ComputerWeekly

How to overhaul legacy bank platforms while keeping the lights on

JP MORGAN COO INDIA GARY-MARTIN JUGGLES MULTIPLE LEGACY IT SYSTEMS
WHILE KEEPING THE MERCHANT BANK COMPLIANT **PAGE 8**

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War of the wallet looms

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PHOTO STORY

> **Samsung Galaxy SIII - The most powerful phone on the market?**
Samsung has unveiled the Galaxy SIII Android 4.0-powered smartphone to take on the likes of the HTC One X and the Apple iPhone 4S.

VIDEO

> **CW500: Warren Buckley of BT Retail on BTCare**
Warren Buckley, MD of customer service at BT Retail, talks to Computer Weekly editor in chief Bryan Glick about BTCare, BT's social media-based technical support service.

> **CW500: Dave Britton, Met Office - social media 'when it matters'**
Dave Britton, chief press officer at the Met Office, talks about the social media project that won Computer Weekly's *Best Use of Social Media* award in 2011.

PREMIUM CONTENT

> **CW Buyer's Guide: IT tools**
In the words of US sociologist Charles Perrow: "Productivity depends more on technological changes and economy of scale than on human efforts." Mass production is key to unlocking IT's productivity. And in the context of IT operations, cloud services providers and internet companies such as Google and Amazon are already benefiting from economies of scale, standardisation and automation.

> **How to improve communication with your boss**
How do I deal with a boss who has an alien communication style ? In the words of George Bernard Shaw, "The biggest problem with communication is the illusion that it has been accomplished." If you and your boss are not communicating effectively, you will be wasting time attempting to deliver what you think your boss wants, only to find your assumptions fundamentally flawed.

> **The future of Government operations: Digital citizen survey**
Most people responding to this Accenture survey say they would use digital services if offered by government, especially for routine transactions. And over half want to conduct all their government business digitally in the future. The biggest challenge for government is not catching up with the private sector — it's giving digital citizens what they want while using digital channels to improve public value.

OPINION

> **Smart cities: The anywhere working city**
The concept of the Anywhere Working City is a polycentric megalopolis driven by expectations of different ways of working, shopping and living, enabled by new architectures. Nomadic workers looking for workspace between office and home will use third space hubs at networked focus points around the city and beyond.

> **Professional service management to help IT take a seat at the top table**
IT service managers should be at the forefront of efforts to take IT into the boardroom. The present dearth of CEOs who come from an IT background in the UK is a major concern considering the increasing importance of IT infrastructure to delivering competitive advantage or organisational efficiency.

BLOGS

> **Adrain Bridgwater: Technical blogging advice for software developers**
Software programmers spend most of their time programming. Surely then, the programmer community should be an excellent source of advice for those who want to grasp the key issues of the day pertaining to any particular language, methodology, platform or device. Antonio Cangiano, a software developer and technical evangelist for IBM, wants programmers to start blogging.

> **Philip Virgo: Democracy won, but it was close run: we still need action on election fraud**
The nail-biting climax to the London Mayoral Election with ballot boxes of postal votes supposedly emerging from storage cupboards at the last moment indicates that something is very rotten with the state of electoral conduct in the UK. Democracy is a precious gift and it does not come cheap. Once lost it has to be bought back with blood, not just lucre.

> **Bryan Glick: Microsoft's price hike could hardly be worse timing**
Timing, they say, is everything. Microsoft's could not be worse. There is huge scrutiny and discussion going on about the effects of supplier lock-in and the relative merits of proprietary and open software standards - a debate prompted by the government's increasingly heated open standards consultation. Microsoft, in particular, is often quoted as an example of the perils of lock-in.

> **Matt Scott: The evolution of the Galaxy Note?**
I came across this patent from Samsung while browsing the web yesterday. It is a concept sketch that was included in a patent filed over a year ago, in March 2011. The application was made for an "ornamental design for a mobile phone". Intriguing I hear you say. As well as echoing the Sony P tablet design, with its dual screens, it also bears a striking resemblance to the Galaxy Note.

PUBLIC SECTOR IT
Troubled Rural Payments Agency systems to be replaced by 2015

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) will roll out a new payments system for the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) by 2015 to connect with Natural England and the Forestry Commission. The system will replace the troubled £350m single payment scheme. The National Audit Office had previously found that the complexity of the IT in the current system had led to the department spending £1,743 on administering claims, compared with just £285 in Scotland.

IT SECURITY
Anonymous attacks Virgin Media for blocking file-sharing website

Anonymous downed the website of Virgin Media, which was the first ISP to comply with a UK High Court ruling to block access to file-sharing site, The Pirate Bay. A tweet on a Twitter account associated with hacktivist group Anonymous said: "Virgin Media – Tango Down #OpTPB", indicating a link to The Pirate Bay (TPB).

IT HARDWARE
TfL seeks £2m contract for real-time information screens

Transport for London (TfL) is seeking a supplier for its £2m roll-out of real-time information (RTI) screens, which will give customers up-to-date service availability information at stations. The contract is for TfL's electronic service update boards (ESUBs) positioned in front of London Underground gates to give customers entering the network an "at a glance" understanding of how all parts of the network are running.

INTERNET TECHNOLOGY
Political parties failing to deliver their messages online

The three main political parties in the UK are failing to take advantage of the digital media revolution in their attempts to reach voters. In a report compiled by advertising agency Cheetham Bell JWT, the websites of the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties were tested for use of social media, accessibility compliance and search engine activity.

MOBILE TECHNOLOGY
Roaming charges to be slashed across Europen under new bill

The European Parliament has passed a bill backing cuts to roaming charges incurred when using a mobile phone abroad. The bill will see new caps on how much a mobile operator can charge a European citizen when they use their mobile phone in another EU country.

CHARMINGMAN/FLICKR

Home Office IT costs a mystery

The Home Office does not know how much it has spent on computer equipment over the past two years.

In response to a Parliamentary question, immigration minister Damian Green said the Home Office, the Criminal Records Bureau, the UK Border Agency and the National Fraud Agency buy their equipment through third-party suppliers and were unable to disaggregate the costs from their managed services contracts. "It is not possible to say how many computers and related equipment have been purchased since May 2010, without incurring disproportionate cost," he said.

But the department's Identity and Passport Service estimated a figure of £3.7m for its computers and related equipment procured over the past two years.

Rachel Reeves MP asked the Department for Education how many computers and related equipment had been purchased since May 2010, but the department was not able to provide the information in time.

The news followed research from Computer Weekly that found that most major government departments do not know how much they spend on e-mail services.

Companies with a dedicated project management office (PMO)

We have an existing PMO in place	72%
We have never had a PMO	14%
Don't know if we have a PMO	6%
We plan to implement a PMO	5%
We used to have a PMO but it was disbanded	3%

Source: The Global State of the PMO (2012), ESI International

HP SOFTWARE UNIVERSE AND CUSTOMER FORUM

"I have fallen in love with HP – its skilled people and intellectual property"

Meg Whitman,
CEO, Hewlett-Packard

IT MANAGEMENT
Canary Wharf takes stress test in preparation for Olympic Games

Businesses in Canary Wharf ran two days of stress testing ahead of the London Olympic Games, including flexible staff working. The test, carried out on 8 and 9 May 2012, was organised by Canary Wharf Group and Deloitte in preparation for the London Olympics 2012 in July. About 100 companies across London were involved in the test, which was designed to assess IT, telecommunications and transport requirements.

IT SECURITY
Skills gap hinders compliance with EU Privacy Directive

A shortage in IT skills means businesses are under pressure to update their websites in time for the new EU Privacy Directive, which comes into effect at the end of this month, according to recruitment firm Modis. On 26 May, the UK Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) will impose its EU directive, which has been designed to protect the privacy of internet users.

ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE
Microsoft May security update features three critical patches

Microsoft has released seven bulletins – three critical and four important – addressing 23 vulnerabilities in its May Patch Tuesday monthly security update. MS12-029 is the bulletin that should be highest on the list for most organisations, as it can be used to gain control of a user's machine without requiring user interaction, said Wolfgang Kandek, chief technology officer at security firm Qualys.

INTERNET TECHNOLOGY
### Online competition sends Clinton Cards into administration

Clinton Cards has announced that it is entering administration, with many blaming online retailers and e-cards for its demise. The company, which has 628 shops and 139 Birthdays outlets, was in debt to Barclays and the Royal Bank of Scotland to the tune of £35m.

IT SECURITY
Cybercriminals turning attention to applications, research shows

Web and mobile applications are the new frontiers in the war against cyber attack, according to the latest top cybersecurity risks report from Hewlett-Packard. The report reveals that SQL injection attacks on web applications have increased sharply, from around 15 million in 2010 to more than 50 million in 2011. ∎
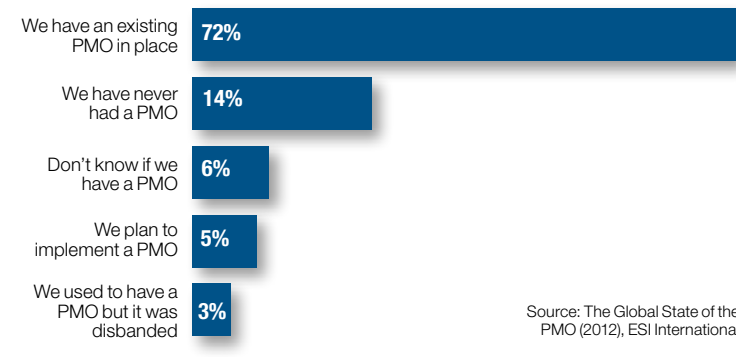
WIRELESS NETWORKING

Digital payment entrants jockey for position as war of the wallet looms

Near-field communications technology promises to revolutionise the way consumers spend, writes **Kathleen Hall**

The recent launch of O2's mobile wallet app is the latest signal of a shift in the payments market, away from banks as primary providers, to a more diverse landscape.

If the mobile wallet does take off in the next few years, it could become a lucrative business opportunity, with more companies competing with traditional finance providers.

James Richards, director of mobile at software company Intelligent Environment, has worked in digital banking for over 10 years. He said the market has started to diversify to include retailers and telecoms companies.

"UK banks have been slow to react to mobile payments. And other organisations are looking to exploit this area," said Richards.

Richards has worked with O2 for a year on the software and security around its mobile app, which will allow users to transfer up to £500 via text message. While the technology is not quite a mobile wallet, O2 is clearly staking out the market space for mobile contactless payments for when near-field communications (NFC) becomes ubiquitous.

"Most people have a number of cards in their wallets, such as shopping loyalty cards. Over time we will start to see that replicated on the mobile phone, containing cards and details to pay for goods and services," he said.

"Over the next three years we will see the war of the wallet, with many more organisations providing mobile payment services. Different types of organisations will focus on different features and functionalities," said Richards. "We are already starting to see a land grab in taking services to market but, over time, providers will realise that, rather than competing, it would be better to collaborate."

Slow to market

But while there are new entrants to the NFC sector, it is still some way from becoming a high street reality.

Mike McNamara, CIO of Tesco, said the retail giant is waiting for the mobile wallet to take off before it deploys more contactless payment points. "We have about 40 shops that take

> "The sticker solution is a good interim, but ultimately not where the final end point is"
>
> Rob Bamforth, Quocirca (*inset*)

contactless payments. We will roll that out further when customers really care about it and the phones come off the production line. It's happening slower than anticipated, but it's a good technology. In a year or two we will probably see a lot more NFC-embedded comms," he said.

Rob Bamforth, analyst at Quocirca, said the problem is not getting the technology right, but the incumbent vested interests. "The hold-up is due to the agenda of a number of companies and aligning all those commercial interests, with the questions of who is taking a share of the payment and how much," he said.

Immediate electronic payments could disenfranchise the incumbent providers, with the added impact of them losing brand ownership as consumers no longer associate payments with a bank card but a mobile phone.

Barclays recently launched a small contactless card that can be stuck to a mobile phone. Bamforth said: "There is something interesting in the messaging of the Barclays contactless payment sticker, as it seemed to be

reported as a something to do with mobile. The sticker solution is a good interim, but ultimately not where the final end point is."

Richards agreed: "Barclays is an example of a company doing innovative things, such as [mobile payments app] Pingit, but it is still behind some of the things that other companies are doing."

Future of the mobile wallet

However, payment providers need to take a less siloed approach.

"There are still some restrictions in place, such as Google's wallet only being available on Samsung's Nexus phone and with certain network carriers. These restrictions will need to be removed if companies are to see successful take-up of the mobile wallet," said Richards.

There are three main changes which will need to happen before the mobile wallet becomes reality. First, the arrival of more NFC-enabled phones. Samsung has already started to make some headway in this area but companies such as Apple are

remaining tight-lipped about when this will arrive on the next iPhone.

Second, more retailers will need to provide contactless terminals.

Third, payment providers must offer the right services consumers feel comfortable using.

Consumer behaviour is rapidly changing with new technologies. If companies don't move with the times they can quickly fall from success, as shareholders in RIM and Nokia would testify. Incumbent payment providers just cannot afford to dig in their heels in against change. ∎

IT MANAGEMENT

The results of a recent survey on the top concerns for IT executives are surprising, particularly the area of IT identified by most of 500 CIOs, CTOs and IT managers polled.

Application performance management (APM), was the greatest concern, and that this is true for companies in the UK, France, Germany and the US across all business sectors, according to a report by research firm Quocirca.

The survey was commissioned by dynaTrace, a division of Compuware, to identify the top priorities for IT departments across the financial, e-commerce, technology and other commercial sectors.

Why APM?

But why, given a choice of 14 IT concerns, including cloud computing, datacentre virtualisation, optimisation of application lifecycle and new customer-facing apps, did APM come out on top?

The main drivers are increased use of service delivery applications, particularly online, and increased user expectation, according to Bob Tarzey, analyst and director at Quocirca.

The danger is that if expectations are not met, customers will go elsewhere and internal users will not be as productive or motivated as they might otherwise be, he told Computer Weekly.

Some 82% of CIOs and 66% of all IT executives agreed that internal users and customers expect better performance, such as faster page loading, from their online applications.

But 43% of CIOs are not confident that their organisations will be able to meet this increased demand without improving their current APM capabilities.

In this regard, 80% of executives said their application monitoring should be more proactive to accelerate problem resolution and improve user experience, while 76% said monitoring of their applications needs to start with the user perspective.

"Organisations need to look at the whole transaction chain, but ensuring users are getting what they expect from applications is a good place to start," said Tarzey.

Applications only really come together at the user end, said Michael Allen, Compuware European IT services management sales director. "Only on the device do all the elements come together, such as browser performance, data transfer rates and third party code execution, so monitoring application performance at the datacentre does not

Why application performance management is a top priority

APM is expected to be more vital in 2012 than ever before. **Warwick Ashford** reports

give an accurate picture of the user experience," he said.

But he said this is not very difficult to do: "The important thing is to recognise the importance of the shift from 'system' management to 'application performance' management." Modern IT architecture has largely solved the problem of availability, he said, so now the emphasis is on performance.

According to Allen, APM is becoming the single metric that is understood by everyone. "It helps businesses understand the contribution their systems are making to the overall experience, and you can't manage something you don't monitor," he said.

Nearly 90% of CIOs say they need full visibility of all user behaviours, business transactions, complaint resolutions and conversion rates through a single APM system to eliminate time spent correlating between tools.

"APM is not only about performance, but also correlating that with impact on the business in real-time to highlight trends and problems so the business can react quickly," said Allen.

Around 90% of CIOs also said they needed to resolve performance issues to free up human resources to do something more strategic, as businesses demand that IT departments do more with fewer resources.

The research, said Tarzey, supports the view that 2012 will be the year of APM, although the emphasis on this is likely to continue and grow in years to come.

Regardless of title or business sector, more than 80% of respondents agreed that APM would be more vital in 2012 than ever before. Most also have a will to see this through, with two-thirds of respondents saying they are actively upgrading their APM capability in 2012.

The survey report notes this is often not a one-off investment but a process of continuous improvement. Over one-third said they have recently invested in APM, but plan to invest more.

"Only the smallest fraction reported that they had no procedures or tools for APM or did not know," said Tarzey.

The survey report includes a table to help organisations evaluate their APM needs, using the same questions from the survey conducted as background to the report.

Organisations that download the free report, simply need to answer the questions, total up the score, and see how they rate on the APM Pain Index, said Tarzey.

"Organisations as a whole can use the report to benchmark themselves against their peers. If they are confi-

dent, then they are ahead of the curve. If not, they are in good company," he said.

CIOs can also use the findings of the report to make the business case for investing in APM, said Tarzey, because it shows that by investing now, an organisation could get ahead of its competitors.

According to the survey report, if APM is not top of mind, then it probably should be to meet increased user expectations, achieve competitive differentiation and realise business goals.

"Organisations not investing in APM may be at a competitive disadvantage," the report said. "Although application delivery is complex, it is possible to get a holistic view of the transaction and the user experience, but only if an APM system is in place that is capable of achieving this." ∎

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❯ Understanding application performance monitoring and management

❯ Application performance management tools: A must-have for the cloud

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MOBILE NETWORKS

4G setbacks frustrate business users as legal brawls delay Ofcom auction

With conventional networks buckling under an explosion of mobile data, what's holding up 4G? **Jennifer Scott** explains

The mobile phone has become a staple of business life and workers now expect to stay connected on the move via voice, text and the internet.

But with corporate users and consumers pushing more data across mobile connections than ever, networks built in the days of lower traffic are buckling under the pressure.

Most would scoff at a 2G network, but it is still a common connection for mobile users across the UK. Those lucky enough to have decent 3G reception still find the networks too busy to provide good performance.

Enter 4G or Long Term Evolution (LTE). This next generation of mobile network promises much speedier performance – reportedly upward of 100Mbps download speeds – and will involve freeing up more spectrum for mobile connections, lifting the burden from older networks and improving the experience for all.

But, despite the desperate need for 4G, the UK lags far behind other 4G-enabled countries.

A few trials have begun in Britain, with major network operators testing out their 4G capabilities. But trials only provide a handful of users with the new speeds and the process of moving from 3G to next-generation networks is taking a lot longer than it has elsewhere across the globe.

Everything Everywhere – the partnership between Orange and T-Mobile – has championed a quicker roll-out of 4G technology, with a campaign named 4GBritain. It has the support of campaign groups such as The Countryside Alliance and industry names such as Virgin Media.

Research conducted for Everything Everywhere claimed the full investment needed from mobile operators to bring UK networks up to scratch would be £5.5bn. But the report also said this money would bring an extra 125,000 jobs to the UK and add 0.5% to national GDP – equivalent to £75bn over 10 years.

With the research suggesting over two-thirds of the 95 billion minutes of business calls in the UK are mobile, corporate users will need the investment more than anyone.

"One quarter of employees who

While Everything Everywhere has campaigned for a quicker 4G roll-out, some blame the joint venture for triggering the legal battles holding up Ofcom's spectrum auction

use the internet for their work are now being provided with 3G mobile devices for internet access and data connectivity. A £5.5bn programme will register as a meaningful boost to business investment nationally and will come at a time when the economy is operating well below full capacity and there is a dearth of private sector investment," read the report.

Spectrum auction delays
Everything Everywhere might be making noise about wanting to ramp up the roll-out, but some have suggested the operator is to blame for the lengthy delays.

To get an operational 4G network in the UK, spectrum needs to be made available. Ofcom is in charge of sharing out spectrum and took a long time to announce the auction for the 800MHz and 2.6GHz bands, which is now set for the end of 2012.

However, Everything Everywhere asked Ofcom if it could use existing 2G spectrum to start offering 4G services sooner. The regulator responded by saying it didn't see an issue with granting the request.

This led to uproar from the company's rival operators, which said allowing the second usage for the spectrum would give Everything Everywhere an unfair advantage to win over customers looking for faster speeds, before they had a chance to implement their own 4G networks.

It is now being suggested the likes of Vodafone, O2 and 3 might actually take Ofcom to court to dispute the decision, further delaying the auction.

Ofcom told Computer Weekly such issues were causing more delays to the roll-out and users should come before stakeholders when making these decisions.

"It is our objective to see consumers benefit from 4G services as soon as possible," said Ofcom. "And we want consumers to enjoy the benefits of strong competition in the future.

"Delays have been caused by legal challenges and threats of litigation from various companies as they seek to defend their own commercial positions. While we recognise the need for companies to protect the interests of their shareholders, our role is to promote the interests of consumers."

Companies can try and get their way with Ofcom and rival firms can go through the courts but, whatever drama ensues, firms, regulators and

users need to understand building up a strong, reliable 4G network needs time, planning and a large investment to get it off the ground.

Take time to get it right
Rob Bamforth, principal analyst at Quocirca, said it is a much tougher process than the move from 2G to 3G.

"Unlike the 3G roll-out, where operators were all at the starting blocks together and the public initially didn't care, 4G is more high profile, as can be seen from some of those involved in the campaign," he said.

"Everyone wants high-speed mobile access everywhere and for as little as possible. The problem is it requires investment, roll-out effort and assessment by Ofcom to ensure it's been achieved. It won't happen overnight and in the haste to avoid delays, there could be problems."

Bamforth believes it better to take time over the roll-out to get it right, even if that means falling behind other countries.

"The UK doesn't need a fast roll-out to a few select places just to satisfy vendor agendas," he said. "It has to deliver the widest possible coverage and this needs obligations placed on operators, who might otherwise simply go for the low-hanging fruit of highest return.

"High-speed mobile broadband soonest is necessary but without ubiquity it is not sufficient. With 4G, 'ready, aim, fire' is the last thing the UK needs."

Of course, the soap opera playing out between operators and Ofcom will continue for some months, but what business users want is the network, not more squabbles. ∎

IT LEADERSHIP

How to maintain banking compliance while transforming legacy platforms

COO India Gary-Martin tells **Angelica Mari** what it's like to overhaul multiple legacy systems while staying compliant

CW500 INTERVIEW

As the global chief operations officer (COO) of investment banking for technology and operations at JP Morgan, India Gary-Martin leads the bank's technology strategy.

She was hired by JP Morgan two years ago, following years in senior technology and non-IT roles at other banks, including Royal Bank of Scotland and Lehman Brothers. Her present role oversees the strategic aspects of a transformational engineering programme, which was fuelled by multiple acquisitions and is now more than half-way complete.

Gary-Martin's team of several thousand staff worldwide has been busy integrating the platforms that came out of the multiple mergers and acquisitions of recent years and reassessing various aspects of a very large technology footprint.

"Though the acquisitions meant we had multiple platforms for a period, we were in the very fortunate position of being able to select best-in-class platforms from our own portfolio. Out of all change there is tremendous opportunity, if you plan it properly," Gary-Martin says.

"Acquiring a large portfolio of platforms also meant acquiring people with great expertise. The firm's acquisitive nature was a huge opportunity for us, in technology and people – though challenging, we were really lucky in that respect."

Customer is king

One of the biggest areas of focus for JP Morgan in its investment banking division – the bank does not have a retail presence in the UK – is on electronic trade execution and its client-facing technology.

The key objective for the IT team is to provide a top-notch customer experience while integrating and evolving the bank's legacy platforms.

"In addition to staying ahead of the needs of our client and pre-empting

> "Timing and consistency is the curse of every organisation's legacy footprint"
>
> India Gary-Martin
> JP Morgan

market trends, we are also managing a complex regulatory environment that is focused on transparency and standardisation," says Gary-Martin.

"It is our job to ensure that our technology is in sync with those requirements. We have to be flexible and shrewd to deliver a quality product in a timely fashion."

From a development perspective, the main priority for JP Morgan is to build cross-asset systems to support clients and staff. The firm's client-facing platform, dubbed JP Morgan Markets, is evolving to provide real-time data for clients to access research and execute trades in one place.

Improvements must be carried out with the right levels of control and risk management. Most of the work is carried out in-house, although the bank partners with vendors for standard transaction processing.

"Living and breathing the business everyday allows our business-facing development functions the opportunity to innovate in a way that is more

difficult to do remotely," she says.

Due to the size and breadth of its technology platforms, JP Morgan uses a number of development methodologies. The bank maintains rapid application development (RAD) teams using agile methodologies and mainframe-based technologies that employ a waterfall-based approach.

"Given the nature of sales and trading businesses and the speed with which they operate, our RAD teams face the challenge of delivering quickly for the business while ensuring the levels of control applied fall within the boundaries of corporate governance," Gary-Martin explains.

"Flexibility and control can be a difficult balance to strike, but getting it right is entirely necessary."

Big data focus

As in many other major companies that store huge volumes of often unstructured information, JP Morgan is placing a significant amount of effort around managing big data.

According to Gary-Martin, the bank maintains a robust central reference data function that manages all client and internal data. In the future, every application will draw upon the same source of data.

"Every large company I've ever known has been focused on the provision of accurate dynamic and static data. Timing and consistency as it relates to data is the curse of every mature technology organisation's legacy footprint," she says.

"Like all big players, we suffer from that, but also have a very robust programme to resolve the issue over time. Again, we have to manage our migration to a single 'golden source' very carefully. Given the requirements to ensure data privacy and accurate transaction reporting, we can't afford to get the data wrong or report differently from one place to another. It has to be right."

Such a vast amount of data processing means another area of focus for JP Morgan is around continuously evolving its infrastructure. The bank's infrastructure team is responsible for managing the physical decommissioning of applications and servers as an integral part of its group-wide engineering programme.

Gary-Martin says the advancements in the bank's infrastructure have to consider the existing server footprint and datacentres.

"Though we concentrate on traditional infrastructure to keep the business running, our business-focused infrastructure capability serves the business and development community in delivering the technology to create low-latency trading capability that is the best in the market." ∎

more online

Online awards set to recognise and reward those resellers, distributors, and vendors that have delivered truly exceptional customer service and channel support throughout the year.

The MicroScope Awards for Channel Excellence (ACEs) celebrate the best of the channel recognising those that have delivered the best service, products and support. The awards, now in their 5th year, have been enhanced with a broader range of categories encouraging those with products and projects they are proud of to step forward and nominate themselves or their suppliers.

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Submit your vote on the shortlist by 18th May!

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KARL FLINDERS **LEADER**

Retailers mind the IT gap to stay in business

For the last year or so we have been writing about the changing role of IT as businesses anticipate economic recovery.

Whether or not the recovery is on the way, businesses in sectors such as retail have been investing in technology to help make them more competitive, rather than just to cut costs.

News last week that high street greeting cards retailer Clinton Cards had entered administration did not shift the earth in the same way as the demise of Woolworths in 2008, but four years on it is proof that surviving the worst of the recession is no guarantee of future prosperity. Retailers need to be competitive and IT is a way to ensure this.

Clinton Cards has 628 shops and 139 Birthdays outlets, but many feel the rise of online shopping is to blame for taking shoppers away from the high street. Greeting card retailers have also had to deal with the competition from online customisable offerings, such as MoonPig.com and FunkyPigeon.com.

Retailers are investing in IT. Recruitment companies have been talking up the opportunities for IT professionals in the retail sector. For example Giant Group recently said mobile specialists are in demand from retailers that are investing in mobile platforms to increase their share of the growing online retail market.

Customer-facing technology is being harnessed to make shopping easier whether online or in-store. You can browse the web and buy from your mobile phone online. Soon the mobile wallet will mean most shoppers on the high street will flash their phone in front of a scanner to pay for purchases.

In this week's issue we look at the use of near-field communications (NFC) technology to make this a reality.

Tesco described how it is ready to roll out more contactless payment capabilities in shops when mobile phones get NFC-embedded and customers begin to demand to pay for purchases with phones. ∎

Editor's blog
computerweekly.com/editor

SARAH BURNETT **OPINION**

Why the public sector is turning to multi-sourcing

More and more government departments are turning to multi-sourcing as opposed to single sourcing in the current era of austerity. Recent examples include the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) ADEP (application deployment) procurement process which concluded in the autumn of 2011. Four vendors were awarded prime contracts in five lots: Accenture - lot 1: customer facing systems; HP – lots 2 and 5 to support the legacy core benefits systems; IBM – lot 3: business facilitating systems; Capgemini – lot 4: business prototyping.

Another example can be found in the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) which, in March 2011, awarded three lots to different suppliers for various components of its shared services program: Steria for a common back-office operating platform; Savvis for hosting services on an infrastructure-as-a-service basis; and Accenture as lead for systems integration.

Multi-sourcing has stood the test of time. Twenty years ago, in the relatively early days of IT outsourcing, it was widely assumed that organisations would soon stop using specialised firms for activities such as data-centre and server management, workplace services, network management, and application management. It was

It isn't typically possible to select a single vendor to handle a wide range of processes

argued that, in the matter of a few years, these distinctions would disappear and the industry would be left with a small number of firms dominating multi-process IT outsourcing across all of IT infrastructure management and application management.

Instead, twenty years on, organisations still predominantly outsource IT infrastructure management services and application management services in separate, rather than combined, IT outsourcing contracts, as demonstrated by the DWP and MoJ examples. Only some vendors have capabilities across both IT infrastructure management and application

management and clear divides still exist. Organisations in both the private and public sectors tend to maintain a single-digit number of preferred suppliers, frequently chosen along process domain lines, for application management. The purpose here is typically to maintain a level of competition between vendors as much as deploying vendors according to their strengths.

Primary drivers for multi-sourcing contracts include a desire to adopt best-of-breed for a particular process or domain and ensure access to superior capability; and a desire to maintain a level of competition between vendors to ensure quality of service and a competitive price.

Single-sourcing, on the other hand, tends to be driven a desire to reduce the level of resources incurred on vendor management; a desire to work more closely with a vendor and devote the resources appropriate to a strategic partner; and a desire to take a more end-to-end approach to process development.

The advantages of multi-sourcing in BPO are easy to see, as it encompasses hundreds, if not thousands of distinct processes – many more than in IT outsourcing. There are few vendors with end-to-end capability in individual processes. For example, many vendors can offer P2P services and some have procurement support capability but few have significant category management capability to offer end-to-end source-to-pay. Similarly in HRO, the leading vendors in say payroll are only in rare cases able to offer say RPO or learning services. This means that at present it isn't typically possible to select a single vendor to handle a wide range of processes across front-office customer handling, industry-specific middle office silos, and support functions even should the client Organisation wish to do so.

But in BPO, as in application management, the current economic climate has accelerated vendor consolidation. By maintaining a small portfolio of strategic vendors, organisations develop close collaborative BPO relationships based around centres of process domain excellence. ∎

Sarah Burnett is research director for public sector BPO at NelsonHall

Could G-Cloud become the pride of public sector IT?

THINKSTOCK

Despite the gloomy financial climate, the government has stated that G-Cloud remains a priority. It is to be hoped that this is the case, as it does offer the best chance to drive down IT costs within the public sector, says **Clive Longbottom**

CW BUYER'S GUIDE
GOVERNMENT IT
part 3 of 3

Historically, IT projects in the public sector have tended to be overspent and underperforming. Not the sort of track record that sends out the right signals during a poor economic climate – but can things be done differently? One major problem is that central and local government have never been regarded as a joined up set of agendas or processes, and each part has gone its own way with its own systems and software. Therefore, when central government decided that a main aim was to centralise reporting, problems arose around what format the data needed to be in – and how to retrofit existing systems to monitor and report events in the right manner.

Many different approaches have been put forward over the years, with minimal success due to lack of impetus, funds or just poor implementation. One that keeps being trotted out is the use of open source software to lower the cost of public sector IT.

On the face of it, this seems valid – using commercial, off-the-shelf software (COSS) involves paying a licence fee up front and then a maintenance fee per year after that, or an ongoing yearly fee that nominally covers the licence and maintenance such that the customer (in this case the government) can use whatever version of software it wants whenever it wants. With free open source software (FOSS), the licence fee disappears. With millions of employees in the public sector, saving even a few pounds per person on licence fees must be good news.

Front-end familiarity
However, software support is still required, and for FOSS this tends

to come as a subscription, which in many cases is pretty similar to the maintenance component of COSS. For front-end systems, such as operating systems and office software, familiarity is a big issue. The majority of employees understand Windows and Microsoft Office, and training can be kept to a minimum. A Linux/OpenOffice or equivalent system can present a major training problem and ongoing help desk issues which can easily wipe out any savings made from the licences. Also, there can be issues with "round-tripping" – the sending of documents to others in the process chain where actions are required and the document is then sent back. For standard government-to-citizen documents, this should not be a problem, as forms should either be web-based or sent out in final format (for example, Adobe PDF), but for supplier documents or others where macros may be involved, for example, the loss of fidelity during the round-tripping could result in a

less than legal contract being put in place.

But for back-end systems, COSS can make a great deal of sense – the use of Linux as an operating system for large-scale operations is proven – and can save significant amounts of money where the application is agnostic as to the underlying operating system. An area where this may be the case is in what was originally termed by Sir Peter Gershon in his report looking at streamlining government IT as "shared services" and is now being touted as the G-Cloud.

Behind the G-Cloud
The idea behind the G-Cloud is to provide a set of services that are common among a broader group of users than a single department in central and local government. For example, HR tends to be similar across the public sector – employment contracts are by role, booking holiday is a common process, and so on. Therefore, having many hun- »

dreds or thousands of bespoke systems dotted around the public sector is nonsensical, and expensive. By centralising an HR application in a manner that allows any department to use the same system, redundancy of function can be driven out of the process. Along with this, the scale of the master contract can drive down licence and/or support costs, and data becomes centralised, allowing better monitoring and reporting.

A cloud platform requires flexibility at the basic level, however. The workloads involved may be unpredictable, or even where there is predictability, may be cyclical as with payroll, which runs weekly or monthly with little activity in between. Therefore, a highly scalable, flexible and shareable platform is required spread across a large number of servers. Using a COSS operating system can end up with large costs to cover the number of CPUs and cores involved, whereas FOSS gets rid of this cost.

Another aspect of G-Cloud is that it should lead to a lowering of costs for COSS through the centralisation of licensing. At the moment, a high degree of procurement is carried out at a local or departmental level, leading to licence and maintenance costs being relatively high. Centralising licence usage through to G-Cloud means that greater economies of scale can be applied, and central contracts used to drive down licence costs to a minimum. Also, actual usage can be monitored, and over-licensing can be identified and removed, as well as negotiating with vendors to allow the use of concurrent licences, where the number of people using a licence at any one time is covered, rather than the number of people who could use a licence.

Easier and cheaper

Another aspect of G-Cloud is a statement by central government that it agrees that there is a need to make dealing with government easier and cheaper so that smaller suppliers can get involved.

Historically, public sector projects have involved suppliers jumping through so many hoops that only the large vendors and systems integrators could afford to get involved.

G-Cloud is supposed to make it easier and less costly to become a government supplier – and once on the list, for government and local departments to easily find what is most cost-effective for them and take the service directly without the need for new negotiations.

Encouraging smaller suppliers into dealing with the public sector should create more competition and there-

What was originally termed by Sir Peter Gershon *(pictured)* in his report looking at streamlining government IT as 'shared services' is now being touted as the G-Cloud

fore drive down costs.

Even with the financial climate remaining gloomy, the government has stated that G-Cloud remains a priority. It is to be hoped that this is the case, as it does offer the best promise for IT costs within the public sector to be driven down.

However, the biggest issue may well be around how data is managed and used across the public sector. It is all well and good being able to gain access to applications and services directly and to implement them via self-service, but if the end result is a silo of data that cannot easily be shared across departments as required, or cannot be reported in context against other relevant information, then any cost savings will have been wasted.

Open data requirement

Open data is required – both in the

way that it is formatted, and in the way that it is made available for use. It is a given that the public sector has to be very careful in how data under its control is secured – there have been far too many headlines in the press about how information has been lost, leaked or stolen.

However, this should not result in a knee-jerk reaction aimed at locking down the data – far from it; the end target has to be for all information to be made available in a manner that ensures that it is secure in the context in which it is being used.

For example, a citizen should be able to see all information that appertains to them – but should not necessarily be able to see the same information for their neighbours.

A public sector worker may need to be able to see a sub-set of information about a defined group of people,

whereas an external contractor may only be able to see such results with any personal identifiable information excised. This capability requires data to be held in an open format, such that the overlying systems that manage the granular security required can deal with each data source adequately.

On top of this is the need for other data types to be included. An increasing amount of information about citizens, departmental work and laws is being held in standard documents, rather than directly in formal databases. As time goes on, this is likely to grow to include voice and video information as well. Tools will be required to ensure that any type of information can be included in public sector processes, and that the process chains can be open enough for public and private employees to be able to fully participate in the processes as needed.

In the balance

The future of public sector IT is still in the balance. The G-Cloud is undoubtedly the biggest change that can bring cost savings to public sector processes, but needs more weight and impetus behind it to make it more generally available with more functionality, faster. The judicious use of FOSS can help in managing costs – but an ivory-tower attitude of "FOSS everywhere" could have process costs that wipe out the technical savings. Open data has to be at the core of any public sector technology strategy – getting this wrong could destroy any possible cost savings, and could make it difficult to recover the situation in the near term.

Although still in the balance, the government must take this opportunity to drive a more flexible and functional platform across the public sector. This will be a slow process overall – but quick wins can be made for little investment, and the savings made must then be ploughed back in to gain greater savings in the future. ■

Clive Longbottom is founder of Quocirca

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> G-Cloud cost £4.93m to set up, says Maude

> Government publishes plans for £1.6bn of IT contracts

> Government frameworks not working for SMEs, says G-Cloud director Chris Chant

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Time to value and nurture IT students

With 40,000 UK IT graduates unemployed, a predicted shortfall of 100,000 IT professionals with digital skills to support UK businesses is unacceptable. But what is to blame and what can be done about it? **Karl Flinders** reports

Creating business-ready IT professionals is a top UK priority. The UK could soon have a shortage of people with appropriate IT skills in the region of 100,000, yet there are thousands of IT graduates unemployed or working in unrelated jobs.

At a recent roundtable at IT supplier industry group Intellect, a group of IT industry directors and academics discussed the challenge facing education to produce the home-grown IT skills that the UK economy requires.

With an estimated 40,000 UK IT graduates unemployed and many more doing jobs unrelated to their qualifications, a predicted shortfall of 100,000 IT professionals with digital skills to support UK businesses is unacceptable. In Europe, including the UK, the skills shortage is expected to reach 700,000.

However accurate these claims are, there are underlying problems with the UK IT education system which are perhaps exposed by the propensity for UK businesses to offshore IT work.

Michelle Selinger, director of education practice at Cisco, who spoke at the Intellect event, says people are »

« not being taught the most up-to-date skills that industry needs.

The roundtable speakers were unanimous in their belief that there is a mis-match of skills. Selinger says there needs to be more liaison with university and industry to influence what real-world skills are needed.

A report from The Open University recently found that 43% of employers are concerned by how little knowledge applicants have about business operations.

Practical industry knowledge
Kevin Streater, executive director for IT employer engagement at The Open University, says the answer is to build industry relevance into the IT curriculum. He gave examples: "City University embeds certification in the second year prior to students' year in industry. The Open University is replicating this, meaning students go into industry with practical industry knowledge." He says as technology develops, educational organisations need to keep their curriculums up to date.

In a recent article for Computer Weekly, Streater wrote: "This distance between employer needs and education provision is a major reason why computer science graduates are the largest group of unemployed graduates in the UK, and contributes to the rising trend of UK employers outsourcing their IT services abroad. As jobs disappear, the prospects for IT graduates get bleaker and prospective students are turned away, while the industry continues to suffer, stuck in a negative spiral of decline."

Figures from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) show that computer science graduates are the largest group of unemployed graduates in the UK. The figures from July 2010 show that 17% of 2009 computer science graduates were unemployed. This was the highest of all subject groups. The average graduate unemployment across 12 subject groups was 10%.

Two-pronged approach
Streater says to put IT back on the right path, the business relevance of the IT education system needs to increase to raise workplace experience and commercial awareness. He says IT educators need to take a two-pronged approach.

"We must ensure that young, inexperienced students are given the commercial nous that will help them quickly get up to speed and contribute in the workplace," he says.

From June, The Open University's new joint honours degree will allow students to combine their IT studies with a complementary subject in business, design, mathematics, psychology or statistics.

"By also adding new work-based learning modules, offering specialised pathways to particular IT roles and including the latest supplier certifications, we are working to ensure our graduates have the mix of technical skills and office experience employers want," says Streater.

He says the second approach needs to see more business skills in university departments.

"We need to throw open the doors to outsiders. If there is not enough business acumen within our IT departments and IT graduates, it certainly exists elsewhere within the wider workforce. We must therefore make it easier for people switching careers, with self-taught IT skills and an appreciation of how businesses work, to acquire the qualifications to make the jump across to IT," he says.

IT suppliers can also help bridge the gap between IT students being newly qualified and enterprise ready. For example, Cisco's Networking Academy has 600 academies in the UK, and has reached 1.5 million students worldwide. Students learn how to put computers together and how to configure them on a network.

Oracle's academy has been running for 20 years and teaches 1.5 million students every year from a programme combining business, technology and education.

Peter Twining, programme director at The Open University's Vital programme, says because big ICT suppliers each have programmes, "the challenge for teachers is to distinguish between them.

"We need a body to bring all the information together and help to advise teachers – potentially an area Intellect could help with."

Percentages of graduates unemployed

Computer science	17%
Communications	14%
Architecture	13%
Engineering	13%
Creative arts	13%
Business studies	11%
Maths	10%
Languages	9%
Biological science	9%
Law	6%
Education	5%
Medicine	0%

Figures for 2009. Source: HESA

Multiple programming skills command higher salaries

A study from IT recruiter Greythorn has found that IT professionals can earn £10,000 more if they know more than one programming language. Charlie Setoodeh, senior consultant at Greythorn, says: "The proliferation of programming languages such as Scala, Perl and Ruby has fundamentally changed the landscape for IT professionals. When building up your skill-set as an IT professional, it's now a major selling point to have expertise in multiple languages. Many companies, especially in London, are looking for flexible employees, sometimes requiring knowledge of three or four languages, with a blend of niche and traditional expertise."

The most lucrative languages are those in which fewer professionals are literate and include Scala, Python, Erlang, Ruby on Rails and Perl. The fastest growing programming language is Objective C, which has seen rapid expansion driven by growth in the demand for programmers able to work on mobile platforms.

Bridging the gap
In a recent development, UK IT service providers agreed to take on more IT apprentices to help bridge the gap between education and the workplace, as part of a government-backed scheme. The Ministry of Justice and private charity Business in the Community have backed the project. Nine of the biggest UK IT service providers have agreed to a charter for employing IT apprentices.

Accenture, Atos, Capgemini, CSC, Fujitsu, HP, Logica, Siemens and Steria have all signed up to the charter, which aims to help students further their careers in IT. The companies agreed to offer standardised apprenticeships in six roles. These are software development, testing, IT support, project management, networks and business analysis.

Removing career opportunities
Despite all the best intentions of the IT industry to make IT professionals business-ready, money talks. As a result, businesses are offshoring jobs, often entry level, in their thousands to save money. This practice is removing the opportunities for UK IT professionals to begin their careers.

John Harris, chairman of The Corporate IT Forum IT user group and a senior IT executive at pharmaceutical giant GlaxoSmithKline, recently told *Computer Weekly* that although outsourcing brought value, people had moved jobs that should not have been moved. "We outsourced our skills pipeline. This has meant the IT prospects for young people were effectively hamstrung. Young people were not being given a chance to come into the industry."

Harris is working with members of the IT Forum to make skills development a major focus for the IT directors' group. "We are trying to make apprenticeship a hot topic. Unanimously, everyone sees this as important." He says there is currently less of an appetite for training younger people and that there is a genuine shortage in certain IT roles, particularly in areas such as IT architecture. Such knowledge cannot easily be picked up from a text book, he says: "You need a certain amount of real experience."

Government lacks grasp
The Corporate IT Forum's Education and Skills Commission said it would be potentially harmful to the UK if the now defunct ICT curriculum is not replaced.

Joanna Poplawska, spokeswoman for the commission, says it is worried that the UK government lacks a grasp of business computing, and is more interested in creating the next Facebook or Google, leaving a huge gap in IT skills that can be applied in business. »

Businesses are offshoring jobs, often entry level, in their thousands to save money. This practice is removing the opportunities for UK IT professionals to begin their careers

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Lack of IT talent a global issue

A lack of IT talent is a global issue, according to recruitment group Hays Information Technology.

The recruitment specialist has compiled a list of the top 10 skills that are lacking globally, with IT pinpointed as one of the top "hard skills" in demand.

Hays said candidates with knowledge of Java, .Net and C++, as well as IT skills specific to individual industries, are particularly hard to come by.

« "Over 50% of IT professionals work in end users' organisations – IT does not necessarily mean working for Microsoft or Google," she says. "The use of computing devices and basic programming skills needs to be accommodated in education. But we also need experts who can apply IT to build and improve business."

While schools teach basic business and economics, Poplawska would like to see these lessons correlated with IT to enable schoolchildren to grasp how IT drives business.

The UK government even seems open to support from India to bridge the gap between education and work in IT. Azim Premji, chairman at Indian IT outsourcing firm Wipro, has offered to take UK students to India for 12 months to be trained up in software, IT and engineering.

In the Wipro programme, students would receive three months of classroom-based training and nine months of work-based training. The idea emerged when Premji met prime minister David Cameron when he travelled to India in 2010. Premji told the *Telegraph* newspaper that he and Cameron had talked about education and in particular the shortcomings of IT and engineering education.

Wipro is not unique in Indian IT for its appetite for training. Tata Consultancy Services has made more than 43,000 offers to trainees to join this year alone.

IT professionals in the UK, such as Harris at The Corporate IT Forum, are

THINKSTOCK

Educators should introduce more business-focused IT courses and placements in industry and start IT-based lessons across schools at an earlier age

A Computer Weekly survey found that 78% of IT professionals think IT outsourcing has contributed to a shortage of UK IT professionals

of the opinion that outsourcing work to locations such as India is harming the UK IT skills pot.

Impact on skills
A Computer Weekly survey asking for the views of IT professionals on outsourcing's impact on skills found that 78% think IT outsourcing has contributed to a shortage of UK IT professionals. A total of 16% did not think outsourcing has contributed to the shortage, while 6% didn't know.

Many believe Intra-Company Transfers (ICTs), which enable multinational companies with UK operations to bring staff from overseas operations, are largely to blame. Indian IT service providers are heavily criticised for bringing thousands of workers from India to work on UK contracts.

When asked what could help the

UK build its IT skills base, survey respondents felt the practice of offshoring IT work must be reined in. Comments included:
- "Stop the majority of intracompany transfers so that there are jobs for graduates."
- "Don't let so many of the grounding skills be moved offshore. It is putting people off entering the IT industry."
- "Reduce ICTs, provide tax breaks for taking on UK graduates, pay towards tuition fees for students studying computer science."
- "Limit the number of ICT visas."

While the government pledged to reduce the number of overseas workers in the UK, through a cap and a minimum wage set for ICTs, recent figures show that the number of overseas workers entering the UK on ICTs has increased since the government introduced its cap on immigration when the coalition came to power in 2010 – with incoming IT staff forming a significant proportion.

Apprentice scheme role
The survey also asked what the role of apprentice schemes should be. They were asked whether they think apprentice schemes are the answer to the skills gap.

Almost half (47%) said yes, 35% said no and 18% didn't know.

Respondents to the Computer Weekly survey expressed their views on how to close the skills gap. Commentators said educators should introduce more business-focused IT courses and placements in industry and start IT-based lessons across schools at an earlier age, and the government should encourage firms to develop their own talent.

Whether outsourcing or the education system is to blame for a future shortage of people with digital skills in the IT industry, educators, businesses and government must find common ground and initiate programmes that ensure the UK is at the forefront of the digital revolution. ■

more online
- › Schools must replace ICT lessons with business IT
- › Intra-company transfers increase following immigration cap
- › ICT curriculum for GCSE is scrapped

downtime

HP makes technology work for you, but not for us

With 500 "influencers" in Shanghai last week, you'd think HP would be able to get its technology working. But the company that claims it is the world's largest hardware company failed to wire up a Wi-Fi network.

With presentations being translated live via wireless headsets, it was only a matter of time before the company's wireless gremlins struck again. This time, the influencers could clearly hear the presenter – the problem was that it was a presenter from a different stream.

It's no wonder CEO Meg Whitman is spending a tonne of the company's money on R&D over the next three years. How can HP ever hope to be a networking giant if it can't even get 500 people simultaneously connected to a Wi-Fi network.

Sexting app could have a use for technology firms

Okay, you caught us – we sexed up the headline a bit. Snapchat isn't "officially" a sexting app, it is a real-time picture chatting app that offers time protection.

Although, you would be forgiven for thinking that sexting is the sole use for this app, given the images that accompany it (*see right*) and the fact that it is rated 12+ because of "Infrequent/Mild Sexual Content or Nudity".

So, where do tech companies come into this? Well, Downtime is sick of supposed leaks of new products and the incessant speculation and rumours that follow. Companies could take matters into their own hands and use this sexting photo sharing
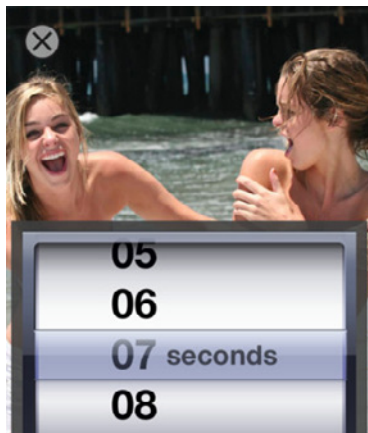
app to send out a picture of their latest product on their terms.

The timer function in Snapchat means that the recipients can only see the image for a maximum of 10 seconds before it disappears forever.
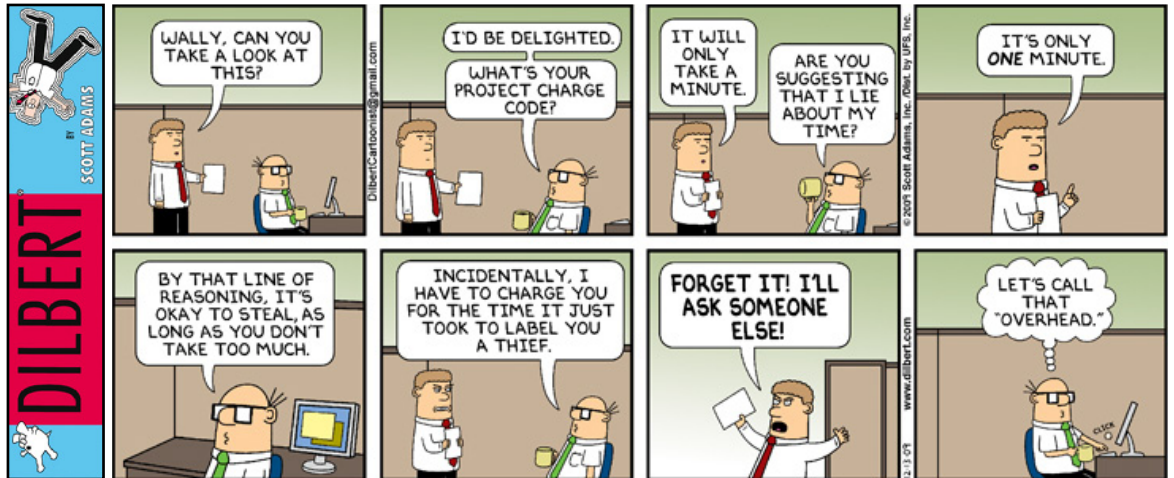
Heard something amusing or exasperating on the industry grapevine? E-mail **cw-downtime@computerweekly.com**

And, as an added safety measure, if users try to take a screen shot, the image is closed.

Problem solved. No need to thank Downtime. We're here to serve.

Real-time taxi tracking spells end of the road for pie-in-the-sky ETAs

A smartphone app from GetTaxi has recently received an update which may leave a lot of cabbies red-faced.

The app, which works on Android, iOS and BlackBerry, now offers customers information about their driver, such as a picture, previous user ratings and contact details.

The GetTaxi update also includes real-time tracking so customers can see exactly where their taxi is. Looks like cabbies can no longer simply pluck figures out of the air.

Does your mum Tweet during sex?

A report compiled by *Parents* magazine has found that 12% of mums use their smartphone during sex.

That sounds quite high to the Downtime team. The fact that more than one in ten mothers are 'liking' things on Facebook during the pro-creation of a sibling seems dangerous to us.

What could be so important that you need to do it while you're doing it?

Texting a friend?

"Lol, that is so ionfvoei'[pfv#f[efew f[ewi[orrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr."

Tweeting?

"@ashtonkutcher I find that wfm]ej bheiioms'liouefjwoakllllllvoioio!!!Mp oi[ose."

Or maybe taking a picture/recording a video...

Who knows, but if you are a mother, please refrain from such activities. If you don't, you are in danger of the following:
1. Tagging the wrong name on a picture in Facebook;
2. Texting the wrong person;
3. Tweeting up to the 140 character limit;
4. A sticky screen.

Let this be a warning to you: multitasking is a gift to women – don't abuse it. ∎

Read more on the Downtime blog
computerweekly.com/downtime

Global warming a is just a load of guff

Scientists have revealed that dinosaur flatulence might have been responsible for the warm climate 150 million years ago.

Yes, scientists at Liverpool John Moore's University have revealed that floating air biscuits emanating from the nether regions of the earth's largest ever inhabitants produced the methane responsible for heating up planet Earth. They reckon dinosaurs produced 520 million tonnes of methane every year.

That can only be good news for IT departments – no longer will IT be blamed for increasing corporate carbon footprints and global warming.

Researchers say every night during sleep, the average human melts a piece of ice the size of a football through indiscriminate chuffing. And people complain when you leave your computer switched on during lunch… What about the farting?

Daily news for IT professionals at **ComputerWeekly.com**