

IAPetus



Quarterly Bulletin For the Institution of Analysts & Programmers

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July 1997

Entries for the Register of Consultants

The Institution's 1997 *Register of Consultants* will be published in the Autumn. If you are sometimes available for consulting work we recommend you to have an entry in the Register: it costs nothing and the Register is sent to everyone we hear about who might need a consultant.

Those of you who had entries in last year's Register or have written to us since with new entries or amendments will appear automatically in the 1997 edition. We will follow your most recent instruction with the minimum of editing necessary to standardise presentation and make the entries fit the page.

Some of you may like to add further amendments, or perhaps to draft an entry for the first time. A glance through last year's register and the guidelines below will be helpful:

Name and qualifications

We will print your first name, surname, degrees and professional qualifications as shown in the IAP's

main membership database unless otherwise instructed.

Address

We will repeat what we have unless otherwise instructed. You may prefer to use the name and address of your business. We will print telephone, fax, mobile, e-mail and website numbers – just tell us what you want. We cannot overstate the advantage of giving a number where the phone will be answered during working hours by a real live person – most wives or mums can be trained to respond sensibly and ring you at work if it's important (*I believe it is possible to train husbands too, but await confirmation of this!!! – Ed.*) We know of many occasions when members have lost business because they only had answering machines.

Work experience

Up to 70 words. Many potential employers know nothing about IT – that's why they need an expert. This

section should be draped with them in mind. Minimise IT jargon: just say in simple language where you've worked and what you did. Try to build in key words that potential clients might use to search the Register on disk.

IT capability

10 key words. This is where you tell your fellow professionals what you know. Jargon permitted!

Remember the Register will be freely available to members of the public. You may get some junk mail or unwanted calls. That is the price you pay for publicity. The deadline for entries is 31 July. Just post a draft to the Institution office, fax us on 0181-567 4379, or e-mail dg@iap.org.uk

Education Committee Recruits Please?

Even before Harold Ead's death (reported elsewhere) it had been agreed that the IAP's Education Committee needs strengthening.

The existing members are all working in industry, so the employers' viewpoint is fairly well represented and seems to be essentially that "colleges don't teach students the right stuff". What we lack is

proper representation of the academic viewpoint from people with real practical hands-on experience of running courses, and setting and maintaining standards.

While some of the Committee's work can be done by post and telephone, it is a great advantage if

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Lurking at my keyboard late at night, wondering what to write next . . . still tired after going to London last Saturday for the IAP Council meeting then staying up to 2 am last night writing HTML code . . . typical life of an IAP member, scuttling around, juggling all the things that need doing and regularly working the normal programmer's hours of 9 to 5 – the ones around midnight!

Right, all you members in Malta, listen up! Next January Alex and I will be in Malta for a week. We will

be there 13 to 20 January 1998. We'd love to meet you – why not drop me a line (or an email!) and we can try to meet up for a drink or something! This is our family holiday, but we are trying to persuade the Director General that he could do with a week in the sun . . .

Negotiations are still in progress for a replacement all-singing all-dancing (or at the very least a monthly with colour!) magazine for *IAPetus*, but for the time being you are stuck with me.

And finally – read the article

about Bletchley Park and decide what YOU can do.

The importance of the place is difficult to over-estimate and it would be a shame if nothing was done. Write to your local paper, write to the nationals, save up any spare cash you may have . . . more in the next issue, as I don't have time to contact the Bletchley Park Association before this goes off to the printers.

Megan C. Robertson
Editor

Harold Ead 1924–1997

Those who knew him and worked with him will be sorry to learn that Harold Ead is dead.

Harold joined the Institution in October 1989, a few days before the demise of my predecessor Bob Charles, but I first met him at the Institution's first conference in 1992. I was impressed by the lively and witty man who made a point of buttonholing me to offer his help in the running of the Institution.

At the time I was finalising arrangement to launch the LVP as a corporate entity, so Harold became one of the first Members of the Council and a founding director of the new company.

Harold's professional background was in electronic and biomedical instrumentation. He had an MSc in Physical Instrumentation and was a Companion of the IAP. For a time he worked with Honeywell and then, until his retirement, at St Bartholomew's Hospital. His

role was to develop and implement systems to monitor and control the increasingly complex equipment used in Intensive and Coronary Care. He has published numerous papers in his specialised field, and lectured extensively: hence his life-long interest in education.

Harold became Chairman of the IAP's Education Committee, which he drove along at a cracking pace. Harold was always early for the meetings. Harold had always done the homework. Being retired meant he had more time available than other committee members, so a few months back I had persuaded him to take on a part time job as the Institution's Education Manager. More than once when we attended meetings together I have found myself running to keep up with him.

In fact Harold's outward health and energy were misleading. He was a diabetic who had been totally

dependent on insulin for more than 40 years. His life was defined by a strict daily regime of injections and precisely controlled meals. Even so he suffered increasingly from a range of debilitating side effects from his diabetes. His vision had become so poor lately that he found reading almost impossible.

Harold once proudly showed me an early heart pacemaker which he had helped to develop, and which he kept as a souvenir. The medical equivalent of the Colossus computer, it must nevertheless have been a miracle of miniaturisation in its day. It seems particularly poignant, therefore, that a man who has spent a significant part of his lifetime's effort developing equipment to help alleviate heart disease, should himself fall victim to an unexpected and fatal attack.

Mike Ryan

Education Committee

– Continued from Page 1

members can meet occasionally, and the present committee has found it convenient to hold its meetings three or four times a year in London. In view of the increasing daily activity on the educational front, it is also useful if members can call in occasionally at the Institution's office in Ealing. So really we are looking for people who live in the London area, do not get sent away on jobs in inaccessible places for long periods, and have both the time, the inclination and the expertise needed to contribute usefully to the IAP's educational programme.

The office will be delighted to receive initial enquiries and to expand on the details of our needs.

New Fellow

We are particularly pleased to welcome David Brynmor Owen, who was admitted as a Fellow of the Institution in May 1997.

David Owen was initially employed by MANWEB, a period which included two years of full time formal training with IBM, in the heyday of their mainframe computers.

On completion of his training in 1975 David joined the Ministry of Defence for a time on classified work; this in turn was followed by two years as Computer Manager for Valkari Motor Holdings.

1984 David Owen became Information Technology Manager for Alfred McAlpine Plant, one of

the UK's leading plant hire companies, a position which he holds to this day.

He is the sole person responsible for the development and implementation of all integrated and stand-alone computer systems for Alfred McAlpine Plant, both in the UK and abroad. McAlpine's systems today cover accounts, workshop, fleet management, plant hire, transportation, stock control and many more, involving hundreds of different programmes and some very advanced applications. Yet when David joined the company they had no computers at all. He has done everything from scratch.

The Director General writes

Not many current members of the Institution will have seen the new brochure which we send out to prospective members, though a number of you have contributed to it in various ways. It was created for us by Trotman and Co., an agency which has since won an industry award for their work with professional bodies.

The brochure is a colourful effort. The front cover features the IAP Coat of Arms in all its glory, and a young chap staring intently at a VDU – “Mr. Worried”, as he is known in the office. Is Mr. Worried a prospective member in urgent need of help from the IAP’s hotline? Or is he a member who has failed to pay his sub on time, frightened that Nicole will send the boys round?

Anyway, the document has been getting about, and to my surprise I received a phone call recently from my opposite number in a much grander institution (no, not that

one!). After first congratulating me on the brochure, which somehow he had seen, he asked whether I would consider popping round to give his own marketing committee a few pointers! As a free lunch was on offer it was an easy decision.

You might think professional bodies would all be fairly similar, but in my experience this is not so. Certainly walking into the meeting I had an initial impression that not only sheep but also committee members must have been successfully cloned. But I soon found Institute X was very different from the IAP. For one thing, with 15,000 members paying up to £120 a year each, it was much bigger and richer than the IAP. But while this relative wealth ought to be an advantage, in fact it was insulating the organisation against reality.

It seemed the basic character of the Institute had changed little since it was founded 120 years ago.

Indeed, several people on the committee felt it was their primary duty to “hold the line” against an onslaught of modern bands that threatened to dilute their traditional standards. They weren’t going to change.

But one or two small voices put forward the heretical notion that the Institute was operating in a competitive situation! And of course it is true. The Institute may have cornered the market in its own specialised professional field, but it still has to compete for cash against all the other calls on members’ pockets. “If I pay £120 sub to this lot, will I be £120 better off? Wouldn’t the money be better spent at the local Harvester?”

IAP members are pretty smart people, and I would be amazed if there aren’t 3,000 of you out there asking exactly these kind of questions. But we don’t intend to be caught napping. The IT industry is dynamic and fast moving.

Professional people as a group will always have needs, but those needs will change. Bodies such as the IAP have to change too, so we are constantly scanning the latest trends in order to seek out new ways we can be of service to our members. They’re going to have to keep getting up early at the Harvester!

People sometimes tell me that programming will soon be a thing of the past and I shall find myself down at the Jobcentre or selling matches on street corners. But it all depends on your definition of programming. Certainly the kind of programming that was needed in the heyday of the mainframe has become a comparative rarity. And even the minicomputers, that seemed such a miraculous advance at the time, have in their turn been largely swept away by a giant wave of PCs.

Each successive generation requires a different kind of input from programmers. But I see no sign that computers are ever going to be able to manage without brainy people to feed them instructions. Even Deepest Blue seems to need an army of backroom boffins, if only to hold his coat and crack open the champagne.

Mike Ryan

SPRECHEN SIE DEUTSCH?

And are you at the same time an experienced analyst/programmer within one or more of the following products:

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- ☐ CICS, DB2
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CH-6440 Brunnen
(Tel: + 41 792 087 484)

Please do not forget to specify: practical experience on a project-level (used tools/products), expected salary, family situation (if relevant), and (passport) nationality.

PS: We also need analyst/programmers for Denmark (then you apparently do not need to speak German!)

And by the way:

We also need – for both countries – OS/390 – Specialists.

I received a note from Steve Squires, MIAP, in which he said: "I was very interested to read, in your March Bulletin, about the Institute's new Recognition Scheme for Agencies. There is a personal experience I'm willing to share that provides evidence of the need for such a scheme. . .

"In July of last year I accepted an offer of what I thought was a permanent job with a company called Neural Net Limited. I had attended an interview at their 'temporary' offices in part of an industrial unit in Brackley, Northants. They are still there.

I was told that training would start as soon as I commenced working for them and that I would be 'shadowing' other, more experienced engineers. The reality was very different.

Having returned a signed copy of the contract I waited for over a week for further instructions and was then asked to visit a client site in London.

On arrival there was some confusion as to who had sent me. The client – Network SI – thought I'd been sent by an agency and had never heard of Neural Net Limited! When I queried this with Chris Sutcliffe, Manager at Neural Net, it was dismissed as a mistake.

Later that week I had a telephone interview with another 'client' – The British Marketing Research Bureau and was asked to start on the following Monday. After I arrived I was sent timesheets from an agency (MSB) and it dawned on me that I was being contracted out. There had been no mention of this at the interview.

The assignment lasted five weeks. I was then interviewed and taken on

by another 'client'; again via an agency. Pay-day came and went but no money. I had had an advance of £500 but having worked six weeks by now, and not had any indication of the training that was promised I began to fear the worst.

When I tendered my resignation my salary was paid, but some 20 hours overtime was not, and assurances on training given. By then I'd lost all faith and insisted on working my week's notice.

On leaving my P45, overtime payment and last week's salary were withheld. An attempt at payment was made but the cheque was

A Cautionary Tale

stopped and returned unpaid. I sued and Neural Net lodged a counter claim. Fortunately I had the benefit of Legal Insurance and was able to pursue Neural Net for the money owed and in May this year they settled out of court for slightly more than they owed me.

I had accepted a salary of £22,000 and now know that I was contracted out at £19 and then £24 per hour! Also, I have since learned that my CV had been edited and contained a totally fabricated paragraph about my experience and distributed to numerous agencies without my knowledge or consent. I never did get a P45!

The lesson is clear. Without some form of regulation, organisations like Neural Net will exploit the unwary.

There had been some telltale signs that I missed. For example, the letter offering me the job gave the company address as a P.O. Box number, the registered office as an office in Bicester and didn't have any VAT registration number on it. Given that I was interviewed at offices in Brackley and the likely turnover of a company in this business would surely trigger the limit to register for VAT . . . I should have heard alarm bells.

"The reality was very different"

With the benefit of hindsight, I ought to have checked them out more thoroughly before accepting the job offer. One easy, and relatively cheap way of doing this, is to request reports from Companies House. These can be ordered by telephone and usually arrive within a week.

Unfortunately, I only did this as things started to go wrong. On 11/09/96 the records showed the registered address of the company being in a room in Chelsea which I later found to be part of Nurses accommodation – not the address on the letter.

Also, Companies House were able to advise that Neural Net had only been trading as such since April 1996, had been known as Sherbourn Systems Limited before that and were in default with their annual return (a sign that the company was not being run properly).

As for being associated with this unfortunate episode, I have long overcome the embarrassment of being exploited and, as there are no legal ramifications for telling the truth, I have no objections to being named. Neural Net Limited however might.

My solicitor advised me that during the negotiations that led to the out of court settlement, an initial offer was made of an extra £50 if I would agree to a 'non-disclosure' clause that would prevent me from discussing the case with anyone! I declined."

This last paragraph, of course, is one of the reasons that too many charlatans get away with it – it takes some courage, even when you have the vindication of a successful court action behind you – to stand up and say that you were 'had' by one of these shady types.

The IAP's scheme won't do away with the crooked, or even the careless, amongst the agencies; but we can rest assured that those agencies which are accepted into the scheme will not be amongst them!

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Correspondence about the Institution should be sent to Charles House, 36 Culmington Road, London W13 9NH. Tel: 0181- 567 2118, Fax: 0181-567 4379, e-mail: dg@iap.org.uk.

Like Peter Duffy (*IAPetus* issue 21), David Hazelden FIAP, feels strongly about Bletchley Park.

He says that its contribution to the Allies' success in the last world war can never be overstated; but unfortunately the true value of its

need for Bletchley Park, and it slipped sadly further into the obscurity that it has never come out of.

So, he asks, what to do about it? As Peter Duffy says, the first problem that needs to be redressed is to make as many people as poss-

letter that IAP members (and maybe others as well) could send to their MP would help raise political awareness; a public awareness programme should also be run, showing that the Park is as big a step forward in the evolution of computers and computing science as Pascal and his Adding Machine, Babbage and his Analytical Machine, Boole and his logic, and Eckert and Mauchly and ENIAC, to name but a few. (By the way, can you spot the British names among that list? Shouldn't more people also know who they are?

The British press is an ideal medium for this, both local and national. The second problem is the need to raise funds. The IAP represents analysts and programmers – let's use it!

The story of Bletchley Park is a fascinating one – it would be a crime to let it be forgotten without at least a fight, so let's do something!

Bletchley Park – Computing History

“The goose that laid the golden egg and never cackled”

success was (understandably) never made known during the war – to have done so would have defeated the reason for its existence. Once the war was finished, so was the

ible aware of the existence of Bletchley Park, and to point out its contribution not only to the Allied war effort but also to the world of IT. The publication of a standard

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www: <http://jaguar.netmania.cc.uk/krystal>

STOP PRESS!!!!

(I've always wanted to do that!)

I raised this matter at the IAP Council Meeting on 21 June, and there was a wave of enthusiasm for this campaign. More in the next *IAPetus*, but in the meantime a fund has been established and donations will be welcomed at the Institution office, marked 'IAP Bletchley Park Fund'. Please contribute generously, so that we will be able to make a substantial contribution to this worthy cause in the name of the Institution.

If you are in the Milton Keynes area do drop in and see what is already there . . . our President Jim Bates went and had hardly got through the door before his help had been enlisted to get an old punch card reader working (they'd no manuals, but Jim had worked on that model as a youngster and could remember obscure throat gaps and the like!). Why not write to your local press, or to the national papers, or even to your MP?

The first electronic computer ever was Colossus 1 at Bletchley Park. Much of Alan Turing's early work was done there. Without the cryptographic work done during World War 2 it is possible that the war might not have been won by the Allies.

Churchill called it 'The goose that laid the golden egg and never cackled' – it is now time to do some cackling on its behalf!

Many IAP members are, no doubt, already at home on the Internet; happy with the nuances of the world wide web and with wonderful pages there for the rest of us to wonder at. If you are among that number, please visit the IAP website (<http://www.iap.org>) and add your business or personal link in so we know where to find you.

The rest of you are probably still not quite sure what it is all about. The Internet goes back to the dark days of the Cold War, when the Americans decided that they needed some kind of communications network that would be literally bomb-proof. So they designed a system which had multiple redundant links . . . and various researchers in government-funded institutions discovered that they could share time on each other's big computers, not to mention chat with each other. The universities got in on the act, then like Topsy, it 'just grewed'.

Then came the World Wide Web, from a chap working at CERN, who do particle physics work buried underneath Europe. He came up with a nice graphical hyperlinked system which didn't care where you or the material you wanted to look at were, it just linked them together invisibly. That is the great joy of the beast – the linkages between whatever it is that you are looking at now and other material that may be of relevance or interest.

As the technology has expanded, information can be stored and displayed in an increasing number of formats – words, pictures, movies, sound clips, not to mention files and programs that you can download and run later. More importantly, unlike many things in the world of computers, the Internet doesn't care what machine, operating system or software you are using, provided that you have a 'browser' program which understands the Internet. So anything from a palmtop to a mainframe can communicate quite happily, PC, Apple Mac, UNIX box, whatever.

It all sounds quite complicated, but it is relatively easy to create. The key is 'HTML' or 'Hyper Text Mark-up Language', which is used to turn your text, pictures etc. into a set of 'web pages' which can be accessed over the Internet. HTML consists of a series of tags you insert to format the page, telling the system how it is all to appear to a passing browser.

The simplest form just takes a chunk of text and makes it visible; you then add in a pointer to say a picture you want to

appear, or to another page of text. You can specify the background colours, the way the text appears on the page and so on, making it as complicated or as straightforward as you like.

Originally, web pages were written using an ordinary text editor, you just put in the command tags amongst the rest of your text, so '`<B>write this in bold</B>`'

HTML and WWW

So what's it all about?

would do just that. Needless to say, plenty of specialist web page writing software has turned up. Some are quite clever, you can have WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) ones like Microsoft's Front Page, which display the page as it will finally look while you are writing it; or you can have ones like Hot Metal which insert all the tags where you tell it, and is capable of checking that all web browsers will be able to understand what you are writing.

This last is very useful – the two main web browser programs are Microsoft's Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator; and they don't interpret things quite the same way! Front Page, also being a Microsoft program, has a habit of using a few odd commands and 'extensions' to standard HTML which Internet Explorer understands, but which leave Netscape Navigator a bit confused. If you are writing a complicated page (she says with feeling, being in a middle of a contract doing just that!) it is vital to check that your page appears the way you want when looked at by both browsers . . . if it works under both, it ought to be OK for at least 90% of people who try to access it, whatever they are using.

Right, so it's quite easy to create a nice series of pages full of words and pictures (which may move!), with links to other odds and ends. There's a whole lot more. You can put programs behind the visible page, to handle say a response form. Maybe you are advertising a product, and you'd like to invite people to ask for more information. Create a form, and they can enter in their name and address and any areas of particular interest . . . you get an email with this information and can act upon it. Recently, I filled in one form I found on a site in the Kingdom of Jordan . . . the reply came from HM Queen Noor!

A certain building society has a program on its website which enables you to enter postcode or town, and it will tell you (by hunting through a database) where you can find the nearest cash-

point machine or branch. The IAP website – as mentioned earlier – has a program which enables members to enter details of their own websites and automatically sets up links from the IAP page to them, and emails the 'webmeister' to let him know that it's happened. If that wasn't clever enough, the program actually lives somewhere entirely different on the web, being called from the IAP page when it's needed. Things like this are either done by using special 'scripting' languages like Perl or by calling more conventional programs which run and then return their results back into a web-compatible format.

There are a few snags, of course. Some programs, like ActiveX and Java, are capable of performing operations on YOUR computer when accessed over the Internet from wherever they are situated. Maybe they will be doing something that you want them to do; but it's all too easy for the mischievous or malicious to make them do something that you wouldn't like . . . assuming that you ever find out, that is! Even a simple thing like reading what programs you have copies of may be information that you don't want someone else to know.

Some programs gather information about who you are when you visit a site, and can even discover where else you have been; again something that you may wish to keep private (just because you like pictures of classic cars, say, doesn't mean that you want to be bombarded with sales literature!). Most browsers have facilities to prevent these things happening, although it can be an 'all or nothing' approach, you can disable ActiveX, say, but then although you are safe from unwanted interference you cannot make use of its beneficial aspects either.

There are other security aspects, too. Commercial uses of the web have suffered from fears that data transmitted across the Internet is not secure . . . you may want the bookstore to know what your credit card number is so that you can order a book, but you don't want anybody else to be able to read it. Encryption may be the answer, but that is being hampered by the US government, which wishes to restrict the quality (i.e. uncrackability) of encryption commercially available on the grounds that crooks and subversives might encrypt their messages beyond the ability of the police or security services to decode!

Recently, it has been announced that Netscape have just been granted export permission for 128-bit cryptography (thanks, Edwin Keen, for that snippet of information!), which will improve matters considerably. Some people are

Nine million people received the new style tax returns in April. This is the biggest upheaval in tax for 50 years and shifts the burden of assessing tax from the Revenue to the taxpayer.

Self Assessment – Does it Affect You?

The main body of the return can be accompanied by a further 10 supplementary forms covering employment, self employment, partnerships, land and property, capital gains, foreign income, shares etc.

In addition there are a minimum 50 pages of notes that need to be read and understood. The Revenue has sent only the forms it thinks you need, however, it's your responsibility to make sure you have all the correct forms and that information you enter on them is accurate. If you receive figures from your employer, don't assume they are correct, check them.

If you want the Revenue to calculate your tax, you must send back your completed return by September 30, 1997, although you must still check their figures, as again, they're your responsibility. **Already, the Revenue has said that 60% of the returns coming in contain mis-**

takes and are incorrect (see penalties below). The most important point to remember is that if you receive a tax return, it **MUST** be sent back with any moneys owing, by January 31, 1998 to avoid receiving

a penalty and interest charges.

The New Deadlines and Penalties

- Incorrect returns or returns not sent in by January 31, 1998, attract a £100 penalty.
- Incorrect returns, or returns not sent in by July 31, 1998 attract a further £100 penalty.
- Tax returns still outstanding after this date attract a fine of £60 per day until received.
- Failure to maintain adequate records will result in fines of up to £3,000. Everybody must maintain records, whether or not you receive a return, and all records must be kept for 22 months from the end of the tax year for those on PAYE and 5 years for those with self-employed income.
- Interest will be charged on any outstanding tax from January 31, 1998.
- Tax due but not paid at February 28, 1998 will incur a sur-

charge of 5%.

- Tax due but not paid at July 31, 1998 will incur a 10% surcharge.
- Interest will be charged on all surcharges and tax outstanding.

A Possible Solution

There are a number of companies who complete tax returns for a fixed fee, (although some do charge additional fees depending on how many schedules you require).

One company offering a return service is Tax Watchdog Limited. They already work with many of the biggest organisations in the UK, and their fully comprehensive PAYE service costs only £39.95.

They don't advertise their services, but if you want further information, telephone David Davies on 0161 480 7717.

Their fees are fixed, irrespective of the amount of work involved, and include everything required to satisfy the requirements of the Inland Revenue.

It's interesting that such a high proportion of returns have mistakes.... one begins to wonder if the instructions are at fault! In the USA, who have practised a similar form of self-assessed taxation for ages, there are hosts of companies who will do it for you and most people use them as a matter of course.

In the British culture, any accountancy service is regarded as 'expensive' and most people wouldn't go near them for purely personal matters... it will be interesting to see how – if – this changes. – Ed.

speculating that the recent announcement of a large Microsoft research facility to be established in Cambridge, England, is at least in part to facilitate the bypass of US export controls.

To conclude this brief survey, the web can be a lot of fun. It can be ruinous on your 'phone bill (not to mention causing marital disharmony in 2-modem households like ours!), and there is a fair bit of nasty stuff out there – people who claim the Holocaust is an invention of the Jews, how to derail a train and enough smut for a brigade of chaps in dirty raincoats! – which is easy to avoid unless you are a journalist... for some reason all they ever seem to find is the unpleasant material.

Go look for yourself, there is a whole world out there to explore!

Encryption and Trusted Third Parties

Edwin Keen has been designated to keep watch on the whole field of Government regulation of encryption (use and export), key escrow and the licensing of trusted third parties on behalf of the IAP.

Informed discussion is very welcome, as are pointers to further documentation. A small amount of relevant information is available on the Internet as follows:-

DTI (1997) 'Licensing of Trusted Third Parties for the Provision of Encryption Services'. Avail-

able from <http://gtiinfo1.dti.gov.uk/pubs/>

Abelson, H. et al. (1997) 'The Risks of Key Recovery, Key Escrow and Trusted Third Party Encryption'. Available from http://www.crypto.com/key_study

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (1996) 'Recommendation of the Council Concerning Guidelines for Cryptographic Policy'. Available from http://193.154.75.3/Netzeit/OECD/oecd_07.html

Year 2000 ... yet again

A company called CompuGenex has announced the launch of a newsletter, *The Year 2000 News*, which will be dedicated to the legal, accounting, computing, insurance and commercial issues surrounding the 'problems' (as they put it) associated with the Year 2000 date/time issue.

Their aim is to provide a source of reference and good ideas to help companies through the next three years – they intend to include such useful things as supplier contacts, case studies from companies already working their way through the necessary processes, how to test for product compliance and how to present your case for funding to your bosses.

The Confederation of British Industry will be contributing, as well as such worthies as leading IT directors and business leaders.

Sections will include a Directors Desk, a Legal Desk, The Auditor and

the Insurance Desk; each dealing with specific areas. The Legal Desk will examine those aspects of the law that can protect individuals and companies in the event of product failure and disaster, as well as ideas for negotiating contracts with your suppliers and such like.

The Auditor aims to assist with ensuring that your financial infrastructure can continue to operate as the turn of the century approaches. They also intend to cover any health and safety issues that arise; and are offering a prize for the best practical solution to a Year 2000 problem.

Although this seems mainly aimed at the business end of the market, it may well be useful for

those of you who are involved in running the IT end of large companies, or who write systems which make extensive use of dates ... and will provide a market place for those who have solutions to provide!

Three main 'targets' for this publication have been identified – the big companies like the Prudential and the manufacturers of Parker Pens; the small to medium business which maybe has only a few IT professionals or even hires in when required, and the software supplier (manufacturer or dealer).

It isn't cheap – the annual subscription is £297 for at least 8 issues a year and a fancy binder (a 3 month money-back trial is available) – but if the Year 2000 is important to your business it could well be worth it.

Call CompuGenex Customer Services on FREEPHONE 0800 590 843 if you want to know more.

News

A happy and satisfied member of the Institution, P.J. Turner MIAP writes: 'Since becoming a Member of the Institution of the Analysts and Programmers I am glad to say that I have progressed and have become a line manager for my company.'

'My work experience has extended, not just from programming mini-computers and PCs, but to managing a complete computer infrastructure for one of our major clients. Many thanks for any influence your letters may have had.'

It's good to hear how well one of our members is doing – well done that man! – and that one person feels that he's been helped by his membership ... and you can all bask in the knowledge that one of the reasons that Mr. Turner's MIAP has helped him is because YOU are all good professionals.

Year 2000 Update

According to Caper Jones (1997), October 1997 is roughly the latest date for specialists to commence work on the problem within a large organisation with a reasonable probability of completion before 2000.

For in-house solutions that would imply that large organisations should by now at least have assessed their software portfolio, and be moving on to the remedial stage.

To assist our members, details of a number of key documents are provided below, and the Internet addresses at which you will find them.

Cirillo, G.P. (1996) 'Negotiating Your Y2K Assessment/Remediation Contracts'. Available from <http://www.y2k.com/negotiat.htm>

Cirillo, G.P. (1997) 'Y2K Remediation Contracts: When your back is against the wall, you do not need leverage to succeed'. Available from <http://www.y2k.cpm/sequelgp.htm>

De Jager, P. (1997) 'A Matter of Honour'. Available from <http://www.datamation.com/PlugIn/issues/1997/march/03col60.html>

Jones, C. (1997) 'The Global Economic Impact of the Year 2000 Software Problem. Version

5.2'. Available from <http://www.spr.com/articles.htm>

Manley, S. (1997) 'Solutions to the Year 2000 Problem'. Available from <http://www.nyx.net/~smanley/cs3113/millennium.html>

Sandler, R.J. et al. (1997) 'Frequently Asked Questions about the Year 2000 Computer Crisis ("The Year 2000 FAQ")', version 2.2, January 1997. Available from <http://www.year2000.com/y2karchive.html>

Details of a large number of solution and service providers are available from <http://www.year2000.com>

Details of BIOS compliance are available at http://www.mitre.org/research/cots/COMPLIANT_BIOS.html

A good product compliance database is kept at <http://www.weblaw.co.uk/y2k.htm>

Thanks to **Edwin Keen** who researched these; and says that whereas the more 'net-headed' of us might easily find them, this list may be a shortcut to spending ages with one of the web search programs. If you go looking, remember that many web servers use Unix and can be case sensitive ... so if Edwin has put something in capitals, do the same!