

Manchester Science Parks' newsletter for knowledge-based businesses

Cloudy Skies Ahead

There is a virtual revolution happening at Manchester Science Park and tenant company Melbourne Network Solutions is leading the way with its new UltraCloud™ system.

For the past five years Melbourne, based at Turing House, has operated two dedicated data centres in the heart of Manchester, providing modern high-tech businesses with a secure facility to house vast quantities of data as well as data network infrastructure, from servers to storage systems.

The computer itself may have transformed the world over the past 60 years but, with the advent of the Internet, the role of high availability data centres in ensuring modern businesses have the digital storage space and low latency connectivity to make the most of their ICT cannot be underplayed.

Last month Melbourne took another step forward in its server hosting service by launching UltraCloud™, a virtual dedicated server solution, which aims to cut costs and improve performance. Melbourne has conducted extensive beta testing to ensure UltraCloud™ will prove indispensable to current and new clients alike. But, one question remains - what exactly is it? Find out on page 7.

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Weathering the storm

The UK is now officially in recession and many people have voiced concerns that 2009 will be a tough year – though hopefully the picture will not be as bleak as has been painted in recent months.

As the economic situation continues to unfold, one thing has become clear and that is, at all levels, from staff through to management, being able to learn new skills, plan for the future and adapt to changing needs has never been more vital for business.

Companies which are innovative and forward looking, who view the recession as an opportunity rather than a setback and are able to adapt accordingly, are the firms who will be successful long into the future.

As such, this first edition of **msp**'s re-launched newsletter highlights the latest news from some of **msp**'s tenant companies who are continuing to do well, win contracts, sign up new clients and develop new products and services.

This success can be seen in companies of all ages and all sizes, from the long established IPEC Ltd who are in talks with EDF France to begin rollout of their electricity network monitoring system into Europe, through to IT company Liquid Bronze which joined the Park last year and developed the recently launched business review website, Freedom.com



By listening and adapting to the changing requirements of modern high tech businesses, **msp** is also working to develop its business support offering and open up new pathways for tenant companies to access the resources needed to nurture their development.

This month (February) **msp** launched its new website which aims to provide a portal for high tech companies to tap into a wide range of services and advice, such as news on funding resources, training opportunities and city-wide business events.

msp will also celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2009. Having been established in the recession era of the 1980s, **msp** itself is testament to the fact that, with the right support and foresight, innovation can flourish despite the economic conditions.

Innovative and ambitious, I am sure both **msp** and its tenant companies will weather the storm and continue to grow and evolve for many years to come.

Jane Davies
msp CEO

£20m Iraqi contract for B-Plan

msp tenant company B-Plan Information Systems has begun work to install a new IT system in Iraq's largest bank as part of a project to modernise state-owned banks in Iraq.

Under a £20million contract B-Plan, which has an office at **msp**'s Synergy House as well as bases in Iraq and Jordan, is co-ordinating the installation of IT systems, ATM cash points and satellite communication links at the Rafidain Bank's 147 Iraqi branches.

Project co-ordinator Laurence Hargreaves (pictured with Executive Chairman, Shirko Abid) said B-Plan was creating a new dawn for Rafidain Bank, which has had one of the most chequered histories of any financial institution.



"At the moment, all the Iraqi branches are run on a paper filing system and we are dragging them into the 21st Century," he stated.

B-Plan, which has 120 staff and a £7million turnover, was awarded the seven-year contract by the Iraqi Ministry of Finance.

Log onto www.b-planuk.com to find out more about B-Plan.



IPEC looks to the future

Big plans are afoot at high tech engineering firm IPEC Ltd which recently welcomed new Managing Director Tony Hepton on board.



Rebrand for Fusion SRP

Business change and IT recruitment specialist Fusion SRP has begun 2009 with a new identity and a new office. Now known as Rubic Recruitment, the company has moved into bigger offices within msp's Greenheys building.



Rubic's Managing Director, Matthew Browett (pictured), explained that the rebrand allows the company to develop a new and exciting image as it prepares to undertake new challenges in 2009, including looking at channel partnerships and other market opportunities.

He commented: "Despite all the negative talk about the recession, business is going really well for us. Our market is still buoyant especially given we undertake business change recruitment, which for many companies is something they are looking seriously at.

"We are looking forward with positivity and developing partnerships with other recruiters which bring additional services into our portfolio."

Rubic Recruitment can be contacted on (0161) 226 2000 or log onto the website www.rubicrecruitment.com

For the past seven years IPEC Ltd has been monitoring the electricity network across London as part of an ongoing contract with gas and electricity supplier, EDF Energy.

Now, with IPEC Ltd currently in talks with EDF France to begin rollout of monitors into their European operations over the coming months, new MD Tony (pictured) is hopeful IPEC will soon be keeping an eye on the electricity network in Paris too.

A Paris contract would be a coup for the Rutherford House based company, which began life 14 years ago as a spin-out from the University of Manchester and currently employs 16 full time staff between Manchester and London.

Speaking to *nova*, Tony explained how IPEC is working to identify and resolve any issues within London's underground electricity network before the issues turn into major problems which could disrupt electricity supply.

"We have around 100 monitors spread across London which are providing continual analysis of almost 5000 assets, namely switchgear and cables, which carry electricity to homes and businesses in the capital, including such well known institutions as the Houses of Parliament," he stated.

"Data from our monitors is collected daily by IPEC's servers

For more information on IPEC and its electricity network monitoring system please visit www.ipec.co.uk

in Manchester where technicians analyse the information, picking up any unusual activity as soon as it occurs and, if necessary, getting our team of London engineers on site to take remedial action."

According to Tony, Paris has similar problems to London in that it has an aging, underground electricity network which, he believes, could benefit from IPEC's technology and expertise.

"A failure in the electricity supply is disruptive to homes and businesses but the electricity supply company itself is also financially penalised by Ofgem in the UK for any drop in supply to their customers," he continued.

"Just like water and gas, electricity is an asset but it is an aging asset. Energy companies cannot afford to dig up and replace all the cables in huge cities like London so that is where we step in.

"IPEC's technology identifies which areas are critical and where the electricity supply company would be best investing money in upgrades.

"Keeping a close eye on how electricity equipment is performing and what areas need attention is a win-win approach for everyone," concluded Tony. "It is both cost effective for the energy supply company and their customers and, after all, no one wants an unexpected electricity blackout."

Academy's teenage businesswomen

Three enterprising Year Nine students from Manchester Academy have already taken the first steps on what are sure to be high-flying careers by setting up their own business.

Ka Yan Yiu, Zaya Purevsuren and Ivy Makhoha (pictured) have re-launched the company Cathay Craftz, which specialises in making and selling handmade crafts such as origami cards and mobiles.

The innovative products, which can be customised to order, cover a wide range of inventive and picturesque gifts such as origami slippers, hats and gloves through to a bunch of paper flowers.



Cathay Craftz began life in 2007 when it was set up by four students from the Academy, however, this year Ka Yan, Zaya and Ivy decided to re-open the company and breathe new life into it.

"We thought the business had a lot of potential so we decided to re-launch it and make it even bigger and better," explained Research Director Ivy.

Despite only being in their early teens, the girls are astute businesswomen and plan to market the product range to other students and Academy staff as well as the school's business partners.

"We have arranged a number of presentations to businesses such as the

Science Park to get the word about our goods into the marketplace," explained Creative Director Ka Yan.

Finance Director Zaya, the lady who has her eye on the bottom line, added: "The 2007 company made a healthy profit of £635 but we hope to improve it this year by boosting sales amongst the business community."

To receive a brochure of Cathay Craftz' products please contact Jan Hilton, Business Development Manager at **m**sp, on jan.hilton@mspl.co.uk

The running of Manchester Academy is supported by a number of sponsors including **m**sp and the United Learning Trust (ULT).



Freedoma connecting business with customers

A new website, developed by Liquid Bronze (Greenheys), is helping Manchester businesses find out what their customers really think of their company.

An online business directory with a difference, www.freedoma.com is a website where users can search online for specific business products or services, see business scores and other people's recommendations, share their own reviews and network with friends and colleagues.

Freedoma, which launched this month (February), is the brainchild of Manchester entrepreneur Caleb Storkey who worked with **m**sp tenant company Liquid Bronze to create a business directory that encourages users to

interact with each other and the businesses they use.

"Freedoma is taking the idea of a business directory to the next level," he explained. "Not only can users get all the business contact information they need but they can also see what other people think of the company and which firms are recommended."

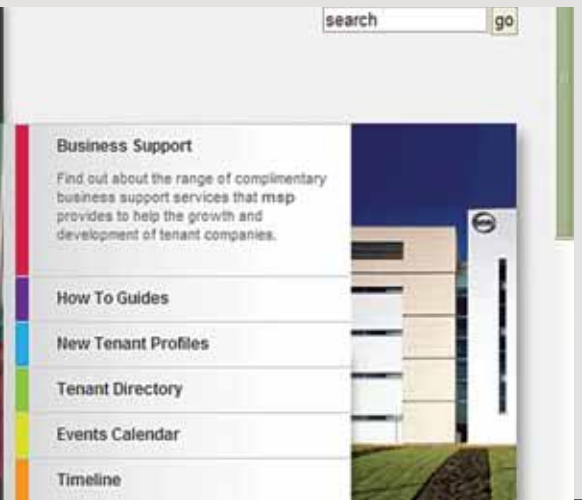
Caleb continued: "The whole concept of Freedoma is that content is created by the community, developing a network of trust and honesty where users can make informed decisions on the businesses

they use while businesses can grow based on their positive reputations."

Caleb believes that Freedoma will also open up channels for mutually beneficial dialogue between business and customers with some additional plug-ins currently in development.

"Businesses will be able to use Freedoma to interact directly with their customers, get feedback on how their company is perceived and, if necessary, what measures they can take to improve their service and boost their company rating," he concluded.

For more information or to join the Freedoma revolution log onto www.freedoma.com



msp's new website a pathway to knowledge

Manchester Science Park is reinventing its online image with a new website which aims to act as a gateway for science and technology companies to tap into the city region's innovation ecosystem.

Launched this month (February) www.manchesterscienceparks.co.uk is an integrated online forum where companies can network, access business support, get invaluable business advice as well as find out information on **msp**'s accommodation and business support services.

According to Aizaz Sheikh, **msp**'s Marketing Manager, the new website is aimed at enhancing **msp**'s unique position as a portal for high tech companies to access the city region's business, public and academic resources, encouraging innovation and collaboration.

"The old **msp** website was created around 2002 and it no longer reflects **msp**'s positioning as one of the UK's leading science parks as well as a thriving science and technology community within the vibrant city of Manchester," explained Aizaz.

"The Internet has developed so much in the past five years that having a website that was basically an online brochure was not providing the impact we needed," he continued.

"We decided to go back to the drawing board and develop a completely new website

which would focus on building long-term relationships with current and potential tenant companies, creating a forum for dialogue and knowledge exchange."

According to Aizaz, the website has been designed around the requirements of high tech companies, looking at what users want and need from a company dedicated to developing the city region's knowledge economy and supporting its tenant companies.

"The website will have all the information on **msp** which the old website offered such as availability and **msp**'s business support services," continued Aizaz. "However the new website also has a lot more to offer the user to encourage companies to revisit the site and build up a connection with the Science Park."

The new website's features include business blogs, the latest news and stories from the Park and a calendar of city-wide business events – all aimed at ensuring **msp**'s tenant companies have their fingers on the pulse of Manchester's knowledge economy.

For potential tenants, the website will also have in-depth information on the Science Park itself, from interactive site maps showing **msp**'s accommodation in real-time to how the Science Park's growing list of partnerships within the public, private and academic sectors can be exploited to support its tenant companies.

How **msp**'s new website can work for your company

Business blogs by industry experts from **msp**'s tenant companies

A pathway for high tech SMEs to access national and regional business resources

Manchester's top business events throughout the year

The latest news from **msp** and its tenant companies

News on developments within **msp** aimed at supporting its community of science and technology firms

visit **msp**'s website at www.manchesterscienceparks.co.uk

Link into Wired City Reconnected

Manchester Science Park is continuing to host a range of Wired City Reconnected events on the Park, opening up opportunities for tenant companies involved in digital and ICT industries to network and find new business opportunities.



Organised by Les Selby and Immy Deshmukh, the events help to connect businesses who wish to address a skills gap when meeting clients' needs, meet potential new suppliers or freelancers, collaborate on projects or simply exchange ideas and get feedback.

As an added benefit, Les and Immy provide an introductory service designed to 'match' businesses' interests and maximise the opportunities for participants to talk business.

Les, who is also one of the facilitators, explained: "The Wired City Reconnected events are delivered in a supportive and friendly environment where the emphasis is on businesses talking and exploring potential collaborations rather than just hearing sales pitches.

"The events attract a good balance of regular attendees as well as new delegates and we also work hard to provide assistance before and after with pre-event profiles on all businesses attending, an introductory service and help for businesses unable to attend the networking event due to work pressure."

For more information on Wired City Reconnected please contact Les.selby@albaassoc.com visit www.albaassoc.com or call Les on 07799 215 285.

Internship Projects launched at msp

Manchester Business School recently launched its MBA Internship Projects on the Science Park, highlighting the opportunities for tenant companies and MBA students to collaborate for mutual benefit via a range of internships.

The Business School hosted a number of introductory seminars at **msp** to explain to interested companies the various types of internships they can tap into as well as the benefits of recruiting an intern from the MBA programme.

By becoming an intern the students get experience of working on actual business problems which need challenging, multi-disciplinary solutions. Simultaneously the companies taking part have access to the knowledge and creativity of talented, mature students who are supported throughout the project by the Business School.

Opening up a route for institutions such as Manchester Business School to interact with tenant companies is

part of the integral role played by **msp's** Business Development Manager, Jan Hilton (pictured), who helped to organise the seminars.



Jan said that over the past five years there has been a growing realisation within the **msp** community of just how much support businesses can access within the universities.

"The support available covers areas such as access to academic research and intellectual property but it also includes business support," Jan stated. "A lot of tenant companies have found having access to a university's business acumen and facilities extremely useful."

For more information on the MBA Internship Projects please contact Michelle Farrington on +44 (0) 161 306 6591 or email: michelle.farrington@mbs.ac.uk.

Alternatively, click on the recruitment section of the website www.mbs.ac.uk/careers or email: career_management@mbs.ac.uk

Cloudy Skies Ahead

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“UltraCloud™ is a system in which a single physical server which has a lot of power can be partitioned into multiple virtual servers, each capable of running its own dedicated operating system,” explained Steve Allan, Melbourne’s Sales Director.

“Most traditional servers are vastly under used, which is a waste of both energy and money. In effect UltraCloud™ solves that issue by providing the infrastructure and software to share the resources of one, major machine,” he continued.

“It is a cost effective approach. If you are running multiple servers you need power for each one of those machines. With our virtualisation system, to run multiple servers on a single machine, you only need to power one server and one processor, which is less money and better for the environment too.”

Speed, security and storage issues have also been considered. Melbourne uses centralised storage known as a SAN (Storage Area Network) to abstract the UltraCloud™ Virtual Server from the hardware of the physical server it is on and all storage is centralised on the SAN device.

What this means is high speeds and data back-up; if any piece of physical equipment fails for any reason then none of the data is lost and the server restarts on an alternative physical server. Melbourne also guarantee the memory (RAM) and storage space ordered and also offer anti-spam filtering and server management if required.

For Steven, the new UltraCloud™ system is testament to Melbourne’s ethos – Melbourne Network Solutions is a firm that believes in always pushing the boundaries and, in an industry that is constantly changing, staying one step ahead of the game is vital.

For more information on UltraCloud™ contact Steven Allan on (0161) 232 0001 or email steven@melbourne.co.uk. Alternatively log onto www.melbourne.co.uk



Salamander showcase at Westminster

Salamander is following up with water company directors after showcasing its new generation of water monitoring technology at an All Party Parliamentary Water Group conference at Westminster.

The prestigious ‘Leading Through Innovation – the Way Forward for the UK Water Sector’ event provided Salamander, based at **msp**’s Williams House, with an opportunity to present its innovative Hydraclam device to a highly influential, 250-strong audience.

A new technology, the Hydraclam can be safely attached to underground water systems via hydrants, enabling it to continuously monitor water quality and feed this vital data back to a control centre.

Previously, water companies could only monitor the water network on a sporadic basis with an engineer having to physically go to a site, tap into the underground water system and take a sample for analysis.

For more information on the Hydraclam visit www.salamander-group.co.uk



Dr Stephen Boulton (pictured), Managing Director at Salamander explained: “The Hydraclam can monitor the turbidity, electrical conductivity, pressure and temperature of water 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

“This real-time, ongoing data allows water companies to control the water network, a vital asset, taking necessary action to rectify issues such as leakage before they turn into problems, as well as developing strategies for future network maintenance.

“It means the water system is being proactively rather than reactively managed and, overall, the result is better water quality as well as improved performance levels and financial benefits for water companies.”

Dr Boulton also revealed that the Hydraclam is in use by nearly all major UK water service providers as an investigative tool and has also been picked up by a number of well-known UK water companies as a continuous water monitoring tool.

PRWD presented at Usability Event

Usability and software development company PRWD Ltd, which is based at msp's One Central Park offices, recently sponsored a free seminar 'Usability: What's The Use?' at Manchester Digital.

Around 100 delegates attended the free seminar, which included a presentation by Paul Rouke (pictured), User Experience Director at PRWD, on how usability processes can optimize e-commerce websites, B2B websites, lead generation sites, intranets, internal software systems and bespoke web and software applications.



"Usability isn't just another technology fad or buzzword," explained Paul. "Usability focuses on customers' needs, wants and psychology to ensure a website or IT system is optimised for conversions and ease of use, maximising web traffic and conversion rates."

Since launching in 2005, PRWD have built up a strong client base within a variety of sectors, including retail and manufacturing, using their expertise in user-centred design coupled with web and software development to provide an in-depth service.

The company's client list includes Contact Packaging Plc, which last year made a major move from their traditional strategy of relying on sales people to generate new business to fully embracing online marketing initiatives.

Providing an evaluation of the company's needs as well as support throughout the move, PRWD used their in-house e-commerce platform UCCommerce to deliver Contact Packaging's new e-commerce website.

For more information on PRWD log onto www.prwd.co.uk

ICT Corner with Martin Heaton



Do you have a technical query about IT or telephony and you're not sure where to go to get the answer? Well, you can try asking me – if I don't know the answer, I probably know someone who does!

There is also a Google Group dedicated to **msp** tenants for this purpose. Most of the IT services tenants are already members and are available to answer your queries.

The address of the group is <http://groups.google.co.uk/group/msp-technical-discussion>

If you would like to join let me know and I will add you as a member. You will have to create an account on Google Groups. This group will be migrated to a new **msp** Intranet when that goes live later this year.

Tenant ICT Network

I am planning to have another meeting of the ICT network in early March. Again, for non-technical tenants, this is a valuable source of information on the IT and telephony services offered on the Park.

Comments about the last meeting:

"I found it very useful as it allowed me to get to know some of the other IT tenants on the Science Park on an informal basis. The Science Park is a hotbed of IT companies that each have something unique to offer." **Godel Technologies**

"It was a very productive meeting and it was great to meet other **msp** businesses. I left the meeting with three leads and I think that was just the tip of the iceberg so I'm looking forward to the next meeting." **Melbourne Network Solutions**

"Guys, just wanted to say it was good to meet you at Martin's forum meeting yesterday. Heard some good stuff and will promote your services wherever we get a chance. Looking forward to the next one." **Greenlight Computing**

I hope to see you in March.

Martin

Email martin.heaton@mspl.co.uk

What's on at msp

Thursday 26 February 12.15pm-1.30pm

Seminar: Crisis to Opportunity (The tough choices forced by recession)
Kevin Engel, Grant Thornton

Thursday 26 March 11am-3pm

msp Tenant Showcase & Business Support event

A lunch-time event offering tenants an opportunity to present their businesses to each other and invited guests from the academic, public and private sectors.

Guest speaker at the event will be television presenter and meteorologist **Fred Talbot**, a former science teacher and a keen advocate of the North West's science and technology base.

There will also be an opportunity for tenants to meet with people from business support agencies such as Business Support Solutions at the Chamber, Business Link, MIDAS and UKTI.

Thursday 30 April 12.15pm-1.30pm

Seminar: Recruitment & Training and Support opportunities from the Chamber of Commerce
Business Support Solutions

Thursday 21 May 12noon-2pm

Seminar: Accessing knowledge: engaging with The University of Manchester

In conjunction with Manchester Momentum

Thursday 25 June 12.15pm-1.30pm

Seminar: Using a grant funding database - assistance with seeking and obtaining grants
Beevers & Struthers

July Date tbc.

Summer BBQ for tenants

This year **msp** plan to make this a family event so bring along your families.