

NINEVEH NEWS - Issue: June 2004

INSIDE NINEVEH – Tim Dawes (tim@nineveh.co.uk)

I hope you have all got your IEG3 application forms in on time. I don't know about you but I'm feeling rather challenged by all these bright colours. The ODPM may be excellent in some ways (suggestion as to what on a postcard to...) but in the fields of form design and colour sense they are not world leaders.

We have been busy reviewing these things and of course helping clients undertake their general gap analysis following the finalisation of the Priority Outcomes. Two things are emerging.

One is that those authorities who, strongly steered by the ODPM Modernisation Group, decided to concentrate primarily on CRM enabled mediated access channels are in trouble because they now have to race to develop on-line service options. "But we asked our customers" they cry. "It's what our citizens said they wanted" they protest. Yes, but that citizen consultation thing – that was the year before last. Wake up you country hikers and smell the Starbucks! On-line stuff is now very cool with the political classes and that's the only focus group you really need in local government. Oh, and by the way, if you rush it and put in a load of unfriendly, slow and scarily not-at-all-secure e-transactions and are criticised as a result, that's OK. It's only your job on the line after all.

The second theme to emerge is that level of assumption made for the functionality and quality of national project deliverables is out of all proportion to the actualité. There is no problem, say our friends in Whitehall, meeting these targets because there are products that address these areas coming out of the national project structure. The logic is clear enough. 1. We have spent a lot of money on these projects. 2. The press reviews have generally been good, the lunches even better. 3. Government is perfect and never makes a mistake and so.. 4. the National Projects must have delivered on all our high expectations. Now, I'm not saying the Emperor is "in the all-together, he's as naked as the day that he was born" BUT to suggest that he stands before us fully clothed or that such rags as he has carefully draped to preserve his modesty fit well or are the very best available is...well an imaginative interpretation of the facts. From where I'm standing the real problem is this National thing. Not a good word National, especially when put in front of others. Consider what doing that did for "Savings", "Socialism", "Bus", "Rail", "Front" and "Westminster Bank"?

Anyway, enough cynicism from me. More about a National Project follows directly from Dave. By the way, he tells me that it is not true that the "P" is silent.

PARSOL NATIONAL PROJECT

An article by Dave Farmer, a Nineveh Consultant whose speciality is on-line Planning and Licensing applications and Document Management and Workflow (dave@nineveh.co.uk)

The PARSOL, Planning and Regulatory Services On Line project, completed at the end of April and proudly delivers a whole range of products for enabling local authorities to e-deliver their e-planning objectives.

PARSOL was financed by the ODPM and led by Wandsworth Borough Council, who being leaders in the e-Planning arena (Pendleton report) were the natural choice to lead such a project. Surprisingly however, a number of other 'ICT leading edge' Planning authorities (24% according the MORI Baseline survey) were keen to be involved and West Dorset, Salisbury, Birmingham, Warwickshire and Harborough, to name but a few, stepped forward to take up the challenge. The challenge was, "to develop a range of guidelines, benchmarks, schemas, systems and toolkits to assist Local Authorities in building effective and transparent online planning and regulatory systems".

The majority of products are now available on the project website www.parsol.gov.uk. However, just before you rush off to start that long download it's well worthwhile taking a look at what's available:

Stream 1: Accessible Planning Services delivers Expert Systems, Enforcement and a set of documents for Agent Certification, Project Procurement and FAQs for businesses.

"Do I need permission" Expert System leads members of the public through a series of questions and answers to determine if permission is required for their development. Planning sceptics believed, and may still believe, that this is not possible but integration with Planning and GIS systems has resulted in the completion of this product.

For those authorities already providing online planning information the Enforcement project extends the boundaries into the areas of enforcement and Section 106 agreements.

Stream 2: Interactions Standards and Toolkits delivers a set of documents including the Best Practice Review, Baseline Survey and toolkits for Planning Service Delivery standards and Implementation Guidance.

The key deliverable, and most worthy of mention is the PARSOL EXCHANGE product. This system, although still in its formative years, could well change the face of e-planning in the future. The Exchange allows authorities to publish Planning Applications and

Local Development Plans to a central repository from where they are distributed to planning statutory bodies and agencies. The system manages responses and through the LGOL Net system provides seamless integration into back office systems.

Stream 3: IT and Technical Infrastructure delivers the technology that makes all things possible! Key deliverables include sets of XML Schema along with Knowledge Management and Mobile Technology reports.

Stream 4: Regulatory Services is the only stream that takes the Planning out of PARSOL.

E-licensing is a key product here, delivering a downloadable application that can be implemented by authorities wishing to provide online facilities for applying and managing a whole raft of licences. Although the system only supports a limited range (Liquor, Taxi, ATPE, Building Regulation and Food Premises Registration) it is hoped that additional licences will be added later. The product is still undergoing final testing with demonstrator sites at West Dorset, Rochdale and Wandsworth.

Other deliverables here include the 'Informing Users' and 'Business Self Assessment' toolkits. Again, these deliver a set of downloadable software that can be installed, customised and delivered by local authorities.

So take a good look at what is available on the website and see what best meets your authority's needs. The research had been done for you and it is there to equip you to manage your planning more effectively.

EVENTS DIARY – Edited by Ruth Scott (ruth@nineveh.co.uk)

Useful sections of the locale-gov site:

For National Projects events around the British Isles, please see <http://www.localegov.gov.uk/page.cfm?pageID=567&Language=eng>

For IEG events see <http://www.localegov.gov.uk/page.cfm?pageID=186&Language=eng>

June

16 – Security /Mobility Seminar, Securing the Extended Enterprise, London, www.computerweekly.com/computacenterseminar

21 – CAS-web event, London Central Partnership, *free to LA employees and the voluntary sector*, London <http://event.casweb.org/>

22 – Improving and Managing Processes, Stirling, Socitm <http://www.socitm.gov.uk/Public/learning/default.htm>

22-23 – Smarter Procurement, Stratford-upon-Avon, Socitm <http://www.socitm.gov.uk/Public/learning/default.htm>

22-23 - Government Computing exhibition and conference 2004, London, www.gcexpo.com

22-23 - Procurement Solutions exhibition and conference, London, <http://www.kablenet.com/events>

24 – Information and Knowledge Management, York, Socitm <http://www.socitm.gov.uk/Public/learning/default.htm>

July

6 – Third Annual London e-Government Conference, London, London Connects, www.govnet.co.uk/londonegov

7 – Managing and Sharing Data in the Public Sector, Manchester, Kable, www.kablenet.com

13 – Flexible working in the Public Sector, London, Kable, www.kablenet.com

September

14 – Information Management in the Public Sector, London, Kable www.kablenet.com

22-24 The 4th Annual Knowledge Management for the Public Sector, Ark Group www.ark-group.com

October

10 – 12 SOCITM 2004, Edinburgh <http://www.socitm.gov.uk/Public/events/Socitm+2004/default.htm>

13-14 – Storage Expo 2004, London, www.storage-expo.com

14 – 3rd Annual Event, IT Security in the Public Sector, London, www.kablenet.com

18 – 20 AGI2004 Chelsea Village, London www.agi2004.org.uk

19-20 – Outsourcing for value addition,

To add events to this diary contact Ruth@nineveh.co.uk or ring 023 9236 074

FINALLY

Your feedback is important. Let us know of anything happening in your area that would be of interest to other subscribers in the public sector, send to:

news@nineveh.co.uk

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