be some time before any changes are incurred on this side of the pond.

Resellers agree that while there are some strategies that need to be addressed, such as the vendor's web-selling presence and rules of engagement, Hurd would be wise to try to continue on the channel path that HP has rediscovered.

Sara Driscoll

US VIEWPOINT ROBERT FALETRA

Microsoft really gets into the Groove

THE BEST IDEA, product or programme doesn't always win in this business. Products that have access to a well-defined channel have a much higher likelihood of success than those that don't.

Microsoft's acquisition of Groove Networks is an example of a company that has figured this out, buying a company that didn't have a clue how to build a channel.

Groove had a "field of dreams" approach to building a channel. From where I sit, it never made the effort to bring on the talent and do the hard work needed to build a sales channel. Instead, it thought its collaborative software was so good that resellers would beat a path to its door. As a result, the company was getting no traction in the market and had to make a deal. Need I say it again? Great product innovation – something Groove has – doesn't make a successful company.

While it's too bad for Groove, Ray Ozzie's decision to sell the company to Microsoft should prove to be good for its product. Once it's integrated into the Microsoft product set, Groove's software will be successful because of the access to Microsoft's channel.

Groove is a case study in what not to do as a startup with a solid, evolutionary product.

It was a company that had everything going for it and blew it. Every startup would kill to have a founder with the rock-star status that Ray Ozzie has in this business. As the creator of Lotus Notes, Ozzie had an opportunity to market Groove's collaborative product offerings as the next wave. And Ozzie can command an audience that listens.

Instead, the company thought little about channels and lots about product development. Groove never figured out that it needed to spend as much effort building a viable channel as it did developing its product.

Success-hungry startups should look at Groove's failure as an example of how important it is to build a strong channel.

Microsoft, on the other hand, has always had a laser focus on channels. It has always put exceptionally bright executives in top channel positions.

Groove's product has a high likelihood of success thanks to Microsoft's channel and marketing engine. It's the same product, of course but it now has a different emphasis on what's important to make it successful.

▸ *Robert Faletra is president of the CMP channel group.*

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audiovisual

Entering an exciting AV era

THE MARKET FOR AUDIOVISUAL (AV) PRODUCTS IS AN EXCITING ONE at the moment. Hardware margins in the sector may slip over time, but there are plenty of other ways to add value, and new technologies are constantly breaking through.

But perhaps the most important reason for taking note of AV is that it provides a good point of entry.

AV resellers are staking claims with interactive whiteboards, plasma screens and projectors. They may even be staking those claims in your customers' offices, classrooms and boardrooms at this very moment.

The likes of whiteboards and projectors are relatively easy to sell. AV resellers say that if you can understand how to operate or install a PC, you can certainly get the hang of AV. It may be worth taking a look at this market – not least as a foot in the door for new prospects.

The potential for training revenue is also good: being able to operate something doesn't necessarily mean you can use it well.

The caveat is that as this market becomes more popular, it will also become more crowded and margins will be squeezed.

On the plus side, though, by the time one part of the market

> **The potential for training revenue is also good: being able to operate something doesn't necessarily mean you can use it well.**

has hit near commodity status, it's likely that another area will have become ready for exploitation.

Although it is a few years down the line, videoconferencing (VC) is likely to be the next step for AV and networking resellers. At present, VC is tricky to install and baffling to operate. The time when any of us can set up and tear down video calls from our own desks is probably a lot further away than the vendors would have you believe. But if AV doesn't present an opportunity for your business today, bear in mind it may well affect your business tomorrow if you ignore it.

▶ *Ben Tudor, features editor.*

OFFICIAL SPONSOR ANDY RUMP

We can learn from education

AUDIOVISUAL (AV) PRODUCTS THAT COVER A WIDE RANGE OF collaborative and display solutions, are, and will continue to be, an exciting opportunity for IT resellers.

Historically in the IT market, PCs, printers and scanners became commoditised relatively quickly. This product lifecycle meant that the channel had to adapt continually to maintain profitability. Resellers have done so by expanding their portfolio of expertise and spectrum of products.

At a time when margins in the IT market are at best flat, or at worst declining, the opportunities for resellers selling AV solutions are significant. Both the volume growth rate and reseller margins available on AV products far exceed those of many IT products.

AV products are weathering the margin storm. Where IT products may traditionally have been plug-and-play, AV products have specific application requirements. The fact that installation, training and support are key factors that influence the successful implementation of many AV solutions ensures that the high product margins are supported by further business potential from support services.

One area that has been hugely successful for many AV vendors, including Smart Technologies, which are handled solely by Steljes in the UK, is the education market. Although this success has been supported over the last couple of years by government investment it was driven initially by distributors and resellers that understood the application and best practices for the technology in day-to-day use in the classroom.

The demand for interactive whiteboards in education continues to be buoyant, and has opened up opportunities for other AV products and peripherals. Reports such as the Becta Review 2005 (*www.becta.org.uk/research*), released last month, confirm there is evidence that specific support and advice improves the ability of institutions to implement ICT. This applies equally in both

> **The demand for interactive whiteboards in education continues to be buoyant and has opened up opportunities for other AV products.**

education and industry, and creates an excellent opportunity for those resellers able to ensure good quality products with continued support.

Success in the education market has led to opportunities in the public sector and the corporate market, where these products are now desirable and affordable.

Steljes continues to invest in supporting the end-user experience in the corporate, public-sector and education markets, thereby developing the market for their resellers. The company has also recruited experts to help maximise opportunities in these markets. Steljes's Business Development Consultants have been talking to end-users to establish a better understanding of their requirements. In turn, this has created a platform for the portfolio of products that Steljes can offer to its resellers. Steljes uses this knowledge to help IT resellers. The value-added support includes the promoting of solutions and giving VARs the appropriate training and support to tackle the market themselves confidently.

AV is a relatively new market to the IT reseller. It is a market that is still growing and is margin rich. This is a marketplace perfectly suited to the skills of the IT reseller with the contacts and skills to optimise sales.

▶ *Andy Rump is channel manager IT at Steljes Group.*

SOUND VISION

The audiovisual market is continuing to thrive. **Paul Bray** looks at the areas where it is showing business benefits and promising further growth.

THE AUDIOVISUAL (AV) MARKET IS booming, and with good reason. Today's AV devices are cheaper, better and easier to use than their predecessors, and the technologies continue to improve. Schools, businesses and the public sector face numerous challenges – from engaging and retaining pupils' interest to improving performance and sharing expertise – which AV is well equipped to meet. And the upgrading of network infrastructures has created enough technical capability and spare bandwidth that these traditional barriers to AV are no longer a constraint.

The most successful market for AV at the moment is primary and secondary schools. Thanks to big government grants, sales of that classic classroom duo, projectors and interactive whiteboards (IWBs), have exploded. According to research firm Decision Tree Consulting (DTC), the UK is the world's largest market for IWBs, with predicted sales for 2005 of nearly 100,000, 95 per cent of them to education. Projector sales in 2005 will exceed 320,000, said DTC, nearly half to education.

Almost all secondary schools and most primaries have at least some IWBs and projectors, according to the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (Becta). And they work. Last year's report from Ofsted, the schools inspectorate, said; "Teachers [are] using the power and versatility [of IWBs] to produce some excellent lessons."

Yet the market is far from saturated. Becta says the mean number of IWBs per school is just two for primaries and 7.5 for secondaries. DTC estimates that, of around 600,000 potential locations in schools, only 160,000 (27 per cent) have yet been equipped, and believes primary schools will be major buyers this year. The common pattern, say resellers, is for schools to buy a few units, try them out, then come back for more when funds allow.

Selling AV to education is like pushing at an open door, according to Andy Duckworth, managing director of specialist VAR CDEC. "Most teachers have seen that this is the way the tide is flowing, and the only 'hard sell' required is to beat the competition," he says.

But it does require experience and commitment. Duckworth and several of his colleagues are former teachers. He says: "Most of the people here know the market very well." CDEC used to cover south-east England, but now focuses on south-east London. "We've become very focused and very local, which is vital for providing support. If a projector goes down, we've got to be there within 24 hours," Duckworth says.

CDEC is a preferred supplier to the London Borough of Bromley, a big benefit since Bromley schools can go straight to CDEC without obtaining quotes from other suppliers. The VAR is also one of a score of resellers to be authorised by Becta, another big plus, Duckworth adds.

Competition is hotting up as the education honeypot attracts more bees. But

CRN condensed

- The market for AV is booming as kit becomes easier to use, network bandwidth increases and customers face new challenges.
- Primary and secondary schools are the key markets for AV at the moment, although the education market is hardly saturated.
- Total education margins, estimate some industry players, are only 10 per cent, but education authorities tend to be prompt and reliable payers.
- On the other hand, IP TV margins are much higher, at between 20 and 70 per cent for some installations.
- Sales pitches to public-sector customers have to be benefits-led.

Foot in the door

IT resellers are strongly placed to enter the audiovisual market (AV), believes Neil Curtis, head of marketing at systems integrator ITM, which has welded together its separate IT and AV businesses during the past two years.

"The IT world understands how to package enabling technologies and market solutions," he says. "It tends to be closer to the client's business, and is better placed to identify compelling needs and sell on return on investment." The AV industry, by contrast, can be very product and technology-centred, Curtis adds.

As AV and IT technologies converge (for example in the trend towards IP) mainstream IT resellers are jumping the divide, especially into data projection technologies such as projectors, plasma displays and interactive whiteboards, often by offering AV to their existing IT customers.

Sica Solutions is a Lotus Notes and intranet VAR which first discovered AV through customers in the fire service. "We started an AV division and suddenly sales went through the roof," says director Stacey Cady. Sica trained up existing staff in AV, used contractors to provide nationwide coverage, and outsourced marketing to a telesales firm.

"It's not difficult to switch. If you can operate a PC, you can operate AV," Cady adds. But with margins reliant on added value services, he advises budding AV resellers to become one-stop-shops.

Network VAR KBR entered AV to broaden its offering to its existing education and local government clientele. "We say: what else can we use our installation group for, what else can we put on the network?" said account manager Peter Coulthard. Data projection technology is easy to learn, with the help of vendors, but KBR has so far shunned the complexities of videoconferencing.

Coulthard advised resellers to stick to a small portfolio of reliable products. "There are some brands I wouldn't touch," he warned. "I've sold them and they've come back to bite me." So now he sticks to Promethean and Smart whiteboards, and Sanyo, Sharp and Hitachi projectors, whose quality he trusts.

IT resellers can also make the transition to videoconferencing, said Ian Vickerage of specialist distributor Imago, but this requires technical resources, investment and commitment. "It's more challenging and you can't play at it," Vickerage says.

Most resellers start by buying from specialist AV distributors, according to Colin Messenger, senior business conaultant at analyst DTC. Once they know the market and have started selling in bulk they can consider switching to a broadline distributor, trading lower prices for less support.

resellers without education experience should be prepared for a culture shock, according to Colin Messenger, senior business consultant at DTC. "Education is a different kind of sale, and the budgets work differently, too," he says. Resellers must convince not only the teacher who will use the AV system, but also the head, who holds the purse strings, and the governors, who authorise the expenditure.

"You're not going to make a high margin, but at least it's guaranteed. Schools don't go bust and education authorities are usually pretty prompt payers," Messenger adds.

Duckworth claims total margins, including value-add, are only around 10 per cent, so resellers need to sell in volume. On the plus side, however, repeat business is abundant and CDEC spends nothing on marketing, relying on reputation and word of mouth.

Most schools buy AV as a complete solution, including installation, training and support, which helps drag margins up to respectable levels. Using AV kits is easy, so training focuses on maximising the educational benefit. "If you can drive a computer you can use AV," says account manager at Promethean reseller KBR, Peter Coulthard. "The hard bit is finding and sharing the experience that teachers need." So KBR works extensively with teachers to find out what makes them tick.

Security offers a new opportunity for value-add, according to Andy Rump, channel manager at AV distributor Steljes. "One reseller told me that projectors are being stolen to order from schools," he says. The solution is a security bracket that should take an hour to remove.

Data projection systems (projectors and IWBs) offer a major window of opportunity, but it may not be open for long. DTC predicts that, by 2007, 77 per cent of classrooms will have interactive AV devices installed. Although there will be a market for spare parts such as projector bulbs, and for new sales as old and heavily-used projectors are replaced by newer, brighter models, the market will be much reduced. Prices are falling, too, with a projector, IWB and installation costing an average of £2,000 this year, compared with £2,400 last year, according to DTC.

Other AV technologies may help plug the gap. Touch-sensitive interactive panels could replace or supplement IWBs and projectors. Electronic 'voting' systems allow teachers to set instant tests, for example to see how much a class has remembered from the previous lesson (although Duckworth thinks voting systems are still a bit of a gimmick). Digital presenters, such as an overhead projector with a powerful magnifier, are good for displaying specimens in science lessons.

"The software provided with IWBs is also proving to be critical. Although margins aren't particularly high, it's an important differentiator," says Alex Goudge, marketing manager at IWB and projector vendor Hitachi. "A partnership between Hitachi and Cambridge University Press will give resellers the option of offering curriculum products with the boards."

Source: Vince Fraser

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audiovisual

Videoconferencing (VC) is a rather different sale from data projection. But proponents say the technology is becoming easier to install and use, and offers more potential sales to universities and colleges, which buy less data projection kit. Vendors such as Polycom claim their new IP-based VC systems are easier to use and require less additional infrastructure than conventional systems, while new compression standards such as H.264 are improving picture quality and cutting bandwidth.

VC and video streaming are ideal for higher education institutions to share resources and facilitate distance learning, says Ian Vickerage, managing director of digital video distributor Imago. He says margins are higher, and it is "a more permanent, long-term business than whiteboards and projectors".

Although IP TV is rather specialised, margins are even higher, says Colin Farquhar, managing director of IP TV vendor Exterity – 20 per cent on sale and at least 50 per cent on installation for a small project, 25 per cent and 70 per cent respectively on a large installation.

As the education market becomes more crowded, so opportunities are opening up in business and the public sector. The corporate market has been slower to embrace AV than education. But ultimately it could outstrip it in both equipment sales and services, especially as young people who have experienced the benefits of AV in education grow up and join the workforce.

"We've seen that the corporate market is a real growth area, especially in IWBs," says a representative for reseller PC World Business. "There are more boardrooms than classrooms in the UK, and IWBs can save businesses considerable time and money. We've seen that early adopters now depend on AV solutions, and become regular purchasers of AV."

According to Rump, AV allows IT resellers to expand their portfolio with customers that are already becoming sated with IT equipment. "It's not a cold call but a warm call. We know you've got this IT equipment, but how can you get better use from it?" Rump says.

Many corporate applications of AV involve training, in both professional training companies and companies which train staff in-house. Other major applications include meetings and presentations (in person and remotely), conference venues, corporate reception areas, point-of-sale, trading floors, and travelling sales people equipped with the new breed of low-cost, high-performance portable projectors.

Reseller Sica Solutions uses training to interest companies in AV. Once they become familiar with the technology in the training room, it often cascades throughout the organisation.

The business benefits of AV can include more effective teaching, learning and training, improved communication and sharing of ideas in meetings and briefings, and bet-

Seven pillars of wisdom (common mistakes)

- Do it properly. "I've seen an awful lot of bad installations," says Andy Duckworth.
- Don't box-shift. "Sell training and services, otherwise the customer won't be happy with the product and you won't get repeat business," says Steve Dracup.
- Specialise on a product set. "Many people take too broad an approach," according to Andy Rump .
- Ensure the prospect is genuine. "You can't sell AV on the phone, so it has to be worth the sales person's while to attend," says Stacey Cady.
- Don't compete on price. "It's not necessarily a price-driven market," says Peter Coulthard.
- Be committed. "If you're not wholehearted, things will go wrong," says Ian Vickerage.
- Avoid complacency. "Be prepared to adapt as the market evolves," says Con Mallon.

ter sales presentations and customer communications. VC can cut travel time and costs, and improved communications can reduce product development cycles.

"It's all about efficiency and time-saving," Rump says. "Organisations are really changing the way they structure and operate meetings." To illustrate the possible savings, Rump cites a company which had 27 flipcharts in its boardroom. These were on full view, and so not secure. They were also expensive, and all of the data had to be copied and re-interpreted before it could be distributed or re-used. None of this would apply to an AV system.

The main issue resellers must overcome is customers' unfamiliarity, according to Steve Dracup, managing director of IWB and panel vendor Promethean. "A lot of

people have never seen these products, so you can't sell them from a data sheet. They have to be demonstrated, so resellers need to invest in demo equipment," he says.

According to Coulthard: "If you try a hard sell, either it won't work or you won't get repeat business. I don't 'sell' to the customer, I talk to them. Then we take some equipment and demonstrate it, then leave it with the customer for a week's trial."

Even existing kit is not always a bar to further sales. Con Mallon, regional director of projector vendor InFocus, says: "Our research suggests that 30 per cent of projectors are over three years old. The technology has moved on so fast that we see a big opportunity for replacement and reinstallation." (*CRN, 29 March*)

Added value services such as training

and integration are just as important in the corporate and public sectors as in education, and margins are better, according to Stacey Cady, director of Sica Solutions: 10 to 12 per cent on hardware, and 50 per cent plus on services for some clients.

The public sector's use of AV is in many ways similar to that of big companies, although to date sales have been small, at least in data projection (less than two per cent of UK projector sales, according to DTC). The NHS is keen on training and distance learning. The emergency services and the Ministry of Defence are also showing interest, for example, in command-and-control applications using large plasma displays to show the location of hazards and available resources during an incident. This is more viable now that prices have fallen and reliability and quality have improved, according to Rump.

Because public money is involved, sales pitches to the public sector must show be benefit-led. Cady says: "They won't buy on spec, so you have to look at best-value." High-level contacts are also important. "In the fire service, for example, decisions are made at chief and deputy chief level, so that's where we go in," he adds.

Even if a reseller conducts a successful trial with a public-sector body, it may have to enter a competitive tender with other suppliers, warns Barrie Guy, retail solutions manager at NEC Display Solutions.

"Here you face the age old question of what value you add, and you need to be prepared from day one," Guy says. It is advice which all AV resellers should follow, whatever sector they are targeting.

Contacts

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Sanyo streaking ahead

There are plenty of players in the projector market, according to analyst iSuppli, although six firms take around half the market share. Sanyo leads at present, partly because of its strong presence in the education market. Many players tend to sell across vertical sectors rather than being strong in just one specific market.

Projectors market share (%)

Dell, Epson, Hitachi, HP, InFocus, JVC, Liesegang, Mitsubishi, NEC, Optoma, Panasonic, Philips, Plus, Sanyo, Sharp, SIM2 seleco, Sony, Toshiba, Viewsonic, Others

(x-axis: 0, 3, 6, 9, 12, 15)

Source: iSuppli

ResellerNews

Product life is a roller coaster

Sales peaks and troughs in the AV market are the same as in many IT sectors. The peak in the first quarter is due to increased spending before the year end. The second quarter is a little slower, although iSuppli displays research director, Andrew Murray, said that consumer buying spiked during this period last year, pushed by the European football championships in Portugal. The third quarter shows a ramp up to bigger sales in the fourth quarter. The last three months of the year typically see a very high number of consumer sales due to the run up to Christmas.

Unit shipments of projectors by quarter in 2005

1Q 2005, 2Q 2005, 3Q 2005, 4Q 2005

Number of units sold
(x-axis: 0, 20,000, 40,000, 60,000, 80,000, 100,000, 120,000)

Source: iSuppli

ResellerNews

Smaller means bigger

Projectors are becoming smaller and more personalised, said iSuppli's Murray. This is helping vendors break into the consumer market, with some manufacturers coming out with increasingly compact, portable projectors. According to Murray, there is plenty of growth left in most segments of the market. Although growth from 2004 to 2005 is expected to be steady, the increase in growth will accelerate up to 2008.

Expected sales of projectors to 2008

2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008

(x-axis: 0, 100,000, 200,000, 300,000, 400,000, 500,000, 600,000, 700,000, 800,000)

Source: iSuppli

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credit and finance

A second chance to credit some trust

The slate is clean, but can a failed director be trusted to trade on open credit terms? Eddie Pacey finds out

SHOULD THE DIRECTOR OF A PREVIOUSLY failed business be given the chance to have another go?

There are those die-hards that will forever say no, and an abundance of others that demand MOT checks and the introduction of schooling for failed businessmen. It is likely that these two groups lament the introduction of the Enterprise Act of 2002, a law designed to encourage the entrepreneurial spirit and permit lesser periods in Bankruptcy.

A better question to ask is whether a failed director should be trusted to trade on open credit terms in their new business.

Business needs to be able to trade on credit terms. Trade credit funding is probably at least two and a half times as large as the funding provided by banks and financial institutions. Unlike the latter two, most trade credit is unsecured and generally interest free. There's no better way to borrow!

But herein lies the dilemma. If, as a trade supplier, you lost a lot of money when the last business went down, you're unlikely to want to open up the coffers again. If you feel the previous business floundered too quickly, was poorly managed or deliberately 'manipulated' before failure, your shutters will go up and stay up. 'Manipulated' means knowing in advance the business is floundering, doing nothing about it, reducing one's own personal liabilities to the bank, settling directors' loans into the business, buying more kit on credit which won't be paid for, reducing inventory to nil or moving it to a safe house. Manipulating the sale of assets at a silly price to 'newco' is the final triumph.

Many failed businesses fall into this category but thankfully, serial failures across multiple business ventures remain exclusive.

It could be argued that any failure is the responsibility of directors, but this is an unreasonable stance. Loss of a major client, a bad debt, a shift in product portfolio, market competition, declining gross margin and poor management can be excused, if the explanation and background to failure is plausible and understood.

The key element is judging whether a director has recognised the failures and weaknesses of the bankrupt business and has taken steps to ensure a similar situation does not arise in their new venture or if it does, it is acted upon and corrected in good time. This is by no means an easy assessment to make and much will depend on how well you have known the director and their previous business.

One should not look for repentance but an understanding of failure and character. Directors must accept that limited liability is not a licence to ignore fundamental business principles and relationships.

▶ *Eddie Pacey is director of credit services at Bell Microproducts Europe.*

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Convergence, IP telephony or strategic marketing – whatever your concerns, there will be no shortage of hot topics up for discussion at the Comms Channel Expo show, as **Simon Meredith** discovers

R ESELLERS WHO ATTEND THIS YEAR'S combined Comms Channel Expo and Technology Retail Show (CTS) event at the NEC next week will be going to find new products and solutions, forge new business relationships and pick up on old ones. But this event, now the major UK trade show of the year, also presents a good opportunity to learn about new technologies and markets, and to keep your finger well and truly on the pulse of these fast-moving segments of the industry.

CRN is running and supporting a number of events designed to help delegates keep up to date with the latest trends and developments. Two on-the-record panel sessions will be hosted by *CRN* (see box, page 37), and interested resellers who are attending the show are welcome to come along and put their own questions to the assembled panel of experts.

A number of other seminars and presentations also form part of the three events that will be taking place over two days. Resellers wanting to stay abreast of the current directions in the market would do well to take in some of these talks.

CRN condensed

- ▶ Reseller Forum will focus on changing reseller models and developments in the mobile market.
- ▶ Focus is on 64-bit, 3D graphics and mobile in the Market Information Centre.
- ▶ *CRN* special panel debates on VoIP and SME routes to market give you a chance to put your questions to the experts, on the record.
- ▶ The Comms Education Zone will cover the potential for IP connectivity business, QoS and voice recording.

The Reseller Forum within the Education Zone is perhaps the first place to look if you are keen to get an independent view of current market developments. The presentations cover subjects from strategic marketing to the state of today's mobile sector, and some broader trends and business strategies as well.

Keith Humphreys, managing consultant at specialist networking industry research firm euroLAN, will be giving a presentation entitled 'How to avoid the squeeze: balancing value and volume'. Humphreys says that he will be sending out a warning to resellers.

"As products move through their cycles from value to volume, there is a danger that the partner gets caught in the squeeze position in the middle. In the early part of the life cycle products are high value times low volume, which is OK. At the commodity part of the life cycle products are low value times high volume – that's still OK, but requires an altogether different business model. In the middle is a no man's land where a lot of VARs find themselves."

Humphreys will provide examples of how resellers can make sure they do not fall into this gap. He'll also be looking at some of the other current pressures on VARs. Humphreys believes that most resellers' business models are still too general and that this will have to change if the channel is to avoid a spate of failures.

"Many are trying to be all things to all people and failing. The key is to establish where you are as a channel player and do what you do well," he said.

If you are seeking out the best potential partners in the mobile market, then it could well be worth attending the presentation that Rachel Lashford, one of the bright crop of analysts from channel-spe-

The *CRN* special panel debates

Comms Solution Theatre at 12.45 on 12 April 2005
VoIP on the web – a pipe dream or the next big wave?
With Skype, Vonage and other services already attracting broadband users, is VoIP for everyone just around the corner, and will voice resellers have to move faster than they previously thought into the converged world? Industry experts assess the reality of VoIP today. The panel for this event will be made up of senior channel management from leading vendors, such as Nortel and Alcatel, as well as Keith Humphreys from independent researcher, euroLAN.

Resellers Forum at 11.45 on 13 April
The SME buyers dilemma – which route will they take?
What route are SME buyers most likely to take in the future? Will they continue to work with the traditional reseller? Will they turn to retail, to mail order or the web, or go direct in ever-increasing numbers? We hear from some of the individuals that have vested interests. Leading figures from resellers, as well as major distributors and vendors, will be sitting on this panel.

*Anyone attending the shows will be welcome to sit in on these panel discussions and put their own questions to our panelists.

cialist research firm Canalys, will be giving at the show.

Lashford will be looking at the mobile device market and the trend for more mobiles to have dual functionality. She will be giving details about who is currently winning the battle for market share and looking ahead to predict which vendors are best placed to exploit growth in this vital part of the market. Lashford will also look at key areas of opportunity for resellers.

Several of the presentations in the Reseller Forum this year will focus on different aspects of managing business, and in particular on sales development, marketing and customer retention.

Peter Wright, managing director of Wright Associates, a leading marketing consultancy, will be talking about how different tools and methodologies can be used to give your business a competitive advantage. And Ian Henley, chairman of the Contact to ContRact consultancy, will be there to talk about how resellers and channel businesses of all kinds can survive in today's tough markets.

"Once the IT industry was an incredible money making machine", says Henley. "But now it is slowly emerging from a traumatic recession and we can't expect a return to the 'happy days' because in the future there will be no free lunch." In his presentation, Henley will suggest ways in which to manage change in a maturing market and address some of the practical measures that can be taken to improve business performance.

John Niland, managing director of Success 121, will be taking a more direct approach in his presentations and talking up the merits of 'systematic referral marketing' – a way of finding new customers. "Searching for clients is a drain on the diary and on motivation", says Niland. "But if you could permanently escape from the prospecting treadmill by finding better ways to capture the attention of ideal clients, what difference would that make?"

In his presentation Niland will be outlining how to take a different approach to finding new business prospects.

Tarek Sherazee, director of specialist channel consultancy VIA International,

will be discussing how the quality of business relationships can be managed more effectively. This will be aimed at everyone in the channel, from vendors right through to resellers.

Taking an even broader and long-term perspective, Simon Orme, managing partner at Simon Orme and Associates, is going to be talking about the strategy of buying your way to success – and why you should be cautious if this is your chosen route.

"Acquisition can be an important part of the growth strategy, but it has to be approached with care", says Orme. "Due diligence will focus upon the financial aspects of the acquisition, but too often the cultural elements are given less attention than they deserve."

There is no question that the cultural fit has all too often been underestimated in mergers and acquisitions in the IT industry in recent times. Orme, who has been both a buyer and a seller of businesses, will also address the need for good management expertise and practice in acquisitive companies.

For resellers who want to keep their fingers on the pulse, a visit to the Market Information Centre should be time well-spent. Here, Dave Everett, European product and platform manager at AMD, will be presenting his views on the importance of 64-bit computing, and John Osbourne, general manager of PC components at Computer 2000, will be looking at the wider opportunities that are being offered by mobile computing.

"We think there are more opportunities emerging in the mobile market – developments in technology and connectivity are driving the buying decision where the combination of an attractive specification and price will be more important than the name on the box," says Osbourne.

"We'll be talking about how resellers and systems builders can make the most of those opportunities and how we are going to help them."

Richard Huddy, head of European development relations at Centerprise, will look at the future of 3D graphics. All three

Source: Simon Procter

feature

of these presentations can be witnessed on both days of the show.

You will have to be there on Tuesday morning, though, to hear Simon Darby, Windows XP marketing manager at Microsoft, talk about 'The future landscape of consumer digital enjoyment', and to hear Tom Wagland, quality assurance manager at Ricoh, ask 'Is environmental management a waste of time?'

On Wednesday morning in the Market Information Centre there will be a presentation by Stephen Blomfield, business manager at reseller Enlight, on building a foundation for systems integration. Another speaker will be Josef Zacharias, UK director of firewall specialist Kerio Technologies, who will talk about 'no-lose' partnerships between vendors and resellers.

The programmes in the Convergence Solutions Theatre will be very different on each of the days. Among the highlights will be Tuesday's presentations from Swyx and from AYC Telecom, as well as a talk from Aastra Telecom on IP telephony. Paul Taylor, sales and marketing director at Swyx, says that he plans to demonstrate to resellers how they can make money from selling convergence software and SIP devices right away.

"There are a lot of misconceptions within the channel on what VoIP can offer on legacy and soft-switching telephony products, and over the impact that SIP will have on the market. We'll be covering all these topics at the show," he said. Aastra will be looking specifically at "native IP" and asking whether this is indeed the way forward.

> **"There are a lot of misconceptions within the channel on what VoIP can offer on legacy and soft-switching telephony."**

Wednesday's programme will see presentations along similar lines from names such as Alcatel, Hewlett-Packard (HP) and Mitel, as well as VoIPStore and distributor Westcon. In addition, Teleware Hosted Services will be talking about the opportunities for on-demand communications and launching its reseller programme. Full details of the programmes are available on the relevant web sites – see box below for details.

In his presentation, Alcatel's Northern Europe solutions marketing manager, Neal Tilley, will be arguing that by signing up with dedicated broadband telephony providers, resellers could be missing a trick and losing out on substantial revenue from service management contracts. Alcatel is championing the use of in-house or hosted broadband IP telephony to increase margins and give customers choice and flexibility. The vendor is also launching some new channel schemes at the show.

In the Comms Education Zone there will also be a different programme on each day and the focus will be very much on convergence. Day one kicks off with Oak Telecom asking 'Is convergence really happening?' This will be followed by a look at QoS on DSL-based VPNs, presented by Tiscali.

Later there will be a talk by Broadband Telephony on coping with the transition to VoIP, and Kay Tobin, commercial director at Tri-Line Network Telephony, will be giving a presentation that is intriguingly entitled 'Breaking all the rules'.

Don't expect too many rules to be shattered – but do expect some pragmatic and useful information to be imparted – on Wednesday, when you can hear speakers from Cable & Wireless and Titan Technology talk about how to best exploit convergence opportunities in the Convergence Theatre.

Easynet will be focusing in on MPLS networks and Veritape director of sales and marketing, Cameron Ross, will present his views on the increasing potential for resellers to make sales of recording equipment. Finally, Stephen Alexander, vice president of strategic solutions at on-line comms trading marketplace Arbinet, will be talking about how you can manage suppliers more effectively.

Wherever you choose to spend your time, you should find something that will help you understand where we are in the market today and what the future holds. Hopefully, along the way, you'll also pick up a few tips on how to maximise your sales in what will undoubtedly remain one of the most vibrant areas of the market for many years to come.

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Welcome to the Education Zone

The education programme is completely free for visitors and offers a unique opportunity to enhance your time at the show. Within the zone you'll find different sections focusing on different areas of the market. For full details of the programme in each section, please visit the web sites listed at the bottom of this box.

Reseller Forum: This is the place to hear independent views about commercial strategies from leading independent consultants to help you enter new markets and sell new products. Presentations include those by channel researchers euroLAN and Canalys.

Strategic marketing – Wright Associates
Thriving and surviving in maturing IT markets – Contact to Contract
How to avoid the squeeze: balancing value and volume – euroLAN
Managing relationship quality – VIA International
Smart mobile devices for the business market – Canalys

Comms Solutions Theatre: Here you will be able to see presentations from major vendors on the latest communication technologies and solutions, and how they can help your customer's business. Presentations taking place here will include:

Is convergence really happening? – Oak Telecom
Generating new revenue streams from convergence – Broadband Telephony
Increasing the value of your call recording sales – Veritape
Managing voice suppliers – how do you perform? – Arbinet

Convergence Solutions Theatre: In this area the focus will be firmly on the rapidly developing market for VoIP solutions. All the presentations will be aimed at resellers and on helping you to build margins in this key area of the market. Presentations taking place here will include:

IP Telephony: the future is now –Swyx Solutions
Native-IP is the future – Aastra Telecom
VoIP for the SME – VoIPStore
Delivering business communications on demand – TeleWare Hosted Services

To get full details of the event programmes and a list of exhibitors visit the following sites:
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www.technologyretailer.co.uk
www.comms-channel.co.uk

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Big-name firms in OEM deals

Ben Tudor

Nortel and Alcatel have signed OEM agreemets with Aruba and Trapeze, bitter rivals of Airespace, following Cisco's acquisition of the firm.

Aruba and Trapeze, who have signed with Alcatel and Nortel respectively, have competed in recent weeks to announce deals and programmes – the latest being parallel launches of licensing deals for other Access Point (AP) makers.

"Nortel has invested in Trapeze. It's a similarly structured deal to the one we have with 3Com," said Michael Coci, Trapeze's director of product marketing and business development.

"Eighty per cent of Airespace's sales came from Nortel, as I understand it," he claimed.

Nortel will jointly develop products with Trapeze, and will also sell its products on an OEM basis.

"A product set will be available in May," said Shirley O'Sullivan, security and WLAN leader for Nortel EMEA.

Aruba has cemented a similar deal with Alcatel. The French telco will develop products for the firm and resell Aruba devices under its Omni brand.

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CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1159226
www.crn.vnunet.com/news/1161385

Cisco thins out to beef up its WLAN offering

Acquisition of Airespace sees firm switch to thin wireless architecture

Jennifer Hagendorf Follett

Cisco has completed its acquisition of Airespace, adding wireless LAN (WLAN) switching to its portfolio.

The acquisition, which was announced in January, plugs a hole in Cisco's WLAN portfolio. The move also means Cisco's competitors – Alcatel and Nortel Networks – must sign new OEM and joint-development partnerships with WLAN vendors. Both vendors previously partnered with Airespace. Nortel has now plumped for Trapeze, and Alcatel has selected Aruba (see left).

Cisco is planning to offer a full WLAN portfolio to support its existing wireless products, as well as the Airespace portfolio, integrating Airespace's technology with its own, according to Alex Thurber, director of security and wireless for worldwide channels at Cisco.

"We have more intelligent APs [Access Points] at the low end, where they don't need to be managed, and at the high end we'll have managed offerings," he said.

With the completion of the acquisition, Airespace's products become part of Cisco's Structured Wireless-Aware Network (SWAN) portfolio, and its team joins the Wireless Networking Business Unit under vice-presidents Brett Galloway and David Leonard.

According to industry observers, Cisco's acquisition of Airespace signals the end of the 'fat versus thin' WLAN architecture debate.

The firm's apparent backing of the WLAN switch model also solidifies its position as the dominant wireless architecture.

WLAN platforms based on stand-alone intelligent, or 'fat', access points are now relegated only to small deployments where there are too few APs to justify

the centrally managed solution offered by 'thin', stripped-down APs paired with WLAN switches, Cisco said.

Cisco has been the most vocal proponent of fat wireless architecture, but has seemingly reversed course with its purchase of Airespace, which makes WLAN switches and thin APs.

"The Cisco/Airespace deal really killed that whole argument," said Aaron Vance, senior analyst at Synergy Research Group. "Cisco was the main proponent [of fat APs] and one of the last soldiers standing."

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CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/features/1161572
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Wi-Fi wireless switch market, March 2004

Symbol 48%
HP 2%
Extreme 7%
Aruba 12%
Airespace 31%

Source: Synergy Research

Computer Reseller News

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Another Avaya executive makes exit

Ben Tudor

Avaya's UK and Ireland head sales director, Enzo Viscito, has left the firm. The vendor would not comment on the news, but a representative for the firm said that Viscito had left by mutual agreement after a 'grown-up' conversation. A replacement has yet to be appointed.

Viscito is one of several staff to leave the UK operation in recent

months. He was preceded by UK and Ireland vice-president Clive Sawkins, and SMB channel sales chief Richard Pitt, who left to join Cisco and voice application specialist IDL Mettoni respectively in the past five months.

However, the traffic has not all been one way; the company also signed three senior executives at the start of the year (*CRN*, 31 January), including the creator of Orange UK's business channel

operation, Paul Louden, as a replacement for Pitt. Buddie Ceronie, former head of 3Com's UK operations, took the reins from Sawkins as vice-president of UK, Eire and southern Africa, after a stint as vice-president of channel sales EMEA at the vendor. Jeremy Keefe, a veteran of reseller Logicalis, has also joined the firm, handling some of its large direct accounts in Europe.

Keith Humphreys, managing

consultant at euroLAN, said that Avaya has made a number of changes recently.

"Avaya didn't break out the SMBS business from the rest of its sales during the last financials," Humphreys said. "It also seems to be bringing the management of the two businesses – SMBS and ECG – closer together."

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White-boxed out of the ring

Martin Lynch

DELL HAS AXED ITS TROUBLED WHITE-BOX efforts in the US, killing off any plans the PC giant had of entering the European system builder market.

The company announced recently that it was exiting the unbranded PC market after just over two years and would cease selling its Pentium and Celeron-based offerings, the 510D and 610D, to channel partners. The company admitted that it stopped selling the systems in January, but it has only just announced a formal end to the programme.

Despite the retreat, Dell maintains that its decision has been based on channel feedback and not a failure to make it work.

"This doesn't signal any diminishment of the [SolutionProvider Direct] programme," Dell claimed in a statement.

"This was based on the fact that solution providers prefer Dell-branded product. Nothing else is changing. We are focusing on the products they are most interested in, which is Dell-branded and third-party products."

Dell entered the sector in August 2002

Michael Dell, Dell

in an attempt to compete with smaller system builders, selling unbranded Dell systems through US resellers and system builders. However, the scheme has been dogged by problems since the start,

according to feedback from analysts and the channel. Despite launching in 2002, Dell's drive to recruit partners was still having problems in 2003 because many felt that Dell systems offered too little margin. Others in the channel did not trust Dell, fearing it would try to steal their customers.

"We have not been super-impressed with what we've seen. I'd still put it in the experiment phase," said Michael Dell, Dell chief executive, in early 2003.

Many European system builders will be breathing a sigh of relief, as Dell is already making life very hard for smaller players with some very aggressive price cuts.

"Dell tried to take on the white box manufacturers and it put its hands up and admitted it can't do it," said Les Billing, managing director of Microtronica.

"That says it can only compete in the branded world. I think it's good news [for system builders here] that Dell has given up. I don't think it was going to spend a lot of time on the white-box sector though, as it ran against its own direct strategy."

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CRN www.crn.vnunet.com/features/1160399

Sales figures leave room for growth

Martin Lynch

GLOBAL PC SALES WILL BE WEAKER THIS YEAR than in 2004, and European sales are expected to tumble from 10 per cent in 2004 to low single digits in 2005.

Despite a strong fourth quarter and healthy 2004 overall, analyst IDC is blaming a cautious US market and a delayed recovery in the Japanese market for the revised figures. Its prediction for growth in total worldwide PC shipments for 2005 has dropped from 10.1 per cent to 9.7 per cent. There will be 195.4 million shipments in 2005 with the total shipment value growing by 5.3 per cent to $209bn.

The good news, according to IDC, is that demand will shift into later years with growth forecast to remain over eight per cent until 2009.

"Despite fears of slowing growth, particularly in the US consumer segment, the PC market was fairly robust in the fourth quarter of 2004, with strong demand in the consumer and business segments," said Loren Loverde, director of IDC's *Worldwide Quarterly PC Tracker*.

"While growth in 2005 will be slower than in 2004, we expect continued strength

Worldwide PC shipments and growth (units million), 2002-2006 (%)

Consumer	13.6 / 13.5 / 8.8< / 8.7
Commercial	11.2 / 15.9 / 10.2 / 8.6
Total	12 / 15 / 9.7< / 8.6

2003
2004
2005*
2006*

* Forecast data

Source: IDC

Computer ResellerNews

in portables and emerging markets."

IDC said that notebooks are fuelling growth in western Europe, with rates of more than 20 per cent predicted in 2005.

"People are more interested now in notebooks than they are in desktops but I feel desktop sales [for us] will still outweigh notebooks for the next couple of years," said Marc Engall, sales manager EMEA at PC builder Elonex.

Recent figures from Context, which tracks sales through the channel in eight of Europe's leading countries, found that sales of notebooks almost equalled desktop sales in January 2005. The analyst firm claimed that if current trends continue, notebook sales will eclipse those of desktops this year (*CRN*, 29 March).

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Contact: Rebecca Hill Tel: (020) 7316 9106 Email: rebecca_hill@vnu.co.uk Database contact: John Leonard (020) 7316 9776 Email: john_leonard@vnu.co.uk
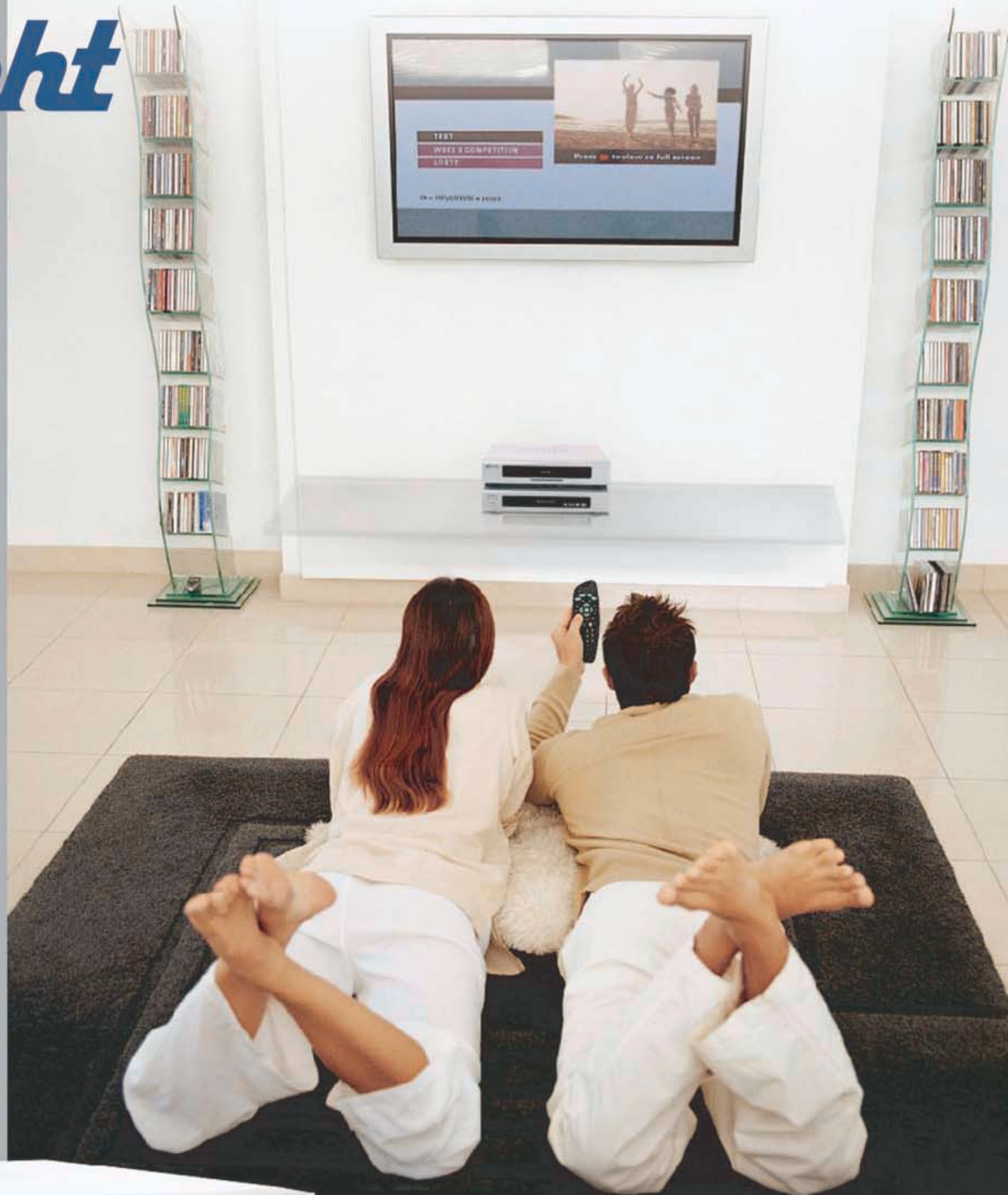
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Living on the edge

Goan trance music fan Richard Bradley, channel sales director, UK & Ireland at Computer Associates, finds golf frustrating but enjoys team building on the narrow ridges of Mont Blanc

Computer Reseller News: Describe your job.

Richard Bradley: I look after all of CA's routes to market ranging from worldwide system integrators, to the large distribution companies, retailers, resellers and OEMs.

What was your first job?
RB: Working for Our Price records on Tottenham Court Road.

How much did it pay?
RB: I can't quite remember how much I got paid. It was just enough to cover my rent and feed myself, but the staff discount on music was great.

How did you get into IT?
RB: At university I did some computer-based research into DNA sequencing on an Apple II computer. This along with a little programming experience got me my first job at Apple in 1983, where I stayed happily for 13 years.

Do you have any IT qualifications or any unusual qualifications?
RB: I have done some assembler level programming courses way back when, but I have no specific qualifications.

> **I've just returned from India where I bought Goan trance music which I'm listening to a lot.**

"Golf is a good walk spoiled." Do you agree?
RB: Definitely. I found it an incredibly frustrating experience. And the adage that a lot of business is carried out on the golf course is utter tripe!

Which is the most dynamic and inspiring vendor?
RB: Apple, for design and innovation.

What's the most memorable sporting occasion you have seen?
RB: The Palio in Sienna: bare-back horse racing medieval-style in the town's central square.

What was the most exciting holiday you ever went on?
RB: An Apple team-building exercise. We climbed Mont Blanc with expert help from Chris Bonnington and local mountain guides. The final ascent is a narrow ridge with sheer drops into either France, Italy or Switzerland. We were tied together and taught to jump in the opposite direction if a team member were to fall. Thankfully I never implemented the manoeuvre.

What is your favourite CD?
RB: David Bowie's Aladdin Sane and Scissor Sisters. I've just returned from India where I bought Goan trance music which I'm listening to a lot.

Who has been the best James Bond? Who should be the next?
RB: Sean Connery, of course. And Ricky Gervais should be the next.

Complete this sentence: "At the Channel Awards, I..."
RB: ...was much less pi**ed than those around me.

What factors do you think gave you the success you have had?
RB: Factor 18 at the start of the holiday working down to factor eight.

What's the worst web site you have seen?
RB: www.bodhranbrothers.com. I discovered this when I googled the words goat and cousin. Don't ask. It's a US folk band who claim that they were "abandoned as babies and raised by wild Irish goats, the Bodhran Brothers maintain their family history through songs, stories, and the close comfort brought about by beating on their deceased siblings' skins". Eh?

Would you rather have a country house or a city penthouse?
RB: I've chosen both.

Which is the better book: *Catch 22* or *Pride and Prejudice*?
RB: *Catch 22*. I like the classics, but Dickens over the Brontes or Austen.

Is IT well taught in schools?
RB: No. It bores the kids rigid.

Companies

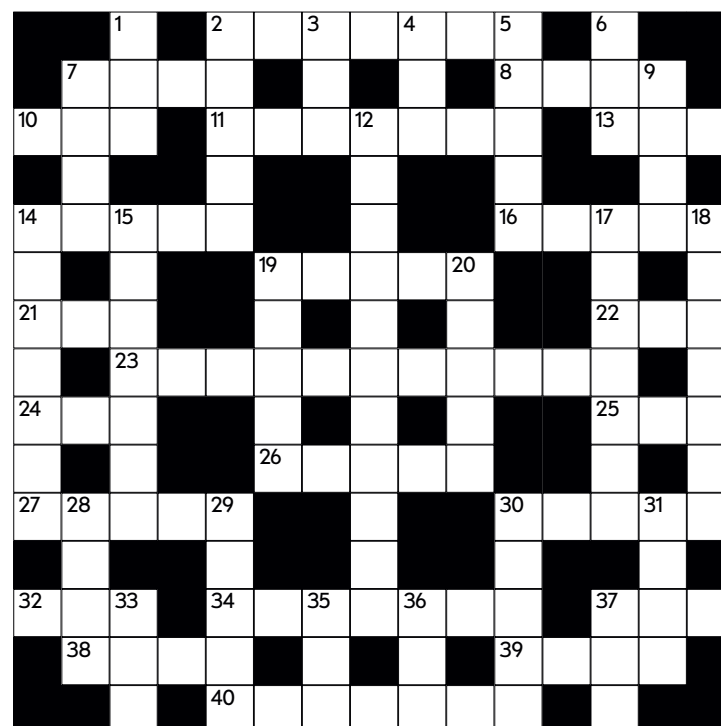## Crossword

Across
2   Program designed for a specific function (7)
7   Microsoft's means of Web file sharing (acr) (4)
8   Concludes a program (4)
10 Resistance unit (3)
11 Mail messages encased in angle brackets (7)
13 Human/machine financial resources (acr) (3)
14 Makes a file accessible (5)
16 ___ join, database management operator (5)
19 Hires a computer system (5)
21 Video performance measure (acr) (3)
22 ASCII character 4 (abbrev) (3)
23 ___ rate, speed of information exchange (3, 8)
24 Compaq's high-performance disk interface (acr) (3)
25 Mouse's foot-wiper? (3)
26 Install a system (3, 2)
27 Remove from a drive (5)
30 Chats on the Internet (5)
32 High ___, good screen quality (abbr) (3)
34 Net ___, Internet filters (7)
37 Independent variable, in short (3)
38 Computer ___, electronic fun (4)
39 ___ space, one quarter of a font size (4)
40 Client-responsive computers (7)

Down
1   Make a screen less bright (3)
2   Computer operators (5)
3   Group of national standard setters (inits) (3)
4   ___ slot, connection (init) (3)
5   Frequent option prompt (3/2)
6   ___ Lovelace, Babbage's programmer (3)
7   Silicon ___, integrated circuit (4)
9   ___ effect, change of state caused by a sub-routine (4)
12 Discrete activity within a computer system (11)
14 Not connected to a network (7)
15 Leading decision support tool from Hyperion (7)
17 ___ sensor, temperature detector (7)
18 Moves a graphic in one plane (7)
19 Classifies (5)
20 Computer multi-user overseer (acr) (5)
28 Stored graphic file (4)
29 Colour tints (5)
30 Tries out a new system (5)
31 Make type spacing more balanced (4)
33 ___ Mac, error indication (3)
35 Neither...___, logic expression (3)
36 Type of disk-drive interface (acr) (3)
37 UNIX system version for IBM PCs (acr) (3)

Crossword supplied by BEAP   For solution see www.crn.vnunet.com

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diary

Dave the dealer

Dave Diamond-Geezer, director of Digital Online Deals and Global Integration (Dodgi) of Dagenham Ltd, is famed among other resellers for his ability to make margin on anything. Contact him at *crn@vnu.co.uk* if you have some pukka gossip or a load of, er, suspiciously cheap components.

Edited by Sara Yirrell

March

28 Monday
Easter Monday

I'm so glad I bought that load of PlayStation consoles from Pete down the road. He swore they were kosher and said the only reason he was selling them was because he didn't have room to store them in his flat. Why wouldn't I have reason to trust him? He only wears that sheepskin coat and flat cap as a fashion statement. Now that Sony has been asked to stop selling the consoles in the States after it lost a patent infringement lawsuit, I have got Dave Jnr to set up my own US web site and those consoles are flying through the door. Funnily enough, when I rang Pete to see if he had any more, his wife told me he had gone to the 'big house'. He must be raking it in.

29 Tuesday
Lucy Lawless's birthday

Trev has just been telling me about two blokes from Malawi who were arrested after claiming the country's president was afraid of ghosts. He really does read the most bizarre web sites, but is always good for a bit of gossip. Trev said the pair were arrested under a new charge of causing ridicule, for saying the president had to move out of his mansion because it was haunted. Always wanting to act the hard man, Trev said he'd never be scared of a few ghosts, which may be true, but I bet he'd run a mile if he caught sight of Her Indoors first thing in the morning.

30 Wednesday
Celine Dion's birthday

Some of my customers up north have really been taking the Mick this week. They keep placing massive orders and then trying to name their own price to pay for the goods. I only caved in once because some bloke actually inflated the amount he had to pay, which was nice. Apparently this was because a supermarket in Yorkshire allowed people to guess their own shopping bills when a thunderstorm caused a power cut, and the management wanted to keep customers happy rather than making them wait. I don't know about a power cut, but the next one who tries it on will just be cut off.

31 Thursday
Christopher Walken's birthday

Her Indoors always says doing the weekly food shop with Dave Jnr in tow is difficult, so yesterday I told her to stop moaning. After the steam had stopped coming out of her ears she announced it's now up to me to get the shopping. So I'm going to a supermarket that's installed DVD and CD players on trolleys to keep kids amused. I know Dave Jnr is a bit big for the trolley, but I told him it's either that or spend two hours locked inside a hot car with no open windows. He gave in.

April

1 Friday
Toshiro Mifune's birthday

A Chinese internet firm has sent new sales staff out begging on the street as part of their training, saying it will teach them to be thick-skinned and less self-conscious. I quite like the sound of this and am thinking of sending Shirl out to Dagenham High Street this afternoon – she dresses like a streetwalker most of the time anyway. And I won't let her back in until she's earned enough to buy me a pint in the Dog & Duck.

Dave now has his own weblog. Catch up on his views or send him some juicy gossip at:
http://crn.vnunet.com/davethedealer

Calendar

7 April
Event: Central and Eastern European Storage Roadshow 2005 Poland
Venue: Warsaw
www.idc.com/events/eventshome.jsp

12-13 April
Event: Comms Channel Expo
Venue: NEC, Birmingham
www.comms-channel.co.uk

12-15 April
Event: Storage Networking World
Venue: Phoenix, Arizona
www.snwusa.com/agenda.html

17-20 April
Event: Siebel User Week
Venue: Barcelona
www.siebeluserweek.com/europe

20-21 April
Event: The Wireless LAN Event
Venue: Olympia, London
www.wlanevent.com

25-26 April
Event: Gartner Outsourcing and IT Services Summit 2005

Venue: Royal Lancaster Hotel, London
www3.gartner.com/2_events/conferences/asm6i.jsp

26-28 April
Event: Infosecurity Europe 2005
Venue: Olympia, London
www.infosec.co.uk

28-29 April
Event: Outsourcing & IT Services Summit
Venue: Royal Lancaster Hotel, London
www.gartner.com

29-30 April
Event: Symbian Exposium 03
Venue: Excel Centre, London
www.symbian.com/exposium

28 June
Event: PCA Golf Day
Venue: Cambridge
admin@pcauk.org

A minimal attendance fee may apply. Dates were correct at time of going to press and may be subject to change.

Comms Channel Expo details

For the eighth consecutive year, the NEC, Birmingham, will be hosting the Comms Channel Expo and the Computer Trade Show (CTS) from 12-13 April 2005.

Comms Channel Expo, supported by *CRN* and sponsored by Oak Telecom and Westcon, features an exhibition of about 60 suppliers. Also supported by *CRN* and sponsored by VIP Computer Centre and eSys Distribution UK, CTS will include an exhibition of about 150 leading suppliers.

Both events play host to a free comprehensive educational programme, which is split between four theatres:
● The Comms Solutions Theatre.
● The Reseller Forum.
● The Market Information Centre.
● The Convergence Solutions Theatre.

CRN will host two panel debates at the show. 'Voice over IP on the web – a pipe dream or the next big wave?' is scheduled for 12.45 in the Comms Solutions Theatre on 12 April, while 'The SME buyer dilemma – where can you get the best deal?', will be taking place at 11.45 on 13 April in the Reseller Forum.

Two new events are running this year: Office Technology Expo and the Technology Retailer Show. Visitor badges will entitle delegates to attend all four shows.

Visit *www.comms-channel.co.uk* or *www.ctshow.co.uk* for more information or to pre-register, or call (01635) 588 867.

(Sidebar tabs: Addresses / Anniversary)

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