

NINEVEH NEWS - Issue: February 2005

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

It is rather a long time since I wrote my piece for the last “monthly” news letter. I can't help noticing that it is dated October. Where does the time go to? In our case the intervening months have seen us make some significant changes to the Company. In November we moved into our new offices at 15a South Street, Havant. The premises are on two floors in the centre of the town of Havant and allow us to receive guests comfortably and to hold seminars and training events as well as accommodating our offices. The move also saw the removal of any last vestiges of dependency on Microsoft. All our IT is now Open Source (PHP driven web site hosted on Apache, Damien server and Red Hat clients running a combination of office products including Open Office, Evolution and Mozilla). Early in the new year we finalised our Partnership Contract with Dacorum Borough Council and, for my sins, I find myself as one third of the Partnership Board which oversees all aspects of this authority's government and transformation agenda. If you want to see an example of our work there see the e-planning service at:

<http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/PlanningWeb/ApplicationSearch.aspx>

In January we welcomed another new member of the board. Sheila Davidge will be known to many of you, particularly those in the South West where she was at one time part of the District Audit team.

Meanwhile interest in our services continues to be strong as authorities look for assistance in implementing customer service solutions or help with their e-government targets. Many are still looking to complete customer service targets and we have been helping several to purchase and implement CRM solutions. For others, indeed many, it is the just the sheer complexity of their programmes that is causing the problem. As the race to meet the target dates accelerates, projects, sub projects and ancillary activities are kicked off all over the organisation. Keeping track of them all is difficult enough, trying to keep all the participants pulling in the same direction harder still.

ITIL – Service Management Essentials, Foundation course

As you may know, Nineveh is pleased to be working with Fox IT to offer this ITIL foundation course. A three-day course, leading to the ISEB/EXN Foundation Certificate in IT Service Management, is being held at our premises in Havant, Hampshire, from 14 to 16 March. Our competitive price includes the examination fee. You can find more details and book your place from our web site at <http://www.nineveh.co.uk/events.php>. Completion of this course is also worth 15 SOCITM CPD points. For further information please ring Ruth on 02392 471811.

PLEASE NOTE: there are still a few places left on this course – but to secure one you must book as soon as possible.

New Wave Direct Service Systems

An article by Janet Daniels, a Nineveh Consultant whose specialty is the development of ICT and Customer Service within Housing, in which fields she is an acknowledged expert.

(janet@nineveh.co.uk)

Direct Services has undergone something of a recent renaissance recently - both in local authorities

and housing associations. Within local authorities those DLOs that survived competition, CCT and best value reviews have emerged more confident, having shown that they can provide value for money. However, the inspection regimes (in both LAs and HAs) and external competition means that the Direct Service operation still has to constantly increase productivity. Direct service providers now have more freedom to tender for work with other public sector bodies, so they increasingly have a requirement to monitor several different contracts against different contract performance measures. In the past three or four years an increasing number of repairs contractors, both in-house ones and private companies, have started to handle calls directly from tenants rather than having jobs referred to them via a housing repairs team.

A new generation of “DLO system” is emerging. The new systems are actually delivering mobile IT solution for the workforce - something that has been talked about for years but never really well implemented before. Managers started to ask some time ago why their workforce could not have the same type of equipment as a private sector technician or parcel delivery agent. Mobile hand held equipment that tells the operative what his next job or drop was, allowed the operative to instantly communicate the result of the call to his office and keep everything up to date without reams of paper. Convergence between increasingly reliable and user friendly mobile technology together with browser based call handling systems has meant a real step change in the systems now available.

Most of the traditional DLO system suppliers (e.g. Rocc, Servitor and Consillium) now partner with Optitime, who provide a “real time” scheduling system . This system uses a scheduling algorithm to calculate the optimum next job for the operative. Work schedules can either be frozen say the day before or continuously updated. This means that the operative can receive the next job on the hand held device after updating the result of the current job. Operatives can now also have mobile access to emails on the same device, removing the need for paper memos and the need to come back to the depot.

There are also new entrants to the market who have built up their expertise entirely in the demanding world of the private sector. One such company is Prolog partnered with Pervasic who have recently won the contract at Chesterfield (their first public sector client) and a Housing Association. Their flexible system can have a tailored set up and scheduling on a par with Optitime but can also cope fully with stores held only on the van, purchase card purchasing by the operative at builders merchants and paperless invoicing from suppliers. The FSI with Xmbrace/Cognito partnership at Peterborough City Council has similar features.

What are the benefits from these new generation systems? A first is an immediate rise in productivity both for the operatives and the back office staff as the need to complete paperwork for pay and job details and to return to the depot disappears. The second is the availability of information to the customer services team who know immediately what the result of the job is and can keep clients informed on progress about why a job has been delayed. Management information can be produced much faster.

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

For SOCITM events please visit: <http://www.socitm.gov.uk/Public/learning/Calendar.htm>

For Kable events please visit: <http://www.kablenet.com/ke.nsf>

March

- 1 & 2 – Developing and ICT Strategy, Birmingham, SOCITM Learning
- 10 – Government Computing North 2005, Manchester, Kable
- 14 – LGC Forum 2005 - Public Choice, London, <http://www.lgc-forum.co.uk>
- 14 – 16 ITIL Foundation Course – Nineveh (see above)
- 17 – Local Public Service Agreements, London, LGC Conferences, <http://www.lgc-lpsa.com>
- 23 – Customer Service Open Day, Ashford, Ashford Borough Council, <http://www.ashford.gov.uk/events>

April

- 19 & 20 – Account Management for the ICT Dept. Stafford-upon-Avon, SOCITM Learning
- 20 - 21 – Local e-gov Expo, London Barbican Exhibition Centre, sara@revolution-events.com
- 26 – 28 Infosecurity Europe 2005, London, <http://www.infosec.co.uk/>
- 26 – 28 Helpdesk & IT Support Show 2005, London,

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

Copyright 2004 Nineveh Consulting Ltd

This newsletter may be reproduced in full as long as all parts including this copyright notice are included.

Sections of this report may be quoted as long as they are clearly attributed and our web site address (www.nineveh.co.uk) is also cited.

Should, for whatever reason, you want to no longer receive this newsletter please return email with “uns ubscribe newsletter” in the subject heading.