

Rust Report

News and views of the action in Australasia's IT sector this week

March 2, 2007

THE RUST BUCKET

Business is business

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY is no longer a business resource, it is the business environment. Ongoing advances in IT, along with global competition, are adding complexity and uncertainty of several orders of magnitude to the organisational environment.

However, let's face it, in most enterprises technology is not only ubiquitous, it is also largely the same, with minimal levels of differentiation among businesses of similar size or scope. What matters is having the right people to innovate, facilitate, and drive the "business of the business" through the IT organisation's capabilities to deliver products and services.

Among the attributes currently in demand for IT personnel, none is more important than an overall understanding of business processes. Being in IT today is about understanding the business issues clearly and having the ability to deploy technology in pursuit of attaining business goals.

Also, the need to navigate regulatory compliance suddenly sees IT plunged into a partnership of sorts with the finance department. Finance understands where it needs to go and IT must understand how to get there. The challenge is creating a dialogue for the CFO-CIO collaboration to occur. Despite all the grumblings, this is an opportunity for businesses to nail down their internal controls and bring IT into the fold.

Many companies have decided they no longer want to be in the IT business or the processing business or even the R&D business. They have prioritised the tasks they should pursue as their core business and decided that they really don't need to perform whole sets of tasks to remain competitive and profitable. The rise of the IT services industry is testimony to the analysis that businesses have performed to discover what's core and what's not.

Expertise is also evolving: over the past decade expertise has become distributed across the globe. Once a business decides on its core competencies and once it identifies the expertise it needs to satisfy its non-core requirements, then it looks for cost effective expertise.

Time will tell if outsourcing results in more technology jobs; time will also tell if the jobs are at the right place in the technology food chain. Another worry is whether the education system is able to stay current, foster innovation, and provide leadership.

The challenge of technology managers is to coordinate the pieces of innovative process in a period where their window of opportunity is shrinking. As the rate of new opportunities increases, the duration of each opportunity decreases, meaning that business organisations have smaller timeframes in which to act.

— Len Rust RustOz@bigpond.com.au

UK food maker's reps hit the road with O4

Australian sales systems developer O4 Corporation has delivered a mobile field force solution to UK food manufacturer Cookie Coach. The system is being used by the snack food producer's 26 van sales reps, who service more than 3000 outlets throughout the UK, explained Desmond Miller, CEO of O4. The system roll-out was carried out by O4 and its UK partner Sandpiper Corporation.

Miller added that the software, which is being run on Intermec Pocket PCs linked to Cookie Coach's HQ via GPRS, is used to input orders and other sales data from the field.

The collaboration with Sandpiper was indicative of the international recognition being gained by the Australian software, Miller claimed. "The partnership with Sandpiper Corporation will enable O4 to continue its focus on the consumer products industry in the UK. Meanwhile, using O4's desktop application, the O4 Workbench, Sandpiper will develop solutions for other industries, such as transport and logistics." www.o4corporation.com

CCK wins bank deal in Philippines

Australian developer CCK Financial Solutions has been selected to provide its Guava Suite treasury management system to United Coconut Planters Bank in the Philippines. The bank will use the software to manage its treasury and trust banking functions, explained Joseph Wong, managing director of CCK. The software will also be accessible from the bank's 178 branches for customer-based foreign exchange, money market, and securities investment transactions.

The bank is CCK's first Guava client in the Philippines and also the developer's first trust banking client, and will open a new line of business for CCK, Wong added. www.cck.com.au

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INSIDER EDITION

Aussie tech for teachers in Maldives

Brisbane developer Softlink has implemented its Liberty3 SQL library system for the Maldives College of Higher Education. The Web-based software will allow the college to integrate the operations of its five library branches and two college campuses, explained Chris McPhee, technical product manager for Softlink. In the future the inter-library loan capability of Liberty3 SQL will be used to involve the college's island campuses more actively in its library and information services, he added.

"MCHE, like many higher education institutions around the world, needed a robust, fully multi-lingual solution that could operate through a Web browser," McPhee said. www.softlinkint.com

Inspired choice for logistics group

Inspired Logistics — a third-party logistics company in The Riders Group — plans to install the Atlas contract warehousing system from Sydney-based developer Advanta Software.

Inspired specialises in the pharmaceutical, medical device, and healthcare sectors and was attracted by the modularity of the Atlas software, explained Paul Bunting, logistics manager at Inspired. The company will initially implement modules from the supply chain management and supply chain execution suites, including client billing, warehouse management, scan packing, EDI, order processing, purchasing, focus forecasting, report generating, track and trace, and electronic forms printing, Bunting added. They will be integrated with Inspired's own in-house applications. www.advantasoftware.com.au

Infomedia breaks into bus market

Infomedia, the Australian developer of electronic parts catalogues, has broken into a new market with the sale of its Microcat system to Turkish bus manufacturer Temsa. Gary Martin, CEO of Infomedia, said Temsa makes seven per cent of all buses manufactured in Western Europe and is aiming to increase its market share to 10 per cent this year. "Temsa buses are on the road in over 30 countries — predominantly within Europe — requiring after-sales service and maintenance to be carried out around the world," Martin added.

"The agreement with Temsa represents an exciting new venture for Infomedia. For some time now we have held the view that Microcat could bring similar benefits to users in other sectors, just as it has for passenger vehicle parts professionals over many years," Martin said. www.infomedia.com.au

Aussie twang in building society app

Heritage Building Society has awarded a contract to Information Technologies Australia (iTa) for the provision of voice self-service applications. iTa will provide a customised application that will allow users to navigate through a range of financial services and then access the preferred service either via an automated transaction or through a contact centre agent.

The system will be based on a VoIP VXLN voice recognition system from Intervoice connected to a Cisco switch provided by Touchbase. It is scheduled to go live at the end of April. www.itaus.com.au

Mirvac goes live with access system


Australian company Valorem Systems has completed the first phase of the roll-out of its Praxeo facilities access management system for the Mirvac property group. The company has so far deployed 50 systems, with a further 15 to be implemented in the second phase.

A spokesman explained that the Praxeo software allows property managers and contractors to track who visits a site, how long they spend there, and where they are on the site. www.valoremsystems.com

Eclipse speeds reporting for hotels

Accor Hotels has completed an accounting upgrade across sites in Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and French Polynesia. Australian company Eclipse Computing — a subsidiary of UXC — helped Accor with the consolidation of its financial data from French Polynesia to Sydney. "This means that Accor now has tools to collate data from Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and French Polynesia, in multiple currencies, whilst ensuring local statutory reporting needs are still met," explained Martin Wildsmith, director of business development at Eclipse.

The upgrade included the implementation of SunSystems' accounting software with the addition of Microsoft Dynamics (formerly Great Plains) accounting and PayGlobal. The goal was to consolidate 45 hotel ledgers into a single corporate ledger, he added. www.au.eclipsecomputing.com



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Motion gets moving with Blue Zone

Reseller Blue Zone has won a couple of strong contracts in Australia and New Zealand for Motion Computing, a US provider of slate tablet PCs for mobile professionals. The new customers are Lock N Key, and Veolia Water Solutions and Technologies.

Lock N Key, a security wholesaler, will provide its A/NZ sales reps with Motion Computing tablets, which will allow them to review customer history, submit orders to the warehouse, and create invoices while in the field.

Environment solutions provider Veolia Water Solutions and Technologies has selected Motion's tablet PCs to support its service technicians as they monitor drinking and waste water services around Australia. www.bluezone.com.au

IronPort to protect Woodside e-mails

Woodside Energy has awarded IronPort Systems a contract to deploy an e-mail security appliance at its headquarters in Perth and a facility in Texas. The deal was negotiated by ChannelWorx, IronPort's Australian distributor, and was fulfilled by reseller Corporate Express. www.channelworx.com.au

Experts concerned by health plans

Developments affecting e-health records are of such concern to Australian IT and health professionals, that they have drawn attention to four areas they believe need urgent attention. At a meeting in Sydney on Monday the Health Informatics Society of Australia spelt out the danger areas as: wide-reaching data access; the need for special provisions for health information; the use of national identifiers; and awareness of IT risk factors.

"It should be recognised that incidents involving the revealing of sensitive health information are irreversible, disclosure is for life," explained Professor Peter Croll, who chaired the privacy forum.

Professor Bill Caelli told the meeting that privacy is not just about building secure systems to keep intruders out. "Many privacy violations involve insider attacks," he noted.

Further, software used by doctors and clinics leaves much to be desired, Caelli said. "The companies that supply this software openly admit they have only just recently started to build security into their systems from the ground up and that nearly all current systems in use have simply tried to bolt security on." www.hisa.org.au

Aussies worth watching

A roundup of companies making waves at home and abroad

- **GENOS** commercialises emotional intelligence instruments and programs based on research undertaken at Swinburne University of Technology. The company's solutions have been used by large organisations that include Australia Post, Sanofi-Aventis, Pfizer, and OneSteel. Genos' core principle is to help individuals and organisations reach their full potential through developing their emotional intelligence. www.genos.com.au
- **INTERCAD** specialises in mechanical computer-aided engineering, computer-aided design, and computer-aided manufacturing solutions. Core activities include software sales, training, and consulting services as well as technical support. The technologies Intercad supplies address the full spectrum of customer requirements that range from engineering design, finite element analysis, visualisation, and animation to 3D graphics accelerators. www.intercad.com.au
- **UTILIBILL** is a utility billing, provisioning, customer management, and self-care system that is used by more than 75 service providers across Australia. Utilibill offers an end-to-end solution ensuring that users minimise the number of systems their staff require to run the day to day business. Utilibill also offers migration transition services and a range of services to streamline business process. www.utilibill.com.au
- **GOTALK** provides a range of wholesale and retail telecommunication services and has developed a Universal Recharge account that allows customers to manage and share their telco spend across a range of prepaid mobile, Internet, broadband, and dial-up services. GoTalk has established corporate partnerships with Harvey Norman, BP, Caltex, Tandy, Harris Technology, and Australia Post. www.gotalk.com.au
- **TYPEQUICK** specialises in keyboard training and is used in more than 3000 Australian schools, TAFES, colleges, and universities. TypeQuick is also used throughout Japan, where it trains 250,000 students each year, as well as in New Zealand, the UK, Europe, South Africa, and the US. The company works closely with clients to implement its products. www.typequick.com.au
- **COORDIMAX** has developed an integrated suite of software applications to automate business processes, capture data, and process it for effective management decision-making. The Cordimax product is now available to small enterprises through Ingram Micro. www.coordimax.com

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DEAL MAKERS

Chinese commercialise CSIRO tech

The CSIRO ICT Centre has awarded China Electronic Technology Corporation a licence to commercialise its wireless communications technology in China. The deal, which involves technology transfer in the area of antennas, is the first of its kind between the two parties, but is expected to herald a long-term partnership, claimed Dr Y Jay Guo, director of the CSIRO Wireless Technologies Laboratory.

"With its booming economy and large consumer base China is fast becoming a significant early adopter of new technologies," Dr Guo said.

"CSIRO is confident that the deal will allow the opportunity for a closer collaboration between China and Australia to extend research co-operation and develop markets for CSIRO's research." www.csiro.au

Keycorp keeps us guessing

Electronic transactions specialist Keycorp has kept the ASX in suspense over the exact nature of a refinancing it is undertaking. Trading in the company's shares was suspended on Monday and, despite several false starts, had not been resumed by the close of business on Thursday.

In its initial request for a trading halt Keycorp said it was engaged in discussions with third-parties regarding a financial restructuring. The halt was not expected to last more than 48 hours but was not lifted on Wednesday morning as had been suggested in the statement to the ASX.

Keycorp has been fighting to get into the black since the 2004/05 financial year when it sold its subsidiary Transaction Network Solutions back to Telstra (Rust Report, July 1 2005, p4) www.keycorp.net

eServGlobal buys messaging group

eServGlobal — an Australian developer of network-based enhanced solutions for telcos — has bought the assets of Empower Interactive Group (EIG), a provider of mobile messaging solutions. Ian Buddery, CEO of eServGlobal, said EIG's clients include seven operators in one of the world's largest mobile communications groups, as well as several major carriers in South-East Asia.

"Empower has a product suite which is complementary to eServGlobal's messaging offering and we share many important customers," Buddery said. eServGlobal will further develop EIG's products, he added. www.eservglobal.com

Mincom licences recruitment pack

Queensland developer Mincom has entered an agreement that will allow it to offer a hosted recruitment service from NGA.Net under its own brand. The solution will be marketed as Mincom e-Recruitment and will be integrated into the Mincom Ellipse enterprise asset management solution.

"Our customers come from high growth, asset-intensive industries where attracting and sourcing qualified talent is key to their success. Through this relationship we will be able to assist customers in streamlining the recruitment process and reducing their time-to-hire," claimed Johann Poppenbeck, Mincom's vice president of industry and product management. www.mincom.com

SMS buys business process firm

SMS Management & Technology has expanded its consulting business through the acquisition of Operational Concepts (www.opconcepts.com.au), a Victorian consulting firm that specialises in business process architecture, organisational redesign, and business improvement services. The two companies had previously worked together on business engagements in the financial services and infrastructure sectors, noted Tom Stianos, CEO of SMS.

Some 22 staff of Operational Concepts will join SMS, including the firm's principals, who will assist in the integration of the two. www.smsmt.com

UCMS brings offshoring onshore

Contact centre specialist United Customer Management Solutions (UCMS) has formed a division specifically to provide alternatives to offshore outsourcing. The new division already has customers in Melbourne who are initially being offered inbound customer support. Within 12 months the business will be offering services nationally, claimed David Barnes, executive general manager of the new UCMSremote service.

"It's a recurring theme," Barnes noted. "Companies typically head offshore for contact centre and administration support services in order to reduce the cost of labour, but too often the planning and consideration of how best to culturally align their service branding requirements with offshore service providers is incomplete. Within two years companies are heading back home again." www.ucms.net



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DEAL MAKERS

Continued from page 4

Computershare continues US growth

Australian share registry specialist Computershare has expanded its North American empire through two acquisitions valued at a combined \$US25 million.

In Canada Computershare has agreed to buy the corporate trust assets of TD Bank Financial Group, and in the US it has acquired the transfer agent business of Western Corporate Services, which trades as US Stock Transfer Corporation.

"While individually small these acquisition are part of our ongoing consolidation of like businesses across the world," explained Stuart Crosby, CEO of Computershare. "We will continue to look for opportunities to invest further in all the markets we operate in." www.computershare.com.au

EDS has Aussie defence in its sights

US services provider EDS has launched a division that will target Australia's defence market. The new EDS Australia Defence Services will aim to secure involvement in the defence areas of battlespace, logistics support, and administration.

Chris Mitchell, managing director of EDS Australia, said the company will spend more than \$A5 million a year on training and R&D to address a "looming IT skills shortage in defence".

"We have assessed the resources issue very carefully and will be transferring 50 engineers and project managers to our defence business over the next 12 months," Mitchell said. "We intend to become a major participant in Federal Government defence tenders."

— BUSINESS BRIEFS —

- Oriel Communications has raised \$A1 million through a private placement to sophisticated investors, including the company's three largest shareholders. The funds will "support strategic initiatives". www.orielcommunications.com.au
- Genos, a company that uses technology developed at Swinburne University of Technology to help organisations measure emotional intelligence, has appointed Kitso Khuma its South African distributor. www.genos.com.au
- NSW company Risk Shield has launched an on-demand version of its Enterprise Risk Management software. The new service will enable the company to implement a worldwide distribution model, claimed Maco Tapia, managing director of Risk Shield. www.riskshield.net

COMMS BITS**MobileActive gains a US foothold**

Australian mobile phone content provider MobileActive has entered a multi-territory billing agreement with US company Sybase365. The deal gives the Australian company access to bill its content and entertainment catalogue over the Sybase365 premium billing and delivery networks, which includes premium rate SMS agreements with up to 125 carriers around the world.

"There are attractive emerging market opportunities for mobile phone content and entertainment and this agreement gives the company the ability to enter a number of those markets in a highly efficient and effective manner without the need for localised infrastructure," claimed Chris Thorpe, CEO of MobileActive. www.mobileactivecorporate.com

Hatteras backs PowerTel network

US company Hatteras Networks has been selected to provide mid-band Ethernet solutions that will be used in a copper network to be offered around Australia by PowerTel. The network will offer 2-40M-bits/sec symmetrical Ethernet-over-copper services, explained Paul Broad, managing director of PowerTel.

"PowerTel's enterprise customers will no longer have to wait for fibre to get high-performance, high-value Ethernet services. With Hatteras Networks' equipment we can extend the Ethernet service edge of our network to all businesses today," Broad claimed. www.powertel.com.au

— Comms Briefs —

- New Zealand ISP Orcon Internet has selected Siemens Networks to deploy an IP-based network that will be used to offer voice-over-IP services for Kiwi residential and business customers.
- Diebold Australia, which recently was named a reseller of Zylotech Secure Virtual Surveillance systems (*Rust Report*, Feb 23, p4) has been awarded a contract to deploy a pilot of the system for Vodafone Australia. The system will be used at a remote site to enable Vodafone to assess the ease of control and quality of the system. www.zylotech.com.au
- ICT services provider Brennan IT has launched a range of managed IP telephony solutions aimed at the SMB sector. www.brennanit.com.au
- BigAir Group has teamed up with an undisclosed partner to submit a response to the NSW Government's call for expressions of interest in the provision of broadband wireless services. www.bigair.com.au

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RUST e-RESEARCH

How Aussies protect their assets

A national survey of 1800 Australian small and medium businesses (SMBs) has found that almost half didn't have a system in place for managing their IT assets, costing them thousands of dollars each year in depreciated values, residuals on leased equipment, and missing parts.

The survey conducted by Invizage, part of the Sensis group, found that 45 per cent of the SMBs surveyed were not proactively managing their I.T. assets.

The survey revealed that just over 50 per cent of respondents in the construction, manufacturing, and retail industries had an IT asset management system in place. Given the propensity towards mobile technologies and point-of-sale systems in these industries, this was a revealing statistic.

Invizage managing director, Elisabet Wreme, said with mobility and compliance issues becoming key factors for SMBs, they ran the risk of increased costs if their IT assets were unaccounted for.

"Forty-six per cent of SMBs with 19 employees or less aren't monitoring software licences and hardware, surprising when you consider the amount of computer equipment that may exist within businesses of that size," she noted.

The survey also found that only 50 per cent of SMBs had some type of disaster recovery plan. Just 48 per cent said they backed up data daily, while a quarter of SMBs conducted weekly backups.

"A large number of SMBs said they could retrieve data and systems from their backups in the event of a disaster," said Wreme. "However, with only 52 per cent of SMBs conducting daily backups, they might not have access to crucial up-to-date data if something drastic happened to their premises or infrastructure."

"Interestingly, SMBs predominantly operated by females were less likely to conduct daily backups, with only 37 per cent of female-operated businesses conducting daily backups, compared to 52 per cent of male-operated businesses," continued Wreme.

Looking at the regional/metropolitan dichotomy, the survey found that only 42 per cent of SMBs in regional areas had an IT disaster recovery plan in place, while their metropolitan counterparts showed 54 per cent of SMBs owning a disaster recovery plan.

SOA finally living up to its hype

Service-enablement might finally be living up to its hype according to recently released research from programming consultancy Evans Data Corp.

The company found that nearly half of programmers have already participated in successful SOA development efforts, and that SOA development efforts themselves are finishing on time, for the most part.

Service-enablement and service-oriented architecture have garnered somewhat mixed reputations, in part, sceptics grouse, because they promise more than they can deliver, ignore obvious people and process problems, and are imperfectly understood by executives and business stakeholders (who tend to focus more on the promise than on the feasibility of pervasive service-enablement).

Evans Data's study might not do much to allay the concerns (much less quell the grousing) of SOA sceptics, but it should bolster the case of SOA promoters. Evans Data found that among programmers who have experience with SOA-related projects, more than 40 per cent said they were able to complete a typical SOA development effort within three months. While that's probably not as high a rate as most project managers would like, it's still more than twice the year-ago percentage. What's more, greater than 60 per cent of all SOA projects are finishing within six months, which is not a bad tally by any measure, especially when one takes into account the traditionally high rate of failure among enterprise development projects.

"We are now moving from the SOA pilot stage into full live deployments, taking advantage of the reuse of frameworks and services thus driving the much improved productivity curve," said Evans Data president John Andrews.

What's behind these verifiable increases in developer productivity? For starters, Evans Data says, organisations are adopting .Net and Java for SOA in nearly equal proportions. By 2009, the researcher estimated, two out of three SOA developers will be running most of their applications in managed code. How's that for momentum?

Spam volumes hit record high

Marshal's Threat Research and Content Engineering (TRACE) Team have found that total spam volume is at its highest peak ever and has increased 280 per cent since October last year. According to the TRACE Team, spam levels increased 30 per cent in a single recent week, coinciding with a resurgence of spam coming out of China and South Korea.

"The increase in total spam volume could be attributed to the dramatic increase in spam we have seen coming out of Asia in the week," said a Marshal spokesman.

RUST e-RESEARCH continued on page 7 >>

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RUST e-RESEARCH
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"The increase in spam coming out of the region is likely the result of a newly activated botnet running off computers in Asia", the spokesman said. "This shows yet again the importance of having adequate malware protection on your home and business computers."

According to the TRACE team, users now receive eight spam messages for every 10 e-mails they receive in their inbox. "Approximately 85 per cent of all e-mails received are spam. If the current increases in spam volumes continue in 2007, users can expect at least 90 per cent of all e-mails received to be spam by the end of the year.

"Although it is difficult to see the levels dropping over an extended period of time, it is also hard to imagine such high levels of spam in today's e-mail traffic," said the spokesman.

Spam will remain one the most significant security threats facing businesses in 2007, the TRACE team reported.

IT risk management ranks lowly

Sixty per cent of respondents to an IT risk management report conducted for Symantec expected at least one major IT incident per year that could halt or disrupt a critical part of the business.

Some of the other key findings included:-

- 66 percent of respondents expected a major regulatory incident at least once every five years; and
- 58 percent of respondents expected a major data loss caused by events such as data centre outage, corruption of data, or breach of security systems, at least once every five years.

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BY ASSOCIATION

Where are all the women?

By Sheryle Moon*

When I joined the ICT industry in 1981, little did I know that computers would provide me with such a dynamic, challenging and fulfilling career.

We all know women who have enjoyed satisfying and stimulating careers in the ICT industry. And yet statistics tell us that the number of women in the ICT industry is falling rapidly. The Australian Bureau of Statistics tells us that 23.6 per cent of ICT employees were women in 2001. By 2004, that figure had fallen to 16 per cent.

And here's more food for thought. AIIA's counterpart in Britain, IntellectUK, released a study last year which suggested the male-dominated environment and a lack of work/life balance made the industry unattractive to women.

So, we have female professionals abandoning the ICT industry because it is not providing them with the career challenges and work/life balance they are looking for. Simultaneously, the numbers of young women studying IT is also shrinking.

In 1996 the percentage of women enrolled in IT courses was 36 per cent, falling to 22.6 per cent in 2003 — that's 13.4 per cent in seven years.

We know that many young women are turned off careers in ICT because they believe it's for computer nerds, or for blokes, or boring. And yet, when asked what they are looking for in a career, young women say they want fun, variety, security, interaction with others, to express their creativity, and the opportunity to travel.

It sounds like they are describing our industry!

So, what can we do to make the ICT industry more attractive to young women entering the workforce and more flexible for women already in an ICT career?

Governments, industry associations, companies, and professionals each have a vital role to play in improving our industry's image and attracting more women.

ICT companies must maximise the benefits of the technology they helped to create by offering women flexible working arrangements. The ABS tells us that just under a quarter of all Australians now do some work from home — this must increase if we are to capitalise on the skills of women who want to juggle career and motherhood.

Governments and associations like AIIA must help women understand that a career in ICT is a career full of challenges and rewards that can be pursued within practically any sector they choose.

Engaging more women in the ICT industry is not just about helping bottom line profits. It's not just about maximising women's contributions to the labour force and to Australia's productivity.

Being a part of the ICT industry enables women to influence technological innovation — everything from traffic and transport to communication and construction — across the entire spectrum of our society. And in return, it ensures that our society has a wider skill set to draw upon and benefits from the intellects and technological talents of all its members, not just 50 per cent of the population.

Sheryle Moon is CEO of the Australian Information Industry Association
www.aiaa.com.au

She will be speaking at the upcoming International Women's Day luncheon on Thursday March 8 in Sydney. For more information see
www.fitt.org.au

GUST SPOT

E-trading in public hospitals

By Margaret Gehrig*

THE COST of healthcare has been a contentious issue for many years. In 2003-04 Australia healthcare expenditure was 9.7 per cent of the GDP (\$3919 per person); as a comparison the USA's healthcare spend was 16.5 per cent of the GDP in 2006 (\$US7110 per person) and was predicted to rise to 20 per cent by 2015. Ways in which to stem increasing expenditure seem to have eluded governments to date. However, a new initiative — supply chain reform — is being pursued by all federal and state governments as a way of reducing the costs of healthcare.

One of the key ingredients in the success of an initiative as big as national supply chain reform in the public sector is the co-operation between the nine jurisdictions. This is a significant project with all states facing enormous challenges, which include standardising back-end systems, culture change, and business re-engineering, but the lure of success is that they believe they can make substantial savings. For example, one of the large states estimates savings of around 70 per cent of backroom costs are possible. This will hopefully be achieved by reducing ordering errors, keying in of orders, etc.

In 2005 the National e-Health Transition Authority (NEHTA) was formed, reporting to the nine health ministers. NEHTA's role in supply chain reform covers three phases:

1. Find a national product catalogue (NPC);
2. Set standards for e-procurement hubs that will facilitate relevant data transfer, such as purchase orders, dispatch notices, and invoices; and
3. Adopt business intelligence tools which will allow jurisdictions at all levels to analyse their spending patterns.

The last item of spend analysis has suppliers most worried as they fear that it will be used to squeeze prices down. Suppliers agree that it is a government responsibility to spend taxpayer's monies efficiently but are concerned as to how this information will be gathered and analysed.

The way in which healthcare entities and suppliers will trade electronically has been endorsed by all nine health ministers. In association with GS1 Australia, NEHTA is rolling out an NPC, which will become *The* source of item master data for public health entities seeking to purchase medicines, medical devices, etc. The NPC will be housed on GS1's data synchronisation catalogue service with suppliers responsible for loading their product data up to the NPC. The data requirements are significant, with 69 fields per product expected on Day 1. Suppliers have until June 2007 to have their data loaded onto the NPC.

Will this project succeed? So far, there seems to be good co-operation between federal, state and territory governments to make it work. However, the task is an enormous one for both the governments and the suppliers. A lot of money and effort has to be spent in the first instance by all stakeholders and not everyone is convinced that they will see a return for their investment.

*Margaret Gehrig is an independent e-health business consultant. For detailed information on the above contact mga@margaretgehrig.com.au

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare media release, Canberra, 28 September 2005
California HealthCare Foundation, Health Care Costs 101, 2006

— Around the traps —

(Revolving Doors continued from page 9)

- Christiane Molony has been appointed vice president of human resources for Computer Sciences Corporation's Australian operations. She has been with the company since 2002 after working for St George Bank, Macquarie Bank, and Telstra.
- Rebecca Hill has been appointed strategic partner manager for Western Australia at Lexmark Australia & NZ. She has previously worked for BenQ, Telstra, NetComm, Anixter, and Mitsui Computer.
- Andrew Beecher has been appointed head of group marketing at Australian search engine company Ansearch. He was previously with Carsales.com.au
- Websense has appointed Gareth Davies territory manager for WA and NZ; Steven Gross systems engineer, northern region; and Thomas Lavery territory manager, northern region. Davies joined the company from Wales; Gross was most recently with Citrix Systems; and Lavery, who is British, has worked in Australia for Software Spectrum and Data#3.
- David Knox has joined ValueNet as senior channel manager and John Watson as senior sales engineer. Knox was previously with Downer Engineering, Watson with Gap Telecoms and Telstra.

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REVOLVING DOORS

The Distillery sites new chief in UK

Canberra software developer The Distillery has appointed a new CEO, David Oates, and will base him in London even though the company's HQ will remain in Canberra. The move is being made for strategic reasons to maximise the interest being shown in the UK in the company's software.

Oates has spent more than 21 years in the IT software industry. His two most recently-held positions were executive vice president of international operations at Israeli company Tescom Software Services, and vice president international for Primavera Systems.

Oates replaces Robert Schwarz, who did not want to relocate to London and will leave the company following a handover to Oates. CFO Barry Ford will take up the new role of general manager of global operations, based in Canberra.

Powerlan shuffles executive deck

IT products and services supplier Powerlan has undertaken a restructuring of its executive roles to meet an array of changing demands.

- Dr Ian Campbell has been appointed executive chairman;
- Jon Newbery has been appointed CEO of the Powerlan Group and will remain CFO; and
- Dr Tomislav Matic has become full-time CEO of the Clarity division.

"The board has identified the need for Clarity to operate under a dedicated and permanent CEO while Powerlan explores methods to further fuel Clarity's extraordinary growth potential in the global operational support systems market," Campbell said.

Amcom rings the senior changes

Amcom Telecommunications has made a series of changes at senior levels following the decision of Eddy Lee to stand down in August from his roles as CEO and managing director.

Clive Stein will become CEO and managing director. He is currently COO.

At the board level Les Wozniczka, managing director of Futuris Corporation, has been appointed a director, replacing Chris Ferguson who is standing down but will be an alternate director for Wozniczka.

Hansen moves new MD south

US company Hansen International has promoted Peter Richardson to Australasian managing director and will move him from Sydney to Melbourne. He replaces Reg Leonard, who remains a director of the company.

Loehr named Intel's solutions chief

Corey Loehr has been appointed regional manager of Intel's enterprise solutions group in Australia and New Zealand. He has been with the company for five years, most recently as business development manager.

Howe heads sales at GlobalConnect

Grant Howe has been appointed national sales manager of GlobalConnect Australia, a subsidiary of Avaya GlobalConnect. He was most recently director of business development for Australia and NZ at Avaya Communication, and previously worked for Phoneware Communications.

Mark Miller takes new role in Avanade

Mark Miller has been appointed to the new position of enterprise business solutions capability director at Avanade Australia. He will be based in Melbourne.

Miller has been in the IT industry for 10 years, and in Australia for six years. He started his career in the US with Manhattan Associates. In Australia he has worked for two Microsoft gold certified partners.

Ode to alliances at Vignette

Dan Ode has been appointed strategic alliances manager for Australia and New Zealand in the Australia Pacific sales team of Vignette Corporation. He will be based in Sydney. Ode was previously distribution manager for Computer Associates.

Glen Phillips heads BD for Marshal

Glen Phillips has been appointed business development manager at the Australian operation of British e-mail and Internet security specialist Marshal. Phillips was previously with Internet Sheriff, and has also worked for Telstra, WorldCom, and NTT Australia.

CQR spreads wings to Victoria

Mark Jones has opened a Melbourne office for Adelaide-based information security specialist CQR Consulting. He has previously worked for GE Money and Wizard.

Addison heads Victoria for Altis

Paul Addison has been appointed Victorian regional manager of Australian data warehousing group Altis Consulting. He previously worked with Syspro Software, CommSoft and ICSGlobal.

More jobs in AROUND THE TRAPS on page 8 <<